



# Professional Investigator

SFJ Awards Level 3 Award for Professional Investigators

Qualification Handbook

Qualification Number: 610/6747/7

Operational Start Date: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026

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## Document Control

### Revisions and Amendment Register

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# 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 and People 1<sup>st</sup> 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:

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Meadowcourt Business Park

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Sheffield  
S9 1BY

Tel: 0114 284 1970

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Website: [www.sfjawards.com](http://www.sfjawards.com)

## 2. The Qualification

### 2.1. Qualification Objective

This handbook relates to the following qualification:

#### **Level 3 Award for Professional Investigators**

The role of a Professional Investigator is to establish facts ethically and lawfully so that organisations and individuals can make informed decisions. Working across private, public and employment contexts, investigators plan enquiries, gather and analyse information from open and closed sources, interview relevant parties, manage exhibits and evidence, and report impartially on their findings. They operate to sector Codes of Conduct and professional ethics, and comply with key legislation governing privacy, surveillance, data protection, disclosure and the handling and continuity of evidence. Collaboration with clients, colleagues and external agencies is central to the role, alongside proactive management of risk, health and safety, and conflicts of interest to preserve integrity and public confidence.

The objective of this qualification is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills required to plan, conduct and report professional investigations to legal and organisational standards. It equips learners to scope and risk-assess enquiries; select and use lawful, proportionate methods; analyse and corroborate information; maintain the security, continuity and integrity of records and exhibits; and present clear, accurate reports and evidential statements. Learners will develop practical competence in interviewing, information management and grading, and in preparing client-focused communication plans that protect confidentiality while meeting legal and evidential requirements. On completion, learners will be able to deliver proportionate, defensible investigations that align with organisational policy and national legal frameworks.

## 2.2. Pre-entry Requirements

There are no pre-entry requirements for this qualification. However, centres must ensure that learners are able to complete this qualification, for example, through completing a skills scan to ensure they can work at the appropriate level.

## 2.3. Qualification Structure

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

Mandatory Units					
Unit Number	Odyssey Reference	Unit Title	Level	GLH	Credit Value
1	6806	Planning and Reporting Investigations	3	25	4
2	6807	Information Management for Investigations	3	9	2

## 2.4. Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Values for Total Qualification Time<sup>1</sup>, 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

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



- 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 3 Award for Professional Investigators	60	34

## 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 positions learners for immediate contribution to entry-level investigative roles and provides a clear foundation for advancement into specialist or



supervisory posts and higher-level study in investigations, intelligence, compliance and security.

Learners can also use this Award as evidence towards professional body membership and CPD in the investigations sector, building a portfolio that demonstrates lawful, ethical practice across planning, interviewing and information management.

## 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](https://sfjawards.com) or on request from SFJ Awards.

## Qualification Units

<b>Title</b>	Planning and Reporting Investigations		
<b>Level</b>	3		
<b>Unit Number</b>	1		
<b>GLH</b>	25		
<b>Learning Outcomes</b> <i>The learner will:</i>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b> <i>The learner can:</i>		<b>Guidance and/or Indicative Content</b>
1. Understand the law, legislation, ethics and Codes of Conduct related to professional investigations	1.1	Outline a professional investigator Code of Conduct	<p>A Code of Conduct for the relevant sector, e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General: Association of British Investigators (ABI) Code of Ethics &amp; Professional Standards, Institute of Professional Investigators (IPI), World Association of Private Investigators (WAPI), BSI:102000 (2018), UK GDPR Code of Conduct for Investigative and Litigation Support Services.</li> <li>• Public Sector: Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) Codes of Practice, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Code for Crown Prosecutors, Civil Service Code, Local Government Code of Conduct, Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).</li> <li>• Employment/HR: ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Code of Professional Conduct, etc.</li> </ul>

	1.2	Explain the investigation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The structure of an investigation process relevant to the sector, and the activities involved, e.g., initial assessment, planning, gathering evidence, interviewing, evaluating/analysing, reporting, review.</li> </ul>
	1.3	State the legislation that should be followed when carrying out investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate legislation that should be followed when carrying out investigations, including awareness of differences in nations legislation.</li> <li>Current legislation, guidelines and codes of practice including laws of evidence and procedures (including acquisition and preservation of evidence), privacy and information laws, criminal and civil procedure, human rights laws, how to obtain information by lawful means.</li> <li>Examples of relevant legislation, e.g., Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (as amended by the Criminal Justice Act 2003), The Data Protection Act 2018, The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Freedom of Information Act 2000, Human Rights Act 1998, Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, as amended by The Criminal Justice Act 2003, The Bribery Act 2010, The Computer Misuse Act 1990, The Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Public Interest (Disclosure) Act 1998, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, Civil Procedure Rules 1999, Criminal Procedure Rules 2020, Criminal Practice Directions 2023, local bylaws.</li> <li>Health and Safety issues involved in searching for information and preserving evidence.</li> </ul>
	1.4	Describe the legal and ethical requirements of investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal requirements: key legislation such as the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, Human Rights</li> </ul>

			<p>Act 1998 (e.g. right to privacy), Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) where applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawful basis for collecting, processing, and storing information.</li> <li>• Ethical requirements: principles of fairness, impartiality, confidentiality, transparency, accountability.</li> <li>• Avoidance of bias, conflicts of interest, and coercive tactics.</li> <li>• Adherence to sector-specific codes of conduct (e.g. Professional Investigative Bodies, Membership Bodies).</li> <li>• The role of professional judgement and ethical decision-making.</li> </ul>
	1.5	Explain how to prepare a tracing report that adheres to lawful methods for gathering and verifying information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition and purpose of a tracing report, e.g. locating an individual or asset.</li> <li>• Lawful data sources. e.g., electoral roll, credit databases, Companies House.</li> <li>• Practices to avoid, e.g., misrepresentation, phishing, unlawful surveillance.</li> <li>• Steps in preparing a report, e.g., post-trace consent when necessary.</li> <li>• Data protection compliance and maintaining confidentiality.</li> </ul>
	1.6	Describe how to conduct investigative activities that adhere to regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying relevant regulations: data protection, surveillance law, employment law, health and safety, safeguarding.</li> <li>• Ensuring activities are proportionate, necessary, justified, carried out with appropriate authorisation,</li> </ul>

			<p>e.g. client screening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation and record-keeping requirements related to paper records, electronic files, video/audio recordings.</li> <li>• Reporting procedures and escalation protocols.</li> <li>• Methodologies to be used to gather information: interviewing witness, suspects and other relevant people, locating witness/suspects/other, statement taking, recording evidence, paper-based or electronic desk research (records, registers, databases).</li> </ul>
	1.7	Explain how open and closed source information can support investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open-source information (OSINT): publicly accessible data e.g., social media, websites, news articles, electoral registers, and public records.</li> <li>• Closed source information: restricted or confidential data, e.g., internal HR records, credit reference data, police intelligence, licensed databases.</li> <li>• How to gain permission and authorisation for disclosure of sensitive and restricted information.</li> <li>• Strengths and limitations of each source type: reliability, accessibility, verification.</li> <li>• Importance of ethical sourcing, accuracy, and cross-referencing.</li> <li>• Integrating open and closed source data to build a fuller picture.</li> </ul>
2. Understand how to establish the purpose and ongoing feasibility of an investigation	2.1	Describe the purpose of different investigations and their possible outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of different investigations: prevention of loss or crime, prevention of litigation, recovery of property, including information, intelligence gathering, discipline, location of person or property.</li> <li>• Possible outcomes: prosecution, litigation, dismissal.</li> </ul>

	2.2	Assess the information needed to meet different investigational requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information needed to meet different investigational requirements: establishing purpose, investigation plan with subjects, timescale, review, progress and reporting.</li> <li>• Investigations options: overt, covert, direct, indirect.</li> <li>• Identify available sources and resources, e.g., people, equipment, information, finance, specialists, cost, colleagues, external agencies, specialists, legal advisers, clients.</li> </ul>
	2.3	Identify criteria for establishing the feasibility of an investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria for establishing the feasibility of an investigation: legality, possible consequences, purpose, sources and resources available, cost and budget, client expectations, time scale; potential value and availability of information, compliance with relevant legislation, regulations and codes of practice, organisational guidelines. Establishing parameters of the investigation, e.g. financial, timescales, responsibilities, legal or regulatory, ethical, moral, change in circumstances.</li> <li>• Constraints of the investigation: financial, resources, time, logistical (distance, location), personnel, legal, ethical, moral, professional values.</li> </ul>
	2.4	Identify possible consequences of carrying out an investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible consequences of carrying out an investigation: conflict of interest, legal implications and changes in legislation, regulation or codes of practice, social or community impact, involvement of Enforcement Agencies (Police, Customs &amp; Revenue, Security Services) media interest, national or international boundaries, covert surveillance being compromised, collateral intrusion, lack of information, identification of the need to cater for</li> </ul>

			special needs, age, limited ability, escalation of costs, the need to provide evidence in court.
	2.5	Explain how to establish collaborative relationships with relevant people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish collaborative relationships: people and agencies involved including client and colleagues: colleagues, specialists, police and other public services and enforcement agencies (e.g. HMRC, Benefits Agency, HSE, etc.), employers, neighbours, associates, friends of the 'target', the client.</li> <li>The importance of establishing and maintaining professional relationships.</li> <li>Methods of establishing effective communication with collaborative partners: formal, informal, direct, indirect.</li> <li>Providing and receiving information, maintaining effective collaboration with external people and parties whilst maintaining the required level of confidentiality of information, the importance of ensuring currency of information shared between collaborative partners.</li> </ul>
	2.6	Explain conflicts of interest in investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition of a conflict of interest and examples in an investigative context, e.g., investigating a friend, having a financial interest in the outcome of the investigation previous involvement with the case or parties concerned.</li> <li>How to manage conflicts of interest.</li> <li>Legal and ethical frameworks that support impartiality.</li> </ul>



	2.7	State what options are available to deal with conflicts of interest in an investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying conflicts of interest: commercial, operational, legal or regulatory, ethical.</li> <li>Options to deal with conflicts of interest: redefining the investigation's objectives, recommending alternative action, abandoning the investigation, transferring the investigation to a colleague, seeking independent professional advice, when to involve police and/or other public services.</li> </ul>
	2.8	Explain the potential consequences of unresolved conflicts of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consequences of not dealing effectively with conflicts of interest: prosecution, loss of confidence from client and other parties, financial and other possible consequences.</li> </ul>
3. Understand how to report and present the findings of an investigation	3.1	Describe different types of investigation reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different types of investigation reports: investigation reports, surveillance reports, interview reports, investigation plan with targets, timescale, review, progress and reporting, reports for evidential purposes and others as appropriate.</li> <li>Types: ad-hoc, formal, planned (according to an agreed timescale), interim, verbal, written.</li> <li>Format and information to be included: photographic, video recordings, written (paper based, electronic), audio and others as appropriate.</li> </ul>
	3.2	Describe the client and legal requirements of investigation reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirements of investigation reports in terms of meeting client and legal needs.</li> <li>Establishing client requirements: format e.g. written, verbal, presentation, full, interim, informal, according to agreed time scale. Purpose of report and type of client.</li> <li>Confidentiality, accuracy, security of evidential documentation, photographs, client expectations.</li> <li>Ensuring compliance with current legislation,</li> </ul>

			<p>regulations, confidentiality, codes of practice and organisational guidelines e.g. data protection etc. Ensuring accuracy, validity, reliability and completeness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting information and findings to different types of clients: private individuals, corporate, public bodies, police, local authorities, government departments.</li> <li>• The importance of providing complete and appropriate authenticated documentation.</li> <li>• Ensuring clients agreed needs and expectations are met in terms of reporting and presenting the results of the investigation: handling sensitive information, recommending further investigative action.</li> </ul>
	3.3	Explain the skills required to write and present investigation reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing skills: clarity and conciseness, accuracy, logical structure, objective tone, grammar and style, inclusive language, relevant to audience, data protection considerations.</li> <li>• Presentation skills relevant to the role and sector: verbal communication, using visual aids, engaging delivery, answering questions, anticipating potential questions, provide detailed clarifications of the findings.</li> <li>• Defending the report: being able to justify the methodology, decisions, and conclusions, ensuring that the investigation's integrity is upheld.</li> </ul>
	3.4	Summarise the methods used to present the findings of an investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods used to present the findings of an investigation: written reports, oral reports, visual presentations, debrief sessions, stakeholder reports and other methods as appropriate.</li> </ul>

4. Be able to plan an investigation	4.1	Apply suitable processes to create an ethical and effective investigation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and scope definition.</li> <li>• Legal and ethical considerations.</li> <li>• Planning steps: setting clear terms of reference, identifying the investigation team and roles, risk assessing the investigation process</li> <li>• Ethical principles: fairness, impartiality, confidentiality, proportionality, avoiding conflicts of interest and undue influence, transparent decision-making and documentation.</li> </ul>
	4.2	Identify sources available to support the investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary sources: physical evidence, open-source, closed-source, imagery, human, communications.</li> <li>• Secondary sources: witness statements, interviews, policies, procedures, historical case data, internal reports.</li> <li>• Expert input: legal, forensic, technical, safeguarding advisors.</li> <li>• Technology tools: case management systems, evidence logging tools, digital analysis software.</li> </ul>
	4.3	Develop strategies to use during investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies: evidence gathering and preservation, analytical techniques, contingency planning, communication plans.</li> </ul>
	4.4	Identify resources to support the investigation that are realistic, achievable, and ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources: human, physical, budget.</li> <li>• Ethical: ensuring resources used do not infringe on rights, breach confidentiality, data protection considerations.</li> </ul>
	4.5	Identify the risks to an investigation and how to mitigate them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise risks of self and others: health and safety legislation and regulations, carrying out risk assessments, dynamic risk assessment. Conflict management: recognising potential conflict situations, dealing with aggressive or antisocial</li> </ul>

			<p>behaviour, defusing conflict, avoiding conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications skills: active listening, non-verbal, communication cycle.</li> </ul>
5. Be able to carry out and report on basic investigations	5.1	Demonstrate a range of communication techniques during investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbal communication techniques: active listening, questioning (open, closed, probing), challenging, clarifying, summarising, paraphrasing, empathy, rapport-building, non-verbal communication, silence and pause techniques, neutral tone and language, structuring the conversation.</li> <li>Written communication techniques: statements, reports, visual aids, transcription.</li> <li>Adapting communication style for vulnerable individuals, and awareness of cultural and accessibility needs.</li> </ul>
	5.2	Manage conflicts of interest in investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage: identify, mitigation of risk, policy review, decision-making processing, report.</li> </ul>
	5.3	Demonstrate effective interviewing during investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interview techniques and procedures: accurate and legible statements, including corrections, alterations and additions which have been agreed and endorsed by interviewees.</li> <li>Processes and techniques used for carrying out interviews, e.g., PEACE model (plan/prepare, engage/explain, account clarification, closure, evaluation).</li> <li>Interviewees: witnesses (co-operative, non-co-operative), suspects (co-operative, non-co-operative), other relevant persons</li> <li>Adjustment requirements, e.g. translation.</li> </ul>

	5.4	Produce investigation reports to meet legal, client and organisational requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal compliance: ensuring the report respects confidentiality, complies with data protection laws (UK GDPR), and avoids defamatory or prejudicial content.</li> <li>• Client and organisational expectations: tailoring language, detail, and content to the needs of the audience while upholding standards of objectivity, accuracy, and clarity.</li> <li>• Structure and format, e.g., executive summary, background, methodology, findings, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.</li> </ul>
	5.5	Write a statement that can be used in evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of statements, key components, format.</li> <li>• Ensuring the content reflects only what the person knows, saw, or did—avoiding assumptions or opinions.</li> <li>• Ensuring statements are taken voluntarily, without coercion, and stored or disclosed in accordance with legal and organisational policies.</li> <li>• Aligning statements with interview notes and the wider investigation evidence to avoid contradictions.</li> <li>• Extracting evidence for statement from surveillance logbook.</li> <li>• The principles of RV Turnbull and ADVOKATE (amount of time, distance, visibility, obstruction, known, any special reason, time-lapse, error) to ensure all elements of identification are covered.</li> </ul>
6. Be able to establish and manage relationships with clients	6.1	Carry out due diligence on a potential client prior to contracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of due diligence.</li> <li>• Carry out open and/or closed source checks in line with Terms of Reference.</li> <li>• Legal considerations related to compliance with anti-money laundering (AML) regulations, data</li> </ul>

			<p>protection, and ethical investigation standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documenting findings.</li> </ul>
	6.2	Identify threats and risks that can impact the investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of threats and risks: legal risks (e.g. breaching data protection or surveillance laws), reputational damage to client or investigator, security risks (e.g. data breaches, physical threats), non-cooperation from witnesses or stakeholders, ethical risks (e.g. client attempting to influence findings).</li> </ul>
	6.3	Agree a communication plan with the client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting expectations: defining the frequency, format, and level of detail of updates.</li> <li>• Communication methods: email, secure portals, phone calls, face-to-face meetings.</li> <li>• Confidentiality and data security.</li> <li>• Record-keeping.</li> <li>• The JESIP Joint Doctrine document including the JDM (joint Decision Model, and M/ETHANE information sharing method).</li> </ul>
	6.4	Analyse information gathered and collate the evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence collation: organising documents, interview notes, and digital evidence systematically, checking reliability, credibility and relevance.</li> <li>• Analytical techniques.</li> <li>• Maintaining objectivity.</li> <li>• Chain of custody: ensuring all evidence is traceable, secure, and lawfully obtained.</li> <li>• Use of tools: digital case management systems, mind maps, timelines, or evidence charts.</li> </ul>
	6.5	Report back on conclusion of the investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting findings clearly, objectively, and in a format agreed with the client.</li> <li>• Report contents: summary of methods, findings, conclusions, and recommendations (if appropriate).</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal and professional standards.</li> <li>• Presentation options: written report, oral briefing, or combined formats.</li> <li>• Follow-up: to offer clarification, support implementation of recommendations, preparing for further action (e.g. court or tribunal).</li> </ul>
<b>Additional information about the unit</b>			
Delivery Guidance		<p>This unit covers planning and reporting on investigations</p> <p>Learners will explore the law, legislation, ethics and Codes of Conduct related to professional investigations, how to establish the purpose and ongoing feasibility of an investigation, and how to report and present the findings of an investigation. They will apply these principles in planning an investigation, carrying out and reporting on an investigation, and establishing and managing relationships with clients.</p> <p>To deliver this unit, centres should adopt a blend of theoretical instruction and practical activities to ensure learners develop both the knowledge and practical abilities of professional investigators.</p>	
Assessment Guidance		<p>Assessment for this unit should combine theoretical understanding with practical application, allowing learners to demonstrate their ability to plan and report on investigations effectively.</p>	



<b>Title</b>	Information Management for Investigations		
<b>Level</b>	3		
<b>Unit Number</b>	2		
<b>GLH</b>	9		
<b>Learning Outcomes</b> <i>The learner will:</i>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b> <i>The learner can:</i>		<b>Guidance and/or Indicative Content</b>
1. Understand how to research and analyse information to support an investigation	1.1	Identify appropriate sources of information to support an investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate sources of information: how to identify and search for appropriate sources of information to support the investigation e.g. documents, electronic, covert human information sources (informants), professional contacts, witnesses.</li> <li>• Types of information, e.g. physical exhibits (e.g. objects, documents), intelligence, forensic exhibits, testimonials (e.g. oral) and documentary evidence.</li> <li>• Compliance with current legislation and codes of practice.</li> </ul>
	1.2	Explain methods of researching information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main methods of researching information: desk research, telephone, face-to-face (e.g. experts, third parties), internet, interviews (e.g. witnesses, suspects), surveillance (overt, covert), open-source research (e.g. libraries, central information facilities), exhibit management; evaluation of each,</li> </ul>

			appropriateness of methods in different circumstances, their value for different purposes.
	1.3	Describe why information and evidence is analysed and graded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and evidence analysis and grading: ensuring continuity, confidentiality and integrity of information; establishing the value/evidential value and reliability of information and intelligence; establish patterns, links and trends; identify irregularities, including actual/potential criminal activity, breaches of civil law and breaches of organisational rules or procedures, assessing and cross referencing information, identifying the availability of additional evidence, confirming and agreeing objectives of the investigation.</li> <li>Methods for grading information should be logical and systematic e.g. by source, information type, evidence, reliability, value.</li> </ul>
	1.4	Explain the value of corroborating information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of corroborating information: the importance of corroborating, risks of not corroborating/incorrect information; corroborating information systematically; establishing patterns and links, the reliability of information, ensuring accuracy, value for evidential purposes; methods used to corroborate information; corroborative sources (usefulness and reliability); reliability and validity of corroborated information.</li> </ul>
	1.5	Explain how to maintain the continuity and integrity of evidence, and its importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to maintain the continuity and integrity of evidence: how evidence is kept safe and secure, properly marked, identified and recorded; ensuring that its continuity and integrity is maintained; prompt and appropriate action on finding information which may be used as evidence; how and why records and exhibits need to be stored to protect their integrity.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity and integrity of evidence: suitability of evidence for evidential purposes; being able to provide the continuity of evidence and respond appropriately to challenge; meeting objectives of investigation; how to handle and store written and recorded information to preserve its security; providing the relevant parties with complete and appropriate authenticated documentation.</li> <li>• The importance of maintaining the continuity and integrity of evidence, how and why records and exhibits need to be stored to protect their integrity, evidential purposes.</li> </ul>
	1.6	State the requirements of legislation relevant to searching for, obtaining and handling information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate legislation that should be followed when searching for, obtaining and handling information, including awareness of differences in nations legislation.</li> <li>• Current legislation, guidelines and codes of practice including laws of evidence and procedures (including acquisition and preservation of evidence), privacy and information laws, criminal and civil procedure, human rights laws, how to obtain information by lawful means.</li> <li>• Examples of relevant legislation, e.g., Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (as amended by the Criminal Justice Act 2003), The Data Protection Act 2018, The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Freedom of Information Act 2000, Human Rights Act 1998, Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, as amended by The Criminal Justice Act 2003,</li> <li>• The Bribery Act 2010, The Computer Misuse Act</li> </ul>

			1990, The Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Public Interest (Disclosure) Act 1998, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, Civil Procedure Rules 1999, Criminal Procedure Rules 2020, Criminal Practice Directions 2023.
	1.7	Explain why, and how, the security and confidentiality of information must be maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why the security and confidentiality of information must be maintained: compliance with legislation, codes of practice, client confidentiality; how long data should be kept, and the consequences of not maintaining e.g. evidence not evidential, loss of business/confidence, prosecution.</li> <li>• How the security and confidentiality of information must be maintained:</li> <li>• Format of information e.g. written (paper based, electronic), photographic, video recordings, audio, physical exhibits, e.g. clients' details, communications, operational plan (chain of evidence).</li> <li>• Methods of information transmission, e.g. electronic, textual, verbal. Maintaining the security and confidentiality of information to comply with: clients' instructions or requirements, legal requirements, professional codes of practice.</li> <li>• Methods for maintaining the safety and security of information and evidence</li> </ul>
<b>2. Understand types of evidence and handling evidence in investigations</b>	2.1	Describe the types of evidence used in an investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions and purposes of evidence in investigations.</li> <li>• Types of evidence: witness evidence, documentary, physical evidence, digital, expert, tangible objects etc.</li> <li>• Relevance, admissibility, reliability, and how</li> </ul>

			evidence types may vary by sector, e.g., workplace vs. criminal investigations.
	2.2	Explain what is meant by exhibit management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of an exhibit.</li> <li>• Exhibit handling procedures, labelling, logging, storage, assigning unique exhibit reference numbers, creating an exhibit log or schedule.</li> <li>• The principle of continuity and integrity: preventing contamination or tampering, secure storage and access control.</li> </ul>
	2.3	Explain the importance and process of completing investigation records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of investigation records: transparency, accountability, procedural fairness, auditable record, supporting decision-making and possible legal or disciplinary proceedings.</li> <li>• Types of records: case notes, interview records, evidence logs, exhibits registers, timelines, witness lists, final investigation reports etc.</li> <li>• Record-keeping principles: accuracy, objectivity, confidentiality, data protection compliance.</li> </ul>
3. Be able to interview people to gather information	3.1	Identify the types of people to be interviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of people to interview: complainant/reporter/referrer, perpetrator/subject/respondent/accused person, witnesses, victim, experts/technical advisors, managers/senior leaders, human resources, safeguarding leads, parents/guardians/carers, students/learners, service users, regulatory body representatives, confidential informants/whistleblowers.</li> </ul>
	3.2	Select a relevant interview type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main types of interviews and when they should be used.</li> <li>• Types of interviews: formal, informal, ad-hoc, general enquiries, pre-planned, the correct</li> </ul>

			<p>procedures for managing the presence of third parties, procedures to interview under-16s and vulnerable adults, location, necessary equipment and people, appropriate method according to circumstances and purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods of recording information.</li> <li>• The PEACE (Planning and Preparation, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure, and Evaluation) Model Plan.</li> </ul>
	3.3	Carry out effective interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out effective interviews: establishing aims and objectives, ensuring integrity of evidence, methods of recording.</li> <li>• Effective communication, the importance of body language, how to suspend and reconvene interviews.</li> </ul>
	3.4	Record information during an interview and store it for evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How information should be recorded during an interview and stored after the interview for evidence in court: evidence is kept safe and secure, properly marked, identified and recorded, whilst ensuring that its continuity and integrity is maintained, handling and storage of records and exhibits to protect their integrity, ensure continuity, and preserve value as evidence physical (e.g. safes, secure storage, marked and recorded) electronic (e.g. encryption, pass word protected) chain of evidence procedures</li> </ul>
<b>Additional information about the unit</b>			
Delivery Guidance	This unit covers information management for investigations		

	<p>Learners will explore how to research and analyse information to support an investigation, and the types of evidence and handling evidence in investigations. They will apply these principles in interviewing people to gather information.</p> <p>To deliver this unit, centres should adopt a blend of theoretical instruction and practical activities to ensure learners develop both the knowledge and practical abilities of professional investigators.</p>
Assessment Guidance	Assessment for this unit should combine theoretical understanding with practical application, allowing learners to demonstrate their ability to manage information in investigations effectively.



## 3. Centre Requirements

### 3.1. Centre Responsibilities

Centres must be approved by SFJ Awards and 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.

### 3.2. 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 in this handbook, in line with our CASS Strategy.

### 3.3. 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

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<sup>2</sup> [Condition H2 - Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny where an assessment is marked by a Centre](#)

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. Assessment

### 4.1. Qualification Assessment Methods

Assessment methods<sup>3</sup> that can be used for the SFJ Awards Level 3 Professional Investigator are as follows:

- Aural Examination
- 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

### 4.2. 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

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<sup>3</sup> Selected from assessment methods listed on Ofqual's regulatory system (Portal)

Ofqual's level descriptors.<sup>4</sup> 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.

### 4.3. 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.

#### 4.3.1. 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.

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<sup>4</sup> 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](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications)

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.

### 4.3.2. 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).

### 4.3.3. 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.

### 4.3.4. 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.

### 4.3.5. 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.

### 4.3.6. 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 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.

## 4.4. 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.

## 4.5. 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

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<sup>5</sup> 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](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications)



- 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'.

## 4.6. 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.

## 5. Assessor Requirements

### 5.1. 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.

## 5.2. 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.

## 5.3. 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.

## **5.4. 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.

## **6. Internal Quality Assurer Requirements**

### **6.1. 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.

### **6.2. 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.

### **6.3. 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.

## 6.4. 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.

## 7. 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.

### 7.1. 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.

### 7.2. 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.

## 8. 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.

## 8.1. 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.

## 8.2. 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.

# 9. Standardisation

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

## 9.1. 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.

## 9.2. 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](#).

## 10. 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](#).

## 11. 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.

## 12. 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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