

Guidance on assessing SVQs during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic – support for awarding bodies, centres/providers and learners

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has presented extraordinary and challenging circumstances for the vocational education sector. SQA Accreditation, in partnership with sector skills councils/standard setting organisations, must provide supplementary guidance to support the delivery and assessment of SVQs throughout this unprecedented period.

This guidance and approach will assist awarding bodies and centres/providers in ensuring that learners are not disadvantaged and that a standardised approach can be used to both deliver and assess all SVQs.

This guidance is supplemental and does not replace the existing requirements for delivery or assessment laid down within any of the SVQ assessment strategies or qualification standards.

Current government guidance relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) must be adhered to at all times.

Awarding bodies must ensure that the approach taken by centres/providers remains fit for purpose and that their assessments remain robust where learners' evidence is *valid, authentic, reliable, current and sufficient*.

Centres/Providers must ensure any approaches considered are first confirmed as acceptable with their Awarding Body.

The most effective way of assessing competence within an SVQ is by observing the learner directly. During social distancing, this method of assessment may not align with the current government guidance for coronavirus (COVID-19). Therefore, assessors should consider other appropriate methods of assessment and/or types of evidence that would meet the requirements of the unit/qualification. These could include:

- ◆ witness testimonies
- ◆ professional discussions
- ◆ authenticated learner-produced reports
- ◆ outputs from the learner's work or work products (with supporting documentation from work activity)
- ◆ records, photographs or video evidence of work activity taking place (there must be enough to show the relevant level of input from the learner)

Use of technology should also be considered. This could include:

- ◆ **video** link/recording — this option may be considered for various elements of the assessment process, including communication with learners, witnesses and employers. Where this option is used, the following must apply:
 - The assessor must introduce all members involved in the video/recording, their role, the qualification being assessed and purpose of the video/recording.
 - The assessor must confirm with all parties that they agree to being recorded, in line with the awarding body policy on personal data management, which must meet legislative requirements as set by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
 - The date, time, location and purpose of the video recording must be stated.
 - The date and time must also be stated at the end of the video recording.
 - The assessor must have agreed a plan in advance of the video recording to ensure the outcomes are met.
 - When being used as a tool for observation, the assessor must be able to confidently validate and authenticate the evidence being provided to enable an assessment decision.
 - The video must be clear and recorded at a distance whereby the task is clearly visible and an assessment decision can be made with confidence.
 - The video evidence must be accompanied by an assessment decision that demonstrates that the video evidence has been assessed and feedback has been given to the learner.
 - The video must be of the actual work being carried out in real-time and not a synopsis of the work that *was* done, produced after it is completed (if being used as an observation).

- ◆ **audio** link/recording — this option may be considered for various elements of the assessment process, including communication with learners, witnesses and employers. However, it is not suitable for observations. Where this option is used, the following must apply:
 - The assessor must introduce all members involved in the call/recording, their role, the qualification being assessed and the purpose of the call/recording.
 - The assessor must confirm with all parties that they agree to being recorded, in line with the awarding body policy on personal data management, which must meet legislative requirements as set by GDPR.
 - The date, time, location and purpose of the recording must be stated.
 - The date and time must also be stated at the end of the recording.
 - The assessor must have agreed a plan in advance of the call/recording to ensure the outcomes are met.
 - When being used to capture a professional discussion, the assessor must be able to confidently validate and authenticate the evidence being provided to enable an assessment decision.

Video and audio links are not limited to live assessment and recordings can be utilised to capture evidence for assessing at a later time.

All evidence gathered should be traceable, auditable and authenticated.

Minimum performance evidence requirements

Performance evidence should continue to be the main form of assessment in order to demonstrate consistent and competent performance for a unit. Where strategies define a set or minimum number of examples of evidence required, assessors may accept fewer examples, provided they are satisfied that the full range of performance and scope has been met to confirm competency.

For learners who are nearing completion of their qualification, evidence already gathered should be reviewed to identify where it may provide additional evidence to meet the requirements of the remaining units.

Important note:

It is expected that whichever assessment method is used to produce evidence, awarding bodies and centres/providers will be confident that the evidence produced is *valid, authentic, reliable, current and sufficient* to cover the performance criteria and knowledge requirements fully.

The process of assessment must not differ from that outlined within the relevant assessment strategy as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation — the assessor and the learner must agree a plan prior to the assessment and evidence gathering. Assessments must be carried out in a way that ensures the assessor has the confidence to make an informed decision about the learner's competence. Following this, the assessor must provide feedback on their decision to the learner and, finally, review the learner's progress towards competence.

Both the internal and external quality assurance arrangements remain as stated in the assessment strategy documentation.