

Approaches to Assessment for Customised Units in Foundation Apprenticeship Frameworks

Introduction

This Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) Approaches to Assessment document sets out the requirements for learning providers/centres delivering Customised Units within Foundation Apprenticeships. It will help learning providers/centres ensure that their delivery of Customised Units complies with the requirements for SQA external verification and meets FA programme requirements.

This document covers:

- Definition of 'the workplace' in the context of delivering the Customised Units for an FA
- Definition of the 'Employer' in the context of delivering the Customised Units for an FA
- Definition of 'real work activity'
- Approaches to assessment
- Assessment methodologies
- Adaptations to Assessment

Rationale for Customised Units in Foundation Apprenticeships

The inclusion of Customised Units in FAs enables providers to use a range of approaches to delivery and assessment. FA learners may be unable to gain direct access to a physical workplace and/or close face to face contact between assessors and FA learners may not be possible. Where this is the case, Customised Units allow FA providers to use a range of delivery and assessment methodologies, in order to ensure FA learner access to the workplace is accommodated either in person or via remote working.

FA lead partners and learning providers/centres should use this document as the basis for developing and defining the evidence requirements and assessment methods to be used. Further, this document should be read in conjunction with the FA Framework Document, FA Product Specification, Customised Unit specifications, FA Employer Guides and any available Learning Support Materials.

These materials can be accessed on the learning provider section of the apprenticeships.scot website:

<https://www.apprenticeships.scot/learning-provider/>

FA learning providers/centres should also read any relevant guidance from SQA. Taken together these provide support in delivering and assessing the relevant FA.

Definitions

“The Workplace”:

The workplace is defined as the location where the learner is conducting activity on behalf of their host employer. This includes both the physical workplace environment, such as an office or site, or any other location where work-based activity is being managed via digital and online platforms.

The workplace environment is where learners would use organisational equipment or processes and procedures under commercial and business operating conditions (including timescales, adverse conditions, responsibilities). The learner would also be required to comply with organisational regulations and policies.

Where applicable, any machinery, tools, materials, equipment and resources typically used must be representative of industry standards and there must be sufficient available for each learner to demonstrate their competence individually.

“The Employer”:

For the purposes of the Customised Units, the employer is defined as follows:

External Employer: This is where the learner is paired with an employer external to the delivering centre. This employer will be required to host the learner for the duration of their work placement, providing real work activities aligned to the performance criteria within each unit, supporting the assessment and development of knowledge, understanding and competence. This applies irrespective of whether the learner attends the physical workplace or attends remotely as outlined above.

Internal Employer: This is where the learner is paired with an internal operational or functional department of the learning provider/centre institution. In this circumstance the learning provider is required to fulfil the same duties and requirements of external employers as outline above.

“Real Work Activity”:

To be considered ‘real work activity’, employers should be providing learners with tasks and activities that are required by the employer to support current or future operational needs. The activity should be aligned to the overall organisational goals and objectives.

Approaches to Assessment

The Assessor and Internal Verifier:

The assessor and internal verifier must meet the competence requirements of the related SVQ or Diploma units within each framework. This will ensure that standards are maintained and accommodate any adaption due to prevailing conditions.

In the assessment of these Customised Units, assessors are tasked with supporting the employer to understand the types of activity that will be required to satisfy the performance criteria against each unit. The assessor is then required to maintain regular engagement with the learner and employer, to record the learners' progression against the criteria and inform planned activity going forward.

The aim of the assessor is to support the learner in fully achieving the necessary standards required that satisfy the requirements of each unit and to the standards of SQA external verification.

Assessment Methodology:

The approach to assessment taken by learning providers/centres, should be developed to reflect and complement the methodology of how work placement is being facilitated. As per the definition of the workplace earlier, assessment should be adaptable to include either physical or remote engagement, based on the prevailing conditions at the time.

It is the discretion of each learning provider/centre to maintain an evidence base of activity against the criteria per learner. Good practice recommends the development of either an electronic or manual portfolio of evidence. As regards the methodology to conduct assessment the following options exist:

- Directly observing the learner in carrying out work tasks, whether face-face or online
- Directly recording the learner carrying out work tasks (e.g. video recording)
- The learner producing physical or digital work products
- Written, face-face or digital discussion with the learner, employer or other professional after the event
- A combination of all the above assessment methodologies can also be used

The above outlines the primary approaches to assessing the Customised Units within FA frameworks. Further information on additional approaches to assessment can be found in the [SQA Guide to Assessment](#).

Wherever evidence is generated through workplace activities, assessors should ensure that quality control measures are in place to ensure that evidence is reliable and that learners are secure in the skills/knowledge being assessed. This would include reinforcing assessor judgments through additional evidence.

Adaptions to Assessment:

On occasion, there may be limitations affecting the ability to conduct workplace assessment. In these cases, assessment of learner's competence in a sheltered environment where the learner is protected is acceptable, where the environment and task scenarios replicate those expected in industry.

Prior to implementating adaptions, learning providers/centres must first alert SQA to the proposed approach by submitting an 'Adaptions to Assessment' request. The link for which is below:

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/adaptations-conditions-assessment-request-form.pdf

Upon receipt and review, SQA will be in touch to advise further.

Examples of where this may be required include:

- where performing specific activities would be very costly to perform in terms of time, materials and equipment
- where safety of the workplace or safety of the candidate could be affected, or disruption to work processes could occur
- where issues of confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements (NDA) restrict access to real work opportunities
- where employers cannot give access to their physical workplace

Providers should design any realistic work environments so that they match the physical characteristics of a real work, as detailed below:

- the environment must take into account legislation, regulations and codes of practice which apply to the regulated workplace environment
- assessments must be carried out under realistic work pressures that are found in the normal industry workplace
- assessments must be carried out in conditions and facilities which are typical of those encountered in the normal industry workplace
- the range of materials, equipment and tools that learners use must be up-to-date and be of the type routinely found in the normal industry work environment.
- all work carried out must be completed in a way, and to timescales that are acceptable in the normal industry workplace
- provide interaction with colleagues and contacts using the methods of communication used in the workplace
- learners must be expected to achieve a volume of work comparable to that expected in the normal work situation being replicated.
- learners must be given workplace responsibilities that will enable them to meet the requirements of the assessment

Supporting Information:

SQA's Guide to Assessment is designed to provide support for everyone who assesses for SQA qualifications. It looks at the principles of assessment and brings together information on assessment in general as well as on best practice in assessment.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/GuideToAssessment.pdf