Skills for Care and Development QCF Assessment Principles

1. Introduction

1.1 Skills for Care and Development (SfC&D) is the UK sector skills council (SSC) for social care, children, early years and young people. Its structure for realising the SSC remit is via an alliance of six organisations: : Care Council for Wales, Children's Workforce Development Council, General Social Care Council, Northern Ireland Social Care Council, Scottish Social Services Council and Skills for Care.

1.2 This document sets out those principles and approaches to QCF unit/qualification assessment not already described in the Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The information is intended to support the quality assurance processes of Awarding Organisations that offer qualifications in the Sector, and should be read alongside these. It should also be read alongside individual unit assessment requirements

1.3 These principles will ensure a consistent approach to those elements of assessment which require further interpretation and definition, and support sector confidence in the new arrangements.

1.4 Where Skills for Care and Development qualifications are joint with Skills for Health, Skill for Health will also use these assessment principles.

2. Assessment Principles

2.1.Assessment decisions for competence based learning outcomes (e.g. those beginning with' to be able to') must be made in a real work environment by an occupationally competent assessor. Any knowledge evidence integral to these learning outcomes may be generated outside of the work environment but the final assessment decision must be within the real work environment.

2.2 Assessment decisions for competence based Learning Outcomes must be made by an assessor qualified to make assessment decisions.

2.3 Competence based assessment must include direct observation as the main source of evidence

2.4 Simulation may only be utilised as an assessment method for competence based Lo where this is specified in the assessment requirements of the unit'.

2.5 Expert witnesses can be used for direct observation where: they have occupational expertise for specialist areas or the observation is of a particularly sensitive nature. The use of expert witnesses should be determined and agreed by the assessor.

2.6 Assessment of knowledge based Learning Outcomes (e.g. those beginning with 'know' or 'understand') may take place in or outside of a real work environment.

2.7 Assessment decisions for knowledge based Learning Outcomes must be made by an occupationally knowledgeable assessor.

2.8 Assessment decisions for knowledge based Learning Outcomes must be made by an assessor qualified to make assessment decisions. Where assessment is electronic or undertaken according to a set grid, the assessment decisions are made by the person who has set the answers.

3. Internal Quality Assurance

3.1 Internal quality assurance is key to ensuring that the assessment of evidence for units is of a consistent and appropriate quality. Those carrying out internal quality assurance must be occupationally knowledgeable in the area they are assuring and be qualified to make quality assurance decisions.

4. Definitions

4.1 Occupationally competent:

This means that each assessor must be capable of carrying out the full requirements within the competency units they are assessing. Being occupationally competent means they are also occupationally knowledgeable. This occupational competence should be maintained annually through clearly demonstrable continuing learning and professional development.

4.2 Occupationally knowledgeable:

This means that each assessor should possess relevant knowledge and understanding, and be able to assess this in units designed to test specific knowledge and understanding, or in units where knowledge and understanding are

components of competency. This occupational knowledge should be maintained annually through clearly demonstrable continuing learning and professional development.

4.3 Qualified to make assessment decisions:
This means that each assessor must hold a qualification suitable to support the making of appropriate and consistent assessment decisions. Awarding Organisations will determine what will qualify those making assessment decisions according to the unit of competence under assessment. In any case of significant uncertainty the SSCs will be consulted.

4.4 Qualified to make quality assurance decisions:
Awarding Organisations will determine what will qualify those undertaking internal quality assurance to make decisions about that quality assurance.

4.5 Expert witness:
An expert witness must:

- have a working knowledge of the QCF units on which their expertise is based
- be occupationally competent in their area of expertise .
- have EITHER any qualification in assessment of workplace performance OR a professional work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff.