

**Assessment Strategy for Police competence based  
qualifications other than NVQs in the QCF**

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## 1. Background

Skills for Justice is the sector skills council covering all employers, employees and volunteers in the criminal Justice sector throughout the United Kingdom. This includes:

- Police Forces
- Law Enforcement Agencies including SOCA, HMRC, UK Border Agency
- Custodial Care including the public and private sector establishments
- Community Justice
- Forensic Science
- Courts and Tribunals Services
- Prosecution Services
- Fire and Rescue Sector

## 2. Introduction

This document sets out the specifications of Skills for Justice on behalf of the police and law enforcement strand of the Justice sector of the UK, for the assessment and quality control systems required for competence based qualifications in the QCF other than NVQ's.

The following sections outline Skills for Justice's specific principles in regard to:

1. external quality control of assessment
2. workplace assessment
3. the use and characteristics of simulation
4. the required occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers
5. liaison between the SSC and the Awarding Organisations

These principles are in addition to the generic criteria that Awarding Organisations must meet for the delivery of qualification on the QCF, as required by Ofqual's *'Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework'*.

This Assessment Strategy does not describe these systems in detail. It only provides the overarching principles. These systems may vary from one Awarding Organisation to another and Skills for Justice accepts this, providing the overarching principles of this document are consistently put into practice.

Skills for Justice works in partnership with its Awarding Organisations in order to deliver quality assessment and will be happy to provide them with appropriate guidance and support in implementing its requirements.

### **3. External Quality Assurance**

The monitoring and standardisation of assessment decisions will be achieved by a robust and strong centre monitoring and quality assurance by Awarding Organisations. The mechanisms required to achieve this are outlined in Ofqual's *'Regularity arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework'*.

In addition to the Regulator's requirements, Skills for Justice will require all external quality assurance reports and other data relating to a centre to be evaluated by the Awarding Organisation and any risks relating to quality control to be addressed. External quality assurance, monitoring, support, development and control should be put in place as appropriate to each Centre's level of risk.

The Awarding Organisations is a body recognised by the qualifications regulators against the requirements set out in these regulatory arrangements to award credits and qualifications.

All assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers i.e. those persons whose role is to carry out assessment and quality assurance, must meet the requirements of Ofqual's *'Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework'*.

### **4. Workplace Assessment**

Skills for Justice believes that direct observation in the workplace by a competent assessor (as outlined in Section 6.1) is always to be preferred. Workplace assessment is any real policing situation where a candidate demonstrates their competence against a unit or units and does this entirely without intervention from a tutor, supervisor or fellow officer (for example, candidates can provide evidence of competence during their tutor period - provided that the activities are completed without the intervention of their tutor, supervisor or fellow officers).

Skills for Justice recognises that there are alternative evidence sources which may be used where direct observation is not possible or practical e.g. work products, records, reflective accounts, professional discussion, simulations etc. Where other forms of evidence are used the Assessor is responsible for making the final judgement in terms of the candidate meeting the evidence requirements for the unit.

Scenario/simulation based assessment of knowledge and understanding may take place in a different environment, for example, in a training and development centre or another environment, which is not the immediate workplace.

Scenarios/simulations can be used when:

- there are limited opportunities to demonstrate competence in the workplace against all of the learning outcomes or that the length of time for opportunities to arise is considered too long.
- scenarios/simulations would provide a more consistent demonstration of competence
- it would enable candidates to be assessed in more difficult circumstances than is likely to happen day to day

The use of scenarios/simulations cannot be used to cover all of the workplace assessment requirements. They should only supplement when necessary for the reasons listed above.

Where simulations are used, the methodology should have previously been agreed as part of the ongoing quality assurance by the awarding Organisation

## **5. Requirements of the Centre**

For the purpose of this Assessment Strategy, the Centre is defined as the team responsible for working with the Awarding Organisation on behalf of the organisation.

The Assessment Centre must:

1. Ensure that there are a sufficient number of people trained or qualified to assess the number of candidates they anticipate to register and qualify.
2. Provide quality assured training for those people identified as being responsible for assessing candidates that meets the requirements of Skills for Justice.
3. Put verification systems and verifiers in place to ensure that all assessments are valid, reliable, authentic and sufficient.
4. Provide quality assured training for those people identified as being responsible for verification that meets the requirements of Skills for Justice
5. Ensure that there is a system of standardisation in place to ensure that all assessments are consistent and fair.
6. Ensure that those undertaking the roles of verification and assessment maintain their skills, knowledge and understanding regarding assessment and verification and the associated qualification.
7. Comply with the requirements of the Awarding Organisations

## **6. Requirements of Assessors and Verifiers**

Skills for Justice believes that the occupational expertise of those undertaking the roles of assessment, internal and external verification is one of the key factors underpinning valid, fair and reliable assessment. The integrity of assessments and verifications is of paramount importance. Centres must ensure that there is sufficient time to conduct effective assessment and verification.

### **6.1 Assessors**

Assessment is an activity that can be performed by a dedicated individual or as part of an individuals wider role e.g. Supervisor, manager, tutor.

All assessors must:

1. be qualified as an Assessor (A1) or have been trained to assess through a programme that meets the requirements of the Police Learning Descriptor for Assessor Training. Assessor training authorised and monitored by an Awarding Organisation (although not necessarily leading to A1) would also be acceptable. Where Centres use trained assessors they must provide evidence of the training undertaken to Awarding Organisations.

2. have the role of assessor identified within their role profile, where assessment forms part of an individual's role
3. be occupationally competent in the unit they are assessing. This means that each assessor must, according to current sector practice, be competent in the functions covered by the units they are assessing. They will have gained their occupational competence working within the Justice sector or within an appropriate occupational sector. They are not required to occupy a position in the organisation more senior than that of the candidate they are assessing. Centres must be alert to the risks that all such arrangements could present and ensure that sufficient quality controls are in place through the internal verification process to minimise the possibility of collusion between candidates and assessors. Assessors must be able to demonstrate consistent application of the skills and the current supporting knowledge and understanding in the context of a recent role directly related to the units they are assessing as a practitioner, trainer or manager.
4. be familiar with the units that relate to the qualification and must be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work
5. maintain their occupational competence by either actively engaging in continuous professional development activities or by performing the operational role as part of their regular responsibilities in order to keep up-to-date with developments relating to the changes taking place in the Justice sector.

## **6.2 Internal Verifiers**

Verification is an activity that can be performed by a dedicated individual or as part of an individual's wider role.

All Internal verifiers must:

1. be either qualified as a Verifier (V1) or have been trained to perform the function of verification. A programme that meets the requirements of any Police Learning Descriptor for Verification Training or V1 training authorised and monitored by an Awarding Organisation (although not necessarily leading to V1) would also be acceptable. Where Centres use trained Verifiers, they must provide evidence of the training undertaken to Awarding Organisations
2. be occupationally knowledgeable across the range of units for which they are responsible prior to commencing the role. Due to the risk critical nature of the work and the legal implications of the assessment process, Internal Verifiers must understand the nature and context of the assessors' work and that of their candidates. IVs must also sample the assessment process and resolve differences and conflicts on assessment decisions.
3. Ensure that assessment has been carried out by persons who are 'occupationally competent' within the area they are assessing.
4. maintain their occupational knowledge by actively engaging in continuous professional development activities in order to keep up-to-date with developments relating to the changes taking place in the Justice sector.
5. have an appropriate induction to qualifications and the standards that they are verifying provided to them by the Centre, and have access to ongoing training and updating on current issues relevant to these qualifications. Information on the induction and continuing professional development of internal verifiers must be made available to the external verifier.

### **6.3 External Verifiers**

All External Verifiers must:

1. be occupationally knowledgeable and have gained their knowledge working within the sector or associated professional/occupational area.
2. have a thorough understanding of the qualification units that they will be verifying
3. have a detailed knowledge of the Awarding Organisation's systems and documentation
4. have a thorough understanding of the qualification system and national policy and guidance documents produced by the regulatory authorities and Awarding Organisations describing assessment and verification practice
5. maintain their occupational competence by actively engaging in continuous professional development activities in order to keep up-to-date with developments relating to the changes taking place in the Justice sector. These activities may include those offered by the Awarding Organisation, Skills for Justice or other relevant providers in the sector
6. hold, or be working towards an external verifier qualification.
7. have, where appropriate, undergone relevant security checks due to the nature and confidentiality of the information that they will be exposed to. This will be arranged by Skills for Justice in conjunction with the Awarding Organisations.

The Awarding Organisation may seek clarification from Skills for Justice of the appropriateness of the specific external verifier applicant where appropriate.

Appendix A - Police Sector Qualification Units

**The acceptability of simulation for police sector qualification units**

<b>Police Qualification Units</b>		<b><i>Simulation Allowed</i></b>
AB1	Communicate effectively	Yes
BE2	Provide initial support to victims, survivors and witnesses	Yes
CB1	Gather and submit information that has the potential to support law enforcement objectives	Yes
CD1	Provide an initial response to incidents	Yes
CD3	Participate in planned operations	Yes
CD5	Arrest and detain or report individuals	Yes
CI101	Conduct priority and volume investigations	Yes
CJ101	Interview victims and witnesses	Yes
CJ201	Interview suspects	Yes
CK1	Search individuals within a policing context	Yes
CK2	Search vehicles, premises and open spaces	Yes
GC10	Manage conflict	Yes