

Guidance for the assessment of Scottish Vocational Qualifications in Social Services and Healthcare, Social Services (Children and Young People) and Integrated Health and Social Care

This guidance is designed to assist assessors, in approved centres, with the assessment of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) in Social Services and Healthcare, Social Services (Children and Young People) (SSCYP) and Integrated Health and Social Care. It must be read in conjunction with the assessment strategy set out by the standard setting organisation. This guidance is to be used to support the assessment strategy for the following qualifications:

- ◆ SVQ in Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF levels 6, 7 and 9
- ◆ SVQ in Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF levels 6, 7 and 9
- ◆ SVQ in Integrated Health and Social Care at SCQF level 7
- ◆ SVQ in Care Services Leadership and Management at SCQF level 10

Readiness for assessment

SVQs are based on National Occupational Standards (NOS) and assess the application of skills, knowledge and understanding in a specific occupation against the standards required in the workplace. Learner evidence must be focused on activities that they have carried out within their job role, demonstrating how these activities relate to the knowledge and performance criteria within the SVQ award and at the SCQF level they are undertaking. This principle of evidence being related to work practice and the work context of the learner applies to all aspects of these qualifications.

Learner evidence must show competent practice over a period of time. Therefore, the assessor must satisfy the internal verifier that they have selected a range of appropriate assessment methods that reflect the learner's development and application of knowledge to practice in a range of practice situations.

The employer's role

The employer's role is to identify employees who may be required to undertake a qualification to meet the current registration requirements in accordance with the employee's job role and responsibilities or to work in an integrated way. Regulated employers will follow the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers, employer code 3.4, 'As an employer, I will support workers who need to be registered with the SSSC to meet and maintain their conditions for registration and the requirement for continuous professional learning and development.'

Learners following the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers, take account of code 5.6, 'Maintain my continuous professional learning to improve my knowledge and skills and contribute to the learning and development of others.'

Learners deserve the best opportunity and conditions for completing their qualification. The assessor will confirm with the learner and their manager, where appropriate, that the learner is prepared and ready for assessment.

The learner must have:

- ◆ completed an induction, and have sufficient occupational practice and knowledge
- ◆ their own learning and assessment needs met, through the provision of support, conditions for assessment and materials
- ◆ relevant understanding, and documentation about the assessment process
- ◆ registered with the awarding body before the formal assessment begins
- ◆ consented to the assessment

The learner must not have any disciplinary matters under investigation which call into question their competent practice in relation to the NOS.

Employers need to ensure that they have considered the SCQF characteristics prior to the learner being presented for assessment. This is specifically in relation to the characteristics relevant to communication at the different SCQF levels. For information on these characteristics please use this link: <https://scqf.org.uk/about-the-framework/>.

The assessor's role

Selecting assessors

The assessment strategy requires those who are working within the social services sector to hold a registerable qualification for the area and level of practice being assessed. However, assessors are not required to register with the SSSC or other accepted regulatory bodies.

Assessors can be competent in their areas of expertise within an integrated sector. Learners may have more than one assessor from other areas of expertise. A co-ordinating assessor will lead the assessment.

It is the responsibility of the assessment provider to ensure that assessors have achieved or are working towards a registerable qualification as defined by the SSSC in the area of practice they are assessing. In addition to this, the assessor must hold qualifications equivalent to, or above, the level of award they are assessing and in the relevant area of practice.

The SSSC website provides a list of registerable qualifications for each area of practice. If an assessor does not meet the learning and development (L&D) competency requirement, they must plan to work towards an approved qualification within the agreed timescale of three years stated within the assessment strategy.

¹The SSSC will accept a qualification meeting the registration requirements with other regulatory bodies as detailed on their website.

It should be noted that if an individual has let their registration lapse with any of the other regulatory bodies detailed on the SSSC website then it is incumbent on the individual assessor to show through their continuous professional learning (CPL) that they have kept their experience, knowledge and skills current to enable them to assess at the level and in the area they are assessing.

It is the assessment provider's responsibility to ensure that assessors meet all of the following requirements:

Requirement	Definition
Occupational competence for assessors of SVQs in Social Services and Healthcare or Children and Young People (all levels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The assessor must be capable of conducting the functions covered by the NOS they are assessing to the standard described within them, according to current sector practice. ◆ The assessor must hold a registrable qualification acceptable to the SSSC for the area and level of practice being assessed. ◆ SSSC registration is not required as the assessor may not be in a post which can be registered under the functional criteria of SSSC registration. ◆ The assessor must have knowledge of regulation, legislation and/or codes of practice applicable to the role they are assessing.
Occupational competence for assessors of SVQ Integrated Health and Social Care at SCQF level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The assessor must be capable of conducting the functions covered by the NOS they are assessing to the standard described within them, according to current sector practice. ◆ The assessor must hold a registrable qualification acceptable to the SSSC for the area and level (SCQF 7 or above) of practice being assessed or a recognised healthcare qualification at SCQF level 7 or above. ◆ SSSC registration is not required as the assessor may not be in a post which can be registered under the functional criteria of SSSC registration. ◆ The assessor must have knowledge of regulation, legislation and/or codes of practice applicable to the role they are assessing.
Assessor qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The assessor must hold or be working towards a valid assessor's qualification as identified by the qualification regulator, SQA Accreditation. Qualifications must be achieved within appropriate timescales. ◆ Holders of predecessor qualifications must work to the current NOS for learning and development which can be evidenced through CPL.

¹<https://www.sssc.uk.com/registration/help-with-register-parts-fees-and-qualifications/>

Requirement	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assessors completing a qualification should be supported by, and have all decisions countersigned by a qualified assessor.
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The assessor should have sufficient operational experience of the role they are assessing and be able to interpret current working practices, technologies, and products. ◆ The assessor must have technical knowledge and experience of NOS at the time the assessment is taking place.
Continuous professional learning (CPL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The assessor should have access to and be engaging with CPL activities to keep up to date with developments in the sector and any issues relevant to the qualification and/or its NOS. ◆ It is expected that credible CPL will contribute to professional development, inform practice, and assist assessors in meeting their roles and responsibilities in an informed, competent, and confident manner. ◆ CPL should be maintained as an annual requirement which will be examined as part of the external quality assurance process.

Co-ordinating assessor

As the assessor's occupational competence determines which NOS they assess, more than one assessor may be required. In such circumstances, a co-ordinating assessor must hold responsibility for the overall qualification and support of the learner. The co-ordinating assessor must be a qualified assessor who is occupationally competent and experienced in the terms stated above.

The co-ordinating assessor will be responsible for:

- ◆ co-ordinating the assessment of an individual learner
- ◆ the integration, planning and directing of assessment for the overall qualification
- ◆ ensuring the best use of all evidence available to make judgements about the competence of learners against standards
- ◆ the final judgement of competence for each NOS that has been assessed by more than one assessor
- ◆ working with internal verifiers to ensure standardised practice and decision-making within the assessment

The internal verifier's role

The internal verifier is central to the quality assurance and verification of assessment of performance evidence in the workplace. Internal verifiers should 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 conduct all the

other internal verification roles as required following the most current earning and development NOS.

It is the assessment provider's responsibility to ensure that internal verifiers meet all of the following requirements:

Requirement	Definition
Occupational competence for internal verifiers of SVQs in Social Services and Healthcare or Children and Young People (all levels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The internal verifier must be occupationally competent in the area they are verifying. It is crucial that internal verifiers understand the nature and context of the assessor's work and that of the learner. ◆ Hold qualifications and/or experience equivalent to or above that of the assessor. The internal verifier must have knowledge of regulation, legislation and/or codes of practice applicable to the role they are assessing.
Occupational competence for internal verifiers of SVQ Integrated Health and Social Care at SCQF level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The internal verifier must be occupationally competent in the area they are verifying. It is crucial that internal verifiers understand the nature and context of the assessor's work and that of the learner. ◆ They must hold a registrable qualification acceptable to the SSSC for the area and level (SCQF7 or above) of practice being assessed or a recognised healthcare qualification at SCQF level 7 or above. ◆ SSSC registration is not required as the internal verifier may not be in a post which can be registered under the functional criteria of SSSC registration. ◆ The internal verifier must have knowledge of regulation, legislation and/or codes of practice applicable to the role they are assessing.
Internal verifier qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The internal verifier must hold or be working towards a valid internal verifier's qualification as identified by the qualification regulator, SQA Accreditation. Qualifications must be achieved within appropriate timescales. ◆ Holders of predecessor qualifications must work to the reviewed NOS for learning and development which can be evidenced through CPL. ◆ Internal verifiers completing a qualification should be supported by, and have all decisions countersigned by a qualified internal verifier.
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The internal verifier must have sufficient operational experience within the sector that can be evidenced and is current and relevant to the qualification at or above the level being verified. This must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about the assessor's assessment processes and decisions.

Requirement	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The internal verifier must have in-depth knowledge and experience of the NOS at the time the assessment is taking place.
Continuous professional learning (CPL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The internal verifier should have access to, and be engaging with, CPL activities to keep up to date with developments in the sector and any issues relevant to the qualification and/or its units. ◆ It is expected that credible CPL will contribute to professional development, inform practice, and assist internal verifiers to meet their roles and responsibilities in an informed, competent, and confident manner. ◆ CPL should be maintained as an annual requirement which will be examined as part of the external quality assurance process.

Access to assessment

All learners should have equal access to assessment. Regardless of geographical location, work setting and patterns of work, they must be enabled and supported to undertake these awards. Assessment providers are required to demonstrate how they ensure learners have equal access to assessment.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Everyone involved in the assessment process must:

- ◆ demonstrate a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion under current legislation
- ◆ actively promote human rights and the core principles of dignity, fairness, accessibility, respect, and autonomy
- ◆ deliver qualifications in keeping with the codes of practice, applicable to the learner's role and the setting within which they work

Protection, wellbeing, and trauma-informed practice

Everyone involved in the assessment process must recognise and understand their responsibilities for the wellbeing and safeguarding of children and adults. They should be ²trauma-informed to promote safe and trusting relationships, empowerment, collaboration and choice throughout the assessment processes.

Assessment

Evidence of learners' competent performance must be drawn from work activities that take place under normal working conditions and within their usual work roles and environment. When learners write about their work practice, they must identify appropriate knowledge points that show how the knowledge informs their practice. Every effort must be made to ensure that claims for knowledge and performance are maximised in each piece of evidence to avoid evidence only containing performance or knowledge.

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/trauma-informed-practice-toolkit-scotland/pages/10/>

Planning

Integration of knowledge and practice is a fundamental feature of work within the care sector. When planning for assessment, assessors and learners must identify opportunities to integrate several activities and knowledge for assessment.

The success of integration of knowledge and practice is facilitated through the assessor's ability to support the planning process with learners. Unit-by-unit planning is strongly discouraged and learners must be encouraged to consider how their skills and knowledge in a particular situation are not limited to one unit, but cover aspects of several units.

The assessor and learner must jointly plan the assessment, choosing the best sources of evidence and assessment methods for the performance criteria and knowledge. Assessors will use their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of all direct and indirect assessment methods.

Direct assessment	Observation, related questioning and inspecting work products (created at the time of the observation).
Indirect assessment	Inspecting work products (not created at the time of observation), professional discussion with learners, witness testimony, expert witness, learner statements or reflective accounts, simulation, and recognition of prior learning (RPL).

Planning needs to be documented in a way that is meaningful and beneficial for the learner and assessor to ensure the learner is clear about what they are expected to do, what they are expected to cover, the assessment method to be used and the timescale for completion.

How this plan is presented is dependent on the needs of the learner, but assessors must ensure that their approach to planning is congruent with the current learning and development standards.

Holistic assessment

Assessors must apply the principle of holistic assessment, enabling the learner to meet several performance criteria and knowledge across the mandatory and optional units within each piece of evidence. Holistic assessment minimises the impact of the assessment on individuals who need care or support. It also avoids duplication of evidence and over-evidencing the NOS. Holistic planning will enable the learner to show that they can apply the common and specific knowledge in practice.

Planning for holistic assessment

Planning should be learner-led, with the assessor encouraging the learner to become familiar with the standards, have ownership of the qualification and understand how they can progress through the qualification. The plan should be unique to each learner, any reasonable adjustments, and the care or support needs of individuals. Continual planning will support the ongoing process of assessment, review, and feedback throughout the assessment until all performance criteria and knowledge are met.

The amount of observation carried out for each unit is determined by the assessor.

It is not generally necessary to provide separate pieces of evidence for each aspect of performance criteria, where it mentions individuals/key people and others. Additional discussion with the learner may be all that is required to ensure the claim for such a performance criterion is robust. However, assessors and learners need to be satisfied that all parts of a performance criterion are covered sufficiently.

Assessors must use their judgement and expertise to deploy a range of assessment methods, in line with current learning and development standards, to establish learner competence.

Relevant RPL should be completed at the start of the assessment planning, avoiding duplication of evidence and learning.

Direct observation

Observation of learner performance is the principle and most reliable method of assessment and observation is required for each unit. The amount of observation carried out for each unit is determined by the assessor. They must be satisfied that they have observed enough practice in conjunction with other learner evidence to reach a decision that the learner is deemed to be competent in relation to that unit. The assessor must be prepared to justify their assessment decisions to the internal and external verifier if required.

It is expected that observation will be carried out holistically, therefore any one observation may provide evidence across several units.

Where an assessor observation would be intrusive, compromising the dignity or privacy of the individual, it is expected that an observation by an expert witness is provided (see section on expert witness).

Audio and visual technology for remote observations is acceptable where a risk assessment demonstrates the technology does not compromise the privacy, dignity, consent, or confidentiality of anyone involved in the assessment. Retaining some face-to-face observation in the portfolio is required. Interactions in the wider naturally occurring environment inform holistic assessment and safeguarding. Where remote observation benefits the individual receiving care or support, remote observation is acceptable, but there should be at least one instance of face-to-face observation in a portfolio.

Sources of evidence

1 Observation of a learner's practice

A record of the direct observation of the learner's performance, in naturally occurring work situations by a qualified assessor, or an assessor undergoing a current L&D qualification with their decisions countersigned by a qualified assessor.

2 Learner's reflective account

Learner's reflective account of practice/practice journals must include the learner's explanation of their practice and focus on the reflective questions: What? How? When? What now? Why?

The learner must produce reflective writing which focuses on learner practice for all levels of these qualifications. This is in keeping with the role and functions of any employee within the social care and childcare sectors.

CPL requirements with the SSSC and other regulatory bodies require reflective writing. It is expected that within any learner portfolio, there is written reflection. For further guidance, employers and assessment providers should refer to SCQF descriptors for each SCQF level.

3 Products

Products of the learner's own work and contributions they have made to a specific document. For example:

- ◆ care plans
- ◆ minutes
- ◆ reports
- ◆ project reports
- ◆ curriculum planning
- ◆ plans for care and support
- ◆ child observations and assessments

4 Professional discussion

Professional discussion is an important element in evidence gathering and should not simply be a question-and-answer session but be planned with the learner. The planned discussion will be used to clarify the learner's practice and provide evidence integrated across a few units.

Professional discussion could also provide evidence for knowledge and performance criteria that are difficult to evidence through observation of the learners' work activities. It is particularly useful to provide evidence of a learner's knowledge and understanding of the principles which support practice, policies, procedures, and legislation. Professional discussion can also provide evidence that the learner can critically evaluate these and apply them to their practice and demonstrate the link between theory and practice.

An audit trail of such evidence must be clearly identified.

Professional discussion for vocational awards should be in the form of a structured review of practice with the discussion captured on an audio recording or as a written account. The record of the professional discussion with an assessor must show how the evidence meets the standards. It may also contain naturally occurring questions arising from direct observation and/or discussion.

The written or audio summary must be clearly cross-referenced to the standards, to enable the evidence to be internally verified and be authenticated by the assessor. An audit trail of such evidence must be clearly identified.

The recording of the professional discussion must be agreed between the assessor and learner so that it is clear who will undertake the recording.

5 Direct questioning

This is where the assessor asks the learner questions and records their response or where the learner is given a few questions to write a response to. Please note question banks are not permitted within these qualifications. Questions can be used to fill gaps in performance or knowledge, but this usually only occurs at the end of the learner's portfolio when it is not possible to cover them using other principal assessment methods as detailed above.

6 Written assignments and projects

These must be relevant to the learner's work role and designed to cover knowledge not easily incorporated into accounts of practice.

7 Assessment of knowledge and understanding

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 within the learner's portfolio of evidence.

Common knowledge points are in the majority of units, at each level of each SVQ. Where it is not possible to identify this knowledge in reflective accounts of practice, to avoid repetition, assessors should assist learners to provide evidence for these knowledge points in focused pieces of work. The aim of these pieces of work is to cover knowledge points fully and should demonstrate the application of knowledge to the learner's everyday work practice.

Assessors should be clear that knowledge cannot be inferred from observed practice, however, it is acceptable for knowledge to be included if it is explicit from what has been observed or from what a learner specifically states during the activity being observed. For example, a learner might be explaining why they are washing their hands to an individual or a child and then they may go on to explain that this is part of their organisation's specific health and safety policy. This would cover specific knowledge points and is a natural discussion that could take place during practice that the assessor would hear. However, if a learner washed their hands and did not explain the reasons for doing this then to claim those same knowledge points would not be appropriate, as knowledge would be inferred rather than explicit.

Observation could also be used to confirm knowledge if the situation observed is like a piece of practice recorded in a previous reflective account by the learner — this will help avoid assessors and learners writing about the same piece of practice. For example, a learner may have written in a reflective account that they always wash their hands using a specific technique and antibacterial hand-wash whenever they are about to undertake personal care to avoid the risk of cross infection. Then in an observation, the assessor might see them carry out this task, showing how the knowledge has been applied in practice. A range of methods should be used to identify knowledge from observed practice. For example, learners could be questioned, encouraged to review their practice verbally or knowledge could be included in reflective accounts of practice.

Assessors need to ensure that the learner can apply knowledge and understanding within the context of the units. Assessors should use holistic assessment to establish the knowledge and understanding required to support competent practice.

Assessment providers may choose to use their own style of project or assessment to cover these points. However, when considering the approach to use, assessment providers must ensure all of the following key areas are covered and learners:

- ◆ must show their understanding of the knowledge point
- ◆ must explain how they would use that knowledge in their job role
- ◆ wherever possible, should be guided to provide a specific example from their work practice where they have applied that knowledge
- ◆ must demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in the context of the units

This approach provides a structure or framework to facilitate the learner meeting these common knowledge points. The assessment methods used to cover the common knowledge points are subject to the professional judgement of the assessor and should be planned to meet all knowledge points.

It is essential that the key areas detailed above are covered. Workbooks or set pieces of work which identify scenarios for reflection or contain a list of questions are not acceptable pieces of evidence to demonstrate learner competence in the common knowledge points.

8 Simulation

Simulations should not be used other than in exceptional circumstances. The assessor should seek clarification from the internal verifier as to the relevance of the method and keep a record of the discussion for standardisation purposes.

Assessment providers are advised not to create standard simulated activities or worksheets, as the requirement for any simulated piece of evidence would only occur at the end of the portfolio development where gaps are identified and will be specific to each individual learner.

If an assessment provider feels there is a need for a standard simulation activity, then this is an indicator that the learner unit selection is not appropriate as it does not relate to the learner's job role and function.

If in doubt the internal verifier should seek clarification from the awarding body as to the suitability of the simulation method of assessment.

Where simulation is used it must replicate usual activities in real work situations. The use of simulation to support evidence should be agreed in advance by the assessor and learner at the assessment planning stage.

9 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A learner may have completed pieces of work from a training course or other qualification which demonstrate knowledge and understanding applicable to the learner's work setting. It is the learner's responsibility, with encouragement from the assessor, to highlight these pieces of work as part of the assessment planning process and the assessor must then consider the relevance of these pieces of work in the context of the qualification the learner is now undertaking.

Any previous pieces of work must be no more than five years old and the content in terms of legislation and best practice must be current. All pieces of RPL should be presented within the learner's portfolio of evidence, given an evidence number and any performance or knowledge points it covers should be clearly marked alongside the parts of the text they relate to. The assessor must authenticate that any evidence used is the learner's own work.

Where a learner has completed individual SVQ units as part of an HNC they will receive automatic credit for this within SQA's qualification registration database and so will not be required to complete these units again as they appear within the SVQ. In these instances, it would be helpful for an SQA record of the unit achievements to be presented in the learner's portfolio so that it is apparent why these will not be covered as part of this qualification.

Awarding bodies must ensure that guidance includes a consistent approach to recognition of prior learning that is agreed with the SSC and reflects the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework RPL Core Principles.³The core principles state RPL should be:

- ◆ learner focused
- ◆ accessible
- ◆ flexible
- ◆ reliable, transparent and consistent
- ◆ quality assured

The aim of the SCQF RPL Core Principles is to make sure that there is effective, quality-assured practice that will enable all users of the SCQF to have confidence in the outcomes of RPL.

10 Witness testimony

This is a statement from someone who has worked alongside the learner or can confirm their practice in a specific context. They are asked to endorse and comment on a reflective piece a learner has written that they have witnessed.

The witness must confirm in their statement that what the learner has written is accurate, rather than fulfilling the role of the assessor and writing a direct observation. It is the assessor's role to determine the suitability of the witness. This assessment method is seldom used within the assessment of these qualifications, instead, expert witness provides more robust evidence of a learner's competent practice.

Individuals and carers as witnesses are in an advantageous position concerning direct experience of care provision. Their views of the service received should be seen as relevant and important in the assessment of the learner's performance, alongside other sources of evidence. This type of evidence will be particularly relevant to lone workers such as childminders and home carers.

Service users and carers may provide witness testimony. Final decisions about the suitability and status of this testimony in the learner's assessment will be made by the assessor. Witness testimony can be used as a way of authenticating learner evidence.

³<https://www.sssc.uk.com/careers-and-education/qualifications/recognition-of-prior-learning/>
<https://scqf.org.uk/support/support-for-individuals/rpl-for-learners/>
<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/67029.html>

11 Expert witness

Expert witness testimony can be used to meet the practice observation requirement of optional units and mandatory units in addition to the assessor's observations of practice.

Assessment providers are required to evidence how they have selected and supported the expert witnesses that are used. There is not an SQA requirement that they attend centre standardisation meetings or fill out assessment provider registration forms; however, if the assessment provider the learner is doing their SVQ with requires this, then that is the centre's prerogative. External verifiers are looking to see that the assessment provider has a process for approving the expert witness and supporting them. This will look different for different assessment providers.

The role of the expert witness is to submit evidence to the assessor as agreed between the assessor and learner at the assessment planning stage. The evidence may cover points from an individual unit or across several units. This evidence must directly relate to the learner's performance in the workplace which has been observed by the expert witness.

The expert witness must:

- ◆ have credible experience/occupational competence in the area being assessed. This may include line managers or other experienced colleagues from inside an organisation or from other agencies involved with the workplace
- ◆ understand the assessment providers' recording requirements and will require guidance on the skills required to provide evidence for the NOS. If the expert witness holds a recognised assessor qualification (D32,33,A1 L&D9DI) then the written evidence can be included as an observation by the expert witness
- ◆ have CPL relevant to the sector for which they are assessing performance

An assessor can have a professional discussion with the expert witness to ensure that what has been observed is used to its fullest potential. The sufficiency of the evidence is judged by the assessor.

Recording evidence

It is recognised that alternative forms of recording portfolio evidence will evolve using information and communications technologies including e-portfolios. Assessors must ensure they are satisfied that the evidence presented by the learner is traceable, auditable and authenticated and meets the requirements set out in the assessment strategy and this guidance document.

Regardless of the form of recording used, the guiding principle is that learner evidence and information must be traceable for internal and external verification purposes.

Where an e-portfolio requires learner evidence to be 'uploaded' claims for performance and knowledge must be claimed within the evidence itself to ensure the claims can be tracked against the NOS.

Remote assessment is where the learner and assessor use digital technology for the assessment when the learner is in a different location from the assessor. This may include online portfolios, video conferencing and mobile devices which support:

- ◆ online observations of practice
- ◆ professional discussion
- ◆ viewing products
- ◆ discussion with expert witnesses
- ◆ virtual individual or group learner support

All evidence must be robust and only short pieces of audio/visual recordings should be used as evidence so that assessors and verifiers can determine where in the recording the evidence occurs.

Voice recording is an additional method to support learners to present evidence of competence but is not to be used as a replacement for written evidence.

No photographic evidence, which identifies individual children or adults, should be included in portfolios.

Assessors must ensure they are satisfied that the evidence presented by the learner is traceable, auditable, and authenticated and meets the requirements set out in the assessment strategy and this guidance.

It is best practice for the audio/visual evidence to be transcribed, and the audio/visual recording deleted to preserve anonymity. Informed consent is necessary before taking part in any remote assessment, including how the information will be shared and stored. The assessor must keep a record of consent.

The assessment provider must have a standardised approach to remote assessment, data protection and security. Measures for accountability, such as privacy policies and risk assessments are required, including for third-party online platforms or personal devices. Assessment providers may wish to seek support from their own Information Technology/Governance department or the ⁴Information Commissioner's Office.

Meta skills

Meta skills are innate, timeless, higher-order skills that create adaptive learners and promote success in whatever context they are applied. Assessment providers could shift focus on developing meta skills in individuals such as:

- ◆ managing yourself: focusing, integrity, initiative
- ◆ working with others: communicating, collaborating, leading
- ◆ creating change: curiosity, sense-making, critical thinking

⁴<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/>

These meta skills are recognised as lifelong skills a worker needs to adapt to change in work. They are vital skills employers look for. SVQs provide the opportunity to recognise meta skills but they are not essential to the assessment.

Current and future workers must be equipped with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they need in sustainability transitions. Vocational learning is designed to support sustainability for workers, where they can continue to build their skills, by adding more SVQ units to their qualification through reflection which ensures continued development of skills as roles evolve over time.

National Occupational Standards

It is the assessment provider's responsibility to ensure that all learners, assessors and internal verifiers are using the current standards. These can be downloaded from SQA Care's website.

Learner portfolios

It is the assessment provider's responsibility to ensure that the learner's portfolio is completed and includes the names of the assessor(s) and internal verifier(s), the achievement record and the learner's signed, plagiarism declaration that the work contained is the learner's own.

Location of evidence

It is the assessment provider's responsibility to ensure that the external verifier has access to the learners' evidence in a format that is clearly tracked against the NOS. This requires all evidence to detail where it meets the standards through performance criteria and knowledge points being claimed alongside the relevant part of the text that they apply to. Evidence presented with no claims for performance and/or knowledge detailed on it will be deemed to be unsatisfactorily tracked against the NOS.

Malpractice policy

It is the assessment provider's responsibility to ensure that SQA's procedures for dealing with suspected cases of malpractice are adhered to. These procedures are necessary for maintaining the integrity of SQA's qualifications.

SQA is committed to safeguarding its reputation for the quality and credibility of its qualifications. All allegations of malpractice should be investigated consistently, fairly and impartially.

The term 'malpractice' covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the assessment process or the integrity of an SQA qualification, the validity of an SQA certificate, or the reputation and credibility of SQA.