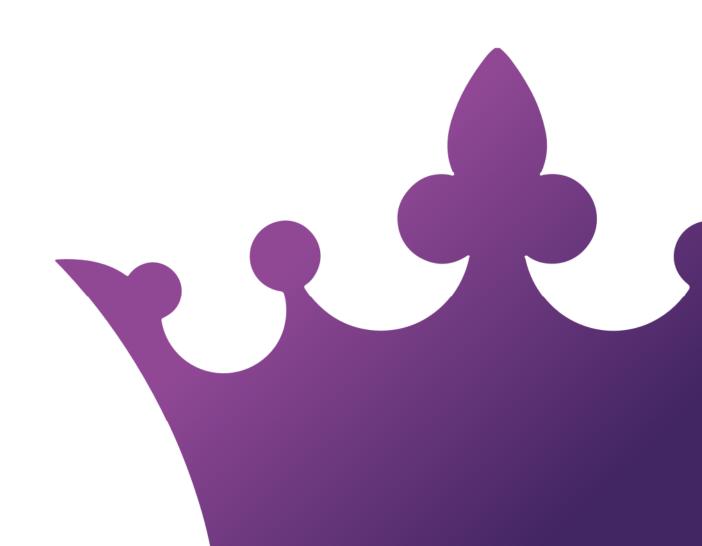# Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice
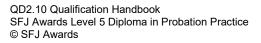
Qualification Handbook

SFJ Awards Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice

Qualification Number: 610/2081/3

Operational Start Date: 1 February 2023

Document Control

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Date of Issue	Page No	Revision	Version
03/02/2023	-	N/A	1

Contents

1   Introduction

1.1   About Us

SFJ Awards is part of the Workforce Development Trust group, together with Skills for Justice, Skills for Health and People 1st International. 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 and Qualifications Wales, to assess, quality assure and certificate learners and employees, helping training providers and employers to continue developing a highly skilled workforce for the future. Our values are 'For Skills, For Flexibility and For Jobs' and our work embodies the core charitable aims of the wider Workforce Development Trust group that ultimately supports better jobs. 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

E-mail: info@sfjawards.com
Website: www.sfjawards.com

2   The Qualification

2.1   Qualification Objective

This handbook relates to the following qualification:

SFJ Awards Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice

The objective of this qualification is to allow Probation Services Officers to develop the skills required for the role of a Probation Officer.

This qualification has been revised with National Probation Service (NPS) and the Ministry of Justice and replaces the SFJ Awards Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice 601/8688/4. The qualification has been updated following developments in the delivery of probation services, so it reflects current terminology and practice, and supports modernisation of the assessment process. It is a mandatory component of the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQIP) training programme.

'People on probation' and 'individuals' include all those for whom Probation Officers have supervisory responsibility. Evidence can therefore be generated from working with offenders based in the community or through work with people serving a custodial sentence. Evidence for the qualification will come from working with diverse behaviours such as domestic abuse, sex offending, extremism, violence and substance abuse, and a wide range of offenders including those with mental health and personality disorders. However, it will not be necessary to obtain evidence for working with all these groups.

Performance evidence for working with victims, and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults will also need to be included for the relevant units in accordance with organisational requirements.

Probation Officers are expected to demonstrate 'professional curiosity' which is explained by HMPPS as:

Being professionally curious is a process of always questioning and seeking verification for the information you are given rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value. By doing this you can avoid some common pitfalls in practice: being 'professionally optimistic' by focusing on positive and not identifying where things are not improving, or risk is increasing; making a judgement about new information without verifying it with other agencies involved; accepting an offender's level of compliance and not exploring if this could be 'disguised compliance'; allowing crisis/chaotic behaviour to distract you from risk management work and accepting this as normal.' (HMPPS, 2020).

2.2 Pre-entry Requirements

To undertake this qualification learners are likely to be working as Probation Services Officers or in equivalent roles in order to be suitably experienced. Learners will need to have been accepted onto the PQIP programme.

2.3 Qualification Structure

To be awarded this qualification the learner must achieve **6** mandatory units as shown in the table(s) below.

Mandatory Units					
Unit Number	Odyssey Reference	Unit Title	Level	GLH	Credit Value
1	6302	Understand probation practice	5	20	7
2	6303	Demonstrate probation values and professional behaviours	5	15	8
3	6304	Assess and manage the risk, needs and responsivity of individuals	6	20	10
4	6305	Engage individuals on probation and in custody to support positive change	5	15	8
5	6306	Rehabilitate, resettle and promote desistance from crime	5	15	8
6	6307	Produce and present reports for formal hearings	5	13	5

2.4   Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Values for Total Qualification Time[1], 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
- 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 5 Diploma in Probation Practice	460	98

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

2.5   Grading

This qualification is graded pass / fail.

2.6   Age Range and Geographical Coverage

This qualification is recommended to learners aged **18** years and over and is regulated in England and Wales.

2.7   Opportunities for Progression

This qualification comprises the vocational element of the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) and therefore supports learners to become qualified Probation Officers.

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 www.sfjawards.com or on request from SFJ Awards.

3 Qualification Units

3.1 Mandatory Units

Title	Understand probation practice	
Level	5	
Unit Number	1	
Total Hours	70	
GLH	20	
Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	**Assessment Criteria** *The learner can:*	**Guidance and/or Indicative Content**
1. Understand the framework of probation practice	1.1 Explain the organisational aims and structure of the Probation Service	
	1.2 Summarise the range of legislation that governs probation practice	This may include for example legislation relating to victims' rights, criminal justice, data protection, safeguarding, equality and diversity.

		1.3	Summarise the relationship of the Probation Service to the wider Criminal Justice system	This is likely to include a succinct overview of how the Probation Service works in relation to other Criminal Justice organisations and how this affects their operations and interactions with regard to statutory duties and public protection.
		1.4	Analyse how organisational policies and procedures inform own practice	Includes for example victims' rights, Practice Frameworks, National Standards.
2.	Understand probation professional ethics, values and practices	2.1	Analyse the implications of professional ethics and values on probation practice	May include for example professional boundaries and integrity, equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging.
		2.2	Explain how professional ethics and values are promoted in own role	Learners should be able to reflect on their own practice.
		2.3	Explain how the values of the Probation Service support its organisational aims	
3.	Understand risk assessment and management in the probation context	3.1	Summarise the principles of risk assessment	
		3.2	Critically compare static and dynamic risk factors	
		3.3	Evaluate the role of protective factors in managing the risk of harm	Examples could include links to risk management plans.

		3.4	Analyse how strategic partnerships within public protection arrangements in own area of responsibility support the management of risk and positive outcomes	
		3.5	Evaluate the role of professional curiosity in enhancing risk assessment and management	
4.	Understand how to engage and motivate people on probation to promote change	4.1	Evaluate own approach to building trust and rapport with a diverse range of people on probation whilst maintaining professional boundaries	
		4.2	Critically compare strategies for motivation and maintaining engagement	For example, a strengths-based approach.
		4.3	Analyse how a strengths-based approach contributes to desistance from crime	
5.	Understand how to share information and represent own organisation in a range of professional contexts	5.1	Explain the importance of effective communication both verbally and in writing	Learners should consider how they communicate both when representing own organisation and sharing information.
		5.2	Explain the report requirements for formal hearings addressing complex behaviour and circumstances	Formal hearings may include: court hearings, case conferences, oral hearings and parole boards.
		5.3	Explain the information needs of formal hearings	May include information required, timescales and format.

	5.4	Summarise how information is shared within and between organisations	

Additional information about the unit	
Unit aims	This unit is about understanding probation practice and underpins all the other units in the Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice. Learners must be able to show that they have a solid grounding in all elements of probation practice.
Assessment guidance	This unit must be assessed through methods appropriate for knowledge based criteria, for example: • Written assignments (including scenario-based written assignments) • Written tests • Evidenced written and/or oral questioning or professional discussions with assessors
Links	www.probation-institute.org/code-of-ethics

Title	Demonstrate probation values and professional behaviours
Level	5
Unit Number	2
Total Hours	80
GLH	15

Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	Assessment Criteria *The learner can:*		Guidance and/or Indicative Content
1. Be able to promote the professional values required of a probation officer	1.1	Contribute to a culture of openness and accountability	This will include compliance with organisational policy but may also be indicated in interactions with people on probation and colleagues in own and other organisations. Assessors may consider evidence from line managers in respect of reflective supervision and personal development.
	1.2	Demonstrate how the rights and needs of victims are taken into account	
	1.3	Demonstrate own ability to take into account diversity of, and equity for, individuals	

2.	Be able to maintain and develop own knowledge, skills and competence within the role of a Probation Officer	2.1	Explain the benefits of maintaining own learning and development and applying new knowledge to own practice	
		2.2	Respond positively to feedback	For example, from colleagues. Sometimes feedback can be difficult to receive. Valid/evidence-based feedback needs to be acknowledged and taken on board to support practice improvement.
		2.3	Share own experience and knowledge with others	In a learning organisation, individuals readily share their knowledge with colleagues to improve team performance.
		2.4	Review own practice to identify development needs and specify priority areas for development	This will include reflection on own practice.
3.	Be able to make evidence based decisions	3.1	Explain how to mitigate the impact of unconscious bias on decision-making	This may be personal unconscious bias or that displayed by others.
		3.2	Take evidence-based decisions with an explanation of the rationale	For example, defensible decisions, reference to Practice Frameworks, research and available toolkits.
		3.3	Seek guidance and support at appropriate times when making decisions	

		3.4	Justify own professional judgement in complex cases	
4.	Be able to work as part of a team	4.1	Contribute to the objectives of own team and wider organisation	
		4.2	Share information with relevant individuals and organisations in order to keep people safe	May be a wider 'team' and include organisations such as agencies, support organisations, charities. People may include: individuals on probation or in custody; staff in own or other organisations; members of the public Learners may also consider adult and child safeguarding.
		4.3	Demonstrate personal resilience in the management of workload	This may include for example, prioritising workload and how competing priorities are managed.
5.	Be able to promote equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging	5.1	Demonstrate respect and responsiveness in own work with individuals	Individuals may include people on probation or in custody, or colleagues in own and other agencies.
		5.2	Promote equity, value diversity and support inclusion and belonging through work with others	Others may include people on probation or in custody, or colleagues in own and other agencies.

	5.3	Reflect on own behaviour in relation to promoting equity, valuing diversity, and supporting inclusion and belonging	
6. Be able to manage data and information to support colleagues in own and other agencies	6.1	Maintain records according to organisational requirements	For example, timeliness of record keeping.
	6.2	Maintain the confidentiality of data and information in line with organisational and legal requirements	

Additional information about the unit	
Unit aims	This unit is about demonstrating professional values and behaviours in probation practice. Learners must be able to make professional judgements using appropriate ethics and values.
Assessment guidance	This unit must be assessed through methods appropriate for competence based criteria, for example: • Direct observation in the workplace by an assessor • Witness testimony • Work outputs (product evidence) • Evidenced written and/or oral questioning or professional discussions with assessors
Links	https://www.probation-institute.org/code-of-ethics

Title	Assess and manage the risk, needs and responsivity of individuals
Level	6
Unit Number	3
Total Hours	100
GLH	20

Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	Assessment Criteria *The learner can:*		Guidance and/or Indicative Content
1. Be able to carry out risk assessments for individuals in custody or in the community	1.1	Gather information required to carry out risk assessments	
	1.2	Analyse all relevant information to inform risk assessments	
	1.3	Assess individuals' perceptions of their circumstances and behaviours	May include challenge to these perceptions and behaviours.
	1.4	Assess the criminogenic needs and strengths of individuals	
	1.5	Assess individuals' responsivity and capacity for change	Assessment may address protected characteristics in relation to responsivity.
	1.6	Analyse individuals' risk and protective factors	
	1.7	Analyse the likelihood of individuals' reoffending to inform risk assessments	

		1.8	Evaluate the risk of serious harm	
		1.9	Assess the imminence of serious harm	Harm could be caused to anyone who might be affected by the individual's actions, including self. Learners may also consider adult and child safeguarding.
		1.10	Carry out risk assessments according to organisational requirements	
		1.11	Justify decisions and conclusions of risk assessments	
2.	Be able to develop risk management plans to keep people safe	2.1	Create risk management plans by working with individuals and stakeholders to reach a professional judgement	People may include: individuals on probation or in custody; staff in own or other organisations; members of the public. May include how planning addresses mitigation of the risk of serious harm. Learners may also consider adult and child safeguarding.
		2.2	Engage with organisations who can contribute to risk management plans for individuals who present a risk of serious harm to others	May include challenging other agencies, escalating decisions and holding others to account.

		2.3	Demonstrate how own decisions and actions have supported risk management	
		2.4	Produce a clear and realistic contingency plan	
3.	Be able to plan interventions for individuals who present a risk of serious harm to others	3.1	Engage with individuals to promote the purpose and benefits of the interventions available	
		3.2	Evaluate the suitability of interventions	
		3.3	Make a professional judgement concerning interventions and support plans which aim to protect the public and meet individuals' needs	Learners may consider safeguarding principles and the needs of victims.
		3.4	Record decisions of interventions and support plans which aim to protect the public and meet individuals' needs	
4.	Be able to implement and review risk management plans	4.1	Implement risk management plans through engagement with individuals and relevant organisations	May include for example: • multi-agency working • safeguarding issues • challenging other agencies and holding others to account • escalating decisions • supervision • victim safety • monitoring

				• intervention
				• contingency
	4.2	Review with individuals and relevant organisations the effectiveness of agreed interventions and support plans		
	4.3	Make a professional judgement concerning options for change where planned objectives are not being met		May include changes to interventions if there are altered needs.
	4.4	Record decisions regarding changes in interventions and support plans which aim to protect the public and meet the individuals' needs		

Additional information about the unit	
Unit aims	This unit is about assessing the risk, needs and responsivity of people on probation and in custody, including those who present a risk of serious harm to others. The learner must be able to critically analyse and interpret complex information to make accurate and defensible decisions, professional judgements, and risk assessments.
	This unit is also about managing risk of serious harm to the public. Practitioners will need to be confident to work effectively, efficiently, and excellently to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, as well as potential victims of serious offending, for example, sexual offending, domestic abuse, extremism and hate crime.

Assessment guidance	This unit must be assessed through methods appropriate for competence based criteria, for example:
	- Direct observation in the workplace by an assessor
	- Witness testimony
	- Work outputs (product evidence)
	- Evidenced written and/or oral questioning or professional discussions with assessors
Links	https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/

Title	Engage individuals on probation and in custody to support positive change
Level	5
Unit Number	4
Total Hours	80
GLH	15

Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	Assessment Criteria *The learner can:*		Guidance and/or Indicative Content
1. Be able to engage and motivate individuals to promote positive change	1.1	Engage with individuals to explore the effects of their behaviour on themselves and others	Individuals may be people on probation in the community, or in custody.
	1.2	Motivate individuals to promote positive change	
	1.3	Support development of individuals' self-determination	
	1.4	Encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own behaviour	
	1.5	Encourage individuals to resolve issues associated with attitudes and behaviours that are non-productive	May include challenge to counter-productive attitudes and behaviours.
	1.6	Use motivational interviewing to promote rehabilitation and resettlement	

		1.7	Collaborate with individuals to ensure they are meaningfully involved in planning and that their views are taken into account when establishing goals	
		1.8	Encourage individuals to identify options for overcoming barriers to their progress	
		1.9	Collaborate with individuals to develop personalised rehabilitation plans for their desistance from crime	
		1.10	Model appropriate use of authority	
2.	Be able to manage individuals' rehabilitation and their desistance from crime	2.1	Work with individuals to facilitate their understanding of the conditions of their supervision and the consequences of non-compliance	
		2.2	Work with individuals to encourage compliance	
		2.3	Use feedback and praise to encourage individuals to sustain positive changes in their behaviour	
		2.4	Support individuals to build resilience and avoid dependency	
		2.5	Challenge individuals' attitudes, opinions or behaviours which are anti-social, aggressive, discriminatory or disruptive to progress	This may also link to Learning Outcome 1, AC1.5
		2.6	Review goals and achievements with individuals as required	For example, in response to changes in circumstances

		2.7	Record the outcomes of reviews in accordance with organisational requirements	
3.	Be able to collaborate with others who are working to rehabilitate individuals on probation or in custody	3.1	Enable individuals to access other sources of specialist help which meet their needs	
		3.2	Establish working relationships with other agencies for the benefit of individuals and their objectives to desist from crime	
		3.3	Provide others working with individuals the information they need to address difficulties	
		3.4	Review strategies and outcomes with individuals and those who are engaged in helping them	

Additional information about the unit	
Unit aims	This unit is about engaging with individuals on probation or in custody and encouraging/motivating them to address their offending behaviour.
Assessment guidance	This unit must be assessed through methods appropriate for competence based criteria, for example: • Direct observation in the workplace by an assessor • Witness testimony • Work outputs (product evidence) • Evidenced written and/or oral questioning or professional discussions with assessors
Links	https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/

Title	Rehabilitate, resettle and promote desistance from crime
Level	5
Unit Number	5
Total Hours	80
GLH	15

1. Be able to plan the supervision of individuals serving sentences in custody and the community	1.1	Produce an initial sentence plan setting out how all the requirements of the sentence will be delivered within available timescales	This can also apply to individuals on licence.
	1.2	Use collaborative assessment and goal setting approaches with individuals to agree sentence plans	
	1.3	Analyse the individual's readiness and motivation to change and how this might affect engagement and compliance	
	1.4	Plan for interventions in collaboration with individuals and stakeholders which are most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance	Stakeholders may include other agencies and support organisations. Interventions in a custodial setting will routinely include Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) plans.

2.	Be able to supervise individuals serving sentences in custody and the community	2.1	Implement the supervision of individuals in accordance with the sentence plan	In a custodial setting, this will include communication between Prison Offender Manager (POM) and Community Offender Manager (COM) regarding ROTL and progress of the plan.
		2.2	Enable individuals to modify their plans and actions where necessary	
		2.3	Use structured supervision sessions, including one to one interventions, to support desistance	Appropriate and considered use of toolkits or other resources.
3.	Be able to enforce court orders and statutory licences	3.1	Investigate cases of apparent non-compliance	Non-compliance in a custodial setting can include disciplinary issues where referral to the Governor is indicated under the Incentive Earned Privileges Scheme (IEPS)
		3.2	Establish reasons for non-compliance with individuals and with people who are involved with individuals	
		3.3	Evaluate all possible alternatives to enforcement action	

		3.4	Take appropriate enforcement actions consistent with organisational policy and statutory requirements	Enforcement in a custodial setting can also include adjudications, where a prisoner is placed on report. Investigations resulting in sanctions in custody for non-compliance/behavioural issues are good sources of evidence.
4.	Be able to monitor and review the progress of individuals serving sentences in custody and the community	4.1	Work with individuals to re-engage, recognising perceived unfairness and barriers to progression	This may be following breach, recall or a warning. In a custodial setting, this should include reference to procedural justice.
		4.2	Monitor progress of individuals against the objectives of their sentence	
		4.3	Review sentence plans and objectives in line with risk, needs and responsivity	Sentence plan reviews should be carried out collaboratively with the individual and relevant agencies/organisations
		4.4	Evaluate the effect of any changes in the individual's personal circumstances which may influence their behaviour or motivation to change	
		4.5	Provide individuals with feedback on their progress	

Additional information about the unit	
Unit aims	This unit is about rehabilitating and resettling offenders and promoting desistance from crime. It includes sentence planning and the supervision of individuals in custody and in the community.
Assessment guidance	This unit must be assessed through methods appropriate for competence based criteria, for example: • Direct observation in the workplace by an assessor • Witness testimony • Work outputs (product evidence) • Evidenced written and/or oral questioning or professional discussions with assessors
Links	https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/

Title	Produce and present reports for formal hearings
Level	5
Unit Number	6
Total Hours	50
GLH	13

Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	Assessment Criteria *The learner can:*		Guidance and/or Indicative Content
1. Be able to analyse information for formal hearings	1.1	Evaluate individuals' progress with regard to addressing their behaviour	Formal hearings may include: court hearings, case conferences, oral hearings and parole boards. Reports can be oral as well as written. However, in most cases they are likely to be written.
	1.2	Analyse information to inform report preparation	May include for example, validity and authenticity of information and its sources.
	1.3	Evaluate the risk of harm and the likelihood of further offending	

		1.4	Explain the risk of harm that may be experienced by possible victims	Possible victims may include known persons, strangers, staff or the individual themselves.
2.	Be able to develop options for formal hearings	2.1	Investigate the options available for formal hearings	
		2.2	Discuss with individuals the options available for formal hearings	Individuals may be on probation or in custody.
		2.3	Make professional judgements concerning options available for formal hearings	
3.	Be able to prepare reports for formal hearings	3.1	Collate information required for formal hearings	
		3.2	Work in collaboration with representatives from own and other organisations to prepare suitable reports	Organisations may include partners such as agencies, support organisations, charities.
		3.3	Produce reports that meet the needs of the formal hearings	
4.	Be able to present reports for formal hearings	4.1	Prepare cases to ensure that quality information is being presented to meet the needs of formal hearings	Learners should be mindful of any safeguarding concerns.
		4.2	Present information at formal hearings in a manner which is consistent with the conventions of the hearing	
		4.3	Interact with participants in formal hearings in a manner which promotes the organisation and profession	This may include challenging others' professional opinion.
		4.4	Manage the provision of requested information to those authorised to receive it	

Additional information about the unit	
Unit aims	This unit is about producing well-argued and presented reports for formal hearings such as court hearings, case conferences, oral hearings and parole boards. The reports will need to include a critical analysis of evidence, defensible decisions and evidence-based options for achieving change in behaviour. Reports may include, for example: pre-sentence reports, parole reports, licence recall reports, child protection reports, Home Detention Curfew assessments, release on temporary licence reports and case conference reports.
Assessment guidance	This unit must be assessed through methods appropriate for competence based criteria, for example: • Direct observation in the workplace by an assessor • Witness testimony • Work outputs (product evidence) • Evidenced written and/or oral questioning or professional discussions with assessors
Links	https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/

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 Handbook
- Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policies

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Sanctions Policy
- Examinations and Invigilation Policy
- Risk and Centre Monitoring Policy
- Fair Access and Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy
- Standardisation Policy
- Direct Claims Policy
- Centre Approval Process

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.[2] 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 their own assessments for the SFJ Awards Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice, 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

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

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.

5   Assessment

5.1   Qualification Assessment Methods

Assessment methods[3] that can be used for the SFJ Awards Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice are as follows:

- Coursework
- E-assessment
- Observation
- Portfolio of Evidence (including for example question and answer sessions, work products)
- Practical Demonstration / Assignment
- Professional Discussion
- Written Examination

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.[4] Further information on qualification levels is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Guidance.

Evidence must be:

- Valid
- Authentic
- Sufficient
- Current
- Reliable

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[3] Selected from assessment methods listed on Ofqual's regulatory system (Portal)
[4] 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

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

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 by learners when 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).

5.3.2 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 either in a non-operational environment which is not the learner's workplace, for example a training centre. The qualification handbook will specify whether simulations are allowed for the qualification and/or units within it. 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 consider 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.[5] 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

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[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

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)

Where written assessments are centre-devised and centre-assessed, centres must:
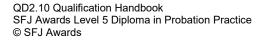
- maintain a sufficient bank of assignments which are changed regularly
- record how risks in tests/exams conducted in controlled environments are mitigated
- conduct assessments in line with SFJ Awards Examination and Invigilation Policy

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 levels qualifications or assessment criteria which require learners to 'explain', 'describe', 'evaluate' or 'analyse'.

5.6 Command Verbs and Level Descriptors

The evidence the learner provides needs to show that they have met the assessment criteria, so it is important that the assessor and the learner understands what the criteria expect them to do. Below are the command verbs used in the assessment criteria in the SFJ Awards Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice.

Command Verb	Definition
Carry out	Perform a task
Challenge	Question / dispute especially as being unjust, invalid, untrue
Collaborate	Work jointly with others or together on an activity, project or task
Contribute	To take part in a task or to give ideas or opinions about a topic
Create	Produce, bring into existence

Command Verb	Definition
Critically compare	Identify similarities and important differences, and the strength of the evidence for each
Discuss	Present key points; give a detailed account including a range of views or opinions, which include contrasting perspectives
Enable	Give (someone) the authority or means to do something; make it possible for something to happen/be done
Encourage	Persuade (someone) to do or continue to do something by giving support and advice
Engage	Occupy or attract (someone's interest or attention); participate or become involved in
Establish	Secure acceptance for/come to an understanding of something
Gather	Bring together, collect
Implement	Fulfil, perform or carry out a plan, action, task or procedure
Interact (with)	Communicate or be involved directly; act in such a way as to have an effect on someone/each other
Investigate	Carry out a systematic or formal inquiry to discover and examine the facts of (problem, options, incident, allegation etc) to establish the truth
Justify	Support a case with evidence. Give reasons for the validity of a view or idea why some action should be undertaken, for example by discussing and discounting alternative views or actions.
Maintain	Cause or enable (a condition or situation) to continue
Make a professional judgement	Apply knowledge, skills and experience, in a way that is informed by professional standards, laws and ethical principles, to develop an opinion or decision about what should be done to best serve individuals
Manage	Be in charge of or control or direct people/resources
Model	Use (a system, procedure etc.) as an example to follow
Monitor	Watch/follow the progress of anything within an area of study or field of work potentially to complete tasks and address problems
Motivate	Provide (someone) with a reason for doing something
Plan (for)	Detailed proposal for doing or achieving something
Present	Offer or express something in speech or writing
Produce	Cause (a particular result or situation) to happen or exist
Provide	Make available for use; make adequate preparation for (a possible event)
Record	Set down in writing or some other permanent form for later reference
Reflect	Give thoughtful, balanced consideration to an issue or action in an area of study or field of work
Respond	Say/do something in return, make an answer
Review	Survey information, methods, outcomes, conclusions, after the event, deciding what was effective or not
Seek	Attempt to obtain, achieve or find (something)

Command Verb	Definition
Share	To have, use or experience something at the same time as somebody else
Support	To provide someone with what they need to achieve something
Take (action)	Do something to achieve an aim or deal with a problem
Take decisions	Reach a conclusion or resolution after consideration
Use	To put into action/practice
Work with	Co-operate with someone to perform a task or activity or take responsibility

As well as the command verbs, it is also important to take into account the level of the unit when making assessment judgements. Using the summary of the RQF qualification levels[6] alongside the command verb explanations helps to establish the correct standard required.

Level	Knowledge Descriptor (the learner...)	Skills Descriptor (the learner can...)
5	Has practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to find ways forward in broadly defined, complex contexts. Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas. Is aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work. Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.	Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods, cognitive and practical skills to address broadly defined, complex problems. Use relevant research or development to inform actions. Evaluate actions, methods and results.
6	Has advanced practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors. Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them. Can critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas.	Determine, refine, adapt and use appropriate methods and advanced cognitive and practical skills to address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors. Use and, where appropriate, design relevant research and development to inform actions. Evaluate actions, methods and results and their implications.

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[6]Ofqual Level Descriptors
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications

5.7 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 the work, particularly when assessing in the public and security sectors, and the legal implications of the assessment process, 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 Vocationally Related 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 the work, particularly in the justice, community safety and security sectors, and the legal implications of the assessment process, 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 assessors.

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 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
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- 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.

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