

**IMI**  
**Automotive Retail Sector**

**Assessment Strategy for**  
**Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This assessment strategy applies to all competence based units and qualifications that sit within the automotive retail sub-sectors represented by the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI). Competence based units and qualifications in Scotland are in the form of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). This sector assessment strategy comes into force on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 and will apply to any new competence based units and qualifications. It will also replace other assessment strategies, currently used for existing SVQs, as and when they are updated and re-accredited. See [www.motor.org.uk](http://www.motor.org.uk) for a list of all competence based units and qualifications that are covered by the sector assessment strategy. There are four components to the sector assessment strategy which set out requirements and guidance relating to:

- assessment principles
- occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers
- external quality control of assessment
- continuous professional development

The purpose of the sector assessment strategy is for IMI and awarding organisations to work in partnership to:

- maximise the quality assurance arrangements for the sector's competence based units and qualifications and maintain standardisation across assessment practice
- assure employers and candidates that the sector's competence based units and qualification are consistently assessed to the national occupational standards, and
- promote continuous professional development amongst assessors and verifiers.

The content of the assessment strategy has been reviewed in close consultation with awarding organisations. The primary audience are awarding bodies that offer Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) in the automotive retail sector. Prospective or approved centres should not need to work directly with this document as its requirements will be incorporated within the procedures of their chosen awarding organisation. The strategy should be used alongside the assessment and quality assurance guidance published by the regulatory authorities.

### 1.2 Scope of this assessment strategy

This assessment strategy relates to the technical national occupational standards developed by IMI and as a result applies to the SVQs that have been put in place to cover the following sectors of the industry:

This is the overarching strategy for the assessment and verification of SVQs that are based upon National Occupational Standards from the IMI.

### 1.3 The aims of the assessment strategy

- 1.3.1 This assessment strategy addresses the key features specified by SQA in terms of the design and delivery of assessment.
- 1.3.2 The aim of this assessment strategy is to put in place a robust assessment system that will instil industry confidence in SVQs.
- 1.3.3 IMI will work closely with its awarding organisation partners to develop this assessment strategy further. Together we aim to use this assessment strategy to put in place
- sets of operating principles for awarding bodies
  - guidance materials for assessment centres on how to manage the system of assessment
  - a range of materials that candidates, assessors and internal verifiers will use for assessment purposes
  - systems and materials to monitor the quality of assessment.

## **2. Assessment requirements**

Candidates seeking an SVQ based on the technical national occupational standards developed by IMI must

- take and pass centrally determined assessments in order to test underpinning knowledge described in the technical units
- complete tasks in the workplace or, in exceptional circumstances, a simulated environment, in order to confirm occupational competence.

### **2.1. Assessment of underpinning knowledge:**

2.1.1 IMI requires awarding bodies to ensure that each candidate takes externally set and externally marked assessments for the industry specific elements, as part of their SVQ.

2.1.2 External assessments must be based on and cover the essential knowledge specification contained in each unit and will normally be delivered through the use of multiple-choice questions.

### **2.2. Assessment of occupational competence**

The main purpose of the national occupational standards and the SVQs developed from them is to assess the occupational competence of candidates, which is their ability to use all their skills and knowledge to complete tasks effectively so that the expectations of employers and customers are met.

2.2.1 Candidates must be assessed in the workplace where they will complete tasks that will provide them with opportunities to produce performance evidence demonstrating that the national occupational standards have been met.

2.2.2 The workplace must always be the first place of choice for assessment to be carried out. It is expected that candidates will complete tasks in their normal place of work, but if this is not possible because they do not complete the type of tasks that would be appropriate to the units being assessed, then they can move to another workplace where the task is carried out.

2.2.3 Awarding organisations must stress to and make clear in their guidance to approved assessment centres that assessment of candidates must take place in the workplace. Awarding organisations are also expected to monitor assessment centres in order to make sure that candidates are generating performance evidence from tasks completed in the workplace.

2.2.4 If candidates do not have the opportunity to carry out a task that would generate performance evidence for a particular unit, because the task does not occur at frequent intervals within the workplace or to carry out a task would be unsafe, then the assessment centre can use a simulated environment through which the candidate completes the task. For example, it may not always be possible to diagnose and rectify faults because they do not frequently occur, in which case a simulated environment could be used. In addition, dealing with fire and other emergencies such as recovering overturned vehicles, might be better assessed through a simulated environment because this approach would be safer.

2.2.5 Simulated environments must not be used for the assessment of entire units. For example, if a unit asks the candidate to complete three tasks by working on different types of equipment simulation can only be used once. As a result two of the tasks must be completed in the workplace such as the candidate's normal place of work. This will ensure that the minimum specifications for workplace evidence are met in every instance.

2.2.6 Simulation must be agreed with the Awarding Organisation prior to its use by an assessment centre.

2.2.7 A simulated environment must be managed and organised by an approved assessment centre. Only assessment centres that have been approved by a nationally accredited awarding organisation can set up simulated environments.

2.2.8 A simulated environment must allow the candidate to perform an entire occupational role in an environment that replicates the working environment as closely as possible. Guidance on what should be covered and included in order to manage and organise a simulated environment is provided in Appendix One. The aim of the guidance is to help ensure that candidates

- work in a realistic facility
- have access to complete vehicles
- use up to date information sources
- have access to appropriate tools, parts and materials
- use and complete appropriate documentation
- work to recognised time schedules
- take care of all resources
- work in a safe way.

2.2.9 Candidates will need to be observed by qualified assessors as they complete tasks in the workplace or in a simulated environment. The number of times a candidate must be assessed through observation is determined in the evidence requirements for the units.

### 3. Requirements for assessors and verifiers

#### 3.1 Assessor Requirements.

The assessment of SVQs 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 SVQ 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 Understanding the Principles and Practices of Assessment, 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 additional to working / job shadowing).
- be approved by the Awarding Organisation to carry out assessments for the SVQs they are competent in.

Approval of assessors can be **removed.**

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

### **3.1 Internal Verifier Requirements.**

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

Internal Verification of SVQs 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 SVQ 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 Understanding the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, 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 IMI.
- 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 SVQ(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 SVQ if they are not approved by, or have had their approval removed by the Awarding Organisation.



### **3.2 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.

#### **4. 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 SVQ assessments This will include, but not be limited to the Level 4 Award in Understanding the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, 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 IMI.
- 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 SVQ they are seeking to externally verify
- have a sound and in-depth knowledge of the SVQ 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 SVQs.

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 SVQs delivered and assessed by their approved assessment centres.

## Appendix One

### IMI SVQ ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

#### Evidence other than from direct workplace observation

##### 1. Workplace Assessment/Simulation.

The IMI SVQ 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

It is a pre requirement that centres seek written confirmation before proceeding with simulated assessment. The need for simulation may result from consideration of:

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

In addition, the IMI recognises that candidates using these SVQ units in the context of a Level 1 SVQ 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.

The IMI re-iterates that its SVQ 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 be taken.

## 2. 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.

## 3. Expert Witnesses

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

**Witness testimonies** may be obtained from people that are occupationally competent and whom may be familiar with the national occupational standards (NOS), 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 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.

## 4. 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 and discusses and agrees this with the Institute of the Motor Industry prior to its use.