

Assessment organisation evaluation methodology – guidance notes

The evaluation methodology is based on evidence presented by the assessment organisation. The nature of much of the evidence will be readily apparent to assessment organisations. However, it is recognised that:

- employers / internal assessment organisations may be less familiar with educational quality assurance than academic or training organisations
- it is possible for an assessment organisation to demonstrate evidence in a variety of ways. Therefore the evidence requirements are sometimes described in generalised terms.

Therefore, this guidance explains the non-obvious generalised terms, and sets out the relevant factors and the most typical or usually expected ways in which elements of evidence can be demonstrated.

Most of the guidance relates to QAA Precept / Quality indicator **1 – learning outcomes**. This is because any programme of learning must be founded on its learning outcomes, and defining the way these are set out by an assessment organisation is critical to quality assurance. The other Precepts / Quality Indicators require evidence which is more obviously self-explanatory.

Within a work based learning programme, a *learning framework* is typically a document setting out how candidates are to be developed towards achievement of the work based learning outcomes.

The SRA will have regard to how clear and specific the framework is in detailing the outcomes and in structuring the candidates' learning and development towards them. Taken in conjunction with the actual work the candidate is undertaking, the learning framework takes the place of a curriculum on a traditional or academic course of study.

In this context, an effective learning framework, and the overall approach of the assessment organisation, will be flexible enough to ensure effective development for a diversity of candidates in a diversity of learning environments and patterns of work.

It is expected that the framework will be based on the work based learning handbook but include specific details of, for instance, preparation of candidates' development plans, the pattern and purpose of review meeting etc.

An *operationalised assessment mechanism* will typically be a documented approach to assessment, specifically referenced to the work based learning outcomes and with the capacity to record evidence of progress towards or achievement of the outcomes.

For alternative formats, email info.services@sra.org.uk or telephone 0870 606 2555.

The effectiveness of the mechanism will normally be assisted by including elements of:

- diagnostic assessment of candidates' learning needs
- formative assessment to assist candidates' development towards the work based learning outcomes and
- summative assessment to identify achievement of or failure to achieve the outcomes.

The *typical professional requirements of the learning environment* include not just professional standards (e.g. of professional conduct) but the key features of the learning environment including accepted business practices, typical office procedures and acceptable work behaviours. The SRA will have regard to the extent to which the work based learning programme takes account of these.

An assessment organisation's demonstration of *sufficient flexibility* towards a diversity of candidates and learning environments must address the individual candidates' situations. This includes candidates' background, personal circumstances, and patterns of work such as linear (where a candidate works in a series of environments over time, each contributing some elements towards the work based learning outcomes) and parallel (where a candidate works in variety of environments, for instance for two different employers during the same period).

The assessment organisation must demonstrate that assessment does not include non-essential barriers to accrediting candidates with progress towards or achievement of the work based learning outcomes.

The number of *face to face meetings* with a reviewer or assessor, and the balance of meetings between those between the candidate and the assessment organisation and those between the candidate and their work supervisor or mentor, is at the discretion of the assessment organisation. However the SRA will not normally regard less than four review meetings, at reasonably regular intervals, as adequate to achieve the necessary direction / redirection of candidates towards the work based learning outcomes.

How the Assessment Organisation ensures that the candidate evidences that they demonstrate compliance with the SRA's WBL Outcomes (and, crucially, assesses this evidence) is up to the organisation. The SRA is not prescriptive about how we wish this to be achieved. However, the SRA will validate organisations to ensure our satisfaction with the arrangements they develop. The evaluation methodology will both inform the organisation of this and also ensure effective validation.