# Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety (Fire Auditors)

Qualification Handbook

Qualification Number: 610/8231/4

Operational Start Date: 01 January 2027

# Contents


Contents ..... 2
1. Introduction ..... 5
1.1. About SFJ Awards ..... 5
1.2. Customer Service Statement ..... 5
1.3. Centre Support ..... 5
2. The Qualification ..... 6
2.1. Qualification Objective ..... 6
2.2. Pre-entry Requirements ..... 6
2.3. Qualification Structure ..... 7
2.4. Total Qualification Time (TQT) ..... 7
2.5. Grading ..... 8
2.6. Age Range and Geographical Coverage ..... 8
2.7. Opportunities for Progression ..... 8
2.8. Use of Languages ..... 9
3. Qualification Units ..... 10
3.1. Mandatory Units ..... 10
4. Centre Requirements ..... 34
4.1. Centre Responsibilities ..... 34
4.2. Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy ..... 35
4.3. Facilities ..... 35
4.4. Trainers ..... 35
5. Assessment ..... 36
5.1. Qualification Assessment Methods ..... 36
5.2. Assessing Competence ..... 36
5.3. Methods for Assessing Competence ..... 37
5.3.1. Observation ..... 37
5.3.2. Testimony of Witnesses and Expert Witnesses ..... 37
5.3.3. Work Outputs (Product Evidence) ..... 37
5.3.4. Professional Discussion ..... 38
5.3.5. Questioning the Learner ..... 38
5.3.6. Simulations ..... 38
5.4. Assessing Knowledge and Understanding ..... 39
5.5. Methods for Assessing Knowledge and Understanding ..... 39

5.6. Assessment Planning ..... 40
6. Assessor Requirements ..... 41
6.1. Occupational Knowledge and Competence ..... 41
6.2. Qualification Knowledge ..... 41
6.3. Assessor Competence ..... 41
6.4. Continuing Professional Development ..... 42
7. Internal Quality Assurer Requirements ..... 43
7.1. Occupational Knowledge ..... 43
7.2. Qualification Knowledge ..... 43
7.3. Internal Quality Assurer Competence ..... 43
7.4. Continuing Professional Development ..... 44
8. Expert Witnesses ..... 45
8.1. Occupational Competence ..... 45
8.2. Qualification Knowledge ..... 45
9. External Quality Assurers ..... 46
9.1. External Quality Assurer Competence ..... 46
9.2. Continuing Professional Development ..... 46
10. Standardisation ..... 47
10.1. Internal Standardisation ..... 47
10.2. External Standardisation ..... 47
11. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) ..... 47
12. Equality and Diversity ..... 48
13. Health and Safety ..... 48
Appendix 1: Mapping of SFJ Awards Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety (Fire Auditors) to Level 3 Fire Safety Advisor Apprenticeship Standard (ST0188) KSBs ..... 49

# Document Control

Revisions and Amendment Register

| Date of Issue | Page No | Revision | Version |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09 October 2026 | -- | -- | 1.0 |
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| | 7 | Section 2.3 – updated Odyssey references | |
| | | | |

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. About SFJ Awards

SFJ Awards is part of the Workforce Development Trust group, together with Skills for Justice, Skills for Health, People 1st International and iCQ Awards. The Workforce Development Trust is a not-for-profit organisation helping employers to continually improve their workforce through increasing productivity, improving learning solutions and helping to boost the skills for staff across a wide range of industries throughout the UK and internationally.

SFJ Awards is an independent Awarding Organisation, regulated by the UK qualifications regulators, including Ofqual, CCEA Regulation, Qualifications Wales and Qualifications Scotland Accreditation, to assess, quality assure and certificate learners and employees, helping training providers and employers to continue developing a highly skilled workforce for the future. We add value to employers and training providers by delivering a wide range of sector-specific regulated qualifications, bespoke learner certification and quality assurance; SFJ Awards is also an End-Point Assessment Organisation for Apprenticeships in England.

Whilst predominantly delivering qualifications and assessments to meet the needs of Policing, Fire and Rescue, Community Justice, Custodial Care, Armed Forces, Security and Emergency Services, we continue to grow into markets that require a robust, and quality assured certification solution.

## 1.2. Customer Service Statement

Our Customer Service Statement is published on the SFJ Awards website giving the minimum level of service that centres can expect. The Statement will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in response to customer feedback, changes in legislation, and guidance from the qualifications regulators.

## 1.3. Centre Support

SFJ Awards works in partnership with its customers. For help or advice contact:

SFJ Awards
Consult House
Meadowcourt Business Park
4 Hayland Street
Sheffield
S9 1BY

Tel: 0114 284 1970

Email: info@sfjawards.com

Website: www.sfjawards.com

# 2. The Qualification

## 2.1. Qualification Objective

This handbook relates to the following qualification:

**SFJ Awards Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety (Fire Auditors)**

The objective of this qualification is to provide support to a range of individuals who have responsibility for undertaking fire safety audits in simple premises. This includes Fire Safety Advisors, who work with businesses to help them keep people, premises, and the environment safe from fire by offering advice and education to reduce risk. People in this role may be employed by a Fire and Rescue Service or they may work for an organisation in the public, private or not for profit sector.

'Simple premises' are defined in the Competence Framework for Fire Safety Regulators[1]:

*Small premises with a simple layout such as small shops, offices or industrial units with non-complex means of escape and simultaneous evacuation conforming to a recognised code of practice e.g. Approved Document B or the guidance contained in the documents published by the relevant Government departments to support legislative requirements. Simple premises may range from low to high-risk dependent upon the use, management and maintenance of the premises.*

## 2.2. Pre-entry Requirements

Centres must carry out an initial assessment or skills scan before enrolment to confirm that learners are able to work at Level 3 and meet the demands of the programme.

It is recommended centres consider the following skills and experience when enrolling learners for the qualification:

- an existing role, placement or development pathway linked to fire safety, fire auditing or fire safety inspection activity
- relevant knowledge, skills or experience that will support progression into fire safety practice
- access to appropriate learning opportunities, workplace evidence or supervised practice during delivery

Where a learner does not meet the above expectations, the centre must record and justify how the learner will be supported to meet the demands of the qualification without reducing assessment standards.

Achievement of this qualification on its own does not demonstrate occupational competence as a Fire Safety Auditor. Competence must be evidenced through appropriate workplace experience, supervised practice, ongoing professional development and any relevant organisational authorisation.

[1] National Fire Chiefs Council, June 2023

## 2.3. Qualification Structure

To be awarded this qualification the learner must achieve **4 mandatory** units as shown in the table below.

| Mandatory Units | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unit Number** | **Odyssey Reference** | **Unit Title** | **Level** | **GLH** | **Total Unit Time** |
| 1 | 7022 | Understand the Principles of Fire Safety | 3 | 30 | 60 |
| 2 | 7023 | Understand Fire Safety Regulation in Simple Premises | 3 | 50 | 100 |
| 3 | 7024 | Plan and Prepare for Fire Safety Audits in Simple Premises | 3 | 10 | 20 |
| 4 | 7025 | Carry Out Fire Safety Audits in Simple Premises | 3 | 45 | 90 |

## 2.4. Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Values for Total Qualification Time[2], including Guided Learning, are calculated by considering the different activities that Learners would typically complete to achieve and demonstrate the learning outcomes of a qualification. They do not include activities which are required by a Learner's Teacher based on the requirements of an individual Learner and/or cohort. Individual Learners' requirements and individual teaching styles mean there will be variation in the actual time taken to complete a qualification. Values for Total Qualification Time, including Guided Learning, are estimates.

Some examples of activities which can contribute to Total Qualification Time include:

- Independent and unsupervised research/learning
- Unsupervised compilation of a portfolio of work experience
- Unsupervised e-learning
- Unsupervised e-assessment
- Unsupervised coursework
- Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar
- Unsupervised work-based learning
- All Guided Learning

Some examples of activities which can contribute to Guided Learning include:

- Classroom-based learning supervised by a Teacher
- Work-based learning supervised by a Teacher
- Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a Teacher in real time
- E-learning supervised by a Teacher in real time

[2] Total Qualification Time, Ofqual
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications

- All forms of assessment which take place under the Immediate Guidance or Supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, including where the assessment is competence-based and may be turned into a learning opportunity.

The Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning Hours for this qualification are as follows:

| Qualification Title | TQT | GLH |
|---|---|---|
| SFJ Awards Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety (Fire Auditors) | 270 | 135 |

## 2.5. Grading

This qualification is graded pass / fail.

## 2.6. Age Range and Geographical Coverage

This qualification is recommended to learners aged **16 years** and over and is regulated in England and Wales.

## 2.7. Opportunities for Progression

This qualification creates a number of opportunities for progression within fire safety, fire protection and related professional roles.

Learners may progress to higher-level SFJ Awards qualifications, including:

- SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate in Fire Safety (Fire Auditors)
- SFJ Awards Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety (Fire Inspectors)
- SFJ Awards Level 5 Diploma in Fire Engineering Design (Technician)

These qualifications provide opportunities to develop more advanced knowledge and competence in areas such as fire safety regulation, auditing more complex premises and fire engineering design.

Achievement of the qualification may also support learners seeking to develop their professional standing within the fire safety sector, including progression towards appropriate grades of membership or professional recognition with relevant professional bodies, subject to their individual entry and membership requirements. These may include the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM), the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) and other relevant professional organisations.

The qualification may also support progression within employment into roles involving greater responsibility for fire safety regulation, auditing, risk management and compliance.

## 2.8. Use of Languages

SFJ Awards business language is English and we provide assessment materials and qualification specifications that are expressed in English. Assessment specifications and assessment materials may be requested in Welsh or Irish and, where possible, SFJ Awards will try to fulfil such requests. SFJ Awards will provide assessment materials and qualification specifications that are expressed in Welsh or Irish and support the assessment of those learners, where the number of learners makes it economically viable for SFJ Awards to do so. More information is provided in the SFJ Awards' Use of Language Policy.

For learners seeking to take a qualification and be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language, please refer to SFJ Awards' Reasonable Adjustments Policy. A learner may be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted by SFJ Awards for the purpose of Reasonable Adjustment.

Policies are available on our website sfjawards.com or on request from SFJ Awards.

# 3. Qualification Units

## 3.1. Mandatory Units

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Title** | Understand the Principles of Fire Safety | | |
| **Level** | 3 | | |
| **Unit Number** | 1 | | |
| **GLH** | 30 | | |
| **Learning Outcomes** *The learner will:* | **Assessment Criteria** *The learner can:* | | **Guidance and/or Indicative Content** |
| 1. Understand the principles of combustion, fire growth and fire behaviour in a building | 1.1 | Explain the requirements for combustion to occur | Triangle/tetrahedron of fire – how do components work together, and what happens if one is removed? |
| | 1.2 | Describe how fire develops in a compartment | |
| | 1.3 | Describe how a fire can spread beyond the compartment of origin | |
| | 1.4 | Summarise the common causes of fire in different occupancies | https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics-monitor |
| 2. Understand the principles of building construction and how they relate to fire safety in premises | 2.1 | Identify different types of building construction | For example:<br>• Timber frame<br>• Traditional methods<br>• Portal frame<br>• Sandwich panels<br>• Concrete<br>• External wall systems |

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| | | | Learners will not be expected to have an in-depth knowledge of the impact building construction can have on fire safety. Learners should have:<br>• An understanding of typical fire compartmentation methods, i.e. fire doors, compartment walls, fire stopping etc.<br>• An awareness of how the nature of building materials can contribute to fire development and spread<br>• An understanding of how building construction methods can structurally fail and/or collapse |
| | 2.2 | Describe how different types of building construction can impact on fire safety | This may depend on the age and type of building for example older and heritage buildings which do not conform to current building regulations<br><br>Learners should be able to recognise types of building construction which are outside the limits of their own responsibility |
| 3. Understand the role of prevention in keeping people, property and the environment safe from fire | 3.1 | Summarise the principles of prevention in fire safety | Prevention - aids the Responsible Person in preventing a fire breaking out in the first place or from spreading, through passive measures and managerial actions<br><br>Learners should refer to the hierarchy of risk control (Article 10, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005) |
| | 3.2 | Explain how prevention in fire safety can keep people, property and the environment safe | People:<br>• Safety and Well-being: reduce the risk of injuries, fatalities, and health hazards caused by smoke inhalation or burns.<br>• Health Impacts: Fire prevention measures help minimize risks of harmful substances |

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| | | | being released into the air, such as carbon monoxide, which can pose serious health risks to individuals.<br>• Evacuation and Rescue: Effective fire safety measures facilitate safe and timely evacuation during emergencies. This ensures that people can escape from a building quickly and without harm.<br><br>Property:<br>• Preservation of Assets: Fire safety measures help prevent or mitigate property damage caused by fires. This includes structural damage to buildings, destruction of valuable assets, and loss of business or operational disruptions.<br>• Financial Implications: Fire prevention measures help reduce the financial burdens associated with fire damage on property owners and businesses.<br>• Insurance and Risk Management: Effective fire prevention practices can lower insurance premiums for property owners.<br><br>The Environment:<br>• Air and Water Quality: Prevention in fire safety helps minimize the environmental impacts of pollutants released into the air and water sources by reducing the frequency and severity of fires.<br>• Habitat and Biodiversity: Fire safety measures can prevent wildfires and better protect the environment and its diverse ecosystems. |

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| | | | • Climate Change Mitigation: Fire prevention contributes to mitigating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from wildfires and contribute to overall environmental sustainability. |
| 4. Understand requirements for the protection of people from fire in simple premises | 4.1 | Explain basic fire preventative methods | • Remove<br>• Substitute<br>• Training |
| | 4.2 | Explain internal checking procedures of fire safety provisions and when external competent persons are required to assist | Responsible Person carrying out regular internal checks<br><br>Checks of equipment, fire extinguishers, alarms etc by external competent person at appropriate times |
| | 4.3 | Summarise how fire safety concerns would be reported and escalated in own organisation | May include:<br>• Organisation policies on reporting to fire safety protection department<br>• A clear and communicated route to report fire safety deficiencies to ensure they are remediated appropriately |
| | 4.4 | Summarise how to maintain effective fire safety arrangements | May include:<br>• Management control<br>• Staff training/drills<br>• Maintenance |
| | 4.5 | Describe fire safety training requirements and their purpose in the protection of people from fire | For example:<br>• Induction training<br>• Refresher training<br>• Emergency plan |

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| | 4.6 | Explain the legal requirements for record keeping associated with fire safety equipment and management systems | For example:<br>• Fire risk assessment<br>• Emergency plan<br>• Equipment testing and maintenance records (good practice)<br><br>Management systems should include staff training and fire drills |
| 5. Understand requirements for identifying hazards and risks associated with fire | 5.1 | Define the terms hazard and risk | |
| | 5.2 | Explain methods for identifying fire hazards and fire risks in simple premises | |
| | 5.3 | Explain processes and guidance relevant to fire risk assessment in simple premises | |
| | 5.4 | Define the term relevant persons | |
| | 5.5 | Analyse how different needs and circumstances of relevant persons may impact their responses to fire and fire safety | May include:<br>• Age<br>• Culture<br>• Mobility / physical impairment<br>• Cognitive impairment<br>• Language |
| | 5.6 | Describe recognised processes for fire risk assessment in simple premises | For example:<br>• 5 Step<br>• 9 Step |
| | 5.7 | Explain how risk-based solutions are selected to enable compliance with fire safety regulation | Learners may consider for example:<br>• Cost effectiveness<br>• Cost/benefit analysis<br>• Practicality<br>• Type of premises/environment |

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| | 5.8 | Explain how fire risk assessment may be used to justify departures from codes of practice and guidance | |
| | 5.9 | Explain the consequences of failing to identify fire hazards and control risks | Learners should consider people, property and the environment |
| | 5.10 | Explain methods for reporting fire hazards and fire risks in simple premises in accordance with organisational procedures | |
| 6. Understand control measures to mitigate risks from fire in simple premises | 6.1 | Define the terms:<br>• control measure<br>• active control measure<br>• passive control measure | |
| | 6.2 | Summarise active protection control measures for managing fire safety risk and the purpose of each of these measures, to include:<br>• fire detection and warning systems<br>• fire extinguishers<br>• emergency lighting<br>• smoke ventilation systems<br>• sprinklers and other suppression systems<br>• automatic door closers/openers/locking mechanisms<br>• voice control<br>• rising mains<br>• dampers and fuel shut off devices | Fire protection assists persons in the event of a fire and aids escape. It does not prevent a fire from starting but provides warning and protection during the escape process through active and passive measures. |
| | 6.3 | Summarise passive protection control measures for managing fire safety risk and the purpose of each of these measures, to include:<br>• means of escape | |

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| | | • fire resisting construction of corridors, stairs, shafts, ceilings and compartment floors and walls<br>• fire doors (not automatic)<br>• enclosing of elements of structure<br>• barrier protection of buildings<br>• ablative shielding<br>• smoke seals and intumescent strips<br>• intumescent paints and varnishes | |
| | 6.4 | Describe how fire risk is managed within simple premises, including testing, maintenance, processes and procedures | Learners may consider routine activity, for example:<br>• Frequency of activity<br>• Record keeping<br>• Who carries out the different activities and are they competent to do so? |
| | 6.5 | Describe actions people may take that impact on fire safety | Actions could be both positive and negative |
| | 6.6 | Describe the constraints which may impact on the introduction of fire safety solutions within organisations | Factors could include for example:<br>• Cost/benefit<br>• Convenience<br>• Culture<br>• Age of the building/premises<br>• Heritage (e.g. listed buildings) |
| **Additional information about the unit** | | | |
| Assessment guidance | This unit can be assessed through methods appropriate for assessing knowledge. A combination of methods should be used to allow holistic assessment, which could include coursework, e-assessment, professional discussion, question and answer sessions, and/or written examination. | | |
| Links | • *HSE https://www.hse.gov.uk/*<br>• *Gov.uk https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities* | | |

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| | • *Fire Safety Act 2021 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/24/contents/enacted*<br>• *The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made*<br>• *Amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-bill-factsheets/amendments-to-the-regulatory-reform-fire-safety-order-2005-factsheet*<br>• *NFCC Protection & Business Safety https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Protection*<br>• *Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics-monitor* |

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Title** | Understand Fire Safety Regulation in Simple Premises | | |
| **Level** | 3 | | |
| **Unit Number** | 2 | | |
| **GLH** | 50 | | |
| **Learning Outcomes** ***The learner will:*** | **Assessment Criteria** ***The learner can:*** | | **Guidance and/or Indicative Content** |
| 1. Understand the fire safety advisor role | 1.1 | Explain the role of the fire safety advisor | |
| | 1.2 | Clarify the limits of authority of the fire safety advisor | |
| | 1.3 | Explain how the fire safety advisor can support fire safety investigations | Examples may include:<br>• Taking contemporaneous notes<br>• Taking photographs<br>• Writing statements (own and those of witnesses where appropriate) |
| | 1.4 | Explain how to plan and prepare for a fire safety audit on simple premises | |
| | 1.5 | Explain how to carry out a fire safety audit on simple premises | |
| | 1.6 | Summarise the process within own organisation to provide feedback on the effectiveness of fire safety policies and procedures | |
| 2. Understand legislation and guidance for fire safety | 2.1 | Summarise the legislation relevant to fire safety | Learners should consider:<br>• Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASAW)<br>• Safeguarding<br>• Equality, diversity and inclusion – Equality Act 2010 |

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| | | | Fire specific legislation relevant to the learner's nation:<br>• Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)<br>• Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022<br>• Fire Safety Act 2021<br>• Building Safety Act 2022<br>• Building Regulations<br>• Fire (Scotland) Act 2005<br>• Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006<br>• The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006<br>• The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010<br>• The Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025 |
| | 2.2 | Explain legal powers and enforcement duties under fire safety legislation | May include:<br>• Powers of inspectors (Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Article 27)<br>• Powers of Building Safety Regulator<br>• Evidence gathering requirements<br>• Difference between breach (failure to comply) and offence |
| | 2.3 | Explain the impact on the fire audit process of the following:<br>• Regulators' Code<br>• Powers of Entry Code of Practice | • Powers of entry: code of practice - GOV.UK<br>• Regulators' Code - GOV.UK |
| | 2.4 | Explain the aims, objectives and priorities of the regulatory authority | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | 2.5 | Compare the range of options between informal action and formal enforcement available to enforcing authorities, including the legal differences | • Educate and inform<br>• Non-Statutory Notification of Deficiencies or Letter of Fire Safety Matters<br>• Discretionary powers<br>• Statutory Notices<br>• Prosecution |
| | 2.6 | Summarise fire safety guidance relevant to simple premises | Examples include:<br>• Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Fire Safety - Risk Assessment guides<br>• Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)<br>• Making your small block of flats safe from fire - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)<br>• Making your small paying guest accommodation safe from fire - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)<br>• Making your small non-domestic premises safe from fire - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) |
| | 2.7 | Explain circumstances when responsibility for fire safety regulation may change between organisations | Learners may consider for example:<br>• Building Control<br>• Fire and Rescue Services<br>• Health & Safety Executive<br>• Building Safety Regulator<br>• Local Authorities<br>• Licensing Authority<br>• Crown Premises<br>• Defence Fire Safety Regulator<br>• Office for Nuclear Regulation |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | 2.8 | Explain the role of the Responsible Person in relation to simple premises | Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Article 3 and 5 |
| | 2.9 | Summarise the roles, responsibilities, level of authority and requirements of self and others who have responsibility for fire safety in premises | Learners should consider individuals such as:<br>• Fire risk assessor<br>• Fire warden/marshal<br>• Accountable Person (Building Safety Act 2022)<br>• Individuals covered under Article 5 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 |
| | 2.10 | Explain how to access sources of fire safety specialist support, advice and information | For example:<br>• Relevant Fire Authority or Fire Protection Department<br>• Fire Safety Manager<br>• Responsible Person<br><br>This is applicable to both private and fire and rescue sectors. |
| | 2.11 | Explain the importance of self-development and the ability to support the development of others | |
| 3. Understand characteristics of simple premises, associated fire risks and management levels | 3.1 | Describe the characteristics of different types of simple premises | Learners should consider premises as defined in the NFCC Competence Framework for Fire Safety Regulators:<br><br>*Small premises with a simple layout such as small shops, offices or industrial units with non-complex means of escape and simultaneous evacuation conforming to a recognised code of practice e.g. Approved Document B or the guidance contained in the documents published by the relevant Government departments to support legislative requirements.* |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *Simple premises may range from low to high-risk dependent upon the use, management and maintenance of the premises.* |
| | 3.2 | Explain the fire risks associated with different types of simple premises | For example:<br>• Sleeping above commercial premises<br>• HMOs / vulnerable occupants<br>• Retail (stock, seasonal goods)<br>• Pubs/clubs (overcrowding, decorations)<br>• Restaurants (cooking risks)<br>• Offices (electrical risks)<br>• Arson in commercial premises |
| 4. Understand requirements for fire safety regulation in simple premises | 4.1 | Explain the reasons for visiting simple premises for the purpose of fire safety regulation | May include:<br>• Local knowledge<br>• National events<br>• Risk-based inspection programme<br>• Post-fire<br>• Complaints from members of public or staff, for example: fire exits locked; combustible waste build up; fire alarm disabled/detectors covered; fire doors disabled or wedged; blocking fire exits or routes; lack of notices or lighting<br>• Concerns from fire officers or internal staff, for example: not evacuating on fire alarm; not unlocking fire exits; fire safety systems not properly maintained; lack of awareness when questioned<br>• Intelligence-led (partner agencies)<br>• Themed audits<br>• Operational crews |

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| | | | • Request for advice and guidance on premises |
| | 4.2 | Summarise own organisation's policies and procedures to be followed when carrying out fire safety visits in simple premises | May include policies and procedures for:<br>• Arranging and conducting a fire safety visit<br>• Situations when access to premises is denied<br>• Reporting the findings of a fire safety audit<br>• Health & safety<br>• Safeguarding<br>• Government's Prevent Strategy<br>• Lone working |
| | 4.3 | Explain methods to gather information, data and evidence from partner agencies for the purpose of fire safety regulation | May include:<br>• Types of information<br>• Communication skills<br>• Data retrieval |
| | 4.4 | Explain pre-visit information required for the purpose of fire safety regulation and audit | Information may include but is not limited to:<br>• Premises ID<br>• Previous inspection history<br>• History of fires |
| | 4.5 | Summarise how to manage information gathered during a visit to simple premises for the purpose of fire safety regulation in line with organisational requirements | Learners may wish to consider:<br>• Paperwork e.g. test records<br>• Photos taken within the premises (labelled to identify where in the premises they are taken, direction taken from etc) - are they subject to legal requirements (e.g. PACE Code B/GDPR)? Does their organisation have a policy on using photos? |

| | | | |
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| | 4.6 | Explain information sharing requirements during fire safety regulation | • What information needs processing and sharing<br>• Who information is shared with and when e.g. internal (FRS Operational Crews) and external (partner agencies) |
| **Additional information about the unit** | | | |
| Assessment guidance | This unit can be assessed through methods appropriate for assessing knowledge. A combination of methods should be used to allow holistic assessment, which could include coursework, e-assessment, professional discussion, question and answer sessions, written examination. | | |
| Links | • *HSE https://www.hse.gov.uk/*<br>• *Gov.uk https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities*<br>• *Fire Safety Act 2021 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/24/contents/enacted*<br>• *The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made*<br>• *Amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-bill-factsheets/amendments-to-the-regulatory-reform-fire-safety-order-2005-factsheet*<br>• *NFCC Protection & Business Safety https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Protection*<br>• *Prevent Duty https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales-accessible* | | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Title** | Plan and Prepare for Fire Safety Audits in Simple Premises | | |
| **Level** | 3 | | |
| **Unit Number** | 3 | | |
| **GLH** | 10 | | |
| **Learning Outcomes** *The learner will:* | **Assessment Criteria** *The learner can:* | | **Guidance and/or Indicative Content** |
| 1. Be able to prepare for a visit to simple premises to carry out a fire safety audit | 1.1 | Identify the purpose of the visit | This can include:<br>• Initial visit to the premises<br>• Follow up visits<br>• Monitoring visits<br>• Local knowledge<br>• National events e.g. Grenfell, Manchester Arena<br>• Risk-based inspection programme<br>• Complaints or concerns from members of public or staff, for example: fire exits locked; combustible waste build up; fire alarm disabled/detectors covered; fire doors disabled or wedged; blocking fire exits or routes; lack of notices or lighting<br>• Concerns from fire & rescue service officers or staff responsible for fire safety in an organisation, for example: not evacuating on fire alarm; not unlocking fire exits; fire safety systems not properly maintained; lack of awareness when questioned<br>• Intelligence led (partner agencies)<br>• Themed audits<br>• Operational crews<br>• Request for advice and guidance on premises<br>• National guidance |

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| | 1.2 | Identify the role and interests of stakeholders relevant to the fire safety of the premises | This will be in the context of the fire safety audit being carried out. Stakeholders could include for example:<br>• Employees<br>• Management, including landlords, agents, risk assessors, facilities management companies<br>• Occupants/residents of the premises<br>• Regulators<br>• Accountable persons where appropriate as per the Fire Safety Act<br><br>Learners may consider protection of life, property and the environment from fire |
| | 1.3 | Gather information to confirm:<br>• Location of premises<br>• Person with legal responsibilities and duties for fire safety, or their authorised deputy<br>• Risk-based information for fire safety audits in line with own organisational policies | Information sources may include reference to databases such as:<br>• Own organisation's records<br>• Primary Authority records<br>• NFCC/Fire Authority |
| | 1.4 | Interpret documents for the purpose of fire safety regulation in simple premises | For example:<br>• Guidance documents<br>• Codes of practice<br>• Building plans and information |
| 2. Be able to plan a fire safety audit | 2.1 | Plan fire safety audits | Take into account for example:<br>• Organisational priorities<br>• Appropriate benchmarks<br>• Person(s) availability<br>• Information gathered |

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| | 2.2 | Process and share information for the purposes of fire safety regulation, in line with organisational and legal requirements | For example, if there are joint visits between fire authority/enforcer and non-regulator or other agencies such as housing<br><br>May need additional expertise / competent person e.g. fire engineer, heritage officer to support the visit |
| **Additional information about the unit** | | | |
| Assessment guidance | This unit can be assessed through methods appropriate for assessing knowledge and practical skills. A combination of methods should be used to allow holistic assessment, which could include observation, review of work products, professional discussion, question and answer sessions, coursework and e-assessment. | | |
| Links | • *HSE https://www.hse.gov.uk/*<br>• *Gov.uk https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities*<br>• *Fire Safety Act 2021 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/24/contents/enacted*<br>• *The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made*<br>• *Amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-bill-factsheets/amendments-to-the-regulatory-reform-fire-safety-order-2005-factsheet*<br>• *NFCC Protection & Business Safety https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Protection* | | |

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| **Title** | Carry Out Fire Safety Audits in Simple Premises | | |
| **Level** | 3 | | |
| **Unit Number** | 4 | | |
| **GLH** | 45 | | |
| **Learning Outcomes** ***The learner will:*** | **Assessment Criteria** ***The learner can:*** | | **Guidance and/or Indicative Content** |
| 1. Be able to carry out fire safety audits in simple premises | 1.1 | Secure co-operation of others to gain access to premises and carry out fire safety audits | For example, making contact with the relevant person on the premises |
| | 1.2 | Identify all physical areas within the scope of the fire safety audit and relevant persons | |
| | 1.3 | Conduct fire safety audits using relevant information in line with own role and organisational procedures | This can include:<br>• Initial visits<br>• Follow up visits<br>• Monitoring visits |
| | 1.4 | Identify fire safety management arrangements in place using different information sources | Arrangements under Article 11 and Article 9 of the Fire Safety Order e.g.<br>• Fire risk assessments<br>• Testing and maintenance records<br>• Management policies and procedures, including fire safety policy<br>• Schedule of fire drills<br>• Fire safety management arrangements<br>• Fire safety management activities:<br>  ○ implementing the necessary fire safety control measures<br>  ○ establishing emergency procedures<br>  ○ establishing employee training and maintaining records |

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| | | | ○ competent day to day fire safety management<br>○ co-operation and co-ordination<br>○ sharing information with employees, other employers and self-employed<br>• Suitable system of testing and maintenance of the fire safety control measures and equipment for fire fighters<br>• Monitoring the successful implementation of the fire safety measures<br>• Reviewing the fire safety arrangements |
| | 1.5 | Identify fire hazards related to premises | |
| | 1.6 | Assess fire risks related to premises | For example:<br>• Likelihood/causes of fires in each case<br>• Potential consequences/likely spread of fire<br>• Risk to persons |
| | 1.7 | Determine how to minimise fire hazards and fire risks | For example:<br>• Substitution<br>• Elimination |
| | 1.8 | Assess the type and level of residual risk associated with the fire hazards identified | What risk is remaining after fire hazards and risks are minimised? |
| | 1.9 | Identify control measures | Examples of control measures include:<br>• Detection and warning/methods of raising the alarm<br>• Firefighting equipment<br>• Means of escape<br>• Emergency lighting<br>• Signs and notices<br>• Emergency plan |

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| | | | • Training, instruction and drills<br>• Initiating evacuation |
| | 1.10 | Evaluate the effectiveness of current control measures against fire safety benchmark guidance | |
| | 1.11 | Identify positive aspects of fire safety performance | |
| | 1.12 | Explain findings to person with legal responsibilities and duties for fire safety, or their authorised deputy, advising on:<br>• Fire risk reduction measures<br>• Actions to meet legal and statutory requirements<br>• Implications of any areas of non-compliance identified<br>• Positive aspects of fire safety performance | May include:<br>• Deficiencies<br>• Defects<br>• Lack of resources<br>• Lessons learned<br>• Actions required to be taken by self and others |
| | 1.13 | Explain how embracing EDI contributes to treating everyone with dignity and respect | This can include:<br>• Communicating with occupiers, responsible persons and other relevant individuals in an inclusive and respectful manner<br>• Recognising and responding appropriately to individual needs and circumstances<br>• Providing fire safety advice and feedback fairly, without discrimination or bias |
| 2. Be able to plan and prepare to gather evidence for fire safety regulation in simple premises | 2.1 | Identify whether an offence may have taken place | Learners need to understand the difference between breach (failure to comply) and offence |
| | 2.2 | Identify likely sources of evidence relating to possible offences | Evidence could be for example:<br>• Witness testimony<br>• Documents<br>• Visual<br>• Oral |

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| | 2.3 | Take action to preserve audit evidence | Learners need to be prepared to take appropriate action, for example taking photos and asking people not to interfere with/remove evidence |
| | 2.4 | Inform appropriate persons of actions taken to preserve evidence | Appropriate person may be on site, partner agencies, or within own organisation |
| 3. Be able to gather and secure evidence for fire safety regulation of simple premises | 3.1 | Identify potential evidence | |
| | 3.2 | Follow procedures and rules to ensure continuity and admissibility of evidence | Evidence may include:<br>• Own contemporaneous notes<br>• Photos taken within the premises<br>• Witness statements |
| | 3.3 | Use questioning and listening skills to obtain information | Learners at this level should only be clarifying facts |
| | 3.4 | Secure evidence and information to support any potential investigation that may take place | Learners should ensure evidence is kept safely and in line with organisational requirements / policies and in accordance with PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) |
| | 3.5 | Inform appropriate persons of actions taken | May include:<br>• Person with legal responsibilities and duties for fire safety, or their authorised deputy<br>• Fire safety department within own organisation |
| 4. Be able to manage the fire audit process in line with organisational and legislative requirements | 4.1 | Manage fire safety audits effectively using a systematic approach | • Timely efficient audit<br>• Pace and process<br>• Any disruption to the audit<br>• Flexibility to deal with unexpected findings and issues outside the scope of the plan |
| | 4.2 | Communicate clearly, confidently and persuasively with stakeholders | Stakeholders could include:<br>• Employees<br>• Management, including landlords, agents, risk assessors, facilities management companies |

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| | | | • Occupants/residents of the premises<br>• Regulators<br>• Accountable persons where appropriate as per the Fire Safety Act |
| | 4.3 | Provide advice on fire safety matters to stakeholders in relation to simple premises, including how to reduce the risk of fire and false alarms | |
| | 4.4 | Work within own level of authority, responsibility and competence, and seek support when required | |
| | 4.5 | Challenge unsafe or inappropriate behaviours and practices where appropriate | |
| | 4.6 | Explain how confident and integrity-driven actions contribute to creating safe, effective, and practical outcomes | |
| | 4.7 | Explain how actions and decisions reflect respect for life, adherence to the law, environmental responsibility, and community well-being | |
| 5. Be able to create reports following fire safety audits in simple premises | 5.1 | Prepare reports on the findings of fire safety audits in line with legal and own organisational requirements | Organisational requirements may include:<br>• Timeliness<br>• Reporting lines<br><br>Reports may include:<br>• Purpose of the fire safety audit<br>• Details of premises and attendees<br>• Any limitations<br>• Identified findings<br>• Identified hazards and risks<br>• Fire precautions |

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| | | | • Action taken to deal with risks and fire precaution needs<br>• Areas of non-compliance and offences |
| | 5.2 | Complete, maintain and store data and records related to fire safety | Learners may be required to maintain records by updating them after follow up visits |
| **Additional information about the unit** | | | |
| Assessment guidance | This unit can be assessed in a simulated environment, or through direct observation in the workplace. A professional discussion may be used where evidence does not occur naturally through the workplace. | | |
| Links | • *HSE https://www.hse.gov.uk/*<br>• *Gov.uk https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities*<br>• *Fire Safety Act 2021 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/24/contents/enacted*<br>• *The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made*<br>• *Amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-bill-factsheets/amendments-to-the-regulatory-reform-fire-safety-order-2005-factsheet*<br>• *NFCC Protection & Business Safety https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Protection* | | |

# 4. Centre Requirements

## 4.1. Centre Responsibilities

Centres must be approved by SFJ Awards and also have approval to deliver the qualifications they wish to offer. This is to ensure centres have the processes and resources in place to deliver the qualifications. Approved centres must adhere to the requirements detailed in the SFJ Awards Centre Handbook, which includes information for centres on assessment and internal quality assurance processes and procedures.

When a centre applies to offer a qualification, they will need to provide evidence that they have sufficient resources and infrastructure in place for delivery of that qualification:

- evidence of assessor and IQA competence
- sample assessment materials and mark schemes
- scheme of work
- details of available resources.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that their assessor and internal quality assurance staff:

- are occupationally competent and/or knowledgeable as appropriate to the assessor or IQA role they are carrying out
- have current experience of assessing/internal quality assuring as appropriate to the assessor or IQA role they are carrying out
- have access to appropriate training and support
- are independent and any conflicts of interests are managed and monitored appropriately by SFJ Awards.

Information on the induction and continuing professional development of those carrying out assessment and internal quality assurance must be made available by centres to SFJ Awards through the external quality assurance process.

This handbook should be used in conjunction with the following SFJ Awards documents:

- Assessment Guidance
- Centre Approval Process
- Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy
- Centre Handbook
- Complaints Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Enquiries and Appeals Policy
- Examinations and Invigilation Policy
- Fair Access and Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedures
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy
- Sanctions Policy
- Standardisation Policy
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
- Vexatious Behaviour Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

All documents referenced in the strategy are available to centres on Odyssey, SFJ Awards learner management system, or on request from SFJ Awards.

## 4.2. Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy

Awarding Organisations are required by Ofqual to have a CASS Strategy in place to improve the controls where an assessment is devised and marked by a centre[3]. In line with our CASS Strategy, SFJ Awards will determine the most appropriate CASS approach for each qualification / qualification suite using a risk-based approach.

Any Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) used by centres to develop and/or mark assessments must declare any conflict of interest and centres must ensure that any such conflicts are mitigated. All details of such conflicts of interest must be recorded by the centre.

SFJ Awards will require sample assessments from centres to maintain confidence with our centres' approach to maintaining the integrity of our quality assurance strategy defined within the CASS strategy. Centre marking will be subject to external quality assurance.

Centres are permitted to develop and mark assessments for the qualification(s) in this handbook, in line with our CASS Strategy.

## 4.3. Facilities

Training and assessment for approved qualifications must take place in a suitable environment that has been approved by SFJ Awards. The environment must be adequately equipped for training, conducive to effective learning, and must comply with current Health and Safety requirements. Equipment for practical activities must be readily available and fit for purpose. All examination venues must comply with the policy, standards, and regulations specified by SFJ Awards to gain approval for knowledge-based assessment.

Training and assessment facilities must comply with the ongoing approval arrangements of SFJ Awards.

## 4.4. Trainers

Some sectors specify trainer requirements for qualification delivery, for example first aid and security. Details of any specific trainer requirements are included in this qualification handbook. Centres should therefore check the handbook, or with SFJ Awards, for any trainer requirements that apply to the qualification(s) they wish to deliver. Centres applying for approval with SFJ Awards will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each trainer meets the requirements, for example certificates of achievement, CV or CPD records.

[3] Condition H2 - Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny where an assessment is marked by a Centre

# 5. Assessment

## 5.1. Qualification Assessment Methods

Assessment methods[4] that can be used for the **SFJ Awards Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety (Fire Auditors)** are as follows:

- E-assessment
- Multiple Choice Examination
- Portfolio of Evidence (including for example records of professional discussions, question and answer sessions, work products)
- Practical Demonstration / Assignment
- Practical Examination
- Task-based Controlled Assessment
- Written Examination
- Observation
- Professional Discussion
- Interview
- Presentation and Questioning
- Project

## 5.2. Assessing Competence

The purpose of assessing competence is to make sure that an individual is competent to carry out the activities required in their work.

Assessors gather and judge evidence during normal work activities to determine whether the learner demonstrates their competence against the standards in the qualification unit(s). Competence should be demonstrated at a level appropriate to the qualification. The skills required at the different qualification levels are defined in Ofqual's level descriptors.[5] Further information on qualification levels is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Guidance.

Evidence must be:

- Valid
- Authentic
- Sufficient
- Current
- Reliable

Assessment should be integrated into everyday work to make the most of opportunities that arise naturally within the workplace.

[4] Selected from assessment methods listed on Ofqual's regulatory system (Portal)
[5] Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition, Section E - Design and development of qualifications www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications

## 5.3. Methods for Assessing Competence

Qualifications may be assessed using any method, or combination of methods, as stipulated either by SFJ Awards or within specific qualifications, and which clearly demonstrate that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met. Some sectors may have specific assessment requirements that apply to their qualifications and where these apply, details will be included in the qualification-specific handbook.

Assessors need to be able to select the right assessment methods for the competences that are being assessed, without overburdening the learner or the assessment process, or interfering with everyday work activities. SFJ Awards expect assessors to use a combination of different assessment methods to make a decision about an individual's occupational competence. Assessment methods which are most likely to be used are outlined below. However, these are included for guidance only and there may be other methods which are suitable. Further information on assessment methods is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Guidance.

### 5.3.1. Observation

SFJ Awards believe that direct observation in the workplace by an assessor or testimony from an expert witness is preferable as it allows for authenticated, valid and reliable evidence. Where learners demonstrate their competence in a real work situation, this must be done without the intervention from a tutor, supervisor or colleague.

However, SFJ Awards recognise that alternative sources of evidence and assessment methods may have to be used where direct observation is not possible or practical.

### 5.3.2. Testimony of Witnesses and Expert Witnesses

Witness testimonies are an accepted form of evidence for learners compiling portfolios. Witness testimonies can be generated by peers, line managers and other individuals working closely with the learner. Witnesses are defined as being those people who are occupationally expert in their role.

Testimony can also be provided by expert witnesses who are occupationally competent **and** familiar with the qualification unit(s). Assessors will not need to spend as long assessing expert witness testimony as they would a witness testimony from a non-expert. Therefore, if expert witnesses are involved in the assessment strategy for a qualification a greater number of learners can be managed by a smaller number of assessors.

The assessor is however responsible for making the final judgement in terms of the learner meeting the evidence requirements for the qualification unit(s).

### 5.3.3. Work Outputs (Product Evidence)

Examples of work outputs include plans, reports, budgets, photographs, videos or notes of an event. Assessors can use work outputs in conjunction with other assessment methods, such as observation and discussion, to confirm competence and assure authenticity of the

evidence presented.

### 5.3.4. Professional Discussion

Discussions allow the learner to describe and reflect on their performance and knowledge in relation to the standards. Assessors can use discussions to test the authenticity, validity and reliability of a learner's evidence. Written/audio records of discussions must be maintained.

### 5.3.5. Questioning the Learner

Questioning can be carried out orally or in written form and used to cover any gaps in assessment or corroborate other forms of evidence. Written/audio records of all questioning must be maintained.

### 5.3.6. Simulations

Simulations may take place in a non-operational environment which is not the learner's workplace, for example a training centre. The assessment guidance attached to each unit in section 3 of the handbook will specify where simulations are authorised. Please note that proposed simulations **must** be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose as part of the IQA's pre-delivery activity.

Simulations can be used when:

- the employer or assessor considers that evidence in the workplace will not be demonstrated within a reasonable timeframe
- there are limited opportunities to demonstrate competence in the workplace against all the assessment criteria
- there are health and safety implications due to the high-risk nature of the work activity
- the work activity is non-routine and assessment cannot easily be planned for
- assessment is required in more difficult circumstances than is likely to happen day to day.

Simulations must follow the principles below:

1. The nature of the contingency and the physical environment for the simulation must be realistic
2. Learners should be given no indication as to exactly what contingencies they may come across in the simulation
3. The demands on the learner during the simulation should be no more or less than they would be in a real work situation
4. Simulations must be planned, developed and documented by the centre in a way that ensures the simulation correctly reflects what the specific qualification unit seeks to assess and all simulations should follow these documented plans
5. There should be a range of simulations to cover the same aspect of a unit and they should be rotated regularly.

## 5.4. Assessing Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge-based assessment involves establishing what the learner knows or understands at a level appropriate to the qualification. The depth and breadth of knowledge required at the different qualification levels are defined in Ofqual's level descriptors.[6] Further information on qualification levels is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Guidance.

Assessments must be:

- Fair
- Robust
- Rigorous
- Authentic
- Sufficient
- Transparent
- Appropriate

Good practice when assessing knowledge includes use of a combination of assessment methods to ensure that as well as being able to recall information, the learner has a broader understanding of its application in the workplace. This ensures that qualifications are a valid measure of a learner's knowledge and understanding.

A proportion of any summative assessment may be conducted in controlled environments to ensure conditions are the same for all learners. This could include use of:

- Closed book conditions, where learners are not allowed access to reference materials
- Time bound conditions
- Invigilation.

Where assessment in controlled environments is considered appropriate for qualifications, or the use of specific assessment materials (for example, exemplars or scenarios) is required, information will be included in the qualification handbook.

## 5.5. Methods for Assessing Knowledge and Understanding

SFJ Awards expect assessors to use a variety of different assessment methods to make a decision about an individual's knowledge and understanding, which are likely to include a combination of the following:

a) Written tests in a controlled environment

b) Multiple choice questions (MCQs)

c) Evidenced question and answer sessions with assessors

d) Evidenced professional discussions

e) Written assignments (including scenario-based written assignments).

[6] Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition, Section E - Design and development of qualifications www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications

Where written assessments are centre-devised and centre-assessed, centres must:

- maintain a sufficient bank of assignments which are changed regularly
- record how risks in tests/exams conducted in controlled environments are mitigated
- conduct assessments in line with SFJ Awards Examination and Invigilation Policy.

Centres must take into account the qualification when selecting knowledge assessment methods to ensure they are appropriate and allow the learner to evidence the assessment criteria. For example, MCQs are unlikely to be appropriate for higher level qualifications or assessment criteria which require learners to 'explain', 'describe', 'evaluate' or 'analyse'.

## 5.6. Assessment Planning

Planning assessment allows a holistic approach to be taken, which focuses on assessment of the learner's work activity as a whole. This means that the assessment:

- reflects the skills requirements of the workplace
- saves time
- streamlines processes
- makes the most of naturally occurring evidence opportunities

Planning assessment enables assessors to track learners' progress and incorporate feedback into the learning process; assessors can therefore be sure that learners have had sufficient opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge to perform competently and consistently to the standards before being assessed. The assessment is therefore a more efficient, cost-effective process which minimises the burden on learners, assessors and employers.

# 6. Assessor Requirements

## 6.1. Occupational Knowledge and Competence

Due to the risk-critical nature of fire safety activities within the built environment, and the potential legal and public safety implications of the work being assessed, assessors must understand the nature and context of the learners' work. This means that assessors must be occupationally competent. Each assessor must therefore be, according to current sector practice, competent in the functions covered by the unit(s) they are assessing. They will have gained their occupational competence by working within the sector relating to the unit(s) or qualification(s) they are assessing.

Assessors must be able to demonstrate consistent application of the skills and the current supporting knowledge and understanding in the context of a recent role directly related to the qualification unit(s) they are assessing as a practitioner, trainer or manager.

Where assessors are assessing knowledge-based qualifications, they must be occupationally knowledgeable in the sector they are assessing in.

## 6.2. Qualification Knowledge

Assessors must be familiar with the qualification unit(s) they are assessing. They must be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work.

## 6.3. Assessor Competence

Assessors must be able to make valid, reliable and fair assessment decisions. To demonstrate their competence, we expect assessors to be:

- qualified with a recognised assessor qualification, or
- working towards a recognised assessor qualification.

However, there may be circumstances when assessors have the equivalent competence through training to appropriate national standards, and SFJ Awards will agree this on a case-by-case basis.

Assessors' experience, knowledge and understanding could be verified by a combination of:

- curriculum vitae and employer endorsement or references
- possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ, or vocationally related qualification
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- interview (the verification process must be recorded and available for audit).

Recognised assessor qualifications include, but are not limited to:

- RQF/QCF Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- RQF/QCF Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement
- RQF/QCF Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- An appropriate Assessor qualification in the SCQF as identified by SQA Accreditation

- A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods
- D32/33 Assess candidate performance, using differing sources of evidence.

Where assessors hold an older qualification e.g. D32/33 or A1, they must provide evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to demonstrate current competence.

Assessors must hold an assessor qualification, or equivalent competence if agreed by SFJ Awards, relevant to the type of qualification(s) they are assessing e.g.

- **Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment:**
  For assessors who assess **competence in a work environment**, which requires the use of the following assessment methods: observation, examining work products or outputs, oral questioning, discussion, use of witness testimony, learner statements and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- **Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement:**
  For assessors who assess **knowledge and/or skills in vocationally related areas** using the following assessment methods: tests of skills, oral questioning, written questions, case studies, assignments, projects and RPL.

To be able to assess both knowledge and competence-based qualifications, new assessors should be working towards the **Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement.**

Centres must have in place a procedure to ensure that their trainee assessors have a representative sample of their assessment decisions counter signed by a qualified and competent assessor. SFJ Awards will provide centres with guidance on the ratio of qualified/trainee assessors. Trainee assessors working towards a qualification must be registered for the qualification with a regulated AO and achieve it within 18 months. Assessor competence will be checked through annual External Quality Assurance checks.

Centres must check the qualification handbook for assessor requirements for the qualification(s) they are approved to deliver as some sectors have different requirements e.g. security, education and training, assessor and quality assurance, and learning and development.

Centres applying for approval with SFJ Awards will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each assessor meets these requirements, for example certificates of achievement. Centres who apply for approval to offer additional qualifications will be required to provide evidence of assessor competence for the qualifications they wish to offer.

## 6.4. Continuing Professional Development

Assessors must actively engage in continuous professional development activities to maintain:

- occupational competence and knowledge by keeping up-to-date with the changes taking place in the sector(s) for which they carry out assessments
- professional competence and knowledge as an assessor.

It is the centre's responsibility to retain the CPD information of assessors. Assessor competence and CPD will be checked by External Quality Assurers at the centre's annual compliance visit.

# 7. Internal Quality Assurer Requirements

## 7.1. Occupational Knowledge

Internal quality assurers (IQAs) 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 fire safety activities within the built environment, and the potential legal and public safety implications of the work being assessed, they must understand the nature and context of the assessors' work and that of their learners. This means that they must have worked closely with staff who carry out the functions covered by the qualifications, 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 units.

## 7.2. Qualification Knowledge

IQAs must understand the content, structure and assessment requirements for the qualification(s) they are internal quality assuring.

Centres should provide IQAs with an induction to the qualifications that they are responsible for quality assuring. IQAs should also have access to ongoing training and updates on current issues relevant to these qualifications.

## 7.3. Internal Quality Assurer Competence

IQAs must occupy a position in the organisation that gives them the authority and resources to:

- coordinate the work of assessors
- provide authoritative advice
- call meetings as appropriate
- conduct pre-delivery internal quality assurance on centre assessment plans, for example, to ensure that any proposed simulations are fit for purpose
- visit and observe assessment practice
- review the assessment process by sampling assessment decisions
- ensure that assessment has been carried out by assessors who are occupationally competent, or for knowledge-based qualifications occupationally knowledgeable, in the area they are assessing
- lead internal standardisation activity
- resolve differences and conflicts on assessment decisions

To demonstrate their competence, IQAs must be:

- qualified with a recognised internal quality assurance qualification, or
- working towards a recognised internal quality assurance qualification.

However, there may be circumstances when IQAs have the equivalent competence through training to appropriate national standards, and SFJ Awards will agree this on a case-by-case basis. Recognised IQA qualifications include, but are not limited to:

- RQF/QCF Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes

and Practice
- RQF/QCF Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- An appropriate IQA qualification in the SCQF as identified by SQA Accreditation
- V1 Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
- D34 Internally verify the assessment process.

Where IQAs hold an older qualification e.g. D34 or V1, they must provide evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to demonstrate current competence. Approved centres will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each IQA meets these requirements, for example certificates of achievement.

Centres must have in place a procedure to ensure that their trainee IQAs have a representative sample of their IQA decisions counter signed by a qualified IQA who holds a minimum of the **Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice**. SFJ Awards will provide centres with guidance on the ratio of qualified/trainee IQAs.

Trainee IQAs working towards one of the above qualifications must be registered for the qualification with a regulated AO and achieve it within 18 months. IQA competence will be checked through annual External Quality Assurance checks.

## 7.4. Continuing Professional Development

IQAs must actively engage in continuous professional development activities to maintain:

- occupational knowledge by keeping up-to-date with the changes taking place in the sector(s) for which they carry out assessments
- professional competence and knowledge as an IQA.

Centres must check the qualification handbook for IQA requirements for the qualification(s) they are approved to deliver as some sectors have different requirements e.g. security, education and training, assessor and quality assurance, and learning and development.

# 8. Expert Witnesses

Expert witnesses, for example line managers and supervisors, can provide evidence that a learner has demonstrated competence in an activity. Their evidence contributes to performance evidence and has parity with assessor observation. Expert witnesses do not however perform the role of assessor.

## 8.1. Occupational Competence

Expert witnesses must, according to current sector practice, be competent in the functions covered by the unit(s) for which they are providing evidence.

They must be able to demonstrate consistent application of the skills and the current supporting knowledge and understanding in the context of a recent role directly related to the qualification unit that they are witnessing as a practitioner, trainer or manager.

## 8.2. Qualification Knowledge

Expert witnesses must be familiar with the qualification unit(s) and must be able to interpret current working practices and technologies within the area of work.

# 9. External Quality Assurers

External quality assurance is carried out by SFJ Awards to ensure that there is compliance, validity, reliability and good practice in centres. External quality assurers (EQAs) are appointed by SFJ Awards to approve centres and to monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance carried out by centres.

SFJ Awards are responsible for ensuring that their external quality assurance team have:

- sufficient and appropriate occupational knowledge
- current experience of external quality assurance
- access to appropriate training and support.

## 9.1. External Quality Assurer Competence

To demonstrate their competence, EQAs must be:

- qualified with a recognised external quality assurance qualification, or
- working towards a recognised external quality assurance qualification

Relevant qualifications include:

- Level 4 Award in the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice

Trainee EQAs working towards one of the above qualifications must be registered for the qualification with a regulated AO and aim to achieve it within 18 months. Whilst working towards a qualification, trainee EQAs will be supported by a qualified EQA and receive training, for example by shadowing the EQA on compliance visits. EQA competence will be checked and monitored by SFJ Awards.

## 9.2. Continuing Professional Development

EQAs must maintain their occupational and external quality assurance knowledge. They will attend training and development designed to keep them up-to-date, facilitate standardisation between staff and share good practice.

# 10. Standardisation

Internal and external standardisation is required to ensure the consistency of evidence, assessment decisions and qualifications awarded over time.

## 10.1. Internal Standardisation

IQAs should facilitate internal standardisation events for assessors to attend and participate, in order to review evidence used, make judgments, compare quality and come to a common understanding of what is sufficient.

## 10.2. External Standardisation

SFJ Awards will enable access to external standardisation opportunities for centres and EQAs over time.

Further information on standardisation is available in the SFJ Awards Quality Assurance (Internal and External) Guidance and the SFJ Awards Standardisation Policy.

# 11. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process of recognising previous formal, informal or experiential learning so that the learner avoids having to repeat learning/assessment within a new qualification. RPL is a broad concept and covers a range of possible approaches and outcomes to the recognition of prior learning (including credit transfer where an Awarding Organisation has decided to attribute credit to a qualification).

The use of RPL encourages transferability of qualifications and/or units, which benefits both learners and employers. SFJ Awards support the use of RPL and centres must work to the principles included in Section 6 Assessment and Quality Assurance of the SFJ Awards Centre Handbook and outlined in SFJ Awards Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

# 12. Equality and Diversity

Centres must comply with legislation and the requirements of the RQF relating to equality and diversity. There should be no barriers to achieving a qualification based on:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that learners who are disabled or who have additional learning needs are not disadvantaged in any way. Learners must declare their needs prior to the assessment and all necessary reasonable adjustment arrangements must have been approved by SFJ Awards and implemented before the time of their assessment.

All cases where reasonable adjustment has been used must be fully documented, made available for external quality assurance and retained for a minimum of 3 years.

Further information is available in the SFJ Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and the SFJ Awards Equality of Opportunity Policy.

SFJ Awards will conduct Equality Impact Assessments in the design and development of qualifications to minimise as far as possible any impact on learners with a protected characteristic, disability or additional learning needs.

# 13. Health and Safety

SFJ Awards are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners, employees and volunteers and expect everyone to share this commitment.

SFJ Awards foster an open and supportive culture to encourage the safety and well-being of employees, learners and partner organisations to enable:

- learners to thrive and achieve
- employees, volunteers and visitors to feel secure
- everyone to feel assured that their welfare is a high priority.

Assessment of competence-based qualifications in some sectors can carry a high-risk level due to the nature of some roles. Centres must therefore ensure that due regard is taken to assess and manage risk and have procedures in place to ensure that:

- qualifications can be delivered safely with risks to learners and those involved in the assessment process minimised as far as possible
- working environments meet relevant health and safety requirements.

## Appendix 1: Mapping of SFJ Awards Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety (Fire Auditors) to Level 3 Fire Safety Advisor Apprenticeship Standard (ST0188)[7] KSBs

| | Unit 1 | | | | | | Unit 2 | | | | Unit 3 | | Unit 4 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 | LO6 | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO1 | LO2 | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 |
| K1 | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| K2 | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| K3 | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| K4 | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| K5 | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| K6 | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| K7 | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| K8 | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| K9 | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K10 | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K11 | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K12 | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K13 | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K14 | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K15 | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K16 | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

[7] This qualification has been mapped to the most up-to-date version of the apprenticeship standard at the time of development (V1.2 - https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/st0188-v1-2)

| | Unit 1 | | | | | | Unit 2 | | | | Unit 3 | | Unit 4 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 | LO6 | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO1 | LO2 | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 |
| K17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K18 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K19 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| S3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| S11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S13 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | Unit 1 | | | | | | Unit 2 | | | | Unit 3 | | Unit 4 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 | LO6 | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO1 | LO2 | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 |
| S16 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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