

Skills for Care & Development Assessment Principles

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Skills for Care and Development (SfCD) is the UK sector skills council (SSC) for social care, children, early years and young people. Its structure for realising the SSC remit is via a partnership of four organisations: Care Council for Wales, Northern Ireland Social Care Council, Scottish Social Services Council and Skills for Care (adult social care only).
- 1.2. This document sets out the minimum expected principles and approaches to assessment, and should be read alongside qualification regulatory arrangements and any specific requirements set out for particular qualifications. Additional information and guidance regarding assessment can be obtained from Awarding Organisations and from SfCD partner organisations at links below in appendix 1
- 1.3. The information is intended to support the quality assurance processes of Awarding Organisations that offer qualifications in the Sector.
- 1.4. Where Skills for Care and Development qualifications are jointly supported with Skills for Health, [Skill for Health assessment principles](#) should also be considered.
- 1.5. Throughout this document the term unit is used for simplicity, but this can mean module or any other similar term.
- 1.6. In all work we would expect assessors to observe and review learners practising core values and attitudes required for quality practice. These include embracing dignity and respect, rights, choice, equality, diversity, inclusion, individuality and confidentiality. All learners should follow the appropriate standards for conduct and all those involved in any form of assessment must know and embrace the values and standards of practice set out in these documents.
- 1.7. Assessors should ensure that the voices and choices of people who use services drive their practice and that of their learner. This will be apparent throughout the evidence provided for a learner's practice

2. Assessment Principles

Good practice dictates the following:

- 2.1. Learners must be registered with the Awarding Organisation before formal assessment commences.
- 2.2. Assessors must be able to evidence and justify the assessment decisions that they have made.
- 2.3. Assessment decisions for skills based learning outcomes must be made during the learner's normal work activity by an occupationally qualified¹, competent and knowledgeable assessor.

¹ See Appendix B for links to guidance on qualifications for occupational competence in UK nations

- 2.4. Skills based assessment must include direct observation as the main source of evidence, and must be carried out over an appropriate period of time. Evidence should be naturally occurring and so minimise the impact on individuals who use care and support, their families and carers.
- 2.5. Any knowledge evidence integral to skills based learning outcomes may be generated outside of the work environment, but the final assessment decision must show application of knowledge within the real work environment.
- 2.6. Assessment decisions for skills based learning outcomes must be made by an assessor qualified to make assessment decisions. It is the responsibility of the Awarding Organisation to confirm that their assessors are suitably qualified to make assessment decisions.
- 2.7. Simulation may not be used as an assessment method for skills based learning outcomes except where this is specified in the assessment requirements. In these cases, the use of simulation should be restricted to obtaining evidence where the evidence cannot be generated through normal work activity. Video or audio recording should not be used where this compromises the privacy, dignity or confidentiality of any individual or family using services.
- 2.8. Where the assessor is not occupationally competent in a specialist area, expert witnesses can be used for direct observation where they have occupational expertise in the specialist area. The use of expert witnesses should be determined and agreed by the assessor, in line with internal quality assurance arrangements and Awarding Organisation requirements for assessment of units within the qualification and the sector. The assessor remains responsible for the final assessment decision.
- 2.9. Where an assessor is occupationally competent but not yet qualified as an assessor, assessment decisions must rest with a qualified assessor. This may be expressed through a robust countersigning strategy that supports and validates assessment decisions made by as yet unqualified assessors, until the point where they meet the requirements for qualification.
- 2.10. Witness testimony from others, including those who use services and their families, can enrich assessment and make an important contribution to the evidence used in assessment decisions.
- 2.11. Assessment of knowledge based learning outcomes
 - may take place in or outside of a real work environment
 - must be made by an occupationally qualified and knowledgeable assessor, qualified to make assessment decisions
 - must be robust, reliable, valid and current; any assessment evidence using pre-set automated tests, including e-assessment portfolios, must meet these requirements and can only contribute to overall decisions made by the assessor
- 2.12. It is the responsibility of the Awarding Organisation to ensure that those involved in assessment can demonstrate their continuing professional development, up to date skills, knowledge and understanding of practice at or above the level of the unit.
- 2.13. Regardless of the form of recording used for assessment evidence, the guiding principle must be that evidence gathered for assessment must comply with policy and legal requirements in relation to confidentiality and data protection. Information collected must be traceable for internal and external verification purposes. Additionally assessors must ensure they are satisfied the evidence presented is traceable, auditable and authenticated and meets assessment principles.

3. Quality Assurance

- 3.1. Internal quality assurance is key to ensuring that the assessment of evidence is of a consistent and appropriate quality. Those carrying out internal quality assurance must be occupationally knowledgeable in the unit they are assuring and be qualified to make quality assurance decisions. It is the responsibility of the Awarding Organisation to confirm that those involved in internal quality assurance are suitably qualified for this role.
- 3.2. Those involved in internal quality assurance must have the authority and the resources to monitor the work of assessors. They have a responsibility to highlight and propose ways to address any challenges in the assessment process (e.g. to ensure suitable assessors are assigned to reflect the strengths and needs of particular learners)
- 3.3. Those carrying out external quality assurance must be occupationally knowledgeable and understand the policy and practice context of the qualifications in which they are involved. It is the responsibility of the Awarding Organisation to confirm that those involved in external quality assurance are suitably qualified for this role.
- 3.4. Those involved in external quality assurance have a responsibility to promote continuous improvement in the quality of assessment processes.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Occupationally competent:** This means that each assessor must be capable of carrying out the full requirements of the area they are assessing Occupational competence may be at unit level for specialist areas: this could mean that different assessors may be needed across a whole qualification while the final assessment decision for a qualification remains with the lead assessor. Being occupationally competent means also being occupationally knowledgeable. This occupational competence should be maintained annually through clearly demonstrable continuing learning and professional development.
- 4.2. **Occupationally knowledgeable:** This means that each assessor should possess, knowledge and understanding relevant to the qualifications and / or units they are assessing. Occupationally knowledgeable assessors may assess at unit level for specialist areas within a qualification, while the final assessment decision for a qualification remains with the lead assessor. This occupational knowledge should be maintained annually through clearly demonstrable continuing learning and professional development.
- 4.3. **Qualified to make assessment decisions:** This means that each assessor must hold a qualification suitable to support the making of appropriate and consistent assessment decisions. Awarding Organisations will determine what will qualify those making assessment decisions according to the unit of skills under assessment. The Joint Awarding Body Quality Group maintains a list of assessor qualifications, see Appendix C.
- 4.4. **Qualified to make quality assurance decisions:** Awarding Organisations will determine what will qualify those undertaking internal and external quality assurances to make decisions about that quality assurance.
- 4.5. **Expert witness:** An expert witness must:
 - have a working knowledge of the units for which they are providing expert testimony
 - be occupationally competent in the area for which they are providing expert testimony
 - have EITHER any qualification in assessment of workplace performance OR a work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff within their area of expertise.

- 4.6. **Witness testimony:** Witness testimony is an account of practice that has been witnessed or experienced by someone other than the assessor and the learner. Witness testimony has particular value in confirming reliability and authenticity, particularly in the assessment of practice in sensitive situations. Witness testimony provides supporting information for assessment decisions and should not be used as the only evidence of skills.

Appendix A: Skills for Care and Development partnership website links

- [Social Care Wales](#)
- [Northern Ireland Social Care Council](#)
- [Scottish Social Services Council](#)
- [Skills for Care](#)
- [Skills for Care & Development](#)

Appendix B: Joint awarding body quality group – recognised assessor qualifications

D32 Assess Candidate Performance and D33 Assess Candidate Using Differing Sources of Evidence

A1 Assess Candidate Performance Using a Range of Methods and A2 Assessing Candidates' Performance through Observation

QCF Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment (for competence / skills learning outcomes only)

QCF Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement (for knowledge learning outcomes only)

QCF Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement

Qualified Teacher Status

Certificate in Education in Post Compulsory Education (PCE)

Social Work Post Qualifying Award in Practice Teaching

Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS)

Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning sector (DTLLS)

Mentorship and Assessment in Health and Social Care Settings

Mentorship in Clinical/Health Care Practice

L&D9DI - Assessing workplace competence using Direct and Indirect methods (Scotland)

L&D9D - Assessing workplace competence using Direct methods (Scotland)

NOCN – Tutor/Assessor Award

Level 3 Awards and Certificate in Assessing the Quality of Assessment (QCF)

Level 4 Awards and Certificates in Assuring the Quality of Assessment (QCF)

Level 3 Award in Education and Training JABQG Sept 2014 - Version 5

Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training

Level 5 Diploma in Educations and Training

Level 3 Certificates in Assessing Vocational Achievement (RQF)