



e-skills UK Assessment Strategy for IT & Telecoms Qualifications

Scope

This Assessment Strategy applies to all QCF qualifications in Sector Subject Area 6.1 and also to IT & Telecoms qualifications subject to SQA Accreditation.

This document describes the assessment and verification requirements for these qualifications. Some requirements apply only to designated competence based qualifications.

Competence Based Qualifications

Competence qualifications are first and foremost about what people can do. They go beyond technical skills to include planning, problem solving, dealing with unexpected occurrences, working with other people and applying the knowledge and understanding that underpins overall competence. For the IT & Telecoms sector these professional competence qualifications are based entirely on the National Occupational Standards (NOS) developed by e-skills UK, which describe the competence needed in an occupational role.

Historically NVQs (and SVQs in Scotland) were the qualifications which attested to competence in the workplace. However, for a variety of reasons, these have been perceived as inappropriate for the IT & Telecoms sector. For some time now e-skills UK has been pushing the boundaries of NVQ/SVQ design and delivery to meet the sector demand for flexibility within the qualification regulations.

The QCF (and the introduction of CBQs (Competence Based Qualifications) in Scotland) offers increased flexibility in the way professional competence can be assessed and demonstrated. The QCF has no concept of qualification types such as NVQ, VRQ etc. with specific requirements for assessment and verification. This strategy sets out specific requirements for IT & Telecoms competence based qualifications.

For clarity CBQ will be used to refer to both QCF qualifications which have been designated as competence based qualification by e-skills UK as well those SCQF qualifications specifically accredited as such.

Purposes

The purposes of this Assessment Strategy are to:

- ensure that all IT & Telecom qualifications within the QCF are:
 - assessed consistently
 - quality assured consistently
- maintain the integrity of IT & Telecom qualifications within the QCF; and
- keep bureaucracy associated with assessment and quality assurance of IT & Telecom qualifications within the QCF to a minimum.

Assessment requirements for IT & Telecom qualifications

1. Standardisation of assessment methodology across centres
 - a. Awarding organisations are required to make sure their recognised assessment centres understand how learners are to be assessed.

2. Unit assessment

Unless otherwise specified (see 3 below) all units may be assessed using any method, or combination of methods, which clearly demonstrates that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met.

3. Real work activities [CBQ Only]

- a. Learners must complete real work activities for specified units¹ in order to produce evidence to demonstrate they have met the NOS and are occupationally competent.
- b. Simulation is an allowed assessment method for all units not specified under a. above.
- c. Simulation is also allowed for aspects of units specified in a. above when:
 - a learner is required to complete a work activity that does not occur on a regular basis and therefore opportunities to complete a particular work activity do not easily arise
 - a learner is required to respond to a situation that rarely occurs, such as responding to an emergency situation
 - the safety of a learner, other individuals and/or resources will be put at risk.
- d. When simulation is used, assessors must be confident that the simulation replicates the workplace to such an extent that learners will be able to fully transfer their occupational competence to the workplace and real situations.

The current list of specified units is given as an Appendix.

4. Assessment

- a. Assessors must be competent in the areas they are assessing i.e. have sufficient and relevant technical/occupational competence in the unit, at or above the level of the unit being assessed
- b. Assessors must be fully conversant with the unit(s) against which the assessments are to be undertaken.
- c. [CBQ Only] Assessment of real work or simulation must be to recognised standards².

Quality assurance requirements

1. For IT & Telecom qualifications, awarding organisations are required to make sure their recognised assessment centres understand how the qualification will be quality assured.

¹ This will be indicated in the 'Additional assessment requirements' field of the QCF unit descriptor. A list of relevant units will be maintained by e-skills UK.

² Currently as specified by unit A1 and/or unit A2

2. [CBQ only] Quality control and assurance
 - a. IT & Telecom professional competence qualifications must be verified:
 - internally by an internal verifier, who is accountable to the assessment centre; and
 - externally by a verifier or moderator³, who is accountable to the awarding organisation or an agent of the awarding organisation.
 - b. internal verifiers must:
 - have sufficient and relevant technical/occupational familiarity in the unit(s) being verified;
 - be fully conversant with the standards and assessment criteria in the units to be assessed; and
 - understand the awarding organisation's quality assurance systems and requirements for this qualification.
 - c. external verifiers and moderators must:
 - ⁴hold or be working towards a suitable external verification qualification to confirm they understand and are able to carry out external verification; for moderators only this may be replaced by evidence of appropriate experience and training;
 - have no connections with the assessment centre, in order to maintain objectivity;
 - have sufficient and relevant technical/occupational understanding in the unit(s) being verified;
 - be fully conversant with the standards and performance criteria in the units to be assessed; and
 - understand the awarding organisation's quality assurance systems for this qualification.
 - d. Trainee external verifiers must have a plan, which is overseen by the awarding organisation, to achieve the external verifier qualification within an agreed timescale.
3. Awarding organisations must decide the frequency and type of external monitoring (including verification or moderation where required under 2 above) activities. Any decision must be based on:
 - [CBQ only] the risks associated with a qualification that is designed to help a learner demonstrate occupational competence; and
 - an evaluation of the centre's performance and past record.
4. Awarding organisations will have in place suitably constituted audit processes. For CBQs these should make use of any quality assurance and monitoring systems that already exist in workplace assessment environments.

³ Verification involves visiting the candidate's assessment location; moderation takes place at the awarding organisation's location.

⁴ Currently an external verifier needs to hold unit V2. Or from the past unit D35.

Appendix – List of Units for which work based evidence is required

(all levels)

Customer Care in ICT
Health & Safety for ICT
Managing Software Development
Personal Effectiveness
Quality Management for ICT
Remote Support
Security of ICT Systems
Software Installation and Upgrade
System management
System operation
Technical Fault Diagnosis
Technical Advice and Guidance
Testing ICT Systems
User Profile Administration
Working with ICT Hardware & Equipment

End of document

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