

## Assessment Strategy

<b>Sector</b>	Energy & Utility
<b>Qualification Title(s)</b>	Core Assessment Strategy for all vocational qualifications in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water</li><li>• Gas</li><li>• Network Construction Operations</li><li>• Power</li><li>• Waste</li></ul>
<b>Developed by</b>	Energy & Utility Skills
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**Introduction:**

The purpose of an Assessment Strategy is to provide awarding bodies with a consistent approach to assessment.

The key areas this assessment strategy will cover are:

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

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

This strategy covers all Energy & Utility Skills competency/skills based qualifications in the following industries:

- Water
- Gas \*
- Network Construction Operations
- Power \*
- Waste

\* Indicates that specific additional requirements have been set out in an Appendix 1.

A list of specific qualifications the strategy applies to can be found in Appendix 2.

## **External quality assurance**

*This outlines the minimal requirements for awarding bodies to check the quality of assessment decisions.*

External quality assurance must be ensured through external verification by competent external verifiers (as defined later in this document).

Awarding bodies must:

- carry out risk assessments of organisations seeking to be approved centres to ensure that they have all the appropriate policies, procedures and staffing in place to deliver training
- apply quality assurance and control measures to all approved centres to ensure consistency of delivery
- use a risk-based approach to sampling assessment decisions to ensure that they are appropriate, consistent, and monitored across and within all approved centres
- use monitoring to provide information on the performance of centres and assessors, to inform external verification visits
- ensure that all approved centres have in place systems and processes that are robust, consistently applied and lead to good practice in recordkeeping, support, advice, assessment and verification of learner and staff activities
- operate a system for monitoring continuing professional development for external verifiers
- align with relevant industry standards where there are such statutory requirements to be satisfied (e.g HSE, OFWAT, OFGEM, Gas Safe Register/ MoGS)
- include Independent Summative Assessment (ISA) where necessary to comply with industry and/or regulatory requirements
- operate systems and opportunities for sharing best practice and latest developments in qualification matters between centres
- provide feedback to Energy & Utility Skills of issues related to the national occupational standards and their effectiveness in vocational qualifications
- ensure compliance with regulatory body requirements
- have a data sharing policy which meets GDPR requirements

## **Workplace assessment**

*This outlines which aspects must always be assessed through performance in the workplace – delete if your qualifications do not require evidence of performance in the workplace.*

Awarding bodies must:

- ensure the learner's workplace is used as the predominant assessment location in order that naturally occurring workplace evidence is the primary source for determining competence. The Awarding Body will specify any exceptions to this position. An alternative environment similar to the learner's own workplace (such as another site, plant etc.) may be used where assessment opportunities are not possible within the learner's own workplace
- incorporate systems, within the verification processes, which ensure the learner's evidence meets performance 'over time'

- ensure the assessment methods in the vocational qualifications adequately reflect requirements for the different types of evidence likely to be generated at appropriate levels; for example, prior learning, use of observation or questioning
- with prior agreement of External Verifier/ Awarding Body allow assessment to be carried out in a 'realistic work environment' in order not to disadvantage the learner from the achievement of the qualification. Exceptions may include but are not limited to safety critical activities which may have the potential to cause harm to the individual and/or member of the public
- control the use of simulation as replacement evidence for real work performance
- reserve the right to refuse the use of assessment in a 'realistic work environment' or other simulated environment where it considers the validity of assessment could be compromised
- ensure all performance evidence is supported by the required underpinning knowledge evidence

## **Realistic work environment and simulation**

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

'Realistic work environment' (RWE) and 'simulated working conditions' may be used to assess competence at the discretion of the Awarding Body, where it is considered the environment provided fully reflects a commercial working environment and that the demands on the candidate during simulation are neither more or less than they would be in a real work environment/ situation

### **Realistic work environment:**

Use of simulation and RWE must be discussed with the centre and approved by the External Verifier/Awarding Body, in advance of use, with a clear rationale provided for its intended use. If approval is given, all Awarding Body guidance and requirements must be strictly observed.

Organisations wishing to operate RWE must operate an environment which reflects a real work setting. This will ensure any competence assessed in this way will be maintained. Awarding bodies will determine the situations where this type of assessment may be applied for.

Awarding bodies must:

- ensure the external verification process incorporates procedures centres can use to get prior confirmation on the appropriateness of using planned assessment in a RWE
- operate systems which ensure on-site inspection is carried out to confirm the environment meets the specification and health and safety requirements
- ensure the external verification process incorporates ongoing monitoring

The following are examples of context where assessment in RWE might be used:

- where demonstration of emergency shutdown and related safety procedures would be dangerous and /or disruptive to plant/environment/individuals; and/or costly, such as total plant shutdown or dealing with spillage of dangerous substances
- where issues of confidentiality restrict access to real work opportunities

- demonstrating specific aspects of the operation which rarely or never occur because of effective quality assurance systems e.g. fault diagnosis
- aspects of working relationships and communications where no opportunity has been presented for the use of naturally occurring workplace evidence of learner's performance.

### **Conditions of assessment in a Realistic Work Environment**

The Awarding Body must consider the following conditions of assessment when advising Centres on the use of RWE:

- the RWE must take into account legislation, regulations and codes of practice which pertain to the regulated environment
- assessments must be carried out under realistic work pressures that are found in the normal industry workplace
- assessments must be carried out in conditions and facilities which are typical of those encountered in the normal industry workplace
- the range of materials, equipment and tools that learners use must be up-to-date and be of the type routinely found in the normal industry work environment.
- all work carried out must be completed in a way, and to timescales that are acceptable in the normal industry workplace
- learners must interact with the range of personnel and/or contractors found in the normal industry workplace
- learners must be expected to achieve a volume of work comparable to that expected in the normal work situation being replicated.
- learners must be given workplace responsibilities that will enable them to meet the requirements of the assessment
- learners must show their productivity reflects that found in the work situation being replicated.

### **Simulation**

Energy & Utility Skills defines simulated activities as “those which are carried out without the environment resources or equipment found within the workplace and involve acting or other scenarios which are not ‘real’ work tasks”.

Awarding bodies/organisations must:

- provide centres with guidance on where simulation can be used
- ensure the external verification process incorporates procedures which centres use to get prior confirmation on the appropriateness of using a planned simulation.

### **Conditions for simulation**

The Awarding Body must consider the following conditions of assessment when advising Centres of simulation:

- the simulated situation can represent situations which rarely occur or are exceptional in any other way

- the people taking part in the simulation must have a brief which gives sufficient information to them to recognise the equivalent real situation and decide what they would do and say
- the people taking the parts of other personnel or contractors or customers must be credible for the situation that is being simulated
- the simulated situation must not require the learners to experience unusually difficult circumstances which are outside the normal scope of the job role.

## **Witness testimony**

Energy & Utility Skills supports the use of witness testimony as a natural and effective way of contributing to a learner's source of evidence of competence. Nonetheless, the quality of this type of evidence will be affected by occupational competence and experience of the witness.

As a minimum, witness must be:

- occupationally competent with sufficient experience to judge the assessment activity undertaken by others
- fully briefed and clear about the purpose and use of the testimony
- able to demonstrate that they have the necessary expertise in the occupational area for which they are providing testimony
- appropriately inducted to the Awarding Body and assessment centre requirements and have ongoing support by way of access to updating and other issues connected with the qualifications
- Centres must provide arrangements to provide veracity of any witness testimony evidence/signature authenticity.

## **Occupational expertise of assessors and quality assurers**

*This outlines the occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers.*

### **Assessors:**

- must hold, or be working towards, valid assessor qualifications as defined by the Qualification Regulator
- must be occupationally competent in the units they are assessing. Centres must evidence that the assessor has achieved the award (or equivalent), at or above the level they are assessing. Alternatively they must provide supporting evidence that they are able to make valid judgments through experience built up by working in the industry
- must have a working knowledge of the qualification and a full understanding of that part of the award for which they have responsibility for
- must demonstrate current evidence of continuing professional development in a relevant area of practice.

### **Internal verifiers:**

- must hold a valid internal verifier qualification or be working towards suitable qualifications for internal verification, as defined by the Qualification Regulator(s)

- must be occupationally competent in the units they are assessing. Centres must evidence that the internal verifier has achieved the award (or equivalent), at or at or above the level they are verifying, or provide supporting evidence that they are able to make valid judgments
- must have a working knowledge of the qualifications they are internally verifying
- must be either working in the appropriate sector itself OR they must be able to demonstrate they possess practical and up-to-date knowledge of current working practices appropriate to the sector in which they are carrying out verification activities
- Must demonstrate current evidence of continuing professional development in a relevant area of practice.

**External verifiers:**

- must be familiar with the industry; have up-to-date working knowledge /experience of the technical processes and terminology for which they provide external verification. If appropriate, this experience could be evidenced through professional registration
- must hold valid qualifications in assessment and internal verification and hold, or be working towards valid qualifications for external verification, as defined by the Qualification Regulator.
- must demonstrate current evidence of continuing professional development in a relevant area of practice.

## **Appendix 1 – Gas Qualifications**

### **Matters of Gas Safety**

It is essential that any gas qualifications that are developed, are fully aligned to the Matters of Gas Safety (MoGS) for the scope of work categories being included on the Gas Safe Register card. This could be through an Independent Summative Assessment or aligned to the assessment criteria included in the qualification, specifically:

- Awarding Organisations must ensure that all units and the associated “matters of gas safety criteria” are referenced to those issued by Energy & Utility Skills. The “Matters of Gas Safety” criteria are updated on a six monthly cycle and any changes must be implemented in line with the industry requirements agreed with Gas Safe Register.
- Matters of Gas Safety competence criteria shall be incorporated in all assessments and therefore must include the FULL list of the criteria that is to be included on the Gas Safe Register card.
- It is essential that the Awarding Body update their Assessors and Assessment Materials to ensure that any changes to these criteria are reflected in the performance of the candidate from the date they become effective.

For example: if IGEM/UP/1B Testing procedure changed six months prior to the candidate completing the qualification, all assessments including testing from the change date must be completed against the changed procedure standard.

### **Additional Assessor Requirements**

In addition to the requirements set out in this document, Assessors must be technically qualified in domestic gas installation / maintenance and hold a current certificate of gas safety competence that includes the appropriate criteria and is not more than 5 years old.

Workplace evidence may be gathered by a trained but not necessarily qualified assessor to form a portfolio that is then assessed as diverse evidence, by a qualified assessor, in line with the general requirements set out in this Appendix.

### **Internal Verifier/ Internal Quality Assurer Qualifications**

In addition to the requirements set out in this document, Internal Verifiers/Internal Quality Assurers (IVs/IQAS) shall be technically qualified in domestic gas installation / maintenance.

Where IVs/IQAs themselves do not hold suitable technical qualifications they must have access to technical expertise from qualified personnel, who hold the relevant qualifications, to support them where the verification requires technical support and interpretation.



### **External Verifier/Qualification Consultant Qualifications**

In addition to the requirements set out in this document, EVs/QCs must be technically qualified in domestic gas installation / maintenance. The EV/QC must hold a current certificate of gas safety competence in the areas of gas work they will be verifying that is not more than 5 years old.

Where the EVs/QCs themselves do not hold suitable technical qualifications they must have access to technical expertise from qualified personnel, who hold the relevant qualifications, to support them where the verification requires technical support and interpretation.

### **Electrical and plumbing assessor/ internal verifier (internal quality assurer)**

The requirements for staff delivering and assessing the plumbing and electrical activities are set out in the Building Services Engineering, Sector Assessment Strategy.

In general terms Gas Assessors and IVs/IQAs who meet the criteria to assess and internally verify the gas components of these qualifications will be eligible to assess and internally verify plumbing and/or electrical activities, provided that they can demonstrate the additional competence and experience required to competently assess electrical and/or plumbing work.

Additional evidence for this competence and experience may be in the form of relevant plumbing/ electrical qualifications, minimum technical competence type awards, building regulations competent person's schemes, CPD records and suitable work experience. This is not an exhaustive list and centres must submit requests to confirm the acceptability of other qualifications and experience to their EV/QC for a decision regarding the acceptability of other qualifications.

## **Appendix 2 – Qualifications the strategy applies to**

- SVQ in Frontline Environmental Services at SCQF Level 5
- SCQ in Network Construction Operations (Water) – Main Layer at SCQF level 5
- SVQ in Network Construction Operations (Water) – Repair and Maintenance at SCQF level 5
- SVQ in Network Construction Operations (Water) – Service Layer at SCQF level 5
- SVQ in Network Construction Operations (Water) at SCQF level 6
- SVQ in Leakage Control (Water) at SCQF level 6
- SVQ in Controlling Process Operations at SCQF level 6
- SVQ in Water Industry Operations at SCQF level 6

**Appendix 2 was updated after ACG on 17 April 2019.**