

Frequently asked questions

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1. Who developed these qualifications?

Lifelong Learning UK - the learning sector SSC developed the qualifications during 2009 and 2010 in consultation with employers, practitioners and awarding organisations.

2. What does TAQA stand for?

TAQA stands for

T.....raining

A.....ssessment

Q.....uality

A.....ssurance

3. What is the qualification number for these qualifications?

They are known as the 6317 suite of qualifications.

4. My centre is already approved to deliver the A&V units. What will I have to do to get approval to deliver the TAQA qualifications?

In line with City and Guilds policy there will be automatic approval for all existing 7317 centres to deliver the 6317 qualifications. You do not need to take any action.

Centres should note that these qualifications contain a stronger knowledge base than their predecessors and may require adaptations to previous practice. As with all City & Guilds qualifications the status thereafter will be determined by the results of external quality assurance sampling.

5. What are the main differences between A1 and V1 and the TAQA qualifications?

There are a number of key differences:

- The TAQA qualifications have been written for Framework so are credit rated, written on the Framework template, have Framework levels – which differ from NVQ levels, they are available as awards and certificates
- There are mandatory knowledge-only units in each of the qualifications
- They are open to anyone who is carrying out assessment and quality assurance roles – not just for those working with NVQs
- They have been developed for those working in accredited learning, non accredited learning, the NQF and the Framework and can be used by people who do not assess qualifications but who assess competence in the workplace
- There is a unit specifically designed for assessors who do not assess competence in the workplace
- There is a unit and qualification for quality assurance staff who manage the work of teams of assessors and this includes a unit imported from the Management Standards Council (MSC) units of assessment

6. Is there any independent assessment required in the TAQA qualifications?

No, there is only a requirement for one assessor to assess these qualifications and one person to internally quality assure them.

7. Does the 10 week rule apply to TAQA qualifications?

No, the 10 week rule applied only to NVQs or units of NVQs such as the A&V units.

8. Is there a requirement for the decisions of unqualified assessors to be countersigned? If yes then who can do it?

As stated in 'Our Quality Assurance Requirements' (March 2011 Version 1.0) City & Guilds requires you to continue with arrangements for countersigning. So you need to continue to have decisions of unqualified assessors countersigned by suitably qualified and experienced assessors who can meet the requirements of the assessment strategy for the qualifications that they are assessing. Similarly the decisions of unqualified internal quality assurance (IQA) staff should be countersigned by suitably qualified and experienced IVs/IQAs.

In addition we have always guided centres to keep each of the roles in A1 and V1 separate for a number of reasons. Firstly the countersigner is actually the person taking the assessment decision - and their involvement in the process is to mentor and guide the A1 candidate through the process of assessing that particular qualification - so they are not in a position to assess their A1 as well. In the role of countersigner they need to concentrate on the requirements of the vocational qualification and not be considering the A1 candidate's ability to assess. Also it can cause mass confusion if there is an appeal against an assessment decision taken by the A1 candidate and countersigned by their A1 assessor.

For the same reasons we are continuing to promote the idea that one person carries out only one role in the TAQA qualifications. It is not written anywhere at present that the assessor of the qualification being assessed cannot countersign the TAQA Candidate's decisions but for the reasons above we will continue to recommend that the roles be kept separate.

9. My staff have A&V units do they need to undertake the TAQA units?

It was confirmed by Ofqual earlier this year that there is no mandatory requirement to re-qualify, re-train or upskill to the TAQA units.

However all centres must ensure that all their assessors and internal quality assurance staff (IQAs - previously known as IVs) are working in line with the March 2010 National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Learning & Development - including those for assessment and IQA. The NOS can be found on the LLUK website on the following link: <http://www.lluk.org/4556.htm>

Centres can confirm that their staff are in compliance with the NOS by monitoring staff performance against the standards using routine methods such as observations of assessment practice, quality monitoring, sampling etc. City & Guilds recommends that centres carry out a Training Needs Analysis for all assessors and IQA staff against the relevant NOS Standards and then plan to meet any CPD needs identified in that process.

10. What qualifications does my staff have to have to deliver the TAQA qualifications?

The LLUK Assessment Strategy says:

All those who assess these qualifications must:

- already hold the qualification (or previous equivalent qualification) they are assessing and have successfully assessed learners for other qualifications; if assessing quality assurance roles, they must have experience as a qualified quality assurance practitioner of carrying out internal or external quality assurance of qualifications for a minimum of two assessors
- have up-to-date working knowledge and experience of best practice in assessment and quality assurance
- hold one of the following qualifications or their recognised equivalent:
 - Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment **or**
 - Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement, **or**
 - A1 Assess candidate performance using a range of methods, **or**
 - D32 Assess candidate performance and D33 Assess candidate using differing sources of evidence
- show current evidence of continuing professional development in assessment and quality assurance

Centre staff may undertake more than one role e.g. tutor and assessor or internal verifier, but must never internally verify their own assessments.

All those who quality assure these qualifications internally must:

- have up-to-date working knowledge and experience of best practice in assessment and quality assurance
- hold one of the following assessor qualifications or their recognised equivalent:
 - Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment, **or**
 - Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement, **or**
 - A1 Assess candidate performance using a range of methods, **or**
 - D32 Assess candidate performance and D33 Assess candidate using differing sources of evidence
- hold one of the following internal quality assurance qualifications or their recognised equivalent:
 - Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, **or**
 - Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, **or**
 - V1 Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process, **or**
 - D34 Internally verify the assessment process
- show current evidence of continuing professional development in assessment and quality assurance

To deliver Unit 8 – ‘Plan, allocate and monitor work in own area of responsibility’ your team will to meet the following assessment strategy extracted directly from the Management Standards Centre – MSC Assessment Strategy for Management and Leadership and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and National Vocational Qualifications and Units (February 2010)

“Assessors and Verifiers must demonstrate that they:

- *have credible expertise in management and leadership relevant to the level(s)/units they are assessing or verifying.*
- *keep themselves up-to-date with developments in management and leadership practice;*
- *have a thorough understanding of the NOS for management and leadership at the unit(s)/level(s) they are assessing or verifying.*

In addition Assessors and Verifiers must have:

- An accredited assessor and/or verifier qualification, or
- A related qualification in assessment and/or verification that has been mapped to the national Occupational Standards for assessment and/or verifications, or
- Evidence of undertaking an employer assessment programme that has been mapped to the national Occupational Standards for assessment and/or verifications”

A qualified assessor must countersign the assessment decisions of unqualified assessors. The decisions of unqualified internal verifiers must be similarly countersigned by a qualified internal verifier.

ILM Qualification Specifications – V4 20 August 2010

11. I hold D32/33 and D34 and my staff hold the A&V units. Will we have to do the new qualifications to work as assessors and internal verifiers on the TAQA qualifications?

As you can see in the response in 10 above - all the predecessor qualifications to these are accepted and recognised. So the answer is – no - you and your staff do not need to do these qualifications to continue to practice. You will continue to be qualified to work on the TAQA qualifications.

12. Will my staff have to attend upskilling sessions – as they did when the A&V units were launched?

It is not mandatory that your staff undertake upskilling for the TAQA qualifications. However as they are based on the new national occupational standards (NOS) for assessors and internal quality assurance staff it would be useful for everyone working in those roles to check their practice against the new standards.

Also the people in centres who will deliver the TAQA qualifications will need to demonstrate that they are fully conversant with the requirements and have suitable knowledge, experience and skills to be able to deliver them. This will be checked by your EV.

13. I have some A1 candidates who have not yet completed. Does TAQA affect them in any way - i.e. will there be something in the 6317 that they will later need to cover that is not at the moment in the 7317?

No, the TAQA qualifications do not affect them at all. Your A1 candidates should continue with their A1/V1 in exactly the same way and the units will continue to be recognised as one of the acceptable qualifications for assessors and IVs.

14. Will everyone who assesses Framework qualifications have to have these qualifications? Each Framework qualification may have a different requirement for someone to be able to assess it. What assessors need in order to be deemed suitable and qualified is decided by the SSC for any given qualification. You will find the requirements outlined in the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed – which will be stored on the website of the relevant SSC. So you would need to have a look at the detail of the assessment strategy of each qualification to be certain that you were a suitable assessor.

Many of the assessment strategies produced for Framework qualifications recommend that assessors and Internal Quality Assurance Staff hold a nationally recognised qualification in assessment and internal quality assurance or its equivalent.

Don't forget also that where a qualification contains imported units you also need to check the assessment strategy for those units to be sure that you can meet all the requirements.

15. My centre will still be delivering NVQs into 2011 as recently registered NVQ candidates continue. Will our assessor candidates doing the 6317 Assessor Award be able to assess NVQs to get their evidence for TAQA Unit 2?

Yes, the 6317 candidate assessors will be able to use the assessment of NVQs to gather evidence for their Award.

16. Is the 'Understanding Principles and Practices of Assessment' unit in TAQA the same as the Principles of Assessment unit in the PTLLS/CTLLS?

No, the unit is not the same. They cover some of the same areas of assessment but the units are not identical and have different requirements. From September 2011 the revised PTLLS qualification (6302) includes the 'Understanding Principles and Practices of Assessment' unit as an optional unit.

17. Have any of the new TAQA units been imported from the PTLLS/CTLLS/DTLLS qualifications?

No, none of the new units have been imported from the PTLLS/CTLLS/DTLLS.

The only imported unit in the TAQA suite is Unit 403 and it comes from the Management Standards Council qualifications for Managers.

18. In the new assessment qualifications will there be a requirement for the trainee assessors to be observed as part of their awards?

It depends on which units they are undertaking. If you are referring to:

Unit 302 - Assess occupational competence in the work environment and/or

Unit 303 - Assess vocational skills, knowledge and understanding

then both units must be assessed by observation - but there are also other mandatory assessment methods specified in them. Please refer to the specific guidance in each of the units to be sure that your candidates meet all the requirements.

19. Is it mandatory that candidates are observed 4 times in Unit 302 and 4 times in Unit 303?

Firstly to say that observation is one of the best ways of determining competence and we are keen that centres use it as a main feature of their assessment of TAQA learners. We also intend that the good practice demonstrated by centres in arranging and carrying out these observations will provide role models for the candidate-assessor while they develop their own practice.

However the observations of the candidate-assessor by their assessor must cover:

The briefing of their learners before the assessment (1.4)

Two assessments of two learners - it does not say that there has to be four separate observations. The candidate-assessor may carry out more than one assessment in the time when they are being observed e.g. they may look at products and then carry out questioning with their learners or they might be observing their learner and then asking questions etc, etc. (2.1)

Feeding back to both learners in the above observations (2.4)

It is entirely feasible that one observation of the candidate-assessor assessing each of their learners (ie **two observations in total**) carried out by the TAQA assessor could suffice. If you think the process through - if the candidate-assessor working with a learner, plans and carries out an activity using two assessment methods and then gives feedback then that would be one completed. If they did the same with another learner then that would be all the observations required - plus it would provide a number of products for use as evidence.

20. We have briefly read the new IQA Award and noticed that in Unit 402, it appears that there is no indication of Candidate IQA's having to deal with External Verification visits – as per V1.4 in the existing Award; have we read this correctly?

There is no requirement for IQA candidates to work with EVs. Unit 402 does not require this. In many centres this would be the responsibility of the person leading the IQA process - who could if

they wished - undertake the 6317-42 Level 4 'Certificate in Leading the IQA of assessment processes and practice.'

21. When I attended the training day in London, the trainer said that one of the pathways for the Level 3 was suitable for assessors who marking assignments against set criteria, but were not NVQs. I just wanted to check which combination of units this was.

The answer really is 'it depends'! However - the unit for assessors of non-competence based learning is Unit 303 but your learners may want/need to also do Unit 301. If your candidate-assessor will be assessing a qualification you also need to check the assessment strategy of that qualification to ensure that they can meet the requirements to assess it and to check whether the unit/qualification they need to hold is specified there.

22. The practical units for the assessor quals i.e. Unit 302 and Unit 303 is asking for observations of the trainee assessor's practice - who should be carrying out these observations?

Only someone who can meet the LLUK Assessment Guidance and is on the team agreed by City & Guilds to deliver the TAQA qualifications would be acceptable to carry out the observations.

23. I have the Unit 403 standards but there appears to be neither evidence requirements nor best practice guidance as for all the other TAQA units. Why is that?

Unit 403 is an imported unit from the Management Standards Council suite and what is included in the handbook is all that is currently being provided in relation to this unit.

24. Do you have to be a qualified assessor to undertake Unit 301?

The answer is no. Anyone can undertake the knowledge units in TAQA - Units 301 and 401 - there are no requirements to hold any other qualification prior to undertaking these units.

25. A number of us will be undertaking the IQA certificate in coming months and we are wondering about the status of the assessors with whom we work. Do they have to be qualified or can they be candidate assessors?

There is no specific reference in the qualifications as to whether the assessors you use to achieve your IQA units have to be qualified or not. It would be really useful to have both in your evidence as this would provide you with an opportunity to show that you can support the quite different needs of both.

26. Is the key difference between assessment Units 302 and 303 where the assessment takes place, or is it the methods used? Some people seem to be saying it is the place. For Unit 303, could 'other than the work environment' be out of the workplace eg in an office in a workplace. I am thinking of assessors who are in or go to the workplace, but assess using a range of methods such as projects and case studies and may need the full Certificate, as they do A1 at the moment rather than A2.

It's not so much the place where the assessment happens or the method used - it is more about what the candidate assessor would be assessing - ie something other than a demonstration of competence in a work environment. They could be assessing a case study or a simulation so they might still be observing or looking at reflective statements made by a learner - but they would not be assessing competence in a work environment.

27. Could the same two candidates be used for Units 302 and 303 if they met the requirements of place/methods?

As you can see in the response in question 27 above - the same learners could be used but there would be a difference in what the candidate-assessor is assessing. They would have to assess them demonstrating competence in a work environment for Unit 302. For Unit 303 they might be assessing the same people but doing a project or simulation. The difference is in what is being assessed.

28. For quality assurance Unit 402, in the evidence column, observation comes up in several places eg 2.11, 2.12, 2.14, 2.15. Is this that the assessor would observe the candidate IQA once, observing one assessor assessing and giving feedback, to cover all these?

The observation means that the candidate IQA is observed on a minimum of one occasion where they are monitoring an assessor - by observing them assessing and giving feedback to a learner. (See also the response to question 34 below).

29. Can I achieve an award if I complete Unit 401 + 403 as Lead IV?

You would achieve Certificates of Unit Credit (CUCs) for Unit 401 and 403 totalling 11 credits.

30. In Unit 401 Assessment Criteria 1.5, Assessing and managing risk (5th bullet point) – what does this mean?

It means that the candidate IQA must be able to explain the function of the role in relation to managing risk in quality assurance - for example in planning to minimise the risk of inaccurate decisions taken by inexperienced assessors by increasing the depth and frequency of sampling.

31. In Unit 402 Assessment Criteria 1.1 Discussions with candidates and witnesses (5th bullet point) - does this mean discussions with the candidate IQA and what do you mean by witnesses?

No, it means that in the plan that the candidate IQA puts together their sampling should include discussions with candidates who have been assessed by the assessor whose work is being sampled. In relation to discussions with witnesses the candidate IQA should be planning to check a sample of witness statements (by contacting witnesses) that have been submitted as evidence and assessed by the assessor whose work is being sampled. These were both sampling methods (identified in the Joint Awarding Bodies JAB document), that the IQA has to include in their plan.

32. In Unit 402 Assessment Criteria 1.2 'arrangements for information on assessors and learners' (6th bullet point) – what information is required here on the assessors and learners. By assessor does this mean the candidate assessor?

No, the assessor is the one whose work is being sampled - they are not necessarily unqualified. The candidate IQA needs to include the management of information (such as records and personal data about learners; assessor files - including information such as CVs, copies of qualifications achieved, statements of occupational competence, CPD plans and records, feedback from IQA to assessors over a period of time etc) in their preparations for monitoring.

33. In Unit 402 Assessment Criteria 2.11 to 2.16 Why is it only at least one observation – would the candidate IQA not be expected to observe both assessors?

It does say '....at least one observation' and yes, two observations would be excellent evidence.

34. In the LLUK assessment Strategy where it says "must have evidence of best practice in assessing and quality assuring" - how do we judge 'best practice'? What is 'best'? What if my assessors are good but the centre has a sanction - is best practice being demonstrated regardless?

This is a requirement from LLUK and in reality it will mean a judgement by the centre and the EV. It was included in the qualifications as a way of getting people to think about their practice and about the need for them to actively seek out best practice. Individual assessors and IQAs can demonstrate that they are aware of and carry out best practice even when a centre has a sanction. Evidence of best practice may be found in work products, observed practice, attendance at learning events, and feedback from others such as IQAs, etc. It should be recorded in the Assessor/IQAs CPD Log.

35. GLH has been put in the handbook therefore does this mean that the GLH have to be delivered?

GLH were included in the handbook as they appear in each of the units from LLUK. GLH are required for funding purposes only and as such City & Guilds does not prescribe that they have to be delivered or evidenced. They are, however useful to consider when planning programmes.

36. Unit 302 General guidance - what is a 'substantial' assessment? Please define.

It cannot be accurately and absolutely defined as assessment requirements differ from sector to sector and may vary according to situations. It is an LLUK requirement meant to ensure that assessors don't just do a 10 minute observation and think that this would be sufficient to cover 'one assessment'. The original TAQA handbook said that each assessment would be roughly 4 hours in length - but this was impractical to specify so it was removed. However you may find it useful to note that each assessment should include all of the following – planning, carrying out the assessment, making the assessment decision, giving feedback and recording the outcome – with further planning if required. The resultant documentation from these activities would be evidence of a 'substantial' assessment having taken place.

37. How do we evidence feedback to assessor candidates - does it have to be written?

All feedback to candidates should be both verbal and written, with an opportunity for response. It could also be recorded orally on a voice file or on a video clip.

38. Assessors do not have to be assessing a 'qualification' – but in IQA Unit 402 it reads like the quality assurance is linked to a qualification. How do we quality assure something that isn't a qualification?

There should still be some process of checking and confirming an assessor's decision, as there is for example in performance management systems. In most, the judgements of the person carrying out the appraisal or review have to be scrutinised by someone else. However this may not always be in place where what is being quality assured is not a qualification - but it would be in most cases. Decisions may need to be dealt with on a case by case basis where IQA evidence is being gathered from learning that is not related to a qualification.

39. In 6317- 41 Outcome 2. All evidence requirements' for this outcome state that the candidate trainee IQA must provide evidence to cover the Components of a qualification. Could you please define what this means, is it a unit from each of the candidate IQA's assessors learners?

It can be any part of a qualification, so it could be a unit, it might be more than a unit or it could be less. For example the candidate IQA could be observing the assessors carrying out one assessment activity that does not cover a whole unit. The important thing is that they are being observed carrying out observations of their assessors working with learners as part of their sampling and monitoring of assessment practice

40. 6317- 41 Outcome 2. Criteria 2.1. Best practice guide states, Observation of the candidate IQA observing and giving feedback to assessor(s). Is the observation of the candidate IQA to be carried out by the occupational IQA or by the assessor of the candidate IQA?

The observation referred to in the unit must be carried out by the assessor of the candidate IQA - ie someone who meets the assessment strategy for the TAQA qualifications and who is a listed member of the TAQA assessment team.

41. For unit 303, if we see the assessor-candidates plan eg a project or assignment, we can't see it being assessed as the learner will need time to do it. What are we looking at exactly in seeing a project being assessed? I can see that we should try and observe the other methods where this is easier but wonder what if we can't and these are the main methods?

You can observe the 'management of the assessment' - including the way the candidate assessor prepares with their learners - as in AC1.7 and 2.1. You can then observe them giving feedback, as in 2.6. Throughout your observations you will need to ensure they demonstrate that they have applied any relevant policies, procedures and legislative requirements - this could include them outlining the appeals procedure and HASAW requirements etc for 4.1 and ensuring equality and diversity (and possibly bilingualism) legislation have been applied for 4.2.

42. In Unit 302 can the Assessor-candidate draw up an Assessment Plan for any part of any “group” of credits that form an award of some type? Or does the Assessment Plan have to be for a full group of credits that form an award (i.e. the smallest group of credits that can be certificated)?

As the TAQA units can be used by candidates assessing learning that is not a qualification at all - there is no specification as to what has to be covered in an assessment plan. The assessment plan could be for a single activity, a range of activities, a Framework unit, an NVQ unit, a full Award/Cert/Diploma etc whatever needs to be assessment planned.

43. We have Unit 402 candidates who are quality assurers of Distance Learning Courses. Their assessors only use Q&A (written and oral) as an assessment method, once their students have read through a workbook. The assessors do induct the students and carry out tutorials which are quality assured also. In this situation are there enough assessment methods being used within this area to exercise the QAs and provide sufficient evidence for the unit?

The requirements in Unit 402 are about candidate Internal Quality Assurers being able to use all the different types/methods of sampling rather than being about the assessment methods being used by the assessors. The candidate IQAs have to carry out a number of methods of monitoring to complete the qualification.

The questions to ask of them are - in their role are they able to:

Carry out both interim and final IQA? Page 74

Observe their assessors and give them feedback? Page 74, 75 & throughout - this forms a large part of the candidate IQAs evidence

Have discussions with candidates and witnesses? Page 74 & 75

Monitor learner needs and progress? Page 74

Be able to take part in standardising their decisions with that of other IQAs (Page 79)

If they can do the above and meet all the assessment criteria of Unit 402 then they should be able to complete the unit. What matters is that they are able to and actually do use the range of monitoring methods needed during internal quality assurance.

44. While being observed by their TAQA assessor - If a TAQA candidate carries out an assessment where they observe a learner working then they ask the learner questions – is this one assessment or two?

Each assessment provided as evidence must be a complete process so each must clearly show that the Candidate Assessor has:

- planned the assessment
- carried it out
- asked questions (if necessary)
- made an assessment decision
- given feedback
- made accurate records

In Unit 302 AC 2.1 - the evidence needs to be observation (by a member of the TAQA team) of the candidate assessor carrying out two assessments of two learners - four assessments in total.

An example of this might be -

If a candidate assessor planned an observation of one of their learners, carried it out, asked verbal questions, made an assessment decision, gave feedback and made a record of what had happened and you observed this then this would be **one observation of one assessment of one learner.**

If later that same candidate assessor with the same learner then planned to examine work products, carried out the examination of the products, asked verbal questions about them, made an assessment decision, gave feedback and made a record of this with the learner - and you observed this process - then this would be the **second observation of the second assessment of one learner.**

In other words this would be an observation of **two assessments with one learner and be one of the two** observations necessary.

It does not state anywhere that the assessments - *which must be separate processes and each complete in their own right* - have to be carried out on a different day, in a different location etc,etc. So one assessment could take place immediately after the other but the observation would be of two assessments taking place. This would meet the requirement for one observation of the candidate assessor carrying out two assessments with one learner.

The same process would then have to be repeated - observing the candidate assessor carrying out two assessments with another learner.

This is why we maintain that two well-planned and thorough observations can cover the four assessments required by the unit.

Whatever happens, candidate assessors must use the 3 assessment methods (observation of performance, examining work products, questioning the learner) while being observed and are likely to also cover one or more of the others listed in 2.1.

It is important that the two assessments being observed by the TAQA team member in the example above are clearly recorded as two separate assessments - so the assessment process must be clear, complete and separate for each of them. In other words there would be an assessment plan, a record of the assessment and the outcome for the observation the candidate assessor carried out and another set of similar records for the examining of work products that they did. *This is because it needs to be clear that these were two separate assessments - even though they have possibly been observed during one observation in the same location and on the same day.*

Just to confirm that only members of the TAQA team can carry out observations of candidate assessors. This is because when carrying out an observation the person observing is making an assessment decision and so they must meet the requirements (set by LLUK) for being suitable to assess the TAQA qualifications – and be recognised members of the TAQA team.

45. We deliver our NVQs in a realistic work environment (RWE) as they involve considerable risk and hazardous processes with chemicals - unqualified people would never be allowed to learn the job in a real workplace. Anyway no-one would insure them - so they always have to be qualified before they can go out into the real world. However our assessors need to be able to assess 'competence in a work environment' and so need to complete Unit 302. Is this allowed?

This is a complicated area and it is not possible to give a generic answer about what constitutes an RWE that will fit all scenarios. As a result we respond to individual queries about particular circumstances. In relation to this query we need to know the following sort of information:

- Does your centre have a pre-existing agreement with City & Guilds to use the RWE for the achievement of A1 - which might indicate that the competence being demonstrated has been judged in the past to be as close to real as possible?
- Has this particular RWE has been agreed as being a very realistic work environment by the vocational EV of the NVQs?
- Are your apprentices being assessed on a short work placement or is this their actual work environment for the next few years?
- Do your apprentices work under the same sorts of H & S, pressures and requirements as they would do in their eventual place of work?

If the answer to each of these questions is 'Yes' then it is likely that this would be accepted as realistic and your candidate assessors would be able to undertake Unit 302.

46. Do TAQA Candidates have to complete their qualifications in 18 months as they did on A1 & V1?

There is no timescale given for candidates to complete TAQA units. However it is in everyone's interest for assessor and internal quality assurance candidates to complete in a reasonable period of time. Also this reduces the burden of countersigning.

47. Is it possible to deliver the Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement as a fast track option in a week long course with all assessment and observation done in this short time?

- Though cost effective and efficient assessment is always desirable the requirements of the qualifications must be met to ensure a quality experience for learners and so that the outcome is qualified, competent assessors. These qualifications were deliberately designed to focus on producing such skilled and knowledgeable assessors rather than to enable candidates to complete in double-quick time.
- If the candidates are already knowledgeable about assessment then they would not need much training to cover Unit 301. However if they are new to assessing it is unlikely that they would be have sufficient knowledge to meet the requirements of Unit 301 without at least one or two day's training input. As Unit 301 is a mandatory unit in the assessor qualifications its requirements must be met in full in order for candidates to complete.
- In Unit 302, the assessments and observations done by the candidate-assessor have to be of 2 learners demonstrating competent performance in a real work environment.
- The observations in Unit 303 cannot be done at the same time as the ones in Unit 302 as the ones for Unit 303 are assessments of non-competence based learning.
- It is highly unlikely that observations done online would meet the requirements of the units.
- Learning Assistant would work very well for these qualifications and - yes - the work would need to be in English - unless it was agreed otherwise with City & Guilds.
- As a result it would not be possible to meet all the requirements on a 'course' and extremely difficult to do in as little as a week.

48. For unit 403 could my candidate do an essay incorporating the assessment criteria?

Unit 403 is competence-based and so must be assessed by the demonstration of having carried out the role in a real work environment. Most people will gather evidence of carrying out the role and produce a portfolio for assessment. It is not appropriate for this unit to be tested by assessment of an essay.

49. Is it mandatory to carry out a professional discussion in Unit 301?

Page 25 of the Qualification Handbook says which assessment methods you can use for the unit. It does not say that you have to use more than one - but you could if you judged it to be necessary. So if you feel that answers to the written questions have demonstrated that the candidate does meet the requirements then there is no need to carry out a professional discussion. You could however use the professional discussion to supplement answers if you felt that this was necessary for the candidate to clearly show they have the required knowledge.

50. In Unit 302 do all three mandatory assessment methods have to be observed?

The TAQA assessor should try to observe the candidate-assessor carrying out all three assessment methods. As the TAQA assessor has to observe the candidate-assessor twice (once with each learner) people have reported that it is generally straightforward to plan to observe all three methods.

Some TAQA assessors report that they are observing their candidate-assessor carrying out an observation and questioning with one of their learners and possibly examining work products and questioning with the other.

Best practice would be where the TAQA assessor observes the candidate-assessor carrying out all three methods with each learner. This does require careful planning by the TAQA assessor but it does then demonstrate and model good practice for the candidate-assessor too.

51. In Unit 303- what is a 'skills test'?

A 'skills test' is where skills are demonstrated under test conditions. An example of this is where a word processor operator has to demonstrate that they can type 50 words per minute and input 500 words in 10 minutes with a tolerance of no more than 5 errors. It is only a skills test- if the skills are demonstrated under 'test' conditions.