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| **Assessment Strategy** |  |
| **Sector**  | Laboratory Science  |
| **Qualification Title(s)** | SVQ in Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (Industrial Science) SCQF Level 6 SVQ in Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (Education Science) SCQF Level 6 SVQ in Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (Industrial Science) SCQF Level 7 SVQ in Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (Education Science) SCQF Level 7SVQ in Laboratory Skills (Life Science) SCQF Level 6 SVQ in Laboratory Skills (Life Science) SCQF Level 7 SVQ in Laboratory Skills (Life Science) SCQF Level 8  |
| **Developed by**  | Cogent Skills |
| **Approved by ACG** | 23 May 2018 |
| **Version**  | 3 |

**Introduction**

The purpose of an assessment strategy is to provide awarding bodies with a consistent approach to assessment that complies with SQA Accreditation’s regulatory requirements.

The key areas this assessment strategy will cover are:

* how external quality control of assessment will be achieved
* which aspects must always be assessed through performance in the workplace
* the extent to which a realistic work environment and simulated working conditions may be used to assess competence
* the occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers

Awarding bodies must use the assessment strategy as the basis for developing and defining the evidence requirements and assessment methods their providers will use. This includes specifying how the qualification will be internally and externally quality assured.

**External quality control**

This outlines the minimum requirements for awarding bodies to check the quality of assessment.

External quality control should be ensured through external verification by competent external verifiers. The frequency and scope of external verification should be determined by the awarding body and supported by statistical and risk monitoring.

## **Workplace assessment**

This outlines which aspects must always be assessed through performance in the workplace.

It is mandatory that competence is demonstrated in a real work environment.

Knowledge and understandingwill be demonstrated by the candidate answering a set of questions that must relate to the assessment being undertaken. All questions must be asked by the assessor at appropriate moments throughout the assessment process, preferably linked to observed activity and/or a review of documentary evidence. It will be up to the assessor to determine what questions are asked. All questions and answers must be recorded.

## **Realistic work environment and simulation**

This outlines the extent to which a realistic work environment and simulated working conditions may be used to assess competence.

Simulations should only be used in relation to the assessment of very rare and/or dangerous occurrences, such as:

1. emergency scenarios
2. health, safety and the environment issues
3. rare operations at work
4. the response to faults and problems for which no opportunity has presented for the use of naturally occurring workplace evidence of candidate competence

All simulations should be high quality and designed in relation to a realistic work environment, having an acceptable level of appropriate equipment and operating to professional standards.

Reasons for the use of simulation should be made clear to the external verifier and pre-approved before the assessment has been undertaken and should include the following evidence:

1. which competence (and standards) the simulation will be designed to assess.
2. what equipment, facilities and physical environment will be used for the simulation of performance.
3. how the simulated activity relates to the candidate’s normal work context in terms of the pressures of time, access to resources and access to information.
4. how the simulation will be set up and conducted, preferably supported by physical evidence such as photographs or inspection of a test rig.

Assessors, internal verifiers and centres should monitor the proportion of evidence generated via simulations to ensure that it is not the primary source of a candidate’s claim to competence.

Simulation must enable the individual to demonstrate competence in a real or realistic work environment. In this context this means in specialist centres which replicate the workplace in terms of equipment and environment, reflect normal working situations and use relevant industrial or commercial standards and procedures. Short work placements or non-realistic work environments which do not replicate the pressures and requirements of normal commercial or industrial activities will not be acceptable. The bulk of the candidate’s evidence should be drawn from their normal working activity and not consist of artificially contrived opportunities for one-off demonstration of competence. Similarly, equipment must be that used in current commercial and industrial contexts. Procedures and standards used should be those which are nationally or internationally recognised or devised by specific companies as standard operating procedure.

## **Occupational expertise of quality assurers**

This outlines the occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers.

Assessors:

* must be competent in the units they are assessing. This is shown through the assessor having achieved the award they are assessing OR providing supporting evidence that they are able to make valid judgements of the competence of candidates through experience built up by working in the industry.
* must have a working knowledge of awards and a full understanding of that part of the award for which they have responsibility for.
* must hold or be working towards suitable qualifications for assessment, as defined by the Qualification Regulator(s).

Internal verifiers:

* must be either working in the appropriate sector itself OR they must be able to demonstrate they possess practical and up-to-date knowledge of current working practices appropriate to the sector in which they are carrying out verification practices; and
* must have a working knowledge of the awards they are internally verifying
* must hold or be working towards suitable qualifications for verification, as defined by the Qualification Regulator(s).

External verifiers:

1. must be familiar with the industry, and have an understanding of the technical processes and terminology used.
2. must hold or be working towards suitable qualifications for verification, as defined by the Qualification Regulator(s).