



ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

AWARDS, CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS IN YOUTH WORK PRACTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)

LEVEL 2 & LEVEL 3

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Introduction

The National Youth Agency Education Training Standards Committee (ETS) England and ETS Wales are responsible for the development and endorsement of youth work qualifications in England and Wales based on the National Occupational Standards in partnership with Awarding Organisation's/Bodies (AO/B's¹). ETS England and ETS Wales have developed an assessment strategy for all AO/B's that are awarding the Youth Work in Practice and Youth Work in Practice (Wales) qualifications. This assessment strategy sets standardised and consistent quality assurance expectations for AO/B's.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with the Youth and Community sector and by agreement with AO/B's. It provides overarching principles for AO/B's to use and covers:

- how external quality control of assessment will be achieved;
- a definition of those aspects of the standards which must always be assessed through performance in the workplace;
- the extent to which simulated working conditions can be used to assess competence;
- occupational expertise requirements for trainers and assessors and those providing quality assurance.

The strategy complements the regulatory requirements that AO/B's must meet when awarding qualifications as required by Ofqual in England and Qualifications Wales.

ETS England and ETS Wales work in partnership with the AO/B's to meet their quality assurance expectations in relation to the Level 2 and 3 Youth Work Practice qualifications. Further guidance and support can be provided on request.

Knowledge based units of assessment

ETS England and ETS Wales, sector-based organisations and AO/B's have developed level 2 and level 3 Youth Work Practice and Youth Work Practice (Wales) qualifications, underpinned by knowledge and competency learning, which enable youth workers to work effectively within the sector. The qualifications are informed by the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work (2012).

Assessment methods for the knowledge based units will be developed by AO/B's which are proportionate to the level and breadth of knowledge. They should use resources effectively and be contextualised to workplace practices.

¹ The acronym AO/B's is used throughout to describe Awarding Organisations in England and Awarding Bodies in Wales

Theory of Youth work is a knowledge-based unit and must be assessed accordingly.

Competency based units of assessment

The Assessment Strategy requires the AO/B's to provide detail to ETS England and ETS Wales on each of the following listed below:

Quality assurance

The exact process and frequency of the quality assurance activities, including visits, will be determined following risk assessment by the AO/B's. Where possible, AO/B's should promote to the centres the value of rotating those individuals who are undertaking quality assurance internally to encourage standardisation, independence of assessment and the sharing of good practice.

Risk assessment

AO/B's should take an approach to their centres based on an assessment of risk with respect to the quality and consistency of assessment. AO/B's should ensure that a risk assessment has been carried out of each approved centre and that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the reliability of the assessment.

Awarding organisation/body meetings

ETS England and ETS Wales will arrange annual meetings with AO/B's, the aim of which will be to identify and share good practice and promote consistency. This could include exploring use of simulation and knowledge evidence.

Workplace assessment

The Assessment Strategy is based on the principles that for assessment of competency:

- the workplace is the primary assessment location;
- the primary source of evidence will come from naturally occurring workplace activities and products, produced under normal working conditions.

Assessment evidence should, wherever possible, be holistic. This means that rather than collecting individual pieces of evidence for each assessment criterion, learners should gather evidence to illustrate knowledge, understanding and competence:

- across units that naturally link together;
- where self-evaluation and working with others is required, the evidence may be collected within the normal workplace requirements;
- performance evidence will be gathered, wherever possible, from naturally occurring evidence collected in the workplace;
- evidence must be authentic, current, sufficient, fit for purpose and valid.

Workplace evidence may be collected in the context of full time, part time, casual or voluntary employment. Assessment may also be undertaken in a 'work placement' (i.e. full time learners placed into a work environment for an appropriate period of time or on a regular basis).

Use of simulation

Exceptionally, use of simulation is permitted under a number of circumstances to assess competence:

- where a unit is primarily based on underpinning knowledge but can be contextualised to the workplace within a competency qualification;
- where a lack of opportunity for workplace assessment may be a barrier to a learner accessing or achieving an Award, Certificate or Diploma in Youth Work Practice or Youth Work Practice (Wales);
- where specific adjustments for a given learner prevent access to the workplace or to activities designed to assess learning;
- where there may be issues of confidentiality / safeguarding for young people.

Where simulation is used, it should be designed to ensure that:

- the learner is required to use materials and, where relevant, equipment found and used within the workplace environment;
- the learner is provided by the centre with information, advice and guidance in line with what would be provided in the workplace in the specific context;
- the physical environment and situation replicates the workplace environment in which the skills are used;
- other people with whom the learner interacts in undertaking the assessed activity behave 'in character' for the given situation.

Work based practice units cannot be assessed via simulation.

Occupational expertise of trainers, assessors and those assuring quality

ETS England and ETS Wales acknowledge the vital role that trainers, assessors and those assuring quality have in maintaining the integrity of vocational qualifications. AO/B's and other stakeholders have to have confidence in the actions and decisions of trainers, assessors and those assuring quality.

For existing centres, please also refer to section 7 Transition Process.

Trainers must:

- for the delivery of Youth Work Theory and Work Based Practice units, be a JNC Professionally Qualified Youth Work practitioner, having undertaken a recognised professional qualification in youth work as identified by NYA or ETS Wales.²;
- for the delivery of Youth Work Theory and Work Based Practice units, have a minimum of three years practice experience. The remaining units should be delivered by experienced practitioners with expertise in the subject area;
- have a sound understanding of National Occupational Standards for Youth Work;
- have a sound understanding of the requirements for assessment within Ofqual/Qualifications Wales; be able to evidence continued professional development, including fieldwork³ activities, within the last 3 years.

Additionally for Wales, trainers must:

- hold a recognised learning delivery/teaching qualification and/or have experience of delivering learning;
- be registered with the Education Workforce Council as a tutor, trainer or lecturer in the FE Sector where relevant.

Assessors must:

- for the assessment of Theory of Youth Work and Work Based Practice units, hold a recognised Youth Work (JNC) professional qualification with a minimum of three years' practice experience, with field work experience in the context of youth work, community work, community education or the voluntary community sector, and have relevant experience across the youth and community sector in a capacity recognised by the JNC/ETS within the last 3 years;
- for qualification assessment excluding assessment of Theory of Youth Work and Work Based Practice units, hold a Level 3 in Youth Work Practice (JNC) qualification with a minimum of three years' practice experience, with field work experience in the context of youth work, community work, community education or the voluntary community sector and/or have broader relevant experience across the youth and community sector in a capacity recognised by the JNC/ETS within the last 3 years;
- have a sound understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work;
- have a sound understanding of the requirements for assessment within Ofqual/Qualifications Wales;
- hold or be working towards a recognised assessor qualification** ^^ (i.e. D32/33, A1);
- be committed to, and able to evidence, further training and development.

Those **internally assuring quality** must:

² A current list of all recognised JNC qualifications in England and Wales is on the NYA website www.nya.org.uk and ETS Wales website www.ets.wales

³ This could include, for example, youth work practice, supervision of practitioners or training delivery.

- hold a JNC Professional Youth Work qualification and three years' practice experience, with field work experience in the context of youth work, community work, community education or the voluntary community sector, and/or have broader relevant experience across the youth and community sector in a capacity recognised by the JNC/ETS within the last 3 years.
- have recent experience (within the last three years) of internal quality assurance preferably within an occupational area with relevance to youth work;
- have a sound understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work;
- have a sound understanding of the requirements for assessment within Ofqual /Qualifications Wales;
- hold or be working towards an Internal Quality Assurance qualification (i.e. D.34, V1);
- be committed to, and able to evidence, further training and development.

Those **externally assuring quality** must:

- hold a JNC Professional Youth Work qualification and three years' fieldwork experience of working in the context of youth work, community work, community education or the voluntary community sector, and/or have broader relevant experience across the youth and community work sector in a capacity recognised by the JNC/ETS⁴
- have recent experience (within the last three years) of external quality assurance within the occupational area with relevance to youth work;
- have a sound understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work;
- have a sound understanding of the requirements for assessment within Ofqual / Qualifications Wales;
- hold or be working towards an external quality assurance qualification;
- be committed to, and able to evidence, further training and development.

Minimum Qualification Requirements for JNC Youth Work Practice Qualifications

Units	Trainers / assessors	Internal QA	External QA
Theory of Youth Work	JNC Professional Youth Worker	JNC Professional Youth Worker	JNC Professional Youth Worker
Work-based Practice	JNC Professional Youth Worker		
Mandatory units L2	JNC YSW Level 3		
Mandatory units L3	JNC YSW Level 3		

⁴ Experience would need to be mapped to NOS for youth work as part of an individual recognition process undertaken by ETS England.

Optional units L2&3	Relevant qualification/expertise*		
<p>*Some optional units are youth-work-related so need a qualified youth worker while others may be specialist units (e.g. substance misuse/sexual health) where an expert in that particular area would be better qualified.</p>			

Review and evaluation of the strategy

ETS England and ETS Wales and the AO/B will regularly monitor the effectiveness of the Assessment Strategy. It will be reviewed annually and revised, where necessary.

Mechanisms will be established through the AO/B's annual meetings with ETS England and ETS Wales to enable AO/B's to provide feedback that will assist in the review and evaluation of the Assessment Strategy. The feedback will also be used to review assessment and quality assurance practices, identify and promulgate good practice and inform improvement to the strategy and to future revisions to NOS and qualifications.

Transition Process

ETS England and ETS Wales recognise the need for AO/B's and awarding centres to review and plan for the above changes in delivery of the Youth Work in Practice qualifications. It would be expected that by September 2017 all trainers and assessors are working to the standards outlined above.

ETS England has agreed to recognise the qualifications and experience of a small number of youth sector personnel that have been involved in the delivery of youth work training prior to the establishment of the above criteria. While these individuals may not meet the JNC criteria above, their service will be recognised so as not to disadvantage them unfairly. This recognition will be 'personal to holder'.

ETS England requires all assessors, internal and external quality assurers to have gained the relevant qualifications as detailed above within 24 months of being approved to deliver the qualifications.

ETS England and ETS Wales require AO/B's to make available, on request, information relating to the competence of staff involved in delivering, assessing and internally and externally quality assuring the youth work practice qualifications. This includes:

- youth work qualifications
- youth work experience
- assessor, internal and external quality assurance experience
- assessor, internal and external quality assurance qualifications
- training qualifications
- training experience.

Copies of qualification certificates must be made available on request.

- Individuals that do not hold a recognised qualification will be expected to obtain one within 24 months of approval.
- Individuals that do not hold a recognised qualification must have their assessment/moderation decisions countersigned by a qualified member of staff.