

## Methods of Assessment for NCFE qualifications

This document provides an overview of the different methods of assessment and evidence types to show candidate achievement that could be used for NCFE qualifications. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list as you may be able to use other methods of assessment or types of evidence depending on the qualification. All evidence should be current, valid, authentic, reliable and sufficient.

There are 7 methods of assessment listed here under which candidates could produce evidence. Following each method of assessment are a number of ways this could be evidenced.

The methods of assessment are as follows:

- ◆ Observation
- ◆ RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning)
- ◆ Test
- ◆ Project
- ◆ Questioning
- ◆ Self Assessment
- ◆ Contribution to electronic discussion

### Observation

This is a very useful method of assessment that can be used across a lot of qualifications at all levels. It's defined as 'the process of watching behaviour or events carefully to find something out'. There are a number of ways this can be carried out. The candidate can be observed in their own workplace, a real work environment (RWE) or in another practical setting. It could also include simulations (if permitted for that qualification) and presentations. They could be observed by either an Assessor, a peer or a work colleague such as a Supervisor or Manager. The behaviour observed should be individual to that candidate.

Examples of how this assessment method could be evidenced are:

- ◆ witness testimony - this is defined as 'an observation of performance but it can also contain a record of that person's knowledge and understanding'. It must be done by

a credible witness (the Assessor should check this) such as a Line Manager or experienced colleague, so that they understand the person's job role. The witness should be familiar with the performance criteria (the Assessor should support them) and the witness testimony needs to be individual to the candidate (ie not a generic statement). It's a useful way to capture evidence when the Assessor isn't available, especially evidence that could be difficult to obtain. This can be recorded electronically or written/typed by the witness

- ◆ peer assessment - this is defined as 'feedback from a peer (other candidate or colleague) on performance'. The feedback can be between a pair or within a group. This could be recorded electronically or written/typed
- ◆ presentations – this could be the candidates demonstrating knowledge through a presentation or a simulated performance (if permitted). This should be recorded electronically.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

RPL is defined as 'a method of recognising previous formal and non-formal learning to meet current requirements. This was formerly known as APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning). Evidence used must meet the learning outcomes of the qualification, and there must be an effective and reliable system for recording the RPL within the centre.

Examples of evidence:

- ◆ a portfolio mapped across to the current qualification's learning outcomes
- ◆ a job description showing that the candidate already has the skills within the unit
- ◆ a certificate and details of what was covered in the qualification.

### **Test**

A test is defined as 'a means of establishing competent performance and/or knowledge through a standardised activity or methodology'. Performance criteria can then be objectively assessed. Their use depends on the qualification and assessment strategy.

Examples of evidence:

- ◆ multiple choice questions (MCQ) - a set of questions generally with 1 correct answer and 3 distracters
- ◆ short answer questions (SAQ) – a series of questions requiring candidates to provide a response rather than selecting one from a list
- ◆ essay questions – candidates are given a subject or question, which they're required to provide an argument or discussion for. A word limit is usually given as a guide as to the amount of information that needs to be included
- ◆ assignment on registration – an externally marked assignment given out to candidates at the start of the course which must be completed in isolation by the candidate.

The above can be externally (awarding organisation) or internally (centre) set.

It's generally more appropriate to include a record of whether the candidate achieved or not and the date as evidence of the test. This may be in the form of a results slip provided by the awarding organisation or a feedback sheet from the Assessor.

## **Project**

This is defined as 'a series of tasks relevant to the qualification that are referenced to the learning outcomes'. It could include workbooks, assignments and research tasks. These may be devised by the centre or awarding organisation, and may be mandatory or optional. If a workbook is centre devised it should reflect and be suitable for the needs of the learner, and the centre should check that the workbook is appropriate for the qualification. There should be sufficient space for the candidate to contribute. This could also be in the form of a physical product, for example a final item on a craft course.

Examples of evidence:

- ◆ a completed workbook
- ◆ a report detailing findings from research
- ◆ an assignment
- ◆ a presentation of findings either recorded electronically or typed notes
- ◆ a product.

## **Questioning**

This is defined as 'testing knowledge by asking the learner a series of questions related to the performance criteria'. Beforehand the Assessor should identify the knowledge required, plan the questions (open questions should be used) and a means of capturing them – they could be either written, videoed or voice recorded. The evidence needs to include the questions as well as the answers. Questioning can be useful alongside observations by using 'what if' questions for evidence that's hard to obtain, eg 'what would you do if you were alerted of a bomb threat?' It also may be used after completion of a physical product.

Examples of evidence:

- ◆ professional discussion - this is defined as a jointly agreed discussion between the candidate and a person with subject specific knowledge (suitably qualified). It should be planned in advance in line with the learning outcomes (LOs) - the topics should be agreed and the time limit set in advance. It should be a conversation rather than a question and answer session. This is generally used to plug gaps in evidence or demonstration of underpinning knowledge to meet the LOs, but it doesn't have to be, it can be used to take candidates all the way through
- ◆ Q and A – again used to plug gaps in the evidence of candidates' knowledge. This could be a series of questions pre-set by the Assessor asking directly about certain learning outcomes that haven't been covered adequately by other evidence types

- ◆ written questions or questionnaires – as above this can be another way to fill gaps in the evidence of candidates' knowledge. It could be a series of open or closed questions designed to draw out additional evidence requirements from a candidate that weren't able to be covered in, for example, an observation. These could be 'what would you do if...' type questions.

These should all be recorded electronically using either video or audio, or as written or typed notes.

### **Self Assessment**

This is defined as 'a candidate's self assessment of their previous, current or potential performance'. It could follow practical performance or the completion of a product and should be a reflection on teaching and support as well. If it's completed at various points of the programme it can encourage responsibility for the learner's own learning and pace.

Examples of evidence:

- ◆ reflective account – this is a statement including the candidates personal thoughts, considering what went well and what could be done differently, and assists the Assessor and the candidate in checking knowledge and understanding. It can be written or verbal and must be authenticated by a witness at the workplace (they must be suitable qualified)
- ◆ diaries or learning logs completed by the candidate – these could be either recorded electronically or written/typed
- ◆ a self assessment questionnaire/survey – this could be completed online or paper-based, and a copy of this should be included as evidence.

### **Contribution to electronic discussion**

This is defined as a tool that allows candidates to take part in discussions online. This could be a discussion the candidate has taken part in or a blog they have contributed to. This could also be used as a research tool for the candidate. This is a useful resource for candidates who find face to face discussions hard, and is always accessible, 24 hours a day.

Examples of evidence:

- ◆ a print out of the discussion including the candidate's contribution
- ◆ a link to the relevant part of the discussion board/blog.