Chartered Trading Standards Institute

Assessors – Frequently Asked Questions

Q1) Clarification on the two-year maximum limit for work. i.e., is it two years from start of the work, or from the conclusion of the work? I have been told that candidates should clearly date their work in their report.

A1) It is 2 years from the end of something – When a complaint was closed, when an investigation was completed. The evidence must be assessed before the 2 years is up

Q2) How do assessors gain access to the candidates SharePoint record? Who makes this request – candidate or assessor? And to whom?

A2) When a candidate registers into the framework they receive information from CTSI telling them about their SharePoint. Usually, candidates contact CTSI to arrange for their assessor or verifier to have the link. Candidates should be able to tell you their candidate number if you wish to request the SharePoint from CTSI.

Q3) Further clarification on the generic portfolio?

A3) The Generic Portfolio is used as the example during the Teams Assessor Training, and is used to show how evidence is cross referenced to / from this portfolio. The Teams Assessor training should always be completed, even if the Assessor CPPD has been completed as the Team's training will give more detailed information.

Q4) The assessor training outlines that the assessor needs to provide advice to the candidates on evidence gathering etc. However, who provides the assessor with the CTSI requirements to enable them to advise the candidate on evidence gathering for portfolios?

A4) On the CTSI website there are the Candidate / Assessor Checklists for all Unit 4, Unit 5 (Investigations) and Unit 6 Regulating Markets. These detail the criteria that needs to be met along with the Required Activity and candidates are encouraged to complete these details what areas they can meet already and what evidence they have to prove the criteria. Assessors are also encouraged to complete these as they can list the evidence they expect to see and this is how observations are identified and then cross referenced into other modules (in the generic portfolio) or other Unit 4 portfolios.

Q5) During the informal meeting between the assessor and candidate the checklists are used to discuss the evidence listed, and then discussions can take place around work-activities that meet different criteria or upskilling / training that needs to be completed so that the candidate can gain experience and evidence.

A5) The Checklists, once complete acts as a Skills Gap Analysis. Although not a formal document, it is advised that this be completed as it ensures that the candidate and assessor know what to expect and when as it forms the building blocks of the Assessment Plan.

Q6) How do we ensure consistency and fairness throughout the process? i.e. between the various candidates and assessors. Where is the benchmark?

A6) This is why there are Verifiers. It is the purpose of the Verifier to ensure consistency between assessors within an authority. Just as an assessor has different types of evidence to confirm competency, verifies have different ways to ensure consistency and fairness across the process. Examples of these are Assessor Questioning, Candidate Questioning, Observing Desktop Assessments and Observing an Assessor Observation.

Q7) What is the correct level of competence required by the candidate? What level should be working towards? A newly qualified officer is not going to be as experienced or as competent as a senior officer? At what level should we be pitching our expectations when reviewing work and questioning?

A7) We compare the level of competence required to that of a Driving Test. When the Driving Test is passed, it means that that the new driver (or newly qualified officer) are able to drive without the need to a companion next to them. So a newly qualified officer is able to go and complete a visit without supervision and are able to ask questions of more experienced officers in order for them to become more confident.

Q8) On average for a portfolio, how many different witness observations should be included i.e. how many different officers are expected to contribute to the evidence of a candidate? Or does it not matter as long as the evidence box is ticked? i.e. it could be the same officer each time providing a witness observation for a number of tasks. [my candidate had a reluctance to ask for witness observations, this left me questioning the candidate every single time, to meet the evidence criteria.] I don't know if this is acceptable?

A8) Remember, a Witness Observation is only 1 form of evidence and does not always, have to be used. This will be identified when the Candidate / Assessor Checklist is completed at the start of the process. It is unusual not to have Witness observations as the candidate is unable to go out on their own and sign any formal documentation. It can be the same officer who goes out with the candidate each time which is fine, and an observation could be gained each time.

There is no average for evidence but as a rule of thumb (and this is not set in stone) Work based evidence makes up at least 70& of the portfolio, as this is the easiest way for a candidate to show competence then the remaining 30% is made of either Witness Observations, Assessor Observations, Witness Testimonies and Question & Answer Sessions.

Q9) Why is the witness testimony listed as one of the five forms of evidence, when it can only be submitted once per portfolio?

A9) There is nothing stated that says a Witness Testimony can be submitted only once, it is the norm however, if a candidate has moved from another Trading Standards Authority they are able to contact that authority and request a Witness Testimony from them as well as one from their current authority.

So just to confirm my understanding - each task needs three types of evidence, therefore we have just four options available per task– work based; assessor observation; witness observations & questioning. So every task will be work-based task, therefore that leaves two of the following that must be completed - - an witness observation; assessor observation or questioning.

Work based is always present, then use another two from Assessor Observation, Witness Observation, Witness Testimony, Questions & Answers. As long as this is accepted by the authority as acceptable (no fresh products for screen-testing) then that is acceptable. Assessors are encouraged to carry out Observations as these are a great way to track progress and achievement and they are able to confirm which criteria have been met. Personally, I would be dubious of a candidate who didn't want me to observe them. Two formal assessments needed per task. I have interpreted this as at least two formal candidate assessment feedback forms per task. Why does there need to be two formal assessments? Feedback can be informal or formal. What happens if you provide informal feedback, the work is corrected by the candidate. Assessor then produces formal feedback. Why would a second feedback form be mandatory? That is correct, feedback is given in two ways, informally and formally and formally is when the Assess 4 is completed by the assessor

This is how it works:

An assessor carries out a desktop assessment, and can't clearly see how a piece of evidence meets a piece of criteria ticked by the candidate on the Summary Assessment Matrix. Instead of completing the Assess 4 straight away, they talk to the candidate (informal) to find out why they felt it met the criteria. After their informal chat it can go one of two ways

1) After explaining it to the Assessor, the candidate now sees that it doesn't meet the stated criteria and an alternative is discussed.

2) The Assessor now understands how it has been met, but the candidate hasn't put all the details as evidence and is now aware of what they must do. The assessor agrees that they will accept this piece of evidence at this time.

The outcome of the informal chat is then detailed on the Assess 4 with what must be done in the future.

The Assess 4 belongs to the candidate, and nothing on the Assess 4 should come as a surprise to the candidate, this is why we have the informal chat.