

# Assessment Strategy for SVQ 3 in Dental Nursing

## Skills for Health

### 1. General Introduction

This Assessment Strategy has been produced by Skills for Health in cooperation with sector representative and Awarding Organisation/Bodies partners. It relates to the assessment of the Level 3 SVQ in Dental Nursing.

It deals with assessment, verification, evidence and quality control under the following headings:

- Assessment
- Roles and Responsibilities in the Assessment and Verification Processes
- Sources of Evidence and Assessment
- External Quality Control.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate competence in all of the Units.

They must also be able to perform to the required standard over a period of time.

This Strategy supersedes and replaces all previous Assessment Strategies and supplementary guidance. This Strategy includes the generic criteria that Awarding Organisations/Bodies must meet for the delivery of SVQs, as required by SQA Accreditation's current guidance and requirements.

### 2. Assessment

The SVQ is based on National Occupational Standards (NOS) and assesses the application of skills, knowledge and understanding in a specific occupation to the standards required in the workplace.

It is anticipated that much of the evidence for the assessment of the SVQ will be gathered as candidates carry out their usual duties in support of the wider oral healthcare team. This principle will apply to all competences, except where simulation has been deemed acceptable.

The requirements for occupational competence to assess Units may mean that candidates have more than one assessor or have expert witnesses which may be the candidate's mentor. In such cases, there should be a 'lead' assessor taking a coordinating role for the whole qualification and supporting the candidate (see section 3.4).

## **2.1 Access to Assessment**

All candidates should have equal access to assessment regardless of geographical location, work setting and patterns of work.

The qualification must be delivered within the constraints of current legal practice. The needs of under-represented groups should be addressed including those from ethnic minority communities, those experiencing disability, and those experiencing sensory impairment.

All individuals involved in the process (ie assessors, expert witnesses, verifiers) should clearly demonstrate their commitment to equality of opportunity.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities in the Assessment and Verification Processes**

### **3.1 Assessors**

#### **Occupational Competence**

Those involved in the assessment of the qualification should have the following occupational competence:

- be a dentist who holds a qualification recognised by the General Dental Council (GDC) for registration
- be a dental nurse who holds a qualification recognised by the GDC for registration and who can demonstrate ongoing occupational competence
- be Dental Care Professionals (DCPs) who are competent in the area of practice to which the particular national occupational standards apply and who hold a qualification recognised by the GDC for enrolment or statutory registration (e.g. dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental technologists)
- be professionals who are competent in the area of practice to which the particular national occupational standards apply and who hold a qualification recognised by another UK Health Regulatory body and are registered with the appropriate healthcare regulator in health and social care (e.g. anaesthetists, radiographers)
- hold, or be working towards, the appropriate Assessor Qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation. Assessors holding older assessor qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are assessing to the current standards

### **3.2 Co-ordinating Assessors and Lead Assessors**

In order that the requirements for occupational competence of assessors and expert witnesses can be met while allowing flexibility of delivery, candidates may have more than one assessor or expert witness involved in the assessment process.

Where more than one assessor or expert witness is involved in the qualification, there must be a named assessor who is responsible for the overall coordination of the assessment for each candidate. The Co-ordinating

Assessor will be responsible for integrating, planning and directing the assessment for the whole qualification. Co-ordinating Assessors must also satisfy the requirements as stated under 3.1

Where more than one assessor is involved in a Unit, there must be a named assessor who is responsible for the overall coordination of the assessment for that Unit. The Lead Assessor must ensure that the best use is made of all available evidence and will make the final judgment of competence in each Unit where other assessors have been involved.

It is expected that all assessors will work closely with internal verifiers to ensure standardised practice and judgements within the assessment process.

### **3.3 Expert Witnesses**

The use of Expert Witnesses is encouraged as a contribution to the provision of performance evidence presented for assessment.

The role of the expert witness is to submit evidence to the assessor as to the competence of the candidate in any given Unit. This evidence must directly relate to the candidate's performance in the work place which has been seen by the expert witness.

The expert witness must have credible experience/occupational competence as either a dental nurse, Dental Care Practitioner or oral health manager in the area being assessed

All expert witnesses must be inducted by the centre so that they are familiar with the standards for those Units for which they are to provide expert witness evidence. They must also understand the Centre's recording requirements and will need guidance on the skills required to provide testimony for the Units.

It is not necessary for Expert Witnesses to hold an assessor qualification as a qualified assessor must decide upon the acceptability of evidence, regardless of source. This would include Expert Witness evidence.

### **3.4 Internal Verifiers**

It is crucial that internal verifiers understand the nature and context of the assessors' work and that of their candidates due to the critical nature of the work and the legal and other implications of the assessment process.

#### **Internal verifiers must:**

- be occupationally knowledgeable in respect of the competences they are going to verify prior to commencing the role

- have working knowledge of dental settings, the regulation, legislation and codes of practice for the service (where applicable), and the requirements of national standards at the time any assessment is taking place
- occupy a position that gives them authority and resources to coordinate the work of assessors, provide authoritative advice, call meetings as appropriate, visit and observe assessments and carry out all the other internal verification roles as defined by the relevant national occupational standard
- hold, or be working towards, the appropriate Internal Verifier qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation. Internal verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to current standards.

It is recognised that internal verifiers are expected to verify the assessment process and not re-assess the evidence provided

### **3.5 Assessment Centres**

Assessment Centres will be responsible for maintaining up-to-date information on assessors, internal verifiers and expert witnesses and for ensuring the currency of the competence of all those involved in the assessment process.

## **4. Sources of Evidence and Assessment**

### **4.1 Observation of Practice**

Evidence of candidates' performance will be drawn primarily from naturally occurring work activities that take place under normal working conditions in a normal work environment. Evidence of performance is expected in all Units of the qualification.

Therefore there must be evidence of observation of practice by:

- ◆ A qualified assessor or
- ◆ An expert witness

Where expert witness evidence has been used solely to evidence candidate performance in a Unit, the assessor must carry out a professional discussion to ensure the assessors' final assessment decision is robust. Knowledge to support performance should be based on practice evidence and reflection.

### **4.2 Other assessment methods may include:**

- ◆ simulation
- ◆ direct questioning
- ◆ assignments
- ◆ assessment of products

- ◆ APEL and RPL
- ◆ Candidate's reflective accounts and personal statements
- ◆ Evidence by a witness testimony
- ◆ Professional discussion

The methods of assessment are not exhaustive and a number of other methods may contribute to the assessment of the qualification.

### **4.3 Professional Discussion**

It is a requirement that professional discussion, of which an auditable record has been made, between the assessor and the candidate must take place when direct observation by an assessor is not possible.

Professional Discussion is a discussion which is planned and led by the assessor and must be recorded in such a way as to create an audit trail.

It is not a question and answer session, but more of a chance for wider ranging discussions reflecting and evaluating on areas decided during the planning process.

Professional discussion provides a holistic approach to assessing knowledge and understanding and is useful in determining not only what and how a candidate is performing, but also their analytical and decision-making abilities.

### **4.4 Simulations**

The use of simulation is permitted only in Units CHS36 and OH2 and should only be undertaken in the minority of cases i.e where performance is critical and:

- ◆ where events either never or infrequently occur and yet a high degree of confidence is needed that the candidate would act appropriately for example, where events such as medical emergencies (such as cardiac arrest) occur and competence is vital to ensure best practice and results

Or

- ◆ where events happen frequently but where there is risk of harm to the candidate or service user in a real situation, for example, dealing with aggressive or abusive situations (although evidence from direct observation should be used where possible).

Where simulations are used they must replicate working activities in realistic (but not necessarily actual) workplace environments and this must be agreed with the Internal Verifier and if necessary, the External Verifier beforehand.

## **5. External Quality Control**

### **5.1 External Verification**

The standard external verification model will apply to the qualifications. Awarding Organisations/Bodies are responsible for the competence of external verifiers and must require them to monitor Centres' performance in accordance with regulatory requirements of SQA Accreditation, sampling all aspects of the qualifications' delivery. External verification will include both assuring the quality of the centre that is responsible for making the assessment and sampling from the judgments made on a number of candidates to ensure they are of consistent quality.

Awarding Organisations/Bodies must require external verifiers to take part in regular standardisation activities.

## **5.2 External Verifiers**

The external verifier is the key link for Awarding Organisations/Bodies in the quality assurance and verification of the assessment of candidates' performance in the workplace.

External verifiers must:

- ◆ have a working knowledge of dental care settings, the regulation, legislation and codes of practice for the service they are verifying (where applicable)
- ◆ have working knowledge of the requirements of the national standards they are verifying at the time any assessment is taking place
- ◆ hold, or be working towards, the appropriate external verifier qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation. External verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to current standards
- ◆ external verifiers who are not yet qualified against the appropriate competence but have the necessary occupational competence and experience, can be supported by a qualified external verifier who does not necessarily have the occupational expertise or experience
- ◆ have credible experience which is clearly demonstrable through continuing learning and development

## **6. General**

Skills for Health will work with all stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Occupational Standards and review them as part of the overall management programme for the qualifications.