



The purpose of validation

The Scout Association aims to ensure that adults are able to meet a high standard in their role. However the training it provides is only one piece of the jigsaw. All the training does is help adults learn the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to carry out their role. The adults themselves have to put that learning into practice, perhaps with support and feedback from a line manager or Training Adviser. The next piece of the jigsaw is to assess whether or not the adult is actually using the learning to the standard required. In Scouting we call this process validation.

The process of validation involves comparing what the adult does against a set requirement and deciding whether their performance matches the requirement. Based upon the validation decision, further plans can then be made to develop or manage the adult.

The validation process

Validation processes commonly involve the following stages:

1 Identify and interpret the standard

Both the Training Adviser and the learner must understand what the standard requires. In some validation processes the learner and Training Adviser meet before the validation to ensure the learner has the same understanding as the Training Adviser. In others, a Trainer briefs the learner and the Training Adviser remains at an objective distance. The choice of method will depend on the nature of the module and of the method of validation.

2 Determine what evidence is required to demonstrate that the standard can be, or has been, met

It should be very clear what evidence is acceptable and what evidence is unacceptable for validation purposes. If the standard requires the learner to demonstrate that they know or understand something, the evidence may be gathered by a test, exam or structured interview. If the standard requires the learner to demonstrate an ability or to delivery to a measurable performance level, the evidence may be gathered by observation of a task or by examining the actual output of a task.

3 Collect the evidence required and present it to the Training Adviser

In 'claim based' validation processes, the onus is on the learner to collect the evidence, to format the evidence and to approach the Training Adviser to arrange a validation. In 'check based' validation processes, the Training Adviser collects random evidence, possibly without the learner knowing, and then arranges a validation meeting.

4 The Training Adviser compares evidence against the standard and makes the validation decision

Here the Training Adviser has to base the decision on a comparison between the standard and the available evidence. The comparison process involves the Training Adviser looking at each piece of the standard, then searching the evidence to find some that satisfies that piece. The Training Adviser then moves on to the next piece of the standard. Normally these pieces of the standard are grouped together in sections so that validation decisions can be made for specific sections, according to the validation rules.



5 The Training Adviser informs the learner of the validation decision and gives feedback to help them address any shortfall

A key principle of validation is early feedback. In most validation processes the Training Adviser should indicate where the evidence is insufficient to meet the standard and what the learner should do to collect appropriate evidence in the future. The feedback process encourages transparent validation, the accountability of Training Advisers and fair and objective validation.

The following examples illustrate this process:

Stages in validation	Driving test	Competence based qualification	The Scout Association's Training Scheme
1 Identify the standard	Rules of road use (e.g., Highway Code)	National standard	Training scheme syllabus
	Examiner's observation checklist	Awarding bodies Requirements	Validation requirements
2 Determine the evidence required	Evidence of retained knowledge	Knowledge	Knowledge
	Evidence of driving ability/performance	Observed work performance	Defined validation tasks and activities
3 Collect and present the evidence	Learner sits exam or answers oral questions	Learner presents portfolio of evidence	Learner completes validation
	Learner demonstrates driving ability on a test drive	Learner meets with Training Adviser and answers questions	Learner meets with Training Adviser
4 Compare evidence to the standard	Examiner checks the accuracy of the answers against a marking sheet	Training Adviser studies the portfolio and compares evidence against the standard	Training Adviser studies the evidence and prepares to meet with the learner
	Examiner observes the test drive and completes an observation checklist	Training Adviser prepares questions to learner	
5 Inform the learner of the decision	Examiner tells the learner of the test result and indicates areas to work on	Training Adviser tells the learner of the validation decision and indicates areas to work on	Training Adviser tells the learner of the validation decision and indicates areas to work on



Validation guidelines

The following points are recognised as validation best practice:

- 1 Treat all learners equally, impartially and fairly.
- 2 Wherever possible, the same person should not train and assess a specific learner on the same standard.
- 3 Check that the evidence is the learner's own work and not based on hearsay or on subjective or emotional responses.
- 4 Check that the evidence is valid (i.e., that it demonstrates the knowledge, ability or performance required by the standard).
- 5 Check that the evidence is reliable (i.e., that it is repeatable and based on the learner's ability and performance rather than on guess work or chance).
- 6 Check that there is sufficient evidence to meet the standard.
- 7 Base the validation decision on the evidence presented, observable and available.
- 8 Base the decision on current evidence, not on old evidence.
- 9 Make a written, signed and dated record of the validation process and the reasons for the decision.
- 10 Accept that the onus is on the learner to present the evidence, not on the Training Adviser to find it.
- 11 Base feedback on a comparison of evidence against the standard, not on other evidence that was not presented or available at the time of validation.
- 12 When giving feedback, comment on the evidence rather than the learner's personality or ability.
- 13 Give the learner a written, signed and dated copy of the validation decision and the reasons for that decision.
- 14 Inform the learner how they can appeal against the validation decision if they so wish.