

Learner Observations



The Purpose of Direct Observations

Observations



- To confirm skills
- To confirm competence
- To meet 'be able to' criteria
- To show the development of the learner
- To gauge interactions of the learner with those they interact with



NB – some qualifications do not require direct observations. Please check the qualification specifications for specific details



Who should conduct learner observations?

Occupational Assessor Competence

Centres are responsible for making all assessment decisions for each registered learner.

Assessors must be contracted to work directly with the centre and contribute to all aspects of standardisation. The centre must ensure that a training process is followed, including during induction and quality assurance activities. Occupationally competent and qualified/experienced assessors from the centre must use direct observation to assess practical skills-based outcomes where necessary.

It is recommended that Assessors have an Assessor Qualification

[support-handbook.pdf](#)

Please refer to the relevant qualification specifications

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/>

Useful links to Assessor Training

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualifications/preparing-for-eqa/assessor-training/>



Recording the Evidence



Evidence should be recorded/written up at the time of the observation or as soon as possible afterwards to ensure accuracy.

Points to consider when recording observations;

- Can be written, typed, or voice recorded
- Must include names, date, and location
- A description of the learner's activity
 - Persons present
 - Setting the scene
 - What was observed
 - What the learner did/said
- A record of the assessment decision
- Recorded feedback to learner
- Agreement on any actions
- Agreement on next Steps
- Authenticated and dated by the assessor, learner and any others involved



Recording the evidence



Best Practice

- Well-presented, legible record that provides a detailed and factual account of what has been seen and heard
- Clear links to the qualification specification, including links to the relevant criteria
- Constructive and developmental feedback from the assessor to the learner

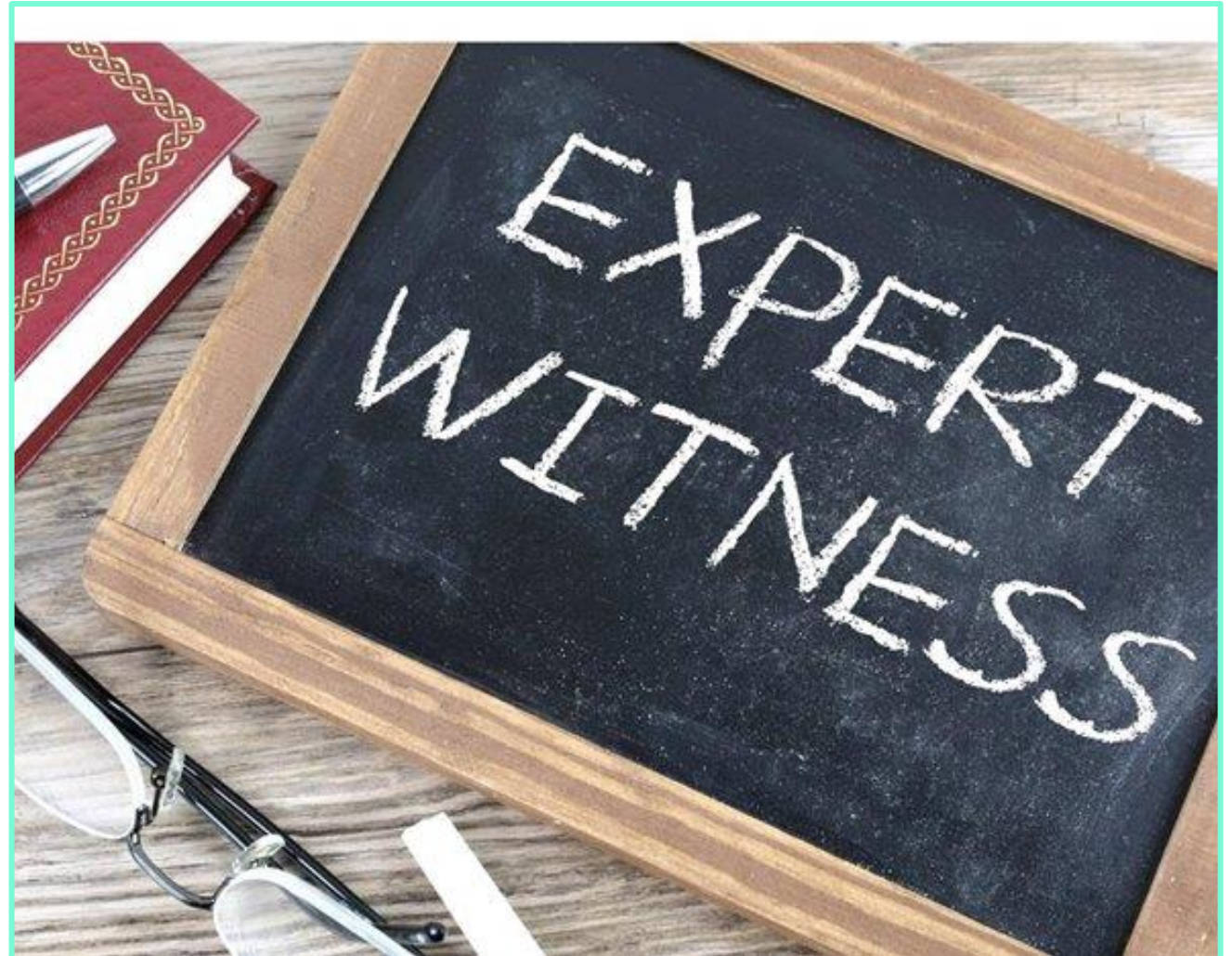
What we often see

- Observations with limited contextualisation
- Handwriting that is difficult to decipher
- Insufficient evidence to meet qualification requirements
- Limited feedback to support learner progression
- Authentication and currency not confirmed

It is sometimes possible to use an Expert Witness, please check the qualification specification to see if this is allowed



- Given the nature of the work, there may be a need to make use of an expert witness testimony (EWT) as a source of performance evidence in the workplace.
- Expert witnesses can be drawn from experienced individuals who can attest to the learner's performance in the workplace. This may include line managers or other experienced colleagues from inside an organisation or from other agencies.
- Expert witnesses must meet the occupational requirements as detailed in the relevant qualification specifications.
- [support-handbook.pdf](#)





TOP TIPS for Assessors

Planning the Observation

- ✓ Timings
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Learner to gain approval from management within the Placement/Work setting
- ✓ Meet with the learner before the visit to go through the Assessment Plan and discuss the focus
 - ✓ Discuss the aims and how these link to the Qualification Specification
 - ✓ Look back on previous Observations to review any areas or gaps that require strengthening or improvement
- ✓ Discuss how you are going to capture the evidence: video recorded/ written/taped or voice-recorded and where feedback will be given

Before the Observation



- ✓ Sign in to the setting to demonstrate good practice and meet legal requirements
 - ✓ Agree on how, where, and when feedback will be given
- ✓ Consider if the learner needs to provide any product evidence to support the Observation
 - ✓ Discuss if there are any changes to the planned Observation

Following the observation

- ✓ Take time to discuss and feedback on the observation with the learner
 - ✓ Explore strengths and areas for improvement
- ✓ Explain if/how the learner met the qualification specification requirements
- ✓ Make sure the learner has time to read through the observation and add comments if they want to
 - ✓ Ensure the learner and assessor have signed and dated the observation record
 - ✓ Feedback should be constructive, encouraging, learner-friendly, and actionable

Reflection, Feedforward, and Planning

- ✓ Allow the learner to reflect on the observations
 - What do they think they did well and what can they improve upon

- ✓ Plan the next steps

