

Skills for Care & Development

Sgiliau Gofal a Datblygu

Skills for Care and Development Assessment principles:

Flexible arrangements to support existing principles and approaches to unit/qualification assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

September 2021 v1.2

1. Introduction

These flexible approaches to assessment have been agreed by Skills for Care and Development to support the delivery and achievement of qualifications during the COVID-19 pandemic and where assessed observation of practice cannot take place within the workplace. Flexible approaches have been applied specifically where there are requirements to include direct observation as the main source of evidence.

These adaptations will remain in place until August 2022 and apply to adult social care qualification delivery in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and early years and childcare, children and young peoples' qualification delivery in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Review of these adaptations will continue by Skills for Care and Development during this time period.

In Scotland, please also refer to <https://news.sssc.uk.com/news/guidance-svq-assessment>.

2. Flexible arrangements as agreed

2.1. Direct observation

Competence based assessment requirements must include direct observation of performance of the learner as the main source of evidence. Where it is deemed safe and appropriate following a robust COVID-19 risk assessment process, direct observation of performance remains the preferred method of assessment.

Where it is not safe to gain direct observation of performance, the following approaches should be considered. A combination can be used

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to create a robust triangulation of performance-based evidence for the learner.

2.2. Expert Witness Testimony

The use of an expert witness (EW) is permitted to undertake and provide observations of performance of the learner if an observation by a qualified assessor cannot be completed.

An expert witness must:

- have a working knowledge of the units for which they are providing expert testimony
- be occupationally competent in their area for which they are providing expert testimony
- have EITHER any qualification in assessment of workplace performance **OR** a work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff within their area of expertise.

The use of an EW should be determined and agreed by the assessor and final assessment decisions must be made by the qualified assessor. The EW should be provided with induction, training and on-going support from the assessor/IQA in order to encourage the provision of a robust statement of the learner's performance against agreed standards or criteria.

A range of suitable EWs should be explored with the learner and workplace.

Centres should enable EWs to provide and present their evidence in an efficient way which does not compromise validity and reliability. This could include the use of voice and audio recordings, or through remote discussions where the main assessor could scribe the EW contributions.

2.3. Remote technology

It remains that video or audio streaming or recording should not be used where this compromises the privacy, dignity or confidentiality of any individual, child

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or young person or family using services as a method of gaining performance evidence.

The use of remote technologies could be considered to observe aspects of the learner's performance where privacy, dignity or confidentiality of any individual, child or young person, or family using services is not compromised. For example, this may include on-line meetings and remote activities in which the learner is contributing, and where the assessor could also attend remotely or observe through use of technology.

If the centre is using remote technologies, then there is responsibility to ensure standardised approaches are adopted and reviewed which consider units and criteria of the qualification where this approach might be suitable. Application of assessment principles should remain central in the way evidence is agreed, planned, gained and presented. If this method is being used, then a careful selection of appropriate assessment opportunities will need to be considered.

2.4. Use of Professional Discussion and Reflective Accounts

Reflective Accounts of practice and Professional Discussions could be used to support other forms of evidence, but are not direct evidence sources which can replace the observation requirement.

3. Safety update

The safety of all involved should be considered. If access to the workplace to carry out observation of practice is permitted; a COVID-19 risk assessment process should be applied and current government regulations and guidance strictly adhered to.

4. Assessment responsibilities update

Additional assessment support may be required at this time with the use, coordination and feedback of assessment methodologies used.

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Where EW's are being used, EW should be provided with induction, training and on-going support from the assessor/IQA in order to encourage the provision of a robust statement of the learner's performance against agreed standards or criteria.

5. Internal Quality Assurance update

Internal quality assurance remains key to ensuring that the assessment of evidence for units is of a consistent and appropriate quality. Internal quality assurance methodologies and approaches should be reviewed to account for centre application in the use of flexible arrangements.

6. External quality assurance update

External quality assurance methodologies and approaches should also be reviewed to account for monitoring of the centre's application of these flexible arrangements.

7. Definitions

Triangulation: Considerations and practices of collecting evidence from different sources to inform and evidence accurate and consistent assessment decisions