



**The Sector Skills Council
for Property Services, Housing, Cleaning Services
and Facilities Management**

the sector skills council for the places where we live and work

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Final Version September 2011

POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR AWARDING SVQS IN THE ASSET SKILLS SECTOR

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1 INTRODUCTION

All SSCs have the responsibility for developing an Assessment Strategy for the SVQs that they develop within their sectors. ASSET SKILLS has worked with the industry representatives, Awarding Bodies (Scottish Qualifications Authority) to develop this Assessment Strategy. This Assessment Strategy applies to SVQs in Housing, Cleaning and Support Services, Facilities Management and Facilities Services.

ASSET SKILLS, with the support of industry, is dedicated to embedding the National Occupational Standards and the SVQs into the workplace and to upholding the quality and integrity of the Standards and the awards.

2 ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

2.1 The following principles will apply to Awarding Bodies:

- 2.1.1 Assessment should normally be at the candidate's workplace, but where the opportunity to assess across the range of standards is unavailable other comparable working environments may be used, following agreement from the External Verifier.
- 2.1.2 A holistic approach towards the collection of evidence should be encouraged, assessing activities generated by the whole work experience rather than focusing on specific tasks.

e.g. If the candidate communicates with a customer whilst engaged in work based activities these can be assessed against both the competency and customer service elements.
- 2.1.3 Assessors can only assess in their acknowledged area of occupational competence.
- 2.1.4 Assessors and Internal Verifiers will be registered with their Approved Centre and be accountable to the organisation for their assessment practice.
- 2.1.5 Health and safety of customers/clients and employees must be maintained throughout the assessment process and if any person carrying out assessment or verification activities does not feel that there is due regard to health and safety then that person should refuse to continue with the activity(ies) until satisfied that due regard to health and safety is being taken.

3 SIMULATION AND WITNESS TESTIMONY

There are a few occasions when simulation or witness testimony is warranted where the centre can demonstrate that performance evidence has been impossible to obtain

The underlying reasons for either simulation or witness testimony are:

- health and safety considerations
- activities that would cause serious inconvenience or loss to an employer if there was an undue delay in their being carried out
- Infrequently occurring activities
- equality of access

3.1 *Simulation*

Simulation may be necessary for specific elements of the units. It is advisable that centres refer to the Awarding Bodies in these cases for clear guidelines.

Awarding Body guidance to centres must ensure that demands on the candidate during simulation are neither more nor less than they would encounter in a real work situation. In particular:

- All simulations must be planned, developed and documented by the centre in a way that ensures the simulation accurately reflects what the unit seeks to assess
- All simulations should follow these documented plans
- A centre's overall strategy for simulation must be examined and approved by the external verifier
- There should be a range of simulations to cover the same aspect of the standard so that the risk of candidates successfully colluding is reduced
- The physical environment for the simulation must be as realistic as possible and draw on real resources that would be used in the industry
- The nature of the contingency must be realistic.

3.2 *Witness Testimony*

Witness testimony should not form the primary source of evidence. Centres must comply with Awarding Body guidance over the occupational competence and briefing of witnesses in the use of witness testimony.

4 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE

- 4.1 Evidence from past achievement may be included as permissible evidence within SVQ assessment methods.
- 4.2 Evidence of prior knowledge and understanding can be offered as supplementary evidence as long as it is a measurable assessed outcome of learning which links to aspects of knowledge and understanding detailed in the National Occupational Standards and confirms current competence.
- 4.3 Assessors should make best use of all the assessment methods available to them in ensuring the most reliable and effective use is made of claims of prior learning and experience which relate to the individual circumstances.
- 4.4 All candidates must demonstrate current competence with respect to accreditation of prior learning (APL).

5 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Awarding bodies will operate a Risk Rating system of Approved Centres. This will be applied UK wide. Awarding bodies will provide details of their plans and criteria for risk rating at the time of qualifications' submissions.
- 5.1.1 The Awarding Bodies will review centre risk ratings on an annual basis to ensure risk rating is still appropriate and take appropriate action to ensure quality assurance is maintained.

6 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL VERIFIERS

6.1 ASSET SKILLS aims to ensure that the technical and quality aspirations of industry are met, in order to inspire confidence in the national occupational standards and qualifications. ASSET SKILLS will work with the Awarding Bodies to implement a practical and cost effective external verification process that will strengthen the rigour and consistency of assessment.

6.2 The criteria will apply to existing and new External Verifiers.

6.3 Verification Competence

6.3.1 *Awarding Bodies will ensure that External Verifiers:*

Hold an appropriate external verifier qualification (D35 or V2), or be working towards the Learning and Development (L&D) unit 12, and demonstrate evidence of knowledge, understanding and experience of the assessment process (together with the occupational competence requirements below).

- In Scotland, all new EVs should have an assessment plan for achieving L&D Unit 12 and be working towards achieving the unit.
- There is no timescale attached to the achievement of Unit 12.

6.4 Occupational Competence

All External Verifiers must

6.4.1 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the National Occupational Standards and Assessment Strategy, together with technical definitions where appropriate. Awarding Bodies should cover this requirement as part of their normal appointment process.

6.4.2 have verifiable relevant experience and current knowledge of the occupational working area at or above the level being verified. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about assessors' assessment processes and decisions. External verifiers' experience and knowledge could be verified by:

- curriculum vitae and references
- possession of a relevant SVQ
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution

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

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

- 6.4.5 have completed continuous professional development to ensure that they are working to the current National Occupational Standards in assessment and verification.
 - 6.4.6 be aware of national issues affecting vocational education, training and qualifications in the sector.
 - 6.4.7 have appropriate knowledge of the ASSET SKILLS framework of qualifications in relevant areas to the qualifications being externally verified.
 - 6.4.8 demonstrate their ability to maintain credibility and retain the confidence of the industry through commitment to continuous personal and professional development.
 - 6.4.9 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the Regulatory Authorities' codes of practice
- 6.5 Awarding Bodies may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.

7 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL VERIFIERS

- 7.1 Internal Verifiers are appointed by an Approved Centre and approved by the Awarding Body through their External Verifier.
- 7.2 This criteria will apply to existing and new Internal Verifiers.
- 7.3 Internal Verifiers should only verify the decisions of assessors which fall within their acknowledged area of technical and occupational competence.
- 7.4 Internal Verifiers should be seen as the person responsible for an approved centre's assessment quality in order to facilitate the assessment process and should be one of the following:

7.4.1 Internal Verifiers will be employed directly or contractually by the same organisation (approved centre) as the assessors

Or

7.4.2 Acting as a counter-signatory on a short term basis, a maximum period of 18 months, where Internal Verifier(s) have not yet achieved their Unit 11 award.

7.5 Internal Verifiers will either:

- a Hold an appropriate internal verifier qualification (D34 or V1) , or be working towards the Learning and Development (L&D) Unit 11
- In Scotland, all new Verifiers should have an assessment plan for achieving unit 11 and be working towards achieving the unit. External Verifiers will monitor progress and achievement towards the achievement of unit 11 during centre visits
 - All new Internal Verifiers must hold L&D units 9D and/or 9DI

Or:

b Where employers opt for an '**employer direct**' model, the qualification requirements specified by the regulatory authorities may be waived as described below.

The 'employer direct' model is where colleagues, supervisors and/or managers in the workplace are involved in the assessment process. Under this model, the employer, with the agreement of their Awarding Body and Asset Skills and the approval of the qualifications Regulators, may choose between:

Achieving the appropriate regulatory body approved unit qualifications for internal verification

OR

Demonstrating that the employer's training and development activity undertaken to prepare, validate and review these verification roles, maps 100% to the

National Occupational Standards which these qualifications are based on. The mapping process **must** be agreed by the Awarding Body as providing the equivalent level of rigour and robustness as achievement of the unit qualification.

The alternative option described above, which waives the need for the regulatory approved units, must be confined in application to an 'organisation by organisation' and 'qualification by qualification' basis, and agreed by the qualification regulators. Prospective organisations must be able to confirm that their in-house practices conform to the requirements of the Standards in association with the relevant Awarding Body.

7.5.2 It is desirable that all Internal Verifiers hold a relevant vocational qualification

Internal Verifiers will:

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

- curriculum vitae and references
- possession of a relevant SVQ
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution

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

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

7.5.6 be prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development

7.5.7 demonstrate their ability to maintain occupational competence by continuous professional development

7.5.8 have completed continuous professional development to ensure that they are working to the current National Occupational Standards in assessment and verification.

7.5.9 have knowledge of the requirements and application of the Asset Skills assessment strategy

7.5.10 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the Regulatory Authorities' codes of practice

7.6 Centres will be responsible for ensuring that internal verifiers plan and maintain continuous professional development

7.7 Approved Centres may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.

8 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSORS

8.1 This section is intended to assist Approved Centres in the recruitment of those individuals who will act as Assessors within the Approved Centre.

8.2 Assessors are appointed by an Approved Centre and approved by the Awarding Body through their External Verifier.

8.2.1 They should only assess in their area of technical and occupational competence as approved by their Awarding Bodies.

8.3 *Assessors should be one of the following:*

8.3.1 Employed directly or contractually by the same organisation (centre) as the candidate

Or

8.3.2 Acting as a counter signatory on a short term basis (18 months) where the Centre Assessor has not yet achieved their L&D 9D and 9DI units.

8.4 *The Assessor should have the following:*

Assessment Competence

Either:

8.4.1

a Hold D32 and/or D33 or A1 and/or A2 or be working towards 9D and/or 9DI units.

- In Scotland, all new Assessors should have an assessment plan for achieving units 9D and/or 9DI and be working towards achieving the units. External Verifiers will monitor progress and achievement towards the achievement of 9D and 9DI units during centre visits.

Candidates in possession of a TQFE without having appropriate 9D and/or 9DI units should undertake continuing professional development to demonstrate that they are working to the appropriate unit standard.

Or:

b Where employers opt for an '**employer direct**' model, the qualification requirements specified by the regulatory authorities may be waived as described below.

The 'employer direct' model is where colleagues, supervisors and/or managers in the workplace are involved in the assessment process. Under this model, the employer, with the agreement of their Awarding Body and Asset Skills and the approval of the qualifications Regulators, may choose between:

Achieving the appropriate regulatory body approved unit qualifications for assessment.

OR

Demonstrating that the employer's training and development activity undertaken to prepare, validate and review these assessment roles, maps 100% to the National Occupational Standards which these qualifications are based on. The mapping process **must** be agreed by the Awarding Body as providing the equivalent level of rigour and robustness as achievement of the unit qualification.

The alternative option described above, which waives the need for the regulatory approved units, must be confined in application to an 'organisation by organisation' and 'qualification by qualification' basis, and agreed by the qualification regulators. Prospective organisations must be able to confirm that their in-house practices conform to the requirements of the Standards in association with the relevant Awarding Body.

8.5 Occupational Competence

All assessors must

8.5.1 have verifiable relevant current industry experience and knowledge of the occupational working area at or above the level being assessed. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when judging candidates' competence. Assessors' experience and knowledge could be verified by:

- curriculum vitae and references
- possession of a relevant SVQ
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution

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

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

8.5.4 be prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development

8.6 Centres will be responsible for ensuring that assessors plan and maintain continuous professional development

8.7 Approved Centres may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.