SQA

Achieving the SCQF Assessor Qualifications/Units (L&D9D and L&D9DI):

A Practical Guide to Developing Assessor — Candidate Competence

Before you start!

The SCQF Assessor Awards

This material has been compiled as a resource to assist you to become a competent workplace assessor and as an aid to developing your skills and knowledge as you prepare to collect your evidence for assessment for either:
Unit L&D9D Assess Workplace Competence using Direct Methods

or

Unit L&D9DI Assess Workplace Competence using Direct and Indirect Methods.

To decide whether either of these awards is appropriate for you, consider where you assess or plan to assess. If your role is to assess outwith the workplace of your candidates, then the appropriate award for you is:
GF8P 48/H290 35 Conduct the Assessment Process.

To decide between L&D9D or L&D9DI, your choice is determined by the assessment methods specified for the standards to which your candidates will be assessed.

L&D9D covers assessing candidates using **direct assessment methods**, including:

♦ observation of the candidates' performance in their workplace
♦ asking them questions
♦ examination of work products created during your observation

L&D9DI covers assessing candidates using **direct and indirect methods**:

♦ observation of the candidates' performance in their workplace
♦ asking them questions
♦ examination of work products (both created and not created at the time of observation)
♦ discussion with candidates
♦ testimony of others (witnesses)
♦ examining candidate statements
♦ assessing candidates in simulated environments
♦ Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) — otherwise known as the Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)

Introduction

These materials have been compiled to assist assessor-candidates develop their understanding and practices in relation to workplace assessment.

The materials will also provide support to those who develop assessor-candidates.

The materials are divided into five main sections:

Preparation for the role of workplace assessor — identifying and using the available sources of information that support the role of the workplace assessor

Planning workplace assessment — understanding the principles of assessment and what should be included in the planning process

Assessing candidate performance and knowledge — using appropriate assessment methods effectively

Confirming candidate progression and achievement — feedback to the candidate; recording the assessment decision to meet internal and external quality assurance requirements for workplace assessment

Maintaining currency in the role — what an assessor can do to keep up to date; sources of support

Getting the most out of the activities

The materials include reading material, activities and self-assessed questions. Here are some tips for getting the most out of them:

♦ The materials have been designed for learning purposes. They are not intended as a means of evidence gathering. This will come later, once knowledge and skills have been put into practice.

♦ Use the materials as part of your development as an assessor to help you acquire and hone the skills you will need to assess your candidates and for the assessment of your own knowledge and performance. It is advisable to seek support from experienced colleagues when undertaking the activities.

♦ You don't have to do the activities in order, or do all of them. Choose the ones that meet any personal development needs you have identified.

♦ There are no right or wrong answers to the activities. They have been designed to help you think through implications for your practice as an assessor.

The symbols used in these materials

This indicates an **activity** which can be used to improve or consolidate your understanding of the topic in general or a particular feature of it. The activities are practically focused, and will periodically ask you to reflect on your own practice and experience as an assessor.

This symbol indicates a **self-assessed question**. These questions can help you check your understanding of the section you have just covered and the appropriate part of L&D9D/9DI. Suggested responses to some of the self-assessed questions can be found at the back of this guide. **It is strongly recommended that you don't look at the responses prior to answering the question.**

This symbol indicates a short section of material that you can read before carrying out an activity.

Further information

Text italicised in blue font signifies where further information may be found on specific topics.

Terminology used in L&D National Occupational Standard 9

Assessment method	*Observation of performance, questioning, checking products of work, witness testimony, discussion with the candidate, examining candidate statements, assessing candidates in simulated environments, RPL*
Assessor-candidate	*The person working towards achieving Unit 9D or Unit 9DI*
Authentic evidence	*The candidate's own work*
Candidate	*The person being assessed*
Reliable	*Assessors achieving a consistent approach to the way they make judgements about candidate evidence*
Role requirements	*Could include holding an assessor qualification and/or occupational experience in the area being assessed*
SSC/SSB	*Sector Skills Council/Standard Setting Body responsible for the development of the National Occupational Standards*
Special Assessment Arrangement	*An agreement made with the candidate and the Awarding Organisation to ensure fair assessment of the candidate without diluting the standards, for example taking account of shift working by arranging assessment opportunities to suit the candidate's work patterns*
Sufficient	*Enough evidence as specified in the Evidence Requirements or the Assessment Strategy*
Valid	*Relevant to the criteria against which the candidate is being assessed*

What is the purpose of assessment?

SQA's 'Guide to Assessment' defines the purpose of assessment as being 'the process of evaluating an individual's learning. It involves generating and collecting evidence of a learner's attainment of knowledge and skills and judging that evidence against defined standards'.
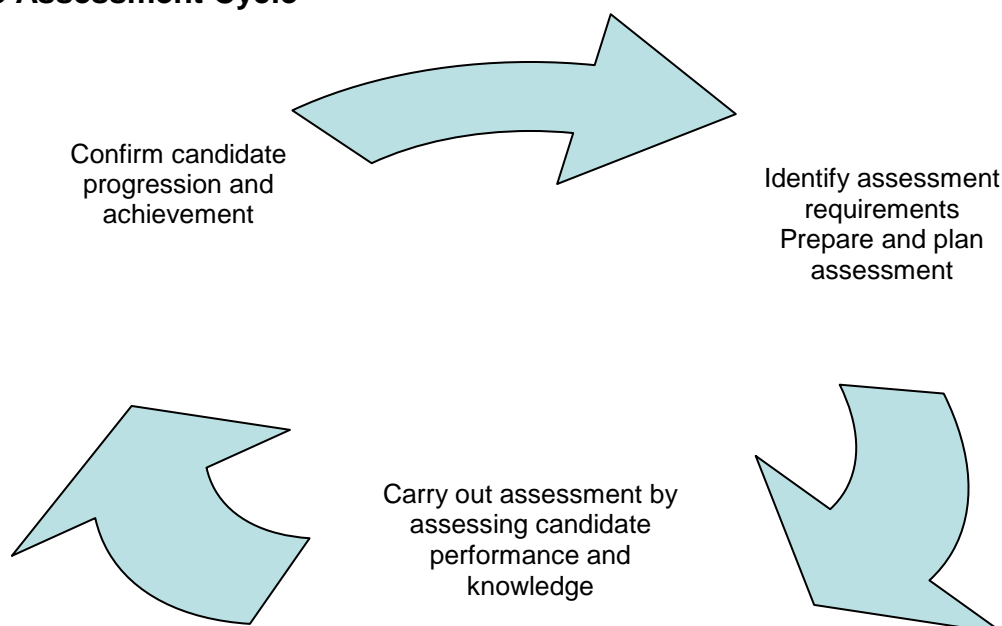
Assessment has many different uses, such as:

♦ identifying future knowledge and skills development needs
♦ recognising strengths and weaknesses to inform learning
♦ informing development plans
♦ measuring individual performance to identify an individual's readiness for assessment
♦ assessment of competence to enable certification

In working with SVQs, all of the above may be used at the appropriate times when getting candidates ready for, as well as carrying out, assessment. Most, if not all, of the stages above will certainly be covered where the assessor is also involved in organising and/or developing the knowledge and skills of candidates as well as providing final assessment.

SVQ assessors, and the standards they are assessed against in order to achieve their assessor qualification (L&D9/D9DI), mainly focus on the last stage of the above bullet-pointed list, (often referred to as summative assessment) where candidates have to reach a satisfactory level of occupational competence in order to achieve certification.

The Assessment Cycle

Confirm candidate progression and achievement

Identify assessment requirements Prepare and plan assessment

Carry out assessment by assessing candidate performance and knowledge

Preparation for the role of workplace assessor

What do assessors do?

♦ They assess individuals (called candidates) in their place of work using a number of methods, mainly observation. The assessment decisions they make will be based on how competently candidates perform in their job.
♦ Their decisions will be made in relation to a set of previously determined national standards on which SVQs are based (often called the NOS — National Occupational Standards) or to a set of in company standards of competent work performance.
♦ They will (where necessary) provide advice and support to enable candidates to develop their knowledge and skills to help them to become competent.

There is no single right way to assess, however there are recognised assessment principles that all good practitioners should apply and we will cover these later in these materials.

The assessor role also requires practitioners to have characteristics that allow them to carry out their role in an effective way.

Activity 1 — What makes an effective assessor?

In the left hand column of the following grid are the collective thoughts of over 50 workplace candidates who were asked to list the characteristics they thought an 'ideal' assessor should have in order to do their job effectively. Compare this list with the one in the right-hand column which is from a typical job description for an assessor.

Characteristics of an 'ideal assessor'	Exemplar Assessor Job Description
Has a high level of knowledge of the subject they are assessing	1 Provide candidates with an induction into assessment of their workplace competence.
Is approachable, you can ask them anything without fear of embarrassment or rejection	2 Identify when assessment is required.
Is fair, treating everyone the same regardless	3 Plan and arrange workplace assessment with the candidate.
Good at listening to what you say and sorting out problems	4 Agree what records the candidate must keep on assessment.
Doesn't put you under examination pressure	5 Make assessment decisions, review progress and achievement, provide feedback to candidates.
	6 Support candidates to enable them to develop their skills and knowledge if necessary.
Gives fair and honest feedback on what you have achieved	7 Maintain documentation surrounding candidate assessment in line with organisation and Awarding Organisation or company requirements.
Is clear about the type of evidence is required	8 Ensure assessment practice is conducted in line with internal and external quality assurance requirements.
Is flexible, fitting in with work patterns and work loads	9 Work with others to ensure reliability and consistency in assessment.

If you don't already have a job description/role profile for your own assessor role, find out where within your organisation you could acquire one. Look at the role requirements and consider what characteristics are important to the job as a whole.

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What and who can help you become an effective workplace assessor?

A workplace assessor is part of a national or in company quality assurance structure where there are people and procedures to provide guidance and support.

For SVQs, the people involved are:

Within the Approved Centre

Other assessors
Internal verifiers
Centre coordinator/support personnel

From the Awarding Organisation (SQA)

Qualification verifiers

For company standards, there will be equivalents to these roles.

Activity 2 — Identifying procedures

This activity will help you to identify all the policies and procedures you need when starting your job as a workplace assessor within your centre, including the Assessment Strategy for the Units and/or qualifications which you will assess. It will also help you to understand how your centre will implement this Strategy through the assessment practices specified in your internal policies and procedures.

You may need help from your centre manager, internal verifier or other more experienced assessors to source all of the information.

Find out what your centre's policies and procedures are, and any associated documentation, in each of the following areas. Tick them off as you obtain them, read through them and make a note of anything you don't understand. Check these points with your centre manager or your internal verifier.

Area	✔	Notes for clarification on understanding
The standards, qualifications and assessment guidance Methods of assessment Assessment records Assessment Strategy Centre arrangements for: ♦ Candidates with particular requirements (sometimes called special assessment requirements) ♦ Complaints and appeals ♦ Health and Safety ♦ Data protection ♦ Access, equality and diversity ♦ Assessor induction, support and CPD ♦ Internal Quality Assurance ♦ Standardisation ♦ Other:		

As a workplace assessor, it is important that you have a full understanding of the regulatory requirements that affect your role, particularly if you are assessing S/NVQs.

Which of the following statements are true in relation to assessing S/NVQS?

Statement	True/False
My centre will receive visits from SQA qualification verifiers to monitor the quality of assessment of candidates.	
It is the responsibility of my centre to write the Assessment Strategy	
As an assessor, I can choose which method of assessment I want to use.	
An assessment record is confidential to the assessor and the candidate.	

Activity 2 may have caused you to think about the different levels of responsibility and regulation held by the various organisations involved with S/NVQs.

In relation to SVQs, the remainder of this section gives an overview of the responsibilities held by the:

♦ Awarding Organisation
♦ SSC/B in relation to Assessment Strategies
♦ Approved centre

Awarding Organisation

The regulations contained in the various documents developed by Awarding Organisations do have an impact on the role of the S/NVQ Assessor as they include the conditions and arrangements that must be adhered to if valid certification is to take place.

The Awarding Organisation will approve centres to offer S/NVQs, register and certificate candidates and ensure the quality of the delivery of S/NVQs issued in its name. Awarding Organisations appoint qualification verifiers to monitor each centre's compliance against specified approval criteria on an ongoing basis.

Specifically an S/NVQ Awarding Organisation will be responsible for:

♦ developing the detailed assessment methodology, instruments and documentation to be used for the assessment of S/NVQs. SVQ awarding organisations must adopt the general principles for assessment specified by the standards setting bodies and approved as National Occupational Standards
♦ maintaining and monitoring the quality and consistency of assessment of accredited S/NVQs and Units
♦ ensuring rigorous external quality assurance; recruiting, monitoring and ensuring the competence of qualification verifiers for SVQs
♦ advising on the occupational expertise required by verifiers and assessors, based on the general principles specified by standards setting bodies
♦ administering S/NVQs, including approving and monitoring centres, and issuing certificates
♦ providing appropriate advice and guidance on the implementation of your qualifications for your customers; promoting the S/NVQs to ensure optimum uptake

It is each Awarding Organisation's responsibility to organise and manage a schedule of external Quality Assurance. This is normally organised on an annual basis.

External Quality Assurance is an integral component of the overall quality assurance mechanism. Organised visits/events allow qualification verifiers to check a centre's internal quality systems, monitor the consistency of assessment practice, and ensure that centre staff are assessing to National Occupational Standards.

Further information about external Quality Assurance of SVQs can be obtained by logging onto www.sqa.org.uk and searching for guidance to External Quality Assurance.

Qualification verifier visits

Visits to approved centres by qualification verifiers are an integral component of the overall quality assurance mechanism. Visits allow qualification verifiers to check a centre's internal quality systems, monitor the consistency of assessment practice, and ensure that centre staff are assessing to National Occupational Standards.

Qualification verifiers play a key role in ensuring Assessment Strategy and Awarding Organisation requirements are applied. The importance of this is exemplified by the fact that non-compliance with quality criteria can result in the imposition of sanctions on a centre which will impact on candidate certification.

Sector Skills Councils/Standards Setting Bodies

The SSC/Bs play a significant role in developing Assessment Strategies for each S/NVQ or range of S/NVQs within a given occupational area. All S/NVQ structures must have either:

♦ a corresponding S/NVQ Assessment Strategy or
♦ an overarching Assessment Strategy which covers the range of S/NVQs within a particular sector area

which must make reference to:

♦ the S/NVQ titles
♦ S/NVQ levels
♦ External Quality Control of Assessment (EQCA)
♦ Simulation, ie which Units the SSC/B has deemed can be undertaken in simulated conditions
♦ Occupational competence requirements for Assessors and Verifiers
♦ Definition of a realistic working environment (RWE).

Assessment Strategies for all SVQS can be found in the Accreditation Section of SQA's Website: www.sqa.org.uk

Approved Centre

Every organisation approved by SQA has responsibilities in terms of what its internal Quality Assurance system must include to meet SQA quality criteria.

Internal Quality Assurance

Centres must have an internal Quality Assurance system to ensure that:

♦ results are consistent between assessors where more than one assessor assesses the same Unit
♦ assessors' judgements are consistent for different candidates
♦ assessment and recording procedures are followed
♦ evidence of assessment is available for the Qualification Verifier

Internal Quality Assurance procedures should ensure that:

♦ the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the assessment and internal quality assurance process are documented.
♦ all learning and assessment materials used for the qualifications are subject to a system of internal quality assurance.
♦ all assessors and internal verifiers involved in the qualification meet regularly to agree and familiarise themselves with the materials to be used, and to establish consistency of interpretation and assessment of the standards. These meetings will take place before, during and after the assessment of the qualification. (The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that appropriate assessment materials are available before delivery, to monitor consistency of assessment decisions during delivery, and to review assessment practice after delivery.)
♦ all items to be discussed are set down in an agenda and decisions and action points are recorded in the minutes.

- ♦ there is a statement of the methods used by the centre's internal verifiers, eg:
  - — sampling assessments to monitor consistency
  - — countersigning of assessment records kept by the assessors
  - — observing a sample of assessments to monitor their consistency
  - — supporting assessors by offering guidance and advice.

SQA's Guide to Approval can be accessed from www.sqa.org.uk

TIP

**A good way to remember where all the main sources of information are held in relation to workplace assessment is to remember the four As.
They are the:**

Assessment Strategy
Awarding Organisation requirements
Assessment requirements/guidance
Approved centre procedures

We have already covered sources of information relating to three of the above, but have not yet covered Assessment/Evidence Requirements.

Assessment/Evidence Requirements

Assessment/Evidence Requirements are particularly important for a number of reasons. The main ones are:

- ♦ SVQ assessors plan their approach to assessments based on stipulated assessment requirements. This helps ensure that the evidence produced is valid.
- ♦ SVQ assessment/Evidence Requirements often stipulate the quantity of evidence that is required. This gives assessors a gauge to judging sufficiency.
- ♦ The standardisation process, contributed to by assessors and managed by internal verifiers, uses Unit assessment/Evidence Requirements as part of judging the reliability of the assessment decisions made.
- ♦ Unit assessment/Evidence Requirements provide a benchmark for all of the assessors within a team, helping them to come to agreement on their judgements.

It is important therefore from an assessor perspective that the assessment/Evidence Requirements contained in Units/awards are as clear and comprehensive as they can be, as they are used to facilitate a number of assessment and internal quality assurance processes.

Assessment methods

As part of applying the appropriate assessment requirements, your Awarding Organisation will have detailed the assessment methodology, instruments and documentation to be used for the assessment of SVQs. This specification is based on the general principles for the assessment laid down by the SSC/SSB and approved by the accrediting bodies.

There is a range of assessment methods used in SVQs — all of which must suit the purpose of what is being assessed. This gives assessment its validity. Observation is the most commonly used method of workplace assessment as it can validly confirm evidence that naturally occurs as the candidate goes about their normal work. It is for this reason that observation in the workplace of the candidate's performance of activities that are part of their job appears in both the workplace assessor qualifications, ie Units L&D9D and L&D9DI.

The other methods in those qualifications include:

♦ Examination of Work Products
♦ Questioning
♦ Discussing with candidates
♦ Testimony of others (witnesses)
♦ Examining candidate statements
♦ Assessing candidates in simulated environments
♦ Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) — otherwise known as the Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)

In some occupational areas, the terminology used for assessment methods is different, eg:

♦ observation can be called 'direct observation' or 'observation of natural performance;
♦ candidate statements can be called 'reflective accounts', 'storyboards', candidate explanation'

Whatever the terms used for the assessment methods, your role as an assessor is to assess evidence produced by the candidate as part of their day to day work which is proof of what the candidate did, how they did it and that they understood why it had to be done and why their approach was appropriate.

The principles of assessment

The principles of assessment and quality assurance, commonly referred to as VARCS (validity, authenticity, reliability, currency and sufficiency) must be understood by everyone within the assessor team. Why? — because they inform the way in which assessment is designed and the resulting assessment and quality assurance decisions that are made as a result of assessment. Their level of importance is exemplified in the following documents:

♦ The quality criteria in SQA's External Quality Assurance process.
♦ Assess Workplace Competence using Direct Methods or Assess Workplace Competence using Direct and Indirect Methods (the qualification you are working towards.

In addition to VARCS, SQA's Assessment principles include the requirements for assessment to be practicable, equitable and fair.

Special assessment requirements/arrangements

Assessment requirements in relation to meeting candidate needs will at times differ. In terms of workplace assessment, assessors may have to make arrangements to assess candidates during for example late shifts, night-shifts or at weekends. In these situations, assessment is organised around candidate work patterns. Similarly, the assessor is duty bound to adjust the assessment process to meet the needs of candidates with for example hearing impairment or speech difficulties, etc providing that the candidate is able to carry out the job role to the National Occupational Standards.

SQA have a webpage dedicated to making assessment arrangements to meet a host of different assessment needs: www.sqa.org.uk

In all of the situations described above, assessment should be planned to ensure that all candidates have equal access to assessment **without diluting the standards**.

Legal requirements

It is incumbent upon all those who have an assessor role to have a good understanding of the legal requirements that surround workplace assessment. The following are the main areas of relevant legislation:

♦ Appeals and complaints
♦ Equal opportunities
♦ Data protection
♦ Health, safety

Additional information on all of the above can be accessed from a number of SQA publications: www.sqa.org.uk

Planning Workplace Assessment

SVQs and in company standards are about being a competent worker, therefore the best way to assess them is by seeing candidates in action in their workplace. In considering the assessment methods and the candidate performance to be assessed, think of the evidence which will be best to confirm that the candidate is working competently to standards in their own workplace.

Your Awarding Organisation and Standards Setting Body will have issued guidance on the kinds of evidence needed by candidates and the assessment methods you should be using when assessing the qualifications within your occupational area. The next activity asks you to identify these requirements, use them when reaching an assessment decision and to think through any implications for your practice.

In carrying out the activity, you need to remember that:

♦ it is essential that performance standards are looked at in conjunction with Evidence Requirements — not separately
♦ by following the Evidence Requirements, the majority of the performance standards will be naturally met
♦ evidence should not be gathered 'piecemeal' and should reflect the process of assessing the same candidates from planning through to feedback
♦ the Evidence Requirements provide 'a benchmark' in terms of how much performance evidence is required
♦ adhering to the principles of assessment (VARCS) minimises the quality assurance risks for your own work and for your centre

Activity 3 — Become familiar with the assessment methods and the principles of assessment

You will need copies of the standards and qualifications you are assessing and any associated guidance to begin with. If you are a new assessor, ask your IV for these. Look at the assessment methods and Evidence Requirements and consider the benefits and drawbacks of the methods you will use.

Assessment Method	Benefits	Drawbacks

Once you have completed this activity, compare your answers with those in Annexe 1 on pages 43 to 45.

Check your planned assessment methods using the assessment quality assurance principles — VARCS*

You are aiming for a 'yes' in each case.

Questions **Yes/No**

Valid: Is the assessment method I'm using appropriate to the activity/evidence I'm assessing?

Authentic: Will I be sure that the evidence upon which I will base my decision upon has been produced by the candidate?

Reliable: Would another assessor looking at this evidence agree with my decision and can I be relied upon as the assessor to make the same decision with other candidates?

Current: Will I know that the candidate is currently competent?

Sufficient: Will I see enough evidence?

Now check your responses with those in Annexe 1.

For more information on assessment methods and VARCS see Annexes 2 and 3 pages 46 to 52

Holistic assessment planning

Adopting a holistic approach to assessment with candidates will increase your efficiency as an assessor and help the candidate to recognise and practise transfer of knowledge and skills. Some SVQ Assessment Strategies require a holistic approach.

For more guidance on this look at your own Assessment Strategy and visit the SVQ pages on the Understanding Standards website. The exemplar material is based on the Business and Administration SVQ but the approaches shown can be applied to other SVQs.

The following steps to assessing can be applied to all qualifications. One of the key activities for a workplace assessor is assessing their candidates using observation. Planning how to do this involves being able to work with your candidates to identify which work activities will give the most effective evidence of meeting the standards. The actions involved are:

1 Choose the activity for assessment and discuss with the candidate what the activity involves.

This means that you find out:

♦ what they will be **doing** (performance evidence)
♦ what **products** will result from the activity (product evidence)
♦ what they will have to think about and need to **know** in order to do the activity (knowledge evidence)

Make notes on all the above, grouped as performance, product and knowledge, so you can now see **what** it is you need to assess.

2 Identify the best methods to use to assess the evidence arising from the activity

As a guide:

♦ performance evidence will have to be observed
♦ products will have to be examined and possibly explained by the candidate
♦ knowledge will have to be ascertained and validated through questioning or discussion

3 Identify the standards that should be covered by this assessment

Now you know what is to be assessed and the methods to use, you can identify which parts of the standards will be covered.

4 Complete the assessment planning process

There is no prescribed format for assessment plans, however they must show that you have identified:

♦ Who is being assessed (the candidate) by whom (the assessor)
♦ The date and location of the assessment
♦ The activity being assessed
♦ The evidence to be judged
♦ The assessment methods to be used
♦ The Units which will be assessed.

Please note: one assessment plan may cover a number of assessment activities: which may not all happen at the same time, for example questioning and discussion may take place several days after the observation and assessment of work products.

Example 1: The SVQ Level 2 Food Preparation and Cooking consists of a number of mandatory and optional Units. In this example the SVQ candidate is working in a busy kitchen and is viewed by their assessor (who is working towards L&D9D) as ready to be assessed on soup preparation. As the assessor works with the candidate, his L&D9D assessor has agreed that she will observe him carrying out assessment planning rather than have a written plan.

Evidence Gathering Form

Candidate Name: Tom Tureen   **Unit:**   L&D9D

Tick evidence type(s) used on this occasion:

Observation   ✓   **Explanation**
Questions   ✓   **Witness Testimony**
Work Product   **Discussion**
APL/APA

Evidence	Performance	Knowledge	Other Evidence
Observation of assessment planning On 31st August, I observed Tom Tureen planning assessment with Julie Ennecut, his candidate for Hospitality SVQ Level 2. They discussed the menus and shift rota for the next 7 days and agreed that Julie would have the opportunity to prepare Scotch Broth on Wednesday, Cream of Celery soup on Thursday and Lentil Puree on Saturday. This would give her the evidence for 2FPC2 and also for some of 2FP7 as some vegetable preparation would be done. Tom went through the standards in detail with Julie and they agreed that she would make the soups telling him when she was ready for him to observe her performance and to look at work product. Julie will do the online knowledge assessment for 2FPC2 this afternoon at 3pm and will describe how to make a consommé julienne to Tom after that. I asked Tom if Julie had any difficulties with the assessment process. He said that she had been nervous about 'failing' at first but that he had explained about being assessed as 'competent' or 'not yet competent' during induction to the assessment process and she was now confident enough to tell him when she felt that she was ready to be assessed. Their effective working relationship was evident in the observation.	1a 1b 1c 1d	1 3 4 7 2	Menus and shift rota for 1st to 7th Sept Soup recipes in kitchen

Signature: *Fiona MacAlpine*   **Date:**   31st August 2014

Self-Assessed Question

Below is the list of knowledge statements included in the first elements of L&D9D and 9DI — preparing and planning assessment. Are there any knowledge statements you are not yet familiar with?

Knowledge statements	Further clarification required
In planning and preparing for assessment: ♦ The range of information that should be made available to candidates before assessment begins ♦ The standards to be assessed and the assessment/evidence regulatory requirements ♦ The candidates' job role and their work environment and how this influences the assessment approach adopted ♦ How to judge when the candidate is ready for assessment ♦ The uses, benefits and drawbacks of the different assessment methods, including those that use technology ♦ Types of risks when assessing and how to manage them ♦ How to involve candidates in planning assessments and ensuring they have access to the assessment process ♦ How assessment arrangements can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of individual candidates ♦ How disputes and appeals will be handled and how confidentiality will be maintained ♦ The concepts and principles of assessment ♦ The principles of assessment (validity, authenticity, reliability, currency, sufficiency (VARCS))	

Assess candidates' performance and knowledge

Once you have carried out all your preparation, you are ready to assess your candidates' performance and knowledge using the methods which are appropriate for the qualification and the candidates' work activities. In most circumstances, you will be using direct methods such as observation, questioning and looking at work products. As you will be there to see the performance and the product and to ask the question, you will have direct evidence of the candidates' performance and knowledge and can make your assessment decision.

Where indirect methods are used, you have not seen the candidates' performance, so there is a need for the evidence to be authenticated as the work of the candidate.

Questioning or discussion are the most common methods used by assessors to authenticate candidate performance evidence.

Activity 4 — Using questioning with work products

Questioning is an effective method to use when you are examining candidates' work products to find out what they know.

Stage 1 — Identify the work products

Identify the different kinds of evidence your candidates produce as a result of their normal work-related activity, including products of work.

Stage 2 — Think of questions you need to ask about candidates' work products

Using the prompts in the left-hand column of table below, give an example of a question you would need to ask about your candidates' work products. Add any others that occur to you in the space provided:

Think of a question that tells you …	Your example …
1 the candidate produced the work product.	
2 they understand the reasons why they produced it in the way they did.	
3 they have produced a work product of a similar standard before.	
4 how they view the quality of the work product.	
5 if relevant, any associated procedures to do with the product, and why they have to be used.	
6 other questions	

Activity 5 — Discussion with the candidate

Go to the Learning and Development pages of SQA's website and view the video of a discussion.

Make notes about the structure of the discussion — beginning, middle and end and think about the steps taken by the assessor to create the environment to enable the candidate to present evidence and to feedback to the candidate. What kind of preparation has been carried out?

Then read the section on Discussion in Annexe 2 on pages 47 to 48.

Confirming progression and achievement

In the context of assessment of competence, whether for an SVQ or incompany standards, the decision you make is that the candidate is 'competent' or 'not yet competent'. Unlike other assessment systems, there is no 'pass or fail', no comparison of one candidate with another, no grading, credits or merits. The candidates you assess will either meet the standards ('competent') or will have more work to do in gathering more evidence, further developing their skills/knowledge before being assessed again ('not yet competent').

Activity 6 — Giving feedback

As the assessor, it is your job to give candidates specific feedback after assessing them. This activity asks you to consider the impact of feedback on your candidates by reflecting on the kind of feedback you have been given during your own working life, considering its usefulness and drawing out principles for use with your candidates. Think of two occasions when you received feedback on your performance — a positive experience and a negative one.

What was it about each experience that made it positive or negative? Say what happened and be specific. For example, say what the other person did or didn't do and describe the impact on you. Examples have been given to get you started — try and think of some more.

The other person	The impact was
Gave me feedback in front of someone else	I felt embarrassed and demotivated
Told me something positive about what I'd done	I thought to myself: 'I'll do that again next time.'

Using your own list, think of some 'rules' to set for yourself when giving feedback to your candidates about their performance. They don't have to be complicated — use your experience to put yourself in the candidate's shoes. Again, examples have been given to get you thinking:

My rules for giving feedback to candidates

1   Find somewhere private where we won't be interrupted.

2   Start by telling them what they've done well.

3

4

5

6

Try and stick to your principles the next time you give feedback to a candidate on their performance. Then ask them how well they thought you did and use what they say to change or add to the principles you have already identified. Above all, ask yourself how you would feel receiving the feedback you give.

Completing Records of Assessment Decisions

Your centre will have provided you with their assessment recording system and possibly examples of its use. You can find examples of various formats on www.sqa.org.uk on the pages for the SVQs that you are assessing. Key information on all of these formats is similar to the list for assessment planning, ie:

♦ Who was assessed (the candidate) by whom (the assessor)
♦ The date and location of the assessment
♦ The activity assessed
♦ The evidence judged
♦ The assessment methods used
♦ The decisions made about which standards were met.

With the addition of 'what next' for the candidate which leads to a new plan to assess another area or a revised plan to revisit the area assessed.

Activity 7

Look at the following assessment record and comment on whether the Evidence Requirements for 9DI have been met and why. You will find the Evidence Requirements in Annexe 4.

Learner: Sally Dennis		Qualification: Unit 9DI	
Date of Assessment: 24th and 27th May 2014		Location of Assessment: Simon John Hairdressing	
Assessor: Deepak Singh			
Assessment Activities		**Performance or Knowledge**	**Location of evidence**
Observation 24th May 2014 I observed Sally observing her candidate Chantelle working with a client in the salon. (Chantelle is working towards her SVQ 3 in hairdressing.) Sally met with Chantelle before the assessment and confirmed Chantelle's understanding of the planned assessment activity with her; it was clear from the discussion with her candidate, that Sally had involved Chantelle in the planning process and that Chantelle had all the necessary information. The assessment had been set at a time and date to meet Chantelle and her employer's work schedules and was based on a number of activities that Chantelle was carrying out as part of her working day.		1a, 2a, b, c KR 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7	Observation (this report)
Sally observed Chantelle as she worked with her client, first carrying out the client consultation, then cutting and finishing the client's hair. Sally took and recorded appropriately a verbal witness testimony from the client during the process to establish Chantelle had met the necessary SVQ standards with relation to customer consultations. Sally examined products from performance (client record cards, client history and product use) and asked Chantelle questions which confirmed her knowledge of the processes she had carried out.		3a, b, c KR 2.1, 2.3	Products on client data base, Simon John Hairdressing, 1 The High Street GL12 5BH
Sally made her assessment decision and completed the documentation appropriately.		4b	Assessment documentation in SVQ candidate file at centre
I then observed Sally giving feedback to Chantelle during Chantelle's break. (This feedback also covered the assessment of the report Chantelle had completed.)The feedback was given in the staff room in private and began with Sally asking Chantelle to assess her own performance. Sally explained her assessment decision, praised Chantelle for the areas in which she had demonstrated competence and produced a plan with Chantelle for the next steps in assessment.		4a, 4b KR 4.2	Assessment documentation in candidate file at centre

Assessment Activities	Performance or Knowledge	Location of evidence
Examining work products	2b, c	
I examined the completed Assessment plan, Assessment record, decision and judgement, All evidence had been captured and referenced against the standards met. The location of the evidence was clearly indicated. These were completed on time and in line with centre requirements.	3a,b,c KR 1.7, 2.1, 2.2	
Discussion and Questioning 27th May		Sound File 1 Learner file at centre
I carried out a discussion and questioning of Sally by telephone which is digitally recorded and is located in Sound File 1 at the timings given.	1a, 2c, 3a to d, 4a,b KR4.3	
During the discussion Sally confirmed the process by which she had planned, set, assessed and judged the assignment which formed part of this assessment. **1 min 10 secs**		
Sally explained the functions of assessment, the responsibilities of the candidate, assessor and internal verifier and the centre's standardization procedures. **5 mins 30 secs**	All KRs	
Sally explained why she had selected the assessment methods and combined them to assess a number of Units holistically through one assessment occasion. She explained the benefits to the candidate and how to safeguard the process and ensure reliability was achieved. **10 mins 20 secs**		
Sally explained when she would and would not use all the assessment methods and described how basing assessment in the workplace real work enabled the candidate's full involvement. **14 mins 15 secs**	KR 2.1 to 9	
Sally described how she came to her decision and the processes through which behind safe, authentic, current evidence was gathered and fair and reliable decisions were made. **16 mins 11 secs**	KR 3.1 to 6	
The full discussion which provide evidence for knowledge are on the sound file. The above assessment activities and evidence combine to confirm competence for the Unit.	KR 4.1 to 5	

Self-Assessed Question

Here is the list of knowledge statements included in the last two elements of L&D9D and 9DI. Are there any knowledge statements you are not yet familiar with?

Knowledge statements	Further clarification required
In assessing candidate performance and knowledge: ♦ How to implement the chosen assessment methods ♦ The principles of competence based assessment (competent versus not yet competent) ♦ How to judge evidence in relation to the quality assurance principles that are applied (Valid, Authentic, Reliable, Current, Sufficient (VARCS)) ♦ Achieving objectivity and consistency when making assessment decisions and what to do when there is doubt ♦ Standardisation processes and how to contribute to those ♦ How to cooperate and work effectively with others involved in the assessment process **In confirming progression and achievement:** ♦ The purpose and value of feedback in the assessment cycle ♦ How to deliver constructive feedback and the next steps in the assessment process ♦ How to ensure access and data protection requirements are adhered to when maintaining records of assessment and candidate progress ♦ Internal quality assurance processes and procedures and how to apply these in practice ♦ The value and purpose of continuing professional development for assessment practitioners	

Your role in meeting quality assurance requirements

All assessors have a role to play in ensuring that assessment is carried out consistently within their organisation. This involves working with other assessors, your internal verifier(s) and your qualification verifier on standardising assessment practice and keeping yourself up to date about the standards and best practice in assessment.

Activity 8 — Evaluate your own practice

Look through the standards which you assess and identify any areas you are unsure about or where you feel that you don't assess consistently from one candidate to another. Use the prompts below to help you be specific about any sticking points:

Area	What's the issue	Example
Units/standards		
Choosing and using assessment methods		
Amounts and types of evidence		
Candidate/employer involvement		
Giving feedback to candidates		
Completion of documentation		
Other		

Discuss these with your colleague assessors and/or IV. Following the discussion, identify any changes you will make and reflect on what these mean for you by answering the following questions:

- What suggestions did other team members make?
- What action did you decide to take?
- What are the implications of these for your practice as an assessor?

Your centre will also organise opportunities for you to standardise your assessment practice with others. This may involve discussing your assessment records with colleagues, explaining how you reached the decisions and asking them to comment on the following:

- Did your colleagues agree with your decisions? (If so, why? If not, why not?)

- What did your colleagues say about how you arrived at your assessment decision?

- Would your colleagues have done anything differently? If so, what are the implications for your practice?

Maintaining currency in your role

It is both an Awarding Organisation and Assessment Strategy requirement that you keep your competence in the occupational area in which you assess **and** your assessor competence up to date. Your actions to maintain currency needs to be recorded in a format agreed with your own centre and/or as required by an Assessment Strategy. *See the CPD Toolkit on www.sqa.org.uk and Exemplar 1 on page 58.*

Summary

By this stage, you have covered the performance and knowledge requirements of the assessor Units L&D9D and L&D9DI. To summarise these, remind you as to why each is important and to link the actions to the Evidence Requirements, see the table below:

What	How	Why	Evidence for 9D/9DI
1 Know the Standards	→ Read them → Talk to other assessors → Listen to IV	→ Standardisation → Effectiveness → Confidence → Credibility	→ Centre meeting notes → Your approach to the role
2 Get to know the candidate and their job	→ Meet them → Listen to them → Watch them → Talk to Manager or Supervisor	→ To choose appropriate Units → To agree evidence and assessment opportunities → To support candidate	→ Your assessment planning → Your approach to the candidate
3 Agree with candidate which Units to aim for and in what order	→ Explain, discuss, agree, check with Manager or Supervisor	→ Transparency → Cooperation → Efficiency	→ Overall Assessment Plan
4 Agree Assessment Plans for each assessment occasion, detailing evidence to be collected	→ Explain, discuss, agree, check with Manager or Supervisor	→ Transparency → Cooperation → Efficiency → Candidate can prepare	→ Assessment Plans
5 Assess candidate performance and knowledge	→ Observe, examine product, listen, question, authenticate	→ To decide whether there is sufficient evidence of competence to the Standards	→ Observation checklist of your performance → Assessment records for your candidates
6 Give your candidate feedback clearly and specifically	→ Go through the evidence and the standards	→ Transparency → Fairness → Agreement	→ Observation checklist of your performance → Assessment records for your candidates
7 Record your assessment decisions	→ Complete the paperwork	→ Transparency → Quality Assurance	→ Assessment records for your candidates
8 Review progress with your candidate and plan next assessment	→ Explain, discuss, agree, check with Manager or Supervisor	→ Transparency → Cooperation → Efficiency → Candidate can prepare	→ Review forms
9 Standardise your practice	→ Discuss assessment records and evidence with other assessors and your IV → Present your assessment records for internal Quality Assurance	→ Transparency → Quality assurance	→ Centre meeting notes → IV records

Activity 9 — Deciding between 9D and 9DI — which award is best for me?

Access as many of the following sources of information:

♦ The Assessment Strategy for your candidates' qualification
♦ Your own organisation's quality procedures
♦ The standards to be assessed
♦ The Evidence Requirements for those standards

Use them to identify which assessment methods are specified and therefore which assessor Unit is best fit for you.

Assessment methods needed

Which award is best fit for my planned practice?

Self-Assessed Question

Having made that decision, look at the Evidence Requirements for 9D and 9DI in Annexe 4.

Which of the two qualifications will you be able to achieve from your planned assessor practice?

Assess where you are against the standards

Go to the Unit below that is relevant to you, and assess your knowledge and skills by ticking the relevant column on the right.

Unit title and standards			
9D Assess workplace competence using direct methods			
	I can do this— and prove it	**I need to find out more**	**I need to develop this skill**
1 Prepare and plan for assessments (a) Ensure candidates understand the purpose, requirements and processes of assessment (b) Identify evidence that is valid, authentic and sufficient (c) Plan to use valid, fair and reliable and safe assessment methods (d) Plan assessment to meet requirements and candidate needs			
2 Assess candidate performance and knowledge (a) Collect evidence that is valid, authentic and sufficient (b) Use valid, fair, reliable and safe assessment methods (c) Make assessment decisions against specified criteria (d) Work with others to ensure the standardisation of assessment practice and outcomes			
3 Confirm progression and achievement (a) Provide feedback to the candidate that affirms achievement and identifies any additional requirements (b) Maintain required records of the assessment process, its outcomes and candidate progress			

Unit title and standards			
9D Assess workplace competence using direct methods			
	I know about this and can prove it	**I need to find out more**	**I need to develop this knowledge**
In planning and preparing for assessment 1 The range of information that should be made available to candidates before assessment begins 2 The standards to be assessed and the assessment/evidence regulatory requirements 3 The candidates' job role and their work environment and how this influences the assessment approach adopted 4 How to judge when the candidate is ready for assessment 5 The uses, benefits and drawbacks of the different assessment methods, including those that use technology 6 Types of risks when assessing and how to manage them 7 How to involve candidates in planning assessments and ensuring they have access to the assessment process 8 How assessment arrangements can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of individual candidates 9 How disputes and appeals will be handled and how confidentiality will be maintained			
In assessing candidate performance and knowledge: 1 How to implement the chosen assessment methods 2 The principles of competence based assessment (competent versus not yet competent) 3 How to judge evidence in relation to the quality assurance principles that are applied (Valid, Authentic, Reliable, Current, Sufficient (VARCS)) 4 Achieving objectivity and consistency when making assessment decisions and what to do when there is doubt 5 Standardisation processes and how to contribute to those 6 How to cooperate and work effectively with others involved in the assessment process			

Unit title and standards			
9D Assess workplace competence using direct methods			
	I know about this and can prove it	**I need to find out more**	**I need to develop this knowledge**
In confirming progression and achievement: 1 The purpose and value of feedback in the assessment cycle 2 How to deliver constructive feedback and the next steps in the assessment process 3 How to ensure access and data protection requirements are adhered to when maintaining records of assessment and candidate progress 4 Internal quality assurance processes and procedures and how to apply these in practice 5 The value and purpose of continuing professional development for assessment practitioners			

Unit title and standards			
9DI Assess workplace competence using direct and indirect methods			
	I can do this— and prove it	**I need to find out more**	**I need to develop this skill area**
1 Prepare to assess (a) Ensure candidates understand the purpose, requirements and processes of assessment			
2 Plan assessments (a) Identify evidence that is valid, authentic and sufficient (b) Plan to use valid, fair and reliable and safe assessment methods (c) Plan assessment to meet requirements and candidate needs			
3 Assess candidate performance and knowledge (a) Collect evidence that is valid, authentic and sufficient (b) Use valid, fair, reliable and safe assessment methods (c) Make assessment decisions against specified criteria (d) Work with others to ensure the standardisation of assessment practice and outcomes			
4 Confirm progression and achievement (a) Provide feedback to the learner that affirms achievement and identifies any additional requirements (b) Maintain required records of the assessment process, its outcomes and candidate progress			

Unit title and standards			
9DI Assess workplace competence using direct and indirect methods			
	I know about this and can prove it	**I need to find out more**	**I need to develop this knowledge area**
In preparing to assess 1 How to judge when the candidate is ready for assessment 2 The range of information that should be made available to candidates before assessment begins 3 The concepts and principles of assessment 4 Standards to be assessed, assessment/Evidence Requirements, regulatory requirements 5 The candidates' job role and their work environment and how this influences which assessment approach to use			
In planning assessment 1 The principles of assessment (validity, authenticity, reliability, currency, sufficiency (VARCS)) 2 The uses, benefits and drawbacks of the different assessment methods, including those that use technology 3 Types of risks, including health, safety and welfare and quality assurance risks, when assessing and how to manage them 4 How to plan assessments in own area of responsibility, involving candidates and allowing access 5 How assessment arrangements can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of individual candidates 6 How disputes and appeals will be handled and how confidentiality will be maintained			

Unit title and standards			
9DI Assess workplace competence using direct and indirect methods			
	I know about this and can prove it	**I need to find out more**	**I need to develop this knowledge area**
In assessing candidate performance and knowledge 1 The principles of competence based assessment (competent versus not yet competent) 2 How to judge evidence in relation to specified criteria ensuring the quality assurance principles are applied (valid, fair, reliable, current, safe) 3 Achieving objectivity and consistency when making assessment decisions and what to do when there is doubt 4 Standardisation processes and how to contribute to those 5 How to cooperate and work effectively with others involved in the assessment process			
In confirming progression and achievement 1 The purpose and value of feedback in the assessment cycle 2 How to deliver constructive feedback and the next steps in the assessment process 3 How to ensure access and data protection requirements are adhered to when maintaining records of assessment and candidate progress. 4 Internal quality assurance processes and procedures and how to apply these in practice 5 The value and purpose of continuing professional development for assessment practitioners			

Annexe 1

Activity 1 — What connections did you make?

The main connection is that in order to do the job of an assessor well, you will normally possess the underlying attributes and behaviours (collectively referred to as characteristics) described in the left hand column. Therefore, assessors will aim to develop those characteristics to enable them to carry out the duties of the assessor to the best of their abilities.

Many of the *characteristics* required of an assessor are not dissimilar to those of an effective supervisor/manager, ie to be fair when making decisions about your work, clear when they were giving you feedback, good at listening to you and honest in their opinions about your performance.

In terms of the *duties* included in a typical assessor job description/role profile, again they are not dissimilar to those of a supervisor/manager, ie they organise/oversee staff induction; are responsible for staff training and development; understand the standards their staff should work to and monitor (assess) staff performance.

Activity 2 — Which of the following statements are true in relation to assessing S/NVQS?

Statement	True/False
My centre will receive visits from SQA qualification verifiers to monitor the quality of assessment of candidates.	True
It is the responsibility of my centre to write the Assessment Strategy.	False — it is written by the SSB
As an assessor, I can choose which method of assessment I want to use.	False
An assessment record is confidential to the assessor and the candidate.	False — IVs and QVs need to verify the assessment decisions

Activity 3 — Benefits and Drawbacks of Assessment Methods

Assessment method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Hints and Tips
Observation of candidate's performance Work product	You have seen it/heard it/touched it. Candidate is doing task for real	Can be difficult to arrange May be seen by candidate, colleagues, line manager as disruptive	♦ Make sure that you have recorded what you have seen, either in narrative or on checklist. ♦ If you have used an audio or video record, make sure that you have summarised what is on the record and put the original in the portfolio. ♦ Make sure you describe exactly what product you examined and record your findings or ask candidate to annotate. ♦ Copies of policies/procedures, user guides, etc are not work products unless the candidate wrote them
Assessment in a simulated environment	You can cover things that might be too dangerous, too costly in terms of resources, or too unusual to be assessed by observation of work performance.	Not performance in real conditions	♦ Make sure that the simulation is as realistic as possible. ♦ Make sure that the simulation is administered in the same way to every candidate. ♦ Make sure that the evidence is recorded in a way that gives an audit trail for the Internal Verifier to follow. ♦ Check the relevant Assessment Strategy

Assessment method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Hints and Tips
Questioning Discussion	Enables you to check that the candidate knew what they were doing in carrying out a task and to check that they know how to perform in a range of different circumstances which may be difficult to produce from natural performance, eg What would you do if………?	The writing workload on you increases if the candidate does not wish to write down answers or you ask a lot of questions during an observed assessment.	♦ Ensure that there is a record of the question that was asked/topic raised and the answer that was given. ♦ Can be easier if you are giving your candidates written questions requiring written answers. ♦ Use a digital recording.
Candidate statement	Can provide you with a record of exactly how the candidate carried out an activity which may have happened when you were not there to see it. Can also provide you with an indication of the extent to which the candidate understands the process.	May only provide evidence of what the candidate knows about what they should do rather than what they actually do	♦ Give the candidate a diary or a report form and ask them to record tasks they carry out in the workplace, specifying what they did, when they did it, how they did it and what the results were, possibly what they learned from carrying out the task. ♦ From the point of view of the audit trail, ensure that you or the candidate cross-reference the reports to the Performance Criteria, range/scope or knowledge requirements.

Assessment method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Hints and Tips
Candidate's prior achievement and learning	The candidate can get some credit for work they have done in the past and you may have to assess the candidate less often or nor at all for particular Units.	If the candidate's evidence consists of a certificate which they got for a non-competence based award, you need to check how they were assessed and whether this gives you the evidence you need for a competence based award.	♦ Check the evidence of prior achievement and learning for validity, currency, authenticity, reliability and sufficiency. ♦ Record why the evidence meets the standard for the sake of your Internal and external verifiers.
Witness Testimony	Can provide evidence of performance which would be difficult for you to observe and of candidate's consistent performance over time	Witnesses may have to trained in how to provide valid statements	♦ Make sure that you have checked who the witness was, how much they knew about the process/product and whether they can be classified as an expert witness or an observer. ♦ Ensure that the witness can be contacted by yourself or the verifier to check the authenticity of the report.

Annexe 2

More guidance on Assessment Methods

A   Witness Testimony

Using others to provide witness testimony is a useful assessment method to use with candidates whose performance you need to confirm over time or to provide evidence of a candidate's performance in situations which you have not observed. The Assessment Strategy and/or your organisation may have procedures and guidance on the use of witness testimony — see exemplar material on pages 59 to 62.

Stage 1 — Involve the candidate

Talk to your candidate about involving another person when you are next planning assessment with them.

Stage 2 — Identify what you want the other person to give an account of

With your candidate, identify the areas where another person's account would be beneficial and the standards that you want them to cover.

Stage 3 — Brief the person

Approach the person concerned and brief them on exactly what you want them to give an account of and how you will assess their account (will you ask for a written account? a telephone conversation?).

Here are some pointers to help you:

♦ Explain the standards you want them to cover
♦ Ask the person to describe specific examples of occasions when they have seen the candidate meet these standards and to describe what they did in relation to the standards
♦ Give examples of anything else you want covered, such as the number of occasions, dates and times
♦ For written accounts, it's fine to use the first person — ask them to date and sign it.

Here are some examples of statements from others that provide you with sufficient and insufficient information:

Sufficient	Insufficient
Joe acts quickly to resolve customer problems and does so in a friendly yet efficient manner. He is aware of the hotel's procedures and implements them consistently.	Joe is always happy and has a cheerful manner with the guests. He carries out everything he needs to properly.
Having followed our procedures for lost property, Sally located Mr Jones' wallet and secured it within the hotel safe until he came downstairs to sign for it.	I was pleased to see Mr Jones leaving reception with a smile on his face. He told me that Sally had been very helpful.

B   Discussion with candidates

Discussion is one of the best ways of following up an observation or can be used to gauge whether or not your candidate has the essential knowledge behind what they do and why they do it. It can also be useful to use hypothetically for the candidate to discuss scenarios which have not been observed (such as dealing with emergencies). Discussion with candidates can provide a holistic approach to assessing knowledge and understanding and is useful in determining not only what and how a candidate is performing, but also their analytical and decision-making abilities. As an assessment method, it can be one of the best ways of testing the validity and reliability of a candidate's evidence. It is important to bear in mind that discussion is not a question and answer session and does not replace observation and other methods of assessing candidate performance. There are three key stages in organising the discussion, namely planning, facilitating/assessing and recording.

Planning the discussion

The assessor needs to be clear about the purpose of using the discussion and the required outcomes in the early stages of the planning process. What is to be covered by discussion will largely be determined by the standards/Evidence Requirements to be met. The assessor may decide to use this method because it is a requirement for a specific part of the award/Unit being assessed or there are gaps in evidence which can be effectively closed by using this method.

Candidates should be informed of the format the discussion will take. Assessors should agree a list of areas/points they wish their candidate to cover. It is recommended that candidates receive a written copy of these points in advance of the discussion.

Facilitating and assessing the discussion

Discussion with a candidate is a method of assessment and as such should not be confused with having an unfocused social chat. However, assessors do want their candidates to feel comfortable about the process and therefore the assessor's interpersonal skills are key to achieving positive results.

The assessor's role is to manage the process in order to allow their candidate to prove their knowledge and understanding in a supported environment but without the assessor constantly directing and leading the conversation.

During the discussion, the assessor may use a number of techniques to ensure the discussion remains focused and effective, ie periodically summarising points covered, questioning to probe for more information or to clarify certain points made by the candidate.

At the beginning of the discussion the assessor is likely to be doing most of the talking, ie reiterating the reason for the discussion and agreeing how the main points of the discussion will be assessed and recorded etc. However as the discussion progresses, there should be a gradual 'handing over' to allow the candidate to enter into a full discussion where they have the opportunity of doing most of the talking.

Recording evidence from the discussion

A record of the discussion should be produced to show how the points (relating to the standards/Evidence Requirements), have been covered. There are various options for recording a discussion; audio or video taping or paper based logging. If using an audio/video tape, it is important to agree this with your candidate first to ensure they are comfortable with this method of recording. Whatever recording method selected, the assessor needs to ensure that the evidence resulting from the discussion is clearly referenced to the appropriate standards/Evidence Requirements. This is important to enable effective Quality Assurance.

Example of a format for recording a discussion with a candidate

Sound file location	Discussion point/area covered	Standards/Evidence Requirements met
1–27	Covers following methods of assessment not evidenced by candidate performance: RPL, simulations	Knowledge requirement 2 and PC 2b of 9DI
27–43	Covers feedback and advice to candidates agreeing the next steps in the assessment process	PC 4a and knowledge requirements 4.1, 4.2

C   Simulation

The Assessment Strategies for SVQs tend to say that simulation is not an acceptable method of assessment of candidate performance in the workplace. However, in some circumstances, you may be able to use a simulated situation so that your candidate can provide you with evidence of their performance. This is particularly useful where emergency procedures or Health and Safety considerations are involved. For a simulation to be acceptable it must be realistic, safe, properly organised and competently administered. Everyone involved must know the extent and limits of their involvement. The candidate must be fully briefed on the scenario, what is expected and be able to show that they know the differences from the real event

D   Your Candidate's Own Explanation of their Work

Here the candidate explains what they've done, how it was done and why. They may also explain how they have met the performance standards. Whether written or oral, the explanation will need to be matched to the standards, following through the process of the performance in a logical and informative way. It should:

♦   be simple and to the point
♦   show the candidate's understanding of the performance standards and knowledge
♦   provide a link between the actual performance and the other forms of evidence which prove competent performance.

Points to remember:

1   The easiest way for candidates to report verbally or in writing is to give a chronological account of what has occurred and then to add a commentary on their own performance.
2   Encourage the candidate to explain how the process being described meets each performance standard. Descriptions should be brief and to the point.
3   It is usually easier to write a short and simple account that generally meets the requirements of the Unit. Having completed this you and the candidate can then go through the report and write the number of the performance standard next to the relevant description.
4   A written explanation of a performance does not in itself prove competent practice and will need to be supplemented with other types of supporting evidence.

E Recognition of Prior Achievement, Learning and Experience (RPL)

Prior achievement, learning and experience can include anything the candidate has achieved prior to being registered for the award. Evidence of RPL experience can be provided using **any** of the methods described earlier. Like every other piece of evidence presented as evidence of competence, RPL must be judged by the assessor against the national standards for the candidate's award.

As assessor you need to consider:

♦ To which specific standard the evidence relates
♦ Whether it provides evidence of performance or knowledge
♦ Whether it belongs to the candidate and has been authenticated
♦ Whether it is current or whether it requires to be updated to prove that the candidate is competent now.

You need to help the candidate to present RPL evidence in a form which is easy for you to judge, annotate it with the standard to which it relates and say whether it can be linked to performance or only knowledge.

If a candidate produces certificates as evidence of prior learning then as assessor you will need details of the programme for which the certificate has been awarded. This enables you to identify the type of evidence being claimed (performance or knowledge) and to judge this evidence against the appropriate standards.

Annexe 3

The Quality Assurance Principles — VARCS

Valid

This simply means using appropriate methods of assessment. For example, asking candidates to undertake an assignment on how they would carry out a routine activity such as providing food and drink for individuals in a care setting would not constitute valid evidence as this type of activity would best be observed.

Candidate evidence must comply with permitted Evidence Requirements as specified in the standards. If for example an assessor wishes to use simulation because the evidence they seek is not naturally occurring, it should firstly be checked against the Evidence Requirements and then discussed with the internal verifier.

Policies and procedures can often be included in candidates' portfolios and proposed as evidence. On their own, they cannot validly prove candidate competence, as this can only be done by candidates showing how they actually apply their company's policies and procedures through their actions and knowledge.

Authentic

The evidence used to assess a candidate's competence must be confirmed as the candidate's own. Observations by assessors/witnesses can help authenticate a candidate's work.

Authentication of an end product can be more difficult when the assessor has not been present to observe the activities being claimed and when the evidence is the result of team work, ie a tidy work area, a prepared meal, etc. In these situations, the assessor requires to ascertain what the candidate's exact contribution was. This could be achieved for example by asking for witness statements from staff members on shift at that time and/or through questioning the candidate and others.

Reliable

An assessment method is reliable when it is capable of producing consistent results for any assessor using it.

Standardised assessment materials are a good starting point. Centrally devised observation checklists, questions and acceptable responses can help regulate the expectations of assessors and promote a fair approach to the assessment process. Any centrally devised materials should be agreed by the assessment team and the internal verifier.

Taking part in standardisation activities where previously assessed evidence is reviewed by the whole assessment team can help provide a degree of reliability as can taking part in dual assessing, assessor-colleague shadowing, cross-evidence scrutiny, etc.

Current

The assessor must be satisfied that his or her candidate is 'currently competent'. This means that candidates must demonstrate that their skills meet the requirements of today's work environment and work practices. This quality assurance principle is especially important and must be applied when considering evidence of a candidate's prior achievement/experience.

Sufficient

Assessors must be satisfied that their candidates have produced enough evidence of sufficient quality to prove competence over time. When judging a candidate's evidence, the assessor must make specific decisions in relation to whether or not candidates have provided sufficient evidence to enable the signing off of SVQ Units.

Safe Assessors have to be satisfied and confident that their assessment decisions are stable and sound and meet all of the above quality assurance principles. This would ensure that 'safe' assessment decisions are made.

Annexe 4

Minimum Evidence Requirements for 9D

1   Prepare and plan for assessment

Performance

A brief explanation with supporting documentation of how the assessor candidate confirmed:

♦ that that their candidates understood the assessment process/requirements
♦ that there were evidence sources and assessment opportunities that ensured valid, authentic and sufficient evidence could be collected.

Evidence of planning and agreeing when, where, how and what is to be assessed with two candidates, providing for four assessments in total to meet the candidates' needs, job role and work environment, using as a minimum:

♦ Observation of performance

Performance evidence of planning to use the other methods listed below or knowledge evidence of the benefits and drawbacks of using such methods:

♦ Examining the candidate's products of work (created at the time of the observation)
♦ Questioning

2   Assess candidate performance and knowledge

Performance

Assessment records showing how assessments were carried out against specified criteria for two candidates (four assessments in total). There must be evidence that the candidate assessor has used as a minimum:

♦ Observation of performance

Performance evidence of carrying out assessments using the other methods listed below or knowledge evidence of how to use such methods:

♦ Examining the candidate's products of work (created at the time of the observation)
♦ Questioning

A brief explanation confirming why the assessor candidate felt the assessment methods they had chosen ensured validity, fairness, reliability and health, safety and welfare.

An endorsing statement and /or supporting record(s) from the person responsible for internal quality assurance, confirming the assessor-candidate has met all criteria in this element.

Evidence of the assessor candidate's contribution when working with others to ensure standardisation of assessment practice and outcomes.

3   Confirm progression and achievement

Performance

An observation of the assessor candidate providing feedback and reviewing progress with a minimum of one candidate.

Records of feedback and reviewing progress are required in relation to two candidates covering four assessments in total.

Authentication from the person responsible for internal quality assurance confirming the assessor-candidate has maintained records of candidate progress and the outcomes of the assessment process.

Knowledge

The assessor candidate must demonstrate they have the knowledge specified for all elements of the Unit. This may be evidenced through one or more of the following:

♦ discussion with the assessor candidate
♦ recorded questions and answers (written or oral)
♦ assessor candidate statement

Minimum Evidence Requirements for 9DI

1   Prepare to assess

Performance

An explanation of how the assessor candidate made sure their candidates understood the purpose, requirements and processes of assessment, supported with documentation confirming the candidates' agreement to be assessed and that they have received all of the relevant information. This evidence must cover two assessments of two candidates (four assessments in total).

2   Plan assessments

Performance

An explanation, with supporting documentation, showing how the assessor candidate:

♦ identified evidence sources and assessment opportunities that ensured they could collect valid, authentic and sufficient evidence
♦ ensured they planned to use valid, fair, reliable and safe assessment methods

Evidence of planning and agreeing how and what is to be assessed for at least two assessments of two candidates (four assessments in total) to meet the candidates' needs. Planning must cover the following assessment methods as a minimum:

♦ Observation of performance
♦ Examining work products (both created and not created at the time of observation)
♦ Questioning

Evidence of planning to use one of other methods listed below **and** knowledge evidence* of how to plan and use the other methods:

♦ Discussing with candidates
♦ Testimony of others (witnesses)
♦ Examining candidate statements
♦ Assessing candidates in simulated environments
♦ Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) — otherwise known as the Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APL)

*When explaining how to plan and use methods not used in practice, the assessor candidate must include the benefits and drawbacks of using each of these methods. The evidence generated may also cover the requirements in element 3.

3   Assess candidate performance and knowledge

Performance

Assessment records showing how assessments were carried out against specified criteria for two candidates (four assessments in total). There must be evidence that the candidate assessor has used as a minimum:

♦ Observation of performance
♦ Examining the candidate's products of work (both created and not created at the time of the observation)
♦ Questioning

Assessment records showing use of at least one of the methods listed below **and** as knowledge evidence of how to assess using the other such methods:

♦ Discussing with candidates
♦ Testimony of others (witnesses)
♦ Examining candidate statements
♦ Assessing candidates in simulated environments
♦ Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) — otherwise known as the Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APL)

The assessor candidate must also provide a statement confirming why they felt the assessment methods they used ensured validity, reliability, fairness and safety in assessment.

The assessor candidate should also provide an explanation of the methods they have not used. The evidence generated for methods not used in element 2 may, if appropriate, be used to cover this requirement.

An endorsing statement and/or supporting record(s) from the person responsible for internal quality assurance, confirming the assessor-candidate has met all criteria in this element.

There must also be evidence of how the assessor candidate contributed to standardisation in assessment practice and outcomes, evidenced through records of the standardisation decisions made, supported by witness testimony.

4   Confirm progression and achievement

Performance

An observation by the assessor of the assessor candidate providing feedback and reviewing progress with a minimum of one candidate.

Records of feedback and reviewing progress are required in relation to two candidates covering four assessments in total.

Authentication from the person responsible for internal quality assurance confirming the assessor-candidate has maintained records of candidate progress and the outcomes of the assessment process.

Knowledge

The assessor candidate must demonstrate they have the knowledge specified for all elements of the Unit. This may be evidenced through one or more of the following:

♦ discussion with the assessor candidate
♦ recorded questions and answers (written or oral)
♦ assessor candidate statement

Exemplar 1

Name: Caroline Parker Davidson

Covering the period from: 1st April 2013 **To:** 31st March 2014

Codes: JR = Job requirement   ASR = Assessment Strategy Requirement

Date of Activity	What did you do that contributes to your CPD?	Link activity to specific objectives in your Development	What did you learn from this activity that relates to some aspect of your CPD?	How have you implemented this learning? Is there any further action?
12/04/13	Attended Assessor/Verifier Team Meeting	I am required to attend these meetings to enable me to keep up to date with centre policies and procedures (JR ref 4) These meetings also allow me to keep up to date with current issues in Health and Social Care (ASR page 3). *Evidence ref: Team Meeting Minutes*	A representative from Care Scotland attended our meeting and provided input on the new SVQs in Health and Social Care. I learnt about the new Unit structure and the emphasis for Units to be assessed holistically.	Have not yet assessed new SVQs, but will be taking on new candidates in June, so having info at this stage is useful. The Care Scotland Bulletin and FAQs I have found very useful. *Carry forward to next CPD Record.*
14/05/13	Attended Assessor/Verifier Team Meeting		We discussed points from last QV Report. QV suggested we discussed article on Care section of SQA's Website. We decided to update our IV Strategy as a result — we were obviously 'over-verifying.	Our IV Strategy and procedures were amended to take account of more experienced assessors (before our levels of Quality Assurance were the same for all assessors). I am still getting used to new procedures and will be able to tell more after review in May. *Carry forward to next CPD Record.*

Exemplar 2

Centre Procedure on Use of Witness Testimony

Terminology:

Occupational competence for assessors = current experience and/or qualifications in the occupational area

Technical competence for assessors = current experience and/or qualifications in assessment

Witness Testimony = a type of evidence submitted by the candidate to be assessed by their assessor.

Witness status categories:

The validity, reliability and sufficiency of witness testimony will be affected by the credentials of the witness.

1   Occupational expert and D32/D33 or A1 or 9D or 9DI qualified assessor
2   D32/D33 or A1 or 9D or 9DI qualified assessor without occupational competence
3   Occupational expert and familiar with the standards
4   Occupational expert not familiar with the standards
5   Non-expert not familiar with the standards

Responsibilities and Requirements for Witnesses in the Assessment Process

Role	Occupational Competence	Knowledge of performance standards	Assessor Competence	Potential use as a provider of Witness Testimony	Centre Action re good practice
Witness					
Individual who witnesses candidate performance, eg recipient of a service	None	None	None	Description of what candidate did or said **or** endorsement of candidate's description of what was done	Witness agrees to have testimony used as evidence of performance by the candidate. Ensure that contact details of witness are recorded and that testimony is signed. **Assessor makes the assessment decision re whether evidence meets the standards.**
Line Manager or colleague	Current experience and/or qualifications in occupational area	None	None	Description of what candidate did or said and whether this was appropriate practice **or** endorsement of candidate's description of what was done and whether it was appropriate practice	Witness agrees to have testimony used as evidence of performance by the candidate. Ensure that job title, working relationship with the candidate and contact details of witness are recorded and that testimony is signed. Amount of witness testimony requested agreed in candidate's assessment plan to ensure that witnesses are not overloaded. **Assessor makes the assessment decision re whether evidence meets the standards**

Role	Occupational Competence	Knowledge of performance standards	Assessor Competence	Potential use as a provider of Witness Testimony	Centre Action re good practice
Witness (cont)					
Line Manager or colleague who has current knowledge of the standards	Current experience and/or qualifications in the occupational area	Working knowledge of the standards being assessed either as a candidate or from induction by the centre	None	Description of what candidate did or said and whether this was appropriate practice **or** endorsement of candidate's description of what was done and whether it was appropriate practice. Can refer to the standards	Witness agrees to have testimony used as evidence of performance by the candidate. Ensure that job title, working relationship with the candidate and contact details of witness are recorded and that testimony is signed. Amount of witness testimony requested agreed in candidate's assessment plan to ensure that witnesses are not overloaded. Ensure that knowledge of the standards is current. **Assessor makes the assessment decision re whether evidence meets the standards**
Line Manager or colleague who has current knowledge of the standards and is or has been an assessor	Current experience and/or qualifications in the occupational area	Current knowledge of the standards being assessed either as a current assessor or from induction by the centre	D32 or A2 or L20 or 9D or plus assessment relevant CPD or working towards 9D	Assessor report on the whether candidate has met the standards	Candidate's assessment plan and evidence records show by whom Units were assessed. **Assessor makes the assessment decision re whether evidence meets the NVQ standards unless the witness is listed as an assessor and participates in centre's QA process.**

Role	Occupational Competence	Knowledge of performance standards	Assessor Competence	Potential use as a provider of Witness Testimony	Centre Action re good practice
Centre's staff					
Candidate's assessor	Current experience and/or qualifications in the occupational area	Current knowledge of the standards being assessed as a current assessor	D32/D33 or A2/A1 or 9D/9DI plus assessment relevant CPD or working towards 9D/9DI	Assessor report on the whether candidate has met the standards	Candidate's assessment plan and evidence records show by whom Units were assessed.
Internal Verifier	Sufficient knowledge of the occupational area to support assessors and to standardise	Current knowledge of the standards being assessed	D32/D33 or A1 or 9DI and D34 or V1 or L&D11 plus Quality Assurance relevant CPD or working towards L&D 11		Candidate's evidence records show by whom Units were verified. Ensure that assessors' practice is meeting 9D/9DI standards and that Quality Assurance activity is meeting L&D 11 standards.