

Arrangements for assessment of Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications from September 2021

This document sets out the Asset Management Group's (AMG) approach to assessment arrangements from 1st September 2021 for the following qualifications:

- Essential Application of Number Skills (Levels 1-3)
- Essential Communication Skills (Levels 1-3)
- Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Levels E1- L3)
- Essential Employability Skills (Levels E3-L3)
- ESW in Application of Number (Levels E1-E3)
- ESW in Communication (Levels E1-E3).

The adaptations outlined below are designed to mitigate against the challenges still being experienced by centres in delivering assessments for Essential Skills Wales qualifications due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although this document outlines continued adaptations to mitigate for the impact of Covid 19 on teaching, learning and assessment, in order to protect the validity and integrity of the qualification, centres must deliver teaching and learning across the full content of the qualification. This will ensure that candidates have all the relevant skills required by each level and subject.

Alternative Assessment Learner Eligibility Criteria:

- Learners who have completed teaching and learning and are considered to be functioning at the required level.

The adaptations outlined below are designed to mitigate against the challenges still being experienced by centres in delivering assessments for Essential Skills Wales qualifications due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

| Qualification | Adaptation 1 st September 2021 – 31 st October 2021 | Future Adaptation from 1 st November 2021 – 31 st August 2022 |
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| <p>Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS) Essential Communication Skills (EComms) <u>Levels 1-3</u></p> | <p>Learners need to successfully complete the confirmatory test (externally assessed) only. This can be undertaken via remote invigilation.</p> | <p><u>Learners need to successfully complete both components of the qualification - Task and Test</u></p> <p>Controlled Task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners who are able to complete the task in the normal way should continue to do so (the number of tasks available for use will be limited). <p><i>If this is not possible:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners should complete the task remotely which can be carried out without formal supervision* (the number of tasks available for use will be limited). Standard assessment time allowances must be adhered to wherever it is safe and possible to do so. For Essential Communication Skills, a recording (internally quality assured) or an assessor written record (internally quality assured) can be used to evidence the speaking and listening activity. <p>Confirmatory Test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners should complete the test in the normal way (online and paper-based options available). An option for remote invigilation is available. |

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| <p>Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS) Essential Employability Skill (EES) <u>all levels</u></p> | <p>Controlled Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners who are able to complete the task in the normal way should continue to do so (the number of tasks available for use will be limited). <p><i>If this is not possible:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners should complete the task remotely. This can be carried out without formal supervision* (the number of tasks available for use will be limited). • A recording (internally quality assured) or an assessor written record (internally quality assured) can be used to evidence the structured discussion activity. • Standard assessment time allowances must be adhered to wherever it is safe and possible to do so. | <p>Adaptations from September 2020 carried forward until August 31st 2022</p> |
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| <p>Entry Level ESW in Application of Number and Entry Level ESW in Communication</p> | <p>Controlled Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners who are able to complete the assessment in the normal way should continue to do so (the number of tasks available for use may be limited). <p><i>If this is not possible:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners should complete the task remotely. This can be carried out without formal supervision* (the number of tasks available for use will be limited). A recording (internally quality assured) or an assessor written record (internally quality assured) can be used to evidence the speaking and listening activities. | <p>Adaptations from September carried forward until August 31st 2022</p> |
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***Task administration - remote assessment without formal supervision**

Taking a controlled task without formal supervision is recognition that centres are delivering the qualification in various ways, such as through blended learning, online delivery. This adaptation to the conditions allows a degree of flexibility in the way a candidate takes a controlled task as it assumes that a supervisor will not be present for all or some of the time that the task is being taken e.g. that it is being taken remotely.

Candidates should approach the controlled task in exactly the same way as described in the qualifications' handbook i.e. the duration of each session should be recorded, they can access the internet etc. but with an increased emphasis upon the requirement that the work produced must be wholly their own, and that it has not been copied or plagiarised. Internal assessors and quality assurers undertake quality assurance in exactly the same way as stated in the handbook. If they suspect anything untoward in the way the evidence has been produced or there is concern that it might not be that candidate's work then the centre's normal procedures for dealing with such instances should be applied. Whilst centres are being asked to apply their internal quality assurance in a slightly different way regarding supervision, authentication and rigour have

not been reduced. The awarding body will be sampling work through its external quality assurance process, taking account of adaptations whilst looking for evidence that demonstrates full completion of the task and the IQA process.

Delivering the confirmatory tests

- Candidates **must** be invigilated when carrying out the confirmatory tests.
- Whilst invigilators must be suitably informed and briefed, determining who can or cannot fulfil the Invigilator role is ultimately an internal staffing matter for centres.
As with any form of assessment, centres must consider the potential for any malpractice that could occur and ensure that there are adequate internal safeguards in place to mitigate the risk of this happening. Particular care needs to be taken if an invigilator might be perceived to have a conflict of interest as a result of other roles they perform. As far as possible, centres should avoid situations where candidates are invigilated solely by the main tutor/assessor who has prepared them for the essential skill being assessed. Where this is genuinely unavoidable, the centre must take all reasonable steps to prevent any conflict of interest which could lead to, or be perceived as, malpractice. Candidates' relatives or peers* **must not** act as sole invigilator under any circumstances. If only one invigilator is present, that person must be able to get help easily, without leaving the room or disturbing the candidates. There must be at least one invigilator present at all times during the test.
*A peer is defined as any student at the same provider or an employee at the same level as the candidate.
- Guidance on the invigilation procedure must be shared with the nominee invigilator and should include:
 - Checking the proposed test area is suitably quiet, adequately lit, has good internet/wi-fi connection and has a visible clock
 - Confirming the identity of the candidate
 - Checking that the candidate or anyone else does not copy the test in any way
 - Removing mobile phones, dictionaries and calculators and any other items that could be used for support during the assessment
 - Ensuring that candidates are sufficiently distanced when more than one person is attempting the test
 - Collecting in after completion, any notes the candidate makes during the assessment.
- Specific guidance around remote invigilation will be provided by the awarding body.

Centre devised tasks

Centre devised tasks must not be used with effect from 1 September 2021 until informed otherwise.

Video or audio evidence

Where video or audio evidence is being used in remote assessment situations, the centre is responsible for:

- testing all video or audio recording equipment before the assessment begins
- instructing candidates to clearly state their full name and candidate enrolment number at the beginning of each recording
- securely storing all the recordings, on the centre's computer system as soon as practically possible, not on the individual assessor's personal drive
- providing good quality recording with clear audio and video
- ensuring the voices of the candidate(s) and the assessor are clearly audible throughout the assessment
- using a quiet location for recording
- storing all recordings until after the next EQA activity
- ensuring that the recordings are not edited.

All filenames of the recordings must be labelled with:

- centre name and number
- candidate enrolment number(s)
- level and assessment activity.

Important information to be included in the recording by the assessor:

- centre name
- centre number
- name of the assessor
- date of activity
- type of assessment taking place e.g. Level 1 group discussion
- name and candidate number(s) of the candidate(s) being assessed, and the names of any participants not being assessed

- location of the participants e.g. workplace or home – not specific details
- time the assessment begins and the time the assessment ends.

Online meeting security

Where online meeting software is used, the centre may want to consider the following:

- If the meeting can be locked to the invited attendees only or where this functionality is not available, a meeting password can be set and shared with the candidates in advance
- Reviewing the security, meeting best practice and privacy policy for the chosen virtual meeting software
- After the assessment has finished, the assessor should also end the meeting
- Regularly check for any security issues or technical issues that may affect your selected virtual meeting product.