

Guidance for centres

Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Edexcel SVQ guidance for centres

July 2011

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Section 1: General information about Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)

Introduction

This publication gives you all the basic information you need to know about SVQ qualifications. It includes:

- SVQ levels, design and unit structure
- SVQ assessment
- presentation of candidate evidence
- administrative information and processes
- policy matters
- further information and support materials available
- recording forms for candidates.

The publication incorporates the latest thinking on SVQs and is intended to help those of you who may be new to, or are coming back to, SVQs. It is not intended for candidates. We publish other products that look at SVQs from the candidate's perspective, eg the *Edexcel SVQ Candidate Logbook*.

What are SVQs?

SVQs are work-based qualifications used to assess the skills and knowledge people need to perform their job roles effectively. The qualifications are based on National Occupational Standards (NOS), which define what employees or potential employees, must be able to do and know, how well they must do these things and the circumstances in which they have to use the skills or carry out the activities.

The NOS are usually defined by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) or Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs) which are made up of representatives, including employers, from the relevant occupational sector.

SVQs are open to all. There are no entry requirements, no prescribed methods of delivery, no time constraints for completion and normally no age limits. Candidates do not have to achieve their SVQ all at once; unit accreditation is available for those wishing to achieve an SVQ unit by unit over a period of time (normally related to the life of the qualifications).

Occasionally, special assessment arrangements are needed in order to provide equal opportunities to candidates with special requirements. Information on special assessment arrangements can be found on our website.

Explanation of levels

SVQs are available at five levels, reflecting the range of technical and supervisory skills, knowledge and experience that employees should have as they progress in their industry.

SVQ LEVEL	Candidates must show their competence:
Level 1	At SVQ level 1 (SCQF level 4) competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in the performance of a range of varied work activities, most of which may be routine or predictable.
Level 2	At SVQ level 2 (SCQF level 5) competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. At this level there will be activities which are complex or non-routine and there is some individual responsibility and autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, is often a requirement.
Level 3	At SVQ level 3 (either SCQF level 6 or 7) competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of varied work activities, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable responsibility and autonomy and control or guidance of others is often present.
Level 4	At SVQ level 4 (either SCQF level 8 or 9) competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of complex technical or professional work activities, performed in a wide variety of contexts and with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and the allocation of resources is often present.
Level 5	At SVQ level 5 (SCQF level 11) competence involves the application of skills and a significant range of fundamental principles across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts. Very substantial personal autonomy and often significant responsibility for the work of others and for the allocation of substantial resources feature strongly, as does personal accountability.

Who is involved in SVQs?

A number of individuals and organisations are involved in SVQ assessment. Their roles have been designed to guarantee fair, accurate and consistent assessment.

	Who are they?	What is their role?
Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations that offer SVQs on behalf of Edexcel. They could be schools, colleges, universities, training providers or employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are responsible for the quality of the qualification. They must work within Edexcel's policies and guidelines, for example to provide a realistic working environment (RWE) where simulation is permitted by the standards. Centres appoint assessors and internal verifiers. Once a year, centres must review the operation of the programme and candidates' performance (see <i>Review and evaluation in Section 4</i>).
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers in this context may represent the actual employer of an employee who is being assessed or they might be a provider of work experience opportunities to candidates who are based in a centre. Employees can be permanent or temporary, paid or voluntary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers play a key role in the delivery of SVQs. They work with centres to define the training needs of an individual, negotiating or defining as needed, levels, options and pathways. The agreed programme will depend on the nature of the environment and the sector needs, as well as the needs of the individual. Employers work with assessors to support candidates by providing training and experience opportunities while they are working towards their SVQ. Employers provide assessment evidence through mechanisms such as expert witness statements or observations.
Candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The people who want to achieve the SVQ, eg employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They need to show that they can perform to national standards to be awarded an SVQ or unit(s).
Witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line managers, colleagues or customers with whom the candidate interacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Witnesses provide the evidence of a specific aspect of the candidate's achievements. This must be authenticated by the assessor or an expert witness.

	Who are they?	What is their role?
Expert witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupationally competent people with expertise in specific units of the SVQ, they can give a professional opinion as to the competence of a candidate. Their professional role must involve evaluating the everyday practice of staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert witnesses contribute to the evidence of competent performance in the workplace, especially where there are no occupationally competent assessors for specific option units.
Assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The people who assess the candidates and decide if they have met the required standard, eg supervisors. They must hold a qualification in assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors judge a candidate's evidence of performance, knowledge and understanding against the national standards and decide whether they have demonstrated competence.
Internal verifier (IV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People appointed by the centre, eg supervisor's line manager, who ensure that assessors apply the standards consistently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IVs advise and support assessors and maintain the quality of assessment in a centre. They sample assessments systematically to confirm the quality and consistency of assessment decisions.
Standards verifier (SV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People appointed by Edexcel to ensure that standards are being applied uniformly and consistently across all centres offering the SVQ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SVs check the quality and consistency of assessments, both within and between centres by systematically sampling evidence. They make regular visits to centres to ensure that they continue to meet the approval criteria.
Edexcel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your awarding body, approved by the regulator to offer qualifications and awards. Edexcel provides qualifications throughout the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues candidates' certificates so that employers can be sure the qualification has been gained after a rigorous and effective assessment process.

Assessors, internal verifiers and standards verifiers need to have occupational expertise in the SVQs they are assessing and verifying. The SSC/SSB will normally specify the level of occupational expertise required within the standards and the Assessment Strategy.

Assessors and verifiers are expected to obtain an appropriate qualification in assessment and verification. This can take the form of D32/33 for assessors and D35 or V2 for verifiers (or an alternative qualification that the SSC/SSB recognises or specifies).

Expert witnesses should have a working knowledge of the NOS, and be occupationally competent in the units to which they are contributing evidence. They do not require a qualification in the assessment of workplace performance, but they are encouraged to obtain one. The NOS and Assessment Strategy will normally define any level of occupational expertise required.

Edexcel expects all assessors, internal verifiers and standards verifiers to obtain SSC/NTO-recognised qualifications within 18 months of starting assessing or verifying.

Section 2: Assessment

Introduction

This section gives practical advice on all aspects of assessment, from planning assessment opportunities to recording evidence. It should help you to ensure that your assessment is effective, rigorous and appropriate. The section outlines an approach to assessment based on good practice.

You should read in conjunction with the SSC's/SSB's Assessment Strategy (AS). Evidence requirements can be found in the subject-specific *Edexcel SVQ Candidate Logbook*.

What is assessment?

Assessment is the key to achieving SVQs. As an assessor, your role is vital in helping your candidates to achieve their award and in ensuring that the requirements of the occupational standards are met. You will need to be clear about what is meant by assessment and what you are assessing.

In deciding whether a candidate should be awarded an SVQ, you will need to go through the following stages:

- becoming familiar with the standards
- planning for assessment
- collecting evidence of the candidate's performance
- judging the candidate's evidence against the SVQ standards and making an assessment decision
- recording the assessment decision.

Roles in assessment

Before beginning the assessment process, both you and the candidate should be clear about your roles and the roles of others involved in the process.

Assessor's role

As an assessor you must:

- ensure that candidates understand what is expected of them and what and how it is to be assessed
- ensure that the conditions and materials required for assessment are available
- observe and record candidates carrying out the activities described in the standards – records should say what has been observed, how it was carried out, and what it demonstrated
- know who will act as an internal verifier and ensure that the candidate understands the IV's role
- know who will be the expert witness(es) and ensure that the candidate understands the role of the expert witness(es)
- question candidates and record results

- help candidates to gather and provide evidence
- judge all evidence, including that from expert witnesses
- authenticate the evidence that candidates provide
- record achievement
- identify gaps or shortfalls in candidates' competence
- give candidates feedback.

Multiple assessors

Where more than one assessor is involved, assessment needs to be coordinated. One assessor should draw together all the assessment decisions made by specialist assessors and the contributions from expert witnesses, across the whole qualification.

Candidate's role

The candidate must:

- prepare for assessment by familiarising themselves with the standards, what is to be assessed and how it will be assessed
- ensure that they understand the processes of assessment and play a positive and active role in it
- carry out activities and/or answer questions
- gather and present evidence for assessment
- receive and act on feedback from the assessor and expert witnesses (where appropriate).

Approaches to assessment

Candidates can approach assessment for SVQs through a variety of routes. Two of the main ways are through work (paid or voluntary) or through a training programme.

Work (paid or voluntary) – when a candidate approaches assessment through work it will be the assessor's job to help them plan the sequence of assessment, give feedback on how they are performing and arrange for them to acquire any missing competence.

Training programmes – for training programmes a series of educational or training events in a realistic working environment (RWE), linked to assessment opportunities, will already have been planned. It will be the assessor's job to monitor how the candidate is performing, assess their evidence and provide feedback on their progress. If you find any gaps or potential problems with the training programme, you should ensure that remedial action is taken so that the candidate is safeguarded.

Holistic and integrated assessment

The collection and assessment of evidence is often perceived to be an onerous task for all involved. The candidate will often try to produce unique evidence for each unit. This is not always necessary or appropriate – evidence should be drawn from real work activities and events that would not normally neatly reflect the requirements of a specific unit.

New National Occupational Standards (NOS) combined with a new Assessment Strategy (AS) provide an opportunity for a more integrated and holistic approach to the assessment of SVQs.

NOS and SVQs contain some of the following components, although the format might vary, which can contribute to a holistic and integrated approach to the candidate's assessment:

- identified links with other units
- definition of the skills needed
- types of evidence requirements which occur in more than one unit
- availability of some units at multiple levels.

An Assessment Strategy's key principles and requirements for workplace assessment can provide a basis from which the candidate's assessment plan can be designed. Please read this guidance on holistic and integrated assessment in conjunction with the Assessment Strategy for the specific SVQs (*Annexe B*).

Benefits of an integrated and holistic approach to assessment

Below are some of the benefits to taking a more integrated and holistic approach to evidence collection and assessment. This approach:

for the candidate

- helps them manage their perceived assessment burden
- helps them recognise how skills and knowledge support more than one aspect of their working life
- ensures evidence collection is a natural part of everyday working life for them
- provides them with a more holistic view of a unit-based qualification
- motivates them in their evidence collection

for the employer

- shows how the SVQ relates to the events and activities within the workplace
- enables them to contribute to the candidate's evidence and assessment
- reassures them that the SVQ complements and underpins the candidate's work role and will have a positive impact on productivity and motivation

for the assessor

- provides an effective structure to planning and organising the candidate's assessment and achievement targets
- reduces a potential assessment burden
- reduces the possibility of overassessing the candidate
- puts the emphasis on the quality of evidence to be assessed rather than the quantity.

An integrated approach – some points

Planning

When planning assessment with the candidate, it is important to first consider the links across units, the skills/knowledge and the potential for making use of similar evidence requirements to meet more than one element and/or unit.

Joint planning between the assessor and the candidate can show how the linked units might be assessed and evidenced in a more integrated/holistic way, which builds into and supports the candidate's workplace responsibilities and activities. The integrated/holistic approach to defining the timeframes for a candidate's achievement will ensure it is firmly based on their planned work events/activities.

The process of jointly planning targets for assessment and timeframes for achievement will encourage the candidate to look holistically at what their role involves. They can then identify the activities, skills and knowledge – and the associated evidence they can provide – that will meet the needs of the individual unit and some of the needs of other linked units.

This will encourage the candidate to use whole work activities as evidence, across the SVQ units, reflecting the reality of how they function in their workplace.

Forms of assessment

The candidate and assessor need to agree the methods for assessment and the formats for evidence of achievement that can be used across units. These do not need to vary significantly from the normal methods but do need to take account of the needs of the Assessment Strategy. Assessment methods are covered in more detail in *The five steps to assessment* on page 12.

The forms of assessment most likely to involve assessors include observation, questioning, discussion/interview, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of recognised knowledge and skill qualifications (such as a BTEC qualification) and through authenticating evidence of successful application of work tasks.

Guided discussions/interviews should be used over a period of time to assess the progress of candidates through linked units and/or the planned work event/activity.

The bringing together and coordination of all evidence plays an important part in making assessment decisions, especially where personal testimony, witness testimony and work products all contribute to the evidence. As always, assessors will be required to show that they have used a range of assessment methods rather than relying exclusively on any one method.

Evidence

In moving to a more holistic and integrated approach to assessment, it is important to consider how evidence might be presented and where it could be located.

Candidates need a logbook or portfolio, which can be in either electronic or paper form (the *Edexcel SVQ Candidate Logbook*).

The most likely forms of evidence provided by a candidate in their portfolio/logbook, include personal statements, witness and expert witness testimony and work products. The logbook/portfolio would also contain the statement of the assessor's observations in the workplace.

Work product evidence – electronic, paper or other – can stay in the workplace. The location must be specified in the logbook/portfolio and the assessor will need to view and authenticate the evidence on a visit. Other forms of evidence include audio and video clips. The security of an electronic logbook/portfolio must be maintained and ensured by the candidate and the centre. Where evidence is located in the workplace it is expected that assessors will be able to access several examples of work products and that they will have been identified in the assessment plan.

During their meeting with the candidate the assessor will be expected to ask structured questions relating to the evidence being presented. There may also be some unstructured questions that arise from the structured questions. The approach to this discussion/interview will depend on the candidate and their evidence. Assessors should be flexible when asking unstructured follow-up questions so that a genuine dialogue can be developed during the discussion/interview.

Timing

A candidate can begin their SVQ at any time, provided the necessary preparations and plans have been made.

There is no limit on the time a candidate may take to gain the whole qualification or individual unit(s) (other than the life of the qualification). Some candidates will take longer than others, depending on their understanding of the qualification, their work setting and their personal circumstances. An assessor should, therefore, organise and arrange assessment that is appropriate to each candidate, although there must be an agreed target date for completion.

However it is important that the evidence submitted demonstrates current competence of the task being assessed, particularly if the evidence is from the past.

The five steps to assessment

If you follow the five steps identified you should be able to ensure that your candidates move efficiently and effectively towards achievement of their SVQ.

Step 1: Plan and organise assessment

You should make sure that candidates receive guidance before starting their SVQ. They need advice to ensure that their existing job remit, skills, experience and plans for progression are matched to the SVQ selected. As the assessor, it does not have to be you who carries out the matching exercise. In fact, this part of the process is often carried out during induction but whoever has responsibility for it should ensure that the assessment opportunities available to the candidate are also considered.

You will need to work out how much time you and your candidate are able to devote to their SVQ. This is likely to be limited by the demands of a busy workplace. If possible, try to agree sessions in advance and commit to them and remember that you need to allow for review and evaluation sessions in addition to assessments. Once this is agreed you can begin planning.

There are two levels of planning:

- the overall plan when you and your candidate look at the whole qualification and set targets for achievement
- individual plans for assessment.

There is no limit to the time it takes for a candidate to complete a unit or the full SVQ (other than the life of the qualification). However, you and your candidate should set target dates for completing each unit. In reaching agreement, take into account the candidate's job or training programme and mark out clearly the points of decision for each element and unit.

Overall assessment planning

It is good practice for you to agree an overall assessment plan with your candidate. An overall assessment plan should include:

- the overall programme for assessment, identifying how and when each part of the SVQ will be assessed
- target dates for completing each unit. There are no time limits on the amount of time a candidate can take to complete a unit or an SVQ but target dates will motivate candidates and help you to monitor progress
- how you are going to give feedback
- what happens if there is a disagreement between the candidate and yourself.

Producing an overall assessment plan is the ideal time for you and your candidate to identify opportunities for **integrating assessment**. This is when a piece of evidence generated from one activity is used to prove competence across different elements, performance criteria and/or units. You and your candidate will need to maximise the opportunities for integration to ensure the SVQ builds from real work activities and events.

Through producing the overall plan you may also identify job activities that the candidate currently performs that match the standards and can plan to assess them immediately. You may also identify evidence that can be used from past achievement (see *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* on page 18).

If the candidate is providing evidence from the workplace, their job role may mean they are not able to cover all the standards during the normal course of work. You may need to create new opportunities, such as arranging for your candidate to move to a different department, so that different activities can be performed or different skills used. The candidate might also need to attend a college or training course to fill in any gaps.

You may need to reassure your candidate at this stage. Many feel overwhelmed by the apparent amount of evidence they will have to produce but they will need to realise that with effective planning the process can be made much easier and they will be more likely to succeed.

Individual assessment planning

You and your candidate will need to plan each individual assessment carefully. You will need to decide which methods you will use to carry out the assessment, where and when the assessment will take place and who will be present. You should agree a unit assessment plan that specifies the tasks to be carried out, the time they will take and the parts of the standards that will be covered.

Step 2: Decide on the assessment methods

The methods of assessment you use should be valid, reliable, practicable, authentic and sufficient.

- By **'valid'** we mean that the assessment should be appropriate to the standards.
- By **'reliable'** we mean that the assessment method should ensure consistent results when used with different candidates, different assessors and on different occasions.
- By **'practicable'** we mean that the method should ensure the assessment takes account of available resources, equipment and time.
- By **'authentic'** we mean that the evidence produced is that of the candidate's alone.
- By **'sufficient'** we mean that there must be enough evidence available to assure the assessor that the candidate is competent on a consistent basis.

As an assessor, it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the standards you will be assessing and the associated evidence requirements or evidence guidance provided. In doing so, you will be able to identify what skills need to be demonstrated and the types of evidence that a candidate needs to generate in order to complete all units of the SVQ.

Once you are familiar with the performance criteria, range and evidence requirements in all the units of the SVQ you will find it easier to decide what is acceptable evidence and how it should be produced by the candidate.

You and your candidate must agree the methods of evidence collection that are most appropriate to the candidate's work setting and patterns. Evidence must be precisely and directly relevant to the particular standards for which a candidate seeks credit; it cannot be just a general indication of acceptable practice. You can then determine and agree with the candidate the form of your assessment.

Assessment methods

All methods of assessment fall under one of three categories: **observation, product evaluation and questioning.**

Observation

Observing performance will be the most common method used in assessing the SVQ.

Observation can be organised in a variety of ways:

- continuously working alongside the candidate
- arranging to work alongside the candidate at specific times
- planning to visit when particularly relevant activities are scheduled
- arranging for particular activities to take place.

The candidate will be able to supplement direct observation of performance with other types of evidence, eg personal statements or witness testimonies. It is also possible to use tape recordings or other technology to record performance should it not be possible for you to attend.

Observation by an assessor is considered to be the most valid and reliable method of assessment and there will be many naturally arising opportunities for you to use it.

Expert witnesses can provide observational evidence as guided by the NOS, but it is for the assessor to decide whether this evidence is acceptable for the portfolio.

You should complete an observation record to show the internal and external verifier how you reached a decision on the candidate's competence.

Product evaluation

This involves judging products that candidates have produced during the course of their work. Product evidence will be used a great deal. The exact nature of this evidence will depend on what the candidate's job entails.

Questioning

Candidates have to prove that they have the required knowledge and understanding for each unit. They will often demonstrate it through producing evidence, although in some cases this will not be possible.

Questioning is the ideal way of proving whether or not the candidate has the necessary knowledge and understanding. Questions can be given in many forms, for example professional discussion, short-answer questions, projects, case studies, assignments.

There may be more emphasis on questioning to prove knowledge in areas where evidence is generated through practical working activities and where there is no product evidence. If you are a visiting assessor you might use questioning to prove the candidate's competence and the authenticity of the evidence.

Questioning is a powerful means of checking the knowledge and understanding that lies behind performance. It is also a useful tool for exploring why a candidate acted in a certain way or to identify what they would have done if circumstances had been different.

Questions, whether oral or written, should not require candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding in ways that are either more complex or more simplistic than is necessary to meet the standards.

Step 3: Judge the evidence

The following criteria must be used when evaluating a piece of work to see if it can be put forward as evidence (including supporting evidence).

- **Relevance:** the degree of 'match' between the item of evidence and the required competence, range statement and underpinning knowledge for a unit. If the evidence does not match, it is not relevant.
- **Validity:** the evidence must relate to a specific part of the appropriate SVQ standards.
- **Authenticity:** the evidence must be the work of your candidate as an individual and not someone else or a group of people. You may need confirmation from the candidate's professional colleagues.
- **Currency:** the evidence must show the present ability of the candidate to perform to the national standards. The assessor should judge the acceptability of evidence from the past by the length of time that has elapsed since the performance described took place. Judgements should take into account the 'perishability' of the skill involved, as well as 'watershed' or 'landmark' occurrences in the sector, such as changes in the law, philosophy or practice. (If the competence is demonstrated in a skill test or simulation then it becomes evidence of current competence rather than evidence from the past.)
- **Quantity:** the evidence must cover all the performance and knowledge requirements laid down in the standards but does not require one piece of evidence per element or evidence requirement. The use of integrated evidence should be promoted and the quality of evidence emphasised over the quantity.
- **Variety:** there must be evidence of performance in differing contexts or situations as required by the standards.
- **Sufficiency:** performance to the required standard must be consistent, ie it should be achieved on more than one occasion.

You have to be certain that the candidate has demonstrated competence. Even though all the performance criteria have to be met, when making judgements about sufficiency you should concentrate on the elements and units as they describe what is required. It is not necessary to observe each performance criterion several times but it is necessary to record all evidence that has been taken into account so that it can be identified by internal and external verifiers if necessary. Evidence will have different values – some will leave you in no doubt about competence, while in other

cases you may need to ask for further evidence before you are confident about consistency of performance. The evidence requirements or guidance in the standards will also help you to form your views and make your decision.

In short, you must be satisfied that your candidate can work consistently to the required standard and that evidence is not simply an isolated event unlikely to be repeated.

Step 4: Record

For each unit you should ensure that there is a verifiable record of:

- the assessment activities carried out, showing the methods used and evidence produced
- the date and people involved in the assessment
- your judgement of the candidate's competence
- the location of each piece of evidence within the candidate's portfolio or in their workplace.

The record sheets provided in the *Edexcel SVQ Candidate Logbook* will allow all of this information to be recorded and we recommend their use. However, your centre may use its own recording documentation. This is acceptable as long as it contains all the required information and is passed by your external verifier as fit for purpose.

Insufficient evidence

Where insufficient evidence has been presented or where the candidate has not met the performance criteria at the end of the targeted assessment period you should indicate that the candidate is not yet competent. Feedback to the candidate must include giving the reason why the decision has been made which should be recorded along with a plan to enable the candidate to attain competence.

Step 5: Provide feedback

Your candidate will need to be clear about your judgements and the reasons for them. Time should be set aside for feedback that conforms to the following general principles:

- feedback should relate the candidate's evidence to the NOS
- you should agree what form the feedback will take, written notes are always useful as a record but candidates should be given time to reflect on your comments
- you should ensure that your comments have been understood and that you listen to the candidate's views
- finally, you should agree what happens as a result of the feedback – its purpose is to help candidates make the necessary adjustments, whether this means supplying more evidence, trying again or taking steps to develop the competence that is missing.

Evidence supporting assessment

Testimony – personal and witness

It is inevitable that you will not be able to observe everything your candidate does. On such occasions, statements (testimonies) from other people who have seen your candidate working can be useful sources of evidence for the SVQ as they can describe each activity in detail.

Generally, testimonies are used to support other evidence produced. You should bear in mind that the strength of evidence will vary depending on the knowledge and expertise of the person providing the testimony and you will have to take several factors into account when you make a judgement. It may help if you think of a line from strongest to weakest.

Strongest	Stronger	Weaker	Weakest
Professional worker in senior position in same type of work with knowledge of the standards, eg expert witness.	Professional worker in senior position but with limited or no knowledge of the standards.	Colleague with equal experience but no knowledge of the standards.	Person with experience of the workplace or knowledge of the standards.

Expert witness evidence

The use of expert witnesses is encouraged as a contribution to the assessment of evidence of the candidate's competence in some SVQs, especially where there are no occupationally competent assessors for certain occupationally-specific units.

Expert witnesses must have:

- a working knowledge of NOS for the units on which their expertise is based
- current expertise and occupational competence, ie within the last two years, either as a practitioner or manager, for the units on which their expertise is based. This experience must be credible and clearly demonstrable through continuing learning and development
- either qualification in assessment of workplace performance applicable to the sector or a professional work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff.

The NOS and Assessment Strategy for specific SVQs normally provide clear guidance or requirements for expert witnesses. Please refer to the assessment strategy, (*Annexe C*).

Work products

A number of items could be produced by candidates as evidence, for example spreadsheets and databases used to support work, copies of records or reports that the candidate has compiled, letters and memos, minutes of meetings, leaflets or booklets that provide information to clients, photographs, audio-visual evidence of work which the candidate has carried out. Work products can be located in the candidate's portfolio or in the candidate's workplace and they should be cross-referenced to the performance criteria/elements to which they apply.

Work products must be wholly or partially the result of work undertaken by the candidate. To ensure authenticity, the products should be countersigned by a person in a position of responsibility who is able to vouch that the products are the unaided work of the candidate.

Using simulation

In SVQs, the emphasis is on the candidate being able to carry out real work activities so assessment will normally be carried out in the workplace itself.

On some occasions, however, it might not be appropriate for you to assess a candidate while they are working. For example, where the SVQ requires candidates to carry out emergency or contingency procedures, for safety or confidentiality reasons and/or where a candidate's current job role does not cover all aspects of the qualification. In these circumstances, and if the candidate has no other means of generating evidence, simulation might be appropriate.

Simulation is any structured exercise involving a specific task that reproduces real-life situations. If simulation is used, particular care must be taken to ensure that:

- the conditions in which you are assessing the candidate mirror the work environment, ie it is a realistic working environment (RWE)
- the simulation allows candidates to demonstrate competence across the full range specified in the learning outcomes
- the evidence generated is sufficient to convince you that the candidate has achieved the required standard of competence and that they are capable of sustaining that performance.

For further details refer to the SVQ Sector guidance for centres.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

In assessing candidates for an SVQ evidence relating to past performance can be used as well as that relating to current performance.

In recent years, the concept of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has developed as a way of ensuring that the past experiences and learning of mature people are recognised and validated. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that SVQs are awarded on the basis of assessment of performance against standards.

The competence basis of SVQs means that evidence must always relate to performance, not just knowledge. The evidence of performance must always be valid and relevant to specific standards.

Disagreement

Your centre will have an appeals procedure that is used by candidates if they disagree with an assessment decision you have made. Make sure you are familiar with the procedure and that candidates know how to use it.

The appeals procedure should make it clear how complaints will be dealt with and what the outcome might be.

As an assessor you should make sure that you have a route through which you can express your concerns and reservations, whether about working with a particular candidate or an aspect of the standards and assessment method.

Section 3: How should evidence be presented?

While some assessors and their candidates will opt for alternative methods of gathering and presenting evidence, some will continue to use the traditional portfolio/Edexcel logbook. This section gives guidance on presentation of evidence. Centres can devise their own approaches as long as they agree them with the external verifier and check that all standards have been met.

Candidates and centres can choose from a range of models for the storage of evidence linked to the Edexcel logbook.

Evidence requirements can be found in the subject-specific *Edexcel SVQ Candidate Logbook*. The structure of the portfolio, whatever the format, must contain a minimum of the following:

- index of evidence
- ‘qualification summary and sign-off’ form showing units undertaken with signing-off facility by assessors and verifiers
- candidate declaration of evidence authenticity, which is built into the unit summary form
- witness status list and sample signatures
- unit tracking sheets
- unit evidence. This might be evidence presented as a paper portfolio with copies of the evidence, but candidates are encouraged to leave easily-accessible evidence in its natural location and index it rather than duplicating it in the portfolio. Centres can use alternative models including storing the evidence and unit summary sheets as electronic files. We advise you not to separate evidence for each unit as this can lead to duplication and there is a **tendency to miss the relevance of evidence across units**.

We recommend that you compile your portfolio in the following order:

1 Portfolio title page

2 Personal profile

3 Contents checklist

4 Index of evidence

5 Unit assessment plan

**6 Unit progress and sign-off
record**

**7 Element achievement
record**

**8 Knowledge evidence
record**

9 Personal statement

10 Observation record

11 Witness testimony

12 Expert witness evidence

**13 Record of questions and
candidate's answers**

Portfolio recording forms – explanation

Examples of some of these forms can be found in *Annexe A*.

1 – Portfolio title page

The portfolio title page includes the candidate's details and the unit titles in the candidate's portfolio.

2 – Personal profile

This includes the candidate's personal details and details of their work environment – candidates could use their current CV.

3 – Contents checklist

The candidate might find it useful to complete the checklist as they work their way through their portfolio. This will help to make sure that the relevant items have been included. Once the portfolio is complete, the checklist can be used as a contents page, by inserting the relevant page or section numbers in the right-hand column.

4 – Index of evidence

The index of evidence should be at the front of the portfolio. As pieces of evidence are produced, they should be given a unique number. Candidates then complete the index of evidence so that the evidence can be easily located. Every piece of evidence should be numbered and referenced on the index, including evidence that is not located in the portfolio, such as confidential material which has been left in situ in the workplace.

If the evidence is sampled the final column of the *Index of evidence* should be completed by the internal verifier.

5 – Unit assessment plan

Before candidates begin to collect any evidence it will be helpful to compile, with the help of the assessor, an assessment plan. The plan should identify normal work routines, defining the tasks to be carried out, how long the tasks will take and the evidence that will be generated. The tasks should be 'normal working activities' and part of the day-to-day job role, or 'activities needing to be performed', which means that opportunities to carry out the tasks need to be generated.

Producing an assessment plan will help to identify:

- suitable opportunities for integrating assessment of different units
- any activities and tasks that may need to be undertaken through simulation
- any competences that may require specific assessment opportunities.

6 – Unit progress and sign-off record

This form enables the candidate and the assessor to see at a glance what stage the candidate is at in their qualification.

Each time a unit is achieved, the candidate puts their signature and the date next to the relevant unit title, ensuring that the evidence can be easily located. Before signing against a unit title, the candidate will need to make sure that the assessor has completed the recording documents.

7 – Element achievement record

This lists the performance criteria and scope in an element that the candidate needs to prove competence for. Each time the candidate meets the requirements of an outcome, they should write the date in the relevant box. The National Occupational Standards (NOS) will normally indicate how many times a candidate needs to provide performance evidence to show consistency.

On completion of each element, the assessor will give the candidate feedback about their performance, informing them if they have been successful in achieving the required level of competence for individual outcomes. There is space on the back of the form for the assessor to make comments and/or notes from the feedback session. Candidates should be clear about the assessment decision and understand fully what has been said. The assessor and candidate should both then sign and date the form before filing it in the relevant section of the portfolio/logbook.

8 – Knowledge evidence record

This lists all the knowledge and understanding requirements that the candidate needs to demonstrate for a unit. It is important that the candidate understands the knowledge requirements relating to their expectations and the requirements of their job role.

While working through individual elements, the candidate should tick the appropriate boxes on the form to show which type of evidence has been collected and to prove that the candidate has the required level of knowledge and understanding.

Once the candidate is satisfied that they have achieved the knowledge and understanding requirements for the whole unit the assessor should, as with the element achievement record, note their comments from the feedback session on the form. The candidate and the assessor should then sign and date the form before filing it in the portfolio.

Remember that on completion of the unit the assessor should complete the candidate's unit progress record.

9 – Personal statement

Candidates should use personal statements to record their experience of something, such as how they handled a specific situation. They should describe what they did, how they did it and why they did it. They can refer to other people who were present. Those people might provide a 'witness testimony' which should be noted in the 'Links to other evidence' column on the statement form.

Candidates might also use their personal statements to put pieces of evidence in context for the assessor to help in deciding if it is relevant to the SVQ. For example, candidates may refer to paperwork that is used in their organisation to pass information to a colleague. It may not be clear to the assessor why they are communicating in this way and a brief explanation from the candidate of its relevance may be required.

10 – Observation record

The assessor should record observations of the candidate as they work, and:

- describe the skills used
- describe the activities performed
- specify the units or parts of the units that are covered by the observation
- provide details of the knowledge and understanding apparent from performance and any questions asked during or after performance
- list the other units/elements to which the evidence may contribute ‘integration of assessment’.

The assessor should keep a note of their comments and feedback to the candidate. Once completed, the record of the observation should be referenced as evidence and included in the portfolio.

11 – Witness testimony

There may be occasions when the assessor is not able to observe the candidate carrying out certain aspects of their job. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate for another person to comment on the candidate’s performance by completing a statement called a ‘witness testimony’.

Witness testimony should be used only to support other forms of evidence – such as a product. It should:

- be provided by a person who is not related to the candidate and who is in a position to make a valid comment about their performance, eg a supervisor, line manager, a client, a customer
- contain comments that relate the candidate’s performance specifically to the SVQ NOS
- be authenticated by the inclusion of the witness’s signature, role, address, telephone number and the date.

12 – Expert witness evidence

Where there are no occupationally competent assessors for occupationally-specific units, the use of expert witnesses is encouraged in contributing to the assessment of evidence of competence,

Expert witnesses must have:

- a working knowledge of NOS for the units on which their expertise is based
- current expertise and occupational competence, ie within the last two years, either as practitioner or manager, for the units on which their expertise is based. This experience must be credible and clearly demonstrable through continuing learning and development. Centres must retain records of the expert witnesses, CVs and continuing professional activities. Expert witnesses must hold a qualification in assessment of workplace performance, relevant SVQ qualifications, or a professional qualification work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff. The SSC/SSB will normally specify their requirements in their Assessment Strategy and this means that expert witnesses may need to hold appropriate subject-specific qualifications.

13 – Record of questions and candidate’s answers

This form is used to record any questions the assessor asks the candidate to establish that they have the underpinning knowledge and evidence required for a unit. The candidate’s answers, or a précis and/or bullet points regarding the issues discussed should also be noted. Both the candidate and the assessor should sign and date the form.

Portfolio/logbook recording forms

Samples of all the forms mentioned in this section are in *Annexe A*.

Section 4: Further information

How does an organisation become an Edexcel centre?

Organisations can offer SVQs either by becoming a registered centre in their own right or by working with another organisation that has this status.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that internal quality control mechanisms are in place. Specifically, a centre needs to:

- develop a physical resource within the centre that addresses the needs of candidates and the NOS
- select and train assessors and internal verifiers according to the relevant SSC/SSB requirements
- provide appropriate assessment opportunities for candidates, eg a suitable number at suitable times
- provide candidates with copies of the units appropriate to their qualification, eg through a paper or electronic logbook
- provide assessors and internal verifiers with copies of the appropriate standards, including the Assessment Strategy.

Details of approval procedures are available from Customer Services, on our website and at Edexcel Online.

Risk identification and management

Edexcel will manage how centres approach risk identification. This is done at the time the centre is given their original approval and monitored twice a year by the appointed standards verifiers (SVs) to ensure that quality requirements are maintained.

Risks are rated during the centre approval visit and reported on with a recommendation for approval or further work. Centres with a poor rating will not be approved but be given an action plan detailing what they need to do to achieve approval.

When centres apply for new qualifications, eg the Hospitality SVQs, they are signing against their centre approval policies etc and approval is given based on these overall centre quality systems and policies. The SVs then monitor these twice a year and report to Edexcel and the centre.

For further information on Edexcel's Quality Review and Development policy please refer to the Quality Assurance Handbook on our Edexcel website.

Review and evaluation

The effective development of the programme depends on a full review of its operation and candidate performance. The review should be structured to allow all interested parties (candidates as well as staff) to contribute. The review should evaluate:

- success in meeting and the continuing relevance of the aims of the programme
- previous action plans
- admission, induction, advice and exit arrangements
- the programme of activities and arrangements for all candidates
- the assessment strategies and methods
- resource needs and availability of the resources to candidates
- the relevance, currency and effectiveness of support materials
- the external verifier's comments
- future resource requirements, including staff development.

A review should take place at least once during each programme. A report and an action plan describing the findings and actions to be taken should be produced after each review.

Registration

Every candidate must be registered with an assessment centre that has been approved to deliver the SVQ they intend to be entered for.

To register, candidates should complete an Edexcel registration form (available on the Edexcel website). The form should be returned to Edexcel via the candidate's centre contact. Edexcel will register candidates and issue them with an enrolment number. **Candidates should check this and ensure that all their details are correct. The notification will show their name as it will appear on any award they receive.** If there are any errors please contact Edexcel immediately.

Candidate entries

Entries for SVQs will be accepted on a group award or on a unit-by-unit basis.

In most cases, candidates will be entered for a group award, as well as for the component units. If you enter a completion date for the group award, you need not enter the completion date for the component units (providing the completion date is the same) as verification will be carried out on the whole-group award.

All SVQ entries will need to be processed 10 weeks before the end of the month you have given as the completion date.

Please note that for SVQ units and group awards, there is no discretion in the application of the 10-week rule. Like all other SVQ awarding bodies, we are required to operate this rule to comply with the national criteria for accreditation as an awarding body. This means that no SVQ certification can take place until the 10-week period has elapsed.

Certification process

So that candidates receive their qualification certificates without error or delay it is essential that you are familiar with the certification procedures used by Edexcel.

Once a unit has been achieved and the unit achievement form countersigned by the internal verifier, the centre contact should register it with Edexcel.

Details of the candidate's achievement will be entered in our records and we will issue a 'Record of Achievement'. This is sent to the centre contact to be passed on to the candidate.

When the candidate has achieved all the required units, we issue the SVQ certificate.

Centre contacts should be aware of Edexcel requirements. For example:

- relevant forms and documents and how to complete them
- the accredited centre number and relevant contacts
- appropriate Edexcel contacts
- how long qualifications take to process.

Your centre should inform assessors and internal verifiers on the administrative procedures used before assessment of candidates begins.

All assessors should ensure that there are full records of assessment and related evidence available for inspection by the external verifier. Inspection is part of the external verifier's role, to ensure that the approved centre is maintaining quality standards.

If there is a problem

If a Record of Achievement or certificate does not arrive when expected, the centre should contact Edexcel and have available:

- the candidate's enrolment number
- the centre's registration number
- the name and number of the scheme and qualification that the candidate has entered.

This ensures that the correct records can be accessed as quickly as possible.

Payment of fees

Edexcel will invoice the assessment centre for all fees due, both for registration of new candidates and for certification of candidates' achievement. The assessment centre is responsible for paying these fees to Edexcel and for making its own arrangements to claim any fees due from candidates or their employers.

Anti-discriminatory practices

As part of the approval process, centres are required to ensure that they have an equal opportunities policy in place that covers all aspects of assessment, including access to assessment and taking into account the timing and frequency of assessments. Internal verifiers have a key role in their work with assessors to ensure that assessments do not discriminate against any candidates.

All centres should publish an appeals procedure, which is made available to staff and candidates.

Access and special assessment arrangements

Edexcel's policy on access arrangements and special considerations for BTEC and SVQ qualifications aims to enhance access to the qualifications for learners with disabilities and other difficulties without compromising the assessment of skills, knowledge, understanding or competence.

Candidates with a physical disability, a sensory impairment, a specific learning difficulty, or a temporary disability at the time of the assessment may be eligible for special assessment arrangements.

Special assessment arrangements are intended to enable candidates to demonstrate their level of competence in relation to the qualification standards. They are not intended to compensate for lack of competence and should not:

- give an unfair advantage to candidates
- reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment or compromise the credibility of the award
- mislead users of Edexcel certificates about candidates' competence.

It is important to note that where special assessment arrangements are applied, they may result in an amended certificate being issued. Any requests for special assessment arrangements need to be submitted to Edexcel at the earliest possible date and separately from the entry itself.

What else should you read?

The following publications give more information about SVQs.

Publication

Edexcel SVQ sector guidance for centres

Edexcel SVQ candidate logbook, by qualification, by level

Publications code

specific to each SVQ or suite of SVQs

specific to each SVQ or suite of SVQs

How do you contact us?

For further information about SVQs and our other qualifications, please contact Customer Services. Our Customer Services numbers are:

BTEC, SVQ and NVQ	0844 576 0026
GCSE	0844 576 0027
GCE	0844 756 0025
The Diploma	0844 576 0028
DiDA and other qualifications	0844 576 0031

Calls may be recorded for training purposes.

You can also contact us through 'Ask Edexcel' at www.edexcel.com/ask.

Annexe A – Portfolio/logbook recording forms

Example form 1 – Portfolio title page

Name:	
Job title:	
Name of employer/training provider/college:	
Their address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone number (Mobile):	(Work):
Email address:	
SVQ:	
Level:	
Units submitted for assessment:	
Mentor/Supervisor:	
(Please provide details of mentor's/supervisor's experience):	
Assessor:	Date:

Example form 2 – Personal profile

Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone number (Mobile):	(Work):
Email address:	
Job title:	
Relevant experience	
Description of your current job:	
Previous work experience or attach copy of a current CV:	
Qualifications and training and/or attach copy of a current CV:	

continued overleaf...

Voluntary work/interests:

Name of employer/training provider/college:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone number (work):

Email address:

Type of business, if employer:

Number of staff:

Structure of organisation (including chart or diagram if available):

Example form 3 – Contents checklist

SVQ title:		
Candidate:		
	Completed?	Page/section number
Title page for the portfolio		
Personal profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your own personal details • a brief CV or career profile • description of your job • information about your employer/training provider/college 		
Summary of the units		
Completed units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signed by yourself, your assessor and the internal verifier (where relevant) • reference numbers included • unit assessment plans 		
Unit progress records		
Index of evidence (with cross-referencing information completed)		
Evidence (with reference numbers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observation records • details of witnesses (witness testimony sheets) • personal statements 		

Example form 5 – Unit assessment plan

SVQ title:				
Unit:				
Candidate:			Assessor:	
Normal working activities performed				
	TYPICAL EVIDENCE	WORK AREA	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	LINKS TO OTHER UNITS/ELEMENTS
ELEMENT:				
ELEMENT:				
ELEMENT:				
Activities needing to be performed				
ELEMENT:				
ELEMENT:				
ELEMENT:				
Additional comments				
Assessor's signature:			Date:	
Candidate's signature:			Date:	

Example form 7 – Work Log

SVQ title and level:				
Unit/element(s):				
Candidate:				
Purpose of statement:				
Evidence index number:				
Date	Evidence index number	Details of statement	Links to other evidence <i>(enter numbers)</i>	Units, elements and PCs covered
Candidate's signature:			Date:	
Assessor's signature:			Date:	

Example form 8 – Observation record

SVQ title and level:	
Unit/element(s):	
Candidate:	Date of observation:
Evidence index number:	
Skills/activities observed:	PCs and range covered:
Knowledge and understanding apparent from this observation:	
Other units/elements to which this evidence may contribute:	
Assessor comments and feedback to candidate:	
I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.	
Assessor's signature:	Date:
Candidate's signature:	Date:

Example form 9 – Witness testimony

SVQ title and level:	
Candidate name:	
Evidence index number:	
Where applicable, evidence number to which this testimony relates:	
Unit:	
Element(s):	
Range:	
Date of evidence:	
Witness name:	
Relationship to candidate:	
Details of testimony:	
I can confirm the candidate's evidence is authentic and accurate.	
Witness signature:	
Name:	Date:
Contact telephone number:	
<i>Please tick (✓) the appropriate box.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Qualified as an assessor for workplace performance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiar with the SVQ standards to which the candidate is working

Example form 10 – Expert witness evidence record

SVQ title and level:	
Candidate name:	
Evidence index number:	
Where applicable, evidence number to which this testimony relates:	
Unit:	
Element(s):	
Date of evidence:	
Expert witness name:	
Relationship to candidate:	
Details of testimony:	
I can confirm the candidate's evidence is authentic and accurate.	
Expert witness signature:	
Name:	Date:
Contact telephone number:	

<i>Please tick (✓) the appropriate box.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Qualified as an assessor for workplace performance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant professional work role that involves evaluating everyday staff practice
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current expertise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiar with the SVQ standards to which the candidate is working

Example form 11 – Record of questions and candidate’s answers

SVQ title and level:	
Candidate name:	
Unit:	Element(s):
Evidence index number:	
Circumstances of assessment:	
List of questions and candidate’s responses:	
Q:	
A:	
Q:	
A:	
Assessor’s signature:	Date:
Candidate’s signature:	Date:

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