

What are NVQs?

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are work-related, competence-based qualifications. They reflect the skills and knowledge needed to do a job effectively, and show that a candidate is competent in the area of work the NVQ represents.

NVQs are based on national occupational standards. These standards are statements of performance that describe what competent people in a particular occupation are expected to be able to do. They cover all the main aspects of an occupation, including current best practice, the ability to adapt to future requirements and the knowledge and understanding that underpin competent performance.

How are NVQs achieved?

NVQs are achieved through assessment and training. Assessment is normally through on-the-job observation and questioning. Candidates produce evidence to prove they have the competence to meet the NVQ standards. Assessors 'sign-off' units when the candidates are ready - the assessor tests candidates' underpinning knowledge, understanding and workbased performance to make sure they can demonstrate competence in the workplace.

When new candidates start an NVQ, the assessor will usually help them to:

- Identify what they can do already
- Agree on the standard and level they are aiming for
- Analyse what they need to learn
- Choose and agree on activities that would allow them to learn what they need

At this point, candidates might take a course if that seems the best way to learn what they need. Or they might agree with their employer or supervisor to do slightly different work to gain the evidence of competence they need.

Candidates compare their performance with the standards as they learn. They look at what they have achieved, how much they still need to do and how they should go about it, until they are assessed as competent for a unit or a whole NVQ. The system is right for candidates who already have skills and want to increase them, but also for those who are starting from the beginning. As the system is so flexible, new ways of learning can be used immediately.

For more information please call - Freephone 0808 100 1155