

**COMPENTENCY BASED QUALIFICATIONS
CENTRE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT
FOR NVQs, SVQs and QCF DIPLOMAS**

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Registered Office

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INTRODUCTION

This guide provides information about every aspect of running a Competency Based programme with Lantra Awards. It clearly defines what we expect from you and what you can expect from us.

The guide helps you through the process of becoming a centre approved by Lantra Awards to offer NVQs, SVQs or QCF Diplomas. It takes you through each step of the approval process and what you need to consider when making your application. It also describes the simple administration processes required to operate successfully with Lantra Awards.

There is an explanation of the role of candidates, assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers and the part that they each play in the assessment process. A set of sample documents are included so that new centres can immediately start setting up the systems and procedures required for the effective running Competency Based Qualifications.

Contacting Lantra Awards

If you have any queries about becoming a centre with Lantra Awards or about any of the awards available from Lantra Awards please contact:

By telephone on
024 7641 9703
(answer 'phone facility outside office hours)

By fax on
024 7641 1655

By e-mail at
awards@lantra-awards.co.uk

By post at
Lantra Awards
Lantra House
Stoneleigh Park
Nr Coventry
Warwickshire
CV8 2LG

or visit our website
www.lantra-awards.co.uk

1. WHAT ARE COMPETENCY BASED QUALIFICATIONS?

Competency Based Qualifications including NVQs (National Vocational Qualification) and SVQs (Scottish Vocational Qualifications) and QCF Diplomas are qualifications which measure someone's competence against defined National Occupational Standards (NOS). The standards are set by standards setting bodies, made up of employers, industry and other key organisations within the sector. The standards setting body for the land-based sector is Lantra Sector Skills Council (SSC).

The standards are made available for awarding bodies to offer to their customers, usually referred to as 'centres'. All individuals who want to achieve an NVQ/SVQ or Diplomas, usually referred to as 'candidates,' must register with a centre approved by the awarding body for offering that qualification.

There is no difference between an NVQ and an SVQ. SVQs are offered mainly in Scotland and are regulated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), whilst NVQs are offered mostly in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and are regulated by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), in partnership with the equivalent regulatory bodies in Wales (DELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA). Candidates in Scotland can register for NVQs, and candidates outside Scotland may register for SVQs, provided that their centre is approved for the relevant qualification. Diplomas are also regulated through QCA and sit within the new Qualification and Credit Framework.

Awarding bodies offering these Qualifications must comply with the NVQ Code of Practice (viewable at www.qca.org.uk) and the SQA Accreditation Criteria (see www.sqa.org.uk). The guidance in this booklet will help centres ensure that they operate according to the requirements of Lantra Awards, which, in turn, ensure that the principles of the awarding body accreditation criteria are upheld.

See Lantra Awards 'List of Approved Qualifications' for an up to date list of provision offered by Lantra Awards. The list is available from Lantra Awards and can be found on our website www.lantra-awards.co.uk.

Promotional leaflets for all of Lantra Awards qualifications are available from Lantra Awards.

2. GETTING STARTED – CENTRE APPROVAL

2.1 Centre approval application

Before you can start running a training programme or course leading to an NVQ/SVQ or Diploma, you must make sure that your centre is approved.

The Lantra Awards centre approval application form is designed to give you the opportunity of showing how your centre meets the approval criteria laid down by the regulatory authorities, QCA and SQA. The approval criteria for the two regulatory authorities are slightly different but we have designed the centre approval application form to ensure that you can meet both sets of criteria. You can apply for approval for your centre to offer both NVQs, SVQs and Diplomas, in which case you must clearly indicate on the centre approval application form that your centre is applying for both sets of qualifications.

The application form asks you to describe the team who will be delivering the particular qualification you have applied for, as well as any physical resources which will be made available to support the programme.

You will also be asked to describe the quality assurance systems which will be implemented within your centre to support the delivery of the qualification. On receipt of the application form Lantra Awards will arrange for an external verifier to visit your centre to carry out an evaluation visit.

The external verifier will inspect the arrangements you are proposing and give guidance, which will help you to implement the programme successfully. Following the visit he/she will make a recommendation to Lantra Awards about whether or not centre approval should be given.

2.2 Making a successful application for centre approval

The following notes are designed to help you understand what information we need from you and why it is needed.

You will need to provide copies of the following:

- Organisation chart showing how team members fit into the organisation
- Addresses of locations where assessments take place and how they are linked to the main centre
- CVs for assessors and internal verifiers
- Staff development plan for these assessors and internal verifiers
- Details of physical resources which will be available for training and assessment
- Confirmation of centre approval for current NVQ/SVQ programmes and number of candidates currently registered for each
- National centre number (if your centre has one)
- Your centre's equal opportunities policy, including arrangements for candidates with special needs
- Health and safety policy
- Appeals procedure
- Candidate induction plan
- Description of the processes used for assessment and internal verification
- Arrangements for communication between team members, especially where they are not based at the main centre
- Description of the centre records that will be maintained

You may be asked to provide copies of:

- ISO9000/SQMS certification
- Latest Ofsted, ALI, LSC audit report

2.2.1 Partnership models

It is worth considering whether you want your organisation to become an NVQ/SVQ/Diploma centre in its own right or whether you could work in partnership with another, existing NVQ/SVQ centre. If your centre is likely to have a small number of candidates each year (fewer than 10) it may not be cost-effective to become a centre yourself.

You may therefore want to consider approaching an already approved centre with a view to becoming one of their assessment centres. Lantra Awards can provide a list of currently approved centres for each qualification it offers.

The following partnership models could apply:

- Consortium – a group of organisations working together to achieve approved status and share in the responsibility of implementing a competency based qualification structure.
- satellite centres – different centres, or places of work, providing assessment sites under the 'umbrella' of one co-ordinating centre

If you decide to establish a partnership arrangement, it must be clear what each partner is responsible for. If you apply for centre approval, you need to let us know what type of centre arrangements apply. If you decide to work in partnership with another existing approved centre, you do not need to apply to Lantra Awards for centre approval. However, the other centre must let us (or their awarding body) know of any change to arrangements since they were approved.

2.2.2 Which Qualifications do you want to offer?

You have probably already decided which qualifications your centre wishes to offer. It is obviously essential that you get an up-to-date copy of the NVQ/SVQ/Diploma specifications from Lantra Awards; otherwise you will not be able to plan the training programme and its assessment in any detail.

Some qualifications include different routes, depending on the units selected by the candidate. For example, the NVQ in Plant Operations has routes for lift truck or crane operators (lifting and transferring) or for excavator operators (extracting and excavating). If you know which route(s) your centre is likely to be offering, please tick the relevant boxes. This helps us to identify an external verifier with the appropriate skills for the routes being used within your centre.

Please list ALL the qualifications and levels you want to be approved for at this time as you will need another centre approval visit (for which there is a charge) each time you want to add another qualification or level. For example if you want to offer Fencing at level 2 and then decide to seek approval for level 3, a centre approval visit will be needed. In most cases, centre approval visits can be combined with an external verifier visit if you simply want to add another level for a qualification for which your centre is already approved.

Some centres will have candidates who are based in Scotland who want the SVQ and others based in England, Wales or Northern Ireland who want the NVQ or Diploma. It is possible for your centre to offer both but you must ensure that you clearly identify on the centre approval application form that you are applying for both. You will also need to ensure that separate records are kept for NVQ/Diploma and SVQ candidates.

2.2.3 Your organisation

A centre is the place where assessments are arranged and carried out, and is normally the place where external verification takes place. The centre structure must be made clear on the application for centre approval.

Centres can operate as a single site - one company based on one site. In this case, you simply need to supply the site address and the name and details of the contact person who will be responsible for the competency based programme.

The key contact with Lantra Awards would usually be the internal verifier, but if your centre offers several programmes you might consider appointing a centre co-ordinator.

Some centres may be multi-site centres - a company with several sites may choose to operate as one centre, co-ordinated by one person for all the sites. External verifiers may choose to conduct a visit at sites other than the head office site and will, in any case, need to meet all the members of the programme team over the course of their visits. They will also want to sample candidates being assessed.

If your centre is multi-site, you must be prepared to provide access to all locations, including candidates, records and personnel at any of the sites involved. Where the multi-centre's sites are very dispersed geographically, Lantra Awards may allocate an alternative external verifier to more distant sites or pass on the additional travel costs involved for the usual external verifier.

Some multi-site centres may consider breaking down into regional groups, each acting as a single site (or multi-site centre) in its own right, with a separate internal verifier and external verifier.

2.2.4 Previous experience of NVQ/SVQs or QCF Diploma

You are asked to give information about your centre's experience of running competency based programmes. If your centre already has centre approval from another awarding body, we need to know the awarding body, the qualifications your centre is approved for, the date of centre approval and the number of candidates currently registered with the awarding body for each programme. We ask for the number of candidates registered so that we can judge whether the programme is active.

If your centre has had centre approval refused or withdrawn, you must include this information on the application form.

You are also asked to provide information about your experience of working to quality systems. If your centre has certification for the ISO9000 series or certification with the Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS), you may be asked to provide a copy of the relevant certificate. If your centre is subject to other forms of external quality audit, for example the Training Standards Council, ALI, LSC or TEC/LECs or you may be asked to provide a copy of the latest audit report.

As it is not an 'eligible body', Lantra Awards is required to charge VAT on its fees. If your organisation is an eligible body (most colleges are) you will be able to claim the VAT back. If your organisation is not an eligible body you may still be able to reclaim the VAT. Please check with your local VAT office.

2.2.5 Team members

You will need to identify team members for the roles of assessor(s) and internal verifier(s). The number of assessors and internal verifiers will very much depend on the number of candidates that you expect to register. You are asked to give an estimate of the number of candidates you expect to register in the first year, so that we can make a judgement about the sufficiency of the staff resources you are proposing.

Assessors and internal verifiers need to have appropriate qualifications and occupational experience to be able to fulfil these roles. You are asked to provide copies of their CVs and their A and V unit certificates (or D32/D33/34).

Lantra Awards gives specific guidance about the occupational competence required for each of the qualifications it offers.

An organisation chart must be attached, showing where the team members fit into the organisational structure. If any of the team members are based at a different site, the links between the main site and

other sites must be shown. This will help you plan your communication channels, which are particularly important if some team members are at different locations.

If they are not already qualified, assessors and internal verifiers will need to work towards units of the Training and Development NVQ/SVQ, usually referred to as A1 (or D32) and A2 (or D33) (for assessors) and V1 (or D34) (internal verifiers). You will need to outline the arrangements for assessment decisions to be countersigned by an assessor who is qualified and for internal verifications to be checked, authenticated and countersigned by a qualified internal verifier. If they are new to Competency Based Qualifications they will also need induction and support, so you need to plan a staff development programme including their registration for the A and V unit. If new team members are appointed they will also need staff development. We need to know who will take responsibility for ensuring that team members get appropriate support.

NB. Lack of detail or incomplete information about assessors and internal verifiers is the main reason for centre approval applications being delayed or rejected.

2.2.6 Physical resources

Some programmes will not need any additional resources. Others will need specialist equipment or facilities. For example, for the NVQ in Plant Operations, candidates will need access to relevant pieces of plant. Candidates must have access to these physical resources in order to demonstrate their competence and for training purposes.

You must check the units of assessment to see what will be assessed and ensure that candidates will have access to the right equipment in order to meet the assessment requirements. We need to know who will be responsible for ensuring that the resources are appropriate and who is responsible for ensuring that facilities comply with health and safety requirements.

2.2.7 Management support

Experience has shown us that NVQ/SVQ and Diploma programmes run more effectively when they are given full support by senior management. This can be achieved by appointing an internal verifier from the senior management team, or by ensuring that he/she is given the authority to monitor the quality management systems for the programme and to implement any changes that may be required.

The internal verifier will need the authority to allocate assessors and to take responsibility for their training and development. They will also need the authority for taking remedial action if required and for implementing action points agreed with the external verifier.

Management support can be demonstrated by ensuring that not only are appropriate team members allocated to the programme, but that they are given sufficient time to carry out their role effectively. Additional resources may be required in terms of facilities and equipment. Consequently, it may also be necessary to allocate financial resources as well as staff and physical resources.

2.2.8 Equal opportunities (including special arrangements for candidates with particular requirements)

Most centres will already have an equal opportunities policy, which must be provided with your application. You need to think about how the policy will be applied to this particular programme and how candidates and assessors will know about it.

Lantra Awards expects centres to enable candidates to have equal access to training and assessment regardless of their sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin or disability. Assessment must be undertaken without discrimination. As part of the centre approval process, a policy must be in place to ensure that such discrimination does not occur either directly or indirectly.

You must monitor the programme to ensure that the equal opportunities policy is effective. For example, your records should identify characteristics such as gender, age, special needs and ethnic

origin so that you can monitor progress and achievement of individual candidates against particular characteristics. Assessment decisions must be free from discrimination on grounds other than competence and assessments must not demand levels of literacy, numeracy and verbal skills beyond those required to demonstrate occupational competence.

You will be required to provide details of candidate characteristics (e.g. gender, age, special needs) when you register them with Lantra Awards as awarding bodies also monitor progress and achievement for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring.

We publish our equal opportunities policy, including the arrangements which can be made for candidates with particular requirements, in our policies document (available free of charge from Lantra Awards).

2.2.9 Welsh or Gaelic Irish medium

Centres should contact Lantra Awards if they require assessment materials in the medium of Welsh or Gaelic Irish.

2.2.10 Centre records

There is further guidance in this booklet about what information must be recorded in the following section about assessment and the role of candidates, assessors and internal verifiers.

Lantra Awards is not prescriptive about the format in which records are kept. Most organisations already hold records within their own systems and there is no reason why these records should not be used, provided that the information required is accessible. Centres offering both NVQs and SVQs must ensure that separate records are kept for NVQ candidates and SVQ candidates.

However, new centres may find it helpful to use the standard documents we provide in the appendices to this publication.

Centre records must include:

- data about individual candidates, including any special needs
- assessment and action plans
- candidate registration
- achievement of elements and units
- feedback given to candidates by assessors
- candidates' evidence sampled by internal verifiers
- feedback given to assessors by internal verifiers

All records must be stored securely, so that there is no opportunity for records to be falsified or for fraudulent claims to be made. All assessment records must be retained in the centre for at least 3 years after the candidate has completed the programme.

2.2.11 Consistency of assessment

The purpose of internal verification is to ensure that quality assurance is monitored within the centre. An essential part of internal assurance is to sample the work of the assessor in the programme team to ensure that there is consistency and fairness in the assessment decisions made about individual candidates. It is important that all team members are monitored and that effective communication channels are established, especially if any team members are based at a different site.

Further guidance is given in the sections about assessment and the role of the internal verifier.

2.2.12 Support for candidates

Just as your programme team needs induction and support, so will candidates. It is helpful to design an induction activity based on a particular element or unit, so that candidates (and assessors) become familiar with the way the qualifications operate.

Many candidates, particularly if they are mature adults, will already have relevant skills and knowledge. You will need to establish a system for identifying what skills candidates already have and whether they can provide any evidence from their prior achievements.

Assessors will need to identify the day to day work activities for each candidate so that guidance can be given about which elements/units provide the best starting point for the individual to start collecting evidence. This process underpins the development of an assessment plan for each candidate. Assessment plans should be monitored and reviewed regularly so that, candidates continue to make progress and look for appropriate evidence.

Some centres will have staff working in education guidance. In other centres, assessors may be providing this support. It is important that each candidate has appropriate support and is directed towards additional support if this is required. They may also need guidance on career opportunities when they have achieved.

Candidate with particular requirements may also need support from the centre (refer to equal opportunities section above and Lantra Awards equal opportunities policy for information relating to reasonable adjustments/special arrangements).

2.2.13 Appeals

Many organisations already have a procedure in place for dealing with appeals. You are asked to attach a copy of your appeals procedure. You must make sure that all candidates are aware of your centre's appeals procedure and the Lantra Awards appeals procedure as Lantra Awards may become involved in the arbitration of an appeal. The Lantra Awards appeals procedure is available from Lantra Awards.

Candidates may appeal to Lantra Awards about the assessment process, for example where the consistency or fairness of assessment decisions is disputed. Candidates may not appeal to Lantra Awards about a matter that is internal to the centre and not related to the assessment process.

2.2.14 Complaints

Lantra Awards has a procedure for handling complaints, available from Lantra Awards.

2.2.15 Malpractice

Lantra Awards has a procedure for handling cases of suspected malpractice. The procedure and the sanctions which may be imposed as a result, are available from Lantra Awards.

2.2.16 Additional comments

You may wish to draw our attention to other matters in support of your application.

2.2.17 Undertaking

We ask you to demonstrate your commitment to operating Competency Based Qualifications in accordance with the guidance contained in this booklet by signing the undertaking.

2.2.18 What happens next?

On receipt of your completed application form, we will check that you have provided all the information requested. If the application is complete, we will contact an external verifier to arrange an evaluation visit to your centre. He/she will contact you to make arrangements for a mutually convenient visit date.

At this initial meeting, the external verifier may want to meet a selection of centre staff to confirm understanding of the evidence requirements, assessments, documentation and support systems. He/she will discuss the information you provided on your application form and will complete the centre approval visit report. He/she will probably identify areas where improvements could be made. An action plan will be discussed and agreed to ensure that the necessary action is taken.

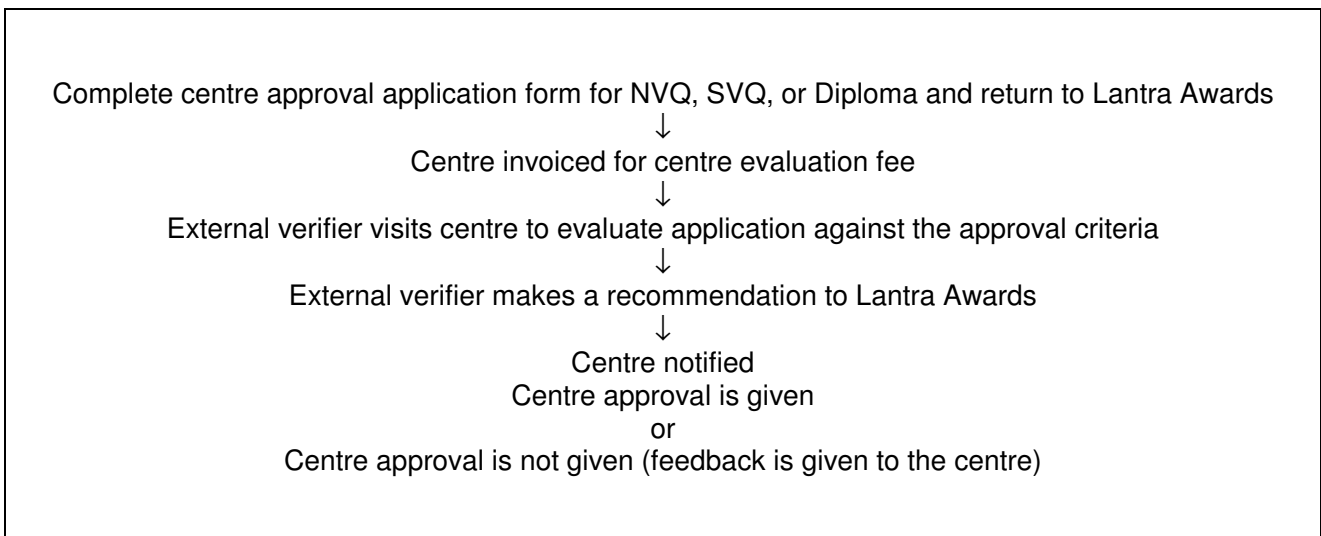
The report includes a recommendation to Lantra Awards about whether centre approval should be given. Lantra Awards will then notify your centre in writing of the decision normally within 10 working days of receipt of the visit report. We will send you a copy of the centre approval visit report. If your centre is approved, you will also be sent a stationery pack so that you can register candidates when you are ready.

2.2.20 Refusal of centre approval

If approval is not given, you will be informed of the reasons in writing and will be given a copy of the centre approval visit report. If your centre is not approved you may appeal against our decision using our appeals procedure. Awarding bodies are required to notify QCA and SQA when centre approval is refused or withdrawn. If your centre wishes to re-apply for centre approval, you will need to submit a new application form. A new application will not be accepted by Lantra Awards until 6 months have passed from the date we notified you of our decision not to give centre approval. Once your centre is approved, you can register candidates.

If more than a year passes without any candidate registrations, centre approval will be suspended. It will be necessary to re-apply for centre approval before further registrations can be made.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE - SUMMARY



3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Centre approval

If approval is given you will be informed in writing and will be issued with a pack of stationery to support the administration of the Qualifications.

3.2 Centre number

When a new centre is approved to offer an award, Lantra Awards will allocate a unique centre number. You must give your centre name and address on any correspondence.

3.3 Allocation of external verifiers

When your centre is approved, you will be allocated an external verifier, who will be given a copy of the centre approval visit report. Details of his/her name and address will be provided and he/she will be informed that your centre has been approved. The external verifier will make contact with you to arrange a visit date within the first six months of the date of your centre's approval.

3.4 Registration of candidates

Candidates can only be registered for an award through a centre which is approved by Lantra Awards for the qualification concerned.

All registrations are checked to make sure that the centre is approved. Candidates may be registered for three or fewer units (at a reduced fee) or for four or more units.

Centres may delay registration until the candidates have shown commitment to the programme and the centre is reasonably confident that they will achieve at least one unit. Registrations cannot be transferred from one candidate to another. If a candidate withdraws from the programme, registration fees will not be refunded.

The latest date by which a candidate must register is **at least ten weeks** before being able to claim a full NVQ/SVQ or Diploma certificate. All awarding bodies are required to apply the 'ten week rule' for full Qualifications, key skills (1995 version only) and A1, A2 and V1. The date of registration is the date upon which the candidate registration record is put onto our computer system and the date of certification is the date on which we print the certificate.

Candidates may transfer their registration from one qualification to another qualification, provided that they are both offered by Lantra Awards. If the registration fee is higher for the second award, centres will be invoiced for the difference. No refunds will be made if the registration fee for the second award is lower. Candidates transferring to a different centre must re-register at the new centre, which may charge for the full registration fee.

If more than a year passes without any candidate registrations, centre approval will be suspended. It will be necessary to re-apply for centre approval before further registrations can be made.

Candidates must be informed that they have been registered.

3.5 Completing the candidate registration form

A supply of candidate registration forms will be sent to you at the time of centre approval. Instructions about how to complete the forms are given below.

When you register candidates, we need to know which Qualification you are registering them for. The qualification codes ensure that candidates are registered for the correct qualification and that certificates are produced with the correct qualification title.

You also need to specify whether the candidate is being registered for the full Qualification (i.e. the candidate will be completing all the units which make up a full qualification) or a part Qualification (i.e. only some units of the qualification). Candidates who are registered for a part Qualification will pay a lower registration and certificate fee. To register for a part Qualification enter the word 'part' in the column headed 'full or part', otherwise enter the word 'full' in this column. If the candidate then wishes to complete the units which would then make up a full Qualification, an additional registration fee will be charged (see fees list).

For each candidate we need the surname/family name, first name and the initials of any other names. The date of birth and national insurance number are important as a means of distinguishing between candidates with the same name. Awarding bodies are required to provide data to the regulatory bodies about candidate characteristics, which is why we ask you to provide details of their sex, ethnic origin and whether they consider themselves to have special needs, so that their achievements can be monitored for equal opportunities reasons.

The ethnic origin codes are:

England and Wales		Northern Ireland		Scotland	
01	White: British	21	White	41	White: Scottish
02	Irish	22	Chinese	42	British
03	Any other White background	23	Irish traveller	43	Irish
		24	Indian	44	Any other White background
	Mixed:	25	Pakistani		Mixed:
04	White and Black Caribbean	26	Bangladeshi	45	
05	White and Black African	27	Black Caribbean		Asian, Asian Scottish or
06	White and Asian	28	Black African		Asian British:
07	Any other Mixed background	29	Black other	46	Indian
		30	Mixed ethnic group	47	Pakistani
	Asian or Asian British:	31	Any other ethnic group	48	Bangladeshi
08	Indian			49	Chinese
09	Pakistani			50	Any other Asian background
10	Bangladeshi				Black, Black Scottish or
11	Any other Asian background				Black British:
				51	Caribbean
	Black or Black British:			52	African
12	Caribbean			53	Any other Black background
13	African				Other ethnic background
14	Any other Black background			54	Any other ethnic group
	Chinese or other ethnic				
	Group:				
15	Chinese				
16	Any other ethnic group				

You are asked to sign and date the candidate registration form. We will raise an invoice for the candidate registration and certification fee, according to the details you give on the form. You may want to take a copy of the completed form before returning it to Lantra Awards so that you can check the details against the invoice you will receive in due course.

3.6 Candidate Registration Numbers

SVQ candidates must provide their SQA candidate number which must be entered on the registration form. Candidates who do not already have an SQA number must contact SQA to be issued with one. SVQ candidates are also required to provide their address.

All other candidates should use their ULN (Unique Learner Number) if available.

3.7 Making an additional registration

Complete the usual registration form with the candidate's details and enter 4 against his/her name. We will then transfer the registration and issue an invoice for the additional fee.

3.8 Direct claims service

Within the first six months after the date of centre approval, claims for unit certificates or full NVQ/SVQ/Diploma certificates can only be made when an external verifier visits. The first external verifier visit will normally be arranged for approximately six months after the date of centre approval. If an external verifier visit has not taken place after approximately six months, claims for certificates will not be processed until after the visit has taken place.

If the external verifier is satisfied that the programme is running successfully, he/she may recommend to Lantra Awards that the centre can use the direct claims service. Direct claims status means that the centre can claim certificates as soon as the candidate completes the programme, rather than waiting until the next external verifier visit takes place. However, all portfolios of evidence **MUST** be retained at the centre until the external verifier has visited so that he/she can check that the evidence for claims already submitted meets the national standards. Direct claims status may be withdrawn if the external verifier is unable to gain access to completed portfolios for candidates where certificates have already been claimed.

It is not uncommon, particularly for new programmes, for it to take some time for candidates to produce evidence and for assessors and internal verifiers to make judgements on that evidence. If the external verifier has not been able to see sufficient evidence to be satisfied that national standards are being met, he/she will recommend that the centre waits until after a second external verification visit before being allowed to make direct claims.

Direct claims status is granted to centres, not to individual assessors. Centres must therefore operate a system to ensure that all of its assessors are assessing to the required standard and that new assessors also meet the standard. The system requires that the internal verifier must observe each assessor, retaining evidence of these observations to be made available during EV visits. Sample form 8 could be used for this purpose. The EV is at liberty to sample this process and observe particular assessors as he/she sees fit. Should an EV lack confidence in the centre's operation of this system then he/she may recommend to Lantra Awards that direct claims status is removed from the centre. It is therefore in the centre's interest to ensure that all assessors have been observed and that only assessors that meet the standard are allowed to assess alone. Where assessors fall short of the standard they should be given the opportunity to improve through mentoring by another assessor and other activities as appropriate.

The centre must retain all documentation and evidence related to all submissions for certification which have occurred since the last satisfactory EV visit.

3.9 Certificate claims

Certificates can only be claimed for candidates who are registered for the award through a centre, which is approved by Lantra Awards for the NVQ/SVQ/Diploma concerned. All certificate claims are checked against the centre approval records and candidate registration records. No certificates will be issued unless the candidate is registered. External verifiers will not sign certificate claim forms for candidates who are not registered. Candidates who are registered for a part NVQ/SVQ will not be issued with certificates for further units unless the additional registration fee has been paid (see fees list).

Certificate claim forms are different for different Qualifications because of the varying qualification routes and unit numbers. When you register candidates, Lantra Awards will prepare individual certificate claim forms for each candidate and send them to you. The certificate claim forms confirm the candidates you have registered and the qualification they have been registered for.

Please check that names are absolutely correct as they will appear on certificates exactly as shown. If there is an error on any name, please ensure that amendments are clearly marked up in red when you return the forms to us to claim certificates. If the qualification title shown is not the Qualification you intended to register candidates for, you must contact us immediately.

Certificate claims must be made on the claim form supplied at the time candidates are registered. As units are achieved, claim forms should be completed, either during external verifier visits or using the direct claims service, and returned to Lantra Awards. We will issue fresh certificate claim forms for each candidate until they either achieve the full award or you notify us that they have withdrawn from the programme.

3.10 Completing certificate claim forms

The claim form lists all the candidates shown on Lantra Awards records as being registered by your centre for that award and will identify the units already achieved. The claim form is completed by ticking the box for the unit(s) being claimed. You need to sign and date the claim form before returning it to Lantra Awards. Unless the direct claims service is being used, the External Verifier must countersign the certificate claim form. If a direct claim is being made please tick the direct claims box on the certificate claim form.

We will issue a certificate to each candidate listing the units he/she has achieved after each claim. Each time a new certificate is prepared, we will send you a fresh certificate claim form for that candidate. The new claim form will include the updated information showing the units achieved so far. You then complete the certificate claim form in the usual way.

After a period of time, the candidate will have achieved the units required for a full award. If the candidate has, as a result of this claim, now achieved all the units required for a full certificate, put a tick in the box saying 'full award'. If a candidate has withdrawn from the programme without completing the full award, the withdrawn box should be ticked.

This system gives centres frequent opportunities to check that their records and the Lantra Awards records tally in every detail. If you discover any discrepancies, please contact us immediately to help us reduce delays in issuing certificates.

3.11 Claiming certificates during an external verifier visit

Certificates must be claimed during an external verifier visit if the centre does not have access to the direct claims service. Centres who do use the direct claims service may still claim certificates during an external verifier visit.

Before the external verifier visit takes place, you must make sure that all the certificate claim forms are available. Once the external verifier has sampled the evidence the candidates are presenting, he/she will countersign the claim form to authorise certificates to be issued. If, during the course of the visit, he/she disagrees with the units being claimed, you and the external verifier must initial any alterations made on the claim form. It must be clear to Lantra Awards which units each candidate is claiming, otherwise certificates will be delayed.

3.12 Applying for CSCS or CPCS cards

Candidates who have achieved the Fencing NVQs or QCF Diplomas in Fencing can apply for the following Fencing Industry Skills Scheme (FISS)/Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards:

Completion of Fencing or Fencing (vehicle safety) Level 2 – blue FISS/CSCS card.
Completion of Fencing Level 3 – gold FISS/CSCS card.
See fees list for current charges.

Before the FISS/CSCS cards can be processed, a FISS/CSCS application form must be completed and returned to Lantra Awards. The candidate must have attended the Lantra Awards health; safety and environmental awareness course and provide evidence that they have passed the CITB touch-screen health and safety test. For application forms and an information leaflet about FISS/CSCS contact Lantra Awards.

3.13 Units achieved with other awarding bodies

Some candidates may have achieved some units with another awarding body. These units are accepted, provided that the original certificates are available for the external verifier to see and that copies of the certificates are sent to Lantra Awards with the claim forms.

3.14 Replacement certificates

If a candidate requires a replacement certificate, for example, where the original certificate is lost or the candidate's name changes, a replacement certificate can be issued. The certificate will be clearly marked as a replacement.

The candidate will be required to provide proof of identity (e.g. birth certificate, wedding certificate, driving licence) and will need to give details of the centre they were registered with and the Qualifications they were registered for. Lantra Awards will check all claims for replacement certificates against the original certificate claim. The centre may be contacted for authentication.

3.15 External verifier visits

The exact frequency of external visits will reflect the centre's performance and throughput of candidates. However, active centres must receive a minimum of one external verifier visit each year and it is likely that most centres will receive two visits, usually at six monthly intervals. The dates of the visits are arranged directly between the centre and the external verifier so that a mutually convenient time and date can be agreed. An external verifier visit will usually take about six hours at the centre, although this can vary depending on the size of the programme and the number of candidates and team members. The location of the visit may vary if assessments are carried out in different locations or if the centre offers a range of Competency Based Qualifications.

Centres with fewer than 10 candidates registered will be charged the standard visit fee for each external verifier visit. This is to ensure that the cost of external verification is covered. Centres will not be allowed to defer visits until 10 candidates have registered if this means that the interval between external verifier visits becomes significantly longer than six months.

Centres that have been inactive may also receive a visit from the external verifier if they wish to remain registered as an approved centre with Lantra Awards, but will be charged the standard visit fee for this.

If additional visits are required, for example, where there are serious problems with the Qualification programme, an additional visit fee will be charged. There may be instances when there are too many candidates to allow the external verifier to sample sufficient portfolios. In these circumstances, Lantra Awards will consider increasing the number of external verifier visits to the centre and may make additional visit charges accordingly.

Centres may request an additional visit if they consider that further advice, support or guidance would be beneficial. An additional visit fee will be charged. The request for additional visits must be made via Lantra Awards and not directly with the external verifier.

3.16 Approval for additional Competency Based Qualifications

Centres who want to offer a new Qualification, or another level of a Qualification for which the centre is already registered, must apply to Lantra Awards for approval for the new programme using the centre approval application form.

3.17 Withdrawal of centre approval

If more than a year passes without any candidate registrations, centre approval will be suspended. It will be necessary to re-apply for centre approval before further registrations can be made.

If centre approval is withdrawn or suspended by Lantra Awards, centres will need to make a full application for re-approval and the full fees will apply. Awarding bodies are required to inform QCA/SQA if they withdraw centre approval.

4. AMENDMENTS TO AND/OR WITHDRAWAL OF A COMPETENCY BASED QUALIFICATION

4.1 Prior consultation with centres

As a result of feedback from centres, Examiners, External Verifiers, Sector Skills Councils or other key interest groups, it is sometimes necessary to make changes to qualifications. On rare occasions, it may also be necessary to withdraw a qualification which has previously been approved.

In such cases, Lantra Awards will ensure that centres are aware of any proposals to change or withdraw a qualification and the reasons for them. Centres will have the opportunity to comment on them before approval for changes or withdrawal is sought from the regulatory authorities.

4.2 Implementation of changes to qualifications

Once approval for changes is given, Lantra Awards will usually implement the changes within 3 months although the timescales will take into account the likely impact on candidates and centres. Depending on the nature of the changes, candidates already registered on a previous version of the qualification may be allowed to complete on that version so that the changes affect only candidates who are new to the qualification.

Clear guidance will be given to centres including:

- Full details of the changes to the qualification
- Timescale for implementing the changes
- Any action that may be required on the part of the centre

All related information (e.g. NVQ/SVQ/Diploma specifications) will be updated with the changes and re-issued to all centres approved for that qualification.

4.3 Withdrawing an NVQ/SVQ/Diploma

Qualifications are approved for a specific period of time to allow for the periodic updating of the national occupational standards on which the qualifications are based. All specifications clearly state the expiry date of the qualification. The expiry date is the last date on which candidates can be registered unless the accreditation period is extended, in which case centres will be informed. The last date for certification allows a further year for registered candidates to complete level 1 NVQ/SVQs, 2 years for level 2 Qualifications and 3 years for level 3 Qualifications.

All centres approved for the qualification will be issued with the specifications for the new Qualifications as soon as possible after the qualification is approved by the regulatory authorities. Centres will also be given clear guidance on the timescales involved and any action required. Centres may choose to transfer candidates onto the new version of the qualification. This can be done (free of charge) provided that the candidate's evidence is mapped against the new specifications to ensure that the new units are fully covered and any gaps in the evidence are identified.

On rare occasions it is necessary to withdraw a qualification for other reasons (e.g. lack of take-up for the qualification). All centres registered for the qualification will be informed at least one year in advance of the date for withdrawal of the qualification. The last date of registration will normally be 1 year from the date of the qualification withdrawal. The last date for certification will normally allow a further year for registered candidates to complete level 1 qualifications, 2 years for level 2 qualification and 3 years for level 3 qualifications. If any action is required by the centre, clear guidance on this will be given.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME

5.1 What is in NVQ/SVQ/Diploma specifications?

The specifications can vary in format, but all Qualifications are broken down into individual units, each of which defines a particular work function or set of assessment criteria against learning outcomes.

Units of assessment and NVQ units have a direct relationship to the National Occupational Standards for a particular industry and/or work environment.

5.2 Assessment strategy

For each NVQ/SVQ/Diploma, the standard setting body specifies an assessment strategy which must be implemented by all awarding bodies offering the specification. Although they vary from one qualification to another, the strategies usually include information on the following topics:

- External quality control/independent assessment
- Work place assessment
- Simulation
- Occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers

This information is reproduced in the introductory section of the NVQ/SVQ/Diploma centre specifications. Centres must ensure that they are familiar with the specifications and the requirements they include.

5.3 General guidance

Further general guidance on the assessment process for Competency Based Qualifications including NVQ/SVQs and Diplomas is given in the following section when describing the role of candidate, assessor, internal verifier and external verifier.

6. KEY ROLES

6.1 Definitions of key roles

CANDIDATE

Person whose competence is being judged

ASSESSOR

Person who makes the judgement about a candidate's competence

INTERNAL VERIFIER

Checks that judgements made by assessors are consistent and checks that quality assurance procedures are followed

EXTERNAL VERIFIER

Independent person appointed by Lantra Awards to visit centre to monitor internal quality assurance and to check that assessments are in line with national standards

6.2 Candidates

6.2.1 Candidates' induction

Candidates need an induction programme to help them identify what skills and knowledge they have and where evidence can be found to support them.

Evidence may come from previous employment, voluntary work or home-based activity. Evidence from activities undertaken before the programme started is usually referred to as evidence from 'prior achievement' or APA (the accreditation of prior achievement). When evidence from prior achievement is used, the assessor must check whether the context in which the evidence was produced was appropriate to the demands of the Qualification and whether the candidate can still perform the task effectively.

It is helpful to design an induction activity based on a particular element or unit, or to show examples of the evidence other candidates have collected, so that candidates (and assessors) become more familiar with the Qualification assessment process.

The induction process will help to identify suitable elements or units for each candidate to start working towards, depending on his/her experience and job role. It is usually easiest for candidates to start collecting evidence for elements which include work activities the candidate performs frequently.

6.2.2 Planning

Assessors work with the candidate to plan where opportunities will arise for collecting evidence of competence. An everyday part of the candidate's job will provide plenty of opportunities to show that he/she is competent in a range of activities. The candidate can show competence simply by arranging for an assessor to observe them carrying out their normal work activities. From observation of the candidate in action the assessor can quickly make a judgement about the candidate's performance.

Assessors can make a report or statement about what they observed. In many centres, this has been developed into an assessor's checklist for frequently observed activities.

Assessors will also need to provide planned learning opportunities. For example, if a candidate is gathering evidence for an element or unit which is not normally part of their day to day activities, he/she will need to spend some time gaining the relevant knowledge and understanding before starting to gather evidence of competence.

It may be apparent that the candidate has the necessary knowledge and understanding through the way that they subsequently carry out a work activity. Alternatively, assessors may set a test or assignment or ask questions.

There may be some areas of the standards not covered by the candidate's work role. Assessors should explore opportunities that the candidate might have for filling those gaps. For example, the candidate could work in other departments where the tasks are frequently performed. He/she could be set a project to be carried out either in the workplace or elsewhere. Alternatively, evidence could be found from prior achievements or through supplementary questioning.

The areas where candidates already have competence and where learning needs to take place first will vary from one candidate to another, which is why planning should be carried out on an individual basis. There may be other learning opportunities which groups of candidates could undertake at the same time.

6.2.3 Collecting evidence

The assessment process is the collection and judgement of evidence against the Qualification specifications and units of assessment. Candidates should be actively involved in the process and are responsible for the collection of evidence. They will need a copy of the standards against which they are being assessed.

Candidates usually build up a collection of evidence which they check (with the help of assessors) against the specifications to make sure that the requirements have been met in full and that there are no gaps in the evidence.

Depending on the nature of the Qualification the type of evidence collected will vary - for example, a job in administration lends itself to the collection of paper-based evidence, whilst a job in construction will probably include more direct observations of performance by assessors. Evidence can come from anywhere, and can be of any sort, providing it is relevant to the standards, but evidence from the workplace, generated while doing real work activities is the most convincing. For most people it is also the easiest and the most economical way of gathering evidence.

Evidence can come from:

- Observations of candidates performing a task
- Candidate reports of an activity
- Products
- Reports by colleagues and/or previous employers
- Examples of work produced by the candidate as part of their everyday work or outside work where relevant
- Video or audio tapes
- Minutes of meetings
- Photographs
- Notes of discussions with assessors
- Project reports
- Knowledge tests

It is helpful to include dates and signatures with a brief description of where/how the evidence was collected; for example, photographs should be labelled to indicate what has been photographed, where and when the photo was taken and what evidence it provides towards the Qualification.

It must always be clear what the evidence is for and how it relates to the standards.

A witness is someone who has occupational expertise, but who is not an assessor, for example an employer. A witness can provide evidence such as a statement of what they observed. The statement must be relevant to the requirements of the specifications. Any evidence from a witness must be signed, dated and include the witness' job title.

Candidates should record details of everyone involved in the assessment process, including witnesses. A standard document is included in this booklet.

Evidence does not need to be paper-based. Evidence can be gathered using a variety of techniques – for example, a video recording can be made of the candidate performing an activity. The sound recording provides an opportunity for the candidate, perhaps in response to questions from the assessor, to comment about what they are doing, why they choose to do it in a particular way, what factors they have taken into account etc.

Photographs can be taken of finished products or work in progress. Tape recordings can be made of the candidate's work activities, such as telephone conversations, meetings, dealings with customers. Discussions between candidate and assessor can be recorded, as well as any questions the assessor needs to ask the candidate to supplement evidence already collected.

Especially for candidates who do not have strong writing skills, alternative methods of capturing evidence should be explored so that they are not put off by having to collect large quantities of paper.

6.2.4 Selecting evidence to include in a portfolio

Initially, candidates should collect anything which, relates to the element title(s) they are working towards. The range statements or specific evidence requirements should be checked from time to time to make sure that these are being covered. The candidate should then look at each piece of evidence and decide what it covers.

In many cases, evidence will cover the requirements of more than one element. It is economical to use evidence that covers as many elements as possible, and prevents the process of evidence collection from becoming repetitive and time-consuming.

In some Competency Based Qualifications the methods of assessment are prescribed – for example, candidates may need to answer a set of questions to assess knowledge, or to complete a centrally specified case study. You need to check the relevant standards for specific details.

Candidates should not try to find a piece of evidence for each separate performance criterion - if they do, they will need to collect large amounts of evidence which is fragmented and does not give a holistic view of the candidate's competence.

There is no need to keep evidence of anything which does not contribute to the final assessment (e.g. handouts prepared by a tutor, or pieces of evidence which cover the same parts of the standards as other, more comprehensive, pieces of evidence).

When candidates first start collecting evidence, they will find that some performance criteria are easily met and are covered many times, whilst others are not covered at all. Further activities may generate the required evidence, but some performance criteria are more easily assessed by supplementary questions - especially those that relate to a contingency that has not occurred, in which case the assessor can ask a 'what would you do if...' question.

Evidence collection and the assessment of that evidence is a cumulative process. There is no time limit during which the evidence must be collected - evidence is complete when the assessor judges that the requirements of the standards have been met by the evidence presented.

Lantra Awards provides suggestions for types of evidence which, could be used for specific Qualifications and provides examples of portfolio evidence drawn from centres.

6.2.5 Candidate records

Lantra Awards is not prescriptive about the format in which candidates keep records of the evidence they have collected. Candidates must keep records of what the evidence is, where it is and which part of the specifications and units of assessment the evidence relates to. The evidence needs to be organised so that anyone (assessors, internal and external verifiers) can see how it relates to the specifications. Some candidates may require a significant amount of support in this process.

As well as keeping a list of what evidence the candidate has collected, he/she needs to be clear about which parts of the specifications the evidence relates to. One of the easiest ways of doing this is to compile a matrix or table mapping the evidence collected and the element(s), performance criteria, range variables and knowledge and understanding covered. The matrix will quickly show where there are gaps in the evidence.

An example of a matrix is included in this booklet. A full set is available within the guidance which, relates specifically to each Qualification.

The following shows the preferred structure for a portfolio of evidence. It is not prescriptive, but is a useful guideline:

Section 1

- Title page
- Contents
- General background information about the candidate (e.g. details of employer job role, organisation chart, training, qualifications as appropriate plus photo, the candidate's registration number and their signature)
- Names of people involved in assessment (assessors, IVs, witnesses) together with their signatures and contact details
- Information about what is being assessed (e.g. types of fencing, categories of plant, highway electrical/traffic signs/traffic signals) within the Qualification
- Information about the candidate's induction programme (e.g. appeals, APA, equal opportunities, target completion date, qualification specifications, how to gather evidence, compiling a portfolio etc)

Section 2

- Assessment plans
- Index of evidence – what the evidence is. Each piece of evidence is usually given a number and placed in a folder so that the assessor or internal verifier or external verifier can find it easily. For example:
 - 1 – Job docket
 - 2 – Video - preparing and setting up a 360 excavator
 - 3 – Witness statement from employer
 - 4 – Observation report from assessor
 - 5 – Written questions and answers – knowledge evidence
 - Etc.
- Evidence reference matrix sheets – identifies what PCs, scope and knowledge evidence are covered by each piece of evidence. Quickly identifies where there are gaps in the evidence which can be covered by gathering additional evidence, the assessor asking questions etc.

Section 3

- The evidence itself in the number order shown in the index (see above). The evidence must include any questions used to assess knowledge evidence, with evidence that they have been assessed and, where relevant, internally verified.
- Feedback from the assessor to the candidate (if separate)
- Evidence of internal verification

Candidate and assessor records can be maintained in electronic format and commercial packages are available. All candidate records must show that the requirements of each element have been met, including performance criteria, range variables and knowledge evidence, as well as showing what the evidence is and where it can be found.

Candidates must endorse each piece of assessed work with a statement confirming that it is the candidate's own work. This must be countersigned by the assessor.

SUMMARY

Candidates are expected to

- identify skills and knowledge they already have and evidence which demonstrates the skills and knowledge
- work with assessors to develop individual assessment and learning plans
- collect evidence and, once they are familiar with the process, make their own judgements about whether the evidence is ready for assessment or not
- review their progress and where further development is needed
- keep their own records of assessment
- endorse each piece of assessed work to confirm authenticity.

6.3 Assessors

6.3.1 Skills and experience

Assessors must be registered by and with an approved centre and have sufficient skills and occupational knowledge to be able to make valid judgements about the competence of candidates they assess against the Qualification specifications. This may be illustrated by the assessor having achieved the award themselves and/or holding current recognised cards/certificates, having substantial current or recent experience at a fully skilled level in the job function(s) being assessed (including working with current legislation, regulations, procedures and technology), or being in a day to day line management, technical or quality assurance role that involves making appraisals and/or assessments of those carrying out work covered by the units they are assessing.

Lantra Awards gives guidance on the specific requirements for assessors for each Competency Based Qualification.

Assessors must have previously held a position at least at the level described by the standards in the qualification. They must receive training in the role of assessor and either hold, or be working towards, units from the Learning and Development NVQ/SVQ (units A1 or D32) and A2 (or D33). They must successfully complete these units within 18 months of the date of the centre's approval or the date that they joined the programme team, if joining after the date of centre approval. Assessments can only be carried out by Assessors approved by Lantra Awards, who will issue an identity card to approved assessors. New assessors must be registered with Lantra Awards using form 10 (Notification of

Changes) in the back of this booklet. A CV and copies of A1 and A2 units (or D32/33) must be attached.

Assessors need to be in regular contact with candidates in order to monitor progress and give feedback. Consequently, assessors are often the candidate's workplace supervisor, a trainer or experienced colleague or manager. If they have the appropriate qualifications and training, assessors could also come from other areas such as leisure or voluntary activities.

Although other people, such as tutors, trainers or mentors may be involved in helping candidates in the learning process and in gathering evidence, it is only assessors who have received the appropriate training who can make a judgement about a candidate's competence for an element or unit.

Assessment decisions by assessors who are still working towards units A1 (or D32) and A2 (or D33) must be supported by an assessor who has gained certification or a qualified internal verifier (i.e. who has achieved unit V1 (or D34) of the Training and Development NVQ/SVQ).

Assessors must be completely familiar with the requirements of the specifications that are used for assessing candidates.

6.3.2 Making assessment decisions

The assessment process for Competency Based Qualifications revolves around candidates collecting sufficient evidence to prove their competence against a set of detailed unit specifications. Assessors must be fully familiar with the specifications and the introductory section, which is specific to each qualification. Assessors must also be familiar with the section in this booklet which gives general guidance about collecting evidence.

When assessing evidence, the assessor must consider whether the evidence presented by the candidate really relates to the requirements of the element or unit. If the evidence is irrelevant it should be discarded or used as evidence towards a more appropriate element.

Assessors also need to consider whether the evidence was really produced by the candidate (authenticity). If evidence is produced as part of a team effort, it must be clear what part the candidate played in the process and the assessor must be sure that the candidate understands the whole process. Assessors and candidates must endorse each assessment to state that the work is authentic.

Assessors need to check that the evidence was produced recently enough to show that the candidate still has the skills being assessed. If the evidence is very old, it may be necessary for the candidate to perform the activity again to show that the skill is still current.

Assessors also need to bear in mind whether the assessment decisions are reliable - would they reach the same decisions based on the same evidence for all candidates? Regular meetings will be organised by internal verifiers to ensure that assessors have the opportunity to compare assessment decisions and discuss assessment issues to ensure that the process is reliable and consistent.

Assessors judge the candidate to be competent when sufficient evidence has been collected to show that it covers all the requirements of the relevant part of the standards. It is not possible to give precise guidance on the quantity of evidence required as different work contexts and job roles will give opportunities for different evidence to be collected, so that every candidate's evidence is unique.

The assessor must feel confident that the candidate has consistently met the standards required and that they will continue to do so in the future. If the assessor is not convinced, then the candidate will need to produce more or alternative evidence.

6.3.3 Support for centre staff

Lantra Awards provides up to two events each year for centres, depending on the number and location of centres for each Qualification title. There will be a nominal charge to cover the venue and catering costs. Assessors and internal verifiers will be given the opportunity to receive relevant information (e.g.

changes to administration, progress of standards review or development) and will also be expected to take part in at least one standardisation exercise.

The standardisation exercise will include sample materials drawn from candidate portfolios, which assessors and internal verifiers will review. This will be followed by a discussion with external verifiers to ensure that all participants reach consensus about the national standard required for successful completion of the qualification.

Attendance at these events is strongly recommended. Where an external verifier considers that a centre is not assessing in accordance with national standards, he/she may raise an action point requiring the centre to send their assessors and/or internal verifier to a standardisation event.

6.3.4 Independent assessment

For each Qualification the relevant standard setting body specifies an assessment strategy which must be implemented by the awarding bodies offering the qualification.

The detail of the assessment strategy is included in the relevant specifications.

Assessors must be familiar with the requirements of the assessment strategy and the specified form for independent assessment.

6.3.5 Simulation

The relevant Qualification specifications include guidance about the use of simulations, as does the assessment strategy. As a general rule, simulation should only be used where it is difficult to collect evidence through a real work situation.

6.3.6 Assessment methods

It is important to use a variety of assessment methods and types of evidence so that the portfolio gives a rounded picture of the candidate's competence. The evidence collected from the candidate's work activities will provide the most convincing evidence of what the candidate can do and the way in which they work.

Competency Based Qualifications are about developing competence over a period of time. The length of time necessary will vary depending on the experience of the candidate and how much new knowledge and/or skills they have to learn. Candidates will need to be assessed on several occasions and Assessors should ensure that assessments are spaced at intervals which would allow for development and consolidation time in between.

Evidence can come from:

- Observations of candidates performing a task
- Candidate reports of an activity
- Products
- Reports by colleagues and/or previous employers
- Examples of work produced by the candidate as part of their everyday work or outside work where relevant
- Video or audio tapes
- Minutes of meetings
- Photographs
- Notes of discussions with assessors
- Project reports
- Knowledge tests

Where work activities do not cover all the requirements of the standards, evidence can be generated through specially set work-based tasks or projects. Skills or proficiency tests might be used to simulate

work tasks. It is important that assignments or simulations are as close as possible to real work activities and the work environment.

Where these activities still do not cover all the requirements of the standards, supplementary evidence can be produced, for example from oral questioning. Questioning can supplement evidence as it gives the candidate the opportunity to explain in more depth what they did and why they did it in the way that they did. It can also help to extend the evidence by asking what the candidate would do in a particular set of circumstances.

Questioning can be used for assessing the knowledge that candidates must have in order to be able to carry out activities competently. Evidence of knowledge can be assessed through case studies, pre-set questions or multiple choice tests. Some standards require a particular type of assessment and you need to check whether this is the case for the Qualifications that your centre offers.

6.3.7 When is the evidence sufficient?

The evidence is complete when the assessor judges that the requirements of the Qualification specifications, including independent assessment, have been met by the evidence presented.

As there are no limits on time, on the amount of evidence produced or the number of assessment opportunities provided, candidates do not 'fail' competency based qualifications. Centres may wish to set guidelines for the length of time or amount of tuition offered to candidates for financial or logistical reasons and it is helpful to candidates to have a target date for completion.

However, there will be some candidates who will not succeed in collecting sufficient evidence of the required quality to achieve. This may be because their opportunities to gather evidence are too limited, for example where an individual's work role does not cover the activities required for the full award. Candidates may be aiming for a qualification at too high a level, in which case they will need guidance onto a more appropriate programme.

Centres must provide the opportunity for candidates to claim unit certificates, so that they can receive a certificate for the units they have been able to achieve. Lantra Awards will issue certificates for units as they are achieved.

Assessors should always bear in mind the centre's equal opportunities policy in relation to the qualification/s they are assessing and ensure that their own practice complies with it. There may be occasions when a candidate has a particular requirement, which means that special arrangements have to be made in order to give them access to assessment opportunities. The internal verifier will be able to give guidance on the special arrangements that can be made. Please refer to the Lantra Awards equal opportunity policy which includes full details of what arrangements can be made for various types of qualifications..

6.3.8 Feedback to candidates

Throughout the process of collecting evidence, it is important that candidates receive feedback, not only to motivate them, but to help them identify when they have collected sufficient evidence for each unit and where further sources of evidence might be found.

If the candidate has been working closely with the assessor, candidates are unlikely to be submitting evidence for final judgements until they are sure that it is of the right type and quality.

Where feedback is given, assessors should ensure that it is positive and constructive and use the opportunity for future planning.

6.3.9 Records

Assessors need to keep records to monitor candidates' progress through the award, primarily when elements and/or units were achieved and to keep records of feedback given from assessments and action plans negotiated as a result. Internal verifiers will need to have access to these records, as will the external verifier, in order to carry out their roles effectively. All assessment records must be kept for a period of at least 3 years after candidates have completed the programme. All records must be kept securely so that there is no opportunity for them to be falsified or for fraudulent claims to be made.

There is no prescribed format for these records and centres may well wish to incorporate them into documentation they already maintain within their own organisation. If the centre already works to quality management systems such as SQMS (Scottish Quality Management System), the ISO 9000 series or is required to maintain records for government funded training schemes, that documentation will almost certainly provide the basis for assessor records. Some examples of records which could be used by assessors are included in this booklet. Separate records must be kept for NVQ and SVQ candidates if the centre offers both qualifications.

Where the candidate has sufficient evidence to claim a unit, the assessor should complete the certificate claim form. All claim forms must be checked and signed by the internal verifier before presenting it to the external verifier or returning it to Lantra Awards.

SUMMARY

Assessors are expected to:

- be familiar with the requirements of the specifications they are assessing, including the assessment strategy and independent assessment
- carry out induction for candidates, including working with them to identify what skills and knowledge they already have, how to start the process of evidence collection and where opportunities for collecting evidence might arise
- make judgements about the evidence collected by candidates
- use a range of appropriate assessment methods
- review progress and give constructive feedback to candidates
- ensure fair assessment and equal opportunities for all
- maintain records for each candidate
- meet with other assessors and internal verifiers to discuss assessment
- endorse all assessments as the authentic work of each candidate (countersigned by the candidate)

6.4 Internal Verifiers

6.4.1 Skills and experience

Internal verifiers must be registered with an approved centre and need to have the authority to carry out their role effectively. For example, they will be responsible for recommending improvements or amendments to systems and for identifying training needs for assessors. The support of senior management is essential to the success of the programme and internal quality assurance.

Internal verifiers need to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the occupational area and the requirements of the specifications so that they can make judgements about the performance of assessors. This may be illustrated by the Internal Verifier having achieved the award themselves and/or having substantial current or recent experience at a fully skilled level in the job function(s) being assessed (including working with current legislation, regulations, procedures and technology), or being in a day to day line management, technical or quality assurance role that involves making detailed appraisals and/or assessments of those carrying out work covered by the units they are assessing/verifying.

Internal verifiers are responsible for the induction and development of assessors so that they understand how the qualifications work, the contents of the Qualification specifications including the assessment strategy and independent assessment, awarding body requirements, appropriate methods of assessment and types of evidence and the records which need to be kept.

They are also responsible for supporting assessors as they progress towards achievement of A1 (or D32) and A2 (or D33). This includes making sure that assessors are registered as candidates with an awarding body and monitoring assessors as they compile their portfolio of evidence.

Internal verifiers can act as assessors. However, they cannot be the assessor and the internal verifier for the same assessment decisions. If an internal verifier acts as an assessor to make an assessment decision, that assessment decision must then be internally verified by someone else.

Centres MUST have at least one internal verifier who is fully qualified before certificates can be claimed for candidates. For small centres, Lantra Awards may approve alternative arrangements - you must contact Lantra Awards for advice first.

Internal verifiers will need to receive training for their role and either hold, or be working towards, unit V1 (or D34) from the Learning and Development NVQ/SVQ. Internal verifiers are required to hold A1 (or D32) and A2 (or D33) as well as V1 (or D34).

Internal verifiers must have successfully completed unit V1 (or D34) within 18 months of the date of the centre's approval or the date that they joined the programme team, if joining after the date of centre approval. If the internal verifier is not qualified, an internal verifier who has achieved V1 (or D34) must check, authenticate and countersign the work of the un-certificated internal verifier.

Assessments can only be carried out by Internal Verifiers approved by Lantra Awards, who will issue a plastic identity card to Internal Verifiers. New Internal Verifiers must be registered with Lantra Awards Form 10 (Notification of Changes) in the back of this booklet can be used for this purpose. A CV and a copy of their A1, A2 and V1 units (or D32/3/4) must be attached.

6.4.2 Assessment strategy

For each NVQ/SVQ and Competency Based Qualification the relevant standard setting bodies specifies an assessment strategy which must be implemented by awarding bodies offering the qualifications. Internal verifiers must refer to the relevant Qualification for information about the assessment strategy and independent assessment (where appropriate). The guidance in this section is general.

6.4.3 Sampling

The internal verifier will check some of the assessments made by assessors to make sure that they agree that the candidate is competent (or not) and to make sure that all assessors in the centre would have reached the same decision based on the evidence provided. Where assessment decisions have been sampled, the internal verifier must initial the record sheets to show that sampling has taken place. Sampling must include some direct observation of assessments taking place.

For some Qualification/s, the assessment strategy includes specific requirements for sampling. Where the assessment strategy does not include guidance on sampling, the following general guidance will be helpful.

Sampling will need to be planned to make sure that evidence selected is representative and includes evidence selected from different:

- units
- assessment methods
- type of evidence
- assessors
- candidates
- geographical sites/assessment locations
- NVQ, SVQ and Diploma evidence if the centre offers all qualifications

Whilst it may not be possible to cover all of the above in one sample, over a period of time internal verifiers must ensure that all, of the above are sampled. The internal verifier should therefore devise and make available to the external verifier a strategy to ensure that the above are covered. The strategy should take into account the number of assessors, new assessors and include mechanisms to deal with assessors whose assessment practices are not completely in line with those of other assessors where these are found to exist.

Internal verification is not a process which is left until the candidate has completed his/her portfolio. Internal verifiers should be sampling portfolios in progress to ensure that they have identified possible problems early on and that appropriate feedback is given to assessors.

The purpose of the sample is to ensure that candidates are being assessed fairly and consistently. The size of the sample selected depends on how confident the internal verifier is about the consistency of assessment practice.

However, as a rough guide, the sample should be at least 20% of the number of candidates or candidates' work. The sample would be larger for a new programme, if assessors are new to the programme or if the internal verifier has already identified potential problems (for example in interpreting the standards). The external verifier will want to see records showing how the sample has been selected.

Where assessors have not achieved A1 (or D32) and A2 (or D33) the assessment decisions that they make must be supported by a qualified assessor.

6.4.4 Consistency of assessment

Standardisation meetings should be held regularly (every month or two) for assessors and internal verifiers to compare and standardise their judgements so that everyone involved in the assessment process has a common understanding of the standards required and is assessing to the standards specified within the specifications.

Ideally, all team members should have the opportunity to look at samples of evidence and compare judgements made on them. Internal verifiers could also present evidence of differing quality to act as benchmarks for future reference. The meetings provide an opportunity to check on the progress of individual candidates, particularly if they are in contact with a number of assessors.

It is important that assessors based at other locations have an opportunity to be included in the meetings, or at least receive a copy of the agenda beforehand so that they can comment and a copy of the meeting notes afterwards.

Keeping minutes of the meetings is helpful, not only for disseminating information to members of the programme team, but also to discuss with the external verifier if necessary. Meetings are important for maintaining the quality and consistency of assessment within individual centres.

Lantra Awards provides up to two events each year for centres, depending on the number and location of centres for each Qualification title. There will be a nominal charge to cover the venue and catering costs. Assessors and internal verifiers will be given the opportunity to receive relevant information (e.g. changes to administration, progress of standards review or development) and will also be expected to take part in at least one standardisation exercise.

The standardisation exercise will include sample materials drawn from candidate portfolios, which assessors and internal verifiers will review. This will be followed by a discussion with external verifiers to ensure that all participants reach consensus about the national standard required for successful completion of the qualification.

Attendance at these events is strongly recommended. Where an external verifier considers that a centre is not assessing in accordance with national standards, he/she may raise an action point requiring the centre to send their assessors and/or internal verifier to a standardisation event.

6.4.5 Records

Records must include the following as a minimum:

- candidate's name
- date of birth
- contact address
- workplace address and contact details

- copies of certificate claims forms
- assessor(s) name
- internal verifier(s) name
- date of registration with Lantra Awards

Candidate assessment records must include details of who assesses what and when, the assessment decision, the method of assessment used and the location of supporting evidence. Assessments must be endorsed by both candidate and assessor(s) to state that the evidence is genuinely the work of the candidate (authentic). Separate records must be maintained for NVQ and SVQ candidates if the centre offers both qualifications.

Records must be stored securely so that there is no opportunity for records to be falsified (e.g. altering assessment decisions) or for fraudulent claims to be made.

Internal verification records must show who internally verified what and when, details of the sample selected and the basis upon which the sample was selected. Internal verifiers must keep records of standardisation meetings, meetings with assessors, observation of assessors and feedback given and records of induction and training of new assessors or internal verifiers and their progress towards Assessor and Verifier A1/2 & V1 (or D32/3/4) units.

Again, there is no prescribed format for these records and centres may well wish to incorporate them into documentation they already maintain within their own organisation. If the centre already works to quality management systems such as SQMS (Scottish Quality Management System), the ISO 9000 series or is required to maintain record for government funded training schemes, that documentation will provide the basis for internal verification records. Some examples of records which could be used by internal verifiers are included in this booklet.

Centres using the direct claims service must keep candidate evidence/portfolios for the external verifier to sample on the next visit following the claim.

Records must be retained by centres for at least 3 years after the candidate has completed the programme. Records must be made available to external verifiers and to the regulatory authorities. If a centre fails to maintain auditable records and so is unable to substantiate claims for certificates, awarding bodies are required to apply sanctions as listed in the NVQ Code of Practice.

6.4.6 Equal opportunities

Lantra Awards expects centres to enable candidates to have equal access to training and assessment for its Qualification regardless of their sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin or disability. Assessment must be undertaken without discrimination. As part of the centre approval process, a policy must be in place to ensure that such discrimination does not occur either directly or indirectly.

Assessors should be encouraged to make a wide range of assessment methods, including the accreditation of prior achievement, available to candidates as appropriate. Where candidates with particular requirements are identified, the necessary resources to facilitate the assessment of these candidates must be provided wherever possible. There may be occasions when assessors will need information about what special arrangements can be made for candidates with particular requirements. Lantra Awards' equal opportunities policy includes details of the arrangements which can be made for candidates with special needs. Please contact us for advice if further information is required.

The internal verifier is responsible for monitoring the programme to ensure that the equal opportunities policy is effective. For example, the centre's records should identify characteristics such as gender, age, special needs and ethnic origin so that progress and achievement of individual candidates can be monitored against particular characteristics. Assessments should be monitored to ensure that they do not demand literacy, numeracy and verbal skills beyond those required to demonstrate occupational competence and that assessment decisions are free from discrimination on grounds other than competence.

6.4.7 Appeals and complaints

The internal verifier may become involved as the first line of arbitration for candidate appeals. The candidate may dispute an assessor's decisions, for example, about the authenticity of a piece of evidence, or whether the evidence is sufficient. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, the candidate may implement the centre's formal appeals procedure.

If the disagreement still cannot be resolved, the candidate has the right of appeal to Lantra Awards where the issue is related to the assessment process (e.g. the consistency or fairness of assessment decisions.) They cannot appeal to Lantra Awards on any other grounds. The Lantra Awards appeals procedure is included in Lantra Awards Policies document.

6.4.8 Malpractice

Where the centre suspects malpractice, especially where it casts doubt on the integrity of the assessment process, the internal verifier is responsible for reporting it and co-operating fully with Lantra Awards and/or the regulatory authorities in any investigations. Lantra Awards will immediately suspend further certification claims while the suspected malpractice is investigated. The regulatory authorities will be notified of any investigations and their outcome. Please refer to the Lantra Awards Policies document. for details of the malpractice procedure.

6.4.9 Changes within centres

Internal verifiers are responsible for notifying Lantra Awards of any changes within the centres, particularly those which may affect centre approval. Lantra Awards must always be informed of any changes to the assessor or internal verifier team. Form 10 in the back of this booklet may be used to notify changes.

6.4.10 External verifier visits

The internal verifier is expected to be present when the external verifier visits. He/she will also expect to see some of the assessors, a sample of candidate and assessor internal verifier records and will sample different assessment methods used within the centre. The internal verifier is responsible for following up action points agreed with the external verifier during the visit. Further guidance is given in the section below about the role of external verifiers.

Lantra Awards welcomes feedback from centres about any aspect of its service and there will be an opportunity to pass comments to Lantra Awards via the external verifier visit report form.

In addition, Lantra Awards actively seeks comments about any aspect of the standards. Any such comments are collated and passed on to the relevant standards setting body so that when the standards are reviewed, feedback from centres can be incorporated.

6.4.11 Regulatory Authorities

From time to time QCA or SQA may wish to visit centres and will require access to premises, meetings, candidate assessment records, internal verification records, documents, data, candidates and staff. Unless centres provide access, awarding bodies are required to suspend all certificate claims.

6.4.12 Risk rating

The regulatory authorities are working with awarding bodies to develop a system for assessing risk, which may affect levels of external verification or monitoring. Further information about this can be found in the relevant specifications and in the NVQ Code of Practice, available from QCA (www.qca.org.uk), the SQA Accreditation Criteria (www.sqa.org.uk) or Lantra Awards.

SUMMARY

Internal verifiers are expected to:

- co-ordinate the provision of one or more Qualification/s within a centre and act as the point of contact with Lantra Awards
- ensure that the centre's internal quality assurance systems are effective
- liaise with the external verifier appointed by Lantra Awards, including being present during centre approval and/or external verification visits and ensuring that action plans agreed during the visit are carried out
- provide support and advice to assessors, including training, development, updating and disseminating information to team members
- sample assessment decisions made by assessors, including direct observation, and provide constructive feedback
- countersign record documents and certificate claims where appropriate
- inform Lantra Awards of any changes within the centre including changes to the assessor or internal verifier team
- monitor equal opportunities practice and achievement in relation to equal opportunities
- ensure that records of candidates' progress and achievements are maintained accurately and are available for the external verifier to see
- ensure sample of candidates and candidates work selected by the internal verifier is available at the time of the visit
- meet with assessors and other internal verifiers (if applicable) to discuss assessment
- ensure that candidates receive appropriate support (induction, planning of learning and assessment, monitoring and review of progress, access to information about progression routes)
- dealing with appeals and referring them onto Lantra Awards if necessary
- provide feedback to the external verifier
- report suspected malpractice and co-operate fully with investigations

6.5 External verifier

6.5.1 Skills and experience

Lantra Awards ensures that external verifiers are familiar with and/or experienced in the sector for which they are appointed and have qualifications and experience that are relevant to the Qualifications offered by the centre. All external verifiers go through a training process with Lantra Awards, which includes being mentored by an experienced verifier, and are expected to achieve unit V2 (or D35) from the Learning and Development NVQ/SVQ within 12 months of their appointment as external verifiers. They will normally also hold A1 (or D32), A2 (or D33) and V1 (or D34).

Lantra Awards external verifiers carry out their duties in accordance with the National Occupational Standards and assessment strategy and current guidance on best verification practice issued by the regulatory authorities.

External verifiers are appointed by Lantra Awards to ensure that each centre's quality assurance systems are operating to maintain national standards. The external verifier will ensure that assessment decisions are consistent with the national standards and will sample assessments and candidates' evidence in order to make this judgement.

External verifiers are also responsible for carrying out visits to centres applying for centre approval. He/she will also make a recommendation to Lantra Awards about whether centre approval can be granted or not.

6.5.2 Assessment strategy

For each Qualification, the relevant standard setting bodies specifies an assessment strategy which must be implemented by awarding bodies offering the qualifications. External verifiers must refer to the relevant Qualification/s for information about the assessment strategy and independent assessment (where appropriate). The guidance in this section is general.

6.5.3 Arranging external verifier visits

External verifiers must have access to candidate and assessor/internal verifier records and locations where assessments take place. The internal verifier must make sure that the required evidence is available for the visit and are informed, especially if they need to travel from other sites. If the centre operates across a number of sites, the external verifier will require the necessary evidence to be made available at whichever site the external verifier nominates for the visit to take place.

Requests to see particular assessors may be made before the visit takes place. Using a standard visit planner letter, the external verifier will inform the centre about 10 days in advance of his/her visit, which evidence he/she wishes to see and for which candidates. They may also request access to evidence for other candidates during the course of the visit, without prior notification. External verifiers may wish to observe assessments taking place and to meet candidates. External verifiers will sample the completed portfolios for candidates who have claimed certificates using the direct claims process. Centres must make sure that these are retained for this purpose until after the external verifiers visit.

For new team members, the external verifier will want to see original certificates for A1, A2 or V1 (or D32, 33 or 34) as appropriate and will discuss CVs in some depth. They may ask for the practical demonstration of the assessor or IV's skills during the visits to assess occupational competence.

Where a candidate selected by the external verifier for interview is not available at the time of the visit, Lantra Awards will require proof that the candidate exists. Where this cannot be substantiated, Lantra Awards will notify the regulatory authorities, suspend the centre from registering candidates or claiming certificates and will instigate formal investigation proceedings.

The external verifier will expect to see the internal verifier and some of the assessors, a sample of candidate and assessor records and a sample of different assessment methods used within the centre. A room should be available for the external verifier to look at evidence and to interview candidates where applicable.

6.5.4 During the EV visit

External verifiers monitor the information given when centre approval was granted and need to be informed when any of those details change particularly where there could be a significant effect on the programme. For example, external verifiers need to be informed of changes in roles and responsibilities within the programme team, and new team members. A change of circumstance form (10) is included in this booklet.

The external verifier will expect you to provide CVs, sample signatures and details of the planned induction and training programme for them. External verifiers need to know if other sites are included within the centre structure.

External Verifier visits will review candidate evidence, the judgements made by workplace assessors and internal verifiers, and the support systems required to deliver the awards.

External verifiers will want to see evidence that achievements are evaluated against equal opportunities data, that candidate action plans and targets are monitored and that, candidates are given access to unit certification.

6.5.5 Sampling

Some assessment strategies make specific requirements for sampling. Refer to the relevant specifications for more information. The information that follows is general. External verifiers are

responsible for selecting the sample, not centres. If the centre offers NVQs, SVQs, and Diplomas the external verifier will select a sample containing a range of evidence.

External verifiers are required to record the evidence they have sampled using the sampling record sheet that forms part of the external verifier report form. This record ensures that external verifiers can build up a record of what they have sampled over the course of several visits to ensure that they are sampling across all the different variables.

External verifiers will plan their sample to ensure that the evidence selected is representative and, that over a period of time; their sampling includes evidence selected from different:

- units
- assessment methods
- types of evidence
- assessors and internal verifiers, including those who are inexperienced
- candidates
- geographical sites
- portfolios in different stages of completion

The external verifier will normally sample the portfolios of around 20% of the candidates or candidates' work. In centres where there are fewer than 5 candidates the external verifier will either sample units from all the available portfolios or sample from one or two portfolios in their entirety, continuing to apply the sampling strategy. Where there are concerns about the consistency of assessment decisions and practices, a higher level of sampling will be undertaken. If this involves any additional units, an additional visit fee will be charged. External verifiers will also sample assessment and internal verification records.

In larger centres, if there is insufficient time during the visit to sample 10% of portfolios it will be necessary to arrange an additional external verifier visit. Lantra Awards will consider increasing the number of external verifier visits to the centre and make any additional visit charges accordingly.

6.5.6 Claiming certificates

External verifiers are responsible for counter-signing claims for certificates if they are satisfied that assessment decisions meet national standards. Where certificates are claimed using the direct claims system, the external verifier will not be at the centre and is not required to countersign the form. They do have the right to demand further evidence to be produced if they consider that the evidence they have seen is below the standard required or where it is insufficient. In these circumstances the external verifier may refuse to countersign claims for certificates or recommend to Lantra Awards that direct claims status or centre approval is suspended or withdrawn.

External verifiers are a useful source of advice and support and, if there is sufficient time, they will be available to discuss various aspects of the programme with you. However, the focus of the day must be on the sampling of assessment decisions and monitoring quality assurance.

6.5.7 Sanctions

Lantra Awards may implement sanctions ranging from suspension of direct claims status to withdrawal of centre approval where centres are found to be not operating Competency Based programmes in accordance with the guidance in this document and the NVQ Code of Practice or SVQ Criteria and Guidance Document. The sanctions which awarding bodies can apply are listed in the NVQ Code of Practice. If centre approval is withdrawn, the regulatory authorities will be informed. Lantra Awards works to the NVQ Code of Practice and to the SVQ Criteria and Guidance Document in its management of NVQs and SVQs and all other competency based qualifications.

6.5.8 Feedback from external verifier visits

You will receive written feedback from the external verifier on the day of the visit. The feedback may include examples of good practice they have observed. There will probably be some action points, which will be discussed and agreed with you during the visit, to help your centre work towards best practice wherever possible. Copies of the report are sent to Lantra Awards and also to the Chief Verifier so that he/she can monitor the award nationally.

If centres are not able to meet the requirements then the external verifier will state in writing what improvements are to be made and the date by which they are to be made. The external verifier will then return to the centre on an agreed date to confirm that the centre has remedied the non-compliance.

Your centre must ensure that action points are followed up; otherwise centre approval may be suspended or even withdrawn. The external verifier will make a recommendation to Lantra Awards after every visit about whether centre approval can be continued. If you are not satisfied with the external verifier's judgement then you can appeal to Lantra Awards according to its published Appeals Procedure.

6.5.9 Number of visits

Centres will receive at least one EV visit per year though two visits normally take place unless a centre has had very little activity. Centres may request additional visits, for which they will be charged the standard visit fee. Additional visits must be requested through Lantra Awards, and not directly to the external verifier. Centres with fewer than 10 current candidate registrations will be charged the standard visit fee to ensure that the costs of external verifier visits are covered. Centres will not be allowed to defer visits until 10 candidates are registered if this means that the interval between external verifier visits becomes significantly longer than six months.

Where the external verifier has identified that a centre is not operating the programme in accordance with the guidance in this document, he/she may recommend to Lantra Awards that one or more additional visits will be required. A charge will be made for all such additional visits.

Where a centre cancels a pre-arranged external verification visit at short notice, Lantra Awards will contact the centre for an explanation. If there is any doubt as to the reason for cancellation, Lantra Awards may suspend direct claims status or withhold certification until a visit has taken place. Lantra Awards reserves the right to carry out external verification visits at short notice or without prior notice to minimise the risk of unsubstantiated claims for certificates being made. The regulatory authorities may also make monitoring visits at short notice or without notice.

If there is a time lapse of more than 12 months between external verifier visits because there are no assessments taking place within the centre, it may be necessary for the centre to apply for centre approval again.

SUMMARY

External verifiers are expected to:

- Monitor the sufficiency of staff and physical resources
- Check that assessment decisions reflect national standards
- Monitor the assessment process and candidates' achievement
- Check that appropriate sources of evidence are used
- Ensure that there is access to fair and reliable assessment
- Check that accurate records are being maintained
- Recommend sanctions where appropriate

SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION

Introduction

Please read this information alongside the guidance given about the role of candidate, assessor and internal verifier in the assessment process.

The documentation included in this section is for guidance – it can be amended or adapted to suit the centre. However, for new centres, the documentation is a helpful starting point.

A brief description of each form and its purpose is given below.

Form 1 Matrix

A matrix can be compiled for each Qualification unit. The far left-hand column is the Evidence Reference number. Each piece of evidence a candidate selects for inclusion in the portfolio, should be given an evidence reference number and then placed in the portfolio in order.

Each piece of evidence is mapped to the Qualification unit specification, so that the criteria, range and knowledge covered can be ticked off. Some criteria may be covered several times, but gaps will appear for others. The matrix helps candidates and assessors to track what the evidence covers and where further evidence must still be collected.

A matrix is available for each NVQ/SVQ and Diploma offered by Lantra Awards.

Form 2 Assessment Plan

Candidates and assessors plan where evidence can be found for the units/elements the candidate is aiming to achieve. It is easiest to start with the elements or units, which are part of the candidate's normal work activity or an activity, which they undertake frequently.

Form 3 Assessment Plan Review sheet

Assessment plans should be kept under review to monitor progress. If the evidence has not been produced for a unit/element as planned, a revised target date should be agreed and further guidance given to the candidate about where evidence can be found.

Form 4 Witness List

For some candidates, assessors at the centre carry out all assessments and no one else is involved at all. For many candidates, other people (such as managers, supervisors, customers, and colleagues) will have the opportunity to see the candidate carrying out activities related to the Qualification.

Sometimes a witness will be someone who understands the specifications because they are working in the same industry and will also be A1 (OR D32)/A2 (OR D33) qualified. Other observers will not be familiar with the standards nor A1 (OR D32)/A2 (OR D33) qualified. Nevertheless, a witness statement can provide useful supporting evidence.

The witness list should be completed for all witnesses who contribute towards a candidate's evidence. Their status (1-5) will determine how much weight their evidence can carry for example, if a candidate's evidence for a whole unit consisted only of an observation from a non-expert who is not familiar with the standards, the assessor will need to advise the candidate to collect additional evidence.

Form 5 Tracking Form

This form should be included in the candidate's portfolio so that it can always be updated as the candidate progresses through units. Alternatively, it can be kept centrally and updated every time an assessor, internal verifier or external verifier looks at it.

Each box should include the person's initials and the date the element/unit was signed off.

This form gives an instant picture of the candidate's progress and what has been achieved, as well as sampling carried out by the internal verifier.

Each time a unit is claimed, the method of claiming external verification (EV) or direct claims service (DCS) – should be entered with the date of the claim. Particularly where candidates are claiming certificates unit by unit, it is helpful to check what has been claimed against the certificates and replacement forms issued by Lantra Awards.

Form 6 Internal Verification Sampling Record

This form is for the internal verifier to record feedback on portfolios sampled. The internal verifier is expected to sample work from each assessor, across a number of different candidates and units, ensuring that a variety of evidence types and assessment methods are included.

The comments should be specific and constructive, drawing on examples from the work sampled.

This record is useful to show the external verifier what has been included in the sample.

Form 7 Feedback to Assessors

When sampling, the internal verifier will have completed the sampling record. His/her observations will be used to give feedback to each assessor in more detail. The form provides a reminder to the internal verifier of what to look for when sampling work.

Form 8 Internal Verification – Observation of Performance

Where an internal verifier has the opportunity to observe an assessor assessing a candidate carrying out an activity, this feedback sheet can be completed.

It will provide useful evidence for an assessor who is working towards A1 (OR D32).

Form 9 Internal Verification – Portfolio Assessment

Internal verifiers may also have the opportunity to observe an assessor giving feedback and assessing a candidate's portfolio.

This feedback sheet will provide useful evidence for an assessor who is working towards A1 (OR D32)/3.

Form 10 Notification of Changes

Lantra Awards must be notified of any changes in the programme team. When new assessors or a new internal verifier joins the team, a CV for each new team member must be sent to Lantra Awards, who will carry it to the external verifier.

If the new team member is replacing an existing team member, we need to know who has been replaced.

SAMPLE FORM 1 - EVIDENCE REFERENCE MATRIX

Registration No.	Candidate
Unit; K/501/7037 (Fe1.1)	Locate and identify services and obstructions taking necessary precautions

Evidence No	Description	Assessment Criteria																Evidence Type (see key)	Notes	
		1.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	4.1	4.2	5.1	6.1	6.2	6.3	7.1	7.2	8.1	8.2				

Candidate Signature	Assessor Signature	IV Signature	EV Signature
Date	Date	Date	Date

Types of evidence;
 Observation (Obs); Work Product (WP); Witness Testimony (WT); Personal Statement (PS); Written answers to questions (WA); Questioning of Candidate (QC);
 Questioning of Witness (QW); Professional Discussion (PD);

If the evidence has been independantly assessed please add (I) after the evidence title



SAMPLE FORM 2 - ASSESSMENT PLAN

Qualification:

Candidate: **Assessor:**

Unit/Elements:

Units/elements	Proposed activity – evidence to be produced	Target Date

Signed:
(Assessor)

Date:

Signed:
(Candidate)

Date:



SAMPLE FORM 3 - ASSESSMENT PLAN REVIEW SHEET

Qualification:

Candidate: **Assessor:**

Unit/Elements:

Units/elements	Action to be taken – evidence to be produced	Target Date

Signed:
(Assessor)

Date:

Signed:
(Candidate)

Date:



SAMPLE FORM 4 - WITNESS LIST

Candidate name:

Please ensure that all witnesses who have signed the candidate's evidence or written a report are included on this witness status list.
Please ensure that all necessary details are included and then signed by the witness as being correct

Name and contact address of witness	Status of witness	Professional relationship to candidate	Elements witnessed	Witness signature	Date

Witness status categories relationship to candidate

- 1 = Occupational expert and A1 (OR D32)/A2 (OR D33) assessor
- 2 = A1 (OR D32)/A2 (OR D33) assessor without occupational competence
- 3 = Occupational expert and familiar with the standards
- 4 = Occupational expert not familiar with the standards
- 5 = Non-expert not familiar with the standards

SAMPLE FORM 5 TRACKING FORM

NVQ/SVQ:

Level:

Internal Verifier:



		UNIT NO:				UNITNO:				UNIT NO:				UNIT NO:			
ELEMENTS:		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
CANDIDATE NAME:	ASS																
	IV																
	Claimed																
CANDIDATE NAME:	ASS																
	IV																
	Claimed																
CANDIDATE NAME:	ASS																
	IV																
	Claimed																
CANDIDATE NAME:	ASS																
	IV																
	Claimed																
CANDIDATE NAME:	ASS																
	IV																
	Claimed																

NVQ / SVQ:

SAMPLE FORM 7 - INTERNAL VERIFICATION – FEEDBACK TO ASSESSORS



Name of Internal Verifier:

Name of Assessor:

Date:

Unit: **Elements:**

Portfolio evidence	Yes	No	Internal Verifier's Comment
Is the assessment method appropriate (suitability)?			
Does the evidence address the PCs within elements?			
Have the evidence requirements (and/or scope) been met?			
Have the knowledge and understanding items been adequately assessed?			
Has the evidence presented been clearly referenced?			

Continued....

General Comments

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Notes to Assessor

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.....

Action to be taken/Items to be resubmitted

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.....
.....

Date for Resubmission

.....
.....

Internal Verifier:

Date:

Action Completed

Internal Verifier:

Date:

Assessor:

Date:

Sample Form 8 - Internal Verifier Observation of Assessor Performance

Candidate:	Qualification / Level:
Assessor:	Internal Verifier:

Checklist	Yes	No	Examples
1. Candidate put at ease			
2. Assessments carried out as per agreed assessment plan			
3. Candidate encouraged to provide appropriate evidence			
4. Relevant questions asked			
5. Assessor did not 'lead' the candidate			
6. All possible sources of evidence have been used			
7. Feedback given to candidate Feedback recorded			
8. Further action agreed with candidate where appropriate			
9. Assessment plans reviewed to reflect progress within the qualification			
10. Necessary assessment documentation completed correctly and to standard			

Assessment activity observed:

Location:

Signatures:

Candidate: _____ **Date:** _____

Assessor: _____ **Date:** _____

Internal Verifier: _____ **Date:** _____



SAMPLE FORM 9 – INTERNAL VERIFICATION – PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

NVQ/SVQ: **Date:**

Assessor: **Location:**

Internal Verifier:

DID THE ASSESSOR:	COMMENTS
Give clear information on the assessment process to the individual?	
Encourage the individual to identify and present evidence?	
Use only the specified performance criteria?	
Use the specified programme and assessment documentation?	
Consider all feasible sources of evidence?	
Accurately judge evidence against elements and performance criteria range and underpinning knowledge?	

Continued.....

DID THE ASSESSOR:	COMMENTS
Ensure that the evidence can be reliably attributed to the candidate?	
Clarify and resolve inconsistencies in the evidence?	
Confirm success to the individual as soon as evidence was sufficient?	
Encourage the individual to ask questions?	
Give feedback as soon as practicable?	
Record evidence and assessment decisions according to verification requirements?	
COMMENTS:	ACTION:

Assessor Signature: **Date:**

Internal Verification Signature: **Date:**

