Consolidated Assessment Strategy for Construction and the Built Environment –

Craft, Supervisory, Technical, Managerial and Professional
Units and Qualifications with NVQ in the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) title and SVQs.

Introduction

This assessment strategy provides principles and guidance to awarding organisations so the assessment of units and qualifications with NVQ in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) title and SVQs is valid, effective and consistent, and has credibility across the Construction and Built Environment sector. This is a consolidated ConstructionSkills Assessment Strategy covering construction and the built environment – craft, supervisory, technical, managerial and professional NVQ and SVQ units and qualifications. This assessment strategy is one of the strands of the ConstructionSkills' Construction Qualification Strategy.

These principles are in addition to the requirements that awarding organisations must meet for the delivery of NVQ and SVQ units and qualifications as required by the qualification regulators' documentation.

This consolidated assessment strategy provides the overarching principles as systems may vary from one awarding organisation to another. Awarding organisations must consistently put these principles into practice.

Annex A provides guidance to help awarding organisations incorporate relevant parts of these principle requirements in their documentation.

Annex B provides additional information relevant to specific NVQ or SVQ qualifications and units, and contains guidance for awarding organisations where National Working Groups or Awarding Body Fora have identified the need for further clarification. This information covers additional occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers or specific qualification/unit assessment guidance.

Annex C provides guidance on the use of simulation; it is a SSC's responsibility to define the acceptability of evidence from simulation in the context of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (N/SVQs). Simulation will only usually apply as a result of one or more of the listed constraints.

Awarding organisations must make this Strategy and the annexes available to assessors, verifiers and candidates.

Principles

1. External quality control of assessment

1.1 Awarding organisations must use risk management for external quality control of assessment. They must evaluate all external verification reports and other data relating to assessment centres. Awarding organisations must address any risks relating to quality control, considering the sector assessment strategy requirements for:

- workplace evidence
- the use of simulation
- the occupational competence of assessors and verifiers.

1.2 The monitoring and standardisation of assessment decisions must be achieved by robust and strong internal and external verification systems that meet the requirements of the qualification regulators' documentation.

1.3 Awarding organisations must be members of the sector's Built Environment Awarding Body Forum, of which the qualification regulators are members. Members will be expected to provide feedback on National Occupational Standards (NOS), NVQ or SVQ units and qualifications, including aspects informing incremental change.

1.4 The Forum will, in respect of this strategy:

- build on the good relationships with awarding organisations
- provide opportunities to identify and address particular issues of external quality control
- contribute to improving quality and consistency
- support awarding organisations to monitor assessment centres' performance to identify areas and levels of risk
- provide information and statistics about take-up and completion, as well as trends and developments that can be used by ConstructionSkills and awarding organisations to identify any problem areas and agree remedial action
- discuss matters concerning quality assurance, as well as providing the opportunity to identify issues arising from implementation of NOS and related vocational qualifications
- inform the continuous improvement of NOS, and awards derived from them
- identify and share best practices to build a whole industry approach to pursue excellence in education and work-based learning and assessment process to achieve competence.

1.5 Awarding organisations and their partners, assessment centres, verifiers and assessors must maintain robust and transparent operational arrangements. They must preserve independence in assessment, certification and quality assurance processes. Awarding organisations must ensure clear separation of their NVQ/SVQ assessment responsibilities from their industry, training, membership, certification, accreditation and commercial interests and resolve any conflicts of interest.

1.6 Where e-assessment is used, it must meet the requirements of the qualification regulators' documentation.

2 Aspects to be assessed through performance in the workplace

2.1 Direct evidence produced through normal performance in the workplace is the primary source for meeting the requirements. This includes naturally occurring documentary evidence (hard copy and electronic), direct observation of activities and witness testimony as relevant. ConstructionSkills' National Working Groups will specify any exceptions to this position (see section 3).

2.2 Workplace evidence must be supported by the required evidence of knowledge and understanding. This evidence may be identified by:

- questioning the candidate
- recognised industry education and training programme assessment or professional interview assessment that has been matched to NOS requirements
- performance evidence.

2.3 A holistic approach towards the collection of evidence should be encouraged. The focus should be on assessing activities generated by the whole work experience rather than focusing on specific tasks. This would show how evidence requirements could be met across the qualification to make the most efficient use of evidence. Annex A suggests standard evidence notes for awarding organisations.

3 How simulated working conditions may be used to assess competence

3.1 Simulations (designed situations for producing artificially generated evidence) may only be used where candidates are prevented from gathering direct evidence from the workplace in the normal way because:

- there are hazards
- it is difficult to distinguish individual performance in team situations
- circumstances occur infrequently or long term results are involved
- confidentiality is important
- there are organisational constraints.

3.2 Any instances where simulation is considered to be acceptable as an alternative (to direct workplace evidence) means of generating evidence, will be determined by the relevant ConstructionSkills National Working Group and stated in the unit. Annex A suggests standard evidence notes for awarding organisations.

3.3 The ConstructionSkills National Working Group will determine and specify on the required realistic working environment and context to be adopted. This could include appropriate:

- tools, equipment and instruments
- materials
- types of contingencies
- standards and quality specifications
- real timescales
- quantities of work
- physical conditions
- relationships with people
- types of interaction
- communication methods and media

- information and data.

3.4 Where simulated evidence is stated as acceptable in the unit, the circumstances and requirements for the simulation needs to be confirmed by discussions between the candidate and the assessor, and which are then agreed by the internal and external verifiers.

3.5 Where other Standard Setting Bodies' units are imported into a ConstructionSkills suite, the evidence requirements of the originating body will be adopted and specified.

4 Occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers

4.1 Awarding organisations must ensure that **assessors**:

4.1.1 have sufficient, verifiable, relevant current industry experience, knowledge and understanding of the occupational working area at, or above, the level being assessed. This must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when judging candidates' competence. Assessors' experience, knowledge and understanding could be verified by a combination of:
- curriculum vitae and employer endorsement
- references
- possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ, or vocationally related qualification
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- interview

(The verification process must be recorded and available for audit)

4.1.2 have sufficient occupational expertise so they have up to date experience, knowledge and understanding of the particular aspects of work they are assessing. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements

4.1.3 only assess in their acknowledged area of occupational competence

4.1.4 have a sound, in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of, the sector's NOS and the Assessment Strategy (this document)

4.1.5 are prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development

4.1.6 hold, or are working towards, a qualification as listed within 'Assessing and Assuring Quality of Assessment', either in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), or the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF):
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- an appropriate Assessor qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation

or hold one of the following
- A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods
- D32/33 Assess candidate performance, using differing sources of evidence

Holders of A1 and D32/33 must assess to the current National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Learning and Development.

In Scotland, approval for exemptions must be obtained from the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

4.2 Awarding organisations must ensure that **internal verifiers**:

4.2.1 have sufficient, verifiable, relevant up to date experience, knowledge and understanding of the occupational working area at, or above, the level being verified. This must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about assessors' assessment processes and decisions. Internal verifiers' experience, knowledge and understanding could be verified by a combination of:

- curriculum vitae and employer endorsement
- references
- possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ, or vocationally related qualification
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- interview

(The verification process must be recorded and available for audit)

4.2.2 have expertise so they have up to date experience, knowledge and understanding of the particular aspects of work they are verifying. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements

4.2.3 have a sound, in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of, the NOS and the Assessment Strategy (this document)

4.2.4 are prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development

4.2.5 hold, or are working towards, a qualification as listed in 'Assessing and Assuring Quality of Assessment', either in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), or the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF):

- Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Process and Practice
- an appropriate Internal Verifier qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation.

or hold one of the following

- VI Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
- D34 Internal verify the assessment process

Holders of V1/D34 must quality assure to the current National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Learning and Development.

It is strongly recommended that within the role of Internal Quality Assurance one of the following qualifications is held.

- Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- an appropriate Assessor qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation

or one of the following

- A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods
- D32/33 Assess candidate performance, using differing sources of evidence.

4.3 Awarding organisations must ensure that **external verifiers:**

4.3.1 have sufficient, verifiable, relevant experience, knowledge and a broad understanding of the occupational working area at, or above, the level being verified. This must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about internal verification and assessment processes and decisions. External verifiers' experience, knowledge and understanding could be verified by a combination of:

- curriculum vitae and employer endorsement
- references
- possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ, or vocationally related qualification
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- interview

(The verification process must be recorded and available for audit)

4.3.2 have sufficient expertise so they have an up to date experience, knowledge and understanding of the particular aspects of work they are verifying. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements

4.3.3 have a sound, in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of, the NOS and the Assessment Strategy (this document)

4.3.4 are prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development

4.3.5 hold, or are working towards, a qualification as listed in 'Assessing and Assuring Quality of Assessment', either in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), or the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF):

- Level 4 Award in the External Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the External Quality Assurance of Assessment
- an appropriate External Verifier qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation.

or hold one of the following

- V2 Conduct external quality assurance of the assessment process
- D35 Externally verify the assessment process

Holders of V2/D35 must quality assure to the current National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Learning and Development.

It is strongly recommended that within the role of External Quality Assurance one of the following qualifications is held at Level 3 and Level 4.

Level 3:

- Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- an appropriate Assessor qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation
  or one of the following
- A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods
- D32/33 Assess candidate performance, using differing sources of evidence

Level 4:

- Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Process and Practice
- an appropriate Internal Verifier qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation
- VI Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
- D34 Internal verify the assessment process

4.4 Selection and appointment of **assessors and verifiers**

All applicants should be advised that they may be interviewed. Applicants' CVs should be profiled against the activities and range of the NVQ/SVQ(s) they will assess/verify to check that the applicant has the relevant current experience, knowledge and understanding of the occupational working area:

- at, or above, the level they will be assessing
- of sufficient depth to credibly verify judgements and assessments
- to uphold the integrity of the NOS and this Consolidated Assessment Strategy.

All assessors should have experience as well as, not in lieu of, qualifications.
Where there seem to be gaps in a potentially suitable applicant's experience and knowledge, the applicant should be interviewed. Successful applicants' CVs, profiling, reasons for not needing to interview and interview records should be available for audit.