Assessment Strategy

Diplomas in Port Operations SCQF 5 & Supervision of Port Operations SCQF 6

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**Introduction**

Port Skills and Safety (PSS) is the body tasked with setting standards of best practice for port operations. Working with key stakeholders in this industry, including employers, the HSE, unions and education bodies, PSS has developed a suite of standards covering the activities undertaken by port operatives and their supervisors.

The standards are available to inform a range of applications, including the development of qualifications. These standards are the basis for the SQA Diploma in Port Operations at SCQF 5 and the Diploma in Supervision of Port Operations at SCQF 6.

**Purpose of the assessment strategy**

This assessment strategy, and therefore the purpose of this document, sets out the overarching principles for the assessment of the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations. These principles are in addition to the generic criteria that awarding organisations must meet as specified by SQA Accreditation.

The primary audience for this document is approved SQA centres wishing to offer units and the group award in the diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations. Centres delivering the units or the full award should also be aware of, and meet, the relevant requirements of this strategy.

SQA are responsible for providing quality assurance processes for the assessment of the standards within the diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations. SQA are in the best position to provide detailed assessment guidance and requirements regarding evidence of competence. However, assessment should be effective without being overly burdensome, and suitably qualified and experienced assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers must be allowed to apply their professional judgement, whilst ensuring that they comply with the assessment guidance and requirements regarding evidence in a consistent manner.

Prospective, or approved centres offering the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations, need to be aware of the requirements of this document. They need to see, and to work within the overall documentation, procedures and systems proposed by SQA Awarding Body.

**Risk Management**

An integral part of the ongoing process of improving the quality of assessments is the identification and management of risks associated with unit assessment. In recent years, the regulatory authorities and Awarding Bodies have worked together in developing approaches towards identifying and responding to such risks, where the aim is to ensure effective and consistent assessment across individual approved centres. PSS will expect SQA to apply relevant risk management systems in the awarding of the diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations, and to deploy resources accordingly to address identified risks.

**Assessment in the workplace**

SQA considers it essential to the validity of the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations, that performance be assessed in the workplace. All of the units of competence within diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations are designed to reflect best practice by practitioners in real workplace settings. The standards have been tested to ensure that performance evidence can be collected in a reasonable time and cost. There are no circumstances where performance cannot be assessed by the use of one or more of the established assessment methods including, observation, the scrutiny of documentary evidence and reports, and the use of witness testimony. There are however some circumstances where response to emergencies will form part of the standard or where there may be unreasonable risk involved in demonstrating a skill or task. In those instances the use of simulation will be allowed (see below).

Assessment of the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations must include observation of the candidate’s performance. However, observation by either the assessor and/or an expert witness need not be the only form of assessment. As above, there are several further established methods of assessment, and all are acceptable for use when assessing the diplomas or units within the award. The use of media such as video and stills photography are wholly acceptable as part of an assessment and evidence portfolio. Where a candidate is not in a position to provide evidence across a particular unit(s) due to their current assignment or position, they will need to agree upon suitable opportunities to generate evidence, such as through work placement or simulation. This must be planned and agreed with the assessment centre and, if necessary, with the employer at the start of the qualification. The evidence provided, together with information gained from discussion with, and questioning by, the assessor, should enable candidates to show that they:

* Have achieved all of the stated outcomes of effective performance,
* Have demonstrated all of the behaviours which underpin effective performance,
* Possess, and are capable of applying, all of the required aspects of knowledge and understanding.

The use of expert witness testimony

Observation of the candidate’s performance will include some observation by the assessor and it is also anticipated that observation may also be undertaken by a relevant ‘subject matter’ expert(s).

A subject matter expert, or ‘expert-witness’, must be occupationally competent in the activity which they witness and would be considered to be a ‘good role model’ for the candidate. They must also understand the standards covering the activity about which they are providing witness testimony.

**Use of simulation**

SQA believes that the most reliable evidence is generated through work activities

occurring naturally in the workplace, therefore simulation should not be viewed as the main source of performance evidence of the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations. There are some particular units and isolated requirements within the standards for the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations for which candidates may not always be able to produce evidence from the workplace within an acceptable timeframe and for which simulation will therefore be an acceptable form of assessment. Indeed, within some aspects of health and safety, and in dealing with emergencies, there are some sophisticated simulation procedures available which may offer an appropriate alternative for the assessment of competence. It is recognised, therefore, that there will be situations where individual candidates may find it difficult to provide performance evidence derived from their normal working activities. In these situations, simulation can be considered as an option. Particular units where simulation may be appropriate are identified below.

If simulation is required other than for those units that are identified below, then this must be agreed before undertaking any assessment with the external verifier, who will decide whether the circumstances warrant its use. Simulation should be allowed only when other sources of performance evidence cannot be assessed effectively without undue burden upon the candidate. External verifiers should discuss these situations with the assessor and candidate, and be able to establish a rationale for the decision. The Awarding Body is responsible for the parameters under which simulation should operate in order to avoid the use of invalid and unacceptable practice.

Examples of units where simulation must not be used for the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations:

* Allocate and check work of your team
* Liaise and develop professional working relationships with third parties
* Manage own resources
* Monitor procedures to control health, safety and security risks in ports
* Provide leadership for your team
* Encourage innovation in the team
* Plan change
* Implement change
* Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in own area of
* responsibility
* Conduct an assessment of risks in the workplace
* Organise, deliver and maintain reliable customer service
* Improve customer relationships
* Work with others to improve customer service
* Monitor and solve customer service problems
* Provide learning opportunities for colleagues
* Enable individual learning through coaching
* Enable individual learning through coaching
* Manage own resources and professional development
* Develop productive working relationships with colleagues

Examples of units where simulation may be appropriate within the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations:

* Work safely near water
* Respond to emergency situations
* Respond to a pollution incident
* Administer emergency first aid in ports
* Respond to emergency situations aboard vessels
* Manage port users in an emergency
* Respond to an incident within a port environment
* Administer first aid

**Occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers**

It is important that assessors, internal verifiers (IVs) and external verifiers (EVs) of the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operationshave appropriate occupational expertise to fulfil their roles. This is required in addition to the achievement of the further requirements specified in national codes of practice. The assessment process must be credible, and assessors and verifiers perform an essential role in achieving this.

SQA does recognise that the search for experience and ability has to be tempered with the availability of assessors and verifiers. However, SQA must ensure that the assessors and verifiers recruited by assessment centres fulfil all of the relevant requirements. The requirements for the occupational expertise of assessors, IVs and EVs are set out below, and it will be the responsibility of SQA to monitor their effectiveness and to provide any recommendations for modifications.

**Assessors**

Assessors for the award of Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations must be occupationally competent and knowledgeable in respect of the units they are going to assess. SQA will ensure that assessors have verifiable, relevant and 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 candidate’s competence. Assessors’ experience and knowledge

could be verified by:

* CV and references
* Possession of a relevant industry diploma or other equivalent qualification(s).
* Membership of a relevant professional body

To assess at SCQF 5, the assessor must be operating, or have operated, at a technical/operational level or above, and/or within a relevant training function with responsibility for training port operatives

To assess at SCQF 6, the assessor must be operating, or have operated, at a supervisory level or above, and/or within a relevant training function with responsibility for training or mentoring port supervisors.

Assessors must also:

* be familiar with the Standards making up the diploma

which they are seeking to assess to be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work.

* have sufficient time to carry out the role and receive an appropriate induction to the diploma that they are assessing
* actively engage in relevant, industry specific continuing professional development activities to keep up-to-date with developments relating to the

port operations practice in which they are assessing

* Hold or be working towards an appropriate Assessor qualification as identified by awarding body accreditation or the qualification regulator. Assessors holding older assessor qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are assessing to the current standards.
* If candidates are taking the unit Assess candidates using a range of methods J42T 47 this does not act as a substitute for the National Assessor Awards, but it may help in providing evidence towards the national assessor award. Candidates will still be required to complete the National Assessor Awards identified by an awarding body accreditation when working towards their assessor awards.

**Internal verifiers**

Internal Verifiers (IVs) for the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations SCQF 6 must:

Have an understanding of the role being verified, based upon some occupational expertise and experience in port operations appropriate to the level of the diploma that they are seeking to internally verify, and to the pathway(s) being progressed. The Internal Verifier must possess, or be working towards, the required qualifications and requirements for IVs as identified by the awarding body accreditation or the qualification regulator.

* Internal Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to the current standards
* Keep up to date with developments in relevant port operational practice,

Have a thorough understanding of the national occupational standards making up the diploma which they are seeking to internally verify, and be able to provide advice upon the interpretation of the standards.

**External verifiers**

External Verifiers for the Diplomas in Port Operations & Supervision of Port Operations must:

* Have some occupational understanding of working within port operations at a level appropriate to the qualifications which they are externally verifying. Whilst there is no requirement for EVs to have occupational experience of working within port operations, it is highly desirable that they do, and they must at least have some experience of working in a related occupational environment, for example, goods handling, marine, and/or passenger handling operations,
* External Verifiers, or equivalent role, must hold or be working towards an appropriate External Verifier qualification as identified by awarding body accreditation or the qualification regulator.
* External Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate

that they are verifying to the current standards.

* Have a thorough understanding of the national occupational standards making up the diploma which they are seeking to externally verify.

**Learner malpractice**

* Where the assessor or other quality assurance personnel observes a learner malpractice, which has the potential to cause harm or heightened levels of stress to personnel within the port environment, assessment should not take place, or if it is in progress it must be stopped immediately. In addition, this learner malpractice should be reported promptly to the Internal Verifier and learner’s line manager on site.

# Appendix 1 Blank Recording Documents