

## **Vocational Qualifications Code of Practice**

This Code of Practice applies to Vocational Qualifications which have been created and will be maintained by the NOMS HR Directorate. The Awarding Organisation for these qualifications is City and Guilds.

The qualifications are:

### **Vocational Qualification Diploma in Probation Practice at level 3** **Vocational Qualification Diploma in Probation Practice at level 5**

These new Vocational Qualifications will be available under the Probation Qualifications Framework from 1st April 2010 and will replace the National Vocational Qualifications in Community Justice currently used in the Probation Service. They will be located on the national Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

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# 1. About these vocational qualifications

## 1.1 Format of qualifications

Although these qualifications are written in QCF format which is different to the format of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), it is important to recognise that they are still based on the Community Justice National Occupational Standards (NOS) and will be assessed using NVQ assessment methodology.

The qualifications are written in a unit based format that specifies the learning outcomes which need to be met. Each unit has a **level** attached to it which defines the degree of difficulty and a **credit** rating which specifies the notional learning hours required to complete the unit. This includes guided learning hours and time for private study, practical and work based learning and assessment activity. One credit is equal to 10 notional learning hours.

## 1.2 Structure of qualifications

The structure of the Vocational Qualification Diploma in Probation Practice at level 3 can be found at [Appendix 2.1.1b](#) in the Regulatory Framework.

The structure of the Vocational Qualification Diploma in Probation Practice at level 5 can be found at [Appendix 2.1.2b](#) in the Regulatory Framework.

These qualifications are designed to be **flexible** and **balanced** in order to meet the needs of employers and reflect the job roles of candidates.

They are **flexible** in that they do not prescribe a particular route for candidates but identify priority units which map against identified job roles. Mandatory units have been kept to a minimum in order to provide maximum flexibility.

They are **balanced** in that they require units to be selected from each group of skills, identified as being the skills required by probation practitioners. These skills sets are:

- Valuing diversity
- Working with risk and protecting individuals
- Tactical skills
- Communication and managing information
- Supporting individuals
- Technical skills

The format of the qualifications is informed by the **Rules of Combination** which have been agreed with City and Guilds and Skills for Justice. These:

- state which units are mandatory and which optional
- take account of the credit value and level rating of each unit
- state how units can be combined together to achieve the qualifications.

In the level 3 qualification there are currently thirty five units across the six skills sets, three of which are mandatory. Units must be selected from each of the skills sets, according to the Rules of Combination

In the level 5 qualification, there are sixteen units across the six skills sets, six of which are mandatory. Three of the units are at level 6. For this qualification, twelve of the units must be combined to form a vocational qualification, according to the Rules of Combination.

The relevant level descriptors for qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (annex A) have informed the development and design of these new vocational qualifications and will continue to underpin the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

These qualifications will be subject to early review in April 2011.

## **2. Assessment of the qualifications**

### **2.1 Principles of assessment practice**

The assessment of these qualifications will be underpinned by principles of assessment practice which have been agreed with City and Guilds and Skills for Justice and which have been incorporated into the new QCF units.

- Assessments will be assessor led, holistic and lean and will utilise valid and cost effective evidence gathering methods, approved by the external verifier.
- Effective and efficient planning will underpin all assessment activity and the selection of units to make up the qualification will relate directly to the candidate's job role.
- Work based assessment will be the norm, with the primary sources of evidence being observation of practice, scrutiny of work products and professional discussion, supported by witness testimony.
- Assessment Centres who use expert witnesses will only do so as part of their Centre assessment strategy, with the approval of the External Verifier and in line with City and Guilds guidance. Expert Witnesses must be occupationally competent in the units being assessed, trained as Expert Witnesses against the L20 standard and, preferably, qualified to the L20 standard.
- Simulation will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the external verifier.
- Evidence should be rich, enabling it to be used across more than one unit, with a focus on quality rather than quantity.
- Knowledge and understanding will be demonstrated via the assessment of practice and through specific learning outcomes.
- Candidates will not be required to produce portfolios of evidence in order to achieve these qualifications. In line with advice from the Qualifications

and Curriculum Development Agency, evidence of competence can be kept where it is naturally located. Centres will need to ensure that up to date, auditable records of assessment are kept which show the evidence produced, assessment decisions and where evidence is located.

- Assessment practice will be inclusive and reasonable adjustments will be made for staff with individual requirements, in a timely and positive manner.

## 2.2 Guide to assessment and verification

### 2.2.1 Assessment

- **Assessor competence**

Assessors will:

- ✓ Hold or be working towards achievement of the A1 assessor award and will comply with the requirements of the nationally recognised assessor competencies in the A1 qualification.
- ✓ Be familiar with the Community Justice National Occupational Standards and the QCF unit learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- ✓ Access and respond to feedback and directions from internal verifiers.
- ✓ Contribute to standardisation and centre quality assurance processes.
- ✓ Be pro-active about identifying own professional development needs.

- **Planning:**

- ✓ Establish assessor-led action planning taking into account candidates' needs in order to ensure fair assessment.
- ✓ Advise candidates on the selection of optional units within the context of job role, qualification and the Rules of Combination.
- ✓ Set and agree realistic deadlines for both formative and summative assessment taking into account the timeline requirements of the PQF.
- ✓ Assist candidates to present evidence for Accreditation of Prior Learning /Recognition of Prior Learning.
- ✓ Advise candidates how to take an holistic approach to preparing for assessment emphasising quality rather than quantity and the efficient use of evidence; focus on candidates' work-based activities and tasks rather than simply taking a unit by unit approach.
- ✓ Advise candidates how to prepare both for observations of practice and professional discussions.
- ✓ Agree an individual assessment plan with each candidate

- **Assessment Methods:**

- ✓ Assess candidates performance primarily in the workplace *integrating* a range of methods, especially observation of practice and professional discussion.
- ✓ Observe candidates undertaking a wide range of normal work activities as agreed in assessment plans while also using opportunities as they arise.
- ✓ Observations will comply with the relevant confidentiality protocols, especially in relation to partner assessment agencies. However, every effort will be made to negotiate a flexible approach which meets the needs of all agencies and individuals concerned.
- ✓ Conduct digitally / electronically recorded professional discussions in a way which encourages candidate engagement, avoids a simple question and answer approach and facilitates the demonstration of competence e.g. discussion of specific pieces of work with offenders.
- ✓ Undertake professional discussions in a conducive environment which complies with the confidentiality and security requirements of all the agencies involved in the assessment process.
- ✓ Assimilate the examination and discussion of work products with observations and professional discussions.
- ✓ Examination of witness statements which are relevant to the standards and/or digitally/electronically recorded discussion between assessor and witness.

- **Making Assessment Decisions:**

- ✓ Judge competence on the basis of evidence being :
  - **Valid** – assessed only against the appropriate learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
  - **Authentic** – the candidate’s own work.
  - **Current** – evidence from past achievements must reflect candidates can still perform to the required standards.
  - **Sufficient** – the amount of evidence needed to make a judgement.
  - **Reliable** – the same assessment result should be obtained over time or by different assessors using the same evidence.
- ✓ Cross referencing of evidence across units will be the norm with emphasis on judging quality rather than quantity.

- ✓ Make decisions which ensure that *all* learning outcomes and assessment criteria are met and be satisfied the candidate's competence is current and consistent.
  - ✓ Ensure assessment decisions are made in a timely and efficient manner, in line with the centre's assessment strategy.
- Recording
    - ✓ Complete written records of planning and assessment decisions using the approved centre documentation.
    - ✓ Write clear and concise records which avoid unnecessary commentary and provide a coherent trail of candidate progress.
    - ✓ Record professional discussions digitally/electronically ensuring that they are audible. Where security requirements prevent the use of electronic recording devices in the workplace, efforts will be made to identify suitable alternative arrangements including off-site venues.
    - ✓ Ensure that recorded witness statements are audible and associated notes concise and brief – the evidence is the recording itself.
    - ✓ Ensure that Awarding Body and Probation Service Providers confidentiality protocols are implemented including maintaining assessment records safely and securely.
    - ✓ Ensure candidate evidence remains in its normal workplace location where it can be easily accessed.
  - Feedback
    - ✓ Provide formative and summative feedback to candidates on assessment decisions in line with agreements established in the assessment plan.
    - ✓ Provide both informal and formal feedback using a range of communication channels.
    - ✓ Give supportive and clear feedback which is:
      - honest
      - specific
      - accurate
      - factual
      - evidenced
    - ✓ Make constructive comments which enable and enhance candidates' ability to demonstrate competence against learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
    - ✓ Identify and, if appropriate, arrange additional candidate learning opportunities when required.

## 2.2.2 Verification

- **Internal Verifier (IV) competence**

Internal Verifiers will:

- ✓ Hold or be working towards achievement of the V1 Internal Verifier award and will comply with the requirements of the nationally recognised internal verifier competencies in the V1 qualification.
- ✓ Be familiar with the Community Justice National Occupational Standards and the QCF learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- ✓ Be familiar with the requirements of the nationally recognised assessor competencies in the A1 / A2 qualifications.
- ✓ Ensure own professional development needs are met

- **Management**

- ✓ Contribute to the design of a clear and realistic sampling strategy.
- ✓ Ensure the promotion and implementation of the sampling strategy making clear its requirements to assessors and candidates.
- ✓ Ensure sufficient resources are available so that both candidates and assessors are supported effectively.
- ✓ Ensure assessors use their time effectively and efficiently with an emphasis on lean assessment practice.
- ✓ Be pro-active in identifying and implementing corrective measures in relation to assessment practice and centre procedures.
- ✓ Provide feedback on candidate progress and assessor performance to the Assessment Board (or equivalent mechanism). Make proposals for improvements.
- ✓ Ensure development needs of assessors are identified and met.
- ✓ Provide mentoring to assessors, paying particular attention to the needs of newly qualified assessors and to the desirability of checking a higher proportion of the assessment decisions of new assessors.
- ✓ Contribute to the management of appeals and complaints in accordance with assessment centre procedures.
- ✓ Ensure the provision of accurate and relevant information, advice and guidance to candidates, potential candidates and

their employers using a range of methods, such as presentations.

- **Standardisation**

- ✓ Ensure standardisation of assessor activities in order to ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions including:
  - Observation of assessor practice in accordance with the sampling strategy
  - Sampling the range of assessment methods
  - Sampling of assessment documentation
- ✓ Convene and chair standardisation meetings of assessors when examples of assessment practice will be examined and analysed.
- ✓ Provide constructive feedback to assessors, which focuses on their assessment decisions, practice and behaviours.
- ✓ Advise assessors on the interpretation and clarification of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, based on the National Occupational Standards.
- ✓ In respect of assessments undertaken by persons working towards the A1 qualification, ensure that adequate supervision is provided and that arrangements for decisions to be countersigned by a fully qualified assessor are in place and implemented.
- ✓ Ensure assessors understand and comply with candidate tracking arrangements.
- ✓ Attend and contribute to national internal verification events.

- **Centre Performance**

- ✓ Ensure that access to fair assessment is maintained and improved based on the needs of assessors and candidates.
- ✓ Analyse feedback from a range of sources to make proposals and suggestions for improvements in the delivery of work-based qualifications to Awarding Bodies and the Probation Qualifications Assurance Board.
- ✓ Contribute to the arrangements for external verification.
- ✓ Implement external verifier's action plans and ensure assessors comply with the requirements.
- ✓ Ensure that changes in assessor and candidate circumstances are communicated to the centre administrator.

### 3. Centre Requirements

Organisations or providers who wish to offer these qualifications will need to meet the following criteria which set out what Providers of Probation Services will require:

- to be a City and Guilds approved centre.
- to have City and Guilds approval to offer the Vocational Qualification Diploma in Probation Practice at level 3 and/or the Vocational Qualification Diploma in Probation Practice at level 5.
- to provide copies of external verifier reports that demonstrate compliance with Awarding Organisation requirements.
- to have a written assessment centre strategy which will include descriptions of assessment methods used and how the centre will ensure lean and cost effective assessment.
- to have an effective Assessment Board or equivalent mechanism in place that oversees assessment and verification arrangements. This must involve participation/representation from key stakeholders, including employers, candidates, assessors and internal verifiers.
- to be able to demonstrate that they have a sufficient number of occupationally knowledgeable/competent and qualified assessors and internal verifiers across the whole range of probation work.
- to be able to demonstrate that they have arrangements in place for the checking, authenticating and countersigning of decisions of unqualified assessors and internal verifiers, in line with City and Guild requirements.
- to maintain a list of approved assessors and internal verifiers with evidence of their qualifications, occupational knowledge/competence and records of Continuous Professional Development.
- to have ensured that assessors and internal verifiers are adequately prepared to deliver QCF qualifications.
- to be able to demonstrate how the continuing learning and development needs of assessors and internal verifiers are identified and met.
- to have effective systems and processes in place for the registration and tracking of candidates and for maintaining records of unit achievement of candidates. They must also demonstrate that they can meet the data requirements of City and Guilds and the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- to produce an Annual Report on the performance of the centre, including information about candidates' progress and achievements
- to have effective appeals and complaints procedures in place. Model procedures are provided at annexes B and C
- to have an Access to Fair Assessment policy and be able to demonstrate how this is implemented

- to have systems in place to obtain and respond to feedback from candidates and employers.

## 4. Key tasks and responsibilities

### 4.1 Requirements of assessors and verifiers

The requirements for the qualifications and occupational competence of assessors and internal verifiers of these vocational qualifications are set out in the following table:

Task	Activities	Qualifications of person undertaking task	Knowledge and competence of person undertaking task
Assessment of Level 3 VQ Diploma in Probation Practice	<p>Carry out assessments to the A1 standards.</p> <p>Make judgements of candidates' competence through formative and summative assessment processes and by use of a range of assessment methods.</p> <p>Provide feedback on candidate performance against the QCF and National Occupational Standards and review progress</p>	<p><u>Essential</u> hold the A1 assessor award</p> <p>or</p> <p>working towards it – to be achieved within 12 months of commencement of assessor role.</p> <p><u>Desirable</u> DipPS, DipSW CQSW or equivalent</p> <p>or</p> <p>VQ level 3 in Probation Practice or equivalent</p> <p>or</p> <p>PTLLS award or equivalent</p>	<p><u>Essential</u> Knowledge of the Community Justice NOS</p> <p>Occupationally competent in all units assessing</p> <p>Knowledge of current legislation and changes to practice</p> <p>A CPD record that is planned and reviewed on an annual basis</p>
		<u>Essential</u>	<u>Essential</u>

<p>Assessment of Level 5 VQ in Probation Practice</p>	<p>Carry out assessments to the A1 standards.</p> <p>Make judgements of candidates' competence through formative and summative assessment processes and by use of a range of assessment methods.</p> <p>Provide feedback on candidate performance against the QCF and National Occupational Standards and review progress</p>	<p>holding the A1 assessor award</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>working towards it – to be achieved within 12 months of commencement of assessor role.</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p>DipPS DipSW CQSW or equivalent</p> <p><u>Desirable</u> PTLLS award or equivalent</p>	<p>Knowledge of the Community Justice NOS</p> <p>Occupationally competent at Probation Officer level.</p> <p>Minimum of two years experience following qualification</p> <p>Knowledge of current legislation and changes to practice</p> <p>A CPD record that is planned and reviewed on an annual basis</p>
<p>Internal Verification</p>	<p>Carry out internal verification to the V1 standard.</p> <p>Implement and contribute to the management and improvement of centre's Internal Verification procedure.</p>	<p><u>Essential</u></p> <p>qualified assessor for minimum of twelve months</p> <p>holdV1 award</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>working towards it – to be achieved within 18 months of commencement of internal verifier role.</p> <p><u>Desirable</u></p> <p>DipPS (or equivalent) for level 5 assessments</p> <p>DipPS (or equivalent) or VQ level 3 Diploma in</p>	<p><u>Essential</u></p> <p>Thorough knowledge of the Community Justice NOS</p> <p>Knowledge of current legislation and changes to practice</p> <p>A CPD record that is planned and reviewed on an annual basis</p> <p>Occupationally competent or knowledgeable at Probation Officer level (for L5 assessments)</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>Occupationally competent or</p>

		Probation Practice (or equivalent) for level 3 assessments	knowledgeable at Probation Services Officer level (for L3 assessments)
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In addition to the above requirements, the following guidance from the Skills for Justice Assessment Centre Strategy (Oct 2007) applies to these vocational qualification

- **Assessors**

All assessors must be occupationally competent. This means that each assessor must be competent in the functions covered by the units they are assessing. They will have gained their occupational competence working within the justice sector. They are not required to occupy a position in the organisation more senior than that of the candidate they are assessing. However, centres must be alert to the risks that all such arrangements could present and ensure that sufficient quality controls are in place through the internal verification process to minimise the possibility of collusion between candidates and assessors.

Assessors must be familiar with the National Occupational Standards and must be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the relevant area of work.

- **Internal Verifiers**

All Internal verifiers must be **occupationally knowledgeable** across the range of units for which they are responsible prior to commencing the role. Due to the risk critical nature of the work and the legal implications of the assessment process, Internal Verifiers must understand the nature and context of the assessors' work and that of their candidates. This means that they must have worked closely with staff who carry out the functions covered by the national occupational standards, possibly by training or supervising them, and have sufficient knowledge of these functions to be able to offer credible advice on the interpretation of the standards. IVs must also sample the assessment process and resolve differences and conflicts on assessment decisions.

Internal Verifiers must occupy a position in the organisation that gives them the authority and resources to co-ordinate the work of assessors, provide authoritative advice, call meetings as appropriate, visit and observe assessment practice, and carry out all the other important roles of an internal verifier.

- **Selection of staff to undertake the tasks of assessment and verification**

In making decisions about the selection of staff to undertake the tasks of assessment and verification, Assessment Centres and Providers of Probation Services should take into account the requirements set out in the table above and the guidance from Skills for Justice. They should also be mindful of their responsibilities in terms of the preparation, qualification and continuing approval of assessors and verifiers.

In addition, when making judgements about the occupational competence of assessors, it is advisable to bear in mind the following two key points:

- the narrower the job role/experience of the potential assessor, the less able they will be to assess across a range of units/qualification pathways. It follows, therefore, that assessors with a greater depth and breadth of experience can be utilised more flexibly across a wider range of job roles.
- these qualifications, unlike NVQs, require candidates' knowledge to be assessed through specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria. This will demand a level of intellectual rigour and a sound theoretical knowledge on the part of assessors of these qualifications.

## **4.2 Further tasks and responsibilities**

### **4.2.1 Quality Assurance Co-ordinator**

The role of Quality Assurance Co-ordinator is a requirement of City and Guilds. The main responsibility of this role is to ensure that the management, administrative and quality assurance systems are properly maintained and that communications between the centre and City and Guilds are dealt with in a timely and efficient manner.

The person undertaking this role will need to:

- have an appropriate background in assessment management, administration and quality assurance
- ensure that all management, administrative, assessment and verification procedures are implemented correctly and consistently across the Centre's activities and are reviewed and improved.
- have regular contact with assessors and internal verifiers who undertake work for the centre
- co-ordinate external verifier visits and ensure that information is provided as required.

### **4.2.2 Lead Internal Verifier**

In line with City and Guilds advice, it is recommended that a Lead Internal Verifier should be appointed for each qualification. The Lead Internal Verifier will be responsible for:

- liaising with the Quality Assurance Co-ordinator
- maintaining regular contact with the internal verifiers
- ensuring that internal verification is carried out efficiently and consistently across the qualification.

## 5. Quality Assurance

### 5.1 External Quality Assurance

Approved assessment centres will be required to comply with the Quality Assurance arrangements of City and Guilds, provided by the external verification process. In particular, they will be expected to respond to any action points identified during external verifier visits and to improve their practice accordingly.

Approved assessment centre will also be expected to participate in quality assurance arrangements operated by the Probation Qualifications Assurance Board. This may include participation in events to ensure national consistency and standardisation.

There is an expectation that providers will work closely with City and Guilds, Skills for Justice and the NOMS HR Directorate in participating in the early review of these qualifications.

### 5.2 Internal Quality Assurance

Approved assessment centres will need to demonstrate that they have effective internal quality assurance arrangements in place in order to ensure optimum assessment of these qualifications and to enable continuous improvement.

These will include:

- the implementation of an explicit, written Internal Verification Procedure to ensure the standardisation of assessment activity, accuracy and consistency in assessment decisions and the implementation of any corrective measures.
- the use of feedback from candidates, employers, assessors, external and internal verifiers to improve centre procedures and assessment practice.
- the use of information from data collected about candidates and assessors to inform and improve access to fair assessment

- ensuring that the assessment centre's list of approved assessors and internal verifiers is maintained and regularly reviewed and that assessors and internal verifiers have sufficient time, resources and authority to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- demonstrating that information provided to City and Guilds for the purposes of registration and certification is complete and accurate.
- demonstrating that accurate and timely information, advice and guidance is provided to candidates, potential candidates and their employers.
- demonstrating compliance with the requirements of this Code of Practice.

## QCF Level Descriptors

Level	Summary	Knowledge and Understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
<b>Entry to level 3</b>	Achievement at <b>Entry 3</b> reflects the ability to make use of skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out structured tasks	Use knowledge or understanding to carry out structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts.  Know and understand the steps needed to complete structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts.	Carry out structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts.  Be aware of the consequences of actions for self and others	With appropriate guidance take responsibility for the outcomes of structured activities  Actively participate in activities in familiar contexts.
<b>3</b>	Achievement at Level 3 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to complete tasks and address problems that, while well defined, have a measure of complexity. It includes taking responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within limited parameters. It also reflects awareness of different perspectives or approaches within an area or study or work.	Use factual, procedural and theoretical understanding to complete tasks and address problems that, while well defined, may be complex and non-routine.  Interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.  Be aware of the nature of the area of study or work.  Have awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.	Address problems that, while well defined, may be complex and non-routine.  Identify, select and use appropriate skills, methods and procedures.  Use appropriate investigation to inform actions.  Review how effective methods and actions have been.	Take responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures, including, where relevant, responsibility for supervising or guiding others.  Exercise autonomy and judgement within limited parameters.

Level	Summary	Knowledge and Understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
4	Achievement at level 4 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine. It includes taking responsibility for overall courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within fairly broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives of approaches within an area of study or work.	<p>Use practical, theoretical or technical understanding to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the nature and appropriate scope of the area of study or work</p> <p>Have an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area or study or work.</p>	<p>Address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well defined.</p> <p>Identify, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills.</p> <p>Initiate and use appropriate investigation to inform actions.</p> <p>Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for courses of action, including, where relevant, responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement within broad but generally well-defined parameters.</p>
5	Achievement at level 5 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address broadly-defined, complex problems. It includes taking responsibility for planning and developing courses of actions as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives, approaches or schools	<p>Use practical, theoretical or technological understanding to find ways forward in broadly-defined complex contexts.</p> <p>Analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Address broadly-defined complex problems.</p> <p>Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills.</p> <p>Use relevant research or development to inform actions.</p> <p>Evaluate actions, methods and results.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for planning and developing courses of actions, including where relevant, responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement within broad parameters.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and Understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
	of thought and the reasoning behind them.	Understand different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.		
<b>6</b>	Achievement at Level 6 reflects the ability to refine and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address complex problems that have limited definition. It includes taking responsibility for planning and developing courses of action that are able to underpin substantial change or development, as well as exercising broad autonomy and judgement. It also reflects an understanding of different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them	<p>Refine and use practical, conceptual or technological understanding to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors.</p> <p>Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas</p> <p>Understand the context in which the area of study or work is located.</p> <p>Be aware of current developments in the area of study or work</p> <p>Understand different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them</p>	<p>Address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors.</p> <p>Determine, refine, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills.</p> <p>Use and where appropriate design relevant research and development to inform actions.</p> <p>Evaluate actions, methods and results and their implications.</p>	<p>Take responsibilities for planning and developing courses of action that are capable of underpinning substantial changes or developments.</p> <p>Initiate and lead tasks and processes, taking responsibility where relevant for the work and roles of others.</p> <p>Exercise broad autonomy and judgement.</p>

Source: [www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/QCF\\_level\\_descriptors.pdf](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/QCF_level_descriptors.pdf)

## Model Appeals Procedure

### Introduction

1. This procedure relates to assessment decisions at the level of a unit of accreditation undertaken by the Assessment Centre. It does not cover employment issues of capability, attendance or disciplinary matters
2. The process should be seen as a “last resort.” The candidate and Assessment Centre, namely the Quality Assurance Co-ordinator, must ensure that all measures have been taken to resolve any dispute at the lowest possible level before a formal appeal is made.
3. Appeals can only be made on the following grounds:
  - the conduct of the assessment process
  - the validity or authenticity of the evidence provided
  - the reliability of the evidence
  - the currency of the evidence
  - the sufficiency and quality of the evidence
  - the adequacy of opportunities offered in order to demonstrate competence
4. Candidates who wish to pursue an appeal on the grounds outlined in paragraph 3 should be
  - Registered with the awarding body
  - Notified by the assessor that they have been found “not yet competent” in any unit of assessment
5. The outcome of an appeal can only be:
  - that there are no grounds for appeal
  - the appeal is upheld, in which case the panel will decide
    - a. that the assessor reconsiders the decision in the light of the evidence available
    - b. that another assessor be invited to repeat the assessment process
    - c. that the original assessment decision is overturned and certification is claimed

### Appeals Procedure

#### Stage 1 Informal Stage

6. Candidates should discuss the difficulty with their assessor in the first instance and may involve the Internal Verifier (not the Quality Assurance Coordinator) at any time

## Stage 2 Formal Stage

7. If the matter cannot be resolved by informal action, the candidate should make a formal approach to the Lead Internal Verifier for that award, notifying their intention to appeal. This should be done within 5 working days of failing to reach agreement informally. The Lead Internal Verifier will arrange to meet the candidate within 10 working days of this notification
8. The Lead Internal Verifier will evaluate
  - the assessment plan
  - the candidate's evidence and associated records
  - the assessor's rationale for their decision
  - the opinion of the candidate
  - the opinions of the assessor and Internal Verifier who were involved at the informal stage.
9. The Lead Internal Verifier will provide the candidate and the assessor with written notification of their judgement, with a copy to the Quality Assurance Coordinator
10. If the candidate disputes the Lead Internal Verifier's decision s/he should apply to the Quality Assurance Coordinator within 15 working days for a hearing by an Appeals Panel. This must include relevant documentary evidence and a personal statement including reasons for appeal as included in this procedure, and attempts at resolution. Candidates wishing to seek advice in the preparation of this submission must do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

## Stage 3

11. The assessment centre will ensure that the Appeals Procedure incorporates these underlying principles:
  - Natural justice
  - Fairness
  - Equity
  - Independence
  - Objectivity
  - Consideration of individual requirements
12. Upon receipt of the candidate's submission the Quality Assurance Coordinator will arrange for an appeals panel to be convened within 15 working days. Written acknowledgement will be sent to the candidate.
13. The Appeals Panel will consist of:
  - The Quality Assurance Coordinator of the Centre (Chair)
  - An Assessment Board member
  - A Lead Internal Verifier

- An assessor from the Centre
  - The panel will not include any person involved in the original assessment decision
14. The Panel will review all the documents relating to the disputed assessment decision(s). They will consider the candidate's submission and make their decision.
  15. The Panel may decide that it wishes to receive further documentation or clarification. The Lead Internal Verifier involved at Stage 2 may be required to attend to provide information relevant to the appeal.
  16. The candidate has the right to attend the panel and must be given reasonable opportunity to do so. The candidate may be accompanied by another who can either speak on their behalf or support them through the process.
  17. The decision of the Panel will be recorded by the Quality Assurance Coordinator and a copy of the decision and notes of the appeal meeting will be sent to all parties involved in the meeting within 5 working days.
  18. The appeal will be endorsed and minuted at the next meeting of the Assessment Board.

### **Appeal to the Awarding Body**

19. There is no right of appeal against the **decision** of the panel.
20. If the candidate considers that the appeal procedures have not been properly carried out, they can appeal directly to the Awarding Body.

## Model Complaints Procedure

### Grounds for Complaint

A complaint may only be made using this procedure on the grounds that the Assessment Centre has failed to fulfil its responsibilities or commitments as described in the Centre's regulations.

- Complaints about assessment decisions will be made using the appeals procedure.
- Complaints by individuals against their employers should be made using the grievance procedure of the appropriate employing authority.

### Procedure

1. Where possible the complaint should be resolved at the earliest opportunity and lowest level.
2. The candidate will discuss the complaint with the Assessor. Where it is not possible to achieve resolution the Internal Verifier will be involved.
3. If they are unable to achieve a satisfactory resolution the complainant will inform the Quality Assurance Co-ordinator in writing of the nature of the complaint and what attempts have been made to resolve the situation.
4. Receipt will be acknowledged in writing.
5. The Quality Assurance Co-ordinator will convene a panel meeting within twenty working days of the receipt of the complaint. The panel will consist of:
  - A member of the Assessment Board
  - An Internal Verifier (not involved in the complaint)
  - The Quality Assurance Co-ordinator
7. The complainant has the right to attend the panel meeting accompanied by a person of their choice for personal support.
8. The outcome of the complaint will either be
  - the complaint is not upheld against the Assessment Centre
  - the complaint is upheld, that restorative action has been identified and the appropriate individuals to be informed.

9. The Quality Assurance Co-ordinator will inform the complainant and members of the panel of the decision within five working days of the panel meeting.
10. The Quality Assurance Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring the necessary actions have been taken.