

EXPERT WITNESS – GUIDANCE

The role of the expert witness is to submit evidence to the assessor as to the competence of the candidate in any given unit. This evidence must directly relate to the candidate's performance in the work place which has been observed by the expert witness.

The expert witness must:

- Have a working knowledge of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the competencies on which their expertise is based.

and

- Have credible experience/occupational competence in the area being assessed. This may include line managers or other experienced colleagues from inside an organisation or from other agencies involved within the workplace.

and

- Be inducted and/or supported by the centre and/or assessor to ensure that they are familiar with the Standards for those units for which they will provide expert witness testimony,

The expert witness must also understand the centre's recording requirements and will require guidance on the skills required to provide evidence for the National Occupational Standards.

It is not necessary for expert witnesses to hold an assessor qualification as the qualified assessor makes all assessment decisions about the acceptability of evidence regardless of source.

It may not always be possible to plan certain observations and therefore the candidate's line manager or another senior colleague may be the best person to provide evidence of competence in unexpected situations, for example, dealing with a health emergency, an evacuation, or supporting someone when they are distressed.

When writing a statement as evidence of competence for a candidate's portfolio, the expert witness is required to write specifically about the candidate's practice using the performance criteria of units identified as guidance.

It is not sufficient to write a generic statement reading like a good reference – the detail of what the candidate did and how this demonstrates competence is required.

It is the expert witness's responsibility to identify the performance criteria and knowledge/understanding they believe has been satisfactorily illustrated in the observation.

The named assessor will then assess the evidence provided by an expert witness and may ask some additional questions for clarification to ensure overall competence of practice observed by the expert witness.

When using an expert witness as a method of assessment, it is essential that the expert witness provides to the assessment centre the following:

- A copy of their job description.
- A copy of learning & development undertaken.
- A copy of relevant qualifications
- A statement confirming their role in evaluating the competence of the candidate.

These will be retained by the centre to confirm occupational competence of individuals providing additional evidence to demonstrate a candidate's competence in the workplace.

