

Update - 13 November 2020

An overview of planned adaptations for Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications for 2020/21

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has resulted in disruption to education and training during spring and summer 2020. Public health restrictions are likely to be in place during 2020/21, and further disruption may occur on a localised basis.

The Asset Management Group (AMG) will continue to review the situation at regular intervals to take account of public health advice and the Covid-19 situation – but the intention is to work back towards teaching, learning and assessment as normal.

To mitigate the disruption to teaching, learning and assessment of the Essential Skills Wales qualifications, the AMG have agreed to the following arrangements which have been agreed with Qualifications Wales.

These arrangements update and replace any previous arrangements communicated by the ESW awarding bodies. It is recognised that these arrangements may still present challenges for some centres; however, in putting these in place, the ESW awarding bodies have considered both the pathway for a return to the standard assessment model, alongside issues relating to the manageability, validity and reliability of the Essential Skills Wales qualifications.

Certification arrangements for Entry Level candidates

There is no adaptation applied to Entry Level Essential Skills qualifications. Candidates working towards any of the ESW qualifications at entry level must be assessed using the existing rules for invigilation as specified by each awarding body.

Certification arrangements until 31 December 2020

For learners who are registered and on programme and will complete their ESW qualification by 31 December 2020, the following requirements apply:

Essential Communication Skills or Essential Application of Number Skills Levels 1, 2 and 3

- Candidates must successfully complete the confirmatory test. Candidates are **not** required to complete the controlled task.

Essential Digital Literacy Skills at Levels 1, 2 and 3

- From the **1st October 2020**, candidates can be assessed on the controlled task **without** formal invigilation. Candidates will now also need to complete the structured discussion element of the task, either individually or as part of a small group. This may be carried out remotely and a recording of the discussion must

be made available for external verification, together with the candidate's preparatory notes.

- It is recommended that the standard assessment time allowances be adhered to.
- Two tasks will be made available by the awarding bodies for use during this arrangement.

Essential Employability Skills at Levels 1, 2 or 3

- Candidates must successfully complete the controlled tasks **without** adaptation and under supervised conditions. Candidates will also need to complete the structured discussion element of the task, either individually or as part of a small group. This may be carried out remotely and a recording of the discussion must be made available for external verification, together with the candidate's preparatory notes.
- It is recommended that the standard assessment time allowances be adhered to.

In order to protect the validity and integrity of the qualification for the long term, centres must have completed teaching and learning across the full content of the qualification.

Arrangements for learners who have not completed their qualification by 31 December 2020 and all new learners registered from 1 January 2021 onwards

Essential Communication Skills or Essential Application of Number Skills at Levels 1, 2 and 3

- Candidates must successfully complete the confirmatory test.
- In addition, candidates must also complete a controlled task to provide evidence to support the skills required for the successful completion of the qualification. Centres can choose from two tasks that will be made available at each level by the awarding bodies for use during this arrangement. No other tasks should be used. This task can be assessed **without** formal invigilation. It is recommended that standard timeframes are adhered to. This task must be internally assessed and externally quality assured.

Essential Digital Literacy Skills at Level 1, 2 and 3

- Candidates must successfully complete a controlled task to provide evidence to support the skills required for the successful completion of the qualification. Centres can choose from two tasks that will be made available at each level by the awarding bodies for use during this arrangement. No other tasks should be used. This task can be assessed **without** formal invigilation. It is recommended that standard timeframes are adhered to. This task must be internally assessed and externally quality assured.

- Candidates will also need to complete the structured discussion element of the task, either individually or as part of a small group. This may be carried out remotely and a recording of the discussion must be made available for external verification, together with the candidate's preparatory notes. It is recommended that the standard assessment time allowances be adhered to.

Essential Employability Skills at Levels 1, 2 and 3

- Candidates must successfully complete the controlled task **without** adaptation and under supervised conditions.
- Candidates will also need to complete the structured discussion element of the task, either individually or as part of a small group. This may be carried out remotely and a recording of the discussion must be made available for external verification, together with the candidate's preparatory notes. It is recommended that the standard assessment time allowances be adhered to.

Monitoring of any ongoing impact resulting from Covid-19 restrictions

The Asset Management Group will continue to monitor and review any ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and their potential to disrupt learner access to assessment with a view to returning to the standard assessment model when it is feasible to do so.

Remote Invigilation

All four awarding bodies continue to explore remote invigilation opportunities for ESW qualifications and updates will be provided in due course.

Summer 2021 examination series

On 10th November 2020, the Minister for Education announced that there will be no end of year exams for learners taking GCSEs, AS levels or A levels in summer 2021. It is not currently anticipated that the Essential Skills Wales qualifications will be affected by this decision.