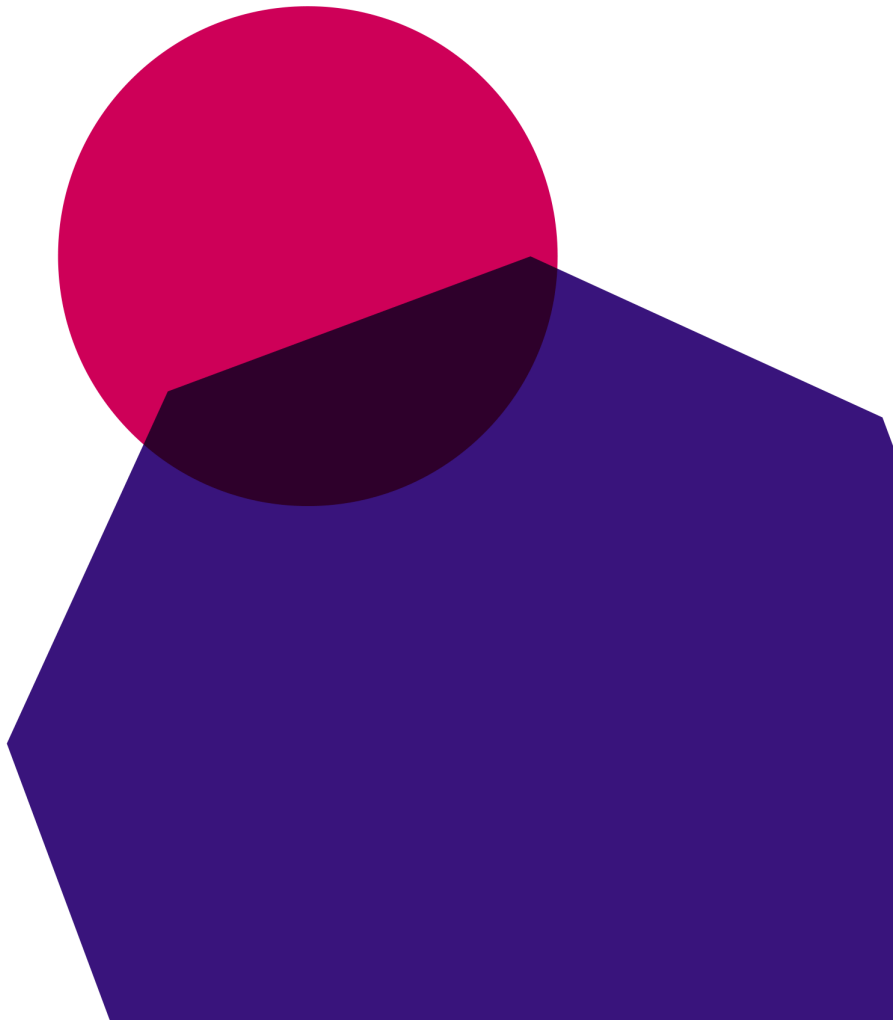


Functional Skills and ESOL Skills for Life

TAG FAQs

Version 1.0 (May 2021)



Contents

Key Dates	3
Systems and Process	5
Eligibility	7
Evidence for TAG	10
Adaptations	10
General Queries	11

Key Dates

1. When will centres get information about the system or the data they will be expected to submit?

We have now published the following documents:

- Key dates
- System and process guidance

These can be found on the Qualification Specific Covid-19 webpages which can be accessed by clicking the links below:

- [Functional Skills](#)
- [ESOL](#)

2. When will the results be issued?

Each window has a results release deadline. We have published Key Dates for windows 1, 2 and 3 on the Qualification Specific Covid-19 webpages which can be accessed by clicking the links below:

- [Functional Skills](#)
- [ESOL](#)

We will be publishing dates for further windows in due course.

3. Can we have an earlier submission window?

Unfortunately, this is not possible. The TAG windows have been constructed around the need to develop new systems to manage this process, the resources needed in centres to conduct the TAG process and ample time for thorough quality assurance to be conducted. We've worked to make the process as efficient as possible, and our results deadline date is set 20 days after the submission window closes in line with our usual timelines for issuing Functional Skills results. We've also offered multiple submission windows this summer based upon feedback from the process we followed in 2020. The results dates are deadlines and we will release results as quickly as we can.

4. What if further learners are found to be Eligible past the eligibility submission date for Window 3?

We will be monitoring the volumes of requests for consideration for TAGs and it is likely that we will introduce further windows towards the end of the period outlined in the key dates document on the [Functional Skills Covid-19 page](#).

5. Can only Legacy FS learners be submitted in the first window as the 2nd window results date is end of July?

No, submissions for both Legacy and Reformed Functionals Skills will be accepted for Window 1.

Centres will also be able to submit Legacy candidates in Window 2 and results will be issued in time for the certification end date of 31 July 2021. However, centres should not plan to use

TAG, they should continue to attempt delivering live tests. If a candidate is not due to complete their course until July but they are ready for assessment, centres should delay the assessment until the learner is able to take a test in person or using remote invigilation. The TAG process should only be used for learners who cannot access a test now and need a result imminently.

Systems and Process

1. Do I need to submit fails?

The centre will need to demonstrate the learner is eligible for a TAG, including that they are 'assessment ready'. There is no requirement to submit fails, however, centres are able to do this within the Alternative Results Processing tool on Walled Garden if they wish.

Where the centre feels that the candidate is not at the required standard to achieve a pass, they should collate further evidence to support a TAG submission in a later window.

We do appreciate in some circumstances; centres may feel it is helpful to have a fail grade published on the Walled Garden, so the system will not prevent centres from entering a fail grade but centres should be aware that they will be charged for all grades entered through the TAG process, both pass and fail.

2. Are TAGs being submitted at overall qualification or component level?

Both eligibility bookings and TAG results will be submitted at component level (eg 4748-111).

When making submissions centres will only be able to see the e-volve component numbers within the system, so even if you would usually use paper-based exams, you will need to use the e-volve assessment code for eligibility and TAG submissions:

Below we have outlined the assessment codes that can be selected in the system:

Level	Assessment	Code
Level 1	Speaking, Listening and Communication/Communicating	3748-012 or 4748-012
Level 2	Speaking, Listening and Communication/Communicating	3748-015 or 4748-015
Level 1	Reading	3747-110 or 4748-110
Level 1	Writing	3747-111 or 4748-111
Level 2	Reading	3748-113 or 4748-113
Level 2	Writing	3747-114 or 4748-114
Level 1	Mathematics	3747-119 or 4748-119
Level 2	Mathematics	3747-120 or 4748-120
Level 1	Functional Skills ICT	3748-924
Level 2	Functional Skills ICT	3748-925
Level 1	Reading to obtain information	4692-501

Level	Assessment	Code
Level 2	Reading to obtain information	4692-601

3. Are we able to upload eligibility bookings in cohorts rather than individual candidates?

Centre must have valid reasons why each individual learner is eligible for a TAG, reasons cannot be applied across an entire cohort. We may request to see evidence for individual learners that you make eligibility bookings for. When entering your Eligibility Booking you will need to add individual learner records to the booking. You will be able to select multiple candidates and create a 'cohort' within the system which can then be recalled when entering TAG submissions on Walled Garden.

4. Are results input into Walled Garden by City and Guilds or by centres?

Each centre will have to submit TAGs in Walled Garden, once the City & Guilds has approved their Eligibility Booking. Centres are able to view their booking status on Walled Garden. If centres submit TAGs without their eligibility booking being approved, the submission will error.

5. What do we do if the group of learners in a submission all have different reasons for not being able to take the test?

The ERF will ask you to give details why the learners cannot access a live assessment against each of the conditions. The more detail you can provide, the quicker we will be able to consider your application, as the eligibility decision is made by learner, not by submission. If we need further information, we will contact you.

6. Do we submit one Eligibility Rationale Form (ERF) for all the learners we feel are eligible for TAG? Or is it one form for every learner?

You will only submit one rationale form for ESOL, one for Entry Level Functional Skills and one for L1/2 Functional Skills, for each submission window.

7. Can one individual complete the ERF for all subcentre numbers for a centre?

We would encourage each sub-centre to submit an ERF as the reasons relating to learners at one sub-centre may differ to another. We have revised the form following Window 1, going forward the ERF must be signed off by the Head of Centre.

8. What is meant by Head of Centre, we have a centre manager, curriculum manager and head of service... which level would the sign off be allocated to?

All centres must have a Head of Centre. This person would have been named when you gained approval from City & Guilds. The ERF form should be signed off by the Head of Centre or someone who has their permission to act on their behalf.

Eligibility

1. What information do we need to give you in relation to Eligibility? We've seen the terms Eligibility Booking and Eligibility Rationale Form what are these?

For eligibility centres must complete both of the following:

- Eligibility Booking (via Walled Garden): Here you will tell us which learners and which assessments you wish to submit a TAG for during the current window.
- Eligibility Rationale Form (ERF) (via City & Guilds Website): here you will provide use with the rationale for why you believe these learners are eligible for a TAG.

Further guidance can be found in our system and process guidance on the Functional Skills or ESOL Covid-19 pages.

2. We have learners who we planned to enter for assessment in August 2020, unfortunately they couldn't complete their assessment. They have since been on a break in learning but have now returned and are ready to be assessed. Are they eligible for a TAG?

They will be considered eligible for a TAG provided if:

- their course end date is in the past and assessment is overdue, and,
- they would have been considered eligible for a TAG at the time they were ready to take a live assessment, and,
- the centre has supporting evidence to demonstrate the learner was assessment ready, and,
- the centre can demonstrate it is not possible to invite the learner back to take an assessment face to face and has explored all possible adaptations to test.

3. Are learners who completed their course before end of March 2021 eligible for a TAG without needing to meet the criteria regarding face-to-face assessment or remote testing?

No, all learners must meet the eligibility criteria for a TAG. Although these learners may be considered 'overdue', the centres will need to demonstrate that all other options (i.e. delaying the assessment, face-to-face assessment and remote invigilation/assessment) have been exhausted as part of their Eligibility Rationale Form submission.

4. If our centre has students who are all overdue their assessment and have now left the college, will these be eligible for TAG? In the Eligibility Rationale document, can we skip the questions about exploring the other options?

As outlined in Q3, a learner will **only** be considered eligible if all the other options have been explored and exhausted, even for 'overdue' assessments. In this situation, the learners should be invited back in to take an assessment in person or remotely before applying for a TAG.

5. We still have some students who are waiting to take FS assessments from last year as they weren't able to be put forward for calculated grades. How will these students be able to obtain their qualifications?

Centres should continue to attempt to deliver assessments as usual, and these learners should attempt to access a live test either in person or by remote invigilation. A TAG submission will be considered for these learners provided that the centre holds sufficient evidence to show that the learner meets the eligibility criteria and would pass their Functional Skills assessment if they were able to sit it.

6. We run FS English from September to January and then start FS maths. The college was shut during our exam time and we cannot easily get students back in for exams without teaching them. Would we be able to claim TAGs for English FS?

Although these learners are overdue their Functional Skills English assessments, the fact that they are now attending college for their maths qualifications demonstrates that they are able to access an assessment face to face. It would be difficult for the centre to justify the need for a TAG in this situation.

7. We have learners who were exam ready through at a previous level but have now progressed to the next. We will put them in for assessment for their current level and plan to use TAG for the assessments they missed in November. Is this acceptable?

No, these learners do not qualify for TAG. As they are able to access the assessments at the new level, they do not meet the eligibility conditions of TAG and they should complete the assessment at their original level before completing an assessment at the new level.

8. What if our organisation does not offer remote invigilation?

Eligibility criteria for TAG is based upon a learner's ability to access assessment. The centre has a responsibility to provide opportunities for the learner to attempt the assessment, both in person and remotely. The centre must explore all options for their learners to support them taking the assessment normally. To be eligible for a TAG there would need to be a valid reason for the **learner** not being able to take the assessment by remote invigilation. We would not accept a centre decision not to offer remote invigilation as a valid reason.

9. Can TAG be based on learner preference? If the learner would prefer to not sit a test and is feeling too much under pressure, can they be put forward for TAG?

Eligibility criteria is about the ability to access assessment in line with Public Health guidance or remotely. Learner preference does not meet the eligibility criteria for a TAG.

To be eligible, centres must be able to demonstrate that learners cannot:

- afford to delay the assessment,
- access the assessment face to face,
- access the assessment remotely

If the learner is experiencing either Covid or assessment related anxiety, the centre should assess their needs and identify if there are any access arrangements that would help the learner to access the assessment.

10. Would it be classed as needing TAG if the learner does not want to complete a test remotely and is unable to travel to testing sites due to Covid, vulnerabilities, etc?

See the answer to 9 above. It should be noted that the 'stay at home' rule was lifted on 29 March and the shielding rules were only in place until 31 March 2021, but there are instances where learners with specific health issues have been directed to take additional care so this may be considered as sufficient reason to apply for a TAG. It is important that in these cases centres give a detailed response on the Eligibility Rationale form to assist the quality team with their decision-making process.

Learners not wanting to take a test remotely is not a valid reason for not being able to take the test remotely, therefore even if the learner is shielding this learner would not be eligible for a TAG.

11. If students have only been able to complete part of their speaking and listening assessments, due to remote learning, can we claim SLC through the TAG route? If so, how?

Due to the range of adaptations available for Speaking, Listening & Communicating (SLC), it should be possible for all the activities to take place remotely without the need for a TAG. In order to submit a TAG, learners will need to have sufficient evidence that covers the range within the SLC assessment, therefore if they have only partial demonstrated the skills assessed within SLC, they will not have sufficient evidence to support a TAG.

Where a centre can demonstrate that it hasn't been possible to deliver SLC, and they have sufficient evidence that the candidate meets the pass standard for all the subject content for SLC, they can apply for a TAG submission to be considered through the eligibility process.

12. What if some learners are not ready now but will be ready by 31 August? Can they be put forward for TAG in the first window for example?

Learners should only be submitted for a TAG when the centre has evidence that they would pass the assessment should they sit it today for example. Where learners are not yet at the relevant standard, centres should continue to teach them and submit them for a TAG in a later window when they have the relevant evidence.

13. New learners are joining us all the time and may not be able to access assessment and may not have the learning in place right now, but they would by 31 August, are they in scope for the first window?

No, learners can only be considered for a TAG if you have the evidence that they are ready for assessment at the point of eligibility submission. When you have sufficient evidence that the learners would meet the pass criteria you should attempt to deliver a live assessment either face to face or remotely. Only where it is not possible to deliver a test or delay assessment can a learner be considered for a TAG in the next available window.

Evidence for TAG

1. What evidence will you be looking for to justify TAG?

The Alternative Assessment arrangements for 2021 guidance document which can be found on the [Functional Skills Covid-19 webpage](#) has a section on sources of evidence for TAG judgements.

We strongly recommend that centres utilise sample assessments where possible to generate evidence. Centres should make every effort to supervise the completion of these assessments to ensure the evidence generated by the learner is authentic and valid.

2. Would a BSKB report showing learner working at their required level be sufficient?

It is unlikely to be sufficient on its own. Please see the guidance document for an explanation about what constitutes sufficient and trusted evidence for a TAG. There are a number of points which would need to be covered and it is unlikely that this one piece of evidence would meet all of those points.

Adaptations

1. Can paper-based exams be taken at the employer placement and invigilated by the normal assessor who would visit the workplace.

Functional Skills exams can take place in the workplace, but a tutor for the subject being examined **must not** be an invigilator for any exam so if the normal assessor is preparing any candidates for Functional Skills exams they are not permitted to invigilate. Please see the Functional Skills Instructions for Conducting Exams (ICE) document for the requirements for invigilators

2. Can we use remote invigilation for entry level Functional Skills?

Yes, we have updated the adaptations guidance [here](#) with advice about carrying out entry level assessments remotely.

3. Will you be offering remote invigilation in the future alongside the examination centres?

We will continue to offer the existing interim 'Test at Home' remote invigilation solution until we launch our long-term remote invigilation service in early Summer, which will replace the interim solution.

4. How long will the City & Guilds testing centres remain open?

We closed the London testing centre at the end of April and the sites in Birmingham and Bristol will continue to be available until 31 May 2021.

General Queries

1. Could you clarify the deadlines for ordering paper-based on-demand papers?

Paper-based on demand exams must be booked 14 days in advance of the planned exam date.

For Legacy Functional Skills (3748) English and Maths the last date that paper-based exams can be booked through Walled Garden is **11 May 2021**. The last date the assessments can be sat is **28 May 2021** and all assessments need to be received by City & Guilds by 4 June 2021.