ASSESSOR MATERIALS
DEFINING AND
ASSESSING
COMPETENCE (DAC)
PROJECT V. 3

This document contains all the documents required for assessment at Pay point 4, all generic supporting documentation is available on the College of Policing dedicated web page.
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Assessor Handbook - Pilot

This handbook offers guidance to first line managers/Sergeants to assess the Foundation Threshold for the pilot phase of the Defining and Assessing Competence (DAC) project. During the pilot phase we will also be asking you to use this process for those who are piloting the assessment at years 10, 15, 20 and 25, but to make the handbook less cumbersome we will be referring only to pay point 4 in the text.

The aim is to offer guidance to assessors so fair assessments can be made.

We have put into this handbook as much information as we can but as we progress through the pilot, guidance will be developed as we collectively begin to understand the standards and required material to assess them. Therefore please feedback any errors you find and more importantly any issues you face while using this handbook. It would be really useful if you could send the team any guidance you develop in force to support your candidates through the assessment. Please be willing to share any information, the more we learn at this stage and the more guidance we can gather, the better and fairer the process will be when it goes live.

Assessor Skills

First of all thank you for agreeing to be an assessor. We do recognise that assessing can be challenging but it is also rewarding and supportive so thanks.

For the pilot we are asking that the assessor will be the first line manager of the officer as they approach pay point 4. In most cases this is likely to be the shift Sergeant. You are not required to hold D32/D33 or A1 or the TAQA assessing units, what we are looking for are those first line managers/Sergeants who have met the Police Sector Standard for the Training of Assessors v3.1 available on the College of Policing web page. For ease during the text of this hand book we will be referring to this role as the ‘assessor’.

Being an assessor means you have the knowledge and understanding of the processes/roles/areas of work you are assessing, you know what
success looks like and you understand the assessment strategy and your role within in it. As assessors you need to be confident in what you are assessing, the standards you are being asked to judge against and the assessment methodology and protocols you will be using for each assessment event. It is recommended that if you are already an assessor you either spend some time familiarising yourself with the assessment process or if less confident attend a briefing session on what you are being asked to do. Your in force DAC Project lead will advise on this.

It is never too early in the process to refer to the ‘Code of Ethics’ and as assessors you are asked to become familiar with this Code and base all your assessment practice within this guidance. Assessing is a responsibility not to be taken lightly and through this pilot we will be looking at ways of making the process as fair and balanced as possible. You need to be just as confident that you have assessed people who are successful as well as people who have been referred.

**What are you Assessing?**

In brief you are being asked to make an assessment of competence using:

- the Diploma in Policing units as a framework
- any required core learning linked to the officer’s role
- the behavioural competencies for a Police Constable based on the PPF
- self-directed Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

as the Police Officer approaches pay point 4.

You are then asked to make a holistic assessment decision of competence about the officer.

Explanation and guidance for how these assessments will take place will be given later in this handbook.

**Assessment Methodology**

Although there will be some areas where there is a standard way of assessing i.e. core learning other areas will require the assessor to be
familiar with the officer and the officer’s work role so individual evidence can be collected.

We are suggesting that assessment materials should be collated through the in force Professional Development Review (PDR) system in a bid to reduce any additional meetings, so it is important that you are familiar with your in force PDR processes and protocols. If you are using your in force PDR system you will be able to assess your officer within a familiar format and also map the evidence which is gathered into the requirements of your force’s priorities. It is very important to recognise here that a PDR is a really useful tool but it is a receptacle for assessment material and is not an assessment tool in itself.

**Establishing the Standard**

During the pilot we will need to be working together to establish what success looks like, taking into account the roles an officer takes and the context in which they work. It is likely that different assessment events will be used for different locations, it is important to recognise the demands in each location will be different and what we need to do is work together to establish what meets the standard in a rural area is the same as in an urban area and that our own prejudices don’t get in the way when making judgements.

We are trying to establish, in response to the Winsor Review, that an officer approaching pay point 4 is ‘competent, capable and professional in the role of an operational police officer’.

**Timetable**

Through the pilot assessors and officers will be asked to keep to a timetable and for evaluation purposes identifying if or why this timetable could or couldn’t be met. Please become familiar with this proposed timetable. Your in force project lead will have access to this.

The pilot is expected to take a year including the evaluation to complete but there will be some project markers which we hope you will be able to meet. We are asking you to re-configure your monthly 1-2-1 PDR
meetings and for part of these meetings focus on the collection and collation of assessment material for this pilot.

**Work-based Holistic Assessment Model (WHAM)**

It is recommended that assessors use the process of the Work-based Holistic Assessment Model (WHAM) identified in the College of Policing training materials. This gives a clear assessment process which can be used as part of the regular management meeting which will already be taking place within forces. The assessment at pay point 4 will be quite specific and will take place as an officer reaches their 4th year in post. During the process of assessment there shouldn’t be any surprises, if an officer isn’t achieving the expected level of assessment they should be advised of this and plans put in place to help them meet the standards. It is hoped that this process will eventually become embedded within the culture of the organisation.

**What is being Assessed?**

As previously mention there are four assessment areas and these will require different assessment techniques which will be used during the whole of the pilot phase.

**Re-affirming of the Diploma Units**

The pay point 4 officer will have already been assessed against the Diploma units during their training but these units are a good indicator of the learning requirements of a police officer role. This phase is not about re-assessing the Diploma units but to use them as an indicator that an officer is capable of doing the basics that a Police Constable role requires and a way of affirming that they still reach the required standard of an operational police officer.

The units can and should be looked at holistically rather than as individual units as they were in the Diploma phase. This is an assessment about ‘the job role’ and should bring together the assessment criteria of the unit and assessment material should demonstrate that an officer is competent.
A complex but everyday work place task should meet many of these requirements. An overview of these units are available on the web site.

Please note you are re-affirming and not reassessing. So within the Diploma units a candidate had to be assessed on various occasions, (known as range statements), clearly at this stage this isn’t necessary. As an assessor you will have prior knowledge of your officer so in most cases you should be well aware of their capability.

Together you need to be looking at opportunities from the officer’s work place to demonstrate evidence of competence across these units. Remember you are looking for the experiences of an officer at pay point 4 you are not expecting your officer to have solved all the crime in their region, this is about a reasonable expectation of capability after four years in a police force two of which were training years. We are looking for competent officers.

The task an assessor will have to do is help an individual officer to identify events within the specific remit of role the officer has to do to meet the standards. It will be one of the focuses of the pilot phase to identify these events and find ways of recording them. Hopefully through this phase we will identify some common threads to help and support other assessors. There are various communication tools being identified through the pilot as a way of supporting assessors. It is unlikely at this stage that the officer will be unable to find any evidence to prove competency across the spectrum. This is a pay point 4 assessment and candidates are unlikely to be beyond their first or second role.

As an assessor you may have to find or tease out opportunities to prove competency but as an experienced first line manager/Sergeant you should understand your officer’s role.

All this information can be stored within the forces PDR system and be ready and waiting for a final summative assessment. Evidence shouldn’t be re-written and presented as a portfolio but fall out of the everyday work load. The aim should be to sign posting evidence rather than reproducing it.

There is a worked example in the appendix.
Core Learning

This is exactly what it says on the tin. This is training that the force and either national or local policy has identified to be completed within the work role. There are many ways you can confirm that this has happened such as checking registers or seeing attendance certificates. What you might also want to do is tri-angulate this by a professional discussion or a question and answer session. It is important that you assess for learning by the candidate rather than attendance.

The requirement to meet the core learning is to meet the learning outcomes specific to the officer’s role. It does not therefore require all candidates to necessarily complete the e-learning programmes that are available. The College of Policing has created these e-learning packages to support learning but these are a resource not a requirement. Many of these learning requirements are met within the training the force provides, for example the National Decision Model may be met through Personal Safety Training.

On the web pages there is a list of all the learning outcomes for the e-learning which is available for the role of Police Constable.

Behavioural Competency

These are the underpinning behavioural expectations that policing has for its officers and almost impossible to assess in isolation. As experienced practitioners yourselves you will be expecting to observe or be aware of how the candidate performs their duties in a professional and ethical manner. The evidence for this is wide spread from observation, peer testimony, feedback from the public and again this can be referenced in the PDR.

An overview of these competencies are available on the web pages.

Role Specific CPD

This will ultimately be a personalised piece of evidence as it will be based on what the candidate is interested in and their specific role. However what you are looking for is a wider interest than in ‘just doing the job’.
Again there are as many ways of doing this but the likely scenarios will be furthering knowledge, finding out more about the communities being served, being involved in POLKA, wider reading, understanding the political landscape etc., etc.

Again we will be looking to assessors to share their experiences in this area so we can gain a greater understanding of what CPD officers do as well as build a library of ideas.

**Assessment Methodologies**

As assessors you are advised to use one or a combination of the following assessment methodologies. Because the assessment is personal to the individual officer we can’t give you the definitive answer to what each assessment event will require but we do recommend that across the whole assessment you use a combination of the following methods.

**Observation**

This is often seen as the strongest method to use, observing a candidate in the work place. As the assessor you are likely to observe the officer’s performance which may be good, bad or indifferent. You will be able to observe how they behaved with the public and whether the piece of work was successful and as the assessor you can cross reference your observations back into the standards and store within the PDR.

**Witness Testimony**

A colleague, a peer, a member of the public may have told you or have written to you to tell you that the service they received from the officer was of a high standard. This information can be tri-angulated with what you already know. These testimonies can also be generated by you as the assessor. If you ask someone for a testimony you will have more control of the evidence you want as you can guide the discussion and focus on the type of material that needs to be generated.
Examination of Product

Within policing a plethora of written material is produced, these can be free style or follow a process laid down by the force, or statute, or training and an assessor can make assessment decisions by evaluating these products.

Questions and Answers/Professional Discussion

Although slightly different technically you as the assessor can illicit information from the officer during your regular meetings. Some questions are likely to have standard answers and some will be more open ended and require the manager to be have a professional discussion with the candidate.

Simulated Evidence

Although very unlikely at this stage the assessor could use a simulated situation to gain information. This is creating a situation as real as possible and observing how the candidate reacts. Personal Safety Training and Fire Arms already use these types of scenarios very effectively.

Assessment Process

It is recommended that you re-configure your 1-2-1 meetings and/or your PDR meetings and use the following model as a guide to collecting evidence although if you already have a clear structure in place which is working for you please use that.
Assessment Time Table

During any assessment it is essential that a timetable is put in place to give both assessor and candidate a structure to work to. An assumption has been made that this timetable can be met but we do want to know if it can’t. We know that assessing in policing is dependent on many factors and as a reactive service we know that policing communities will always come first. At the time of writing we are facing a heightened threat alert,
Ebola and the 2015 election is right in the middle of the assessment cycle to name but a few. So if these or any other issue interrupt your process please let us know.

Don’t worry as all evaluation material will be confidential and it is important for us to understand why things work as well as why not.

**Setting the Scene**

What we want to try and avoid is any surprises so we do recommend that in the first meeting you explore the pilot and be clear about what we are all trying to achieve, be clear on how you might guide the candidate to collect evidence.

In your first meeting discuss what core learning will be required from a force perspective, the specific behaviours and the personalised CPD. Don’t be judgemental about CPD see what individuals come up with but keep an eye on what is going on.

Also at this first meeting you should discuss any appeal procedure, complaints procedure and any requirement for reasonable adjustment. Remember reasonable adjustment is about changing ways that evidence is presented it is not about changing the standards. Finally put subsequent meetings in the diary and set off. The following meetings should really be opportunities for the assessor and candidate to keep on track and explore ways of finding evidence particularly if candidates are doing an unusual role.

**Standardisation**

Forces should consider developing a process so the decisions can be standardised and assessors need to be working with a lead manager/Internal Verifier to establish ‘What success looks like’.

As assessors it is always useful to be part of an assessing community just to check things are going OK, somewhere you can share your concerns and check yourself, without outside support and challenge there is a real danger of your personal standards becoming too high or too low.
Appendices
Appendix 1

Assessment Event - Recording Sheet

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<th>Candidate Name and Registration Number</th>
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<th>Short Description of Event</th>
<th>Where the relevant evidence is stored</th>
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This assessment covers the following

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Evidence of CPD Activity
Appendix 2

Assessment Event - Recording Sheet

Candidate Name and Registration Number

Assessor Name and Registration Number

Short Description of Event
We gained local intelligence that thefts were occurring in a local car park. On patrol I was contacted by a PCSO who said that an individual matching the given description was behaving suspiciously in a car park. I met with PCSO who said an individual had been walking round the car park for ten minutes. I took down a full description and the name of the PCSO. I briefed the Comms Centre. I went to the car park and stood where I could see most of the car park. I watched the individual meeting the description move down a row of cars. There was good visibility and the suspect was less than 50 yards away. I saw the individual put his hands on the roof of the car and peer into it. I approached the individual. They explained they were looking for a new car and were involved in research. I explained that I was detaining them for the purpose of a search. I carried out the search and found nothing. I completed the Stop and Search form and gave a copy to the individual I had searched.

Where the relevant evidence is stored
- Radio Logs
- PCSO
- Notes in pocket note book
- Possible CCTV from car park
- Appropriate recording of Stop and Search

This assessment covers the following

Units
1 ✓ 2 ✓ 3 ✓ 4 5 6 7 8 ✓ 9 10

Personal Qualities
1 ✓ 2 3 ✓ 4 ✓ 5 ✓ 6

Core Learning
National Decision Model

Evidence of CPD Activity
I looked into the requirements of ‘Park Mark’ which is an assessment strategy for creating safer car parks. Our Community Safety Team is involved with this initiative so I found some details and sent them to the car park owner.