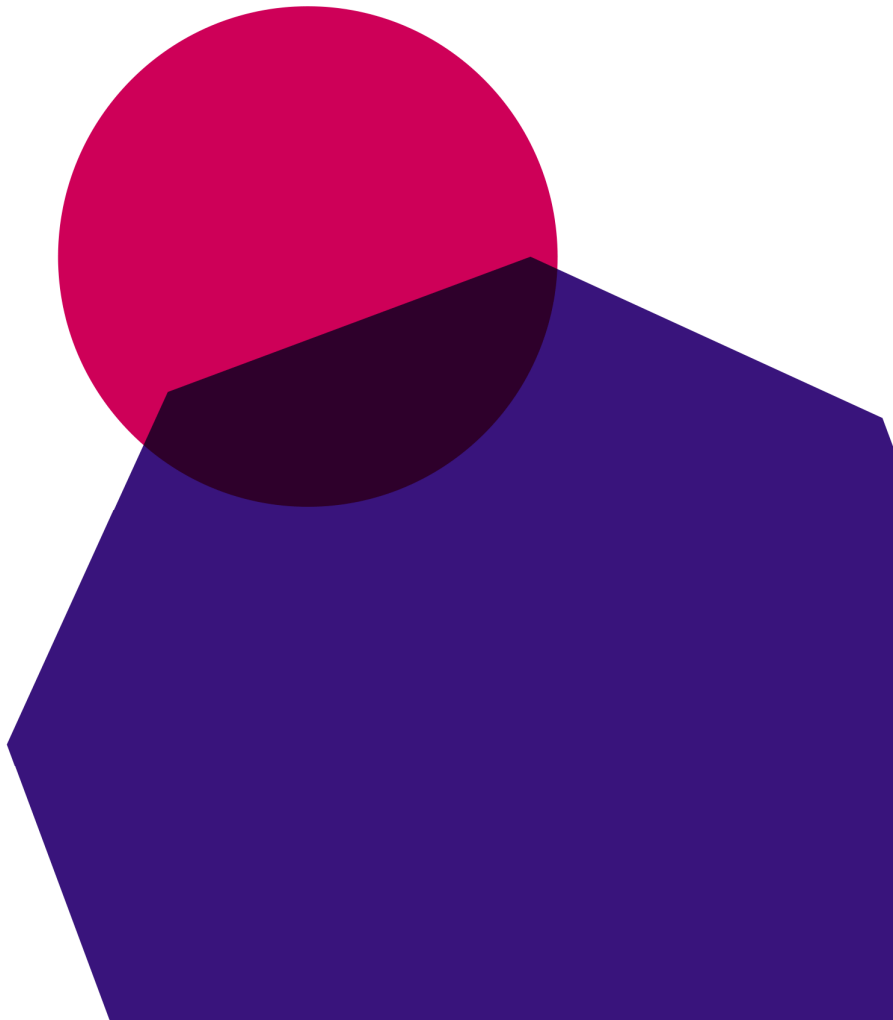


# Mitigation approaches for VRQs and NVQs

## FAQs

June 2020 V1.2

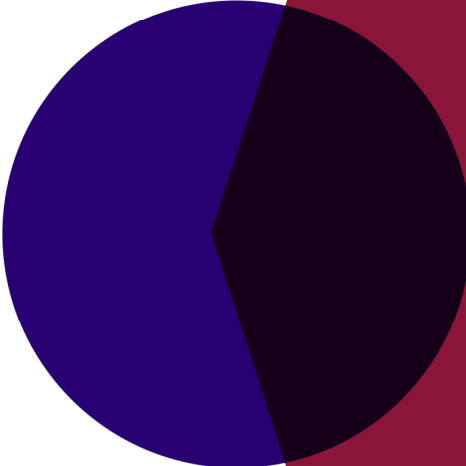


Due to the nature of this document, these FAQs will be updated regularly with new or amended questions. The version control table below will outline any changes or additions made to this document.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Change</b>
1.1	Amendment to original Q13 (now Q14)
	New Qs added: Q8, 17-19
1.2	New Qs added: Q9-12, Q24-29

# Contents

- General FAQs



## General FAQs

These FAQs should be read alongside the **Information for Heads of Centre, Heads of Department and tutors on the determination of centre assessment grades, in relation to Covid-19 disruption** as well as the individual **sector-based assessment mitigation guidance** documents available on the Covid-19 support pages of our website.

### Learner and the Covid-19 arrangements

#### 1. Which learners do these mitigations apply to?

These arrangements will apply to all learners who were due to sit assessments between 20 March and 31 July 2020. This includes learners who may be only part way through their programme of study and will continue with learning towards their qualification after this date. For example, if they had planned to take an assessment on one or more units of a modular course and are half-way through a 2-year programme of study.

#### 2. If a learner has completed all the assessment requirements for some units but we are adapting the assessments for others, should this learner still be included in our list of learners that have had assessments adapted?

Yes, the learner should be included in the adaptation spreadsheet and the adaptation process would need to be followed for this learner.

#### 3. Can adaptation be used for learners who are expected to complete their qualification after 31 July 2020? e.g. Apprentices on an 18-month framework, or year 1 learners on a two-year course.

The adaptations currently only apply to learners that are in scope of the extraordinary regulatory framework, which is any learner that was due to sit assessments between 20 March and 31 July 2020. Currently the adaptations do not apply to learners that were due to take assessments beyond 31 July 2020, as more guidance comes from regulators about the situation for learners beyond this time, we will provide further updates.

#### 4. The primary mitigation approach has been changed from what was originally published. Which approach should I follow?

Where a change has been made to the primary mitigation this has been done in the best interest of the learner. Centres should follow the current guidance and primary mitigation approach; if this is not possible then centres should contact us for further guidance.

**5. What happens if a learner does not meet the adapted requirements by the end of September, do they then need to complete all the normal assessments?**

If adaption requirements have not been met by 30 September, the full assessment requirement will need to be achieved.

**6. If I have learners in year one of a two-year VRQ who were due to complete assessments between 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, are these learners in scope of the mitigations?**

Yes these learners are in scope and the mitigation arrangements can be followed for those assessments.

**7. If learners require special access arrangements, additional time or may have had a family bereavement and or significant disruption to their studies (e.g. staff illnesses) – can any additional compensation be applied?**

For information on special considerations, please see guidance in section 2.3 of the document found [here](#)

Also please check the **sector-based assessment mitigation guidance** documents for the specific qualification(s) for any specific guidance.

**8. Can a learner registered for a Diploma be changed to a Certificate to help guarantee achievement of a qualification?**

Yes, but you should check the Walled Garden to confirm if the learner needs to be registered on the certificate qualification. Their registration for the diploma would remain open if they were able to complete the remaining assessments in full later.

**9. If a learner has completed all the assessment requirements for some units but we are adapting the assessments for others, should this learner still be included in our list of learners that have had assessments adapted?**

Yes, the learner should be included in the adaptation spreadsheet and the adaption process would need to be followed for this learner.

**10. For adapted qualifications, what happens if there is no evidence for one or more units within the qualification, and the learner is unable to achieve the assessment via adaption, can the unit still be claimed?**

If there is no evidence, for a particular unit, and this cannot be generated by any of the adaptations by the 30 September, that unit cannot be claimed.

Centres can claim the other units where adapted assessments have been met, and if the learner is able to meet the full assessment requirements for the remaining unit after the 30 September the full certificate would be issued when the remaining unit is submitted.

**11. The adaptations under each qualification says ‘can’ use. Can other adaptations be used?**

No, the only adaptation that can be applied to assessments are those outlined on the relevant qualification page of the mitigation guide.

The use of the word ‘can’ is because adaptations may not be applicable for all learner scenarios, for example some learners may have already met the full assessment requirements for a qualification, some learners maybe able to continue to meet the full assessment requirements therefore not needing to use the adaptations, or some learners may have insufficient evidence or experience to use the adaptations.

**12. Is it an adaptation if formative assessments are used as evidence for summative assessments?**

Yes, using formative assessment as evidence for a task or criteria is one form of adaptation. Formative assessment should only be used as evidence when it is specified as permitted adaptation for a particular assessment in the qualification mitigation guidance document

## **Centre and the Covid-19 arrangements**

**13. If the mitigation is adaptation, why are some units marked as delay?**

The mitigation approach applied to all qualifications is a primary mitigation approach – in many instances, this approach will cover the entirety of the assessment for a qualification; however there are some areas within qualifications where the primary mitigation approach does not fit for all units – particularly where there is a risk related to the assessment (e.g. a practical health and safety assessment).

In many instances, learners will have covered key units such as health and safety at an early stage during the qualification – but not all units; so, adaptation for the outstanding assessment will support them to proceed and certificate. In some areas where key assessment cannot be adapted and the learner hasn’t achieved, then we are unfortunately saying that the overall completion of the qualification is delayed until the learner can be adequately assessed undertaking the specified units under normal requirements.

**14. Why are the level 2 & 3 VRQ qualifications adapt when the technical qualifications and level 1 VRQs are calculated?**

We have taken the approach of adaptation for these qualifications based on consultation guidance that qualifications that are dual purpose ie support progression to FE/HE and employment, however, are more aligned with occupational/competency should be adaptation.

**15. For VRQs that are calculated, if we have learners that we are not happy to submit a centre assessment grade for, can they be delayed, or do we have to submit them as a fail grade?**

If your concern is that the learner is a fail grade then a fail grade should be submitted, unless the normal process for submitting grades is pass candidates only

If your concern is that you do not have sufficient evidence to submit a centre assessment grade then you do not need to submit, but learners would then be required to complete the full assessment requirements to achieve the qualification. If this is the case, you should formally advise City & Guilds of this decision by contacting [estimation.quality@cityandguilds.com](mailto:estimation.quality@cityandguilds.com).

**16. Are specific forms required for conducting adapted assessments, e.g. oral questioning, professional discussion?**

No, centres are able to use their own forms to conduct adapted assessments.

**17. Do any oral assessments have to be undertaken using a specific technology, e.g Zoom, Microsoft Teams?**

Although audio-visual technology such as Zoom or Microsoft teams can be used for oral questioning or professional discussion, it is not mandatory – and centres may conduct oral assessments via telephone.

Centres should however consider the benefits of audio-visual technology for conducting oral assessments, for instance assisting the support of candidate identity.

**18. Do we need approval for our adaptations? Or are they OK from the list provided in the sector mitigation guidance documents?**

For adaptations, no specific approval is needed – centres will make the judgement (based on the qualification guidance we have provided) then claim as normal if you have DCS (Direct Claim Status) for the qual. Centres need to complete:

- a customer intention form
- an 'adaptions submission' spreadsheet which must be retained by yourselves and attached to the CA2 monitoring activity.

If you do not currently have DCS for an 'Adapt' qualification i.e. your approval status for that qualification is Medium or High you will need to contact your allocated City & Guilds quality team and arrange for a remote EQA visit to take place in June/July as soon as possible as the deadline for claims is 30 September.

**19. Do I need to have DCS claim status for centre assessment grades, or adaptations?**

**Centre assessment grades** can be submitted by any approved centre for registered learners regardless of qualification approval risk status.

**Adaptation:** For assessments where the mitigation is adaptation, centres can submit grades both where they have DCS status and where they do not have DCS status. If a centre has DCS status they can submit results via the Walled Garden in the normal manner. For those centres that do not have DCS we are in the process of confirming how the submission of results will work.

Please see our Quality Process Arrangements and Guidance for assessments that have been adapted guidance document found [here](#)

**20. Do I need to provide separate forms for units achieved prior to 20 March, and units where an estimated grade is applied post the 20 March?**

Where assessments have been banked these will be taken into consideration when we aggregate units and issue the qualification.

Where assessment have been completed under normal conditions prior to the 20 March and all internal and external quality assurance requirement met, these unit should be claimed in the normal way via the walled garden

**21. If our learners are able to be on site and working with their usual tutor, do we need to complete a declaration of adaption?**

No. If the centre is able to comply with Government guidelines and the learner and the assessor are able to complete the assessment under normal assessment requirements, then adaptation is not relevant and a completed declaration of adaption does not need to be completed. If they are completing any of the units with permitted adaptations, then a declaration of adaption would need to be completed.

**22. What happens to a learner's results if we cannot claim a unit which has to be passed before claiming?**

Where a learner has not completed a required unit that has been marked in the mitigation guidance document as 'delay', then completed components should continue to be claimed through Walled Garden and banked. Completion of the delayed unit component should then be undertaken at a time when it is possible to do so.

**23. If the primary mitigation approach for a qualification is delay, does this mean that we cannot proceed with any assessment activity, even if it is safe and possible for us to do so?**

A primary mitigation of delay is where no change has been permitted to the assessment methodology of a qualification, and where it is anticipated that centres would be unable to continue to undertake assessments during the current period. If a centre is able to meet government guidelines and continue to undertake assessments for a delayed qualification under normal conditions and requirements, then assessments can continue to be taken, without the need to advise City & Guilds.



**24. Do we still apply grading, for example, pass, merit or distinction, or is it just a pass if they are using adaption mitigation?**

Yes, if assessment should still be graded, using the grading which is relevant to the assessment being adapted.

**25. Can oral questioning of short answer question test be carried out in a group online class call, where a tutor reads out the questions and learners write down answers (type or write), then send them to the tutor when they have finished and before they leave the call?**

This approach is acceptable so long as the authentication of assessment and security can be maintained. Tutors may want to consider the number of learners on the call to ensure invigilation and authentication. Particular attention should be paid to use of mobile phones, texts and email sharing of answers between the group. Centres should consider any access requirements an individual learner may have.

**26. How much briefing can we give a learner prior to a professional discussion for a qualification e.g. can we share some generic questions?**

If planning a professional discussion, the themes or criteria being covered by the professional discussion can be shared in advance, the exact questions should not be.

**27. Can you confirm if we are able to continue to book evolve online exams in the normal way for learners where we are able to administer the exams on a college site following Covid-19 safety precautions?**

Yes you can, assuming that government guidelines in relation to Covid-19 are followed and safety precautions agreed your end between the College, the learner and their employers etc.

For Functional Skills we have currently suspended bookings for all tests both paper and online. There is no need for candidates to continue completing Functional skills assessments. Centres should be focussing on submitting centre assessment grades for their learners. Centres unable to submit calculated grades need to contact us as soon as possible on [estimation.quality@cityandguilds.com](mailto:estimation.quality@cityandguilds.com).

**28. Can City & Guilds sample tests be shared online with learners and the tests sat remotely?**

Yes, sample assessments can be shared online, you should consider authenticity of any evidence if using this as part of a centre assessment grade or as part of an adapted assessment. Centres should consider the level of trust that the evidence of an assessment provides, e.g. the result of mock exams taken within specified conditions in the centre are likely to provide more secure trusted evidence than sample assessments taken remotely.

**29. If we have written our own questions based around the City & Guilds externally set questions. And these have been completed by learners via a quiz forum or moodle. Can these be used as evidence?**

Yes, these can be used provided that they cover the test specification and provided that you can be assured of the authenticity and trust of the evidence (e.g. if the learner is observed on screen completing, e.g. through google form and the responses are sent straight back to the tutor).

### **Submission/quality process**

**30. For centre assessment grades, is there an option to bulk upload?**

For estimation, the centre assessment grades tool (CAG tool) in Walled Garden has both a download function which is live, and an upload function which will be available from Friday 12 June. This is explained in the guidance document found [here](#)

**31. If we don't have direct claims status and now need an EQA remote activity for our adapted assessments and we can't get the ALL of the evidence, will this affect the claims?**

This will need to be discussed with the centres dedicated Quality Delivery team as it would depend on what evidence is available including, if any, adapted assessments. Please contact [adaptation.quality@cityandguilds.com](mailto:adaptation.quality@cityandguilds.com)

**32. On the City and Guilds site there is a learner declaration form is it expected that we should see learners to get this signed?**

The requirement for a learner declaration form for adapted assessments has been removed. Please see our Quality Process Arrangements and Guidance for assessments that have been adapted guidance document found [here](#)

**33. How can an EQA sample for adapted assessment happen when portfolios are in college and cannot be retrieved yet?**

Where centres have DCS this should not be a problem as the EQA sample can be organised for when these are available. However, evidence must be retained for three years as per City & Guilds requirements.

Where centres do not have DCS, EQA activity will need to be delayed until this is available. Adapted evidence should be recent and therefore should be available for the EQA sample.

**34. Where do centres submit the completed spreadsheet for adaptations?**

Completed spreadsheets should be attached to the CA2 in your external Quality Assurance activity within the Walled Garden. Please see our Quality Process Arrangements and Guidance for assessments that have been adapted guidance document found [here](#)

### **Useful sources of information**

1. Ofqual guidance on awarding qualifications in summer 2020
2. Ofqual consultation on awarding vocational and technical qualifications in summer 2020
3. Ofqual guidance for Heads of Centre, heads of department and teachers on objectivity in grading and ranking

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