



Assessor's Guidelines for the SVQs in Advice and Guidance SCQF levels 5, 7 and 8

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About this guide

This guide provides some practical examples of how to assess your candidates for the SVQs in Advice and Guidance SCQF levels 5, 7 and 8. You may be able to think of other ways of assessing your candidates and recording your decisions about their competence.

Using assessments based on these examples does not guarantee successful verification — it is still your responsibility to ensure that internal quality assurance procedures are followed.

Introduction

This introduction provides a brief overview of SVQs and how they are assessed in the workplace. If you are already familiar with the concept of SVQs, you may wish to go to the next section.

About SVQs and the SCQF

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work-based qualifications which set the level of occupational competence for each sector of the economy and are usually delivered in the workplace or in partnership with a college or other training provider. The qualifications have been designed by standards-setting bodies made up of experienced practitioners who represent employers, professional bodies, trade unions, education and voluntary organisations.

Each standards-setting body is responsible for developing national standards which define *what* employees (or potential employees) must be able to do, *how well*, and *in what circumstances*, to show that they are competent in their work.

Each SVQ which a standards-setting body develops has to fit into a broad framework which allows qualifications in the UK and throughout Europe to be compared.

There are SVQs for nearly all occupations in Scotland and they are available at SVQ levels 1–5. SVQs are currently notionally placed in the SCQF as the individual SVQs may be at differing SCQF levels and have differing amount of credit points, depending on the structure and context of the SVQ. SVQs are a means of recognising the skills and knowledge people need in employment, ie job competence. Successful completion of an SVQ provides clear evidence that the learner works to nationally recognised occupational standards.

Each Unit defines one aspect of a job or work-role, and says what it is to be competent in that aspect of the job. To be awarded a full SVQ, candidates must achieve each of the SVQ Units which make it up by demonstrating that they are competent in that aspect of the job. The Units which make up the SVQ can also be taken as freestanding awards. Some SVQs or SVQ Units are incorporated into other awards or programmes including HNCs and Modern Apprenticeships.

Explanation of levels

SVQ1 (SCQF level 4)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in the performance of a range of varied work activities, most of which may be routine or predictable.
SVQ2 (SCQF level 5)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. At this level, there will be activities, which are complex or non-routine and there is some individual responsibility and autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, may often be a requirement.
SVQ3 (either SCQF level 6 or 7)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of varied work activities, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable responsibility and autonomy, and control or guidance of others is often present.
SVQ4 (either SCQF level 8 or 9)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of complex technical or professional work activities, performed in a wide variety of contexts and with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and the allocation of resources is often present.
SVQ5 (SCQF level 11)	Competence involves the application of skills and a significant range of fundamental principles across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts. Very substantial personal autonomy and often significant responsibility for the work of others and for the allocation of substantial resources feature strongly, as do personal accountability.

For further information on SCQF go to www.scqf.org.uk.

How are standards defined in SVQs?

All SVQs consist of standards which can be broken down into various parts.

Units define the broad functions carried out in the sector, and are made up of a number of **Elements**. These **Elements** describe the activities which employees have to perform, and will require candidates to demonstrate certain skills or Knowledge and Understanding.

The quality of performance in what people must be able to do — how well they have to perform — is described by **Performance Criteria**. These may also be called **statements of competence** or **what candidates should do**.

The section on **Knowledge and Understanding** says what candidates must know and understand, and how this knowledge applies to their jobs.

You may also come across standards containing statements on **scope**. These statements could, for example, list the equipment that candidates are expected to be familiar with and use in their occupational area.

Increasingly, you may see changes to this format as standards become more user-friendly and are written in plain English. For example, there may be some standards containing **Range Statements** or **Evidence Requirements**, but over time these should disappear. You may, however, find that information on the context, nature and amount of evidence which is required to prove competence (which used to be given in Range Statements and Evidence Requirements) is now defined in the **assessment guidance** for the qualification. Assessment guidance is drawn up by the awarding body and is packaged along with the standards to form the SVQ.

Who is involved in SVQs?

There are several roles:

- ◆ **the candidate** the person who wants to achieve the SVQ
- ◆ **the assessor*** the person who assesses the candidates and decides if they are competent
- ◆ **the internal verifier*** an individual nominated by the centre who ensures that assessors apply the standards uniformly and consistently
- ◆ **the External Verifier*** an individual appointed by SQA who ensures that standards are being applied uniformly and consistently across all centres offering the SVQ

*Assessors and verifiers in centres will be asked by SQA to prove they have the appropriate occupational competence to assess and verify the SVQ. Occupational competence has been defined by the standards-setting body in the Assessment Strategy for this SVQ(s) — see SQA’s website: www.sqa.org.uk.

Assessors and verifiers are also expected to obtain an appropriate qualification in assessment and verification — this can be the Learning and Development Units (the national standards for assessment and verification), or an alternative qualification which SQA also recognises.

The steps involved in assessing a candidate for an SVQ

In deciding whether a candidate should achieve an SVQ, you will go through these stages:

- ◆ planning for assessment
- ◆ generating and collecting evidence of the candidate’s competence in the Units
- ◆ judging the evidence of the candidate’s ability and making an assessment decision based on the evidence
- ◆ recording the assessment decision and the candidate’s achievement

1 The SVQs in Advice and Guidance SCQF levels 5, 7 and 8

The National Occupational Standards, Assessment Strategy and Award Structure for Advice and Guidance have been developed by the sector skills council Skills for Justice. The SVQs in Advice and Guidance SCQF levels 5, 7 and 8 have been developed from the National Occupational Standards and are intended for people working in the Advice and Guidance sectors.

Prospective candidates may be working as support staff or practitioners with specialist roles in a variety of contexts within the Advice and Guidance sectors. For example, they could be employed as support staff in Housing Association Support Services, Money Advice Centres or Citizen's Advice Bureaux. The SVQs will also be applicable to Careers Guidance practitioners and to other practitioners in that sector such as those providing employment or funding advice for access to further/higher education.

The SVQs are designed to be assessed in the workplace, or in conditions of the workplace. Examples of the settings or centres in which the SVQs are likely to be delivered include:

- ◆ Citizens Advice Bureaux
- ◆ Money Advice Centres
- ◆ Career Planning and Guidance centres
- ◆ Employment Service Offices
- ◆ Adult Guidance Services
- ◆ Custodial Care and Prosecution Services
- ◆ Schools, Colleges and Universities
- ◆ Community Based Services such as Local Housing Projects, Youth Hubs and Family Services
- ◆ Online Support Services

Structure of the SVQs

This section lists the Units which form the SVQs in Advice and Guidance.

SVQ in Advice and Guidance SCQF level 5

To attain the qualification candidates must complete **five** Units in total. This comprises:

- ◆ **three** mandatory Units
- ◆ **two** optional Units

Please note the table below shows the SSC identification codes listed alongside the corresponding SQA Unit codes. It is important that the SQA Unit codes are used in all your recording documentation and when your results are communicated to SQA.

Candidates must complete three mandatory Units plus two optional Units — five Units in total				
SQA code	SSC code	Title	SCQF level	SCQF credits
Mandatory section (three Units)				
H554 04	SFJAB1	Communicate Effectively with People	5	4
H9XK 04	CFACSA4	Give Customers a Positive Image of Yourself and Your Organisation	5	6
H4R5 04	SFJAE1	Maintain and Develop Your Own Knowledge, Skills and Competence	5	5
Optional section (two Units to be selected)				
H9XL 04	CFACSA5	Promote Additional Services or Products to Customers	5	6
HA4V 04	SFJCCDA1.3	Search Databases and Sources of Information	6	6
HA4W 04	SFJZC5	Provide Information and Advice using the Telephone	7	9
FE25 04	CFACSA6	Process Information about Customers	5	5
FM5W 04	CFACSD2	Support Customer Service Improvements	5	5
H8VP 04	PROHSS1	Make Sure Your Own Actions Reduce Risks to Health and Safety	5	8
H5PB 04	SCDHSC0241	Contribute to the Effectiveness of Teams	6	9
H5PC 04	SCDHSC0242	Deal with Messages and Information	6	8

SVQ in Advice and Guidance SCQF level 7

To attain the qualification candidates must complete **six** Units in total. This comprises:

- ◆ **four** mandatory Units
- ◆ **two** optional Units

Please note the table below shows the SSC identification codes listed alongside the corresponding SQA Unit codes. It is important that the SQA Unit codes are used in all your recording documentation and when your results are communicated to SQA.

Candidates must complete four mandatory Units plus two optional Units — six Units in total				
SQA code	SSC code	Title	SCQF level	SCQF credits
Mandatory section group A — three Units				
HA4X 04	LSIAG01	Communicate with Potential Clients	7	11
HA4Y 04	LSIAG02	Support Clients to make use of Services	7	12
HA50 04	LSIAG15	Review your Contribution to Services	7	8
Mandatory section group B — a minimum of one Unit must be completed (please note that the Unit which is not selected as part of this mandatory section may be selected as an optional Unit)				
HA51 04	SFJ6121	Provide Technical Guidance	7	9
HA4W 04	SFJZC5	Provide Information and Advice using the Telephone	7	9

Optional section: two Units must be selected (the Unit which has not been selected as part of the mandatory section may be selected as an optional Unit)				
SQA code	SSC code	Title	SCQF level	SCQF credits
HA52 04	LSIAG13	Enable Clients to Access Referral Opportunities	7	12
HA53 04	LSIAG21	Provide and Maintain Information Materials for use in the Service	7	7
HA54 04	SFJGA6	Develop and Manage Interviews with Clients	7	6
HA55 04	LSIAG12	Liaise with other Services	7	12
HA56 04	LSIAG6	Work with Clients to Develop an Action Plan for Implementation	8	12
HA57 04	LSIAG30	Support Clients to Review Action Plans	7	12
HA5N 04	LSIAG11	Negotiate on Behalf of Clients	7	12
HA5P 04	LSIAG08	Advocate on Behalf of Clients	7	12
HA5R 04	SFJHD705	Act as a Mentor to Colleagues	7	7
HA58 04	ASTH222	Ensure Personal Safety and Security when Lone Working	6	3
HA5T 04	SFJZA4	Design Information Materials for use in the Service	7	7
HA5A 04	CFABES002	Research the Background and Experiences of the Client	8	4
HA5K 04	LSIAG14	Manage Personal Case Loads	8	10
FD3W 04	LSILADD06	Manage Learning and Development in Groups	8	10

SVQ in Advice and Guidance SCQF level 8

To attain the qualification candidates must complete **eight** Units in total. This comprises:

- ◆ **four** mandatory Units
- ◆ **four** optional Units

Please note the table below shows the SSC identification codes listed alongside the corresponding SQA Unit codes. It is important that the SQA Unit codes are used in all your recording documentation and when your results are communicated to SQA.

Candidates must complete four mandatory Units plus four optional Units — eight Units in total				
SQA code	SSC code	Title	SCQF level	SCQF credits
Mandatory section (four Units)				
HA5M 04	LSIAG04	Develop Interactions with Clients	8	11
HA5K 04	LSIAG14	Manage Personal Case Loads	8	10
HA56 04	LSIAG6	Work with Clients to Develop an Action Plan for Implementation	8	12
HA50 04	LSIAG15	Review your Contribution to Services	7	8

Optional section (four Units must be selected)				
SQA code	SSC code	Title	SCQF level	SCQF credits
HA5C 04	SFJAG5	Support the Safeguarding and Protection of People from Vulnerable Groups	8	12
HA5L 04	LSIAG18	Operate within Networks	8	8
HA57 04	LSIAG30	Support Clients to Review Action Plans	7	12
HA5V 04	LSIAG28	Prepare and Set-up Mediation	8	8
HA5D 04	LSIAG29	Support Clients through the Mediation Process	8	12
HA5W 04	LSIAG10	Present Cases for Clients in Formal Proceedings	8	9
HA5X 04	LSIAG17	Provide Support for Practitioners	8	10
HA5E 04	SFJHK401	Manage the Induction of Volunteers	8	8
HA5F 04	SFJCPS4.3	Work with Service Providers to Maximise and Enhance Service Provision	8	10
HA5G 04	SFJCPS1.1	Engage with Service Users	8	10
HA5Y 04	LSIAG26	Negotiate and Maintain Service Agreements	8	8
HA5H 04	LSIILARF2v2	Develop Service Delivery Plans	8	8
HA5P 04	LSIAG08	Advocate on Behalf of Clients	7	12
HA5N 04	LSIAG11	Negotiate on Behalf of Clients	7	12
HA5J 04	SFJIA5	Research Legal Information and Advice	8	8
HA5T 04	SFJZA4	Design Information Materials for use in the Service	7	7
FD3W 04	LSILADD06	Manage Learning and Development in Groups	8	10

An Assessment Strategy for the SVQ

As part of their review of the SVQs in Advice and Guidance the standard setting body in agreement with the Awarding Bodies has developed an assessment strategy. This Assessment Strategy sets out the specifications of Skills for Justice for the assessment and quality assurance for Scottish Vocational Qualifications that sit within the Advice and Guidance sector. The following sections outline Skills for Justice's specific principles in regard to:

- ◆ external quality control of assessment
- ◆ workplace assessment
- ◆ the use and characteristics of simulation
- ◆ the required occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers
- ◆ liaison between the SSC and the Awarding Bodies

The relevant parts of the Assessment Strategy are published on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk), and both SQA and centres must comply with these requirements.

Why would people be interested in the SVQ?

People will take SVQs for a variety of reasons: to gain promotion, to prove their job competence, or for personal development. There will be other reasons too. One of the first things to do is to find out why your candidates want to do the SVQ, and to advise them of the appropriateness of the qualification. If anyone is acting as a coach or mentor to your candidates, they might help you to do this.

How do candidates begin?

Choosing the SVQ

You should make sure that each candidate receives guidance before starting out on an SVQ — they need advice to ensure that their existing job remit, skills, experience, and their plans for progression, are matched to the SVQ selected. It does not have to be the assessor, who carries out the matching process. Whoever has responsibility for this should ensure that the assessment opportunities available to the candidate are also considered when selecting an appropriate qualification.

SCQF level 5

Scott has just left school and does not want to go to university. He was looking for a break from academia and was interested in a qualification linked to working in public services so this award seemed like the best option for him. It was his school that had helped him to find this course and a work placement opportunity. After considering what the award would involve and the time commitment required the school arranged for him to meet the course organiser/assessor who discussed the demands of the award with Scott to ensure he was placed at the right level. He is now doing the SCQF level 5 award. His placement in a local housing advice initiative provides opportunities for relevant evidence and assessment.

He finds the additional work necessary for the qualification manageable due to opportunities for gathering naturally occurring evidence. He receives support from both his placement mentor and assessor and received training as part of his induction on key features associated with undertaking the award such as assessment planning; how to collect evidence; types of assessment methods that might be used and how to construct and manage his evidence portfolio.

Scott, together with his placement mentor and his assessor agreed that through his role he should be able to generate sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the following Units for this level:

Mandatory Units

Communicate Effectively with People

Give Customers a Positive Image of yourself and your Organisation

Maintain and Develop your own Knowledge, Skills and Competence

Optional Units

Provide Information and Advice using the Telephone

Contribute to the Effectiveness of Teams

Example 2

SCQF level 7

Helen works in a college as a non teaching member of staff. The main thrust of her job involves providing advice and guidance to students at pre-entry level, during their course of studies and at pre-exit level. As part of her continuing professional development session Helen expressed an interest in undertaking the SVQ Advice and Guidance. As she had already gained significant knowledge and experience of advice and guidance processes through her day to day job in the college and through participation in college based non credit bearing in-service courses, Helen's line manager agreed with her that doing this would certainly further enhance her knowledge and performance in relation to her current job remit and future career aspirations. Helen then sat down with one of the SVQ Advice and Guidance tutor/assessors in the college who matched the knowledge and skills elements of the award with Helen's job remit, previous training, current knowledge and experience to find the correct entry level for Helen. As a result of this exercise both agreed that SCQF level 7 would be the best starting point and that the following suite of units would be the most appropriate:

Mandatory Units

Communicate with Potential Clients

Support Clients to Make use of Services

Review your Contribution to Services

Optional mandatory Unit

Provide Technical Guidance

Optional Units

Provide and Maintain Information Materials for Use in the Service

Liaise with other Services

Example 3

SCQF level 8

Karim works for a large national organisation that provides shopfront walk in support for people seeking employment and career guidance. Her employer was offering 12 places on an SCQF level 8 Advice and Guidance course to members of staff who could meet the criteria for entry to the award at this level. Following an individual assessment of every member of staff who showed an interest in undertaking the award Karim was one of those selected. As part of the selection process Karim had to justify why she should be given a place on the course. This involved her demonstrating that the suite of Units were compatible with the job she was currently doing; how both she and the organisation would benefit from her successfully completing the award and how she was able to commit her time and focus to the course requirements.

The suite of Units that Karim requires to undertake to achieve the award is as follows:

Mandatory Units

Develop Interactions with Clients

Manage Personal Case Loads

Work with Clients to Develop an Action Plan for Implementation

Review your Contribution to Services

Optional Units

Support the Safeguarding and Protection of People from Vulnerable Groups

Operate within Networks

Support Clients to Review Action Plans

Negotiate on behalf of Clients

2 Preparing to assess the SVQ

This section offers practical advice on how to begin to go about assessing your candidates for the SVQ. This advice is offered as examples of good practice — you may develop your own approaches to assessing your candidates which also work well.

Your role and your candidate's role

Assessing the SVQ will involve several stages. Both you and the candidate should be clear on your roles in the assessment process before you begin.

Your role

- ◆ ensure candidates understand what is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed
- ◆ ensure the conditions and resources required for assessment are available
- ◆ help candidates to identify and gather evidence
- ◆ observe and record candidates carrying out the activities described in the standards — records should say what has been observed, how it was carried out, and what it demonstrates
- ◆ assess products of the candidate's own work
- ◆ question candidates and record results
- ◆ help candidates to present evidence
- ◆ authenticate the evidence candidates provide
- ◆ judge evidence and make assessment decisions
- ◆ identify gaps or shortfalls in candidates' competence
- ◆ provide feedback to candidates throughout the assessment process
- ◆ record achievement

Candidates' role

- ◆ prepare for assessment — become familiar with the standards, what is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed
- ◆ help to identify sources of evidence and how these could be assessed
- ◆ carry out activities, and/or produce products of own work, and/or answer questions
- ◆ gather and present evidence
- ◆ receive and act on feedback from the assessor

Planning

In planning for assessment, you will find it helpful to meet with your candidate and plan what is to be assessed, in what way, and when and where the assessment is to take place. This discussion can be confirmed in the form of an agreed assessment plan between you and your candidate.

You should treat assessment plans as working documents — they can be updated and changed as you review progress with your candidate.

As you are planning assessment, don't forget to make the most of opportunities to *integrate* assessment. This means planning to assess an activity which draws on the contents of different Units or Elements. It can be a practical and cost-effective way of assessing your candidate's competence.

If you are a new assessor working towards your Learning and Development Units (the national standards in assessment and verification) you will need copies of completed assessment plans as part of your evidence.

To help you plan for assessment, we have produced an assessment plan which covers the following mandatory Unit at SCQF level 5.

Communicate Effectively with People

You will notice that we have included spaces to enter dates when the assessment plan has been reviewed. Any gaps in evidence identified during these reviews should be discussed with your candidates and noted for action in the assessment plan.

Assessment plan

Units H554 04	Communicate Effectively with People				
Elements	AB1.1 and A.B 1.2				
Activities	Performance Criteria (PC)	Method of assessment/ sources of evidence	Date of assessment	Evidence already available	Links to other Units (PC and range)
Observation of candidate communicating with housing client	AB1.1 P1, P2, P4, P5	Observation	10/10/16	Work records	H9XK 04
	AB1.1 P3, P6, P7 AB1.2 P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Workplace mentor witness statement	10/10/16	Letters to clients Emails to/from work based mentor	P1–15 K1–5
	K1–20	Personal Statement	24/10/2016	Video link telephone interview with client	
Questioning for Knowledge and Understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from 2nd review		Q&A sheet complemented by oral Q&A session K1-k20	24/10/2016		

Assessor's signature	<u>John Fleming</u>	1st review due	<u>10/10/2016</u>
Candidate's signature	<u>Scott Hill</u>	2nd review due	<u>24/10/2016</u>
Date of agreement	<u>2/10/2016</u>	Date of completion	<u>31/10/2016</u>

Selecting methods of assessment

The methods of assessment you use should be valid, reliable and practicable.

- ◆ By *valid* we mean that the assessment method should be appropriate to the standards.
- ◆ By *reliable* we mean that the assessment method should ensure consistent results when used with different candidates, different assessors and on different occasions.
- ◆ By *practicable* we mean that the method ensures that the assessment makes best use of available resources, equipment and time.

Before you assess a candidate, you must make sure that the methods of assessment you have chosen to use, along with any assessment materials (such as questions and sample answers) have been agreed within your centre through its system of internal quality assurance. This system is often called *internal verification* — its purpose is to help to ensure that assessment methods are valid, reliable and practicable.

There are both benefits and challenges when you are assessing SVQs in the workplace, or in conditions of the workplace. When you select methods of assessment, you should try to offer the candidate the benefits of workplace assessment and minimise any potential difficulties.

The benefits might be:

- ◆ the candidate might feel more confident and relaxed in the practical, familiar context of the workplace surrounded by supportive colleagues. A hybrid approach to assessment can take place in this context whereby gaps in knowledge/performance during observation can be filled with a question and answer session following the observation or by a nominated person who can provide a witness statement

The challenges might be:

- ◆ the candidate might feel uptight about performing in front of someone who is observing

Example

Scott has settled in well to his job at the housing project and has gained in confidence largely due to the fact that his workplace mentor is available to offer advice. Scott turns to this person regularly for answers to questions about work matters that he is not sure about. Understandably, he was a bit nervous about his first observation visit from his assessor because this scenario was not part of his normal work pattern. However, with support from both the assessor and the workplace mentor he performed well.

Methods of assessment

Assessment may involve a range of assessment methods. For SVQs, some of the most commonly used methods are observation, product evidence, and questioning.

Observation

Observation by an assessor is considered to be the most valid and reliable method of assessment. It can be organised in a variety of ways:

- ◆ working alongside the candidate
- ◆ arranging to visit when naturally-occurring activities are carried out by the candidate
- ◆ arranging for activities to take place

Observation by the assessor can often be supplemented by other types of assessment methods such as questioning. For example, it may be appropriate to ask oral questions of candidates as they carry out naturally-occurring activities.

Product evidence

As candidates work towards achieving the SVQ, they will produce evidence in the form of products of their work. The nature of this evidence can vary widely depending on what the candidate's job entails, but examples of product evidence include in Scott's case:

- ◆ work records which meet Performance Criterion 3 that have been authenticated by a witness and are signed and dated and have been approved by line managers
- ◆ e-mails from the candidate to the workplace mentor supervisor which meet Performance Criterion 7

When work products are used in evidence, care should be taken that the confidentiality of customers/clients is maintained in line with Data Protection requirements.

Questioning

Candidates have to show that they can meet the knowledge specifications for the SVQs. For these SVQs, Knowledge and Understanding is specified for each Unit. Much of a candidate's knowledge and understanding will be apparent from what they do or produce as part of their work, but this will not always be the case, and questioning can be a useful way of confirming what candidates know and understand.

Questions can be asked in a variety of forms, such as oral questions, short answer written questions, and multiple choice.

You should be careful that the method of questioning does not go beyond the competence required for the SVQ and become a barrier to fair assessment. For example, some candidates will feel more comfortable with oral questions than written.

Q How would you deal with a situation where someone comes into the housing project seeking assistance but does not speak English?

A I would show with non verbal gestures that we are a supportive and respectful organisation and arrange a subsequent session with this person with an interpreter present

Q What type of records do you make/keep in your job and why is this task important and necessary?

A In line with the organisation's communication policies and procedures we keep a file on all clients who seek housing assistance. We do this so that we have a written record of our meetings with them and can track progress in relation to issues they present. These are stored securely in line with our data protection/ confidentiality policy.

Other methods of assessment

These methods, like questioning, are often used for authentication. See Section 3 for more about authenticating candidates' evidence.

Personal statements

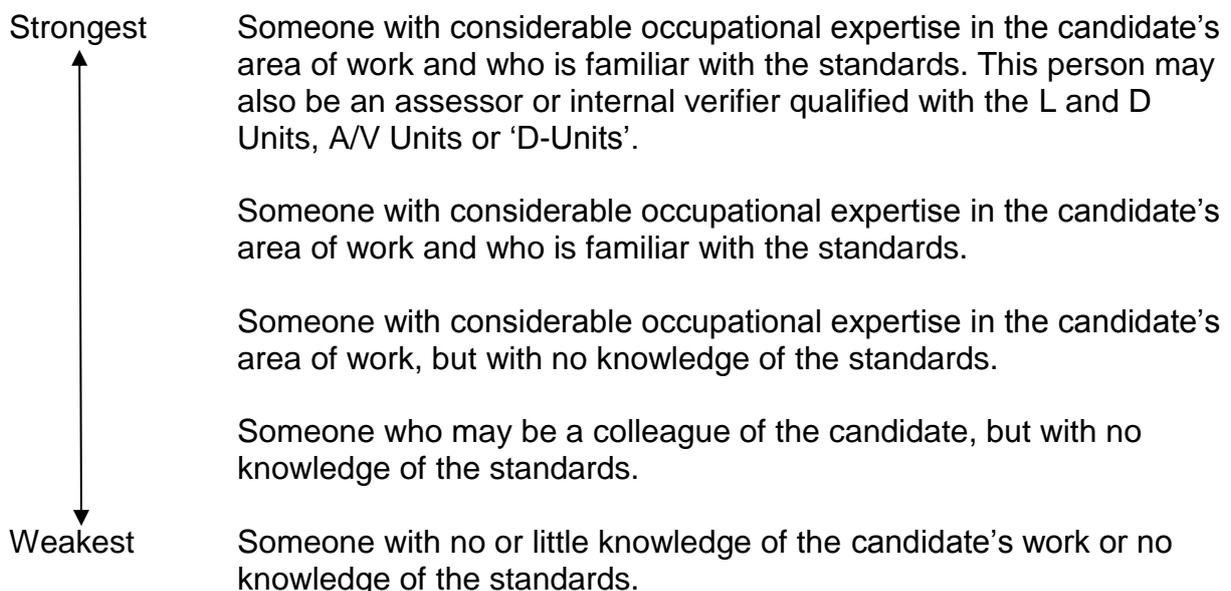
You might sometimes find it helpful to ask a candidate to give an account of why they did an activity in a certain way or how they produced a product of their work. This is often referred to as a *personal statement*. You should take care to ensure that by asking candidates to produce such statements, you are not asking them to demonstrate competence beyond what is required by the standards. You should also be selective in the use of personal statements, and make sure they have not been produced as a substitute to a more valid, reliable and practical method of assessment.

Scott produced a personal statement to demonstrate his knowledge and understanding of his organisation's communication policy and how this affected his performance in the context of his job in the housing project.

Witness testimony

For practical reasons, you may not be able to observe all the activities carried out by your candidates, but might feel that other people may be able to provide a statement on what your candidates have been doing or producing as part of their work. Statements of this kind are called *witness testimony*, and are often used to support other evidence produced by candidates. If witness testimony is used, you should, ideally, identify witnesses and opportunities for using their testimony as part of assessment planning.

You should bear in mind that the weight of the evidence will vary, depending on the knowledge and expertise of the person providing the witness testimony. You will have to take these factors into account as you make your judgement.



Witness testimony is unlikely to be sufficient in itself for a decision about the candidate's competence, and would normally be supplemented by questioning candidates.

The use of expert witnesses is encouraged as a contribution to the provision of performance evidence presented for assessment.

During the assessment feedback session Scott and his assessor identified that there were gaps in performance evidence during the assessor's observation visit to Scott's workplace. So, the assessor agreed with Scott that a witness statement from his workplace mentor could fill these. Scott then discussed these with his workplace mentor (who was listed as a nominated mentor with considerable occupational expertise in Scott's area of work and familiar with the Advice and Guidance standards). The mentor agreed to complete and sign a witness statement and submit this as evidence to the assessor of Scott's competence. This evidence related directly to Scott's performance in the work place which had been seen by the expert witness.

Simulation

Simulation is any structured assessment exercise involving a specific task which reproduces real-life situations.

On some occasions, it may not be practical to assess a candidate in real work. Examples might be where the standards require candidates to carry out emergency or contingency procedures, or where client confidentiality is an issue, or where a candidate's job role does not cover all aspects of the qualification.

Skills for Justice has defined what it regards as simulation, and has specified in the assessment strategy for this award when simulation is and is not acceptable. It states that:

Assessment in a simulated environment should only be used in the following circumstances:

- ◆ where the nature of the work activity presents high risk/danger to the candidate and others, for example, personal safety
- ◆ where evidence in the workplace will not be demonstrated within an acceptable time frame

The Awarding Bodies should issue adequate guidance to their centres as to how these simulations should be planned and organised. In general this guidance must ensure that the demands on the candidate during simulation are neither more nor less than they would be in a real work situation. This guidance should clearly state the strategy for simulations. Simulations must be agreed between the representative from the Awarding Body who is responsible for external quality assurance and with the person who is responsible for internal quality assurance in the assessment centre, prior to use.

All simulations should follow these basic principles:

A centre's overall strategy for simulation must be examined and approved by the person from the Awarding Body who is responsible for external quality assurance.

The nature of the contingency and the physical environment for the simulation must be realistic and candidates should be given no indication as to exactly what contingencies they may come across.

Where simulations are used they must reflect the requirements of the Units.

The location and environment of simulation must be agreed with the person responsible for internal quality assurance, prior to taking place and be checked by the Awarding Bodies representative responsible for external quality assurance.

For more details on simulation and what constitutes performance in the workplace, look at the Assessment Strategy for Scottish Vocational Qualifications in Advice and Guidance November 2015 on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

Other sources of evidence

Other sources of evidence can be previous experience or learning, case studies or assignments.

SQA's *Guide to Assessment* (see section 5) has more advice on methods of assessment and how to ensure that your assessment is valid, reliable and practicable.

3 Generating evidence

The methods of assessment you use should generate sufficient evidence to demonstrate the candidate's competence.

We described earlier the circumstances in which you might choose to use different methods of assessment. Starting on the next page, this section gives you examples of forms which you can use to record and present evidence of:

- ◆ observation (by the assessor)
- ◆ questions and candidate responses
- ◆ personal statement (produced by the candidate)
- ◆ witness testimony

There are blank forms which you can copy and use in assessment in Appendix 1.

Observation

For observation, note that the form asks you to record the skills and activities observed. This helps you to make a judgement on how the activity was carried out and what it demonstrates.

Observation record

Unit/Element(s) Communicate with Potential Clients _____

Candidate Helen Muir _____

Evidence index number 1 _____

Date of observation 20/10/2016 _____

Skills/activities observed	Performance Criteria covered
<p>Observed Helen communicating with a student looking for post college course pointers such as types of jobs available that he could apply for.</p> <p>During the session she showed that she can in line with college procedures:</p> <p>Introduce herself and explain her role and remit</p> <p>Spend sufficient time to obtain information from the student to assess his needs, provide information and technical assistance on how to access additional information or services that might assist him. This was carried out in a supportive manner</p> <p>Take a note of the above with action points to follow up on such as arranging job skill sessions</p> <p>cover confidentiality and data protection aspects and seek permission regarding the sharing and storing of information</p>	<p>P1</p> <p>P2 P3 P4 P7</p> <p>P8 P9</p> <p>P5 P6 P10</p>

Knowledge and Understanding apparent from this observation

K1, K2, K4, K5, K8, K9, K13, K14

Other Units/Elements to which this evidence may contribute

Provide Technical Guidance

Assessor's comments and feedback to candidate

Helen, the following knowledge points still need to be picked up on.
K2, K10, K11, K12 so I would like you to think about ways of gathering evidence for these and we can discuss this at our next planning session. However, the record of the visit shows that you are making good progress

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Assessor's signature John Fleming **Date** 20/10/2016

Candidate's signature Helen Muir **Date** 20/10/2016

Questions and candidate responses

This form can be used to record any questions you might ask the candidate to establish what they know and understand. You should note the candidate's responses on this form too.

Note that there is a space near the top of the form for you to record when, where, how and why you asked the questions.

Where you want to give the candidate written questions, this form could also be used.

Record of questions and candidate's answers

Unit	Communicate with Potential Clients
Element(s)	K2 K10 K11 K12 K14
Evidence index number	5
Circumstances of assessment	
Following an observation visit relating to this Unit Helen and her assessor agreed that there were still gaps in some of the knowledge elements of the Unit. Helen and her assessor agreed to fill these in at the her next assessment planning session. The following is a note of the question and answer session that took place to achieve this.	
List of questions and candidate's responses	
Q	What are the legislation, codes of practice, organisational policies and procedures that you need to know and understand to undertake your job?
A	I covered this in my induction session when I started working here. The college also issued me with a set of documents which cover all the policies and procedures that I need to adhere to when communicating with potential clients. These range from Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Communication to Data Protection and Storage and Sharing of Information. I have a checklist in my portfolio which has been signed by myself and my line manager. This shows that I have covered these at induction and that I know and understand them.
Q	Provide an example of a situation where you have had to adapt your method of communication to suit a particular clients needs.
A	Recently, a part-time student who also holds down a job and is a single parent with childcare commitments contacted me by e-mail for information on job opportunities and I arranged a skype session with her from her home because of her busy schedule. I have a record of this.
Q	You communicated very effectively with the student during my observation visit but how would you communicate with someone with specific communication needs such as someone who had hearing difficulties?
A	The college's Equal Opportunities Policy makes allowances for such situations. We have links with a local voluntary organisation that offers appliances and sign language assistants who can be called on for support in such situations.
Q	How do you know which actions to take to deal with different situations?
A	The college has a list of agencies that can be called upon to assist with difficult situations such as local counselling services for students who present with a range of difficulties such as drug problems or mental health issues.

List of questions and candidate's responses	
Q	How do you meet the recording requirements of your organisation such as how to store information securely.
A	I covered this at induction and I know that I have to follow the college's policies in this regard. These require me to keep both paper based and electronic copies of potential client files in a secure place with restricted access. Similarly, I need to advise potential clients of the college's policies and procedures with regard to data protection and the secure storage of information.

Assessor's signature John Fleming **Date** 30/10/2016

Candidate's signature Helen Muir **Date** 30/10/2016

Candidate's personal statement

If a personal statement is being used as evidence, it should be completed by the candidate. The statement should record what they did, how and why they chose to carry out an activity or produce work in a certain way. Where other people may have been present during an activity and they may be able to provide witness testimony, the candidate should record how the statement links to other evidence in the column provided.

Personal statement: Karim Ahmed-Manage Personal Case Loads

Date	Evidence index number	Details of statement	Links to other evidence (enter numbers)	Unit, Elements, Performance Criteria, Performance statements, scope covered
15/10/16	5	<p>This statement sets out the procedure I adopt for managing and reviewing personal case loads in line with employer's requirements.</p> <p>Once a week I write a progress report that covers topics such as accuracy of information recorded about clients outcomes met; outstanding tasks; improvements that could be made in managing caseloads.</p> <p>I then meet with colleagues and other professionals and exchange information about, assess and prioritise cases and identify with them actions required.</p> <p>I make sure that high priority cases are properly identified as such; assigned to appropriate members of staff; dealt with within required timescales and all actions undertaken are recorded</p>	<p>1. Weekly Progress report</p> <p>2. Minutes of weekly caseload meeting</p> <p>3. Signed Caseload Checklist</p> <p>4. witness testimony</p>	<p>K11-17</p> <p>P3 P4 P5</p> <p>P6 P7 P8 P9 P10</p> <p>P11 P12 P13 P14 P15 P16 P17</p> <p>P1 P2</p> <p>K1-10</p>

Candidate's signature Karim Ahmed

Date 30/10/2016

Witness testimony

Remember when you begin to use witness testimony that it must be capable of being authenticated — even if the testimony itself is being used to authenticate a candidate's claim to competence.

To make sure the witness testimony is genuine, you must ensure that you have a record of who is acting as a witness, their relationship to the candidate (eg supervisor, client) address, telephone number and the date. There are spaces for this information in the form.

Witness testimony

SVQ title and level	SCQF level 8 Advice and Guidance
Candidate's name	Karim Ahmed
Evidence index no	4
Index no of other evidence which this testimony relates to (if any)	1, 2, 3 and 5
Element(s)	
Date of evidence	30/10/2016
Name of witness	Joyce Allan
Designation/relationship to candidate	Line Manager/SVQ workbase mentor
Details of testimony	
<p>I can confirm that In her capacity as a career/employment support officer Karim is required to manage her personal case loads in line with the organisation's requirements and review these on a weekly basis. This she does effectively.</p> <p>Once a week she is required to write a progress report/reflective account that covers topics such as accuracy of the information she has recorded about clients, outcomes that have been met; identify outstanding tasks and improvements that could be made in managing her caseloads. This she does effectively.</p> <p>She then meets with myself and other colleagues within the organisation and other professionals who have an interest in specific cases such as social and health care workers. She exchanges with us information about cases and then assesses and prioritises these and identify actions required.</p> <p>Karim has to ensure that high priority cases are properly identified in line with organisational procedures; assigned to appropriate members of staff; dealt with within required timescales and all actions undertaken are recorded.</p> <p>Karim always assesses and reviews her work effectively and in doing so contributes positively to the development of the service.</p>	

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Witness's signature Joyce Allan **Date** 30/10/2016

Witness (please select the appropriate box):

- Holds L and D Unit 9D/9D1, A1/A2 or D32/D33 qualifications
- Is familiar with the SVQ standards to which the candidate is working

Filling the gaps

There may come a time when your candidate has provided evidence for most of the Unit (or SVQ), but there are some gaps. For example, you may find that certain situations, such as handling contingencies, have not arisen during assessment. Often these will relate to dealing with health and safety issues, or unexpected problems with workflow like delays in receiving information from another part of the organisation.

In SVQ Advice and Guidance such gaps may occur in generating evidence for using different forms of communication during an observation visit, eg written, electronic and telecommunication. During Scott's observation visit he could not demonstrate all of these forms of communication.

To fill this gap, he provided a witness statement from his workbase mentor in relation to his telephone skills and copies of letters and e-mails he had sent.

Guidance and support to candidates

At all times during the assessment process — from planning through to making your assessment decision — feedback should be ongoing, clear and constructive. Feedback should be given against the national standards by relating it to the evidence provided, including the knowledge specifications.

Where there are any shortfalls in a candidate's competence, you should discuss these with your candidate and make plans for re-assessment.

Judging candidate evidence and making an assessment decision

In judging candidate evidence, you must be satisfied that your candidates can work consistently to the required standard, and that the evidence they have produced is their own. You must consider whether your candidate understands and applies the knowledge evidence and how this links to performance evidence.

Evidence must:

- ◆ be relevant to the SVQ
- ◆ be authentic
- ◆ show current competence
- ◆ be sufficient to help you form a decision about the candidate's competence

Insufficient evidence

You have to judge whether the candidate has produced enough evidence required by the standards for you to reach a decision about their evidence.

Where there is insufficient evidence, you should say this to your candidate. You should tell them that it is not that they are not yet competent — there is simply not enough evidence on which to make a decision.

In this situation, your feedback to your candidates must help them produce more evidence and/or plan for further assessment.

Authenticating candidates' evidence

Authentication is required where you have not observed candidates' performance at first hand.

You can check whether a candidate has produced evidence which they claim shows their competence by questioning them or, if this is appropriate, asking them to produce a personal statement, using witness testimony, or seeking peer reports from other colleagues of the candidate.

Initially, Karim produced as evidence of competence for the unit 'Manage Personal Case Loads' the following products: her weekly progress report; minutes of weekly caseload meeting and her case load checklist. These did not determine conclusively, however, that she had met the Performance Criteria for the Unit. In view of this she was asked to produce a personal statement to demonstrate clearly her involvement in this process and relate the product evidence directly to her own performance. She also obtained a witness statement from her line manager which confirmed the details given in the personal statement.

4 Recording achievement

You should retain all evidence — clearly referenced — for internal and external verification.

The candidate's evidence is normally kept in a file, often called a *portfolio*. These documents help you and your candidates to collect, present and cross-reference the evidence to the national standards. They are also a means of recording your assessment decisions, and they tell an External Verifier what stage a candidate has reached in achieving the SVQ.

Example: Scott spent some time with his assessor during induction organising his portfolio into manageable sections to reflect the above. He was advised by his assessor to make sure that the evidence gathered was numbered so it could be indexed and cross referenced to the standards for the SCQF level 5 Advice and Guidance.

Recording documents do not need to be paper-based — it is possible to use an electronic format for collecting and structuring the evidence. Whatever format you and your candidates choose to use, the documents must show what evidence was generated, the assessment decisions you made, how the evidence meets the standards, and where the evidence can be located. You should avoid photocopying items simply to put them in a portfolio — a clear explanation of where the evidence can be found (for example, in a filing cabinet) may be sufficient for the External Verifier to follow it up and include it in the visit.

There are various reasons why record-keeping is so important:

- ◆ it provides a way of tracking a candidate's progress in achieving an SVQ
- ◆ it helps candidates to make claims for certification of their competence
- ◆ internal verifiers and External Verifiers use the records to sample assessment decisions
- ◆ it helps us to monitor the quality assurance of our qualifications

If your candidates' evidence is incomplete, or cannot be located, or if there is inaccurate cross-referencing to the standards, there is a risk that an internal verifier or External Verifier will be unable to confirm your assessment decisions.

To help you and your candidate present evidence and record your assessment decision, we have provided examples of the forms which you and your candidate might use to compile the portfolio.

- ◆ Completing the Unit progress record
- ◆ Using the evidence index
- ◆ Completing the Element achievement record

Completing the Unit progress record

You should complete this form each time your candidate achieves a Unit from the SVQ by adding your signature and the date next to the relevant Unit.

At this stage, candidates should make sure they have completed the recording documents correctly and that their evidence can be easily located. Only then should they circle the relevant Unit number at the top of the form. This enables both of you to see at a glance what stage the candidate is at in their SVQ.

Unit progress record

Qualification and level: SCQF level 8 Advice and Guidance

Candidate: Karim Ahmed

To achieve the whole qualification, you must prove competence in 4 **mandatory** Units and 4 **optional** Units.

Unit checklist

Mandatory	HA5M 04	HA5K 04	HA56 04	HA50 04			
Optional	HA5C 04	HA5L 04	HA57 04	HA5N 04			

Mandatory Units achieved

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date
HA5K 04	Manage Personal Caseloads	<i>John Fleming</i>	02/11/2016

Optional Units achieved

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date
HA5L 04	Operate within Networks	<i>John Fleming</i>	15/11/2016

Using the index of evidence

The purpose of the index of evidence is to help you locate and work through the candidate's evidence. It should give you a summary of what evidence the candidate has collected, and where (eg in a portfolio) it can be found.

The index of evidence should be completed by entering:

- ◆ the index number for each piece of evidence
- ◆ a description of each piece of evidence
- ◆ the place or location where it can be found
- ◆ the initials of the internal verifier and the date (if they have sampled the candidate's evidence)

Ideally, it should be candidates themselves (with your support and encouragement) who complete the index.

You must make sure that the information in the evidence index is accurate when your candidates' portfolios are presented for assessment and verification — particularly the information about where the evidence can be located. This is important because we suggest that anything which has been produced as day-to-day work is kept in its normal location, but anything which has been produced through assessment for the SVQ, eg observation checklists, is filed in the candidate's portfolio. In this way, your candidate can avoid having to photocopy work products just for the sake of including them in a portfolio. It also means that evidence produced as a result of assessment is kept safely in a central file.

If the index of evidence is not completed with an accurate description and location of the evidence, there is a risk that an internal verifier or External Verifier might be unable to confirm your assessment decisions.

Completing the Element achievement record

To help you and your candidates cross-reference the evidence to the standards of the SVQs, we have provided records similar to those produced in the SQA portfolio. Use one record for each Element. The grids should be completed by:

- ◆ entering the evidence index number in the first column
- ◆ giving a brief description of the evidence in the second
- ◆ ticking the relevant boxes for the Performance Criteria (or statements of competence as they are sometimes known)
- ◆ entering the areas of knowledge and understanding the piece of evidence covers

If integrated assessment is used (linking PC or Elements across different Units) the evidence should be cross-referenced back to the relevant Units.

We have provided a completed example to show how to use the record.

Element achievement record

Unit

Element

Evidence index no	Description of evidence	PC/performance statements						Areas of Knowledge and Understanding/scope																		
		3	4	5	17																					
1	Weekly progress report/ managing case loads																									
2	Minutes of weekly personal case load management meeting																									
3	Signed Case load Priority checklist																									
4	Witness Testimony/Case load management																									
5	Personal Statement/ Case load Management																									

Unit HA5K04

Element

Notes/comments

Karim, you have progressed well through this Unit and you will see from the Unit specifications that some of the evidence provided here can also be used for another mandatory Unit HA50 04: 'Review your Contribution to the Service'. In the witness statement your line manager has produced for this Unit he refers to your positive contribution to the service. So, we could discuss your progressing to this Unit at our next fortnightly assessment planning session.

The candidate has satisfied the assessor and internal verifier that the performance evidence has been met.

Candidate's signature	<u><i>Karim Ahmed</i></u>	Date	<u><i>12/11/2016</i></u>
Assessor's signature	<u><i>John Fleming</i></u>	Date	<u><i>12/11/2016</i></u>
Internal verifier's signature	<u><i>Jane Prentice</i></u>	Date	<u><i>10/11/2016</i></u>

5 Further information

What else should I read?

The publications listed here provide additional information on how to implement SVQs. Details of these and other SQA publications are available on our website at **www.sqa.org.uk** on the 'Publications, Sales and Downloads' section. They can be ordered from SQA's Business Development and Customer Support Team — telephone 0303 333 0330. Please note that there may be a charge for some of these publications.

Assessor/Verifier Units: assessment guidance

External Verification: A Guide for Centres

Guide to Assessment

Introduction to Assessment Arrangements for Schools and Colleges

SQA's Quality Framework: a guide for centres

Operational Help Centre

The Operational Guide for Centres has been replaced by the online Operational Help Centre on **www.sqa.org.uk**

Appendix 1: Blank recording forms

Unit progress record

Qualification and level _____

Candidate _____

To achieve the whole qualification, you must prove competence in xx **mandatory** Units and xx **optional** Units.

Unit checklist

Mandatory							
Optional							

Mandatory Units achieved

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date

Optional Units achieved

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date

Unit

Element

Notes/comments

The candidate has satisfied the assessor and internal verifier that the performance evidence has been met.

Candidate's signature _____

Date _____

Assessor's signature _____

Date _____

Internal verifier's signature _____

Date _____

Assessment plan

Units					
Elements					
Activities	Performance Criteria (PC)	Method of assessment/ Sources of evidence	Date of assessment	Evidence already available	Links to other Units (Performance Criteria and Range)
Questioning for Knowledge and Understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from 2nd review					

Assessor's signature _____

1st review due _____

Candidate's signature _____

2nd review due _____

Date of agreement _____

Date of completion _____

Personal statement

Date	Evidence index number	Details of statement	Links to other evidence (enter numbers)	Unit, Elements, Performance Criteria, Performance statements, scope covered

Candidate's signature _____

Date _____

Observation record

Unit/Element(s) _____

Candidate _____

Evidence index number _____

Date of observation _____

Skills/activities observed	Performance Criteria covered

Knowledge and Understanding apparent from this observation

Other Units/Elements to which this evidence may contribute

Assessor's comments and feedback to candidate

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Assessor's signature _____ **Date** _____

Candidate's signature _____ **Date** _____

Witness testimony

SVQ title and level	
Candidate's name	
Evidence index no	
Index no of other evidence which this testimony relates to (if any)	
Element(s)	
Date of evidence	
Name of witness	
Designation/relationship to candidate	
Details of testimony	

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Witness signature _____ **Date** _____

Witness (please select the appropriate box):

- Holds L and D Unit 9D/9D1, A1/A2 or D32/D33 qualifications
- Is familiar with the SVQ standards to which the candidate is working

Record of questions and candidate's answers

Unit	
Element(s)	
Evidence index number	
Circumstances of assessment	
List of questions and candidate's responses	
Q	
A	

Assessor's signature _____ **Date** _____

Candidate's signature _____ **Date** _____