

**Assessment Strategy**

**Sector**

**Qualification Title(s)**

**Developed by**

**Approved by ACG**

**Version**

Pharmacy Services

SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6

SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 8

Skills for Health

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# Assessment Strategy for the SVQs in Pharmacy Services

## Introduction

This strategy sets out specifications for the assessment and quality control of the SVQs in Pharmacy Services. It has been produced by Skills for Health (SfH) in cooperation with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), sector representatives, SQA Accreditation and awarding body partners.

This assessment strategy relates to the following SVQs:

- SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF Level 6
- SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF Level 8

This document outlines the principles that underpin the assessment of the above qualifications with regard to:

- 1. External quality control of assessment**
- 2. Assessment**
- 3. Use and characteristics of simulation**
- 4. Roles within the assessment and verification process**
- 5. Sources of evidence**

These principles are in addition to the regulatory requirements that awarding bodies must meet as specified by SQA Accreditation.

This strategy supersedes and replaces all previous assessment strategies and supplementary guidance.

## 1. External Quality Control of Assessment

The standard external verification model will apply to these qualifications. Awarding bodies are responsible for the competence of those involved in external verification activities and must require them to monitor centre performance in accordance with regulatory requirements, sampling all aspects of qualification 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.

Skills for Health work with awarding bodies to ensure that:

- there is a comprehensive strategy for sampling assessment which is applied across centres
- the level of sampling undertaken in external verification is sufficient to guarantee consistently high standards between centres and between awarding bodies
- external verification takes place using scrutiny of documents and observation of the assessment and verification practices in assessment centres subject to the need for confidentiality
- external verification is planned proportionally and linked to assessment centre performance
- external verifiers are required to take part in regular standardisation activities.

Skills for Health will work with all stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Occupational Standards, the qualification structures and this assessment strategy.

## 2. Assessment

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate competence in the required mandatory and selected optional units. They must also be able to perform to the required standard over a period of time.

Assessment of candidate's performance must take place during the course of their day-to-day work. Direct observation of the candidate's performance in the workplace must be the primary source of evidence. Observations should be of naturally occurring practice within the candidate's work role and include demonstration of application of knowledge and understanding. This principle will apply to all units except where simulation has been deemed acceptable.

## 2.1 Equal opportunities

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

- Candidates must be enabled and supported to undertake a qualification
- The qualifications must be delivered within the constraints of current legal practice
- The needs of under-represented groups should be addressed
- All individuals involved in the process should clearly demonstrate their commitment to equality of opportunity.

## 2.2 Holistic assessment

Each unit has knowledge and understanding relevant to the specified area of practice. Assessment of knowledge and understanding should, wherever possible, be carried out during performance to ensure integration of theory and practice. Evidence of knowledge and understanding should be clearly identified within the audit trail.

Assessors need to ensure that the candidate is able to apply knowledge and understanding within the context of the units. Assessors may use holistic assessment to establish the knowledge and understanding required to support competent practice. Holistic assessment should be used as outlined in this strategy. This will support establishing knowledge and understanding within and across units.

## 3. Use and Characteristics of Simulation

Simulation should only be undertaken in a minority of situations when the candidate is unable to complete the unit because of the lack of opportunity within their normal day to day practice. Simulation may also be considered if there is a potential risk to the candidate or others. Evidence of competence in such situations is viewed as essential to ensure best practice and confidence in the candidate's ability to act appropriately.

Where simulation is used it **must** replicate usual activities in realistic workplace settings. Simulation can never be the sole source of evidence for a unit.

The use of simulation to support evidence should be agreed in advance by the assessor and candidate at the assessment planning stage. Those involved in the assessment process must be satisfied that the use of simulation does not compromise the rigor and integrity of assessment.

Evidence gathered using simulation must result from activities that have taken place in a realistic working environment. A realistic working environment should include the following features:

- It should reflect the workplace conditions and environment and include facilities, equipment and materials used in the workplace for the activities being assessed.
- It should reflect the relationships, constraints and pressures met in the workplace
- Information available to the candidate on the nature of the activity must be consistent with the policies and practices typical of the workplace setting

## 4. Roles within the Assessment and Verification Process

The assessment centre will be responsible for maintaining up-to-date information on assessors, internal verifiers and expert witnesses. Skills for Health (SfH) has identified that, in keeping with the ethos and breadth of units within the qualifications, there may be the following people involved in the assessment and verification process:

- assessors; co-ordinating assessors; expert witnesses; internal verifiers; external verifiers

Details of the relationship between the candidate and the above must be declared and noted by the assessor.

### 4.1 Assessor

The assessor is the key to the assessment process. All assessors must:

- be a Pharmacist or a Pharmacy Technician who is competent in the area of practice to which the NOS being assessed apply. This means that each assessor must be capable of carrying out the functions covered by the units they are assessing to the standard described within them, according to current sector practice.

**and**

- take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills. This should be credible and maintained through clearly demonstrable continuing professional development appropriate to the area of assessed practice. It is expected that learning and development activity will contribute to professional development, inform practice and assist assessors to meet their roles and responsibilities in an informed, competent and confident manner

**and**

- have knowledge and experience of the regulation, legislation and/or codes of practice applicable to their role and the setting within which they work

**and**

- take the lead role in the assessment of observed candidate performance in relation to the units of the qualification.

**and**

- must hold, or be working towards, an appropriate assessor qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation, the qualification regulator. Achievement of assessor qualification needs to be within appropriate timescales. Assessors, who are working towards an appropriate assessor qualification and have the necessary occupational competence and experience, as identified above, should be supported by an appropriately qualified assessor. Appropriately qualified assessors must review and countersign decisions and activities. Assessors holding older assessor qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are assessing to the current standards.

## **4.2 Co-ordinating assessors and Lead assessors**

In order to allow flexibility of the assessment process, candidates may have more than one assessor each assessing different units or aspects of units. In such circumstances a named and agreed co-ordinating assessor must be identified. They will be responsible for co-ordinating the assessment of an individual candidate.

Co-ordinating assessors will be responsible for the integration, planning and directing of assessment for the whole qualification. Co-ordinating assessors must ensure best use is made of all evidence available to make judgements about the competence of candidates. The co-ordinating assessor should make the final judgement of competence for each unit that has been assessed by more than one assessor.

The co-ordinating assessor must be a qualified assessor who is occupationally competent and experienced in the terms stated in 4.1 of this document.

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

## **4.3 Expert witness**

The nature of work to be assessed may include situations of a sensitive nature which require confidentiality. There may also be occasions when there are no occupationally competent assessors for occupationally specific units. In such circumstances expert witnesses may be used as a source of performance evidence in the workplace.

Expert witnesses can be drawn from occupationally competent individuals who can attest to the candidate's performance in the workplace. This may include line managers or other experienced colleagues from inside an organisation or from other agencies.

Expert witnesses may prove particularly important for those candidates who are indirectly supervised during part of their work role, but who have contact with a range of different professionals in the course of their work activities.

Evidence from expert witnesses must meet the requirements of validity, reliability and authenticity. Expert witnesses must be inducted by the centre so they are familiar with those units for which they are to provide expert witness evidence.

Expert witnesses must:

- be occupationally competent in the area of practice to which the NOS being assessed apply
- have a working knowledge of the relevant National Occupational Standards for the competences on which their expertise is based
- hold a position recognised by the GPhC

**and**

- evidence continuous professional development relevant to the area of practice for which they are assessing competence

- have either a qualification in the assessment of workplace performance or a professional work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff
- understand the centre's recording requirements and the necessary skills required to provide evidence.

**NOTE:** The Expert Witness for occupationally specific units in the SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 8 **must be** a qualified Pharmacist or Pharmacy Technician.

#### 4.4 Internal Verifier

The Internal Verifier is central to the quality assurance and verification of assessment of performance evidence in the workplace. Due to the critical nature of the work internal verifiers must:

- be a Pharmacist or a Pharmacy Technician. 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

**and**

- take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills. This should be credible and maintained through clearly demonstrable continuing professional development appropriate to the area of assessed practice. It is expected that learning and development activity will contribute to professional development, inform practice and assist internal verifiers to meet their roles and responsibilities in an informed, competent and confident manner

**and**

- have working knowledge of the regulation, legislation and codes of practice applicable to their role and setting and at the time assessment is taking place

**and**

- occupy a position that gives them authority and resources to co-ordinate the work of assessors, provide authoritative advice, call meetings as appropriate, visit and observe assessments and carry out all the other internal verification roles

**and**

- must hold, or be working towards, an IV qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation, the qualification regulator. Achievement of IV qualification needs to be within appropriate timescales. Internal verifiers, who are working towards an appropriate IV qualification and have the necessary occupational competence and experience, as identified above, should be supported by an appropriately qualified internal verifier. Appropriately qualified internal verifiers must review and countersign decisions and activities. Internal Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to the current standards.

## 4.5 External Verifier

The External Verifier is the key link for awarding bodies in the quality assurance and verification of the assessment of candidates' performance in the workplace.

External verifiers must:

- be a Pharmacist or a Pharmacy Technician
- be occupationally knowledgeable and have gained their knowledge through working within the sector or appropriate professional/occupational area

**and**

- have working knowledge of the regulation, legislation and codes of practice applicable to their role and setting and at the time assessment is taking place

**and**

- hold, or be working towards, the appropriate EV qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation, the qualification regulator. External verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to current standards

**and**

- take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills. This should be credible and maintained through clearly demonstrable continuing professional development appropriate to the area of assessed practice.

External verifiers who are not yet qualified against the appropriate competences 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.

## 5. Sources of Evidence

Integration of knowledge and practice is a fundamental feature of work within the pharmacy sector. When planning for assessment it is essential that assessors and candidates identify opportunities to integrate a number of activities and knowledge. It is not generally necessary to provide separate pieces of evidence for each performance criteria. However, assessors and candidates need to be satisfied that all performance criteria and knowledge are covered.

Where candidates have particular needs, the evidence required may vary. Any alternative evidence used must demonstrate the standards of competence and knowledge identified in the unit, or any part of the unit. Evidence must be from the candidate's performance at work and will include the integration of the value requirements and the application of knowledge and understanding. This will be assessed through direct observation of practice.



It is expected that a range of different assessment methods will be used. However, there **must** be:

- direct observation of practice by a qualified assessor

or

- direct observation of practice by an expert witness and a professional discussion between the candidate and assessor

**and**

- a reflective account

There may also be:

(This list is not exhaustive)

- direct questioning and assignments
- assessment of products generated during the candidates' normal work practices
- expert witness testimony/evidence

### **5. 1 Alternative forms of recording evidence using ICT**

It is recognised that alternative forms of recording assessment evidence will evolve using information and communications technologies including e-portfolios. Regardless of the form of recording used, the guiding principle must be that information about practice must comply with legal requirements and best sector practice in relation to confidentiality. This information must also be traceable for internal and external verification purposes.

Additionally, assessors must ensure they are satisfied the evidence presented is valid, reliable, authentic, current and sufficient and meets the requirements set out in this strategy.

Awarding bodies must ensure that their guidance to assessment centres includes a common approach to the use of sources of evidence.