



THE INSTITUTE OF THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

Assessment Strategy

For

Vocational Competency Qualifications (VCQs)

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Introduction

This document sets out the recommendations of IMI for the assessment of VCQ qualifications based on IMI developed National Occupational Standards. The Strategy is designed to operate across all four nations, bringing parity to all learners. Awarding Organisations wishing to operate VCQs in the retail motor sector must take full part in the IMI Awarding Body Forum.

This is the overarching strategy for the assessment and verification of competency based qualifications (VCQs) that are based upon National Occupational Standards from the IMI and will come into force on the 30th June 2010, it will apply to any new competence based units and qualifications.

Assessment

VCQs are a type of qualification which reflects the unique needs of the workplace. They should be assessed in a holistic way by technically competent assessors. The primary method of assessment should always be direct workplace observation. Some use of simulation is allowed (please see page 4).

Additionally Awarding Organisations are encouraged to make use of naturally occurring quality assurance and monitoring systems where they exist in workplace assessment environments.

The Institute of the Motor Industry require Awarding Organisations delivering VCQs to participate in an Awarding Body Forum. This will, as a minimum, involve an annual meeting to discuss issues of assessment and verification.

VCQ must attest to competence in an occupational role (where competence is defined as the ability to apply knowledge, understanding, practical and thinking skills to be effective in work: these skills will usually include problem-solving, being flexible to meet changing demands and the ability to work with or alongside others).

Any assessment must attest to competence in an occupational role (where competence is defined as the ability to apply knowledge, understanding, practical and thinking skills to be effective in work: these skills will usually include problem-solving, being flexible to meet changing demands and the ability to work with or alongside others)

Evidence Requirements for VCQ

Candidates working towards a VCQ must provide evidence from the workplace that covers a minimum of a 4 month, (16 week), period.

All evidence for VCQs must be assessed by suitably qualified assessors and must adhere to the requirements for the QCF units being assessed.

Rules of combination

Rules of combination must be that determined by the IMI SSC.

Evidence other than from direct workplace observation

Workplace Assessment / Simulation.

IMI credit based units are work / competency based and therefore candidates are to be assessed under normal workplace conditions. It is recognised however, that there are situations where the workplace may not be appropriate or that waiting for naturally occurring evidence is impractical. In these situations IMI will allow centres to set up or devise assessment situations.

These assessment situations can only be set up after:-

- all possible routes for the collection of naturally occurring evidence have been exhausted.
- the exact make up and content of the centre devised assessment has been agreed and approved by the external verifier.
- the assessor can assure that the simulation will provide evidence that is valid reliable and authentic

We suggest that centres seek written confirmation before proceeding with assessment. The need for simulation may result from consideration of:

- Safety
- Legislation
- Regulation
- Contingency
- Cost
- Frequency

In addition, IMI recognises that candidates using these credit based units in the context of a Level 1 qualification may be in a learning environment and not in a workplace. In these situations, centres may set up or devise assessment situations as required, with prior written agreement of the external verifier.

Any simulation must be carried out using actual vehicles; the use of engine rigs or electrical boards is not permitted.

IMI re-iterates that its credit based units have been designed to be capable of assessment in the normal workplace and that subject to the arrangements for simulation described above this should be the case.

Simulation will be monitored by the Awarding Organisations and where it is found to be the “norm” rather than the exception suitable action will need to be taken.

Realistic Work Environment

The IMI requires that candidates are assessed within their normal workplace, or in exceptional circumstances as described previously via simulation. The use of approved simulation means therefore that RWE, Realistic Work Environment is not to be used.

Expert Witnesses

The use of **witness testimony** and **expert witness testimony** are appropriate methods for assessors to collect supplementary evidence on candidates' performance.

Witness testimonies can be obtained from people that are occupationally competent and who may be familiar with the national occupational standards, such as the candidate's line manager.

The assessor must judge the validity of the witness testimony and these may vary depending on the source. Witness testimonies can only support the assessment process and may remove or reduce the need to collect supplementary evidence, however, the awarding organisation's / body's quality assurance requirements must be met. Additionally the person or persons providing the Witness Testimony evidence must make themselves available to the External Verifier for confirmation of evidence validity if required.

Remote Observation.

The use of direct observation from a remote location is permitted as long as the centre seeks and receives the approval of their awarding organisation prior to its use and the awarding organisation discusses and agree this with the IMI prior to its use.

Assessor Requirements.

The assessment of VCQs must be carried out by approved industry competent assessors.

Assessors will be responsible for, and accountable for, the validity, reliability and authenticity of evidence.

The primary responsibility of the assessor is to ensure that candidates satisfy the requirements of the national occupational standards. It is important that an assessor can recognise occupational competence as specified by the national occupational standards. Assessors therefore need to have a thorough understanding of assessment and quality assurance practices, as well as have in depth technical competence related to the qualifications for which they are assessing candidates.

It will be the responsibility of the approved centre to select and appoint assessors.

It will be the responsibility of the Awarding Organisation to approve centre selected assessors.

To be an approved assessor the person must:-

- have sufficient and relevant technical/occupational competence in the Unit, at or above the level of the Unit being assessed
- have in depth knowledge of the Qualification or credit based unit evidence requirements.
- hold or be working towards a relevant assessors award as specified by the Institute of the Motor Industry. This will include, but not be limited to the Assessor qualifications, Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment, Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement, Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement. (and by implication legacy Assessor units A1, A2 and D32/33 unit) but may be an appropriate equivalent as defined by the IMI, SSC)..
- assessors working towards a relevant assessor qualification must achieve their qualification within 12 months.
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the competencies that a learner is required to demonstrate for the qualification that they are undertaking
- provide evidence of completing 5 days working / job shadowing in industry within their professional area in a 24 month period.
- provide evidence of 30 hours of technical / qualification related CPD within a 12 month period.(This is in addition to working / job shadowing).
- be approved by the Awarding Organisation to carry out assessments for the VCQs they are competent in.

Approval of assessors can be **removed**.

Assessors **cannot** assess the VCQ if they are not currently approved by, or have had their approval removed by, the Awarding Organisation.

Internal Verifier Requirements.

VCQs must be underpinned by quality assurance appropriate to workplace based delivery. At a minimum this should reflect the principles outlined below.

Internal Verification of VCQ shall be the responsibility of approved industry competent internal verifiers.

The primary responsibility of the internal verifier is to assure the quality and consistency of assessments by the assessors for whom they are responsible. Internal verifiers therefore need to have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices, as well as technical competence related to the qualifications that they are internally verifying.

Internal verifiers will be responsible for, and accountable for consistency, quality and reliability of evidence and assessors.

It will be the responsibility of the approved centre to select and appoint internal verifiers . It will be the responsibility of the Awarding Organisation to approve centre selected internal verifiers.

To be an approved internal verifier the person must:-

- have in-depth knowledge of the occupational standards and credit based unit evidence requirements.
- be occupationally aware of the relevant industry sector being internally verified
- hold or be working towards a relevant verifier award as specified by the Institute of the Motor Industry. This will include, but not be limited to the Quality Assurance qualifications Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, (and by implication legacy Internal Verifier unit V1 D34 unit) but may be an appropriate equivalent as defined by the SSC.
- verifiers working towards a relevant qualification must achieve their qualification within 12 months.
- provide evidence of CPD totalling not less than 30 hours from within their professional area within a 12 month period.
- be approved by the Awarding Organisation to carry out internal verification for relevant VCQ(s)
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the quality assurance processes required by the centre and the awarding organisation

Approval of internal verifiers can be **removed**.

Internal Verifiers **cannot** verify the VCQ if they are not approved by, or have had their approval removed by the Awarding Organisation.

Multi Discipline Assessors and Internal Verifiers

Assessors and Internal Verifiers who work across multi disciplines must agree to a programme of CPD that will, over an agreed period of time, show their competence across all areas that they assess.

The programme of CPD and the timescale must be agreed for each multi discipline assessor by their External Verifier and may be subject to scrutiny by the IMI.

It is the responsibility of the centre to keep a record of these agreements.

External Verifier Requirements.

Awarding Organisations will be responsible for selection and appointment of external verifiers.

To be an approved external verifier or moderator the person must:-

- hold or be working towards an appropriate qualification as specified by the Institute of the Motor Industry, confirming their competence to externally verify VCQ assessments This will include, but not be limited to the Level 4 Award in Externally Assuring the Quality of Assessment Processes and Practice, Level 4 Certificate in Leading the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, (and by implication legacy External Verifier unit V2 and D35 units) but may be an appropriate equivalent as defined by the SSC.
- external verifiers working towards a relevant qualification must achieve their qualification within 12 months.
- have experience of working within the Automotive Industry gained through current or prior employment in order to have an up to date technical awareness relevant to the VCQ they are seeking to externally verify
- have a sound and in-depth knowledge of the VCQ requirements
- demonstrate their commitment to maintaining their industry knowledge by providing evidence of CPD totalling not less than 30 hours from within their professional area within a 12 month period.

External Quality Control.

It is expected that the awarding of qualifications will be underpinned by quality assurance appropriate to workplace based delivery. At a minimum this should reflect the principles outlined below.

External quality control of assessment is the responsibility of the Awarding Organisations, they must ensure that common approaches are employed and that consistent, high standards are achieved.

External verifiers will be required to implement rigorous risk management strategies consistently across all centres for which they are responsible.

IMI recommends that Awarding Organisations adopt a risk rating and risk management system for centres offering IMI VCQs.

IMI recommend that such systems identify:

- Commercial Risk – is there potential for commercial pressures to ensure that candidates achieve qualifications within unduly short time frames?

- Assessment/Verification risk – are factors apparent in the relationship between candidates, assessors and verifiers that might prejudice a fair and consistent assessment process?

Where risks or potential risks are identified, IMI expects that the Awarding Organisation, via the external verifier takes appropriate action to ensure that the credibility of the assessment process is not prejudiced.

Awarding Organisations will be responsible for and accountable for the quality of VCQs delivered and assessed by their approved assessment centres.