

Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism

**Sector Assessment Strategy for
competence based units of assessment
and qualifications
(in England, Wales and Northern Ireland)**

and

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)

1 August 2009

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1. Introduction

The sector assessment strategy applies to all competence based units and qualifications that sit within the industries represented by People 1st. Competence based units and qualifications are those that are accredited to the Qualifications and Credit Framework, for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which include National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). In Scotland it applies to all sector Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). The sector assessment strategy comes into force on the 1st August 2009 and will apply to any new competence based units and qualifications. It will also replace other assessment strategies, currently used for existing NVQs and SVQs, as and when they are updated and re-accredited. See www.people1st.co.uk for a list of all competence based units and qualification 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:

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

The purpose of the sector assessment strategy is for People 1st and awarding organisations/bodies 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 employers, awarding organisations/bodies, training providers and other sector stakeholders. While many of these stakeholders have an interest in the assessment strategy, its primary audience are awarding organisations/bodies that offer competence based units and qualifications in the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism industries. 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/body.

The strategy should be used alongside the assessment and quality assurance guidance published by the regulatory authorities. Further information about competence based units and qualifications can be found at www.people1st.co.uk. Feedback or comments on the sector assessment strategy can be emailed to qualifications@people1st.co.uk.

2. External Quality Control

2.1 Risk Assessment and Management of Centres

External quality control is achieved through rigorous monitoring and standardisation of assessment decisions. Awarding organisations/bodies achieve this by operating their existing systems for quality monitoring, risk assessment and management of their approved centres, following guidance issued by the regulatory authorities.

As part of this process People 1st requires awarding organisations/bodies to:

- ensure that external verification, monitoring and support provided to centres takes into account their level of risk. For example new assessment centres, and those that are experiencing difficulty in meeting the assessment requirements, should be given additional support by their awarding organisation/body
- supply People 1st with standardised information on their statistical monitoring, including registration and certification figures, on a quarterly basis. This data will remain confidential and no individual awarding organisation's/body's data will be published
- report annually on the outcomes of, and any issues arising from, external verification and quality control arrangements
- highlight specific issues relating to the assessment of the sector's competence based units and qualifications that require immediate attention, as and when they arise
- contribute to the awarding organisations'/bodies' forums to review and discuss matters relating to the assessment of the sector's competence based units and qualifications. The forum will meet at least biannually, or during key stages of projects and reviews
- resolve issues relating to the assessment and verification of the sector's competence based units and qualifications with the action(s), and in the timeframe, agreed

3. Assessment

People 1st advocate the integration of national occupational standards within employers' organisations in order to achieve a national level of competence across the sector's labour market. As such, assessment of the sector's competence based units and qualifications will, ideally, take place within the workplace and assessment should, where possible, be conducted by the candidate's supervisors and/or line managers. People 1st recognise, however, that it is not always feasible for candidates to be assessed in the workplace and as such it permits the use of assessment within Realistic Working Environments (RWE). Additionally, where sector employers do not have the infrastructure to manage assessment independently, it values the role of peripatetic assessors to support the assessment process.

Within these parameters, People 1st expects that:

- the majority of assessment of the sector's competence based units and qualifications will be based on **performance evidence**, i.e. direct observation, outputs of work and witness testimony within the workplace or an RWE approved by an awarding organisation/body, (see section 3.4).
- opportunities to ascertain candidate's **accreditation of prior learning** is maximised by early contact between the assessor and candidate and during initial assessment / induction period.

Please note: External tests do not form part of People 1st's assessment strategy, other than linkage to IATA approved tests in Unit TT27, Sell Multi-Sector Air Travel, part of the Travel S/NVQ (where it may be a specific requirement and therefore applicable in that instance).

3.1 Witness Testimony

People 1st recognise the use of **witness testimony** and **expert witness testimony** as appropriate methods for assessors to collect evidence on candidates' performance.

Witness testimonies can be obtained from people that are occupationally competent and whom may be familiar with the national occupational standards, such as the candidate's line manager. They may also be obtained from people who are not occupationally competent, and do not have a knowledge of the national occupational standards, such as other people within the candidate's workplace, customers and suppliers. 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 minimum observations requirements must be met.

Expert witnesses may be used where additional support relating to the assessment of technical competence is required. Expert witnesses may be:

- other approved assessors that are recognised to assess the relevant national occupational standards, or
- line managers, other managers or experienced colleagues that are not approved assessors, but whom the awarding organisation/body agrees has current occupational competence, knowledge and expertise to make a judgement on a candidate's competence.

Expert witnesses must be able to demonstrate through relevant qualifications, practical experience and knowledge that they are qualified to provide an expert opinion on a candidate's performance in relation to the unit being assessed. People 1st believe that it is unlikely for an expert witness to be fully expert within any of the sector's occupational areas in less than twelve months to two years. The final judgement on the validity of the expert witness testimony rests with the assessor and such testimonies may only be used in line with awarding organisation's/body's requirements.

3.2 Professional Discussion

Professional discussion is encouraged as a supplementary form of evidence to confirm a candidate's competence. Such discussions should not be based on a prescribed list of questions but be a structured discussion which enables the assessor to gather relevant evidence to ensure the candidate has a firm understanding of the standard being assessed.

3.3 Simulation

Simulation can only be used to assess candidates for the sector's competence based units and qualifications where the opportunity to assess naturally occurring evidence is unlikely or not possible, for example assessment relating to health and safety, fire and emergency procedures. It should not include routine activities that must be covered by performance evidence.

There are no People 1st units that can be solely achieved by simulation. In the case of imported units, where simulation is acceptable in the evidence requirements, it should only be used when performance evidence is unlikely to be generated through normal working practices.

See **Annex A** for competence based units which permit the use of simulation.

Awarding organisations/bodies must issue adequate guidance which informs centres how simulation should be planned and organised, ensuring that demands on candidates are neither more nor less than they would encounter in a real work situation. In particular:

- a centre's overall strategy for simulation must be examined and approved by the external verifier
- all simulations must be planned, developed and documented by the centre in a way that ensures the simulation correctly reflects what the unit seeks to assess
- ideally, there should be a range of simulations to cover the same aspect of the standard
- the physical environment for the simulation, and the nature of the contingency, must be realistic
- candidates should carry out the simulation in a professional manner
- the candidate should be given no indication as to what the simulation will present.

3.4 Realistic Working Environment

Assessment of the sector's competence based units and qualifications should ideally be carried out within the workplace, however, where this is not possible candidates can be assessed within an approved Realistic Working Environment (RWE) that replicates a real work setting. The criteria for RWE currently operated in the sector can be found at **Annex B**.

4. Occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers

The requirements relating to the occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers is set out in **Annex C**. Guidance on additional qualifications and / or training relevant to assessors and verifiers can be found in **Annex D**

4.1 Using employers' in-house training programmes to assess competence based units and qualifications (please note this section is not applicable for centres which are either colleges or training providers)

(a) People 1st recognises that employers within the Sector provide robust in-house training, development and assessment programmes which meet the standards for Assessors and Verifiers. Where an employer maps its in-house training, development and assessment programme to the Assessor and Verifier standards and has this approved by their awarding organisation/body, People 1st fully supports the removal of the need to achieve the Assessor and Verifier Units. The individual assessing and verifying the qualifications must still meet the other mandatory requirements for occupational competence as specified in **Annex C**.

(b) It should also be noted that People 1st encourages employers and awarding organisations/bodies to examine in-house employer training, development and assessment programmes to see whether these provide robust evidence against the relevant competence based units and/or qualifications (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or the SVQs (Scotland). Where a direct mapping of the in-house training, development and assessment programme can be made to the:

- relevant Units (based on the National Occupational Standards), and assessment meets the requirements of the assessment strategy and awarding organisation/body evidence requirement,

then awarding organisations/bodies should recognise this training for the purposes of achievement of the specified qualification or Unit.

In both instances specified in (a) and (b) above the awarding organisation/body will be required to ensure that a copy of the mapping is available to the Qualification Regulators.

5. Continuous Professional Development

To maintain high standards of quality and standardisation within assessment, and achieve best practice People 1st require all external verifiers, internal verifiers and assessors to maintain a record of their continuous professional development – see guidance at **Annex E**.

Annex A

Competence based units in Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism that permits simulation

Unit Number	Unit Title	Competence based qualifications that the unit is used in
1GEN1	Maintain a safe, hygienic and secure working environment	Level 1 & 2 NVQ/SVQ Hospitality and Catering
HSL4	Maintain the health, hygiene, safety and security of the working environment	Level 3 Diploma in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership Skills (NVQ) and Level 3 SVQ in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership
GS3009	Maintain the health, hygiene, safety and security of the working environment (adapted from HS4)	Level 3 NVQ Gambling Operations
<p>People 1st have a special dispensation for the imported Customer Service units listed below to be assessed in a Realistic Working Environment (RWE) conforming to People 1st's criteria specified in Annex B (page 9) of this Assessment Strategy. This would only apply to these Units when delivered as part of the L3 Diploma in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership (NVQ) and L3 Hospitality Supervision and Leadership SVQ.</p>		
ICS Unit 26	Improve the customer relationship	Level 3 Diploma in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership Skills (NVQ) and Level 3 SVQ in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership
ICS Unit 32	Monitor and solve customer service problems	Level 3 Diploma in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership Skills (NVQ) and Level 3 SVQ in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership
ICS Unit 42	Lead a team to improve customer service	Level 3 Diploma in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership Skills (NVQ) and Level 3 SVQ in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership

People 1st does not permit the use of simulation, other than as listed below:

The overarching principle to be applied to units identified as suitable for simulation is that it should only be undertaken in a minority of cases where

- **there is a high risk to the security or safety of the candidate, individuals, key people in their lives and others**
- **the opportunity to present evidence from work-based practice happens infrequently and therefore insisting that candidates wait for such an occurrence would be unreasonable or create blockages in the assessment system and might carry the risk of de-motivating candidates**
- **there would otherwise be a breach of confidentiality or privacy.**

The following two units are the only accepted Realistic Working Environments, and no other Realistic Working Environments will be accepted.

TT09	Assist with travel and tourism problems and emergencies	Level 2 NVQ/SVQ in Travel Services and Level 2 NVQ/SVQ in Tourism Services
TT37	Deal with travel and tourism problems and emergencies	Level 3 NVQ/SVQ in Travel Services and Level 3 NVQ/SVQ in Tourism Services

Annex B

Criteria for Realistic Working Environments

It is essential for organisations operating a Realistic Working Environment (RWE) to ensure it reflects current and real work settings. By doing so, sector employers can be confident that competence achieved in an RWE will be continued into employment. RWEs can offer many opportunities to employers and individuals that have limited access to assessment.

The number of hours candidates work and their input is not prescribed, as it is acknowledged that RWEs cannot operate without some flexibility. However, centres must provide evidence that the following criteria are being met as well as fulfilling the awarding organisation's/body's criteria for this purpose. E.V.s are expected to ensure RWEs meet the criteria set out below on at least one visit.

Hospitality		
1	The work situation being represented is relevant to the competence based units and qualifications being assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type of work situation being represented mirrors the relevant setting e.g. quick service takeaway, restaurant, brasserie, café/snack bar, cafeteria, housekeeping department, front office, reception or reservations. • Appropriate industrial equipment, furnishings and resources (e.g. ingredients and technology) that replicate the work situation are used, ensuring that assessment requirements can be covered. • Industry trends are considered in the product and service offer.
2	The candidate's work activities reflect those found in the situation being represented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates operate in a professional capacity with corresponding job schedules and/or descriptions. • Candidates are clear on their work activities and responsibilities.
3	The RWE is operated in the same manner to as a real work situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers are not prompted to behave in a particular manner. • Customer feedback is maintained and acted upon.
4	The RWE is underpinned by commercial principles and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational charts indicate the anticipated job roles in the RWE and their hierarchical structure taking into account supervisory requirements. • There is evidence of business planning, for example product/service plans, staffing/rotas, costing, promotions. • Candidates are encouraged to carry out their function in line with business expectations, e.g. within timescales and budget, minimising wastage. • Legislative regulations are adhered to e.g. food safety, health and safety, equal opportunities, trade description. • Consumer information is provided on products and services e.g. allergy advice on food products.

Annex B (Continued)

Gambling		
1	The work situation being represented is relevant to the competence based units and qualifications being assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type of work situation being represented mirrors the relevant setting e.g. betting shop, bingo hall, casino. • Appropriate industrial equipment, furnishings and resources that replicate the work situation are used, ensuring that assessment requirements can be covered. • Industry trends are considered in the work situation represented.
2	The candidate's work activities reflect those found in the situation being represented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates operate in a professional capacity with corresponding job schedules and/or descriptions. • Candidates are clear on their work activities and responsibilities.
3	The RWE is operated in the same manner to as a real work situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers are not prompted to behave in a particular manner. • Customer feedback is maintained and acted upon.
4	The RWE is underpinned by commercial principles and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational charts indicate the anticipated job roles in the RWE and their hierarchical structure taking into account supervisory requirements. • There is evidence of business planning, for example product/service plans, staffing/rotas, costing, promotions. • Candidates are encouraged to carry out their function in line with business expectations, e.g. within timescales and budget, minimising wastage. • Legislative regulations are adhered to e.g. health and safety, equal opportunities, trade description.

Annex C

Occupational Expertise of Assessors and Verifiers

The requirements set out below relates to all assessors and verifiers. The only exception may relate to in-house employees and managers that are not required to achieve the regulatory approved assessor and verified units based on the arrangement referred to in section 4.1 of this assessment strategy.

✓ = mandatory

Assessors, Internal Verifiers and External Verifiers must:	A	IV	EV
Have a good knowledge and understanding of the national occupational standard and competence based units and qualifications that is being assessed or verified.	✓	✓	✓
Hold or be working towards relevant assessment and/or verification qualification(s) as specified by the appropriate authority, confirming their competence to assess or externally verify competence based units and qualifications assessment. These should be achieved within eighteen months of commencing their role. These are as follows:			
D35 or V2			✓
D34 or V1 - In the case that the IV is working towards their V1 unit, a representative sample of verification decisions, as agreed with the awarding organisation/body, must be counter-signed by a colleague who has achieved either the D34 or V1 unit. This colleague must have the same occupational expertise.		✓	
D32/D33 or A1/A2 - In the case that the assessor is working towards the A1/A2 units, a representative sample of assessment decisions, as agreed with the awarding organisation/body, must be counter-signed by a colleague who has achieved either the D32/D33 or A1/A2 units. This colleague must have the same occupational expertise.	✓		
Have relevant occupational expertise and knowledge, at the appropriate level of the occupational area(s) they are assessing and verifying, which has been gained through 'hands on' experience in the industry.	✓	✓	✓
Adhere to the awarding organisation's/body's assessment requirements and practice standardised assessment principles	✓	✓	✓
Have sufficient resources to carry out the role of assessor or verifier, i.e. time and budget	✓	✓	
Have supervisory/management, interpersonal and investigative skills, including the ability to analyse information, hold meetings, guide, advise, plan and make recommendations at all levels, taking into account the nature and size of the organisation in which assessment is taking place. High standards of administration and record keeping are also essential.		✓	✓
Hold qualifications, or have undertaken training, that has legislative relevance to the competence based units and qualifications being assessed (See Annex D).	✓	Good practice	Good Practice
Update their occupational expertise and industry knowledge in the areas being assessed and verified through planned Continuous Professional Development (see Annex E).	✓	✓	✓

Annex D

Qualifications and Training relevant to Assessors and Verifiers

The following sets out areas in which assessors, verifiers and external verifiers should either received training or achieve qualifications. People 1st is **not** stipulating that assessors, verifiers or external verifiers must achieve specific qualifications, there is the option to either undertake appropriate training or an accredited qualification.

✓ = mandatory

Qualification / Training	Competence based unit / qualification	A	IV	EV
Health and Safety	All sector units and qualifications	✓	Good Practice	Good Practice
Food Safety	Food Processing and Cooking	✓	Good Practice	Good Practice
	Multi-Skilled Hospitality Services	✓		
	Professional Cookery	✓		
	Food and Drink Service	✓		
	Hospitality Supervision and Leadership (<i>with food and drink units</i>)	✓		
Licensing	Food and Drink Service	✓	Good Practice	
	Hospitality Supervision (<i>with food and drink units</i>)			

Annex E

Continuous Professional Development for Assessors and Verifiers

It is necessary for assessors and verifiers to maintain a record of evidence of their continuous professional development (CPD). This is necessary to maintain currency of skills and understanding of the occupational area(s) being assessed, and can be achieved in a variety of ways. It should be a planned process, reviewed on an annual basis, for example as part of an individual's performance review.

Assessors and verifiers should select CPD methods that are appropriate to meeting their development needs. The following provides an example of a variety of methods that can be utilised for CPD purposes.

Updating occupational expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external work placements • Work experience and shadowing (e.g. within associated departments) • External visits to other organisations • Updated and new training and qualifications (www.uksp.co.uk) • Training sessions to update skills • Visits to educational establishments • Trade fairs
Keeping up to date with sector developments and new legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant sector websites • Membership of professional bodies • Papers and documents on legislative change • Networking events • Seminars, conferences, workshops, membership of committees / working parties (e.g. People 1st events) • Staff development days
Standardising and best practice in assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular standardisation meetings with colleagues • Sharing best practice through internal meetings, news letters, email circulars • Comparison of assessment and verification in other sectors • Attending awarding organisation/body meetings/seminars

Downloadable guidance on CPD can be found at www.ifl.ac.uk