SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate in Fire Risk Assessment

Qualification Number: 610/6795/7

SFJ Awards Level 4 Diploma in Fire Risk Assessment

Qualification Number: 610/6796/9

Qualification Handbook

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Contents

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Revisions and Amendment Register

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December 2025	-	First issue	1

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 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

Email: info@sfjawards.com
Website: www.sfjawards.com

2. The Qualification

2.1. Qualification Objective

This handbook relates to the following qualifications:

SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate in Fire Risk Assessment
SFJ Awards Level 4 Diploma in Fire Risk Assessment

The objective of these qualifications is to support learners in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding required to undertake fire risk assessment activity at an **Intermediate level**, in line with **BS 8674:2025**.

The qualifications prepare learners to apply relevant fire safety legislation, guidance and risk-based methodologies across a range of premises, to exercise sound professional judgement within defined limits of competence, and to record clear, structured and defensible fire risk assessment findings. Learners are expected to recognise complexity, uncertainty and situations requiring escalation or referral.

Achievement of the qualification supports progression towards demonstrating competence through **supervised practice**, workplace experience and ongoing professional development. The qualification alone does not evidence unsupervised or advanced fire risk assessment practice.

2.2. Pre-entry Requirements

There are no formal pre-entry requirements for this qualification. Centres must, however, carry out an initial assessment or skills scan to confirm that learners can work at Level 4 and meet the demands of the programme.

As a minimum, centres should only enrol learners who can demonstrate one or more of the following:

- a relevant fire risk assessment qualification at Level 3 (or an accepted equivalent), and/or
- substantial recent experience supporting or undertaking fire risk assessment activities in the workplace, and/or
- a role that provides access to appropriate workplace evidence and opportunities for supervised practice during delivery.

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

Achievement of this qualification on its own does not demonstrate competence as a Fire Risk Assessor. In line with BS 8674:2025, competence must be evidenced

through appropriate workplace experience, supervised practice and ongoing professional development, as well as relevant qualifications.

2.3. Qualification Structure

Level 4 Certificate in Fire Risk Assessment

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

Level 4 Diploma in Fire Risk Assessment

To be awarded this qualification the learner must achieve three mandatory and at least two optional units as shown in the table(s) below.

Mandatory

Unit Number	Odyssey Reference	Unit Title	Level	GLH
1	6813	Fire Safety Requirements in Buildings for Intermediate-Level Fire Risk Assessors	4	30
2	6814	Coaching, mentoring and personal development of Fire Risk Assessors	4	30
3	6815	Carry out fire risk assessments of moderate fire risk buildings as an intermediate Fire Risk Assessor	4	40

Optional

Unit Number	Odyssey Reference	Unit Title	Level	GLH
4	6816	Fire Risk Assessment in Purpose-Built Blocks of Flats	4	40
5	6817	Fire Risk Assessment in Construction Environments	4	40
6	6818	Fire Risk Assessment in Heritage Buildings	4	40
7	6819	Fire Risk Assessment in Health and Care Premises	4	40

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 these qualifications are as follows:

Qualification Title	GLH	TQT
Level 4 Certificate in Fire Risk Assessment	100	200

Qualification Title	GLH	TQT
Level 4 Diploma in Fire Risk Assessment	180	380

[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 creates a number of opportunities for progression, including further study at a higher level and movement into more complex fire risk assessment environments. Learners may progress to the Level 5 qualification, which will align to the Advanced tier of Fire Risk Assessor competence described in BS 8674:2025. As learners gain workplace experience, they may also work towards third-party certification and professional recognition, reflecting the broader competence expectations set out in the standard.

2.8. Use of Languages

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

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

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

3. Qualification Units

3.1. Mandatory Units

Title	Fire Safety Requirements in Buildings for Intermediate-Level Fire Risk Assessors		
Level	4		
Unit Number	1		
GLH	40		
Learning Outcomes The learner will:	**Assessment Criteria The learner can:**		**Guidance and/or Indicative Content**
1. Understand knowledge of fire safety legislation and guidance to inform tailored fire risk assessment approaches.	1.1	Identify specific legal and guidance requirements associated with higher-risk environments	
	1.2	Explain the powers and roles of enforcing authorities in relation to fire safety legislation	
	1.3	Evaluate existing fire risk assessments for suitability and effectiveness.	
	1.4	Explain how to develop new fire-risk-assessment specifications	Annotated or developed FRA templates. Justifications for selected approach (e.g. why PAS 79 vs bespoke). Sample specifications for different building types. Reflections on limitations of prescriptive vs performance-based models.
	1.5	Apply performance-based evaluation methodologies when developing fire-risk-assessment specifications	

			Case studies demonstrating practical application of the chosen methodology.
	1.6	Evaluate the importance of assigning competent Fire Risk Assessors with appropriate legislative and guidance knowledge for different risk profiles	
2. Understand the general fire safety requirement for intermediate premises.	2.1	Explain active fire safety systems within moderate risk buildings and their cause-and-effect programmes	• Fire Detection and Alarm Systems (FDAS) • Sprinkler Systems • Gaseous Suppression Systems: Clean agents (e.g., FM200, CO_2) • Water Mist Systems • Emergency Lighting and Exit Signage. • Smoke Control and Ventilation Systems • Firefighter's Lift Controls Cause-and-effect arrangements in which detection, alarm or suppression systems initiate actions in other building systems (e.g. cessation of air handling or activation of door release).
	2.2	Explain the passive fire safety system provided in more complex premises	• Fire-Resisting Walls and Partitions. • Fire Doors. • Fire-Stopping and Sealing. • Structural Fire Protection. • Compartment Floors and Ceilings. • Protected Escape Routes. • Smoke Barriers. • Cavity Barriers.

			Awareness of issues highlighted through fire case studies and professional media relating to fire doors, external walls, building structure and fire-resisting construction, and their relevance to fire protection and fire safety. • BS EN 13501 • BS 9999 • BS 8214:2016 • BS EN 1366-3 & 4 • BS 9414:2011 BS EN ISO 834 Series
	2.3	Describe the specifications of associated specialist protection systems	Specialist protection systems, such as: • Fixed electrical systems. • Lighting protection. • PV panels. • EV Charging facilities. and evidence their potential impact on fire safety. • BS 7671 Requirements for Electrical Installations (IET Wiring Regulations). • BS EN 60950-1 / BS EN 62368-1 Safety of electrical equipment. • BS EN 62305 Series Protection Against Lightning. • BS EN 62446 Photovoltaic (PV) Systems Testing, Documentation and Maintenance. Building Regulations Approved Document Part L, P & S.
	2.4	Explain how associated specialist protection systems contribute to fire-risk reduction	
	2.5	Explain the additional requirements for fire service access and facilities	Facilities and access provisions for firefighting operations and their relevance to fire risk assessment and risk management, for example: • Access routes for fire appliances

			• Firefighter access points and distances • Firefighter lifts • Firefighting shafts and lobbies • Fire hydrants and water supplies • Firefighter facilities • Dry and wet risers • Approved Document B (Fire Safety), Volume 1 and 2 • BS 9999:2017 • BS EN 81-72 BS 9990
	2.6	Explain the certification, testing and specification related to the development of fire safety systems in moderate risk buildings	Awareness of product certification, testing and specification relevant to fire safety systems, including (where applicable): • BS 5839-1 and BS 5839-6 • BS 5266-8 • BS EN 12845 • BS 9251 • BS 5306-3 • BS 7346-1 and BS 7346-4 • BS 9999:2017 • BS 9990 BS EN 81-72
	2.7	Describe existing fire-safety issues	Fire Risk Assessors must be able to systematically identify and describe common and site-specific fire safety issues, which may include: **Physical Hazards:** • Obstructed or inadequate escape routes and exits • Poor compartmentation leading to rapid fire spread
	2.8	Explain methodologies used to improve fire-safety situations	

			• Faulty or insufficient fire detection and alarm systems • Inadequate or poorly maintained firefighting equipment • Overloaded electrical circuits or inappropriate use of electrical equipment • Storage of flammable materials in unsafe locations **Human Factors:** • Lack of staff awareness or training on fire procedures • Inadequate fire drills or evacuation procedures • Poor housekeeping increasing ignition risks **Building and System Deficiencies:** • Deficiencies in passive fire protection (e.g., damaged fire doors, compromised fire barriers) • Non-compliance with relevant fire safety legislation or standards • Inadequate emergency lighting or signage **Methodologies to Improve Fire Safety:** • Risk Reduction Measures. • Fire Safety Management. • Fire Risk Assessment and Prioritisation. • Use of Technology and Tools. • Engagement and Collaboration. B 2.2 d)
Additional information about the unit			

Assessment guidance	**Scope Limitation – Specialist Fire Safety Systems** Coverage of systems such as smoke control, evacuation lifts, or suppression systems is limited to understanding their impact on fire risk assessment, limitations, and management implications. Design, calculation, specification, or performance modelling of such systems is outside the scope of this qualification.

Title	Coaching, mentoring and personal development of Fire Risk Assessors.		
Level	4		
Unit Number	2		
GLH	30		
Learning Outcomes The learner will:	**Assessment Criteria The learner can:**		**Guidance and/or Indicative Content**
1. Understand Professional Development requirements.	1.1	Evaluate the different methodologies to identify the training needs of yourself and others	Systems approach to training methodologies e.g. • Role performance statements. • Sequential task setting. • DIF Analysis Blooms taxonomy.
	1.2	Explain methods and media to assist in the delivery of Continued Professional Development	• Identify the difference between informal and formal development. • Case studies & historical events. • Media and current affairs
	1.3	Explain the procedural arrangements and documentation required in the recording of personal development	Examples of arrangements that may support professional behaviour include: • processes for confidentiality, dispute resolution and escalation • documentation and controls that support contractual, legal and public responsibilities • internal codes of conduct and governance procedures

			• routes for raising and addressing concerns (for example malpractice, conflicts of interest, poor performance or safety breaches)
	1.4	Evaluate effective strategies, systems, and practices	
	1.5	Recommend strategies that enhance professional conduct and decision-making	
2. Be able to reflect on own competence and CPD needs	2.1	Evaluate personal performance through feedback and reflective practice	
	2.2	Maintain a CPD log with evidence of learning activities and outcomes	
	2.3	Identify future development needs and plan CPD activities accordingly	
3. Be able to mentor and support others in fire risk assessment	3.1	Provide constructive feedback and guidance to peers and junior assessors	Mentoring and supervisory practice within fire risk assessment teams, including supporting less experienced assessors to develop competence and confidence. Professional behaviours when working with others (including regulatory or supervisory roles), reflecting: • safety of life • equality, diversity and inclusion • professional integrity and accountability

			Examples of supportive engagement may include mentoring, peer review, shared learning, and contributing to professional development activities within the fire risk assessment community.
	3.2	Plan and deliver informal and formal learning sessions to support development	Use of selected case studies of moderate-risk premises, of differing complexity, to illustrate fire risk assessment methodologies, analysis of findings, and how recommendations may be justified in relation to legal and statutory requirements.
	3.3	Lead CPD initiatives and contribute to professional learning communities	Examples of how awareness of fire-related trends and incidents can inform professional learning, CPD priorities and changes in practice. Examples of collaborative working with enforcing authorities and supervisors, where applicable, in a manner that supports safety, equality and professional integrity. Use of data and simple analysis to inform the fire risk assessment process (for example, trends in findings, recurring deficiencies, incident patterns, or prioritisation logic). Approaches to allocating work within a team based on competency and role limitations.
	3.4	Use development data in the assignment of Fire Risk Assessors to tasks taking account of their limitations	
Additional information about the unit			

Assessment guidance	This unit focuses on the ongoing personal and professional development of individuals involved in fire risk assessment, as well as the structured development of others within a risk assessment team or organisation. Learners will be required to demonstrate how they actively contribute to the growth of their own competencies and how they support the learning and development of others, particularly in the context of fire safety and risk assessment. The unit is evidence-based and workplace-oriented, encouraging learners to draw directly from real-life professional practice. Through the collection and presentation of appropriate documentation and reflective material, learners will show how they maintain and improve standards in their role, both as individual risk assessors and as mentors or leaders of others in the field. Learners will be expected to provide a portfolio of evidence which may include, but is not limited to: • **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Logs:** Detailing formal and informal learning undertaken, such as courses, workshops, seminars, self-directed study, or professional networking activities. • **Case Studies and Reflective Accounts:** Demonstrating specific instances where learning or development activities were applied in practice to improve outcomes or address challenges in fire risk assessment. • **Lesson Plans and Prepared Training Materials:** Evidence of planning and delivering internal training sessions or briefings to staff, contributing to the overall knowledge and competence of the team. • **Training Programmes and Course Bookings:** Documentation that confirms attendance or coordination of relevant training initiatives for oneself or colleagues. • **Assessment Logs and Appraisal Records:** Showing involvement in the assessment or appraisal of other team members, highlighting developmental feedback given and actions taken to support growth. • **Validation and Peer Feedback on Fire Risk Assessments:** Evidence of participating in, or receiving, validation processes; including peer reviews, supervisory checks, and formal feedback loops, which contribute to the assurance and quality of assessment outputs. • **Use of Development Models:** Examples of how development frameworks such as SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and the GROW model (Goal, Reality, Options, Will) have been applied to structure development plans, set goals, or coach others within the team.

	• **Mentorship or Coaching Activities:** Documentation or reflective accounts showing how the learner has mentored or coached other assessors, including how objectives were set, tracked, and reviewed over time.
Links	Grow Model - John Whitmore 1992

Title	Carry out fire risk assessments of moderate fire risk buildings as an Intermediate Fire Risk Assessor		
Level	4		
Unit Number	3		
GLH	40		
Learning Outcomes The learner will:	**Assessment Criteria The learner can:**		**Guidance and/or Indicative Content**
1. Be able to plan fire risk assessment scope of works tasking and project actions	1.1	Conduct meetings with clients and representatives to communicate, mitigate and manage fire risks	May include: agendas, scope confirmation, minutes and agreed actions.
	1.2	Plan deployment strategy for conducting intermediate fire risk assessments	
	1.3	Adapt fire-risk-assessment methods to meet evolving challenges	May include: adapting methodology to building use, occupancy and emerging risks.
	1.4	Analyse information to generate suitable assessments	
	1.5	Present recommendations verbally and in writing in a form accessible to duty-holders	
	1.6	Provide practical fire safety advice and solutions to duty holders	May include: estimated timescales and costs for implementation.

2. Be able to carry out Fire Risk Assessment observations on moderate risk premises	2.1	Confirm welfare & safety provisions are in place to proceed with assessment	
	2.2	Use existing information and records to assist with effective assessment of hazards and risks	
	2.3	Inspect the premises to identify fire hazards and potential risks within the limits of the assessor's competence and authority	May include: inspection within the limits of competence and authority, with referral where required.
	2.4	Evaluate the adequacy of the general fire precautions including the passive and active fire protection systems installed within the building	May include: assessing suitability, condition and limitations of passive and active fire safety measures.
	2.5	Evaluate the adequacy of key fire safety management and evacuation arrangements	
	2.6	Confirm if existing fire safety provisions are adequate or further measures are needed to control risks	May include: applying risk-based judgement to determine adequacy and need for further controls.
	2.7	Record findings from the fire risk assessment and communicate immediate serious safety issues with relevant parties including clients and regulators where required	May include: clear recording and prompt escalation of immediate serious safety issues.
Additional information about the unit			

<table>
<tr>
<td>Assessment guidance</td>
<td>
LO1 - Evidence for this learning outcome must show that the learner has planned a fire risk assessment effectively. This should include documented evidence of meetings with clients or duty-holders, an agreed scope of works, planning arrangements for conducting the assessment, and records of any issues or conflicts identified and how these were resolved.

LO2 - This table summarises the types of premises typically suitable for assessment by individuals who have achieved Intermediate Level competence under Annex C.3 of BS 8674:2025.

<table>
<tr><th>Category</th><th>Description</th></tr>
<tr><td>Occupancy</td><td>• Up to 500 persons
• Temporary or transient residents
• Visitors unfamiliar with layout</td></tr>
<tr><td>Use</td><td>• Multi-occupied residences (private/commercial)
• Hotels, boarding houses
• Shops, offices, retail centres
• Warehousing, manufacturing (non-hazardous)
• Educational premises (single/two-storey)
• Entertainment venues (audience ≤ 500)
• Residential care homes 10 bed
• Entertainment license venues 300-800 (Martyn’s Law)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Construction</td><td>• Up to 6 storeys or 18 m (including basement)
• Framed concrete/steel with masonry or lightweight cladding
• Load-bearing timber framed buildings
• Known non-combustible external wall systems
• Excludes buildings designed using fire engineering (e.g. BS 7974)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Complexity</td><td>• Escape routes designed to BS 9999 or BS 9991
• Temporary waiting spaces
• Internal areas up to 1,000 m²
• Multiple stairs, level changes, complex layouts
• Travel distances up to 60 m</td></tr>
</table>
</td>
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</table>

		• Older/adapted office buildings with unusual features
	Hazards	• Controlled substances (501,000 litres) • No significant manufacturing/storage of dangerous goods • Potential for malicious acts (e.g. arson, vandalism) due to public access

Learners must complete **at least one full fire risk assessment** of a premises type that aligns with the Intermediate Level profile set out in Annex C.3 of BS 8674:2025. The assessment must include planning, site inspection, evaluation of fire precautions, prioritisation of findings and production of a written FRA report. Evidence may be drawn from a live workplace assessment.

Scope Limitation – Specialist Fire Safety Systems
Coverage of systems such as smoke control, evacuation lifts, or suppression systems is limited to understanding their impact on fire risk assessment, limitations, and management implications.

Design, calculation, specification, or performance modelling of such systems is outside the scope of this qualification.

3.2. Optional Units

Title	Fire Risk Assessment in Purpose-Built Blocks of Flats		
Level	4		
Unit Number	4		
GLH	30		
Learning Outcomes The learner will:	**Assessment Criteria The learner can:**		**Guidance and/or Indicative Content**
1. Understand the legal framework governing fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats	1.1	Identify key legislation applicable to fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats	Learners can name and describe the **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**, **Housing Act 2004**, and **Building Safety Act 2022**, and explain how these apply to common areas and individual dwellings. The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 LGA Guide Part C (25–29); Part D (31–35);
	1.2	Explain the roles and responsibilities of the Responsible / Accountable Person(s) under the fire safety legislation	
	1.3	Describe the overlap between the Fire Safety Order and the Housing Act 2004	
	1.4	Explain the scope and limits of non-invasive FRAs (Type 1) and when Types 2–4 are justified	FRA Types 1–4; documentation; limits of competence and referral. BS 9792.
2. Understand the role of multi-agency collaboration in	2.1	Describe the roles of Building Safety Regulator, Fire and Rescue Services and Local Housing Authorities in regulating fire safety	Learners can understand how regulators coordinate enforcement under the **Fire Safety Order, Housing Act and Building Safety Act 2022**, and how joint inspections and strategic planning improve outcomes.

fire safety regulation	2.2	Explain the importance of strategic and tactical level consultation	
	2.3	Outline protocols for information sharing and joint enforcement	
3. Understand the principles of compartmentation and evacuation strategies	3.1	Explain the concept of compartmentation and its role in fire safety	Learners can describe how compartmentation supports a 'stay put' / ‘stay safe’ strategy, and when simultaneous evacuation may be required (e.g., due to cladding or structural concerns).
	3.2	Compare different evacuation strategies	
	3.3	Evaluate the suitability of evacuation strategies for different building types of dependent upon layouts, design and risk	For example: Travel distances, types of occupants, lighting levels. May include examples of means of escape provisions such as: • single-staircase escape buildings • alternative escape routes • window escape (where permitted under legacy design guidance) • roof escape routes (historic or legacy provisions) • protected corridors and lobbies • escape route width, travel distances and evacuation flow areas of refuge / temporary waiting spaces
	3.4	Understand the siting of ancillary accommodation and the specifications of protection needed to satisfy legislative requirements	
	3.5	Explain the relationship of building height and required fire protection	

	3.6	Explain the requirements for the provision and maintenance of fire doors	
4. Understand fire safety systems and equipment in residentials blocks	4.1	Identify types of fire detection and alarm systems used in blocks of flats and their cause and affect strategies	Learners can inspect and report on the condition and compliance of fire safety. systems, referencing benchmark standards and maintenance records. Evacuation alert systems and their design/installation in accordance with BS 8629:2019
	4.2	Identify the requirements for automatic water suppression systems	
	4.3	Explain the configuration and types of smoke control systems	
	4.4	Identity specification and precautions needed for evacuation and firefighting lifts	
	4.5	Evaluate the need for firefighting equipment and escape signage	
5. Understand how to evaluate available information relating to external wall construction and materials	5.1	Identify indicators of risk from external wall systems that may necessitate a Fire Risk Appraisal of External Walls (FRAEW)	Learners should use a risk-based approach, identifying features that may increase the risk of fire spread via the external wall, such as: • Use of combustible materials (e.g. ACM, HPL, combustible insulation) • Presence of cavities or cavity barriers and whether they are likely to be continuous/effective • Buildings with sleeping risk, especially high-rise (>11m) residential buildings

			• Modifications or unregulated additions to external walls • Past fires or incidents involving the external wall The learner must describe specific scenarios that trigger an FRAEW, such as: • The external wall materials cannot be confirmed as compliant or safe • There is visible damage or degradation of the cladding system • The system is non-traditional or bespoke with unknown fire performance • The building has vulnerable occupants and any uncertainty exists Must show understanding that not all buildings require an FRAEW — e.g., low-rise buildings without significant combustible materials may not.
	5.2	Identify how to document the decision to request a Fire Risk Appraisal of External Walls (FRAEW), or record that it is not required, within the fire risk assessment	Learners must understand that a Fire Risk Appraisal of External Walls (FRAEW) is undertaken only by individuals or organisations with appropriate specialist competence in external wall systems and fire engineering. The role of the intermediate Fire Risk Assessor is to: • identify indicators that an FRAEW may be required • record the rationale for requesting, or not requesting, an FRAEW • refer the duty holder to a suitably competent specialist

			The assessor must not attempt to carry out a FRAEW themselves unless they meet the competence requirements for that role in line with BS 8674 and PAS 9980.
6. Be able to conduct a fire risk assessment in a purpose-built block of flats	6.1	Accurately identify and record key fire safety features and deficiencies within common parts of the building	E.g., Fire doors, fire-resisting walls, alarm systems, emergency lighting, signage, firefighting equipment. Identify and record any damaged or non-compliant components (e.g., missing intumescent strips, wedged-open doors).
	6.2	Confirm the adequacy and condition of fire compartmentation between flats and between flats and common areas	Perform visual inspections for breaches (e.g., unsealed service penetrations). Recommend further investigation where intrusive access is needed.
	6.3	Evaluate the suitability of the building's evacuation strategy (e.g., stay put / stay safe or simultaneous evacuation)	Justify whether the current strategy remains appropriate based on: • Building design • Occupancy type • Fire protection measures Recommend changes only where evidence justifies.
	6.4	Determine the adequacy of access for firefighting and fire service intervention	Assess access routes, dry/wet risers, fire-fighting lifts. Consider impact of parking obstructions or changes to layout.
	6.5	Identify situations where the external wall system may present a material risk of fire spread and recommend Fire Risk	

		Appraisal of External Walls (FRAEW) if appropriate	
	6.6	Assess and document the building's fire detection and alarm systems for compliance with standards and fitness for purpose	
	6.7	Evaluate fire safety management and resident engagement processes	
	6.8	Prioritise findings based on risk level	
	6.9	Communicate actionable recommendations clearly to stakeholders	
	6.10	Demonstrate professional judgement in identifying when limitations prevent a full assessment and clearly record these	
	6.11	Produce a compliant, evidence-based written Fire Risk Assessment report	
Additional information about the unit			
Assessment guidance	Analyse the information required and/or provided to support the undertaking of a fire risk assessment and create clear reports to present complex and challenging material both orally and in writing. In doing so, communicate effectively with the duty holder or those responsible for fire safety management. Apply consistent communication skills and can demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge in order to produce fire risk assessments which make clear the outcomes of the process. **Scope Limitation – Specialist Fire Safety Systems**		

	Coverage of systems such as smoke control, evacuation lifts, or suppression systems is limited to understanding their impact on fire risk assessment, limitations, and management implications. Design, calculation, specification, or performance modelling of such systems is outside the scope of this qualification.

Title	Fire Risk Assessment in Construction Environments		
Level	4		
Unit Number	5		
GLH	30		
Learning Outcomes The learner will:	**Assessment Criteria The learner can:**		**Guidance and/or Indicative Content**
1. Understand the legal and regulatory framework governing fire safety in construction projects	1.1	Describe the key duties under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 relating to fire safety	Covers: • CDM 2015 Construction *(Design and Management) Regulations 2015*- roles • FSO 2005 Regulatory *Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005* - responsibilities • HSG 168 HSE *Guidance 168: Fire Safety in Construction* - the five-step fire risk assessment model • JCoP Joint *Code of Practice on the Protection from Fire of Construction Sites and Buildings Undergoing Renovation* - design/construction phase duties. • DSEAR • HSE • STA guides RC62
	1.2	Summarise the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 as applied to construction sites	
	1.3	Explain the scope and application of HSG 168 and the FPA Joint Code of Practice	
2. Understand fire hazards	2.1	Identify common ignition sources and fuel loads on construction sites	May include, for example:

and risks specific to construction environments	2.2	Evaluate the impact of modern construction methods and materials on fire risk	• lithium-ion batteries • hydrogen tools • flammable coverings • timber frame construction fire triangle principles
	2.3	Explain the fire triangle and its relevance to construction site risk control	
3. Understand fire prevention and protection measures suitable for construction sites	3.1	Compare passive and active fire protection systems required during construction	Includes consideration of passive and active fire protection measures used during construction, such as fire-resisting partitions, temporary alarm systems, fire watch arrangements, suppression systems and emergency planning.
	3.2	Assess the effectiveness of site-specific fire safety plans and emergency procedures	
	3.3	Explain high risk activities on construction sites	May include, for example: • Hot working • Confined spaces • Emergency evac plans • Roof work • Tower cranes Vehicle plant manoeuvring
	3.4	Explain the requirements of off-site assessments for Timber frame structures on construction sites	
	3.5	Explain the considerations when undertaking recladding projects and construction or refurbishment of occupied premises including HRB's.	PAS 9980

	3.6	Explain the requirements for different types of site accommodation and welfare.	
4. Be able to conduct a fire risk assessment for a construction site	4.1	Apply the fire risk assessment process to a live or simulated construction site	Uses site drawings, inventories, method statements, and HSG 168 FRA model for practical assessment.
	4.2	Identify and record significant findings, including hazards, people at risk, and control measures	
	4.3	Recommend proportionate fire safety improvements based on risk evaluation	
5. Be able to develop and communicate a construction phase fire safety plan	5.1	Prepare a fire safety plan incorporating site layout, fire precautions, and emergency arrangements	May include, for example: • fire marshals • hot work permits • temporary building separation • toolbox talks stakeholder roles.
	5.2	Present the plan to stakeholders including clients, designers, and contractors	
	5.3	Justify the selection of fire safety measures based on site-specific risks	
6. Be able to monitor and review fire safety arrangements during construction	6.1	Conduct periodic inspections to verify compliance with fire safety controls	Covers fire system impairments, fire watch, training records, and monitoring tools like checklists and logs.
	6.2	Record and report deficiencies and recommend corrective actions	
	6.3	Evaluate the effectiveness of fire safety training and site inductions	
Additional information about the unit			

Assessment guidance	Analyse the information required and/or provided to support the undertaking of a fire risk assessment and create clear reports to present complex and challenging material both orally and in writing. In doing so, communicate effectively with the duty holder or those responsible for fire safety management. Apply consistent communication skills and can demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge in order to produce fire risk assessments which make clear the outcomes of the process. **Scope Limitation – Specialist Fire Safety Systems** Coverage of systems such as smoke control, evacuation lifts, or suppression systems is limited to understanding their impact on fire risk assessment, limitations, and management implications. Design, calculation, specification, or performance modelling of such systems is outside the scope of this qualification.

Title	Fire Risk Assessment in Heritage Buildings		
Level	4		
Unit Number	6		
GLH	30		
Learning Outcomes ***The learner will:***	**Assessment Criteria** ***The learner can:***		**Guidance and/or Indicative Content**
1. Understand the construction and fire behaviour of heritage buildings	1.1	Describe typical construction methods and materials used in heritage buildings	• RRFSO 2005 Articles 822 (duties and responsibilities) • BS 7913 Conservation principles and material integrity • BS 9999 Risk-based management in complex buildings • Historic England Fire Safety in Historic Buildings (2020) • PAS 79-1 Recording building context and description Impact of energy retrofit and modern services (e.g. solar PV, renewables) on historic fabric and fire behaviour
	1.2	Explain how age, alterations, and materials affect fire spread and structural integrity	
	1.3	Summarise the challenges of applying modern fire safety standards to historic structures	
2. Understand the legal and conservation framework for fire safety in heritage buildings	2.1	Identify relevant legislation and guidance	• RRFSO 2005 Responsible Person duties • Building Act 1984 and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 • BS 7913 Sections 45 (Legislative and ethical context) Historic England Technical Advice Notes on fire and fabric preservation
	2.2	Explain the roles of conservation officers, building control, and fire authorities	

	2.3	Describe the balance between life safety and preservation of historic fabric	
3. Understand fire protection systems suitable for heritage environments	3.1	Explain the use of wireless detection and aspirating systems in sensitive interiors	• BS 5839-1 Fire detection and alarm systems • BS 5266-1 Emergency lighting • BS EN 54-20 Aspirating detection systems • BAFSA Watermist Guidance (2021) Historic England Wireless and reversible protection options
	3.2	Describe passive fire protection options that minimise visual impact	
	3.3	Evaluate the suitability of suppression systems	
4. Understand evacuation strategies and occupant risk in heritage premises	4.1	Identify typical occupancy types and associated vulnerabilities in heritage settings	• NFCC GN03 Evacuation Strategies for Heritage Premises • BS 9999 Annex G Evacuation Design • RRFSO Article 15 Emergency procedures • Historic England Emergency planning for heritage assets Human response and visitor behaviour modelling in heritage evacuation scenarios
	4.2	Explain how building layout and access constraints affect evacuation	
	4.3	Describe strategies for protecting life and property during an incident	
5. Be able to assess fire hazards and risks in heritage buildings	5.1	Conduct a site inspection to identify ignition sources and combustible materials	• PAS 79-1 Section 9 Hazard identification • BS 7974-0 Fire engineering principles • Historic England Common causes of fire in heritage buildings • NFCC Fire Risk Assessment Guidance Assessment of emerging risks from modern services and materials within heritage structures
	5.2	Evaluate the impact of compartmentation breaches and voids on fire spread	
	5.3	Assess the adequacy of fire detection and alarm systems in context	

6. Be able to evaluate fire safety management in heritage premises	6.1	Review fire safety policies, emergency plans, and staff training records	• RRFSO Articles 11, 17 and 21 • BS 9999 Clause 40 Fire Safety Management • BS 9997:2019 • Historic England Maintenance and testing framework Building Safety Act 2022 Golden Thread principles and digital record-keeping for heritage premises
	6.2	Assess the impact of public access, events, and contractors on fire risk	
	6.3	Identify gaps in maintenance and testing of fire safety systems	
7. Be able to develop proportionate fire safety recommendations for heritage buildings	7.1	Recommend fire safety improvements that respect the building's historic value	• PAS 79-1 Evaluating significant findings • BS 7913 Principles of minimal intervention • BS 8670:2022 – Competence and judgement framework for individuals working in the built environment • Historic England Balancing life safety and heritage significance Coordination with enforcing authorities, insurers, and conservation stakeholders when developing recommendations
	7.2	Propose temporary or reversible fire protection measures where appropriate	
	7.3	Justify recommendations based on risk level, building use, and conservation needs	
8. Be able to produce a compliant fire risk assessment report for heritage premises	8.1	Produce a fire risk assessment report	• PAS 79-1 Report structure and content • NFCC Fire Risk Assessment Template • RRFSO Article 9 Recording significant findings • BS EN ISO 9001 Document control and audit trail BS 8670-1:2024 Competence frameworks for building safety Core criteria.
	8.2	Use language that is clear, objective, and suitable for conservation stakeholders	
	8.3	Include prioritised actions with timescales and responsible persons	

Additional information about the unit	
Assessment guidance	Assessment should confirm the learner's ability to plan, conduct and report a heritage-specific fire risk assessment in line with PAS 79-1. Evidence must demonstrate sound professional judgement, proportional recommendations and consistent application of legal and conservation principles. **Typical evidence** • Completed FRA report for a live or simulated heritage building. • Site inspection notes, annotated drawings or photographs. • Consultation or liaison records with conservation or enforcing authorities. **Scope Limitation – Specialist Fire Safety Systems** Coverage of systems such as smoke control, evacuation lifts, or suppression systems is limited to understanding their impact on fire risk assessment, limitations, and management implications. Design, calculation, specification, or performance modelling of such systems is outside the scope of this qualification.

Title	Fire Risk Assessment in Health and Care Premises			
Level	4			
Unit Number	7			
GLH	30			
Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	**Assessment Criteria** *The learner can:*		**Guidance and/or Indicative Content**	**BS 8674 Annex B**
1. Understand the fire safety characteristics of health and care premises	1.1	Describe typical building layouts and construction features of care and health premises	• RRFSO 2005 • HTM 05-01 Managing Healthcare Fire Safety • HTM 05-02 Firecode Guidance in Healthcare Premises • BS 9999 Risk-based design principles • CLG Residential Care & Healthcare Guides NFCC Specialised Housing Guidance	
	1.2	Explain how resident vulnerabilities affect fire risk and evacuation requirements		
	1.3	Summarise the relevant legislation and guidance		
2. Understand fire detection, alarm, and suppression systems in healthcare settings	2.1	Explain the purpose and configuration of L1 fire alarm systems	• HTM 05-03 • BS 5839-1 L1 alarm systems • BS 5266-1 Emergency lighting • BS 9251 Residential sprinklers • BS EN 12845 Integration of digital alerting, nurse call systems and smart building monitoring within fire safety systems	
	2.2	Describe the role of sprinklers and other suppression systems in care environments		
	2.3	Evaluate the integration of fire safety systems with evacuation strategies		

3. Understand evacuation strategies in moderate to high complexity care premises	3.1	Compare progressive horizontal evacuation with simultaneous evacuation	• HTM 05-03 • HTM 05-01 Section 10 • BS 9999 Annex G Evacuation strategies • CLG healthcare guidance • RRFSO Article 15 Emergency procedures • NFCC Evacuation for Dependent Occupants Guidance Human behaviour and dependency modelling in progressive horizontal evacuation
	3.2	Identify the staffing and training requirements to support evacuation	
	3.3	Explain how compartmentation supports phased evacuation	
4. Understand how to apply fire risk assessment methodology to health and care	4.1	Outline fire risk assessment in the context of care settings	• HTM 05-03 K • BS 9792:2023 Fire risk assessment – Methodology for specialised housing and care premises • BS 8670-1:2024 • NFCC Specialised Housing Guidance Application of the nine-step methodology to vulnerable occupants and dependency groups
	4.2	Identify common fire hazards and vulnerable persons in healthcare environments	
	4.3	Explain how to prioritise and record significant findings	
5. Be able to assess fire hazards and risks in health and care premises	5.1	Conduct a site inspection to identify fire hazards and ignition sources	• HTM 05-02 • HTM05-01 • NFCC Specialised Housing Guidance • BS 7974-0 Fire engineering principles NFCC Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment
	5.2	Evaluate the adequacy of means of escape for dependent occupants	
	5.3	Assess the effectiveness of fire detection and alarm systems	

6. Be able to evaluate fire safety management arrangements in health and care premises	6.1	Review fire safety policies, procedures, and staff training records	• HTM 05-01 • RRFSO Articles 11, 17 and 21 • BS 9999 Clause 40 Management arrangements Building Safety Act 2022 Golden Thread principles and digital record-keeping for healthcare premises
	6.2	Assess the adequacy of fire drills and emergency planning	
	6.3	Identify gaps in maintenance and testing of fire safety systems	
7. Be able to make proportionate fire safety recommendations in health and care premises	7.1	Recommend improvements to physical fire precautions	• HTM 05-01 • RRFSO Article 9 Significant findings • Coordination with fire authorities, estates teams, insurers and regulatory bodies (e.g. CQC) in developing recommendations • BS 9792 • BRETrust FB52 CLG guidance
	7.2	Propose enhancements to evacuation planning and staff training	
	7.3	Justify recommendations based on risk level and resident vulnerability	
8. Be able to produce a compliant fire risk assessment report in health and care premises	8.1	Produce a fire risk assessment report	• HTM 05-01 • HTM 05-03 • RRFSO Article 9 Recording findings • BS 9792 • BS 8670-1:2024 CLG guidance
	8.2	Use clear, objective language suitable for responsible persons and enforcers	
	8.3	Include prioritised actions with timescales and responsible persons	
Additional information about the unit			

Assessment guidance	Assessment should verify that the learner can apply FRA methodology within health or care environments, demonstrating understanding of dependency, evacuation complexity and management assurance. **Typical evidence** • Completed FRA report aligned with HTM 05-01 and • Inspection or drill records showing evaluation of detection, alarm and evacuation arrangements. • Records of liaison with estates, care management or enforcing bodies. **Scope Limitation – Specialist Fire Safety Systems** Coverage of systems such as smoke control, evacuation lifts, or suppression systems is limited to understanding their impact on fire risk assessment, limitations, and management implications. Design, calculation, specification, or performance modelling of such systems is outside the scope of this qualification.

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 assessments for the qualification(s) in this handbook, in line with our CASS Strategy.

4.3. Facilities

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

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

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

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 4 in Fire Risk Assessment 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

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

[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

Where scenario-based assessment is used, it must remain within the scope of fire risk assessment and must not require learners to undertake fire engineering design, system specification, or performance-based modelling.

Centres must use scenarios that reflect realistic, evidence-based risk profiles and apply marking criteria consistently in line with SFJ Awards' CASS requirements. External quality assurance will monitor scenario suitability and marking consistency.

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).

5.3.3. Work Outputs (Product Evidence)

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

5.3.4. Professional Discussion

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

5.3.5. Questioning the Learner

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

5.3.6. Simulations

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

are fit for purpose as part of the IQA's pre-delivery activity.

Simulations can be used when:

- the employer or assessor 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

[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

- Sufficient
- Transparent
- Appropriate

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

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

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

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

5.5. Methods for Assessing Knowledge and Understanding

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

a) Written tests in a controlled environment

b) Multiple choice questions (MCQs)

c) Evidenced question and answer sessions with assessors

d) Evidenced professional discussions

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

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. 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.

SFJ Awards
Consult House
4 Hayland Street
Sheffield S9 1BY
Tel: 0114 284 1970
sfjawards.com