

Skills for Health assessment principles



Flexible arrangements to support existing principles and approaches to unit/qualification assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic (Reviewed December 2021)

1. Introduction

These flexible approaches to assessment have been agreed by Skills for Health to support the delivery and achievement of qualifications during the COVID-19 pandemic and where assessed observation of practice in the workplace cannot take place. Flexible approaches have been applied specifically where there are requirements to include assessor observation as the main source of evidence. These adaptations will be reviewed again at the end of March 2022 and apply to healthcare qualifications and the units therein that assess occupational competence delivered in England. Arrangements for qualifications in Scotland have been agreed separately with SQA.

2. Flexibilities

Where it is not safe to gain direct observation of performance, the following approaches should be considered.

2.1. Expert Witness Testimony

The use of an expert witness (EW) is permitted to undertake and provide observations of performance of the learner if an observation by a qualified assessor cannot be completed. The requirements of Expert Witnesses remain unchanged from the Assessment Principles.

The use of an EW should be determined and agreed by the assessor. All assessment decisions remain with the assessor. The EW should be provided with induction, training and on-going support from the assessor/IQA to enable the provision of a robust statement of the learner's performance against agreed standards or criteria. Centres should enable EWs to provide and present their evidence in an efficient way which does not compromise validity and reliability. This could include the use of voice and audio recordings, or through remote discussions where the main assessor could scribe the EW contributions.

2.2. Remote technology

The use of video or audio streaming or recording is not permitted where it could compromise the privacy, dignity or confidentiality of any individual, child or young person or family using services. The use of remote technologies could be considered to observe aspects of the learner's performance where the above circumstances would not be compromised.