

Professional Discussion

What is a professional discussion?

A professional discussion is:

- a structured interview which explores key aspects of the candidate's understanding of practice or procedures allowing the opportunity to gather evidence of competence
- a conversation rather than a question and answer session
- part of the assessment plan and agreed in advance with the candidate

What are the accepted methods of maintaining a record of the professional discussion?

The specific areas of activity to be explored must be clearly identified and agreed in advance, as must the methods by which the discussion will be conducted. This could be via a presentation followed by questioning, "what if" questioning to cover contingencies or the use of scenarios to explore practice (or other forms of mutually agreed processes).

We use a professional discussion to

- confirm the authenticity of witness statements
- cover unusual or rarely occurring situations or scenarios
- cover restricted or confidential settings

The professional discussion should confirm a candidate's understanding of procedures or practice enabling a candidate to provide confirmation of competence

The common evidence requirements clearly state which aspects of competence are to be covered by each professional discussion and these must form the basis of the exchange.

The purpose of the discussion is to probe the level of competence of the individual and to be certain that his/her actions are based on a firm understanding of principles which support practice. Thus the questioning will normally centre on the reasons for selecting specific actions, the alternatives considered and the factors taken into consideration, as well as an evaluation of successes and failures and learning points for the future.

The outcomes of the professional discussion should be captured by means of audio/videotape, written summaries and evidence of structured questioning (e.g. question checklist or structured interview schedule)". If an audio/videotape is used, the recording must be of good quality. There is a Professional Discussion Written Record Form at the end of this document which you can use if you wish to record written records.

Audio tape is not the **only** acceptable method of recording professional discussions. However experience has shown that this method is practical and ensures that the candidate understands the principles and practices of their qualification. Whichever method is used, an assessor should provide the candidate with evidence which can be used as part of the quality assurance process.

Where should the professional discussion be recorded?

The professional discussion needs to be referenced in the unit record as an appendix. The evidence description should be completed to indicate that a professional discussion has been used and that where the performance criteria and range items are evidenced in the discussion this should be identified using an 'S'.

The Professional Discussion Written Record Form at the end of this document should be completed and kept with the unit(s) where evidence was met.

When can a professional discussion be used?

Where the evidence requirements state that performance evidence must be provided then it must be obviously provided in that format. The professional discussion may support this performance evidence and help to expand it etc. but it cannot be used in isolation from the performance evidence. The minimum stated performance evidence must always be supplied.

Where there are gaps in evidence that can be covered by supplementary evidence questions, professional discussion can be used.

Where a candidate has been observed once and they want to use professional discussion to confirm consistency, this would need to be supported by witness testimony or authenticated products of work to support the claim of competence. The performance evidence must cover all minimum performance criteria and ranges at least once.

Professional Discussion can be used to cover the Underpinning Knowledge requirements (except where specific Assessment Strategies state otherwise – such as for Hospitality NVQs). You must detail in the unit records which Underpinning Knowledge has been covered.

Professional Discussion Record Form

To be kept with the unit where Professional Discussion was undertaken and with evidence (if written.)

Candidate details

Candidate name	
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Registration number	
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NVQ Unit(s), Element Number(s) and What you must know/cover/do criteria covered	Type of Recording of Professional Discussion (☑)			Location of evidence
	Video	Audio Tape	Written	

I confirm that the professional discussion, as detailed on this form, is accurate and the candidates own work. I confirm the professional discussion confirms the competence of the candidate and meets the evidence requirements and that the evidence that has been met has been recorded in the unit record with an 's'.

Signature of Candidate		Date:	
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Assessor signature:		Date:	
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Counter Signing Assessor signature (Where Necessary):		Date:	
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IV signature:		Date:	
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