



ENTO regularly receives queries about their standards and in particular the A and V units. These come via learning centres, employers, individual candidates and awarding bodies. ENTO also works with the awarding bodies offering the Learning and Development SVQs/NVQs and the A&V Awards through an awarding body forum at which additional issues are raised and discussed.

After discussion at our awarding body forum a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) along with jointly agreed responses has been produced to provide a reference point for those delivering the A&V Awards.

A. The Assessment Strategy for Learning and Development SVQs/NVQs and the A&V units

1. What N/SVQs/Awards does the Learning and Development Assessment strategy refer to?

The Learning and Development Assessment Strategy only refers to the N/SVQs and Certificate awards in Learning and Development. This defines the requirements with respect to competence of those assessing and verifying the Learning and Development S/NVQs, the A & V awards and the certificate awards. It also defines the position with respect to independent assessment and the use of simulation when assessing these qualifications.

Each N/SVQ has its own assessment strategy which will define the specific requirements for that qualification. Assessors and verifiers will need to make sure that they are familiar with the requirements for all of the S/NVQs they are involved with.

2. Who decided there was a requirement for an assessment strategy?

The requirement for an assessment strategy for each N/SVQ has come from the Regulatory Authorities.

3. Who was responsible for developing the assessment strategy?

ENTO in conjunction with the Awarding Bodies who offer the Learning and Development N/SVQs developed the assessment strategy. In addition the Awarding Bodies with the support and endorsement of ENTO have also developed additional guidance for the assessment and verification of the A+V units. This additional guidance has been adopted by all Awarding Bodies.

B. Assessor and Verifier competence and experience

4. The assessment strategy requires that an assessor must have one years experience in the last two years in the activities described in the standards. When does this one year period commence from?

The one years experience starts from certification of the assessor unit.

5. Does the requirement for one years practice apply to those that achieve the D32/33 units??

The requirement for one years practice prior to assessing Learning and Development N/SVQs and the assessment and verification units applies to all assessors regardless of which units they hold.



6. How do you define occupational competence?

Occupational competence is defined in the assessment strategy and involves practising in the activities described in the standards that you are assessing or internally verifying.

The requirement for one years experience in the last two years is a rolling requirement and therefore in any given two year period in the future the assessor or internal verifier must have been practising for one year. The degree of practising can be proven by producing the same evidence that you would provide to achieve the unit in the first instance.

7. What units do the assessor and verifiers of the A+V units need to hold?

The table below summarises the qualifications required for assessors and verifiers of all of the assessor and verifier awards:

In order to assess or verify a Candidate for the Units below the Assessor/Verifier must have the following Awards	Assessor must have	Internal Verifier must have	External Verifier must have
A1	A1 or D32-3	A1 + V1 or D32-4	A1 + V2 or D32-3 + D35
A2	A1 or D32-3	A1 + V1 or D32-4	A1 + V2 or D32-3 + D35
V1	A1 + V1 or D32-4	A1 + V1 or D32-4	A1 + V1 + V2 or D32-35
V2	A1 + V2 or D32-3 + D35	A1 + V1 + V2 or D32-35	A1 + V2 or D32-3 + D35

NB There is an additional requirement for independent assessment of all A&V Award candidates.

8. Does my internal verifier need to be a qualified assessor?

For the assessment and verification units the internal verifier must hold D32/33 or A1 and D34 or V1.

ENTO believes that all internal verifiers for all N/SVQs should have been at sometime a qualified and practicing assessor.

**9. Does my external verifier need to be a qualified assessor?**

For the assessment and verification units the external verifier must hold D32/33 or A1 and D35 or V2.

ENTO believes that all external verifiers for all N/SVQs should have been at sometime a qualified and practicing assessor.

10. Do I need to have A1 to be an assessor for A1 candidates?

The requirements of any assessor to assess the A1 unit is to be qualified as an assessor (either D32/33 or A1) and have occupational competence as detailed in the assessment strategy for Learning and Development and the additional assessment guidance for assessment and verification.

11. Can the assessor of the A+V units be 'working towards'?

No all assessors and verifiers (internal and external) of the assessment and verification units must themselves hold the appropriate units.

12. Do you need to do both A1 and A2?

No if you do unit A1 then there is no requirement to do unit A2. However if you do A2 first because you only observe performance in the workplace then you may wish to undertake unit A1 if you are required to use additional assessment methods and evidence at a later date. The unit you decide to undertake is based on your role and the assessment methods to be used for a particular award, the best source of this information is the assessment strategy for the sector you assess in and the evidence requirements for the N/SVQ.

13. Do I have to have been a qualified Assessor before I can commence my award to become an Internal Verifier?

To become an internal verifier for the Learning and Development S/NVQs you need to have been an assessor for one year of these standards (or standards in a related occupational area).

However the requirements for other sectors will vary according to the Assessment Strategy for that sector and it may be possible that you can be doing both your assessor and verifier award at the same time or in other cases commence the V1 award immediately following completion of the A1 award. You **MUST** check the assessment strategy for the sector.

In some sectors you may be able to undertake V1 without having any experience of assessment although the view of ENTO is that verifiers should be assessors themselves.

**14. Do newly qualified assessors have to have their judgements countersigned?**

Once qualified the assessor does not need to have their decisions countersigned but should be supported by their Internal Verifier. Equally there is no sound rationale for new assessors to be subject to 100% internal verification of their work. In fact 100% sampling is deemed to be poor practice. The Internal Verification strategy for the qualification should clearly determine the level of sampling based on a number of criteria including experience of the assessor.

15. If an assessor or verifier who currently holds D32/33/34/35 wishes to achieve A1/A2/V1/V2 do they need to have their judgements/decisions countersigned?

No, as the assessor or verifier is already qualified there would be no requirement for their judgements/decisions to be countersigned for their N/SVQ candidate.

16. Do current holders of the D units 32, 33, 34 and 36 have to re-qualify to the new assessment and verification units A1, A2, V1 and V2?

There is **NO** requirement for current D unit holders to re-qualify. In accordance with the NVQ Code of Practice, all assessors and verifiers should be familiar with and working to the requirements of the new standards.

The view of ENTO is that all practicing assessors and verifiers should, as part of a CPD plan, re-qualify to the revised standards.

17. If I do not practice as an assessor for two years do I need to re-qualify?

There is no requirement for those who do not practice for two years to re-qualify, but the demands for occupational competence will have to be met and in addition some CPD activity should take place to ensure that you are able to practice to current expectations as an assessor.

18. Does the A1 assessor of the A1 assessor-candidate need to have the occupational competence/experience/qualifications of the N/SVQ being assessed by the assessor-candidate?

The A1 assessor does not need to have the occupational competence /experience /qualifications of the N/SVQ being assessed by the assessor-candidate. However all assessment judgements of the assessor-candidate have to be countersigned by an assessor who is qualified (A1 or D32/33) and does have the necessary occupational competence/experience/qualifications as defined in the relevant assessment strategy. The assessor of the assessor-candidate must have the occupational competence as detailed in the assessment strategy for Learning and Development and the additional assessment guidance for assessment and verification.

19. What qualifications are needed by the primary assessor and the independent assessor of the A and V units?

The qualification requirements for the primary assessor and the independent assessor of the A and V units are identical and are defined in full in the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy.

**20. Is L20 an assessment unit?**

L20 is NOT an assessment unit but is suited to those individuals working with candidates in the workplace who are able to ensure that the candidate has the breadth of experience and opportunity to achieve the units of their chosen qualification. In addition the unit supports the role of witness testimony but is not required for a witness testimony to be valid.

The view of ENTO is that where possible those supporting candidates' in the workplace and as a result providing vital witness testimony should achieve unit L20

C. Evidence requirements for the A&V units**21. What can be simulated in the A&V Awards?**

There is no simulated activity allowed in the *assessor and verifier awards where all evidence must be derived from the candidate's workplace and reflect normal working practices. It is not permissible to set up activities specifically to allow the candidate to generate evidence for the awards.*

22. What can I do if my candidate cannot cover a performance criterion because the situation just does not arise?

In most cases it should be possible to use hypothetical questioning to allow the candidate to explain what they would do if the situation arose. This is clearly identified in the assessment strategy but currently there are no performance criteria specifically identified in the assessment and verification units which require hypothetical questioning.

23. What evidence is required to prove competence?

The Awarding Bodies who offer the assessment and verification units have developed one set of evidence requirements for the four units of A1, A2, V1 and V2 and for the Learning & Development awards. These are known as the 'Agreed Common Evidence' and are available from your Awarding Body. The development of these evidence requirements was facilitated by ENTO and therefore has our total support.

24. What does 'Contributing to the internal quality assurance process' refer to? (A1.4)

The above element refers to the internal quality assurance process of the accredited centre which the assessor is undertaking assessments for. This requirement does not refer to quality assurance of the location/workplace/establishment of the N/SVQ candidate.



25. Element A1.4 requires the assessor-candidate to contribute to the internal quality assurance processes. What does this actually require the assessor-candidate to do?

In the main this requires the assessor-candidate to comply with internal procedures relating to quality assurance. It also requires the assessor-candidate to contribute to internal standardisation meetings in respect of the qualification the assessor-candidate is assessing

An internal standardisation meeting will normally involve all assessors for a particular qualification and their internal verifier. At the meeting evidence produced by candidates and judgements made by the assessors will be compared to ensure that there is a level of consistency and that the decisions being made meet national standards across the team. Equally there will be consideration of evidence that has been deemed not to have met the national standard. The meeting might focus on a particular unit, an assessment method or a type of evidence.

Pieces of evidence which have been assessed by the assessor-candidate must form part of this standardisation process as it allows them to standardise their work against that of other more experienced assessors.

The evidence to be produced by the assessor candidate to confirm their contribution will be agreed with his/her assessor but it may include minutes or notes from standardisation meetings where candidate evidence has been reviewed.

The assessor-candidate must be recorded on the centre's list of assessors.

(Note: the evidence discussed here does not represent all of the evidence which is required for element A1.4.)

26. In the evidence requirements for V1.3 the internal verifier candidate must be observed by the external verifier or a qualified second internal verifier? Who is the second internal verifier?

If the external verifier is unable to observe the Internal Verifier candidate then the Internal Verifier who is countersigning the trainee IVs work is perfectly placed to be the second internal verifier referred to in the evidence requirements. This internal verifier must be a D34 or V1 holder with occupational competence in the relevant field.

This internal verifier could also act as the independent assessor of the Internal Verifier candidate as long as he/she holds the A1 (or D32/D33) unit and has the required occupational competence for assessors as defined by the L&D assessment strategy. The observation will then count as the independent assessment requirement for V1.



27. Can assessor-candidates use professional discussion as an assessment method with their candidates?

Assessor candidates can use any assessment method they feel is appropriate to their candidates taking into account permissible assessment methods for the units/awards they are assessing.

Professional discussion is a powerful assessment tool which allows the candidate to demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding through discussion and reflection. It is important that all assessors are aware of this method of assessment and become experienced in its use.

Assessor candidates must use a minimum of four assessment methods with their candidates, one of which must be observation. The use of professional discussion as one of these methods is acceptable.

28. An assessor-candidate has to provide evidence of “others” contributing to the assessment process. Who are the “others”?

This depends on the candidate’s situation but it usually refers to the use of witness testimony. The witness testimony should be treated as any other form of evidence to be assessed and judged by the assessor.

29. For Element A1.3 do I have to give feedback to the same candidates I have produced evidence from for A1.1 and A1.2?

Yes, as this represents best practice in assessment. You will have shown that you can follow a minimum of two candidates through the whole assessment process from planning and reviewing, through judging evidence and making an assessments decision and then giving feedback.

30. What has to be covered by the standardisation meetings in order to achieve Element V1.2?

Standardisation meetings have to be held to review the activities of at least two assessors over the complete assessment process. This includes assessment planning, reviewing plans and progress, assessing candidate evidence using different assessment methods, making a judgment, making a decision as to candidate competence, providing feedback and recording the assessment process in line with a centres QA procedures. At least two full units must be covered over the course of these meetings.

It is unlikely that this will be covered in one meeting and in any case, evidence of holding meetings regularly should be provided.

Evidence could be in the form of notes produced from the meetings, assessor observations of the meetings, taped recordings of the meeting, witness testimony or alternative methods agreed with your assessor for the V1 unit.



- 31. The evidence requirement for A1.1 requires that each assessment plan must “cover one full unit of competence which can be certificated”; does this mean that the unit has to be certificated before the assessor candidate can complete the award?**

No, since this might not be achievable in a reasonable timeframe – for example the assessor-candidate may complete the full assessment process but his/her candidate may not yet be deemed fully competent or may not have covered the full range of situations required by the particular standards being assessed.

- 32. For A2.1 how many units of an S/NVQ must be covered by the assessment plans?**

Across the three plans a minimum of 2 full units of an S/NVQ must be covered. There are a number of ways in which this could be achieved e.g. each plan could cover the full requirements of a different unit of an S/NVQ; two plans could cover the same unit with two different candidates with a third plan covering another unit etc.

- 33. What does the word ‘safe’ mean in A1.1 pc c?**

The word ‘safe’ in this context means sound or based on good evidence and not likely to be proved wrong. It is not related to physical safety or Health and Safety at Work procedures.

D. Independent Assessment in the Learning and Development S/NVQs and the A&V units

- 34. Does the second assessor or independent assessor need to be independent of the centre?**

No the requirement is for the second assessor to be independent of the candidate and primary assessor and not necessarily independent of the centre although this may be the case in some instances where an organisation uses peripatetic assessors.

- 35. Does the independent assessor plan assessment with the assessor or verifier candidate?**

The assessment plan for the assessor or verifier candidate is usually devised by the primary assessor in conjunction with the candidate. The plan will clearly state the individual responsibilities for assessment. The primary assessor will have to work with the independent assessor to inform them of the requirement for independent assessment. If the assessment method agreed requires the independent assessor and the candidate to meet, the plan should be updated or revised to include the arrangements made.



36. Does the second or independent assessor need to be occupationally competent and/or qualified?

The second or independent assessor must be a competent job holder and must hold a recognised assessor qualification either D32/33 or A1. For the purposes of these qualifications/awards competent job holder is deemed as being the same as the demands for occupational competence in the assessment strategy.

The primary assessor must be occupationally competent but can be 'working towards' their assessor qualification. Where this occurs all assessment decisions of the primary assessor must be signed by a qualified and occupationally competent assessor. This is a requirement of the QCA NVQ Code of Practice. (para 28, page 7). ENTO believes that this countersignature is essential as this provides support and reassurance for the assessor and ensures that the candidate is being treated fairly.

(Whilst SQA policy does not require countersignature it is the considered opinion of ENTO that the countersignature requirement is essential to raise the independence and standard of assessment and is now encouraging SQA to review its policy and practice.)

In all cases both the primary and independent assessor of A+V candidates must hold the relevant assessor unit either D32/33 or A1 and be occupationally competent.

The view of ENTO is that the independent assessor **MUST** not countersign the primary assessors' decisions if the primary assessor is working towards their assessor unit. In this case the primary assessor's decisions must be countersigned by an additional qualified and occupationally competent assessor.

In addition, the view of ENTO is that the Internal Verifier is not one of the two assessors, but is a third party who meets the demands of occupational competence as defined by the assessment strategy. This view is supported by the Awarding Bodies.

37. Is there a requirement for an element of independence in the singular units of assessment and verification (A1,A2,V1 and V2)?

The additional guidance for the assessment of the A+V units requires a primary piece of outcome evidence for each unit to have been assessed by someone other than the primary assessor. Both of these assessors must be qualified (D32/33 or A1) and be occupationally competent and meet the demands for CPD as detailed in the assessment strategy. Further guidance on independence in these units will be available from your Awarding Body.

In addition the view of ENTO is that the Internal Verifier is not one of the two assessors but is a third party who meets the demands of occupational competence as defined by the assessment strategy. This view is supported by the Awarding Bodies.

38. What role does the independent assessor have in the assessment planning process where this is the chosen method of independence?

The independent assessor is expected to agree with the A1 candidate one of their three assessment plans for their N/SVQ candidate.

**39. Does the independent assessor assess the primary assessor's assessments?**

The independent assessor does not re-assess the work of the primary assessor but is required to assess completely separate evidence. Likewise, the primary assessor does not revisit the independent assessor's judgements.

40. Can other methods of assessment than those given as guidance by the Awarding Body be used to meet the demands of independent assessment?

Yes other methods can be used, but should be agreed with the Internal Verifier and subsequently the External Verifier prior to their use

41. Can the countersigning assessor also act as the independent assessor for A1?

New!

It is perfectly acceptable for this assessor to act as the primary or independent assessor for the A1 candidate as long as he/she meets the occupational competence requirement for assessors of the Learning and Development NVQs/SVQs as defined in the assessment strategy for these standards.

While carrying out the role of primary or independent assessor the countersigning assessor is working on behalf of the centre offering the A unit and should appear on their list of approved assessors.

E. CPD for Assessors and Verifiers**42. Who decides on appropriate CPD for assessors and verifiers?**

The requirement for CPD activity for assessors and internal verifiers must be part of the internal verification strategy and planned in advance. Evidence of the activity must be retained as proof; a certificate of attendance is not evidence of CPD. This would have to be accompanied by some form of evaluation of the activity by the assessor or verifier.

43. Who approves and monitors the planned CPD activity?

The planned CPD activity should be agreed with the external verifier for the awards and monitored by them during normal centre visits. In all cases all CPD activity should be recorded.

44. How many hours CPD do an assessor and verifier have to undertake?

ENTO holds the view that the CPD activity should not be determined by number of hours but by the appropriateness to the individual and their development needs. The minimum requirement is for two activities a year, these should form part of the internal verification strategy for the award and will reflect the individual requirements of the assessor/verifier.

**45. Do all assessors have to undertake two CPD activities each and every year?**

The requirement of the assessment strategy for Learning and Development that all assessors undertake two CPD activities each and every year applies directly to the Learning and Development and Assessment Verification units and not necessarily to assessors and verifiers of other qualifications. However ENTO and the Awarding Bodies are of the view that ALL assessors and verifiers should undertake CPD in relation to assessment and verification and not just their occupational skills. In all cases the CPD activity should be agreed between the assessor and their Internal Verifier and have clear objectives and outcomes. Following the activity(s), it should be reflected upon as to how it has changed practice or confirmed and validated current practice.

46. If I am an assessor and Internal Verifier for the Learning and Development N/SVQs or the assessment and verification units how many CPD activities do I have to undertake?

You will need to do two activities in the role of the assessor and two in the role of the Internal Verifier, a total of four in total for each and every year that you continue to practice.

F. The use of evidence derived from non-SVQ/NVQ qualifications**47. Can non-N/SVQ evidence be used to achieve the assessment and verification units?**

In some cases non-N/SVQ evidence may be accepted where this evidence is gathered in the workplace. However, you must seek the approval of your Awarding Body prior to using this type of evidence.

48. Can I achieve V1 using non-NVQ assessed evidence where there is no External Moderator?

To achieve V1 using non-N/SVQ assessed evidence there must be external quality control. It is not possible to achieve V1 unless there is some external quality control provision.

49. Where non-N/SVQ evidence is to be used for the achievement of the assessment and verification units and the evidence must come from the workplace, whose workplace is that?

The requirement is that the evidence being assessed by the assessor-candidate must come from the workplace of the person being assessed. The workplace is deemed to be the normal place of work of the individual. Where the individual is involved in working at different locations then the evidence must come from normal work activity of that person.

G. Internal verification

**50. What must be included in an Internal Verifier's sampling strategy for an N/SVQ?**

Over a period of time the following must be sampled by the Internal Verifier:

- All candidates
- All units including those that have been assessed by the independent assessor
- All locations where assessment occurs
- All assessment methods
- All assessors responsible to the Internal Verifier

H. External Verification**51. What role do External Verifiers have to play in monitoring Health & Safety and environmental protection procedures when visiting centres?**

External Verifiers should check that centres have written procedures in place to ensure that assessors consider health and safety and environmental protection when carrying out assessments both in and external to the centre. They should also check that appropriate training is available to assessors, delivered both at induction and to refresh and update knowledge as required. When observing assessors they should check that the assessor has applied the procedures as necessary.

The EV does not need to be a qualified Health & Safety professional to carry out these checks but should have the same basic knowledge of health and safety and environmental protection as all who are operating in the workplace. Undertaking training in this respect may form part of their continuous professional development.

I. Assessment methods**52. Is giving a presentation professional discussion?**

Professional discussion is not giving a presentation. A professional discussion is a two way communication between the assessor and their candidate

53. Is professional discussion a formative and summative means of assessment?

Professional discussion can be used as both a formative and summative assessment method, although in many cases the most effective use of a professional discussion is to ensure complete coverage of knowledge and performance criteria.

54. Can video evidence be used for observation?

Observation can be undertaken through viewing of video evidence and does not necessarily require the assessor to be present although it is the preferred option.