Additional Requirements

for Qualifications that use the title

NVQ within the QCF

September 2009

Contents

Purpose of document

1. The purpose of this document is to make clear what additional requirements are needed to assess and quality assure qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF.

2. When an SSC/SSB and awarding organisation wants to use the title NVQ in the naming of a qualification within the QCF, the awarding organisation is required to make sure this qualification is assessed and quality assured in accordance with these additional requirements and other requirements described in the SSC/SSB assessment strategy.

3. The aims of these additional requirements are to

   - ensure that all competence based qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF are

     o assessed consistently
     o quality assured consistently

   - maintain the integrity of qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF
   - establish the NVQ brand within the QCF
   - keep bureaucracy associated with assessment and quality assurance of qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF to a minimum.

Background

4. [1] "At the heart of an NVQ is the concept of occupational competence; the ability to perform to the standards required in employment across a range of circumstances and to meet changing demands. NVQs 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".

5. NVQs are based entirely on National Occupational Standards (NOS) developed by an SSC/SSB, which describe the competence needed in an occupational role.

6. Qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF must comply with the rules of combination determined by the SSC/SSB. Awarding organisations are not allowed to develop another qualification that does not use the title NVQ within the QCF, if it uses the same rules of combination as a qualification that does use the title NVQ within the QCF.

7. The QCF offers increased flexibility in the way occupational competence can be assessed and demonstrated. Qualifications that use the title NVQ in the title within the QCF are just one way of assessing and demonstrating occupational competence. SSCs/SSBs are free to work with their awarding organisations to agree what qualifications will be used to assess occupational competence. Qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF, are not a preferred method for assessing occupational competence and all qualifications accredited through the QCF have equal status.

8. When developing a qualification for the QCF, including qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF, an awarding organisation must be a recognised awarding organisation and must meet the Qualification Requirements in the Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework, published by The Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) in August 2008.

9. The qualification regulators confirmed that a group of SSCs and SSBs would be free to develop specific, additional requirements about the way in which qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF will be assessed and quality assured. For those recognised awarding organisations that want to assess occupational competence through the use of qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF, it has been agreed by SSCs and SSBs that the following additional requirements must be met.

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[1] NCVQ's NVQ Criteria and Guidance 1995.

Additional requirements for qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF

Introduction

10. Qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF must be assessed and quality assured in accordance with the following additional requirements.

Assessment requirements

11. When a qualification uses the title NVQ within the QCF, awarding organisations are required to make sure their recognised assessment centres understand how learners are to be assessed.

12. Assessment methodologies must meet the assessment strategy developed in partnership between the relevant SSC or SSB and awarding organisations for the qualification. The assessment strategy must be published and made available separately and will include the requirements for assessment of qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF. The assessment criteria for each unit will be part of the units that make up the qualification.

13. Learners must complete real work activities in order to produce evidence to demonstrate they have met the NOS and are occupationally competent.

14. When a learner cannot complete a real work activity, simulation is allowed.

15. Simulation is allowed 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.

16. 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.

17. Units that must not be assessed by simulation must be identified by the SSC/SSB in the assessment strategy for the qualification or family of qualifications.

18. Learners must be assessed by assessors

   - who are occupationally competent in the occupational areas they are assessing where they have sufficient and relevant technical/occupational competence in the unit, at or above the level of the unit being assessed and as defined by the assessment strategy for that qualification

- [2]who must hold or be working towards a suitable assessor qualification to confirm they understand assessment and how to assess learners
- must be fully conversant with the unit(s) against which the assessments and verification are to be undertaken.

19. All assessors must carry out assessment to the standards specified in the A units.

20. All assessment decisions made by a trainee assessor must be checked by a qualified assessor or an assessor recognised by an awarding organisation.

21. Trainee assessors must have a plan, which is overseen by the recognised assessment centre, to achieve the relevant assessor qualification(s) within an agreed timescale.

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[2] Currently an assessor could hold unit A1 and/or unit A2. Or from the past unit D32 and/or unit D33. SSCs also identify other suitable equivalent qualifications.

Quality assurance requirements

22. When a qualification uses the title NVQ within the QCF, awarding organisations are required to make sure their recognised assessment centres understand how the qualification will be quality assured.

23. Qualifications that use the title NVQ within the QCF, must be verified

    - internally by an internal verifier, who is accountable to the assessment centre
    - externally by an external verifier, who is accountable to the awarding organisation or an agent of the awarding organisation.

24. With reference to internal verification, internal verifiers must

    - [3]hold or be working towards a suitable internal verifier qualification to confirm they understand how to internally verify assessments
    - 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
    - understand the awarding organisation's quality assurance systems and requirements for this qualification.

25. Trainee internal verifiers must have a plan, which is overseen by the recognised assessment centre, to achieve the internal verifier qualification within an agreed timescale.

26. With reference to external verification, external verifiers must

    - [4]hold or be working towards a suitable external verification qualification to confirm they understand and are able to carry out external verification
    - 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
    - understand the awarding organisation's quality assurance systems for this qualification.

27. Trainee external verifiers must have a plan, which is overseen by the awarding organisation, to achieve the external verifier qualification within an agreed timescale.

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[3] Currently an internal verifier needs to hold unit V1. Or from the past unit D34. SSCs also identify other suitable equivalent qualifications.

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

28. Awarding organisations must decide the frequency of external monitoring activities. Any decision must be based on

   - the risks associated with a qualification that is designed to help a learner demonstrate occupational competence
   - an evaluation of the centre's performance and past record.

29. Awarding organisations will have in place suitably constituted audit processes, which are supported by naturally occurring quality assurance and monitoring systems that already exist in workplace assessment environments.