Guide to the assessment of practical skills in International Vocational Qualifications

City&
Guilds

Equal opportunities

City & Guilds fully supports the principle of equal
opportunities and we are committed to satisfying
this principle in all our activities and published material.

Guide to the assessment of practical skills in International Vocational Qualifications

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

[This page is intentionally blank]

Contents

[This page is intentionally blank]

Introduction

This purpose of this guide is to give advice about the practical assessments in the International Vocational Qualifications (IVQ) offered by City & Guilds. It is part of a range of support materials that we offer to students, teachers and trainers who are following programmes leading to the award of an IVQ.

It will be particularly useful to you if you have just started to offer an IVQ as a teaching or training programme and do not have previous experience of offering our programmes.

If you already have some experience, this guide gives additional information to tutors, examination secretaries and visiting verifiers about the role and purpose of practical work in a programme of learning leading towards an International Vocational Qualification (IVQ). It also gives advice about the different ways you should plan for and carry out the assessments with candidates.

You can also use this guide as part of an programme of self study or in-service training in conjunction with the **International Assessor Award** IVQ syllabus by using this guide as background reading to each section of the syllabus, and then completing the practical assignments in the **International Assessor Award** syllabus.

You should always use this guide with the relevant IVQ syllabus. In some cases this guide may give information that is different from the information in the syllabus because the guide is more up to date. Where there is a difference you should use the information in this guide.

[This page is intentionally blank]

1 International Vocational Qualifications

Since 1995 City & Guilds has been developing International Vocational Qualifications. Our research has shown that that there is a need for competence based qualifications. These are qualifications that confirm that a person has demonstrated the practical skills, as well as the necessary underpinning knowledge, to perform a range of tasks to a specific standard.

International Vocational Qualifications, or IVQs, are available in the following subject areas:

Accommodation Operations and Services
Applied Information Technology
Beauty Therapy
Construction Industry
Engineering Skills
Food and Beverage Service
Food Preparation and Culinary Arts
Hairdressing
International Assessor Award
International Tourism
Mechanical, Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Motor Vehicle Engineering
Reception Operations and Services
Retailing
Teaching and Training
Telecommunication Systems

Ways of assessing IVQs

All IVQs are designed in the same way and there are three assessment tools or ways of recording knowledge and practical skill. The first is related to the underpinning knowledge and takes the form of written tests. These can be multiple choice tests or they can take the form of short structured questions. Multiple choice tests are always used at the first or certificate level of an IVQ and are often used at diploma level. Where no one answer is definitive, or where a more detailed answer is needed, short structured questions are used. This type of question is sometimes used at diploma level and always used at advanced diploma level.

In the future, some IVQs will be using a computer-based test. Here the candidate answers questions – usually multiple choice questions – that appear on the computer screen by using the mouse to click on the right answer. The advantage of this type of test is that the candidate can receive a provisional result as soon as the test is completed.

Practical skills

The second and third assessment tools are related to the ways in which we gather and record evidence for the practical skills that a person can demonstrate as a result of successfully completing a programme of training in preparation for an IVQ.

Some IVQs use a competence checklist to record evidence. This is the second tool that we use to assess practical skills.

A competence checklist is a list of activities or performance outcomes that a candidate must be seen to be able to do in order to be considered **competent** in the tasks being assessed for the qualification. The checklists are written in the same way, so that for each competence statement it is possible to say either **'Yes, the candidate successfully carried out this activity'** or **'No, the candidate has not yet achieved this standard.'**

Fig 1 is an example of a competence checklist.

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

1.1   Handle key systems safely and according to establishment policy. ☐

1.2   Deal with guests' belongings according to establishment policy for security. ☐

Fig 1

In this example the candidate has to show that the tasks can be performed to the standard stated and the method of assessment is observation of performance. Observation of performance under realistic conditions, such as in the reception area of a hotel, is the best method and is attractive to employers and candidates. Alternatively performance can be observed under controlled conditions, such as a reception training area in a college.

Fig 2 is another example of a competence checklist.

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

1.3b   Prepare a report identifying the basic operating principles of contact breaker and breakerless types of main ignition systems. ☐

Fig 2

In this example, the candidate is being asked to produce a report. This is an example of assessing practical skill by **appraisal of a product**. This method of assessment is sometimes used because the assignment brings together the mental, physical and social skills needed to carry out the planning, undertaking and checking of a specified task. In this case the product required is a report with a specific content. A product could also be an object made, a plan, a design, or a piece of processed information.

IVQs that use a competence checklist as a tool to enable **observation of performance or appraisal of products** include

Accommodation Operations and Services
Beauty Therapy
Construction Industry
Engineering Skills
Food and Beverage Service
Food Preparation and Culinary Arts
Hairdressing
International Tourism
Motor Vehicle Engineering
Reception Operations and Services
Retailing
Telecommunication Systems

Some IVQs use practical assignments as an alternative tool for assessing practical skills. This is the third way in which we assess.

Practical assignments are assignments set by us, and included in an IVQ syllabus as required tasks for candidates to complete. The advantage of practical assignments is that they ensure that all candidates are asked to undertake the **same** activities in order to demonstrate their practical skills.

Practical assignments in IVQs are always presented in the same way. There are instructions for the candidate to follow in order to complete the assignment, and there is a **marking guide**. The marking guide is an alternative to the competence checklist and is a list of the things that the candidate must successfully complete in order to demonstrate competence. The practical assignment may ask the candidate to produce a product (eg a thing made, a plan, a report, a design, an item of processed information) or it may require observation of performance, or a combination of the two.

Fig 3 is an example of a marking guide.

Marking

4.1	Research carried out.	[	]
4.2	Well structured report produced.	[	]
4.3	Type and structure defined and described.	[	]
4.4	Forms and types of information described and explained.	[	]
4.5	Information flow diagrams produced.	[	]

Fig 3

In this example the candidate has to show that the tasks have been performed to the standard stated and is an example of **appraisal of products**.

IVQs that use practical assignments as a tool to enable observation of performance or appraisal of products include

Applied Information Technology
Engineering Skills
International Assessor Award
Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Teaching and Training
Telecommunications Systems

Whether a competence checklist is used, or whether practical assignments are used, these methods are the ways in which we ensure that the **evidence of successful performance** is collected and documented in an organised way. This means that everyone can see that the process for assessing practical skills is **fair, valid** and reliable. This, in turn, ensures that the certificate awarded to successful candidates is valued and respected.

In the next section of this guide we look at the different people who are responsible for assessment of practical skills.

2 Key responsibilities for practical assessment – who does what?

Quality first

Everyone involved in practical assessment is responsible for quality.

City & Guilds is responsible for quality by ensuring that it develops policies and procedures that are valid and reliable. We do this in a number of ways –

- carrying out continuous research into the best practices, developing these and using them in our assessment requirements
- submitting our policies and practices for external audit, monitoring and accreditation (eg the UK government, **ISO 9000**)

Because we do this, our qualifications and the assessment processes that lead to our qualifications are recognised internationally.

When you agree to carry out the roles and responsibilities for delivering training programmes and assessments that lead to the award of an IVQ, you are agreeing to carry out your role according to our standards and procedures.

The teachers and trainers

Who is the person best able to state whether or not a candidate can or cannot perform tasks to a certain standard?

This has to be the person who spends most time with the candidate – the candidate's teacher or trainer.

When candidates' practical skills are assessed for an IVQ it is their teachers and trainers who are responsible for

- observing their candidates' performance
- relating it to the criteria for successful performance we give in the competence checklists or practical assignments
- keeping records of achievement
- guiding candidates towards success.

The head of department or supervisor

Most training centres, whether they are a school or college, or a work place, are organised so that there is a person in charge of a team of people responsible for training in a particular activity or subject area. This person, (the head of department or supervisor or similarly named person) is responsible for ensuring that the work of the team is carried out correctly and to the standards required.

When candidates' skills are assessed for an IVQ, it is the head of department or supervisor who is responsible for

- planning and developing, with teachers and trainers, a programme of learning that allows candidates' to acquire, develop and show practical skills
- putting into place a management system so that practical assessments can take place and be monitored

- making sure that teachers and trainers understand their role
- ensuring that different teachers and trainers apply the same standards when they assess their candidates' performance
- confirming that results for practical assessments are fair and reliable – this is sometimes known as internal verification.

The examinations secretary

The 'examinations secretary' is a technical term we use to describe the role of the person whose job it is to maintain contact with City & Guilds. The examinations secretary could be any one of the teachers or trainers, the head of department, or someone else such as a principal or vice-principal. The examinations secretary is responsible for the following aspects of practical assessments:

- making sure that the centre is approved to offer the IVQs for which it is going to assess candidates' practical skills
- ensuring that the centre has a visiting verifier for **every subject area** for which the centre is going to assess candidates' practical skills
- ensuring that candidates' entries and results are sent to us by the due dates

The examinations secretary also has a number of other responsibilities related to the written examinations but these are outside the scope of this guide. You can find out about these in the **International Directory of Examinations and Assessments**.

The visiting verifier

The visiting verifier is responsible for

- reviewing the proposed results for practical assessments
- confirming that there is evidence to support the results, and that the results are a fair and accurate record of each candidate's performance
- signing the results lists for candidates' practical work (**Form S**).

More than one job?

Not every centre is alike.

A large college, such as a community college, will typically have several departments (eg Administration and Secretarial, Construction, Engineering, Hospitality….). Each department will have several members of staff and, probably, some assistants. The college may have a single person who is responsible for making the examination entries to all awarding bodies, including City & Guilds.

In this situation it is quite likely that a head of department leads a team of teachers or trainers and that all of the roles described above are carried out by different people.

In many cases, the opposite is true. Your training centre may be quite small and you might be the only person in the centre with any responsibility for preparing candidates for an IVQ award. In this case, you may need to combine and undertake the roles of teacher or trainer, head of department and examinations secretary.

In this situation, you may combine the three roles, but you **cannot** be the visiting verifier. Additionally, there are safeguards you need to take. For example, when you are assessing your students you must be particularly sure that your assessments of their practical skills are **fair and objective**. It is only natural for any teacher to want his or her students to be successful! You will find the advice and support of the visiting verifier particularly helpful in this situation, because the visiting verifier can give a second opinion and help you gain confidence in your own judgements.

Similarly, if all your preparation and training takes place in the work place, and you are the person whose job it is to use your skills and experience to teach and train less experienced people, you may combine the roles of teacher or trainer, head of department and examinations secretary. Again, you **cannot** be the visiting verifier.

3 Different ways of collecting evidence of practical skills

Earlier, we explained that City & Guilds researches best practice and uses this information to develop guidelines, and that in our IVQs we use two tools to assess and record practical skills: competence checklists and practical assignments.

Both competence checklists and practical assignments allow observation of performance – meaning that assessment takes place whilst the activity is being done. Observation of performance is always preferable, provided that certain conditions are met. We design IVQs to meet these conditions, but in summary they are –

a the assessment (observation) is **valid**, because it accurately reflects the objectives and content of the syllabus, and does not introduce bias or irrelevant demands
b the assessment is **reliable** – it can be checked and confirmed by a second party
c the assessment is of the candidate's own work, it is **authentic**
d the assessment is **current** – it is a reflection of what the candidate can do now, not at some time in the past
e the assessment allows candidates equal and frequent opportunity to show competence
f it is **efficient** and **cost-effective**
g there is **sufficient feedback** about the result of the assessment.

Observation of performance, especially in the workplace, is popular with candidates and employers because it has high **face validity**. This means it has a high degree of realism and is a good indicator of the ability to perform particular tasks.

Where observation of performance is not used, our policy is to include **appraisal of products** as a means of assessing practical skills. Products, as we have explained before, may be objects produced, a plan, a design, a report or an item of processed information. In some IVQs, the competence checklist asks for a report, a plan or design. For example the **Accommodation Operations and Services** IVQ asks candidates to produce a design for the interior of a room. In other IVQs, we have designed practical assignments and projects that lead to the production of a product.

For assessment of practical skills in IVQs these are our recommendations for where and how assessment of practical skills can take place.

Observation of performance – in the real work place as part of work

Advantages	Disadvantages
High face validity	Normal work routine may need to be varied to enable assessment and feedback to take place
Candidate does real job in real environment	
Opportunity for employers to improve quality of workforce through on the job training	Need to involve workplace supervisor in IVQ assessment – training may be needed
Can observe and then promote good workers	Can be disruptive to normal work procedures
Minimises disruption if learning programme is part of on-the-job training	Care needed with real customers
Motivates employees	Insurance and legal issues may be problem
More cost effective than sending employees on a course off site	
Well suited to higher level IVQs	

Comments:

This is where a person's ability to carry out tasks to the prescribed standard is assessed as part of the normal work routine. This approach is most likely to be used when the IVQ is being used as part of an on-the-job training programme that is organised by a company for its employees. For example, employees in a hotel kitchen are on a training programme provided by their employer and the training programme is preparation for the IVQ in **Food Preparation and Culinary Arts**. Another example would be car mechanics employed by a company that uses the IVQ in **Motor Vehicle Engineering.** Observation of performance under realistic conditions such as these is highly recommended because it has high **face validity** – meaning it is as close as possible to a real task. In particular, it is possible to observe whether or not the candidate can perform tasks both to the **standard** required and **in the time** required. Most work environments (servicing a car, cutting hair, preparing a meal) require the job to be done within a certain time to ensure efficient work and customer satisfaction.

Because the employer is also the trainer, those involved in the assessment of practical skills (usually the immediate work supervisors) will have been trained to carry out the role of assessor as part of the process of introducing the IVQ into the workplace.

This approach is most likely to be used with the competence checklist. The checklist is used to observe the candidate's performance against the specified criteria.

– in work placements

Advantages	Disadvantages
High face validity	May be difficult to arrange placements
Popular with candidates	Work placement providers need to know about IVQ
Opportunity for candidates to sample real work before making career decisions	If work placement supervisors are assessing practical skills they need to be trained
Gives access to additional equipment and facilities	Can disrupt normal work, especially when assessment and feedback is taking place
Opportunity to work alongside more experienced people and to observe	Insurance and legal issues may be problem
Gives opportunity to work with customers	
Work can be carried out within realistic environment and conditions, for example realistic times to complete a job	
Opportunity for employers to observe/recruit	
Successful performance is good predictor of future ability	

Comments:

This is where a person's competence to perform tasks to a given standard is assessed in the workplace as part of a specially arranged programme. This approach is most likely to be used where the IVQ programme is being followed in a school or college, and where the work placement is used to provide access to equipment and facilities that are not available in the school or college, or where the work placement is used to give additional opportunities to assess practical competence in a real work environment. This approach has high **face validity** because it allows competence to be demonstrated in a realistic environment.

If this approach is used, the training centre (school or college) needs to plan its IVQ teaching programme carefully so that work placements are integrated into the whole programme. It is necessary to decide **who** should provide work placements, when the work placement will take place, **where** it will take place, **how long** it needs to be to enable the assessment to take place. Work placements must offer realistic work experience – usually involving working with customers – or working with other people on real jobs. The work placement must be in an environment that itself meets the standards required in the IVQ practical assessment. For example, a work placement that does not have any safety equipment is obviously unsuitable.

The best work placements will be in establishments that have a good local reputation or that have achieved a specified status measured by an external organisation – for example a hotel, restaurant or garage that has received a credit rating by the government or a professional organisation for the quality of service it provides.

Some colleges have long-standing arrangements with local employers and they either provide training for employees or the employers may recruit people from the college at the end of their training programme. This type of employer is also likely to be a source of work placements.

It is essential that the work placement provider is involved in the development of the IVQ programme, and particularly in the assessment of practical competences. If the work placement supervisor (the employer) is going to assess the candidate's competences using the checklist, then he or she will need to be trained to do this and will need to understand our requirements.

Again, this approach is most likely to be used with the competence checklist.

– in a realistic work environment

Advantages	Disadvantages
Can be set up within training centre (eg school or college)	May be expensive to set up and equip
Easy to integrate into training programme, if on site	Equipment needs to reflect current work practices – re-equipping can be expensive
Available throughout training programme	Can protect candidates from real work pressures
Good face validity	Benefits may be limited if staff lack recent work experience
Can be used to provide low cost service to public – often popular	If public on site, may present legal/security issues
Less pressure to complete observation/practical assessments within time frame of a work placement – opportunities to repeat and practise skills	
May avoid some insurance and legal issues	

Comments:

This approach is likely to be used by a specialist training institute – for example a Hotel and Catering Institute or a Motor Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Institute. Here, in addition to classrooms, the teaching centre will have specially developed facilities that can be used to enable assessment of practical skills in an environment that is as close to work as possible, but which is not taking place on an employer's premises. Specialist equipment and facilities will be on location (paid for by the institution or provided by an external source such as the government or local employers). The facilities will be used to give practice doing real work tasks and, ideally, will involve producing products for customers. An example would be a Hotel and Catering Institute that has kitchens that are similar to hotel kitchens, and that has a restaurant that is open to the public – maybe at certain times of the day or year.

The type of equipment provided is important. For example, if a Motor Vehicle Institute is only provided with old equipment that has been donated by local employers because it has become out-dated and is no longer used, then the candidate may have the opportunity to demonstrate competence in particular tasks, but does not have the opportunity to become familiar with modern equipment that may be more efficient. To compensate for this the candidate should have the opportunity to learn about and see the latest technological developments.

In the UK some National Training Organisations give a definition of a realistic work environment to ensure that minimum standards are met. An example of such a definition can be found in the **Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing** IVQs.

In this situation, assessment of practical competences will be taking place in the same location as the teaching, and the assessors are likely to be the candidates' teachers or instructors.

– through simulated work experience

Advantages	Disadvantages
Can be arranged within teaching institution (eg school or college) Easily integrated into teaching programme – assessors are usually teachers/trainers Suitable for some IVQs at certificate level, where successful candidates then start first job – under supervision Low cost Can be used to enhance programme for candidates following theory-only route available in some IVQs Opportunity to assess practical skills in situation that is closer to work Good preparation for real work experience – perhaps later in IVQ programme	Does not give sufficient experience of real work place – especially for diploma and advanced diploma levels of IVQ Value depends on whether or not teachers/trainers have recent work experience and can create realistic environment

Comments:
This approach is likely to be used in two important situations – firstly, when access to work experience or a realistic work environment is impossible and, – secondly, when it is more appropriate to use simulation rather than real activity.

If access to work experience in order to assess practical skills is impossible, it may be possible to compensate for this by creating environments and exercises that replicate what will be found in the work place, and using these to assess practical competence. Simulated work experience is often used in occupational areas such as 'administrative assistant', where it is often possible to arrange for candidates to work alongside office staff in the teaching institution (school or college) and to share jobs or tasks.

Simulated work experience should enable the candidate to complete a task or set of tasks in conditions that are as close as possible to those found in work. For example candidates for the **Motor Vehicle Engineering** IVQ may be given a job sheet such as they would receive from an employer, and may be asked to follow the instructions on the job sheet. The assessor then uses the simulation to observe the candidate performing the tasks, and the competence checklist is used to confirm each of the competences as it is demonstrated. The aim of the simulation is to make the task as realistic as possible. If the task is to check a braking system on a car, the using a real car is always better than using a model braking system that has been set up as a teaching aid in a classroom.

Simulated work experience is also a good opportunity for candidates to demonstrate competence in areas where **simulation is appropriate**. For example, competence in performing tasks safely is always a requirement for an IVQ. However some competences – for example, dealing with a fire, or handling dangerous chemicals, need to be demonstrated under carefully controlled conditions to ensure the safety of the candidate. These activities may involve simulation only because of the dangers involved.

In simulated work experience an important consideration is that the candidate is thought of, and assessed, as an 'employee' and not as a student carrying out practical tasks as a 'fun' alternative to classroom learning.

Simulated work experience is useful because it allows you to plan exercises that cover all of the requirements on a particular competence checklist.

Simulated work experience can also be used to meet the requirements of the practical assignments that are found in some IVQs as an alternative to the competence checklist. The advantage of this approach is that precise requirements of the practical assignment are carried out in an environment that is closer to the workplace – and this makes the assignment more realistic as a means of assessing ability to perform tasks in the workplace.

Examples of the types of practical assignments in IVQs that could be included in simulated work experience include, but are not limited to:

002/1 Design instruction and coaching plans and deliver a training session (**Training Skills IVQ**)

036/4 Pattern drawing for sheet metal components (**Mechanical Engineering IVQ**)

17/1 Software development life cycle (**Applied Information Technology IVQ**)

213/2 Design and build a common emitter transistor amplifier (**Electrical and Electronic Engineering IVQ**)

Observation of performance and appraisal of products – using workshop activities, practical assignments and tasks designed by the centre

Advantages	Disadvantages
Can structure assignments to match candidates' development and learning	Low face validity
Can focus on specific skills	Does not give experience of real work
Can be used alongside theory lessons to re-enforce learning and put theory into practice	Difficult to predict candidate performance when faced with real work environment
Candidate can make mistakes in a 'safe' environment	Not suitable for higher level IVQs unless accompanied by work experience
Opportunity to practise skills before work experience	

Comments:

Here the training centre uses the competence checklist to plan a set of activities that will allow the candidate to demonstrate competence in the required practical skills. Often this will involve using equipment in a workshop, for example an electronics, woodwork or computer laboratory. It could involve the salon equipment in the hairdressing department of a college. It may involve working outside – for example using space set aside to construct brick or block walls.

Workshop activities are particularly useful in the early stages of assessing practical skills and can be used in combination with work placement. For example, in the **Construction Industry** IVQ, candidates are asked to demonstrate competence in repairing brickwork. Following good practice, the centre may have arranged for candidates to practise their skills on work placements using real buildings such as public buildings or private houses. To reduce the risk of candidates making mistakes on buildings that have a real value, workshop activities can be used to practise highly technical skills until both the trainer and the candidate are confident that the task can be performed safely and competently on the public building. Workshop practice, combined with work experience, is also useful where there is a high element of risk – car braking systems or where the relationship between customer and customer satisfaction is immediate and critical such as perming hair.

Although it can contribute to the demonstration of practical skills and has its advantages in certain situations, to rely on workshop activities alone for the assessment of practical skills has several disadvantages. It does not give the candidate the opportunity to experience a work environment and therefore it is only possible to **infer** that **if the candidate were in a workplace**, then **probably the candidate would perform the task competently** based on successful performance under observed conditions in the workshop, or while carrying out practical tasks. This approach may be suitable for IVQs at Certificate Level, where the intended outcome is that the candidate can perform a limited range of tasks competently, and under supervision. Used on its own, it is not suitable at Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels for tasks that involve producing products (repaired cars, meals for people, restored decorative finishes) or working with people (teamwork and supervisory skills).

Each of the above methods has its advantages and disadvantages. In summary, assessment of performance in the workplace is always preferable to simulation or to workshop activities. In the higher levels of IVQs, using competence checklists, successful demonstration of competence in the performance of tasks in a work environment can be regarded as essential. For example, candidates for the **Advanced Diploma in Culinary Arts** are preparing for work as chefs, with supervisory skills, and cannot be considered competent in the practical skills if they have not practised these in a busy kitchen of a good quality restaurant or hotel. In other situations, a combination of methods may meet all of our requirements and be cost-effective.

Successful programmes leading to IVQs will always include well planned provision for the assessment of practical skills.

Observation of performance and appraisal of products – using City & Guilds practical assignments

Advantages	Disadvantages
All candidates assessed to same standard using same activities – criteria for success determined by C&G	Without work experience can often only be used to infer readiness for work
Assignments ensure all relevant skills are practised and demonstrated	
Assignments allow candidates to put theory learning into practice	
Opportunity to practice and show transferable skills relevant to work	
Good employer recognition for IVQs using this approach (mainly engineering IVQs)	
Cost effective approach where candidates often progress to higher education	
Flexible – eg can be incorporated into work experience as additional assessment method, can be used as standardised assignment for on the job learning	

Comments:

As noted in Section 2, some IVQs use practical assignments as the way in which we collect evidence of practical competence. Practical assignments designed by us, provide a structured approach to the assessment of practical skills and are cost-effective because you do not need to spend so much time creating conditions in which the assessment of practical skills can take place.

The practical assignments are always structured in the same way:

Preparation notes and instructions for the tutor – including requirements for the assignment
Candidate instructions
Marking scheme
Completion criteria
Any supplementary material needed to complete the assignment.

In most IVQs, for example the **International Assessor Award**, the practical assignments are used to provide opportunities to observe performance and to appraise products. In the **International Assessor Award**, practical assignment 02 requires the candidate to conduct an assessment by observation and perform a variety of tasks. Practical assignment 01 asks the candidate to provide an assessment plan – an example of a product.

Where we use practical assignments in IVQs, it is essential that the candidate successfully completes all the prescribed assignments. Work experience can be used to supplement practical assignments and it can be used as a means of completing them. In the example above, a teacher working full time in a school or college can meet all the requirements for practical assignment 02 whilst carrying out his or her normal work duties. However, the requirements for the assignment must be met in full.

You can find out more about practical assignments in our other publication, the **Guide to Preparing Projects and Portfolios for International Vocational Qualifications**.

How often and when?

Observation can be over time – or it can be as a result of an agreed set of tasks observed on a specific occasion. To explain this it is helpful to look at the particular example in Fig 4

> **Practical competences**
> The candidate must be able to do the following
>
> 1.1   Select and use protective clothing and equipment at all times.   ☐

Fig 4

The chef in a kitchen or car mechanic in a workshop both need to wear particular clothing in order to follow health and safety procedures. They also both use equipment that is there to ensure their safety. The practical competence statement is requiring the candidate to undertake this task or tasks, and is asking the assessor to observe and confirm that the candidate can perform to the standard specified.

In the real work place, the candidate's ability to demonstrate this particular competence can be observed **over time** because the assessor (usually the workplace supervisor) can work alongside the candidate on a day to day basis and knows, from observation, that the candidate always dresses properly and always uses safety equipment correctly.

The advantage of assessing competence **over time** is that, as well as high **face validity**, it also has high **predictive validity**. This means that because the candidate has always been seen to do this task to the correct standard, then it is highly likely that the candidate will continue to do so in the future. The disadvantage of this approach is that, although the assessor may focus on one competence area over time, in reality the candidate has a large number of competences to show, and these must all be observed over time. The assessor must ensure that each competence is given sufficient attention.

If the same competence is observed as part of a **set of agreed tasks on a single occasion**, the assessor is concentrating on specific competences and is highly focused. The advantage of this approach is that the assessor can make a clear decision as to whether a competence has been met or not and record the decision based on immediate evidence. The assessor can also assess a number of competences at the same time – usually as part of a set of tasks that follow in chronological order. It is also possible to give instant feedback to the candidate after the assessment tasks have been completed.

This approach is often used towards the end of a learning programme, and the trainer and candidate prepare for the assessment by confirming what the tasks will be and agreeing what the performance criteria will be. Potential disadvantages of this approach are that it can lead to the assessment being viewed as a formal examination by both the candidate and the assessor, and the situation becomes unrealistic. There is also a risk that both the candidate and the assessor will see the assessment as a 'last chance' to demonstrate competence. Good practice requires that the assessment should take place without undue pressure. This approach can be supported by observation over time, that took place before the assessment activity itself.

In summary, observation of successful competence is always better over time because it combines high **face validity** with good **predictive validity**. This approach also allows gradual completion of a competence checklist and avoids a last minute rush to meet deadlines.

4 Developing assessment skills – preparing assessment plans

If assessment of practical skills in IVQs is to be undertaken successfully using the two tools – competence checklists and practical assignments – then it is essential that all of those involved (teacher, head of department, internal verifier, visiting verifier) are properly trained and qualified.

At the time of writing this guide, we do not require assessors to have a formal qualification in assessment, although we do ask centres to confirm that all staff involved in teaching programmes leading to IVQs are appropriately qualified, as part of the centre approval process. We reserve the right to check this, and we moderate the quality of assessor performance through the visiting verifier.

In addition to this guide, we also provide two other opportunities for assessors to develop their skills:

Assessor training provided by City & Guilds staff, often organised through our branch offices.

The **International Assessor Award**. The syllabus for this IVQ provides a structure of practical competences, underpinning knowledge and practical assignments that can be used as self study. Some centres also offer the **International Assessor Award** as a taught programme and it is possible for you to operate the award within your own centre to qualify your own staff.

In addition to reading this guide, we strongly recommend that you undertake further self study and training. Not only with this increase your own confidence, it will also enhance the confidence of your students, and raise the profile of your centre as a 'centre of excellence'.

In the following sections of this guide, we look at four specific skills you need to develop in all staff who are going to be involved in the assessment of practical skills in IVQs. The information here is based on the content of the four modules in the **International Assessor Award**, so that you can use this guide as background reading for the IVQ.

Preparing assessment plans

Unless assessment is planned it can be disruptive, expensive, time-consuming and still fail to achieve what it sets out to do. At its worst it can be a source of argument and disagreement, resulting in the candidate appealing to higher authority against assessment decisions. In best practice, the assessment process is a natural part of the learning programme, is cost-effective and fair, and is held in respect by all involved.

In IVQs part of the assessment process, as we have already seen, involves the use of written assessments. These are provided by City & Guilds and so there is no need to spend time considering these at this stage. Instead we will focus on planning for the assessment of practical skills.

The first stage in the planning process is to be clear about what it is that has to be assessed. What is the candidate being asked to do, show, know, produce – to what standard and under what conditions?

Often this information will come from an awarding body such as City & Guilds – so in our IVQs you find this information in our syllabus where we state what a candidate must be able to do and what a candidate must know. For practical skills this information is in the form of competence checklists or practical assignment marking schemes. In both of these we state what has to be seen, produced, observed, explained – and under what conditions. This information is always presented in the form of **learning objectives** or **outcomes**. This approach is not limited to IVQs. It is being increasingly used by awarding bodies and other organisations around the world.

This information can also come from lesson plans. A good lesson plan will have objectives – 'what is it that I want the students to be able to know or do as the outcome of this lesson or series of lesson'. If this cannot be identified, then probably the lesson planning needs more attention.

In addition to being able to identify the required outcomes to be assessed, it is also important to make sure that the meaning of the outcome is understood and agreed as part of the planning process – so that everyone is looking for the same thing. Some outcomes, whilst clear, are intentionally written to allow for local interpretation according to particular circumstances. We can use an example from the IVQ in **Hairdressing,** shown in Fig 5.

> **Practical competences**
> The candidate must be able to do the following
>
> 13.8   Deal with requests for appointments promptly and politely.   ☐

Fig 5

Obviously there is no one correct answer to what is meant by 'politely and promptly' although we can all probably agree on some common features – smiling, positive tone of voice, welcoming body posture… However, different countries and companies will have their own definitions of what they consider to be appropriate. This is often what distinguishes one company from another. The teaching programme will provide opportunities to discuss all the possible interpretations and to consider why different companies have different policies and why practices can vary from country to country. It will also focus on what is most appropriate for the particular situation in which the candidates are working.

This discussion is important because it raises candidates' awareness. However, for the assessment of this objective it is important to agree the criteria that will be used so that the candidate understands what is being looked for, and the assessor knows what to look for. This information has to be shared with everyone. So, if there are several groups all working to the same standard, all the assessors and all the students need to have a shared understanding of the required outcomes.

This is an important part of the planning process. When new assessors join the team, they should also share this knowledge.

Having decided what needs to be assessed, the focus of planning should be on the methods to be used. Sections 5 and 6 of this guide, describe the methods that can be used in IVQs to assess practical skills, but to some extent you can decide which methods to use and when.

Assessment of practical skills in your IVQ programme will be **formative** and **summative**. Formative assessment is used during a training programme to assess the progress that a student is making towards final goals. The results are reviewed with the learner and the assessor will discuss with the learner what has been achieved and what still needs to be learned. Summative assessment is used to determine the final level of achievement and to record a statement, score or competence demonstrated, that will not be assessed again during the programme.

You can use a competence checklist for both formative and summative assessment but if you do this part of the planning process involves making the decision to use the competence checklist in this way, knowing when you will have all the summative assessment completed and explaining this to candidates.

The practical assignments in IVQs can also be used for formative and summative assessment but the assignments that have to be completed within a particular timescale, for example, are best used as summative assessments.

Formative and summative assessment are linked to other key factors in planning assessments, particularly cost-effectiveness. You will know that work experience can be used to assess practical skills in IVQs. However, work experience can be time-consuming to arrange and may be limited in availability. It also demands someone's time devoted to assessing outcomes. So work experience is not a cost-effective solution for formative assessment unless you happen to be an employer using an IVQ to train people on-the-job.

In section 3, we suggested that you should use a variety of locations to collect evidence for the assessment of practical skills. The choice of location and method will depend on the skill being assessed, the time available, and the resources required. To explain this, it is best to look at an example of a competence checklist and think about all of the objectives to be assessed? Have a look at the checklist below (Fig 6) which is from the IVQ in **Food and Beverage Service** at **certificate** level and ask yourself how you would plan to assess all the competences on this list for a group of 15 candidates.

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

6.1	Use appropriate methods of taking food orders.	☐
6.2	Use appropriate methods of taking drink orders.	☐
6.3	Take food and drink orders together using the appropriate technique.	☐
6.4	Check and process items to bills accurately.	☐
6.5	Operate a payment point efficiently.	☐
6.6	Handle and record payments accurately.	☐
6.7	Process cash payments accurately.	☐
6.8	Process payments by cheque and credit card appropriately.	☐

Fig 6

Of course, there are several options – and what you actually plan to do will depend on the resources you have, but there are some fairly obvious considerations.

To provide **valid and reliable** assessment of objective 6.3, at least, the choice of assessment method is probably going to be observation of performance. It could also be your approach for the other objectives as well. So you have a wide choice. It could be in work placement in a restaurant – but if you do this, who is going to assess the candidates? Will it be you or will it be the restaurant manager. If it's going to be the restaurant manager, is the manager part of the plan and does the manager understand what City & Guilds (and you) want? Will observation of performance in a restaurant actually give an opportunity for all candidates to demonstrate all the competences to your complete satisfaction? Remember, also, that you have 15 candidates to assess. Are they all going to be assessed on the same day or on fifteen separate days and how many days of work experience is everyone getting anyway? What else do you have to assess? There are 9 sets of competence checklists in this programme at certificate level. Finally, how many work placements are you using? Remember also that this is **certificate** level.

Are there some competences, for example 6.1 and 6.2, that could be assessed under simulated conditions or through assignments because observation of 6.3 in the workplace allows you to infer that 6.1 and 6.2 can also be demonstrated.

How will you deal with cheques and credit cards – objective 6.8 if cheques are not normally used to pay for food and drink. Is this a case for asking questions about underpinning knowledge to make sure a candidate understands how to deal with cheques – explain politely that they are not accepted – rather than observe performance?

By now you may have decided that what is realistic in terms of time and resources required and cost effective for this assessment at this level is a combination of simulated work experience using resources in your own training centre and set assignments during the teaching programme.

There is not a right or wrong answer here. Your assessment plan must involve the selection of assessment methods that are valid and reliable, cost-effective, achievable in terms of time and resources and which cover what you want to assess.

What happens if you decide to stay with the work experience option because it meets all of the above criteria, can be used to cover all the outcomes of the competence checklist for the certificate level, and that you only need to use one restaurant? Rest easy? Well no, there are other considerations that you need to include in your assessment plan.

Do you plan to assess the candidates or will one of the restaurant staff do the assessment, or will you do the assessment together? Let's look at the last example. First of all, it isn't very cost-effective because two people are doing a job that probably one person could do, provided the proper planning and training has taken place. Also it is disruptive – at least one person could be getting on with normal work activities instead of being involved in assessing candidates. If the whole exercise is going to take three weeks – then the disruption is magnified.

What will be the effect on customers and other staff in the restaurant if there is an exercise taking place where one candidate is being observed by two assessors, serving food to a customer. Not only is this disruptive, it is also **intrusive**. The customer is made to feel unhappy surrounded by so many people, and the candidate feels pressurised by a situation where he or she is surrounded by assessors and the whole situation is hardly representative of a **naturally occurring work activity**. So what can you do to plan an assessment that is non-disruptive and more natural? You can agree that the assessment activity can take place in a corner of the restaurant so that it minimises disruption to others; you can agree that real customers will not be used, or that customers will have the situation explained to them. You can agree that the candidate can have a 'trainee' badge. This often encourages customer support. You can plan for the assessor to discretely follow and observe the candidate rather than stand over the candidate with a clipboard and checklist.

Possible the example chosen was an extreme one, but it shows the importance of planning assessments that are cost-effective, minimise disruption and that are part of naturally occurring work activities.

City & Guilds has a policy that all of its assessments including those that assess practical skills should be fair and accessible. This is part of our 'equal opportunities' policy.

There are a number of **special factors** to be taken into account when planning assessment of practical skills for IVQs.

First of all, there are factors to do with language. Here, it will be helpful to briefly explain our policy on language in IVQs. Our policy is to use plain, clear English at all times. Some of our IVQ syllabuses have the Plain English Campaign 'Crystal Mark' for the regulations. This is an external quality measure. All of our IVQ syllabuses and regulations follow this model. The exception to this is technical terms that are part of the day to day language of a particular occupation – and this includes the **French** terms that we use in the **Food Preparation and Culinary Arts** and **Food and Beverage Service** IVQs – all of which candidates need to know in order to be competent.

Written assessments for IVQs are in English. Here our policy is not to use language in the questions that is a test of the candidate's ability to use English. So, in multiple choice tests, we review each question to make sure there are no unnecessary language barriers that might make the question paper a test of English rather than a test of subject knowledge. When marking written papers, for IVQs, our examiners are instructed to give marks for correct facts and responses based on the marking scheme, and not for use of English.

For the assessment of practical skills we provide competence checklists and practical assignments. These are provided for the teacher and for the candidate. They are not a test of English. Each practical assignment in our IVQs includes the instruction to 'make sure that the candidate understands the tasks', and in our guidance on using competence checklists we tell you to make sure the candidate understands what is expected. You are expected to explain any instructions or performance objectives that a candidate does not understand before the assessment takes place.

One exception to all of the above, are the IVQs that we now offer in mainland China, where all of the assessment takes place in Chinese. We may also offer IVQs in other languages in the future.

So, what are the considerations to do with language when planning for assessment of practical skills in IVQs? First of all, you need to look at the group you are assessing and find out whether or not there are any candidates for whom English is not their first language, and then decide whether or not their level of English language is sufficient to cope with the practical assessments without special consideration or not.

Let's go back to the model we used before and look at the competence checklist on page 25 for the IVQ in **Food and Beverage Service** (Fig 6). In this model, objectives 6.1 to 6.8 do not require use of English at all. Therefore it would actually be unfair and irrelevant to ask any candidate to show competence in English in order to meet these objectives.

Objective 6.8 can be met by asking the candidate to answer questions. A broader range of circumstances relevant to objectives 6.1 to 6.7 can also be covered by asking candidates about other ways of doing things. In your assessment plan you need to think about what kind of language you need to use for any candidate for whom English is not the first language. Remember you are checking for knowledge about the subject and not for ability to use English competently.

You may plan to use **supplementary questions** to check that candidates understand why they are performing tasks in a particular way. Again, you need plan for any candidate for whom English is not the first language.

A different situation arises when a candidate has a different need for support. A candidate may have severe reading difficulties but actually be very competent in the tasks being assessed. It would be unfair to penalise this candidate by expecting the candidate to read the performance objectives in order to understand them – so what alternatives do you plan to use?

Finally, on the subject of language, there are circumstances where centres have successfully used IVQ syllabuses as the basis of a training programme for candidates who do not speak English at all. The syllabus has been translated into another language and the teaching has all been in that language – for example, Spanish or Cantonese. These centres have then assessed candidates using the competence checklist or practical assignments and then submitted the results to City & Guilds for certification of the practical competences only. Successful candidates receive a certificate of unit credit. This approach is acceptable to us provided there are no performance objectives or outcomes in which the use of English is required or implicit. If you plan to use this approach remember that the candidates will receive a certificate of unit credit but they will not receive the full IVQ award until they successfully complete the written test which will be in English. (Our current policy for IVQs is to consider situations in which testing in languages other than English may be introduced).

If you work in a language other than English, then your assessment plan must include arrangements for how you will work with the visiting verifier to confirm that your assessments are reliable. Ideally your visiting verifier will need to be competent in both languages. If this is not possible you will need an interpreter to cross check evidence with the visiting verifier, at least for the first few visits, until the visiting verifier is satisfied that your practical assessment results are valid and reliable.

Other special factors to take into consideration include the candidates related abilities and aptitudes. Most of us show some nerves when placed in a situation where we are being assessed. This may be a good thing because it improves our performance, but some people can find process overwhelming, or simply lack the confidence to present themselves for assessment at all. Your task in planning the time and type of assessment is to make candidates feel at ease, so that the assessment process is as natural as possible, and not a test of nerves.

Our IVQs are all designed to be used in any country or culture. In some countries the way people behave, and what is expected of them, will be a natural part of their upbringing and culture. When you plan your assessment of practical skills, make sure that you take into account any special cultural considerations.

Finally, remember that some candidates will have more previous experience than others, and that your assessment plan should recognise previous learning and achievement.

Let's go back to our competence checklist (Fig 6 on page 25) for a final review. Let us assume that your candidate group is not a group of school leavers, but that you are offering your training programme to a group of 15 people some of whom already have experience of working in a restaurant. How will you modify your assessment plan to allow for these people? Will you insist that everyone does the same thing at the same time and in the same way? This may be cost-effective and efficient, but in the process you may lose the interest of people who already have certain skills and knowledge, and who could be encouraged to develop skills in other areas. At the same time, the candidates who already have experience of performing the tasks listed on the checklist may assure you that they can do all this, but how do you know this is true? Your task is to provide acceptable evidence of their competence, so will you just take their word for it, will you discuss the competence checklist and its purpose and then use it as both a formative and summative assessment quite early on in your teaching programme? How will you, or the assessor behave when using the checklist? How will you deal with success and failure?

Again there is no single correct approach. What you are asked to do when planning assessment of practical skills for IVQs is to include consideration candidates' previous learning and experience and use this to decide the best approaches.

We strongly recommend that you use the **International Assessor Award** IVQ syllabus as a self study resource, either for individual study, or preferably for group discussion with your IVQ team in one of your planning meetings. In which case, you can now look at objectives 1.1 to 1.6. You should think of, and discuss, other examples that can be used to illustrate your knowledge of these principles. The best way to do this is to take your own IVQ programme and your own group of students and explain each of the principles in terms of your own situation.

When you have done this, you should be ready to complete an assessment plan. You should use assignment 01 on page 31 of the **International Assessor Award** syllabus and use the checklist on page 33 to check that your assignment is complete. If you are following the **International Assessor Award** IVQ as part of a taught programme because you want the qualification, your assessor will use the checklist on page 34 to check your assignment. You are asked to complete two plans for two different candidates. This is an opportunity to show the special considerations that you would make for a candidate with special learning needs, or with previous experience. At least one plan should include observation of performance.

It may be tempting to skip this stage, but if you do produce a plan it can be a plan that you will use in your own IVQ programme. This will save you time later on because unplanned assessment of practical skills is ineffective and wastes time. Your visiting verifier will also want to know what plan you used to arrive at the practical assessment results you are asking to be verified and counter-signed.

[This page is intentionally blank]

5 Developing assessment skills – conducting an assessment by observation

As a reminder, the following IVQs use a competence checklist to assess practical skills:

Accommodation Operations and Services
Beauty Therapy
Construction Industry
Engineering Skills
Food and Beverage Service
Food Preparation and Culinary Arts
Hairdressing
International Tourism
Motor Vehicle Engineering
Reception Operations and Services
Retailing
Telecommunication Systems

The performance outcomes in the competence checklist are often stated as activities performed to a particular standard, that can be observed by the assessor, as in the example (Fig 7) below:

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

32.67 Set and operate a hand fed circular ripsaw for cutting timber. ☐

32.68 Use jigs, bed pieces, saddles and templates to aid the cutting of components. ☐

Fig 7

In this example it is expected that the candidate will be observed by the assessor, performing the task to the stated standard. Where this might take place and how often was considered in Section 3 of this guide.

In other IVQs

Applied Information Technology
Engineering Skills
International Assessor Award
Mechanical, Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Teaching and Training
Telecommunication Systems

practical assignments are used that may include the need or opportunity to observe performance. A specific example is practical assignment 02 in the **International Assessor Award** IVQ, that requires observation of performance of people who themselves are observing performance!

Within IVQs the person who will normally use the competence checklist or City & Guilds prescribed practical assignment to observe performance is the person responsible for training the candidate – the teacher or instructor. This is the person who has the most contact with the candidate and who is best placed to make a judgement about whether the candidate can or cannot perform the task to the standard required, not just at the time of observation, but on a regular basis. This means that before the competence checklist is used, the assessor will probably have observed the candidate's performance in practical tasks and be already reasonably confident that the candidate can complete the task to the required standard.

In some situations, candidates go on work placement to gain experience in carrying out the practical tasks, and the work placement supervisor acts as the assessor by observing performance. In this case it is the work placement supervisor who will be carrying out the observation using the methods described in this section. When planning work placements and planning assessment it is important to agree with the work placement supervisor whether or not he/she will be involved in observation of candidate performance for assessment, and to give the necessary training and support.

In the planning process you will have seen that it is possible to use the competence checklist as the part of an assessment plan that is going to involve observing the candidate performing particular tasks. The competence checklist serves the purpose of an **observation checklist** that we have prepared for you. It ensures that everyone involved in observation of performance in IVQs is working to the same checklist and standards.

Before the assessment takes place, it is essential that you **brief the candidates**. You can do this as a group, or you can brief candidates individually. If a candidate has a special need, for example, because of a disability it is recommended that the briefing is on an individual basis, and that it takes place before any group briefing. In this way you can prevent the candidate from feeling any unnecessary anxiety.

Observing a candidate's performance is not intended to be an examination, or one that causes candidates undue stress because of nerves and it should never be a surprise, unannounced activity. You will already have planned for the observation of performance to take place in a situation that is as natural as possible. The purpose of briefing the candidate is to share the planning with the candidate and to reduce anxiety and concern.

Your explanation should begin with a description of what you plan to do. The candidate also needs to know whether the assessment is formative or summative – although you probably will not use these terms. The candidate naturally wants to know whether your assessment of the outcomes is going to be part of the learning process (formative) or whether your assessment is going to be part of the final record that you will put forward as the evidence for successful completion of the required practical tasks (summative).

Whether the assessment of practical skill is to be formative or summative, you should show the candidate the performance outcomes you are going to assess by observation – these are usually on the competence checklist, although for formative assessment you may have developed your own. You should explain what it is you are going to ask the candidate to do in order to be given the opportunity to demonstrate the skills, and you should make sure that the candidate understands what it is that you will be looking for. Do not rely on explanation alone, some candidates, if asked 'Do you understand?' will say 'Yes', to avoid embarrassment or to hide the fact that actually they don't understand. When you explain your plan, give each candidate plenty of opportunities to ask questions, and encourage candidates to tell you about anything they do not understand.

In the briefing candidates also need to know when and where the assessment will take place, and how long it will last. Although this seems obvious, the time you spend planning for and setting up activities that will allow you to observe performance will be considerable. All that time will be wasted if a candidate misses the assessment because information about when and where was not available. Don't rely on memory alone – put a list of times and places where it can be easily seen by all candidates.

Each candidate needs to know what you will do with the information that you collect by observation. In IVQs, if you are using the competence checklist to observe performance, you will be looking at the performance outcomes to see which statements can be ticked (). The competence checklist, when completed, will be what you submit to the visiting verifier as your evidence for stating that the candidate has met the requirements for the practical part of the IVQ qualification.

The candidate also needs to know what will happen if you do not tick the box. This means that the candidate **has not yet achieved the standard required**. In most cases, there should be an opportunity for the candidate to attempt the activity again, after you have explained what evidence you are still looking for. (See the section on Giving Feedback).

At the end of the briefing, you should again check that candidates understand what will happen, and that they do not have any concerns. If you do this, you are **gaining their agreement** to your plan and the assessment process. If candidates agree to what you propose, they are more likely to demonstrate their skills with confidence and performance to the best of their ability, which is the object of the exercise.

At this stage it is relevant to introduce another example from an IVQ, this time the Construction Industry IVQ at certificate level, where the teacher or trainer is asked to assess competence in activities related to bricklaying (Fig 8)

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

3.1   Batch and mix mortar and concrete by hand and small rotary mixer. ☐

3.2   Clean and store a small rotary mixer. ☐

3.3   Select, use, clean and store a bricklaying trowel or mason's trowel to build a straight length of single skin wall. ☐

3.4   Select, use, clean and store tools to pick up mortar and render prepared vertical surface in two coats. ☐

Fig 8

In the assessment planning stage, if you are using this particular checklist, you may have already decided that you will assess outcomes 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 by observing performance.

To observe performance successfully you need two types of skill – personal skills, and judgement skills to make assessment decisions based on the evidence and criteria available to you.

Personal skills are related to how you will act as an assessor and how you will **encourage the candidate** during the observation. Although you need to be objective in your assessment, you also need to be supportive. This is best illustrated by watching examples, for example on video, of supportive and unsupportive behaviour.

Assessors with good personal skills will observe performance by:

✓ Planning a realistic environment for the observation – normal workplace, normal workshop activity

✓ Being friendly towards the candidate, and using first name

✓ Checking that the candidate understands everything and is not nervous

✓ Being attentive

✓ Not standing so close to the candidate so that the candidate is distracted or made to feel nervous

✓ Offering words of encouragement – 'that's good', 'well done', provided these do not distract

✓ Asking questions that offer encouragement, 'I was pleased with the way you tidied up after the job was finished, John. Can you tell me why you cleaned the trowel?'

✓ End the observation with a final word of encouragement.

Assessors with poor personal skills will observe performance by

✗ Dressing inappropriately (for example by wearing formal clothes that are never normally worn) to give the observation the feel of a 'special occasion'

✗ Using threatening expressions, eg 'I hope you understand this, because it's too late if you don't!'

✗ Being inattentive, not watching, talking to people not involved in the assessment

✗ Standing very close to the candidate so that candidate feels nervous

✗ Showing disapproval, eg by shaking the head

✗ Ending the assessment with an expression of disapproval, eg 'well that was a waste of time, wasn't it!'

In addition to good personal skills, successful assessment by observation requires good judgement skills. The performance outcomes you will be looking for can be explained in terms of 'Yes, the candidate did this', or 'No, the candidate did not do this'. To make these judgements, you have to have the criteria in front of you, and in your planning you must have decided what it is you are looking for. Some performance outcomes allow a degree of local interpretation for example (Fig 9):

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

37.100 Record test results for a single phase domestic installation in accordance with national/local standards. ☐

Fig 9

In this objective, you are wanting to observe the candidate completing a document – probably in writing, although the objective does not exclude the use of a computer. (Remember your special needs candidates, too). You have to be clear about what standards are relevant – national or local? If there are no standards in your country, what is an acceptable way of recording test results? (Presumably you have taught this in your programme). You also have to decide what is a proper record. Does it include details like name, date, client's name, items checked? Does record mean finish? In other words, should there be no parts of the record that are left incomplete?

Good judgement skills, therefore, depend on planning what you are looking for, and then keeping to your plan when you carry out the assessment. Don't look for other things that are not on your list. Keep to the plan.

Be clear about what you are looking for and focus on one activity at a time. In the example we have given, it is likely that the candidate will perform the tasks in a sequential order. You need to watch for each activity as it happens, in sequence, and make your judgement quickly and decisively, so that you can be prepared to move to the next observable activity. If you are assessing one candidate at a time, you can follow the activities in a sequence. However, you may find that this is not cost effective. An alternative plan would be to assess a group of candidates, we suggest not more that 10 -15. In this case, you will need to move from candidate to candidate to collect evidence for all the outcomes you are observing. Remember that if you do this, some of the procedures will naturally take place at the beginning of an activity. **You will need to plan** your observations accordingly, or involve more than one assessor.

You may still feel cautious about recording successful achievement, even though you have observed what you think was a demonstration of successful performance. A useful tip is to ask yourself whether the candidate has normally performed this task successfully up to the time of the assessment and whether, based on previous observation and the assessment you are now making, you think it likely that the candidate will continue to perform this task to the standard required in the future? If the answer to all these questions is 'yes', then you should be confident about recording successful achievement.

An additional technique for ensuring that your assessment by observation is as accurate and as fair as possible is to use **supplementary questions**. Here, we should distinguish between supplementary questions that are used to support observation, and those that are used to confirm evidence of knowledge because the statement of facts is a required performance outcome. It is the first use of supplementary questions that we will concentrate on in this section.

In the example checklist shown as Fig 8, objective 3.3 asks the candidate to use, clean and store a trowel correctly.

In your observation you watch the candidate clean a trowel using water to remove cement and sand, and then dry the handle and blade, to prevent damage to the handle and rust on the blade. The candidate then hangs the trowel on its designated hook on the board of tools. You decide that you have observed correct performance, but want to know whether the candidate did this because he is just copying what you do without knowing why, or whether the candidate is likely to always do this because he knows why he is doing it. A suitable supplementary question could be:

'John – can you tell me why you cleaned the trowel in water and then dried it, before hanging it up?'

What you are looking for is a statement about cleaning materials that will otherwise dry on the trowel, making it unsuitable for further use. You also want a statement about maintaining the trowel in good condition (rust free) to prolong its life (and save costs). Finally you want the candidate to explain that it has been put in its proper place of storage so that it is not damaged in storage and can be easily found for the next job, saving time and money.

A candidate who offers all these reasons can be confidently assessed not only to have correctly performed the tasks, but also to know why. This is a good measure of likely future performance. Remember that what you ask for must be relevant to the task, and must have been covered in the teaching programme. It is unfair to ask about things you have not taught. You can use a variety of supplementary questions and you can use different questions with different candidates, because you may want to explore different knowledge with different candidates. If you use different questions, with different candidates, you must make sure that your questions are similar in construction and degree of difficulty. You should plan supplementary questions before conducting assessment by observation to ensure they are relevant and fair.

Finally, the question given as an example is what is known as an open question. Open questions often begin with when, why, how… and do not include the answer in the question.

Why did you add water?

When do you check that the bricks are level?

Open questions mean that the candidate has to supply the answer. You should always use open questions.

The opposite of an open question is a **closed question**. For example:

Did you dry the trowel blade to prevent rust?

The candidate only needs to say 'Yes' or 'No' and already has a 50% chance of being correct, but most candidates will guess that the answer you are looking for is 'Yes', even if they don't know about the possibility of rust damage.

No matter how well planned, assessment by observation – like any activity – can be disrupted. You should have planned for this but you also need to be able to deal with distractions as they happen during the observation.

There are two types of distraction to consider – **internal** and **external**. Internal distractions are distractions that come from the candidate. The most likely candidate distractions are sudden loss of confidence, either immediately before or during the observation and resistance to assessment – where the candidate argues against or actually refuses to carry out the task.

As the assessor observing performance you must be alert to the signals that a candidate is giving to you. Candidates may say 'I'm nervous'. Take this statement seriously and respond to it appropriately. A candidate who says 'I'm nervous' with a smile probably has enough 'stage fright' to perform well, and may only need words of encouragement before and during the assessment. Observe performance carefully – some tasks need a steady hand and nervous candidates may have difficulty keeping a steady hand. If the task can be completed, then encourage the candidate to complete, but if the shaking hand is causing the candidate distress, then invite the candidate to take a break and re-start the observation after you have offered encouragement. Be sure to explain that the reason for the break is to allow the candidate to demonstrate best performance, and that it is not a signal of failure.

Resistance to assessment by observation is more serious. The candidate may resist assessment for a number of reasons ranging from nerves (offer encouragement), to not understanding what is required or not being able to perform the tasks (explain again, and review the teaching and learning programme to identify gaps in learning).

A candidate may also resist assessment by observation because the candidate does not have confidence in the assessor's ability to make a fair judgement, or for cultural reasons. The likelihood of this happening may emerge during the candidate briefing. If it does, you must resolve it before attempting the assessment.

If the candidate does not have confidence in the assessor's ability this may be because

the assessor has not briefed the candidate properly,

the assessor is untrained and/or does not demonstrate an understanding of the process

the assessor has consistently criticised the candidate's performance and has not tried to offer constructive teaching and support.

Some of these problems can only be resolved by assessor training and developing candidate/teacher relationships. They are best avoided by proper training and planning.

In the extreme circumstance that a candidate refuses to be assessed at the time of the observation, you have to postpone the assessment and go back to the planning and briefing stages.

Fortunately these situations are few and far between, provided good planning and training are provided.

External distractions during an observation of performance should have been minimised during the planning process. For example, did you tell the college principal not to bring the visitors to the construction area between 2pm and 4pm because you are conducting formative assessments? Have you put notices up for other students, asking them to keep quiet because an assessment is taking place? Did you ask the fire officer to postpone the fire practice until 4.30pm?

You cannot predict a fire alarm signalling a real emergency, or a power cut, or interruptions caused by people who were not advised, or did not take note of your advice. Your role in these situations is to minimise disturbance to the candidate where the distraction is caused by people. Reassure the candidate first, stop the assessment, explain to the candidate what you are doing, then deal with the distraction. Then return to the observation and reassure the candidate once more.

In the case of a power cut or fire alarm, you will need to stop the assessment and, after the distraction is over, explain to the candidate your arrangements for repeating or resuming the assessment.

If you are using the **International Assessor Award** IVQ syllabus as a self study resource, either for individual study or, preferably, for group discussion with your IVQ team about assessing practical skills by observation of performance, you can now look at objectives 2.1 to 2.6 in the 'knowledge requirements' section of module two of this syllabus. You should think of, and discuss, other examples that can be used to illustrate your knowledge of these principles. The best way to do this is to take your own IVQ programme and your own group of students and discuss how you will apply each of the principles in terms of your own situation.

When you have done this, you should be ready to make an assessment decision – objective 2.6 in the 'practical competences' section of module two of the **International Assessor Award** syllabus. You should use assignment 02 on page 35 and use the checklist on page 37 to check that your assignment is complete. You will only be able to complete this assignment as a group exercise with a minimum of three people although you can simulate the tasks and the environment. Working as a group of three, one person performs the task, one person conducts the assessment by observation, and the third person observes the assessor, using the checklist on page 38.

If you are following the **International Assessor Award** IVQ as part of a taught programme because you want the qualification, your assessor will use the checklist on page 38 to check your assignment. You will need carry out observations using candidates carrying out real tasks – and not simulation, but you can undertake this activity as part of on-the-job training by asking your trainer (eg supervisor or head of department) to observe your assessment. In this exercise, where you are the one being assessed, you should only attempt to carry out a formal formative or summative assessment of the candidate, if you have fully explained the situation to the candidate and if your own assessor is prepared to act not only as your assessor but as a verifier of the candidate's performance. It sounds complicated and it is, although it can be very cost-effective if properly planned.

As with planning, it may be tempting to skip this stage, but if you do practise assessment by observation of performance before you are required to do it as a formal part of the IVQ programme, you will have increased confidence and your candidates will have confidence in you.

[This page is intentionally blank]

6 Developing assessment skills – conducting assessments: spoken, written and practical

To ensure consistency, when we ask you to assess practical skills in IVQs we have selected the assessment tools for you – either a competence checklist, or a series of practical assignments.

In the previous section we noted that although observation of performance is a very good way of collecting evidence of practical skills, it may need to be supplemented by other methods. In particular we considered asking supplementary questions. This section of the guide looks at other methods of assessment, and considers how they can be used to assess practical skills in IVQs.

There is a very wide variety of methods that can be used to provide **sources of evidence** for a candidate's ability to do something other than observation of performance. These can be grouped into spoken, written and practical assessments.

As with observation or performance, the **purpose** of these assessments may be formative or summative (see section 4). The assessment may be of outcomes or objectives that are prescribed in a syllabus – as is the case with IVQs. However, the assessment may also be of outcomes or objectives that you have developed – your lesson plan, or a series of lectures. Assessment of practical skills in IVQs always involves using our syllabus to identify the objectives or outcomes to be assessed. As an option you may also assess the outcomes of individual parts of your training programme leading towards an IVQ.

These assessments may be **externally set**. Externally set means that they are being used because an external organisation, (eg, an awarding body like City & Guilds, or a professional association such as the American Welding Society), is using them and is deciding what will be in them. Externally set assessments may be marked by the organisation that set them, or you may mark them yourself.

Assessments may also be **internally set**. Your own organisation may require a particular assessment method to be used. For example, if you work in a college and your college awards its own qualification at the end of a course, it may be a requirement that all candidates take and pass a written examination that you or the department in which you work have set, before candidates can receive the qualification.

Assessments can be a combination of the two. For example, you may set a spoken or written test of knowledge but you have to have the approval of an external organisation (usually an awarding body or professional association) for the content of your test. Similarly you may be given a test to administer but it is your responsibility to mark it, using the marking scheme given to you by the test provider.

Spoken assessments

Spoken assessments take a variety of forms ranging from informal to formal. In the last section we noted that it is often useful to ask **supplementary questions** when observing performance. The purpose of the questions is to test whether or not the candidate has the relevant underpinning knowledge that relates to carrying out a practical task. To return to our example from the last section, when we watch a candidate clean a trowel after use, we may guess or **infer** that the candidate knows why the trowel is being cleaned. But it is only a reasonable judgement based on what we see. The judgement is more reasonable if we have always seen the same candidate always clean the trowel. However, to be absolutely sure that the candidate understands the task of cleaning the trowel, we can ask the supplementary question – can you tell me why you cleaned the trowel in water and then dried it, before hanging it up?'

Supplementary questions are useful because they can be used to probe specific areas of a candidate's knowledge, about which there may be some doubt, or where the possession of knowledge is critical. They are also useful because they are asked as a natural part of an activity – observing performance and asking about what you see – so they are less likely to intimidate the candidate. Finally, they are useful because they provide you with additional evidence before you confirm that a candidate has or has not performed a task to the required standard. Supplementary questions alone, however, are not sufficient evidence for confirming that a candidate has the practical skills to carry out tasks to the standard required.

A more formal approach to spoken assessments is to develop a set of questions that you are going to ask every candidate to answer, or to include in your activity tasks that require a spoken response from every candidate.

For example, here (Fig 10) is the same set of practical competences from the **Construction Industry** IVQ that we looked at earlier:

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

3.1	Batch and mix mortar and concrete by hand and small rotary mixer.	☐
3.2	Clean and store a small rotary mixer.	☐
3.3	Select, use, clean and store a bricklaying trowel or mason's trowel to build a straight length of single skin wall.	☐
3.4	Select, use, clean and store tools to pick up mortar and render prepared vertical surface in two coats.	☐

Fig 10

This checklist suggests that you should be using observation of performance as your main assessment method. However, it is possible to design a set of questions to ask every candidate that will help you to find out more about each candidate's knowledge to support your assessment. You can ask questions about the different kinds of mixes to be used for mortar and concrete, when to mix by hand and when to use a rotary mixer, what is the

method for cleaning a rotary mixer, when you would build a single skin wall etc. Avoid closed questions such as 'Is three parts of sand to one part of cement the correct mixture for mortar for laying bricks?' The candidate can guess 'yes' or 'no' and have a 50% chance of being correct.

By asking every candidate the same set of questions, requiring a spoken response, you are using spoken assessment to ensure that you have evidence of underpinning knowledge to support your assessment of each candidate's practical skills. By using the same set of questions for each candidate you have ensured that you have made the same demand of each candidate. This is especially useful if more than one person is involved in the teaching and assessment of candidates.

Designing a set of questions that require a spoken response is not an externally set requirement for the assessment of practical skills in an IVQ – in other words we do not say that you must use this method. You may find it helpful.

✓ If you do take this approach, the set of questions you ask every candidate will be useful evidence to give to your visiting verifier to support your completed competence checklists. If appropriate, the visiting verifier can use the same questions to randomly check your candidates' knowledge.

Spoken assessment is used in a more formal way in some IVQs, where appropriate. This is especially true where the ability to state something is appropriate evidence of competence, as in the example that follows (Fig 11):

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

1.1   State the name and location of people responsible for health and safety in the workplace
        Workplace: the location in which the candidate is being assessed, and which is a place of work

1.2   State the names and location of documents that refer to health and safety in the workplace.

Fig 11

In this particular example the assessment is concerned with a person's competence to work safely. Although competence in this area is very much to do with the way a person behaves and uses equipment, there is also a body of essential knowledge that everyone should have. If we are going to say that someone has the practical skills necessary to work safely in a workplace, it would be unrealistic to expect them to walk to, and point out, the person responsible for health and safety. However, it is realistic to expect people to be able to give the name of a person responsible for health and safety, and where that person can be found. It is appropriate, therefore to use spoken assessment to test for this knowledge. In this case the assessment has a high degree of **face validity** because

it is a realistic model of what a person would be expected to do in the workplace, although not as part of his or her day to day tasks.

In this instance the spoken assessment is externally set because it is taken from a competence checklist designed by City & Guilds. Within IVQs, there are many examples of competence checklists and practical assignments in which a candidate is asked to state something. Although a written answer may be acceptable (for example, from candidates with particular speaking difficulties), the intended method of assessment is spoken.

It is important not to confuse spoken assessment that requires candidates to give answers to specific questions, from observation of performance that involves speaking. For example, from the **Hairdressing** IVQ, (Fig 12):

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

2.9   Deal with requests for appointments in a
        polite manner.   ☐

Fig 12

In this example (Fig 12), you are asked to observe the candidate's ability to perform the task of talking to customers in an appropriate way in an activity that routinely involves speaking.

Finally, spoken assessments may take the form of a prepared talk. This is similar to a written essay in terms of what it sets out to achieve, but the method of delivery is spoken. This method of spoken assessment is often used in language examinations where candidates are asked to prepare and give a talk (often about a particular subject) in order to provide evidence of their ability to speak the language.

A prepared talk could be a good way of using spoken assessment to provide evidence for the practical skills in an IVQ. For example (Fig 13):

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

7.1.   Prepare a report on a local tourism destination identifying the elements that make up a tourism destination, the reasons behind the development of tourism, the organisations who influence the tourism development, the impacts of tourism, the image requirements of the destination, the stages in planning and development, the reasons why there is a need to continue to develop, the sources of funding available for development.

7.2   Prepare a report analysing the marketing of the local tourism destination.

Fig 13

This example is taken from the diploma level of the **International Tourism** IVQ, and **appraisal of products** is being used. In this case the products are two reports.

Spoken assessment, in the form of a prepared talk can be used to determine whether or not the candidate has produced the required product.

In objective 7.1 the tourism destination has not been defined, other than to say it is local. You need to decide on the definition of local (within the country, within the district, within the town or village) and make sure that candidates know the definition. The actual content of the report is defined. Therefore, to demonstrate the required practical skill which is the ability to find, analyse and describe a local tourism destination within defined criteria, the candidate needs to give a talk that covers each of the areas within objective 7.1

The talk can be illustrated by slides (for example Powerpoint slides) or diagrams, or the candidate may hand out sheets of paper.

Your task as assessor, using spoken assessment to measure this competence is to design a checklist (or marking scheme) so that you can **listen** for and record each example of where the criterion has been met. You will need to decide a few things before the assessment is carried out. (See the section on planning). For example, the objective states that the candidate must give **reasons** behind the development of the destination. Are you looking for a minimum of one reason or two reasons or how many? Are the reasons financial or social? What you are listening for will depend on your teaching programme and the local tourism destination. Similarly, you need to decide what you are listening for as a response to the requirement to give 'sources of funding'. This question implies some form of external funding – local tourism association, or local government but a correct statement may also be that there is no external source of funding. Provided you plan your assessment and share your plan with your candidates, you can use spoken assessment as a means of collecting evidence for competence in objectives 7.1 and 7.2 in the example.

If you use spoken assessment in this way, remember that what you are looking for in these objectives is the ability of the person to give the required knowledge, using speech. You are never assessing the ability to speak well (clearly, varied pitch and pace, well constructed sentences). If candidates struggle to speak well, you should consider an alternative, more appropriate assessment method.

It is unlikely that your visiting verifier will be present at the talk – in any case this might cause candidates to be more nervous than necessary.

✓ You should keep the visual aids used by candidates as supplementary evidence to support your judgement that the candidate is competent in the area you have assessed.

Written assessments

Written assessments may take the form of examinations, tests, essays and reports. They may include the requirement for some form of visual aid such as diagrams and plans.

Written examinations may use multiple choice questions, short structured questions (where a candidate is asked to write brief responses to a number of questions) or essay type questions (where a candidate has the option to write a more open response). Written examinations may be set by an awarding body or examination board, or they may be set by the teaching institution. Sometimes they are set by the teaching institution but **approved** by the awarding body or examination board. Where they are used by awarding bodies or examination boards, written examinations are always carefully constructed and monitored at every stage to ensure that they are fit for purpose. There is much research into how written examination should be prepared and used and this research is used by awarding bodies and examination boards.

If you are in a position of needing to develop a written examination, then you should follow the procedures used by these organisations. However, to assess practical skills in IVQs it is **not recommended** that you use a written examination. We set a written examination to test the knowledge that candidates need to have. By setting a written examination yourself, you are repeating what we do and probably not giving enough attention to the observation of performance or appraisal of products that is best achieved using other methods. Examinations are also intentionally formal – and are usually conducted under strictly controlled conditions. Again, it is not appropriate to sit candidates in an examination room, under 'examination conditions' to assess their practical skills for an IVQ.

Written tests (less formal than an examination, and often used in **formative** assessment) use the same types of question. Written tests are useful because they can be used with a large number of candidates at the same time, to test the same knowledge, and they provide some feedback to the teacher and to the candidate about the level of knowledge.

Written tests could be used in the assessment of practical skills in IVQs if you want to test underpinning knowledge. The approach is the same as that used for the development of standardised sets of questions that you are going to ask candidates during a spoken assessment. Written tests of underpinning knowledge have two major advantages over spoken assessments – they are efficient and they are more reliable (candidates do not have the opportunity to tell each other what the questions are before they are asked). For qualifications that recognise people's ability to perform particular tasks to particular standards, such as IVQs, written tests are not **authentic**. They are not a realistic representation of what a person will be asked to do in the workplace, therefore **we do not recommend written tests** as a method for assessing practical skills in IVQs.

Unlike written examinations and written tests, written evidence of knowledge in the form of reports is often used within IVQs to assess practical skills. This is often the case where it is a routine requirement for a person to be able to collect and use knowledge in order to develop a product. We have already looked at one example from the **International Tourism** IVQ, where the requirement is to produce a report. In this case, it is a realistic expectation that a person developing a tourist attraction as part of his or her job will need the ability to collect information and present it in the form of a report.

We can look at two other examples to illustrate this point – the first from the advanced diploma level of the **Retailing** IVQ (Fig 14), the second from **Motor Vehicle Engineering.** (Fig 15)

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

21.8   Assess the effectiveness of two different sales displays using assessment criteria and methods that are valid, fair and meet the needs of the company. ☐

Fig 14

In this example, written assessment in the form of a report is appropriate because it is realistic (authentic) to expect a supervisor to be able to produce a written report of this kind in order to effectively carry out his or her job. Note that the report can be hand written or produced using a computer software package, although in some instances we require the use of a computer software package where we are seeking evidence of information and communications technology (ICT) skills.

The second example (Fig 15) is also from the advanced diploma level.

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following

65.7   Research information on quality standards and prepare a report applying the standards to motor vehicle service and repair organisations. ☐

Fig 15

In this example, the requirement to produce a written report again reflects the supervisory level of this competence, and is a realistic task. The information on quality standards may itself be in written format, for example in a text book on management or from a company policy document designed to introduce or maintain quality standards. The production of a written report allows the content to be read and discussed.

As with reports used for spoken assessments, it is essential to plan the assessment and to share the assessment criteria with candidates before the assessment takes place.

In many cases the assessment of practical skills within IVQs, the requirement for a report does not specify whether the report is to be spoken or written (or indeed in the format of a short film). However, some objectives do state that a **written** report is required.

Written reports have the advantages of being efficient and cost effective. However, they also have potential disadvantages.

Firstly, they are of limited value in assessing practical skills, unless the practical skill is the ability to present and use knowledge. For this reason, within IVQs we do not use written reports alone as the means of assessing practical skills.

Secondly, they may not be **authentic**. Some candidates will present written reports in the form of information copied from books, or more likely these days – downloaded from the internet. Candidates can present written reports as their own, when in fact they were written by someone else, especially if the report is word processed or uses another form of application software. Asking supplementary questions – 'why did you specifically mention anti-skid braking systems in your report' – is a good way of finding out whether a report is the candidate's own work or not. By asking the question positively, you are looking for a constructive reason for inclusion, that demands knowledge about anti-skid braking systems.

Practical assessments

Practical assessments usually take the form of requiring the candidate to perform a particular task or set of tasks in order to demonstrate competence. The outcomes may be a product or they may be a combination of a product and observed performance.

In common with spoken and written assessments, practical assessments may be **externally** or **internally** set. Within IVQs the requirement to perform a particular task or set of tasks is often a feature of the practical assignments that we use as a tool to assess practical skills. Obviously this is an **externally set** practical assessment. An example (Fig 16) is given below from the **Mechanical and Electrical Engineering** IVQ at advanced diploma level.

Candidates' instructions

3.1   You have three hours to complete this assignment. In this assignment you are required to:

- Observe the effects of wave shaping networks on ac signals
- Record all the results
- Explain the operation of the networks.

3.2   **Signal connections and test procedures**

3.2.1   Connect, in turn, each of the networks shown in section 6, figures 1a, 1b and 1c to a signal generator and oscilloscope as shown in figure 2.

3.2.2   For network 1a, set the function generator to give a 1kHz sinewave having an amplitude of 24v peak to peak. This waveform is monitored on channel 1 of the oscilloscope.

3.2.3   Observe the output waveform of the network on channel 2 of the oscilloscope.

3.2.4   Sketch the shape of the waveform and record the voltage levels of both the negative and positive peaks measured with respect to zero volts of dc.

3.2.5   Replace network 1a with network 1b and repeat steps 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 keeping the same input signal.

3.2.6   Replace network 1b with network 1c and change the input signal setting to a 1kHz square wave having an amplitude of 20V peak to peak. Repeat steps 3.2.3 and 3.2.4

3.2.3   **Conclusions**

3.3.1   For the networks, explain the reasons for the shapes of the output waveforms and the associated voltage levels.

Fig 16

The practical assignment shown in Fig 16 is in the form of practical tasks for the candidate to complete. The task has **face validity** because it requires the candidate to follow a set of instructions in order to complete a specific job, test it for functionality and explain outcomes. In the workplace the instructions could be those of a supervisor and the task could be to make or repair an item of functioning equipment.

The practical tasks within this assignment have **content validity** because the tasks are cross-referenced to the objectives in this syllabus. In this case objective 28.3 on page 24 of the 1999 edition of the syllabus for the **Advanced Diploma in Applied Mechanical and Electrical Engineering** IVQ.

The assignment is **reliable** as an assessment method because it makes the same demands of all candidates and because, within the IVQ structure, we use a visiting verifier to ensure that all candidates have completed all the required assignments and that the assignments have all been marked to the same standard.

The assignment has also been designed to ensure that it only assesses the essential skills that are listed in the syllabus – it does not introduce irrelevant demands. It is also structured in a way that is clear to the candidate and to the assessor, and it allows feedback in terms of discussing candidate performance against the marking criteria.

Practical assignments such as the one illustrated, are intended to be used as **summative** assessments and their successful completion forms the evidence that will be used to state that a candidate has met the requirements for the practical part or component of an IVQ.

Practical assessments can also be internally set – by yourself or by your team – as part of your strategy for allowing candidates to practise and show practical skills. They can be used as both **formative** and **summative** assessment.

When used as formative assessment they give the candidate the opportunity to practise skills and gain confidence before undertaking summative assessment. Used as summative assessment they can be used to provide evidence for a particular skill or skills that is required on, for example, the competence checklist of an IVQ. They are particularly useful if you want design realistic and meaningful tasks that will test a candidate's ability to perform tasks that are relevant to work. For example motor vehicle students can be asked to strip down and reassemble parts of an engine, catering students can be asked to lay a table or re-lay a table that has been incorrectly laid. Finally they are useful in situations where it is impossible to gain real work experience or where practice is essential before work experience. For example, candidates are highly unlikely to deal with a fire during work experience, but a simulated exercise as part of a practical assignment can be used as an alternative. Another example would be situations where, in real work experience, candidates are going to deal with things that are valuable and where practising techniques is essential before access is given to actual work places. This might apply to candidates using higher level decorating and restoration skills where final work experience and summative assessment is on buildings owned by private individuals or the public.

If you design your own practical assessment it must be valid and reliable. That is, it must test a skill or skills that are relevant to the syllabus, and it must be based on clearly understood criteria that are applied to all candidates in the same way. An example is given below, showing how an internally set practical assignment can be designed for candidates and used to demonstrate skills relevant to the skills needed for the **Beauty Therapy** IVQ (Fig 18)

Nail enamelling

Task
You are required to enamel a model's nails with frosted enamel.

You will be marked on the following points.

Preparation

1   You ensured that all preparations were of the correct consistency
2   All preparations were checked at least twenty minutes before use.

Application

3   An appropriate base coat was chosen.
4   Base coat was applied with minimum number of strokes
5   An appropriate colour enamel was chosen
6   Enamel was applied with minimum number of strokes.
7   Three coats of enamel were applied.
8   Nails were presented clearly.
9   Enamel appeared smooth and even.

Completion

10   You ensured all bottle tops, necks and brush shafts were clean.
11   You ensured all caps were airtight.

To pass, all points must be satisfactorily completed.

Result

Signed

This example of an internally designed practical assessment allows candidates to practise and demonstrate the specific skills needed for objectives 16.2 and 16.16 at the diploma level in the **Beauty Therapy** IVQ. As designed it provides the candidate and the assessor with clear criteria as to what is expected and allows the assessor to observe candidate performance against stated standards. It would be possible to adapt the assessment to include practice in additional skills, for example, talking to clients or preparing the treatment area or room.

When you design your own practical assessments such as these, you need to make decisions about the conditions in which the assessment will take place – particularly if your assessment is intended to be summative. For example, some skills need to be tested under timed conditions because in a real work place a task needs to be completed as quickly as possible. Other skills, for example using safety equipment need to be continuously demonstrated, so they need to be assessed more than once.

Which method to use?

The choice of assessment method – spoken, written or practical – is determined by the suitability of the method to its purpose. Knowledge about how to do things can be assessed using spoken or written assessments; the ability to perform tasks is best assessed by undertaking tasks that allow observation of performance.

In IVQs, we recommend that a variety of methods is used so that the assessment decisions that you make are based on as much relevant information as you are able to collect.

The assessment decision and its rationale

So far we have seen that a lot of planning should go into the assessment process, that it takes a lot of structuring to incorporate it into a learning programme, and that even when well planned and structured it can still be demanding for both candidate and assessor. Assessment is of no value, therefore, if it cannot lead to an assessment decision – either the candidate achieved what was required or did not.

If assessments have been properly planned and developed they will contain all the elements needed to enable a decision to be made –

✓ valid – it assesses what you need to assess
✓ authentic – in a way that is relevant to what you are assessing
✓ reliable – using clear criteria that can be applied at all times to all candidates.

Remember that because IVQs are intended to be used throughout the world, the performance criteria – what is acceptable – may vary from country to country. This does not matter; indeed, it is important that you use criteria that are relevant to the needs of the candidate and employers in the country in which you work. What does matter is that what the candidate must be seen to do, and how, are clearly and unambiguously defined.

Provided these elements are in place, you have what you need to make an assessment decision and to give a rationale for your decision. Your rationale will be based on the fact that the assessment itself is valid and relevant, and that the candidate has clearly met (or not yet met) the stated performance criteria.

It is important to be able to explain your decision. First of all, you want to be clear in your own mind that you have made the right decision, therefore, the ability to justify your decision to yourself using objective criteria is important. However, you need to be able to justify your decision to others – not least the candidate. We look at this in more detail in the next section of this guide. Apart from the candidate, you need to be able to justify your decisions to colleagues, to your manager or supervisor and to the City & Guilds visiting verifier.

If you are using the **International Assessor Award** IVQ syllabus as a self-study resource or as part of in-service training, you should now review and discuss objectives 3.1 to 3.6 of the 'knowledge

requirements' section of module three. Consider what assessment types you are currently using in your teaching programme and how they meet the criteria we have explained in this section. Alternatively, if you are planning your IVQ programme, think about what assessment methods you both plan to use and need to use. To do this you will need to be familiar with the IVQ syllabus you are planning to use for your teaching programme.

When you have done this, you should be ready to prepare what is needed for practical assignment 03 on page 39 of the **International Assessor Award** syllabus. This assignment asks you to carry out two different types of assessment and to achieve this you will need to spend some time planning how to complete this. If you are using the assignment as part of a programme of self study you can use simulation but you will need two other people – one person to be assessed and one person to act as observer. If you are carrying out the assignment as part of on the job training, you can use real assessment situations with your own students. Use the checklist on page 41 to check that your assignment is complete. Working as a group of three, one person performs the task, one person conducts the assessment by observation, and the third person observes the assessor, using the checklist on page 42.

If you are following the **International Assessor Award** IVQ as part of a taught programme because you want the qualification, your assessor will use the checklist on page 42 to check your assignment. You will need carry out assessments using candidates in real situations that involve assessing skills or knowledge – and not simulation, but you can undertake this activity as part of on-the-job training by asking your trainer (eg supervisor or head of department) to observe your assessment. In this exercise, where you are the one being assessed, you should only attempt to carry out a formal formative or summative assessment of the candidate, if you have fully explained the situation to the candidate and if your own assessor is prepared to act not only as your assessor but as a verifier of the candidate's performance.

Note that the assignment does not ask you to give feedback – only plan your feedback. Giving feedback and recording decisions are covered in the next section.

As with planning assessment and observing performance, it may be tempting to skip this stage, but if you do practise assessment using spoken, written and practical methods before you are required to do it as a formal part of the IVQ programme, you will have increased confidence and your candidates will have confidence in you.

[This page is intentionally blank]

7 Developing assessment skills – giving feedback on performance and completing assessment records

Essential parts of any assessment activity are to give feedback to the candidate on performance and to keep records. For written assessments, the feedback is in the form of a result (a score or mark), often accompanied by an explanation. Feedback on the demonstration of practical skills may also take the form of a set of results, but the candidate will usually need some explanation about how the result has been decided.

We recommend that for the assessment of practical skills, candidate feedback is always in the form of a one to one conversation between the candidate and the assessor. The assessor should have any written results, for example a completed checklist, available and should show these to the candidate throughout the conversation.

We encourage a constructive approach to giving feedback. As the person responsible for the assessment of the practical skills you can achieve this by remembering that the purpose of assessment is to find out what a person can do and treating the assessment positively. This process begins at the planning stage, when you are explaining to the candidate what the assessment will involve and what are the intended outcomes. A contrasting, negative approach, not to be encouraged, is to treat the assessment activity as a means to find fault or to catch the candidate out by using unexpected tasks, or asking deliberately difficult questions.

A positive approach is maintained throughout the process, from planning through activity and observation to the final stage, where feedback is given. At feedback stage. this always means starting with the activities or tasks or products that the candidate completed well, and explaining to the candidate what was done well. In an IVQ using a competence checklist or a the marking scheme for a practical assignment, this might mean first going through the items on the checklist or mark scheme that the candidate has successfully completed and congratulating the candidate on what has been achieved. At this stage it is useful to explain not only what was successfully achieved but also why it was achieved.

By maintaining a positive approach throughout, a good relationship should have been developed with the candidate, and the candidate is prepared to accept any feedback on performance as fair and valid.

Giving feedback on unsuccessful performance is always more difficult. However, it is equally important. At no time should you feel under pressure to say that something has been successfully achieved when it has not. As with all assessment activities, success at this stage will mean careful preparation at the planning stage. Before the assessment the candidate should have discussed the criteria to be met before successful performance can be recorded; this will also have been part of the day to day teaching programme. The candidate should also have been given the opportunity to ask questions about what is required in the assessment, and to clarify any points which are unclear. Finally, the assessment criteria – competence checklist, or practical assignment marking scheme, or your own checklist, will have been shared with the candidate before the assessment. Therefore what is required should come as no surprise to the candidate.

Assuming the candidate understands what was required, your role is to explain to the candidate the reasons why successful performance cannot be recorded. The approach should be positive and objective. You should explain what parts of an activity were done well, even if overall performance did not meet the required outcome. You should also be able to explain objectively which specific outcomes were not achieved, and why, and to be able to give examples to the candidate about what could be done to achieve a successful outcome. To be able to give this kind of feedback positively, it will be seen that careful and accurate monitoring of candidate performance through the assessment activity is essential. You should make notes at all times, so that there is a written record of objective observations to give to the candidate. The candidate will feel justifiably aggrieved if you cannot explain why the outcomes were not achieved, and what could have been done to achieve them.

Candidates are unlikely to become upset or aggressive about positive feedback, but they may become upset or aggressive about negative feedback, so it is important for you to be prepared for this possibility and to be able to deal with it successfully.

If a candidate becomes upset or tearful, the proper approach is to stop the feedback, and reassure the candidate, but remain objective, for example by asking 'Would you like me to wait for a few minutes before continuing?' This may prompt the candidate to say 'yes', in which case it is perfectly all right to wait until the candidate is ready to go on. Alternatively, the candidate may recover quickly and ask you to continue. Whatever the case, you have consulted the candidate and have maintained a good, supportive relationship.

A candidate is most likely to become aggressive if the result of the assessment is not understood, or if it is considered to be unfair. The correct approach in this situation is to remain calm and objective. You can achieve nothing until the candidate is prepared to listen to you and to discuss things with you. Therefore your first priority is to keep talking to the candidate until you have an agreement that he will listen to what you have to say and to your explanations. It will be helpful for you to make it clear that your job is to give help and support. Once the candidate is listening, it is essential that you have objective criteria for your decisions that you can share with the candidate. If explained carefully, these will be easier to accept. Avoid expressions like 'I think that…..' or 'In my opinion you should have…' These are subjective expressions indicating that you have a personal opinion about a candidate's performance that may be different from the performance outcomes stated in the IVQ checklist or practical assignment marking scheme.

Properly given, the majority of candidates will accept feedback naturally as part of the learning process, especially if it has been given throughout the course. At no time should you allow candidates who are upset or aggressive to affect your judgement. Remember that as assessor, you are the person principally responsible for maintaining the quality of the assessment process, and for assessing outcomes fairly and accurately.

Giving feedback is not a one way process where the assessor talks to the candidate. It is a conversation. A good way of beginning feedback to a candidate would be to start by saying 'well done' and then asking the candidate how he felt about his own performance. This approach immediately involves the candidate in the feedback process and is another opportunity to show the candidate that he is valued and respected. It also provides an opportunity to discuss aspects of the assessment where the assessor's evaluation differs from that of the candidate. This does not have to be limited to activities where the candidate feels he was successful and the assessor disagrees. The reverse may be true.

The manner in which feedback is given is also important. Asking the candidate to stand in front of a table while you read out results, or standing over a candidate while you state what was achieved are both ways of using body language and manners that suggest you want to create a division between yourself and the candidate. They are unfriendly and may be considered to be intimidatory. By contrast, sitting next to a candidate, looking at the written information together, is an approach that suggests openness and a willingness to share and encourage.

When giving feedback it is also important to think about different ways of asking questions. If every comment is preceded with 'Why didn't you….', the candidate will complete the feedback session feeling that nothing was right.

We have already seen that assessment of practical skills in IVQs can be both formative and summative. Formative assessment is more likely to be based on activities and criteria designed by the teacher; summative assessment in IVQs is most likely to be based on the competence checklists or the marking schemes for practical assignments.

Whether formative or summative, an essential part of giving feedback is to agree with the candidate what the future action will be. If the outcome of the assessment activity in an IVQ is the successful completion, with ticks in each box, of a competence checklist, then the next stages are to inform the candidate what will happen next. Most IVQs have at least six competence checklists for each level of the qualification, so the successful completion of one checklist means that part of the requirements for the practical part of the IVQ have now been successfully met. This should be confirmed with the candidate. The candidate should also be told that this successful performance will be recorded. Similarly, the successful completion of all the required outcomes for a practical assignment mean that success can now be recorded for that part of the IVQ. The next stage may be to start preparing for the next assessment.

If the outcome of the assessment activity is the fact that some of the tasks or required outcomes have not yet been achieved, then it is essential to discuss what can take place to overcome this problem. In IVQs with practical assignments, we state that the assignment can be repeated after a period of time. This gives the opportunity for the candidate to repeat the assignment focusing on the areas of weakness. Repetition is allowed after a minimal number of days has passed. This requirement is made because we assume that a candidate will need to practise areas of

weakness, or learn more background information before repeating an assignment. Allowing a candidate to endlessly repeat an assignment may lead to repeated failure. At best it may lead to eventual success by a process of trail and error, but this is not a good indicator of likely future performance.

Where competence checklists are used to record demonstration of practical skills, a likely outcome may be that some outcomes remain to be achieved. Have agreed why they have not been achieved, the candidate and the assessor should agree what still needs to be learned or practised, and when and how an opportunity can be given to repeat the assessment.

By using assessment results to agree further action and learning within the candidate's overall programme, assessment of practical skills becomes a natural part of the learning process, and not an end of course activity to be regarded with anxiety or fear.

Realistically, any course leading to an IVQ comes to an end, and it would be surprising if every candidate successfully achieves all of the outcomes required for the demonstration of practical skills. At this stage the opportunity to repeat assessments comes to an end and it may be necessary to complete the assessment records for a candidate indicating that the candidate has failed to achieve all of the outcomes necessary. It is important to accept this possibility and record it appropriately. If the candidate has been involved in the assessment process throughout the course, the result should not be a surprise. Nevertheless within the City & Guilds IVQ structure it is still possible to be positive about the outcome.

A candidate can always re-enter for the practical component or part of an IVQ, provided you have the facility to accommodate the candidate. There is no limit on the number or re-entries (but avoid pointless repetition) and entries for practical components can be sent to us at any time, subject to the visiting verifier's counter signature on the results submission. This process can continue until the syllabus itself is changed.

We also award certificates of unit credit for successful completion of each component of an IVQ. Therefore a candidate who fails to achieve a pass in the practical part of an IVQ can receive a certificate of unit credit for successful completion of the written test.

Finally, some IVQs, notably

Mechanical, Electrical and Electronic Engineering

have theory and applied routes where a full certificate, diploma or advanced award is available to those who only complete the written assessments.

Teachers and trainers have always used their own record books to note details of things such as completion of tasks and assignments and to record marks or grades for particular activities. Record keeping is an essential part of all assessment activity including the assessment of practical skills.

Within IVQs we provide the essential tools for this job.
In the following IVQs:

Accommodation Operations and Services
Beauty Therapy
Construction Industry
Engineering Skills
Food and Beverage Service
Food Preparation and Culinary Arts
Hairdressing
International Tourism
Motor Vehicle Engineering
Reception Operations and Services
Retailing
Telecommunication Systems

the tool provided is the competence checklist (Fig 19).

Observe technical services

Practical competences
The candidate must be able to do the following:

Observe technical services

5.1   Stand in an unobtrusive location near to the technical service to watch and listen. ☐

5.2   At a convenient time ask the stylist questions regarding decisions made during the technical activity. ☐

5.3   Explain to a supervisor what they have observed, giving an outline of the activity, the questions they asked
        and the explanations given by the stylist. ☐

This is to confirm that the candidate has successfully completed the above tasks:

Candidate signature

Candidate name (please print)

Instructor signature

Instructor name (please print)

Completion date

Fig 19

These are provided to ensure that every candidate following a course leading to an IVQ is assessed against the same criteria. The competence checklists for each level of the IVQ are included in the syllabus. You should photocopy these and ensure that every candidate has a complete set of competence checklists. These should be easily available throughout the course so that you can complete them at the appropriate times. Remember that it is not necessary to complete all the items on one checklist before moving on to the next one. How and when you complete the lists depends on how you have planned your course and the assessments.

Each checklist has a place to sign and date on completion.

The competence checklists are an essential record that you will need to have available for inspection by the visiting verifier, therefore it is essential that they are correctly completed and that they are kept somewhere safe. Whether or not you allow candidates to look after their own checklists is a decision for you to make, but remember that the loss of a candidate's competence checklists may represent the loss of up to two year's worth of assessment activity and record keeping which will be hard to replace. We recommend that where candidate's keep their own checklists, you keep a copy safely in a filing cabinet or similar.

The majority of these IVQs also include a summary form or 'Candidate Assessment Record' (shown in Fig 20 below, that you can complete to show each candidate's progress towards successful completion of all the practical assignments. An example is shown below. This gives you an 'at a glance' record of each candidate's progress and can be used as a cover sheet for candidates' individually completed competence checklists.

In the following IVQs

**Applied Information Technology
Engineering Skills
International Assessor Award
Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Teaching and Training
Telecommunication Systems**

the completed marking scheme (section 4) is the tool used to record achievement and it is usually accompanied by a Candidate Assessment Record within the syllabus.

It is important that you complete records quickly and accurately. Speed is necessary so that decisions are recorded before they are forgotten or confused with other observations. If assessing a number of candidates at the same time, do not attempt to remember your decisions. Record your decision at the time of observation.

Within the IVQ structure one final point needs to be mentioned about recording results. Both competence checklists and the marking schemes within practical assignments consist of statements that lead to the answer of either 'yes, the candidate has achieved this' or 'no, that candidate has not yet achieved this.' Candidates have to successfully complete all of the required outcomes on the checklist to achieve a pass. Within practical assignments, there are sometimes a small number of outcomes whose completion is not compulsory. However, the vast majority of outcomes have to be completed successfully to achieve a pass. By using an approach where we require successful completion of all or the majority of required outcomes we are adopting what is known as a **mastery approach**. That is we are using assessment to show that a person has successfully acquired and demonstrated all of the competences necessary for successful performance. The answer to this question is either 'yes' or 'no' and it is appropriate, therefore to record the result either as a pass or a fail and not to attempt to assess the degree to which a person has mastered a set of skills. For this reason we do not grade the results of assessments of practical skills (eg pass, credit distinction). This is important when you complete the final piece of record keeping used within the IVQ structure for the assessment of practical skills – Form S.

Form S now replaces Form M as the formal record of results for the practical components or parts of an IVQ. This is the record that the visiting verifier will countersign after your proposed results have been agreed and this is the record that you or your manager will send to City & Guilds for the submission of results for the practical components. An example of a completed Form S is included in IVQ syllabuses published or re-printed since the beginning of 2001, and an example is included in this guide. Note that the result for the candidates who have been successful in their practical assessments is always 'Pass' and this is indicated as 'P' in the relevant box on Form S.

It is also important that information recorded about candidates is treated as confidential and secure. Whether or not you share candidate's results with the whole class is a matter for you to decide. Lists of results are often posted on notice boards for everyone to read. However, with the advent of improved communication, many countries have become concerned with the security of information held by or about individuals, and governments in some countries have passed laws dealing with the security of information. You need to be aware that in law there may be people who are not entitled to receive information about candidates; similarly candidates may have a right to have information about themselves withheld except from those who have a right to receive it.

In the case of IVQs, the candidates, your teaching team, your managers, the visiting verifier and City & Guilds all have a right to have access to results for the assessment of practical skills. Who else has a right or the authority to have access needs careful consideration.

Diploma in Food and Beverage Service Candidate assessment record			
Candidate's name and number			
Centre name and number			
Assessment reference	**Date completed**	**Instructor signature**	**Instructor name**
016/01 Safety at work			
016/02 Hygiene at work			
016/03 Security at work			
016/04 Personal skills and attributes			
016/05 Customer care			
016/06 Product knowledge			
016/07 Billing and checking procedures			
016/08 General pre-service procedures			

Fig 20

Records of results can be stored in a number of ways. Traditionally they were kept in teachers or trainers mark books and then, perhaps, transferred to a more formal record. Within IVQs teachers or trainers can keep their own records, but there are also particular tools that must be used for record keeping. Assessment records need to be kept somewhere that is safe and secure to prevent loss or tampering.

Although you could allow your candidates to keep their own records, such as the competence checklist, on its own this is not a secure method and we do not recommend it. Candidates can lose their records, they may be stolen or tampered with. It is essential, therefore, that you keep your own record in a place that can be locked when you are not supervising it.

If you find it more convenient you can keep records on an electronic file. Some schools and college actively encourage this approach to record keeping. If you do this, be sure to keep a back up copy, and remember that the visiting verifier will probably want to see a paper copy unless you have agreed that electronic files will be acceptable.

The secure keeping of records of the assessment of practical skills for IVQs is an essential task. The loss of these records will most likely result in the candidate being denied a pass until sufficient evidence can be collected to show that all of the outcomes have been successfully completed.

For IVQs you need to remember that there is a structure for record keeping which we have just described. However, the assessment of practical skills in IVQs is also subject to a process of **moderation** or **verification**, to ensure quality and consistency of results across all centres. In addition to the records that you keep, you will also need to have evidence of candidates' work to support your assessment decisions and record keeping.

Finally, it is important to think about who else might have reasonable cause to want to have access to your records for the results of practical assignments. We have already considered the legal aspects of giving information. Nevertheless, there are some organisations that may well have a valid interest in your results other than City and Guilds (the awarding body). If your candidates want to progress to a higher level course, either within your institution or elsewhere, then their results will be of interest to the people who run these courses. The results will help them to make decisions about whether or not to accept a candidate on to a course. Employers have reasonable reason to ask for information about results. In some countries, candidates may receive help in selecting careers or finding a job – and the agencies that carry out these tasks can also have an interest in the results you have recorded.

Wherever possible you should support these requests. If your support enables successful progression into employment or to a higher level course, then you are promoting your own course and your own teaching institution. Where the results you give, or a candidate gives, need verification, groups such as employers, universities, immigration authorities can and do contact us to gain the information they need.

If you are using the **International Assessor Award** IVQ syllabus as a self study resource, either for individual study, or for group discussion with your IVQ team about giving feedback on performance and completing assessment records, you can now look at objectives 4.1 to 4.5. You should think of, and discuss, other examples that can be used to illustrate your knowledge of these principles. The best way to do this is to take your own IVQ programme and your own group of students and discuss how you will carry out each of the activities in terms of your own situation. Remember to consider whether or not there is legislation about data security in your country.

When you have done this, you should be ready to give feedback on performance, – objectives 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 in the **International Assessor Award** syllabus, and to record assessment decisions for safe keeping and for future reference by appropriate authorities, – objectives 4.4 and 4.5 in the International Assessor Award syllabus. You should use assignment 04 on page 43 of the **International Assessor Award** syllabus and use the checklist on page 45 to check that your assignment is complete. You will only be able to complete this assignment as a group exercise with a minimum of three people although you can simulate the tasks and the environment. Working as a group of three, one person gives feedback, one person acts as the recipient of feedback, and the third person observes the assessor, using the checklist on page 46.

If you are following the **International Assessor Award** IVQ as part of a taught programme because you want the qualification, your assessor will use the checklist on page 46 to check your assignment. You will need give feedback using candidates who have just completed real tasks or practical assignments – and not simulation, but you can undertake this activity as part of on-the-job training by asking your trainer (eg supervisor or head of department) to observe you giving feedback. In this exercise, where you are the one being assessed, you should only attempt to carry out a formal formative or summative assessment of the candidate, if you have fully explained the situation to the candidate and if your own assessor is prepared to act not only as your assessor but as a verifier of the candidate's performance.

As with all the other activities described in this guide, it may be tempting to skip this stage, but if you do practise giving feedback before you are required to do it as a formal part of the IVQ programme, you will have increased confidence and your candidates will have confidence in you. You will also have additional evidence for the visiting verifier to indicate that you and your team have a procedure for in-service training to improve and develop your IVQ delivery.

8 Getting the administration right

In this guide, the focus of attention has been on the assessment tools and the different methods than can be used to assess practical skills in IVQs. The responsibility for the quality of the assessment of practical skills rests with the teacher or instructor who is training the candidates and we hope that this guide has provided you with useful advice.

To ensure that successful practical assessments leads to the award of an IVQ to candidates who have successfully completed all of the requirements, it is necessary to ensure that City & Guilds procedures have been followed correctly to avoid any last minute problems.

In this final section we briefly summarise these procedures in the order in which they take place.

✓ Programme approval. In order to submit results for the assessment of practical skills, you must have programme approval for the IVQ you are offering and whose students you will be assessing. Do note leave this to chance, or assume that someone else has taken care of it. Programme approval is normally given for four years and is renewed at the end of each period of four years. If your centre is not approved for the subject you are offering, your results will not be accepted.

Programme approval is always indicated by a letter from our head offices or one of our branch offices and states the subject for which approval has been given and the date of the approval. It is often accompanied by a certificate. If you cannot find these, or are not sure about whether or not you have programme approval, contact City & Guilds – Customer Services International, who will be able to confirm your approval status.

✓ Visiting verifier nominated and approved. If you are going to assess practical skills, then you must have nominated a visiting verifier who will check and agree the results of your practical assessments. Your visiting verifier must not be a person who is teaching your candidates – to ensure an independent, objective view. Your visiting verifier should be someone competent and qualified in the subject area you are offering to your students – a local employer, or retired person with relevant recent experience. A copy of the approval letter, accepting your nomination as a visiting verifier is sent to your centre.

✓ At the time of your centre approval, you will receive a supply of forms that will be used to make entries for examinations, and to send us results of practical assessments – Form S. You will also receive a copy of the **International Directory of Examinations and Assessments**, which gives details of all our written examinations and the entry procedures. In IVQ syllabuses printed since 2000, an example of Form S is also included.

✓ First meeting agreed with visiting verifier. If you are offering an IVQ for the first time, or a new IVQ involving a visiting verifier you have not yet worked with, we suggest you agree the date for a first visit by the visiting verifier early in your IVQ programme to ensure everyone involved understands what is required. Visiting verifiers normally only visit once to review each set of practical assessment results you wish to submit to us, but in certain circumstances, including the first time of offering an IVQ, an additional visit is permitted.

✓ Assess your candidates' practical skills according to your plans, using the advice given in this guide. If you have not already done so, agree a date with your visiting verifier so that he or she can review your final assessment decisions. Your visiting verifier may want to see you assess some of your candidates, especially if your are offering an IVQ for the first time. If so, we encourage this approach as it is a way of ensuring quality from the very start of your programme. Remember that it is your responsibility to make the assessment decisions – with confidence. The visiting verifier is there to confirm and support your decisions.

✓ Keep records throughout – safely.

✓ Have all your assessment records ready for your visiting verifier's visit so that your results can be confirmed and Form S can be completed, with a record of the agreed results. Do not send entries for written examinations and results for practical assessments on the same form. Use a separate Form S for each activity and for each level of an IVQ.

✓ Ensure Form S, complete with your results for your practical assessments, is countersigned by your visiting verifier and sent to us. We recommend that you do this as soon as possible after any written examination to avoid delay in receiving results. Remember that even if your candidates successfully complete their examinations in December or June, we cannot issue them with an IVQ certificate or diploma or advanced diploma for IVQs that have practical components or parts, until we receive your practical results.

✓ Keep your records of results and evidence of candidates' work until after we have confirmed your results.

[This page is intentionally blank]

Useful publications

In addition to this guide you may find the following publications useful when preparing for and offering IVQs in your school, college or other training location.

Title/Publisher	Author	ISBN or order number
International Assessor Award 1998 onwards City & Guilds	City & Guilds	SP-00-1105
A Guide to The Assessment of Projects and Portfolios City & Guilds	City & Guilds	SP-00-0008
Delivering International Qualifications – Centre Guide	City & Guilds	WP-UK-0015
Competence-based Teaching and Training City & Guilds/Macmillan Chapter 9 'Assessing Achievement' Chapter 10 'Evaluation'	Anne Castling	0 333 641 574
Teaching Skills in Further and Higher Education Macmillan Press Chapter 12 'Assessment'	David Milton	0 333 548 434
Assessor Workbook: Guidance Chris Cook City & Guilds/Macmillan	Chris Cook	0 333 601 033
Assessment of NVQs and SVQs IPD/TVU Institute of Professional Development/ Thames Valley University 1991	Institute of Professional Development Thames Valley University	1 874 696 055
The Theory of Assessment: An Introduction Kogan Page	J Cotton	0 749 417 099
Competence Based Assessment Techniques Kogan Page	S Fletcher	0 749 404 418
Assessing NVQs Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	ref: QCA/98/135

[This page is intentionally blank]

Further help

You may be interested in the following qualifications that we have available:

International Certificate in Training Skills
International Diploma in Teaching and Training
International Assessor Award.

Each of these IVQs is designed as a qualification for people who are going to teach or train and then assess people who are preparing for vocational qualifications. The **International Assessor Award** IVQ is used as a reference within this guide.

Access Certificate in English Language Teaching

This award is an initial teaching certificate for teachers of English as a second language which has been jointly developed by City & Guilds Pitman Qualifications and the Centre for English Language Studies in Education at the University of Manchester.

[This page is intentionally blank]

Appendix A

The following is an example of a completed Form S, showing how to record results for practical skills.

In the example we have assumed that each candidate has his or her unique candidate enrolment number, eg ABC1234. These will be issued on the first occasion that you make an entry. In IVQs this will normally be when you make candidate entries for the written examinations. It is important to use these numbers when you have them.

The sample form is being used to submit the practical results for the **Technician Certificate in Applied Mechanical Engineering**. This is the actual award title of the certificate level IVQ for which the candidates are being entered. This award has two practical components or parts, which are numbered 002 and 004. Details of all the component numbers and titles of IVQs are always in the syllabus and also in the **International Directory of Examinations and Assessments**.

In the sample, five candidates are being entered. The first three candidates have all passed components 002 and 004. In the case of George Umtali and Samuel Sibley, it is not necessary to repeat the information given for Susan Bailey. A tick in the box marked 'Duplicate to above' means that you are submitting the **same** information for George Umtali and Samuel Sibley.

Sandra Patel is only being entered for one component. Possibly she has already completed component 002, or maybe she was only successful in component 004.

Mohammed Sakir needs an enrolment number. Possibly he joined the course late, possibly he is only being entered for the practical parts of the IVQ and this is the first time his name is being sent to City & Guilds.

Note that the form is countersigned – by the visiting verifier. This is essential when you are sending results for practical assessments in IVQs.

City & Guilds
Form S – registration, results and dated entry submission

This form will be scanned. Please use BLOCK CAPITALS. Please send this form to: City & Guilds, Data Processing, 1 Giltspur Street, London EC1A 9DD.
If you have any questions about how to fill in this form, please phone Entries and Results Customer Support on 020 7294 2787. Please read the guidance notes over the page before you fill in this form.

Centre number: 7 0 1 2 3 4

Award number: 3 0 1 7 0 1

Sub A

Centre name: UPTOWN COLLEGE

Award title: HAIRDRESSING, LEVEL 1

Centre contact name: DAVID JONES

Phone number: 020 8444 3339

Syllabus code

Purchase order number or customer reference

Tick one of these boxes →
Named registration ✓ | Results ✓ | Dated examination ✓ – | Duplicate to above

Block registration ✓ – Month

Number of registrations needed

The candidate's name is not necessary when you have given the enrolment number. (Please use BLOCK CAPITALS)

Insert enrolment number if known (use BLOCK CAPITALS)

Enrolment / Name	Sex (M/F)	Date of birth (DD MM YY)	Ethnic code (see overleaf)	Particular requirements	Funding code	Duplicate to above
E N R 1 0 1 E 1 P 1 0 2 P — PETER BROWN NAME 1 0 3 P 1 0 4 P 1 0 5 P 1 1 2 P	M/**F**	13 10 61				✓
A B C 1 2 3 4 — ANN BROWN NAME	M/**F**	02 02 80				✓
D E F 5 6 7 8 — JAMES GREEN NAME	**M**/F	03 03 75				
E N R 1 0 3 P 1 0 5 P — CANDIDATE NAME	M/F	DD MM YY	see overleaf			
E N R — CANDIDATE NAME	M/F	DD MM YY	see overleaf			
E N R — CANDIDATE NAME	M/F	DD MM YY	see overleaf			
E N R — CANDIDATE NAME	M/F	DD MM YY	see overleaf			
E N R — CANDIDATE NAME	M/F	DD MM YY	see overleaf			
E N R — CANDIDATE NAME	M/F	DD MM YY	see overleaf			
E N R — CANDIDATE NAME	M/F	DD MM YY	see overleaf			
E N R — CANDIDATE NAME	M/F	DD MM YY	see overleaf			

I confirm that the candidates above are entered in line with City & Guilds regulations.

Your signature: .... Page 1 of 1 Date: 11 / 8 / 02 Counter signature (if needed) ....

Send the top copy to City & Guilds. Keep the second copy for your own records.

ST74937 F-0003065 04/02 version 2

GP-00-0004