

**Assessor and Verifier Qualifications
(NVQ, SVQ and similar competence-based systems)**



**Unit A1: Assess candidates using a
range of methods**

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CANDIDATE'S CERTIFICATION CLAIM FORM ASSESSOR/VERIFIER QUALIFICATIONS

Candidate Name

Candidate Number

Unit achieved: **A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods**

Candidate signature Date

Assessor signature Date

Independent Assessor Date

1. The Assessor's signature above certifies that the candidate has met all the requirements for this Unit, including underpinning knowledge)
2. The Candidate's signature above indicates that he/she has agreed and met the terms of the assessment contract and the commercial contract. (For Data Protection, see Page 3)

Internal Verifier signature Date

External Verifier signature Date

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**CANDIDATE PERSONAL DETAILS FORM
(and Data Protection Waiver)**

Your name as you would like it to appear on your certificate:

Candidate Name

Candidate Number (if known)

Date of Birth

Mobile Tel. No

Contact Address

.....
.....
.....
.....

Postcode

Other contact Tel. No.

e-mail (work or personal)

Your signature below indicates that you agree to Chris McAllister using this above information to keep in touch with you during this programme, and to share it if necessary with Awarding Bodies who may require it. In the case of Scottish qualifications you are also agreeing that your certificate may be sent direct to Chris McAllister who is permitted to open it to check the details before forwarding it on to yourself or your company.

Thank you

Chris McAllister

IMPORTANT - Please sign		
I agree to the above information being used as indicated above.		
Signed	Candidate	Date.....

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Workbook Unit A1

Assess candidates using a range of methods

Section 1. How will you achieve this?

Unit A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods will qualify you to assess candidates for NVQs, SVQs and similar competence based qualifications. What you need to do is:

- Attend a training course to learn how to assess. You will be registered with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (or EDI/Goal, formerly London Chamber of Commerce International) for the Unit. If you already know how to assess you may be able to by-pass part of this training course and move straight on to Stage 2:
- The same training course will then go on to explain to you how you compile evidence of having completed three assessments involving at least two candidates and covering at least two NVQ Units. (Each NVQ/SVQ is made up of a number of Units of Competence. As a Trainee-Assessor seeking to gain the A1 qualification you will be expected to complete at least three assessments involving at least two candidates, each for a full Unit of Competence for which they are a candidate for an N/SVQ)
- You then go away and complete three assessments as above, the follow-up stages and the required documentation. (See Pages 19, 21, 24)
- After a number of weeks your Assessor will contact you and arrange to assess you. Your assessment will consist of:
 - a Demonstrating an assessment to the satisfaction of your Assessor.
 - b Showing your Assessor your documentation for all three assessments and follow-up documentation.
 - c Being interviewed by your Assessor on your knowledge and understanding of the assessment process and how it is quality-assured. This interview will be recorded.
- Your Assessor will then take away this Workbook, documents, recordings, etc. When your achievement has been verified and confirmed your Assessor will write to you and tell you that you are qualified to practice as an Assessor.
- After ten weeks from your date of registration you will receive your A1 certificate.
- N.B. If you are an SQA candidates it is important that any outstanding SQA courses and Units for which you are registered are completed BEFORE you can be issued in due course with what will in practice be a combined certificate listing all your SQA qualifications.

Section 2. INTRODUCTION: The important requirements

Unit A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods is the Assessor qualification you will need if you plan to assess candidates in an NVQ, SVQ or similar competence-based environment. If, however, you previously achieved the older qualification D32/D33, you will not need to retrain to gain the new Unit A1.

HOW: Competence-based qualifications such as NVQs, SVQs and similar need to be quality assured. The published Standards set out how this is to be done in the form of this Unit, which is itself based on demonstrating competence. To achieve the Unit you will need to:

- Understand how competence based systems operate. To do this you may need to complete a training course based on this workbook. At your A1 assessment you yourself will be assessed on how well you understand what you have learned.
- Complete at least three assessments of persons who are themselves genuine candidates for an NVQ, SVQ or similar. To do this you will need to be part of an organization that already operates these qualifications. At least one of these three assessments will have to be observed by your own A1 Assessor or some other suitably competent person.
- Use a 25mm hard-backed ring-binder in order to keep your work together. The limp ring-binder in which you may have received this file is really only to simplify postage and packing
- In this ring binder, keep the documentary records of your assessment of your three candidates separate from one another. You now proceed as follows:

First of all you need to explain to your candidates what the assessment process involves. They may know something about this already, (or they may think they know). This process is called Induction but it is not described in detail in this Workbook. An important part of this Induction **MUST** include an explanation of a candidate's right to complain or appeal. They may never actually need to do this, but they **MUST** have the process explained to them.

You have considerable freedom as to how you organise your three assessments. If you work with your candidates most of the time, you will be able to assess them in an ongoing way; assessing elements piecemeal, one bit at a time. Otherwise you may have to arrange a visit to your candidates specifically for the purpose of assessing them and hope to complete the process in one go. If problems arise, or if the assessment needs to be rescheduled for some reason, you will need to note this on the form you use to report the assessment.

- When your candidate is ready to be assessed you **PLAN** the assessment with him or her. For the purpose of gaining your A1, this plan must be a written document. An example of such a document (Document A) can be found on Page 19. Planning the assessment with a candidate forms the first Element of Unit A1.
- Plan how to carry out two more assessments and document your plans using Document A as described above or similar (e.g. an equivalent from your own organization or Awarding Body)

- *Element A1.2* Complete each of your three assessments and document these using Document B (see Page 21 or an equivalent from your own organization or Awarding Body)
- *Element A1.3:* Provide feedback to your candidates, telling them how well they have coped with being assessed by you and noting any important action points which emerged during the assessment. This feedback must be documented on Form B or similar. You may also provide an audio recording of this feedback.
- *Element A1.4:* Your assessments must be submitted to a process of quality assurance at your Centre. You are required to play an active part in this process and to have this documented with the help of your Internal Verifier. (Use the Internal Verifier document for this. See Page 24. It needs to be signed by your Internal Verifier, who must also provide additional documentation)

Your A1 Assessor will examine your documented evidence with you. He/she will also interview you to check your knowledge and understanding of the process. Because this interview is normally recorded, you will not be expected to write lengthy reports.

Your evidence, and the recordings will themselves go through a process of quality assurance, and in due course your A1 certificate will be sent to you.

WHY:The process of assessing competence is meant to be “Quality Assured”. In practice this means.

- You will be qualified to assess candidates and empowered to do so.
- You need to get it right from the start. It is not the Verifier’s job (whether Internal or External) to double-check your assessments and he/she is not allowed to do this anyway.
- In order to do this you need to be trained to the level where you can be entrusted to assess correctly
- Your signature that says the candidate is competent is expected to be reliable enough to stand up in a court of law.
- Your assessments should be sufficiently well documented for there to be a clear audit trail should anything need to be looked into later on.

Your role as an Assessor should not be confused with that of a manager, foreman, supervisor, health and safety officer, etc. These people have their own jobs to do, and are not usually in a position to intervene in, or comment on, your work as an Assessor, or to quality assure it. The person to whom you are responsible in your role of Assessor is known as your Internal Verifier.

This explains the need for documentation, both of the candidates’ competence and of the assessment process itself. The documentation listed on Page 29, when complete, will prove to be the main evidence of your competence as an Assessor and is absolutely crucial to your completing the A1 qualification. In order to satisfy the Awarding Body

of your competence in relation to Unit A1 you MUST provide the required documentary evidence, This Workbook has been designed mainly to help the trainee Assessor compile the documentary evidence required

WHO: The people involved in this process are:

Assessor: The person conducting an assessment is known as the Assessor. While you are being trained for A1, we shall call you a Trainee-Assessor.

Trainee Assessor: That's YOU, at least for the time being.

Qualified Assessor: A person who has achieved A1 (or the older Units D32/D33). You will probably need the help of such a person while you are compiling your evidence for Unit A1

Your A1 Assessor: The person who will assess you for Unit A1. Perhaps it will be Chris McAllister himself.

Independent Assessor: Usually a member of the A1 Assessor's team who can provide a "second opinion" on at least part of the evidence you provide.

Candidate: The persons you will be assessing are known as the Candidates. They will usually be a member of the workforce, a Modern Apprentice, trainee etc. They MUST be genuine NVQ or SVQ etc. candidates. At this stage you are both a Candidate and a Trainee-Assessor. Please make sure you do not get these roles confused.

Internal Verifier: The person within your own organisation who is responsible for the quality assurance of the assessment process. The Internal Verifier usually manages a team of assessors, of which you will be one. Sometimes the term Moderator is used. Quality Assurance is based on the principle that you, as an Assessor, are trained to get the assessment right first time. When you have become a qualified Assessor and when you have 'signed off' a candidate as 'Competent' or 'Not yet competent' your Internal Verifier may afterwards discuss your assessment with you, but he or she is not allowed to countermand your decision or signature. They are however, required to sit in on some at least of your subsequent assessments and to give you feedback on how well you have performed.

External Verifier: The person from the NVQ or SVQ Awarding Body who ensures that all centres are assuring quality in the same way. He or she is subject to much the same rules as the Internal Verifier above.

WHAT: There are technical terms used in connection with NVQs (and also SVQs) which it is important to master.

An AWARD is a single NVQ qualification for which a candidate can gain a certificate.

Each Award is made up of a number of separate UNITS. A candidate can also gain a certificate for one of more Single Units.

An Element is a smaller part of a UNIT. Not all Units can be broken down into Elements and where they are, a candidate cannot gain a certificate for a single Element. He or she needs to achieve at least a full Unit.

Each Element contains a list of STANDARDS. These Standards are expressed in the form of one or more of the following;

Performance Criteria (sometimes called Outcomes). The word Criteria is a Greek plural, and a single one of these is a Performance Criterion. Performance Criteria (or Outcomes) describe what the candidate has to do or to achieve.

Range Statements: Under what circumstances do you need to demonstrate that you can achieve one or more Performance Criteria? For example, an office worker may have to show that he or she can communicate using a range of the following techniques: speech, writing, telephone, fax, phone text, e-mail, etc.

Evidence Requirements. These may specify how the evidence is to be compiled and presented.

Behavioural Outcomes. These specify how a manager's performance, for example, can be detailed into appropriately desirable behaviours.

WHERE: You must compile your evidence for Unit A1 by assessing NVQ/SVQ candidates in your (or their) workplace. This workplace must be able to provide you with the opportunity for quality assuring your assessments. In practice that may mean arranging access for yourself and for your Verifiers: persons who would not normally be granted access to enter a workplace, factory, school, hospital, construction site, etc.

WHEN: When you have compiled the evidence of completed assessments as required by this Unit, you will yourself be assessed by interview by your appointed A1 Assessor.

WHICH. There is also the option of choosing the Unit A2 instead of A1. The comparison between the two Assessor Units is as follows:

Unit A1. Assess candidates using a range of methods is intended for persons who will be responsible for all aspects of candidate assessment, such as observation, interviewing, inspecting bookwork, checking workpieces and obtaining supplementary evidence of competence.

Unit A2: Assess candidates' performance through observation is intended only for those persons whose main contribution to the assessment process will be the assessment of candidates through observation in the workplace

Unit A1 is only slightly more demanding than A2. On balance, we would advise most candidates to strive for Unit A1.

Section 3. How to assess

This Workbook is to assist you to become qualified as an Assessor of NVQ/SVQs (National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications) and similar competence-based qualifications in the occupations in which you are experienced.

NVQ/SVQs are based on occupational competence. They are awarded to candidates who can demonstrate that they can do their job in accordance with the national occupational standards that make up the particular NVQ/SVQ. As an Assessor you will be required to assess and record their competence and knowledge.

Definition of Competence: COMPETENCE: The ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the standards expected in employment.

$$\text{Competence} = \text{Skill} + \text{Knowledge} \quad (C = S + K)$$

When you have compiled the evidence required by this Workbook you will be assessed on your ability to assess others. If successful you will achieve the Unit A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods

What you have to do. As an Assessor you will be required to:

- Plan the assessment with your candidates
- Check on their progress
- Revise these plans as and when required
- Observe and check the work they do, examining different types of evidence.
- Ask questions to check they know and understand what is involved in the various jobs they do
- Decide whether or not a candidate is competent
- Tell the candidate what you have decided
- Record your decisions on the forms provided. If certain forms of evidence are specified in the Evidence Requirements, these requirements must be adhered to.
- Assist with the assurance of quality throughout the assessment process

Assessment of Evidence. Competence is usually assessed by 'examining evidence' as the process is called. You might do this by watching how the candidate does his or her job (Observation), by examining part-completed or finished work or even written reports (Product evidence) or by asking them questions about relevant aspects of their job (Questioning).

Section 4. Range of methods used to assess

It is customary nowadays to subdivide the three methods of Assessment described above as follows:

O – Observation: Observe your candidate at work, and check that work against the printed Standards. Many would argue that this is the best way to assess practical occupations. However, for some occupations, such as Management, observation is not always appropriate.

Not everything can be observed. Firefighters may need to demonstrate their skills and competence in artificial situations, which are called *Simulations*. Aircraft pilots, both civil and military learn their skills and are also assessed in Flight Simulators that never leave the ground.

P – Product Evidence. This is usually intended to be a finished example of some work a candidate has done. However, other types of finished work; whether by the candidate or by some other person, especially in combination with Observation or Questioning, can also provide useful assessment evidence. Thus:

Product Evidence provided by the candidate: Examples of finished work as described above, e.g. a completed wound dressing on a casualty or a wrought iron gateway, etc.:

Photographs, videos, DVDs, OHPs, Powerpoint presentations, audio recordings, etc. of examples such as the above. Personal Action Plans. etc. Written reports by the candidate of how he/she tackled a particular job or assignment, such as a finished report, or a student assignment, Internet download. Other names for these written reports that are sometimes used are: Personal Accounts, Personal Narratives, Reports, Storyboards, etc.

In most cases where a candidate has provided evidence such as the above, some form of backup evidence may be needed to authenticate it, for example, a Witness Statement.

Product Evidence provided by other persons or parties: Any written report, document, etc. which directly describes or concerns the work of a candidate which may be relevant to his/her assessment.

The list is endless and could include, plans, drawings, electrical circuits, photographs, videos, DVDs, OHPs, Powerpoint presentations, audio recordings, books, magazine articles. Witness Statements, management appraisals and reviews, certificates, authorisations (such as CSCS cards) etc.

Sometimes the most important type of Product Evidence provided by other persons usually takes the form of a **Witness Statement**. A suitably responsible person, such as the candidate's manager, should sign usually written statements about the candidate. Verbal witness statements can also be used. See below.

Certificates can also be used as evidence of competence. **Accredited Prior Learning**

(APL) is the term used for evidence provided in this way. The candidate may already be an expert and they may have certificates to prove it! It is important never to take certificates as the sole form of evidence of competence. They always need to be backed up by the observation of practical performance.

The same does not always apply to a similar term **Accredited Prior Experience (APE)**. Here the candidates may have no certificates, but plenty of practical experience. An Assessor can always check this level of expertise, again by the observation of practical performance, but should be careful not to 'put off' a mature adult by treating them as though he/she were a raw teenager.

Q – Questioning. This may involve either short, simple on-the-job questioning sessions or much longer ones (described as Professional Discussions) that in total may last hours or even days. The Assessor asks questions to test the candidate's knowledge and to cover "What if...?" situations such as emergencies, etc. However, if the candidate, when he or she is being observed, demonstrates that he or she knows the answer, there is no need to ask the question. Sometimes the questions used and the answers given need to be written down. I find it is best to use a system of audio recording (tape or digital) and this is to be encouraged.

As explained above, extended interviews between the assessor and the candidate are called Professional Discussions. As above, these discussions need to be recorded in some way (tape or digital). Remember that professional discussions can only be as good as the probing questions asked by the Assessor, e.g. "When did you do this?" "How did it go?" "Tell me about it."

Verbal witness statements can also be used, but a recording must be provided.

The above descriptions of different methods of assessment are important. For your A1 Unit you will need to demonstrate your ability to assess using **at least four methods** of assessment.

Section 5. Quality and Quantity of Evidence.

So, as an Assessor you are encouraged to use evidence from a variety of sources. How good is each of the above types of evidence? It is **Quality** we should be aiming for, not quantity.

The most important requirements for quality of evidence are that it should match the Element of Competence which is being assessed (that is, it should be Valid), that it should cover all of the Performance Criteria, Range items and Evidence Requirements (that is, it should be Sufficient) and that it should genuinely prove that the person is truly competent (that is, it should be Reliable). Thus the main requirements for quality evidence are as follows;

Reliability. Does the evidence of performance indicate that the candidate can do the job? Is the evidence real and is it believable? Is the candidate's performance up to the standard expected in the industry? For evidence to be reliable, do you need to be looking also for backup evidence? If a candidate claims verbally or in writing that he is competent to drive a car, what other method of assessment might you be asking for? If a manager

claimed to have run a large project, would you believe him or her before you had seen the Project Report ?

Validity. Does the evidence relate to the Elements being assessed and is it in the same context and environment? Could a bricklayer be assessed building a wall from Lego? Is it valid to assess a fighter pilot's flying skills using a ground-based simulator?

Authenticity. Is the evidence the candidate's own? If a caterer brought you a photograph of a wedding cake she claimed to have decorated herself, would you ask for proof, and of what kind?

Currency. How old is the evidence? Standard advice is that the evidence should not be more than two years' old. Sometimes candidates will assert evidence which is older than this. It is for the Assessor to decide whether this evidence can be used. If in doubt, consult your Internal Verifier.

Sufficiency. Is there enough evidence for you to infer competence over all the Performance Criteria and over all of the Range? This is exactly what is meant by Sufficiency and has nothing at all to do with the number of pieces of paper in the candidate's portfolio. For the Assessor the question is simple. How many Performance Criteria do I need to sign off? Do I have Reliable evidence for each and every one of them? If not, the evidence is not sufficient and the assessment as a whole is not complete.

The very first of these qualities above, Reliability, suggests that often an assessor needs **backup evidence**, or as it is sometimes called **corroboration** before he can be sure that a candidate is competent. Likewise, the last of these; Sufficiency, also insists on the evidence being Reliable. You only need ONE piece of evidence for each performance Criterion provided that evidence is Reliable. If you still remain unconvinced that you have reliable evidence, you may also need some kind of corroboration.

However, in the example given above of a manager who in a Professional Discussion claimed to have run a large project, would you believe him or her before you had seen the Project Report? No, you would not. He could be lying. For Reliable evidence you need BOTH the Professional Discussion AND the Project Report.

It is very unlikely that your candidate will try to "pull the wool over your eyes" when you are interviewing him or her. You should ask probing questions of the kind; "Has this ever happened to you?" "Tell me more about it." "Why do you think you were right to handle it in the way you did?" etc. It is always a good idea to ask your candidate to provide some document (such as the minutes of a meeting) that will show to what extent he/she was involved in what they claim.

Then there are two other quality issues that are important:

Fairness Is this method of assessment going to be fair to the candidate?

Safety Assessments need to be safe, both as regards HSE and the soundness of the Assessor's judgment.

The above are technical terms and it is important that you know what each of them means because your A1 Assessor WILL ask you to explain them. Quality of evidence

has nothing at all to do with how neatly evidence is presented, or whether there are few spelling mistakes. Quality of evidence is defined as meeting the above tests of Validity, Authenticity, Sufficiency and Reliability. **YOU MUST LEARN THESE TERMS AND UNDERSTAND THEM IN RELATION TO THE STANDARDS YOU WILL BE ASSESSING**

Quantity of evidence. In assessments as in many other endeavours, persons are likely to mistake quantity for quality, thinking that the thicker (and heavier) their portfolio, the more likely their assessor will be impressed. The rules about quantity of evidence revolve first of all around the quality issue of Sufficiency and the question is: Is there at least one item of Reliable evidence for every Performance Criterion and every item of Range which is being assessed? One item of evidence is sufficient provided it is Reliable; not two or three as many people will try to tell you.

Section 6 Holistic assessment.

Assessment should be based on **plain common sense**, plus the rules on Sufficiency, Reliability, etc. described above. If you can see clearly that the candidate has been doing the job, in a genuine workplace setting, and that all the evidence fits together into a pattern around this, then you should have few problems.

(Some people try to distinguish between what they call HARD versus SOFT evidence, and then have trouble explaining what they mean by the distinction! Perhaps they think that written documents are hard evidence, but that your own subjective impression of the candidate's competence is soft, and therefore less reliable. This is a dangerous misunderstanding and causes a great deal of trouble. Instead, as an assessor you should use your own judgment to look for Reliable evidence of competence, whether this is written or not.

However, difficulties occur in situations where the candidate has not yet worked in the job. They might still be studying at college, for example. You need good judgment and good occupational experience to decide whether or not the evidence produced for you by a student is indeed Reliable.

Timing of and Scheduling of Assessments

If you work with your candidate on a day-to-day basis, or if you have easy and frequent access to him or her, for example a Supervisor in a workshop or a Staff Nurse on a hospital ward, then you can assess as you go along, piecemeal, a little at a time, and only sign the candidate off when the assessment has been completed. This kind of assessment opportunity is excellent, but provides no help at all for the Assessor who has difficulty catching up with his candidate and can only visit them by some kind of prior arrangement. You don't know how long the assessment will take to complete or whether or not other visits will have to be arranged.

Formative and Summative Assessment

Assessment was never meant to be a 'finish it here and now' activity anyway. The entire process should be planned so as to assist the candidate as much as possible and allow him to overcome his or her 'assessment nerves'.

The best person to assess a candidate is someone who works with him/her on a day-to-day basis, such as a supervisor, trainer or manager. Assessment can be largely

informal, arranged in ‘bite-sized chunks’ and the candidate should be encouraged to attempt ‘dummy’ assessments in order to build confidence. These whole or partial informal or dummy assessments are called **Formative assessments**. Remember the term. The best way to remember what a Formative Assessment is, is to think of it as a Dummy Run.

By contrast, an assessment which is planned to take place all at once, at the end of which the candidate will be told he/she is competent or otherwise is termed a **Summative assessment**.

Perhaps you have planned a summative assessment with your candidate, but on the day he/she does not perform very well, or something goes awry. What was planned as a Summative Assessment can be written up as a Formative assessment, and the real Summative Assessment rescheduled to a later date.

This re-scheduling between formative and summative assessments is normal. In the case of Unit A1, you are required to show that at least 2 out of your three assessments have been rescheduled for some reason.

Section 7. Interacting with your candidates and others

Your style of interaction with your candidate throughout the assessment is what the person assessing you is looking for. The approach you are meant to adopt should be:

- Simple, straightforward and honest
- User-friendly and supportive towards the candidate and sensitive to his or her fears, worries or other problems
- Reasonably helpful and encouraging, not too stressful for the candidate
- Able to take account of any special assessment needs.

You are trying to help the candidate achieve his or her best performance for you and to be able to answer your questions without being inhibited too much by nervousness or worry.

Getting help from an experienced Assessor and Internal Verifier

The A1 Unit is meant to show that you have been carrying out assessments in a realistic workplace context. A Witness Statement from an experienced Assessor will help to show that your judgments of competence are accurate. In addition you will need the help of your local Internal Verifier in order to Quality Assure your assessments. See Element A1.4

Section 8. Documenting your work

All your work and the supporting documentation must be assembled in this portfolio. (It started out as a Workbook – when complete it will become your portfolio of evidence). After the verification and certification processes are complete, your portfolio, which is your property, will be returned to you. The documentation specified in the next Section and elsewhere is only the required minimum. You may add other supporting documentation to this portfolio, such as photographs, etc. but there is no need to overdo it. Audiotapes, etc. should be retained within their transparent boxes and held to the inside cover of your portfolio using “Sticky Fixers” or similar. Many candidates feel that compiling the required

documentation is the more arduous part of the entire process. You have our sympathies, but remember that without the necessary supporting documents your evidence for this Unit will be considered insufficient and you will not be awarded your certificate.

Remember that the most difficult step on any journey is the first one. Once you have taken that step keep focused on your goal and success will soon be yours.

Section 9. The Elements of Unit A1

There are four parts, or Elements of Competence contained within the A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods

- A1.1 Develop plans with candidates for assessing competence
- A1.2 Judge evidence against criteria to make assessment decisions
- A1.3 Provide feedback and support to candidates on assessment decisions
- A1.4 Contribute to the internal quality assurance process

Element A1.1 Develop plans with candidates for assessing competence

Performance criteria: *You must be able to:*

- a. Agree an assessment plan with candidates
- b. Check that all candidates understand the assessment process involved, the support available to them and the complaints and appeals procedure
- c. Agree fair, safe, valid and reliable assessment methods to be used to assess the outcomes with candidates and others
- d. Identify appropriate and cost-effective assessment opportunities
- e. Plan for the use of a variety of sources of evidence
- f. Identify how candidates' previous experiences and achievements will contribute to the assessment process
- g. Identify and agree any special arrangements needed for fair assessment
- h. Identify where others will contribute to assessments, and any support they need
- i. Identify where there may be aspects of confidentiality and agree arrangements to assess sensitive issues as required
- j. Agree how any difficulties or disputes will be handled during the assessment process with those responsible for quality assurance
- k. Agree with candidates and others when assessment against the agreed standards will take place
- l. Agree arrangements for reviewing progress against the assessment plan with candidates and others
- m. Review and update assessment plans to reflect the candidates' progress and achievement.

Notes on Element A1.1

As the assessor, you must plan the assessment with your candidates beforehand. You must be able to show that you can plan an assessment, make sure the candidate understands what they have to do and that he or she is happy to proceed with the assessment in the manner agreed and at the appointed time and place. You will need to demonstrate a helpful and friendly approach when you talk with your candidate. The Assessment Plan should be documented as per the example on Page 19. For some

candidates, the assessment process may have terrifying connotations. You need to reassure them:

- They will only be assessed when they are ready for it. You cannot 'spring' an assessment on an unprepared or unsuspecting candidate.
- They will only be assessed against the printed criteria.
- They will not be told that they have 'failed'. The correct judgment might be "not yet competent" and they will be given another chance to "pass".
- They will be able to seek support from you (or from someone else) if they think they will have problems.
- If they are nervous, this is a common reaction.
- Reassure them about the methods you will use to assess them.
- Explain how previous training and qualifications will stand in their favour.
- About any special problems they might have, and how these will be overcome, • including the need for confidentiality.
- Who else will be involved in their assessment process.
- About disputes, complaints and appeals, should they arise.
- When and where the assessment will take place.
- Arrangements for reviewing progress and rescheduling or amending the Assessment Plan as necessary.
- Not to worry if assessments have to be re-arranged.

How competence for Element A1.1 must be documented

- a) 3 assessment plans for a minimum of 2 different candidates. Each assessment plan must:
- i cover one full unit of competence, which can be certificated
 - ii. indicate which assessment methods will be used
 - iii. state how assessments will take place Total: 3 plans

Over the three plans the assessor-candidate will

- i. cover a minimum of 4 assessment methods to be used over the 3 assessment plans including observation of the candidates
 - ii provide one example across the 3 assessment plans which includes involving others making a contribution to the assessment process
- b) a record of a written or spoken explanation which:
- i. States the assessment methods selected to assess specific aspects of competence
 - ii. Indicates why they are valid, reliable and fair indicators of competence
 - iii. Covers a minimum of 4 assessment methods reviewed
 - iv. Shows how others have been involved in the assessment process and their precise contribution to the process. Total: 1 record
- c) written outcomes from progress reviews conducted with a minimum of 2 candidates, including evidence of having updated assessment plans. Total: 2 written reviews.

Element A1.2: Judge evidence against criteria to make assessment decision.

Performance Criteria: *You must be able to do the following:*

- (a) Use the agreed assessment methods to judge competence in appropriate contexts as required
- (b) Use relevant past experiences and achievements of candidates as part of the assessment of their current competence
- (c) Ensure that the evidence is drawn from the candidates' own work
- (d) Make safe, fair, valid and reliable decisions about candidate competence based solely upon the criteria stated in the standard.
- (e) Collect evidence from others involved in the assessment process when required
- (f) Apply any agreed special arrangements to enable fair assessment,
- (g) Base decisions on all the relevant performance and knowledge evidence available drawing upon differing sources of evidence as necessary)
- (h) Clarify and resolve any inconsistencies in the evidence
- (i) Record the outcomes of assessments using agreed recording system
- (j) Refer any difficulties in judging evidence to the appropriate person

Notes on Element A1.2 :

Check on your candidate's progress. When you are both agreed that the candidate is ready to be assessed, you observe and check the work they do covering as far as possible all the different parts of the relevant Standards. The detail of the Element above makes it clear what you have to be able to do. You should take account of all sources of evidence, including any previous learning or experience the candidate may have had and any relevant information which other persons may be able to provide. If you come across conflicting evidence, you must try to resolve the problem, perhaps by checking with your Internal Verifier

You must not omit any Statement of Competence, or on the other hand, add any special requirements of your own. However, your candidate will not be able to demonstrate everything to you, for example, procedures in an emergency, and to assess these you will need to ask questions to check they know and understand what is involved in the various jobs they do. You should ask pertinent open, non-leading, questions about the underpinning knowledge required for the job in question or about those procedures which you could not observe. Oral questioning may appear inefficient and time-consuming when there are large numbers of candidates to assess, but it has the advantage of being the user-friendliest method and does not have some of the disadvantages of written question and answer tests.

How competence for Element A1.2 must be documented

- a) 3 assessment decision records for a minimum of 2 different candidates for the 3 assessment plans generated for A.I.I. Total: 3 plans
- b) a record of a written or spoken explanation between the assessor and the assessor candidate where the assessor candidate presents how she/he has:
 - i. used 3 different types of evidence to demonstrate achievement of particular standards
 - ii. used observation of the candidate as an assessment method
 - iii. explained how the assessment methods were implemented
 - iv. evaluated the effectiveness of the assessment methods in the light of assessing candidates
 - v. demonstrated his/her competence in relation to criteria c), d) and g) for Element A.1.2. of the standards
 - vi. Total: 1 record

Element A1.3 Provide feedback and support to candidates on assessment decisions

Performance criteria: *You must be able to:*

- (a) Provide feedback at an appropriate location and time
- (b) Give feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner to candidates which meets their needs and is appropriate to their level of confidence
- (c) Provide candidates with a clear explanation of assessment decisions regarding the sufficiency or otherwise of their evidence of competence
- (d) Advise candidates when competence cannot be confirmed and give advice on how they can develop the necessary skills or acquire further evidence
- (e) Encourage candidates to seek clarification and advice about assessment decisions
- (f) Identify and agree the next steps in the assessment process and how they will be achieved with candidates and others affected by the process
- (g) Follow agreed complaints and appeals procedures when candidates disagree with assessment decisions

Notes on Element A1.3

Now you must decide whether or not your candidate is competent, and tell them what you have decided. This is called 'giving feedback'. It is very important that you are able to show that you can provide feedback to your candidate on how he/she has been progressing during or after the assessment.

The essence of the Assessor's role is to be able to communicate with the candidate. Nowhere is this more important than when giving feedback during and after an assessment. Here is a checklist of things to remember when you are giving feedback.

- Use the candidate's name
- Ask the candidate how he or she felt about his or her performance.
- Tell the candidate the assessment decision
- To start with, always highlight the candidate's strengths
- Be specific about the performance criteria which were or were not met
- If there are any weaknesses, suggest what the candidate could have done differently
- Give the candidate the opportunity to contribute
- Finish by discussing with the candidate what happens next.

You should also record the decisions on the forms provided by the organisation or the Awarding Body.

It is important to treat Element 1.3 seriously. Feedback needs to be thorough, even if the candidate performed satisfactorily for you. This is the most 'touchy-feely' part of the assessment process and even if you find such activities embarrassing or un-masculine, it pays to persevere with them. Make some effort to point out to your candidate how important this part of the assessment process is and how you can both learn from it. The easiest way to do this is to put together what is called a "praise sandwich". You emphasise the positive: make sure you point out to your candidate what he/she did well. Then you point out one or two things which your candidate could have done better, even if it does sound a bit like nit-picking. Finally you finish with more praise, once again emphasising the positive.

The reasoning behind this is that many people work in jobs in which they have very little interaction with persons who could make them seem valued. Very seldom does anyone comment favourably on the work they do. The best managers do this all the time, but then, good managers are still quite rare. Even persons whose job it is to carry out an appraisal of their staff rarely do this properly. So therefore; positive feedback to persons who work in this world is surprisingly rare. Assessing candidates for their NVQ provides a wonderful example of a way in which you can redress the balance. You will both feel buoyed up by it.

How competence for Element A1.3 must be documented

- a) A minimum of one observation by the assessor of the assessor candidate providing feedback to a candidate. This must be supported by evidence of feedback on two other occasions in the form of written records or endorsement by another recognised assessor from a registered centre. Total: 1 observation and 2 records, covering two different candidates
- b) a record of a professional discussion between the assessor and the assessor candidate based on feedback to candidates where the assessor candidate indicates how criteria a),d) and f) were addressed. Total 1 record = Document C

Element A1.4 Contribute to the internal quality assurance process.

Performance criteria: *You must be able to:*

- (a) Ensure that your assessment records are accurate, up to date, and provide an audit trail of evidence.
- (b) Contribute to standardisation arrangements to help maintain the accuracy of own assessment decisions
- (c) Provide accurate and timely assessment information.
- (d) Contribute to the agreed quality assurance process.

Notes on Element A1.4 This evidence would be provided by both of the following:

- Asking your Internal Verifier to complete and sign Form C Page 24
- Asking your Internal Verifier to provide a report on a Quality Assurance meeting which you have attended.

How competence for Element A1.4 must be documented

- a) one assessment record each for 2 different candidates which have been used as part of the internal quality assurance process Total: 2 records
- b) written evidence of having contributed to internal standardisation procedures involving the review of at least 2 pieces of evidence for each of 2 different candidates. Total: 4 reviews, one for each of the 4 pieces of candidate evidence
- c) A written statement from the person responsible for internal quality assurance (e.g. an Internal verifier for N/SVQs) that the assessor has contributed to agreed quality assurance procedures. Total: 1 statement

Section 10 Knowledge requirements for Unit A1

The following knowledge is required to perform the above functions. It will be demonstrated through the outcomes of work activities and through evaluations of systems and processes. It has been brought together in one place and consists of underpinning principles, relevant legislation and procedures and processes. Detailed assessment procedures are provided which will ensure that all aspects of the knowledge and understanding are rigorously assessed using valid methods which reflect the work environment. You need to know, understand and demonstrate the application of the following generic knowledge and understanding, which are covered by the numbered questions on the pages in the next Section:

- 1 how to identify and make use of different types of evidence in assessment (1)
- 2 how to identify and balance differing sources of evidence when making assessment decisions (1)
- 3 ways of collecting evidence which are cost-effective and timely (12)
- 4 how to gather and use evidence drawn from prior experience and achievements within the current assessment process (7,28)
- 5 ways of developing and agreeing assessment plans with candidates and others (8 - 13)
- 6 how to make accurate judgements against specific components within a standard (2 - 5)
- 7 appropriate sources of action and support to assist candidates develop competence (27 - 31)
- 8 ways of adapting assessment procedures to meet individual needs (22)
- 9 types of difficulty which may occur in making safe, fair, valid and reliable judgements of evidence, and who to involve in such cases (24)
- 10 how to follow standardisation and internal quality assurance procedures (25-26)
- 11 how to measure existing levels of competence (1 - 9)
- 12 how to make valid and reliable assessments of candidate knowledge (10, 17)
- 13 how to make valid and reliable assessments of candidate performance (1 - 9)
- 14 ways of ensuring that agreed criteria have been covered during assessment (3)
- 15 how to check the authenticity of candidate evidence (6)
- 16 how to ensure the reliability of supporting evidence provided by others (8)
- 17 how to encourage candidates to consider and make use of previous experience and achievements (7, 28)
- 18 how to give constructive feedback on existing levels of competence and what needs to be done to achieve full competence (27)
- 19 ways of involving candidates in assessment planning (13 - 15)
- 20 how to comply with the data protection requirements (36)
- 21 ways of encouraging candidates with differing levels of confidence and experience to take an active part in the assessment (15)
- 22 how to use language and behaviour which does not stereotype or discriminate against any candidate (37)
- 23 how to accommodate the different needs of candidates (22)
- 24 how to adapt feedback to candidates with differing levels of confidence and experience (29 - 31)
- 25 how to encourage candidates to ask questions and seek advice (29 - 31)
- 26 how to monitor and review progress with candidates (16)
- 27 how to identify changes in vocational areas of competence and assess their implication for own competence (32 - 34)
- 28 how to make best use of opportunities to update skills and experience (32 - 34)
- 29 how to identify and make best use of information on current assessment best practice (32 - 34)
- 30 how to make best use of personal development opportunities to enhance assessment skills (32)
- 31 how to meet candidate needs for access to safe, fair, valid and reliable assessment in line with relevant legislation (1)
- 32 how to recognise and challenge unfair discrimination in assessment (35)
- 33 whom to seek advice from when providing special assessment requirements (22 - 24)
- 34 how to identify and plan for issues of confidentiality and data protection during the assessment process (36)
- 35 how to record, store and pass on assessment decisions to others within an agreed system (23 - 26)
- 36 how to identify and evaluate external factors influencing changes in own area of competence (32 - 34)
- 37 how to identify appropriate sources of support for own development (32 - 34)

Section 11. Questions

When you are being assessed you will be questioned on many aspects of the assessment process in order to ensure that you understand them. The required knowledge is summarised below and will be included in the recorded Professional Discussion with your Assessor.

1. Describe the types of evidence you would use to assess a candidate for a qualification with which you are familiar. Describe at least four methods of assessment you would be likely to use and say in the case of each how Reliable it would be as a source of evidence. (IMPORTANT: Remember that any terms shown in **Bold**, such as **Reliable** above have technical meanings which you **MUST** be able to explain fully). See Pages 12-13.
2. Explain what is meant by **Sufficient** evidence. See Pages 12-13.
3. How would you check that you had **Sufficient** evidence?
4. Please explain what is meant by **Valid** evidence. See Pages 12-13.
5. Please explain what is meant by **Reliable** evidence. See Pages 12-13
6. How would you expect to check the Authenticity of a piece of work that the candidate claims is his own? Pages 11-12
7. What value might you put on a certificate of the candidate's previously acquired competence (See bottom of Page 11)
8. What kind of person in your organisation could be expected to provide you with a Reliable Witness Statement? (See bottom of Page 11)
9. In which type of situation might it only be possible to assess a candidate by using simulations? (See Page 11)
10. Explain why questioning is vital when assessing candidates.
11. Why are verbal questions to be preferred to written questions?
12. Are you allowed to assess candidates by telephone?
13. What techniques would you use to improve the reliability of telephone interviews, assuming you could not attend in person? (See Page 14)
14. How many pieces of evidence do you need for each Performance Criterion? (See P. 13)
15. Explain what you mean by Corroboration and why do you consider it important?
16. Why is it important to secure the candidate's agreement to all aspects of the assessment process: types of evidence, time and place of assessment, etc.?
17. If a candidate asked you to postpone his assessment, how would you react?
18. How would you deal with a diffident or nervous candidate? What techniques would you use?
16. Explain the difference between formative and summative assessments. (See Page 14)

17. When might a planned Summative assessment be written up as a Formative assessment? (See Pages 14-15)
18. What is meant by a “non-leading question” (closed question) and why are they important in assessment?.
19. What six small words do you find helpful in asking non-leading or closed questions?
20. Why is it important to be able to rephrase questions?
21. How far are you allowed to go in order to “help” a candidate through his assessment?
22. If you were assessing a candidate, what kinds of help are you NOT allowed to give?
23. Describe some special assessment requirements you might be expected to cater for.
24. What kind of circumstances might make it difficult for you to come to an assessment decision?
25. If you did have difficulty in coming to an assessment decision, whose advice would you seek?
25. Explain how internal quality assurance processes work in your organization? What are the more important tasks that your Internal Verifier has to complete?
27. What happens at Standardisation meetings and why is it important for you to be present?
28. Why should you try to make your feedback to a candidate after his assessment as thorough as possible? (See Page 22)
29. What would your approach be to assessing a candidate who had no certificates but years of experience? Would you treat him in the same way as you would treat a 16-year-old?
30. Describe what you think is meant by a “Praise Sandwich”
31. Why should you always emphasise the candidate’s strengths? (
32. Now that you have become an Assessor how will you keep up to date? Tell me at least one way in which you can keep up to date as an Assessor? Why is this important?
33. What plans does your organisation normally put in place to make sure that assessors keep up to date with the technical aspects of their job?
34. Does your organisation or Awarding Body provide any kind of support to you to enable you to keep up to date with your role as an Assessor? This might take the form of a newsletter, training courses, etc. Will you be taking advantage of any of these?
35. What might cause unfair discrimination in assessment, either negative or positive?
36. How does the Data Protection Act affect you as an assessor? What are you required to do or not to do?
37. How might your own dress, language or behaviour cause stereotyping or discrimination during an assessment?

Section 12. Your own Action Plan.

What you must do now is:

1. Decide how you are going to carry out your three assessments:
2. What Units will you use for these (at least 2)?
3. Which candidates are you going to assess (at least 2) ?
4. How will you carry out the three assessments?
5. What documentation will you use to record your assessments?
6. What methods will you use?
7. Where will you carry out these assessments?
8. When will you do all three; separately or on the same day?
9. Discuss your plans with your A1 Assessor and form some idea of when you will be ready to be assessed yourself and will have your three assessments ready to show your A1 Assessor.
10. Discuss with your A1 Assessor who might act as your Internal Verifier? . How will your assessments be recorded for Internal Verification and Quality Assurance purposes?
11. Have you been, or will you be, present at a Standardisation meeting to discuss your assessments? When will this take place **Documentation:**
12. Make sure you complete the forms on Pages 26 -28 (or copies of them) in order to document your assessments.

Section 13. Assessment Documentation required

These additional documents should be bound in with this workbook:

1. Brief CV and job description for yourself
2. Copies of the Elements you assessed for your A1
3. Unit Assessment Sign-off Forms (Minimum 3 - See Pages 26 - 28)
4. Internal Verifier Document (See P. 29)
5. Records of Standardisation Meeting(s)
6. Workpieces, etc. (where appropriate)
7. Written reports and other forms of evidence from candidate assessments
8. Recordings of interviews
9. Photographs etc.

Unit Assessment Sign-off Form

Trainee Assessor.

Candidate to be assessed

Unit to be assessed

Types of evidence to be used (please tick)

- **Observation**
- **Primary Product Evidence**
- Other documents
- Accreditation of prior experience, learning and achievement (APL)
- Photographs, drawings etc.
- **Questioning**
- Witness Statements
- Simulations
- Recordings

<i>Performance Criteria</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Assessor Signature</i>

Feedack to Candidate, actions agreed and other comments:

.....

N.B. If more space is required, please use a separate sheet and attach it to this form.

Signature of Candidate.....

Signature of Assessor.....Date.....

Unit Assessment Sign-off Form

Trainee Assessor.

Candidate to be assessed

Unit to be assessed

Types of evidence to be used (please tick)

- **Observation**
- **Primary Product Evidence**
- Other documents
- Accreditation of prior experience, learning and achievement (APL)
- Photographs, drawings etc.
- **Questioning**
- Witness Statements
- Simulations
- Recordings

<i>Performance Criteria</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Assessor Signature</i>

Feedack to Candidate, actions agreed and other comments:

.....

.....

.....

N.B. If more space is required, please use a separate sheet and attach it to this form.

Signature of Candidate.....

Signature of Assessor.....Date.....

Unit Assessment Sign-off Form

Trainee Assessor:

Candidate to be assessed

Unit to be assessed

Types of evidence to be used (please tick)

- **Observation**
- **Primary Product Evidence**
- Other documents
- Accreditation of prior experience, learning and achievement (APL)
- Photographs, drawings etc.
- **Questioning**
- Witness Statements
- Simulations
- Recordings

<i>Performance Criteria</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Assessor Signature</i>

Feedack to Candidate, actions agreed and other comments:

.....

N.B. If more space is required, please use a separate sheet and attach it to this form.

Signature of Candidate.....

Signature of Assessor.....Date.....

A1.4 Quality Assurance Record. Internal Verifier Document

Trainee Assessor.....

Reporting to Internal Verifier

- The following 2 Assessment Records (from assessments completed by the Trainee Assessor above) have been used in the internal quality assurance process at this Centre:

Candidate.....

Evidence Item.....

Evidence Item.....

Candidate.....

Evidence Item.....

Evidence Item.....

- Trainee Assessor has been active in contributing to quality assurance procedures at this Centre by:
 - Discussing evidence with myself and other Assessors
 - Discussing his/her assessment decisions with other (qualified) Assessors
 - Attending a Standardisation meeting on.....

N.B. A record of this Standardisation meeting must be provided and documentation covering these processes should be attached to this Record.

Signed..... Internal Verifier

Centre name