

# SkillsActive

More People, Better Skilled, Better Qualified

## Section A: Overarching Assessment Strategy for Qualifications in Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

---

Sport – Fitness – Hair – Beauty – Playwork – Outdoors – Caravans

## Contents

1. Background .....	2
2. Introduction .....	3
3. External quality control of assessment .....	4
3.1 Internal quality assurance.....	4
3.2 External quality assurance.....	4
3.3 Risk Assessment.....	5
4. Workplace Assessment .....	6
5. Simulation.....	7
6. Competence requirements for those involved in assessment and quality assurance of qualifications.....	8
6.1 Assessor Requirements .....	8
Unqualified Assessors .....	8
6.2 Witness Requirements.....	9
6.3 Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) Requirements .....	9
Unqualified Internal Quality Assurers.....	10
6.4 External Quality Assurer (EQA) Requirements .....	10
Unqualified External Quality Assurers.....	11

## **I. Background**

SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council (SSC\*) for Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being. Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being is made up of seven sectors: sport, fitness, outdoors, playwork, caravans, hair and beauty.

As an SSC, SkillsActive provides employers, training providers, individuals, policy makers and key organisations with consultancy, information and advice on skills development and training.

SkillsActive's primary aim is to increase the demand, quality and availability of skills provision throughout these sectors across the United Kingdom.

SkillsActive regulates and verifies training across the industry through an endorsement process, ensuring that training throughout the sectors are of the highest quality and meet the needs of employers.

With a focus on professional development, SkillsActive aims to support individuals looking to begin a career through Apprenticeships and endorsed training, as well as those who have already made an initial breakthrough and are looking to take the next steps up the career ladder by joining a SkillsActive Register.

With over 4 million people working across the SkillsActive sectors, it is imperative that SkillsActive not only brings the best young talent to work in our sector, but to ensure that there are development opportunities in place to retain this talent.

\*SSCs are independent, employer-led, UK-wide organisations. The SSCs and the UK Commission are committed to working in partnership across the four nations to create the conditions for increased employer investment in skills which will drive enterprise, create jobs and lead to sustainable economic growth.

## 2. Introduction

This document sets out the specifications of SkillsActive for the assessment and quality assurance of qualifications which sit within its footprint.

The following sections outline SkillsActive's specific principles in regard to:

- external quality control of assessment
- workplace assessment
- use of simulation
- competence requirements for those involved in the assessment and quality assurance of qualifications

The principles in this document are in addition to criteria that Awarding Organisations must meet for the delivery of qualifications as required by the regulators for example Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition.

This document (Section A) applies to all qualifications within SkillsActive's footprint. It should be used in conjunction with SkillsActive's and Habia's Assessment Strategy Annexes (Section B) for specific qualifications.

The Assessment Strategy Annexes include information on:

- qualification structures
- evidence requirements
- industry specific requirements

Assessment Strategy Annexes are available on the following websites:

For Sport, Fitness, Playwork, Outdoors, Caravans

<http://www.skillsactive.com/standards-quals/assessment-strategies>

For Hair and Beauty

<http://www.habia.org/standards-qualifications/assessment-strategies>

### **3. External quality control of assessment**

The monitoring and standardisation of assessment decisions must be achieved through robust assessment, internal and external quality assurance systems. These must be reliable, transparent and fit for purpose and, must comply with the requirements of the qualifications regulator. Awarding Organisations are required to monitor the quality of assessment centres and address any risks relating to quality control. External quality assurance measures should be put into place as appropriate to each centre's level of risk.

#### **3.1 Internal quality assurance**

The process of internal quality assurance has historically been called internal verification. Due to this Internal Quality Assurers may often be referred to as Internal Verifiers.

Centres must, in line with regulatory guidance, have an effective internal quality assurance strategy and processes in place to ensure learners are assessed fairly and consistently, and that standards are being met.

To ensure all assessment activities are valid and effective and that Assessors' decisions are accurate a Centre's internal quality assurance process should:

- identify Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) who are responsible for implementing these processes. If necessary identify a coordinating IQA who manages the process
- produce an effective internal quality assurance policy
- produce and maintain a clear audit trail of decision making and action
- produce an internal quality assurance schedule of assessment activities and assessment decisions
- produce a training and standardisation plan for all those involved in internal quality assurance.

IQAs should observe Assessors performing learner assessments at regular intervals according to Awarding Organisation guidelines, risk rating and experience of the Assessor. The reliability, validity and authenticity of evidence must be checked during these observations.

An Internal Quality Assurer cannot internally verify either assessment activities they have produced or assessment decisions they have made.

#### **3.2 External quality assurance**

The process of external quality assurance has historically been called external verification. Due to this Internal Quality Assurers may often be referred to as Internal Verifiers.

To ensure successful monitoring and standardisation of the assessment activities conducted by a Centre, the assessment decisions made by Assessors and the Centres quality assurance processes, an Awarding Organisation must have in place a robust external quality assurance system with clear and effective arrangements to ensure consistency in quality. The mechanisms required to achieve this are outlined by the qualification regulators.

In addition to the qualification regulators' requirements all external quality assurance reports and other data relating to a Centre must be reviewed by the Awarding Organisation. Where any risks are identified relating to the quality control of assessment the Awarding Organisation must have in place an effective risk management and rating system to determine, depending on a centres level of

risk, the appropriate external quality assurance, monitoring, support and control that should be put in place.

### **3.3 Risk Assessment**

All Awarding Organisations are required to implement effective risk management and rating systems to help protect the integrity of the qualification, safeguard assessment and verification processes and ensure standards are maintained. These systems should also focus on:

- conflict of interest
  - any personal or professional relationship between learners, Assessors, Internal Quality Assurers and External Quality Assurers should be declared.
- adherence to Centre approval criteria
  - centres should be continually monitored in addition to its delivery to ensure that the integrity of the qualification is maintained.

Where risk is identified through these systems, Awarding Organisations will need to act accordingly to ensure the Centre is performing to an acceptable level. This may include, but is not limited to:

- inspection/spot visit(s)
- additional monitoring of assessment activities and/or internal quality assurance processes
- quality assuring a sample of learners work from each Assessor over an agreed period of time
- appointment of Independent Quality Assurers
- training and development
- or other action appropriate to the risk.

Awarding Organisations should be able to demonstrate a risk assessment has been carried out for each Centre and a strategy to minimise any risk identified has been implemented.

## **4. Workplace Assessment**

SkillsActive believes that assessment of competence, wherever possible, should be demonstrated through direct observation in the workplace. Learners are expected to demonstrate competence to the standards required over a period of time. Therefore, to ensure validity, evidence should be naturally occurring and collected through performance in the workplace.

It is acknowledged not all workplaces are the same, therefore assessment conditions may not be identical. However to safeguard the integrity of the qualification and ensure a robust and consistent approach to assessment the Assessor must ensure the assessment conditions reflect, as far as possible, those to which the learner is expected to work.

A holistic approach towards the collection of evidence for qualifications is encouraged. The focus should be assessing activities generated in the workplace, through naturally occurring evidence, rather than focusing on specific tasks. Taken as a whole, the evidence must show the learner meets all learning outcomes and assessment criteria across a range of circumstances consistently, over a period of time. It should be clear where each learning outcome/assessment criteria has been covered and achieved.

It is imperative that the learner is not placed under more, or less, pressure than found normally in the workplace during assessment.

## 5. Simulation

Assessment in a simulated environment should only be used in the following circumstances:

1. Where the nature of the work activity presents high risk/danger to the learner and others, for example personal safety
2. Where evidence in the workplace will not be demonstrated within an acceptable time frame.

The Awarding Organisations should issue adequate guidance to their Centres as to how these simulations should be planned and organised. In general this guidance must ensure that the demands on the learner during simulation are neither more nor less than they would be in a real work situation. This guidance should clearly state the strategy for simulations. Simulations must be agreed between the representative from the Awarding Organisation who is responsible for external quality assurance and with the person who is responsible for internal quality assurance in the assessment centre, prior to use.

Please see SkillsActive's qualification specific Assessment Strategy Annexes (Section B) for further detail about simulation.

## 6. Competence requirements for those involved in assessment and quality assurance of qualifications

### 6.1 Assessor Requirements

The key responsibility of the Assessor is to judge whether the learner has achieved the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the qualification they are undertaking.

It is important that the Assessor can recognise occupational competence as specified by a qualification's learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Equally the Assessor must have a thorough understanding of assessment and quality assurance practices. Therefore the Assessor must:

1. be “occupationally competent”. Assessors must provide current evidence of competence, knowledge and understanding in the areas they are assessing.
2. have an in-depth technical knowledge of the qualification, units and standards of competencies required. They must be able to interpret current working practices, technologies and products within the area of work and be committed to upholding the integrity of the qualification.
3. have access to, and be engaging with, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities in order to keep up to date with developments and any issues relevant to the qualification and/or its units. CPD is about keeping up to date with developments relating to changes in practice in the industry. CPD is required per annum which must be demonstrated through a personal development plan (PDP) or as a reflective diary.
4. hold, or be working towards; a valid assessor qualification based on LSIS, formerly LLUK, Learning and Development National Occupational Standards (2010):
  - Learning and Development Unit 9D - Assess workplace competence using direct methods; or
  - Learning and Development Unit 9DI – Assess workplace competences using direct and indirect methods; or
  - Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement (QCF); or
  - Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment (QCF)

or hold one of the following:

- AI Assess candidates using a range of methods\*; or
- D32/33 Assess candidate performance, using differing sources of evidence\*

\*Holders of AI and D32/33 qualifications must work to the reviewed National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development.

### Unqualified Assessors

Awarding Organisations may approve individuals to assess qualifications who have not yet achieved their assessor qualification. However, these individuals must be working towards and achieve this qualification and have an appropriate development plan. Should an unqualified Assessor be used, they must be fully supported and have their assessment decisions countersigned by a qualified Assessor to ensure the learner has achieved the required standard.

## 6.2 Witness Requirements

A Witness testimony, a statement made by someone present while the learner was performing an activity on-the-job, may be used to support the assessment process and where permitted by the awarding organisation.

Witness testimony should only be used as an additional method of assessment when all observations have been carried out by an Assessor.

Where Witnesses are used:

1. evidence must be available that demonstrates the individual has the necessary expertise in the area for which they are providing the testimony
2. any relationship they have with a learner must be declared to the Assessor to determine the value of the testimony provided
3. they must be fully briefed and clear about the purpose of their testimony, it will only be regarded as supporting/supplementary evidence and the final decision regarding the learner's ability to meet the evidence requirements will be the responsibility of the Assessor.

## 6.3 Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) Requirements

The key responsibility of the Internal Quality Assurer is to assure the quality and consistency of assessments made by Assessors for whom they are responsible.

IQAs need to have sufficient knowledge of the qualifications that they are quality assuring. They must also have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices. Therefore IQAs must:

1. have sufficient occupational experience across the range of units and qualifications for which they are responsible prior to commencing their role. This must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when quality assuring judgements about Assessors' assessment processes and decisions.
2. must have an in-depth knowledge of the qualification, units and standards of competencies required. They must be committed to upholding the integrity of the qualification.
3. have access to, and be engaging with, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities in order to keep up to date with developments and any issues relevant to the qualification and/or its units. CPD is about keeping up to date with developments relating to changes in practice in the industry. CPD is required per annum which must be demonstrated through a personal development plan (PDP) or as a reflective diary.
4. hold a valid assessor qualification and hold or be working towards an internal quality assurance qualification based on LSIS, formerly LLUK, Learning and Development National Occupational Standards (2010):

Assessor qualifications:

- relevant assessing qualifications are as specified under assessor requirements

Internal quality assurance qualifications:

- Learning and Development Unit 11 – Internal Quality Assurance; or
- Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (QCF); or

- VI Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process\*; or
- D34 Internally Verify the Assessment Process\*.

\*Holders of VI and D34 qualifications must work to the reviewed National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development.

### **Unqualified Internal Quality Assurers**

Awarding Organisations may approve individuals to quality assure qualifications who have not yet achieved their internal quality assurance qualification. However, these individuals must be working towards and achieve this qualification and have an appropriate development plan. Should an unqualified Internal Quality Assurer be used, they must be fully supported and have their quality assurance decisions countersigned by a qualified Internal Quality Assurer to ensure the quality and consistency of assessment decisions.

## **6.4 External Quality Assurer (EQA) Requirements**

The key responsibility of the External Quality Assurer is to assure the quality, consistency and reliability of assessments and internal quality assurance systems of Centres for which they are responsible.

EQAs must have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices. In addition they must have in depth knowledge relating to the qualifications for which they are externally quality assuring. Therefore External Quality Assurers must:

1. have sufficient operational experience within the industry that can be evidenced, is current and relevant to the qualification at or above the level being quality assured. This must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about internal quality assurance and assessment processes and decisions.
2. have an in-depth knowledge of the qualification, units and standards of competencies required. They must be committed to upholding the integrity of the qualification.
3. have access to, and be engaging with, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities in order to keep up to date with developments and any issues relevant to the qualification and/or its units. CPD is about keeping up to date with developments relating to changes in practice in the industry. CPD is required per annum which must be demonstrated through a personal development plan (PDP) or as a reflective diary. CPD is the responsibility of the individual and is required per annum which must be demonstrated through a personal development plan (PDP) or as a reflective diary.
4. have a detailed understanding of the Awarding Organisation's systems and documentation.
5. hold a valid assessor and internal quality assurance qualification and hold or be working towards a valid external quality assurance qualification based on LSIS, formally LLUK, Learning and Development National Occupational Standards (2010):

Assessor qualifications:

- relevant assessing qualifications are as specified under assessor requirements

Internal quality assurance qualifications:

- relevant internal quality assurance qualifications are as specified under Internal Quality Assurer requirements

External quality assurance qualifications:

- Learning and Development Unit 12 – External Quality Assurance; or
- Level 4 Award in the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (QCF), or
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (QCF); or
- V2 Conduct External Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process\*; or
- D35 Externally Verify the Assessment Process\*; or
- Externally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Workplace Assessment.

\*Holders of V2 and D35 qualifications must work to the reviewed National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development.

### **Unqualified External Quality Assurers**

Awarding Organisations may approve individuals to externally quality assure qualifications who have not yet achieved their external quality assurance qualification. However, these individuals must be working towards and achieve this qualification and have an appropriate development plan. Should an unqualified External Quality Assurer be used, they must be fully supported and have their quality assurance decisions countersigned by a qualified External Quality Assurer to ensure the quality and consistency of assessment decisions.