



**The Sector Skills Council
for Property Services, Housing, Cleaning Services
and Facilities Management**

the sector skills council for the places where we live and work

ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES MAY 2012

POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR AWARDING ASSET SKILLS COMPETENCE UNITS ACROSS ALL FOUR NATIONS

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1 INTRODUCTION

ASSET SKILLS has worked with the Awarding Organisations offering qualifications within their footprint to develop these assessment principles for competence based units of assessment which have been submitted by Asset Skills to the appropriate national qualification and credit framework.

ASSET SKILLS, with the support of industry, is dedicated to embedding the National Occupational Standards and units of assessment into the workplace and to upholding the quality and integrity of the Standards and Units and qualifications based upon them.

2 ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES FOR COMPETENCY BASED UNITS

2.1 *The following principles will apply to Awarding Organisations:*

- 2.1.1 Assessment should normally be at the candidate's workplace, but where the opportunity to assess across the range of standards is unavailable other comparable working environments may be used, following agreement from the External Verifier.
- 2.1.2 A holistic approach towards the collection of evidence should be encouraged, assessing activities generated by the whole work experience rather than focusing on specific tasks.
- 2.1.3 Asset Skills does not prescribe a minimum number of observations. However, evidence provided must demonstrate that the candidate's competency is consistent and reliable.
- 2.1.4 Assessors can only assess in their acknowledged area of occupational competence.
- 2.1.5 Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers/Internal Verifiers will be registered with their Approved Centre and be accountable to the organisation for their assessment practice.
- 2.1.6 Health and safety of customers/clients and employees must be maintained throughout the assessment process and if any person carrying out assessment or verification activities does not feel that there is due regard to health and safety then that person should refuse to continue with the activity(ies) until satisfied that due regard to health and safety is being taken.

3 SIMULATION AND WITNESS TESTIMONY FOR COMPETENCY BASED UNITS

There are a few occasions when simulation or witness testimony is warranted where the centre can demonstrate that performance evidence has been impossible to obtain. The underlying reasons for either simulation or witness testimony are:

- health and safety considerations
- activities that would cause serious inconvenience or loss to an employer if there was an undue delay in their being carried out
- Infrequently occurring activities
- equality of access

3.1 Simulation

Simulation may be necessary for specific elements of the units. It is advisable that centres refer to the Awarding Organisations in these cases for clear guidelines.

Awarding Organisation guidance to centres must ensure that demands on the candidate during simulation are neither more nor less than they would encounter in a real work situation. In particular:

- All simulations must be planned, developed and documented by the centre in a way that ensures the simulation accurately reflects what the unit seeks to assess
- All simulations should follow these documented plans
- A centre's overall strategy for simulation must be examined and approved by the external verifier
- There should be a range of simulations to cover the same aspect of the standard so that the risk of candidates successfully colluding is reduced
- The physical environment for the simulation must be as realistic as possible and draw on real resources that would be used in the industry
- The nature of the contingency must be realistic.

3.2 Witness Testimony

Witness testimony should not form the primary source of evidence. Centres must comply with Awarding Organisation guidance over the occupational competence and briefing of witnesses in the use of witness testimony.

4 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE

- 4.1 Evidence from past achievement may be included as permissible evidence within assessment methods.
- 4.2 Evidence of prior knowledge and understanding can be offered as supplementary evidence as long as it is a measurable assessed outcome of learning which links to the unit of assessment
- 4.3 Assessors should make best use of all the assessment methods available to them in ensuring the most reliable and effective use is made of claims of prior learning and experience which relate to the individual circumstances.
- 4.4 All candidates must demonstrate current competence with respect to recognition of prior learning (RPL).

5 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Awarding Organisations will operate a Risk Rating system of Approved Centres. This will be applied UK wide.
- 5.1.1 The Awarding Organisations will review centre risk ratings on an annual basis to ensure risk rating is still appropriate and take appropriate action to ensure quality assurance is maintained.

6 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL VERIFIERS

6.1 ASSET SKILLS aims to ensure that the technical and quality aspirations of industry are met, in order to inspire confidence in the national occupational standards and qualifications.

6.2 The criteria will apply to existing and new External Verifiers (EVs).

6.3 Verification Competence

6.3.1 *The appointment and competence of External Verifiers must comply with current Ofqual regulations for QCF Awarding Organisations. Awarding Organisations will ensure that External Verifiers:*

Hold or be working towards an appropriate external verifier qualification and demonstrate evidence of knowledge, understanding and experience of the assessment process (together with the occupational competence requirements below).

- In England, Wales, Northern Ireland new External Verifiers must achieve an appropriate external verifier qualification within 12 months of beginning external verification.
- In Scotland, all new EVs should have an assessment plan for achieving L&D Unit 12 and be working towards achieving the awards. There is no timescale attached to the achievement of L&D Unit 12.

6.4 Occupational Competence

All External Verifiers must

6.4.1 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the National Occupational Standards (NOS), Units of Assessment and Assessment Principles, together with technical definitions where appropriate. Awarding Organisations should cover this requirement as part of their normal appointment process.

6.4.2 have verifiable relevant experience and current knowledge of the occupational working area at or above the level being verified. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about assessors' assessment processes and decisions. External verifiers' experience and knowledge could be verified by:

- curriculum vitae and references
- possession of a relevant qualification
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution

6.4.3 have up to date knowledge and experience of the particular aspects of work they are verifying. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements

6.4.4 have a sound in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of the NOS, Units of Assessment and these Assessment Principles

- 6.4.5 undertake continuous professional development to ensure that they are working to the current National Occupational Standards in assessment and verification.
 - 6.4.6 be aware of national issues affecting vocational education, training and qualifications in the sector.
 - 6.4.7 have appropriate knowledge of the ASSET SKILLS framework of qualifications in relevant areas to the qualifications being externally verified.
 - 6.4.8 demonstrate their ability to maintain credibility and retain the confidence of the industry through commitment to continuous personal and professional development.
 - 6.4.9 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the Regulatory Authorities' codes of practice
- 6.5 Awarding Organisations may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.

7 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURERS/ INTERNAL VERIFIERS

- 7.1 Internal Quality Assurers/Internal Verifiers (IQAs/IVs) are appointed by an Approved Centre and approved by the Awarding Organisation through their External Verifier.
- 7.2 This criteria will apply to existing and new IQAs/IVs.
- 7.3 IQAs/IVs should only verify the decisions of assessors which fall within their area of technical and occupational competence.
- 7.4 IQAs/IVs should be seen as the persons responsible for an approved centre's assessment quality in order to facilitate the assessment process and should be one of the following:
- 7.4.1 IQAs/IVs will be employed directly or contractually by the same organisation (approved centre) as the assessors

Or

- 7.4.2 Acting as a counter-signatory on a short term basis, a maximum period of 18 months, where IQAs/IVs have not yet achieved an appropriate qualification in internal verification
- 7.5 The appointment and competence of IQAs/IVs must comply with current Regulatory Authority regulations. IQAs/IVs will either:
- a Hold or be working towards an appropriate internal verifier qualification
- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland all new IQAs/IVs should achieve an appropriate internal verifier qualification within 18 months of beginning internal quality assurance/verification duties. Internal quality assurance/verification decisions by verifiers who are still working towards certification must be countersigned by an IQA/IV who has gained certification.
 - In Scotland, all new Verifiers should have an assessment plan for achieving the Learning and Development (L&D) Unit 11 and be working towards achieving the award. External Verifiers will monitor progress and achievement towards the achievement of Learning and Development (L&D) Unit 11 during centre visits
 - All new IQAs/IVs must hold an appropriate qualification in assessment of competence

Or:

- b Where employers opt for an '**employer direct**' model, the qualification requirements specified by the regulatory authorities may be waived as described below.

The 'employer direct' model is where colleagues, supervisors and/or managers in the workplace are involved in the assessment process. Under this model, the employer, with the agreement of their Awarding Organisation and Asset Skills may choose between:

Achieving the appropriate regulatory body approved unit qualifications for internal

quality assurance/verification

OR

Demonstrating that the employer's training and development activity undertaken to prepare, validate and review these quality assurance/verification roles, maps 100% to the National Occupational Standards which these qualifications are based on. The mapping process **must** be agreed by the Awarding Organisation as providing the equivalent level of rigour and robustness as achievement of the unit qualification.

The alternative option described above, which waives the need for the regulatory approved units, must be confined in application to an 'organisation by organisation' and 'qualification by qualification' basis. Prospective organisations must be able to confirm that their in-house practices conform to the requirements of the Standards in association with the relevant Awarding Organisation.

7.5.2 It is desirable that all IQAs/IVs hold a relevant qualification

IQAs/IVs will:

- 7.5.3 have verifiable relevant experience and current knowledge of the occupational working area at or above the level being verified. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about assessors' assessment processes and decisions. IQAs'/IVs' experience and knowledge could be verified by:
- curriculum vitae and references
 - possession of a relevant qualification
 - corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- 7.5.4 have expertise so they have up to date knowledge and experience of the particular aspects of work they are verifying. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements
- 7.5.5 have a sound in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of the NOS, Units of Assessment and these Assessment Principles
- 7.5.6 be prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development
- 7.5.7 demonstrate their ability to maintain occupational competence by continuous professional development
- 7.5.8 undertake continuous professional development to ensure that they are working to the current National Occupational Standards in assessment and verification.
- 7.5.9 have knowledge of the requirements and application of the Asset Skills Assessment Principles
- 7.5.10 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the Regulatory Authorities' codes of practice

- 7.6 Centres will be responsible for ensuring that internal quality assurers/internal verifiers plan and maintain continuous professional development
- 7.7 Approved Centres may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.

8 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSORS

- 8.1 This section is intended to assist Approved Centres in the recruitment of those individuals who will act as Assessors within the Approved Centre.
- 8.2 Assessors are appointed by an Approved Centre and approved by the Awarding Organisation through their External Verifier.
- 8.2.1 They should only assess in their area of technical and occupational competence as approved by their Awarding Organisations.
- 8.3 *Assessors should be one of the following:*
- 8.3.1 Employed directly or contractually by the same organisation (centre) as the candidate

Or

- 8.3.2 Acting as a counter signatory on a short term basis (18 months) where the Centre Assessor has not yet achieved an appropriate qualification in assessment of competence
- 8.4 *The Assessor should have the following:*

Assessment Competence

Either:

8.4.1

- a Hold or be working towards an appropriate qualification in assessment of competence
- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, new Assessors must achieve an appropriate qualification in assessment of competence within 18 months of beginning assessment duties. Assessment decisions by Assessors who are still working towards certification must be countersigned by an Assessor who has gained certification.
 - In Scotland, all new Assessors should have an assessment plan for achieving 9D and/or 9DI units and be working towards achieving the units. External Verifiers will monitor progress and achievement towards the achievement of 9D and 9DI units during centre visits.

Candidates in possession of a TQFE without having an appropriate 9D and 9DI units should undertake continuing professional development to demonstrate that they are working to the appropriate unit standard.

Or:

- b Where employers opt for an '**employer direct**' model, the qualification requirements specified by the regulatory authorities may be waived as described below.

The 'employer direct' model is where colleagues, supervisors and/or managers in the workplace are involved in the assessment process. Under this model, the employer, with the agreement of their Awarding

Organisation and Asset Skills may choose between:

Achieving the appropriate regulatory body approved unit qualifications for assessment.

OR

Demonstrating that the employer's training and development activity undertaken to prepare, validate and review these assessment roles, maps 100% to the National Occupational Standards which these qualifications are based on. The mapping process **must** be agreed by the Awarding Organisation as providing the equivalent level of rigour and robustness as achievement of the unit qualification.

The alternative option described above, which waives the need for the regulatory approved units, must be confined in application to an 'organisation by organisation' and 'qualification by qualification' basis. Prospective organisations must be able to confirm that their in-house practices conform to the requirements of the Standards in association with the relevant Awarding Organisation.

8.5 Occupational Competence

All assessors must

- 8.5.1 have verifiable relevant current industry experience and knowledge of the occupational area at or above the level being assessed. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when judging candidates' competence. Assessors' experience and knowledge could be verified by:
 - curriculum vitae and references
 - possession of a relevant qualification
 - corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- 8.5.2 have sufficient occupational expertise so they have up to date knowledge and experience of the particular aspects of work they are assessing. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements
- 8.5.3 have a sound in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of the sector's NOS, units of Assessment and these Assessment Principles
- 8.5.4 be prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development
- 8.6 Centres will be responsible for ensuring that assessors plan and maintain continuous professional development
- 8.7 Approved Centres may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.