

Digital Skills Newsletter

New/revised Standards for 2021

City & Guilds offer

We have finally had the publication dates for the new and revised Digital Standards. The lead time to these has not been as we have previously mentioned, as others have been pushing IfATE to get them out as quickly as possible.

It is our intention to offer the following products this year and we are already in a good position to open them for registration as soon as publication happens – with one exception:

- **Information Communication Technician (ICT)** – replacement for Infrastructure Technician and Unified Communication Technician
- **Data Analyst** – new to us
- **Network Engineer**
- **Software Developer**

Centres may need to complete a form to indicate they will be continuing to use us for the Network Engineer and Software Development Standards, in order for us to meet our audit obligations to the EQA body. For ICT and Data Analyst, the usual expression of use form will need to be completed to add these products to your Walled Garden access.

What's different?

The first thing that you will see for these Standards is the change in assessment, which will now consist of 2 methods – 1. Project with Q&A, and 2. Portfolio (not assessed) to inform a Professional Discussion. Also, there are specific knowledge (K), skills (S), and behaviours (B) for each assessment method that the apprentice must achieve to gain a pass – there is no overlap and KSBs missed in one assessment will not be compensated for in the other.

For Network Engineer, the projects will be two 7-hour simulated assessments that must be done on consecutive days, while the other Standards are looking for a real work-based project to be done that is set by the employer for an organisational need.

AND, of course, the other big change is that the on-programme qualifications (other than English and maths) are no longer required to proceed through Gateway to EPA. This may cause some training providers concern about what they do on-programme, well just keep doing what you have been doing is the simple message. While you can no longer use funding to pay for registration and certification on Vendor programmes or our knowledge qualifications, you can still pay for learning materials that are appropriate to the Standard you are delivering. This can be Vendor material or even our own Get-to-Gateway product as required.

For those curious about funding for these Standards, following some wrangling between IfATE and the Minister, the expected reduction has not happened, and the Minister has put all the funding to the same level as the current versions. For ICT this will be the same as Infrastructure Technician – though note that this programme is now a suggested 18 months for a typical apprentice.

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Standard	Registration opens	IfATE Publication
Information Communication Technician	18 June 2021	4 May 2021
Data Analyst	18 June 2021	1 June 2021
Network Engineer	1 June 2021	1 June 2021
Software Developer	1 June 2021	1 June 2021
	EPA booking opens*	
Information Communication Technician	1 May 2022	
Data Analyst	1 May 2022	
Network Engineer	1 May 2022	

City & Guilds is actually ready to go with Network Engineer and Software Developer, but we cannot officially open these for registration until they are published. While ICT has been published (unexpectedly fast) we are still working to our original development plan based on information provided previously and will be ready with Data Analyst from 18 June 2021

Funding for ICT should have been published and the Standard available on LARS from 13 May, as ESFA update mid and end of month, we would expect Network Engineer, Software Developer and Data Analyst to appear mid-June.

City & Guilds product numbers

Standard	City & Guilds Number
Information Communication Technician – product number per Pathway	9601-12/13/14
Data Analyst	9770-12
Network Engineer	9601-12
Software Developer	9600-12

EPA Process

All centres should now be using EPA Pro that has helped smooth out the process by using one system and the introduction of “meet the IEPA” is personalising dates for the EPA evidence submission and interview/professional discussion. This will not change, except that you will now need to consider the timings for the project to be completed and two sessions with the IEPA.

Also, note that the Portfolio must be submitted at Gateway – it is no longer part of the assessed material at EPA.

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Adaptation and Teacher Assessed Grading - reminder

The new VTQ Contingency Regulatory Framework (VCRF) covers certificating and non-certificating students who were expecting to take assessments (for 'in-scope' qualifications) between 1 August 2020 and 31 August 2021.

The VCRF will allow awarding organisations to use alternative arrangements when exams do not take place and/or when students cannot complete all internal assessment. This includes issuing results based on teachers' judgements of students' performance, to be referred to as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs).

Link to high level summary for Technical Qualifications 2021:

[alternative-assessment-arrangements-for-technical-qualification-summer-2021-pdf.ashx](https://www.cityandguilds.com/~/media/2021/04/alternative-assessment-arrangements-for-technical-qualification-summer-2021-pdf.ashx)
([cityandguilds.com](https://www.cityandguilds.com))

Government categories

DfE/Ofqual and the other regulators has assigned categories to qualifications on the VCRF, based on the purpose of those programmes. These are **Category A** and **Category B**; the latter being split in to **B1** and **B2**.

Category A test occupational or professional knowledge and/or skills, or proficiency in a skill area. Students must be assessed on their competency in these areas so that they can be effective and safe within the workplace.

Category B1 are used to support progression to further or higher study or into employment. They are used instead of, or alongside, GCSEs and A levels. TAGs are permitted and can support progression for certain assessment components and specific conditions.

Category B2 are typically either short-course qualifications, qualifications typically delivered on a 'roll-on/roll-off' basis, or which may be smaller than those in B1 (for example, Entry Level or Award sized qualifications).

Centre Assessment Grade (CAG) vs Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG)

- Centres should not make comparisons to the Centre Assessment Grades (CAG) approach adopted last year which were a **prediction** of the grade that students would most likely have achieved had they sat their assessment as normal.
- TAGs are different and must be determined based on actual assessment **evidence** covering the knowledge, understanding or skills that would normally have been assessed (i.e. the evidence must be valid for that particular assessment). Centres should familiarise themselves with the information provided in the guidance document and not rely upon last year's experience.

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City & Guilds Digital and IT VRQs

Classification

City & Guilds Digital and IT qualifications have been placed in **Category A** where they have been determined to be required to prove competence to undertake a job – this applies to NVQ products and some of the qualifications that are the only one in a Credit Based apprenticeship, as well as some Level 4 qualifications.

All the on-programme qualifications for Apprenticeship Standards have been placed in this category, as they are part of an apprenticeship and have reasonable options of *Adaptation* have been provided.

Category A does not allow for Teacher Assessed Grading (TAG).

The rest of the qualifications sit in **Category B1** where TAG may be used as a last option based on a number of criteria. Please check the latest publication for VRQs and B1 qualification on the Covid-19 webpage.

TAG must be based on evidence that you have and are getting now, it cannot be on a prediction of what might have been from evidence that was only collected at the start of their programme.

Centres should continue teaching and learning with assessments as normal, where it is safe to do so. You are going to have complete a *Centre Policy Approach* form that will show your approach for all VRQ qualifications within category B1 that you deliver and that you intend to submit a TAG.

You will be expected to provide further detail around your process for determination of TAGs and the internal quality assurance (IQA) procedures relating to this, in order to ensure we have confidence in the approach to determining TAGs.

NOTE: *Assessment, either remotely or in person, throughout must always be the primary option.*

Adaptations to delivering some assessments have been made so centres must explore these options before considering a TAG for a student.

TAG is the assessment of last resort.

What about Category A qualifications?

Further Adaptations are being added to those published in October 2020. These will look at offering the following (please note this is draft information):

- For Evolve online tests a possible option to use portfolio of evidence
 - judgement must be on evidence that exists and cannot be a prediction.
- Practical assignments to use evidence that has and is being produced by a learner, marked against a City & Guilds Set assignment
 - Cannot be a portfolio of evidence-based judgement, the evidence must be able to be shown to meet the criteria required by the assignment it is replacing.

[Vocational Qualifications - Assessment arrangements 2021 - Covid-19 | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/vocational-qualifications/assessment-arrangements-2021-covid-19)

[Vocational qualifications assessment arrangements - TAG guidance and qualifications list available \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/vocational-qualifications/assessment-arrangements-tag-guidance)

[Technical Qualifications - Assessment Arrangements - Covid-19 | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/technical-qualifications/assessment-arrangements-covid-19)

[Vocational and technical qualifications contingency regulatory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/vocational-and-technical-qualifications-contingency-regulatory-framework)

[Guidance for assessment arrangements – Teacher Assessed Grades 2021 \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/guidance-for-assessment-arrangements-teacher-assessed-grades-2021)

[Assessment arrangements for 2021 - Covid-19 | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/assessment-arrangements-2021-covid-19)

[Technicals – Overview of the TAG process - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Technicals – How to determine TAGs - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Technicals – Evidence requirements for TAGs – YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Other news

The Queen's speech did not give us anything that we haven't already heard. The only real news from that speech was the announcement of a new Skills and Post-16 Education Bill to be introduced in this Parliament, which tells us that education and skills will be a legislative priority for the coming year. With no guarantee that the announcements made in the FE White Paper in January would make it into this year's Governmental 'To Do' list, the Queen's speech has confirmed post 16 skills as a key Government priority.

A quick overview of the legislation that will make it into the bill include:

- Introducing a new student finance system that will transform the current student loans system, giving every adult access to a flexible loan for higher-level education and training at university or college, useable at any point in their lives.
- Giving employers a statutory role in planning publicly funded training programmes with education providers, through the "Skills Accelerator" programme (the original announcement and further information re the Skills Accelerator was in the weekly bulletin I sent out on 30th April)
- the Secretary of State for Education will be given more powers to intervene in colleges that fail to meet local needs (i.e., the local skills priorities that have been established by LEP's and their Skills Advisory Partnerships [SAP's] or by MCA's and their Skills Strategies), and to direct structural change where needed to ensure the provider improves.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

City & Guilds has been reviewing its approach to Remote Invigilation and working on what it can do to be more flexible and offer further solutions. Make sure colleagues (and you) are signed up to the Email Updates for further information from 14 May 2021.

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Updates and webinars – and more

Are you still a bit unsure as to how some of the things around Apprenticeship Standards work or just want a reminder of some of the things we have discussed at events and on webinars? Then, please visit our Updates and Webinars page.

<http://bit.ly/CGDigitalUpdate>

Please check out the information held there as this may answer many of the questions you have.

Next webinars

1 June 2021 (09.30 – 10.30) <http://bit.ly/CGDigital1June>

22 June 2021 (09.30 – 10.30) <http://bit.ly/CGDigital22June>

If you have any specific topics you would like discussed at these events, please forward your suggestions to:

Ken Gaines ken.gaines@cityandguilds.com

OR

David Wackett david.wackett@cityandguilds.com

Essential Digital Skills Qualifications

City & Guilds is planning to launch its EDSQs later this year, for first registration from Autumn. Available at Entry level and Level 1, they will be centre assessed and externally quality assured, and funded through the new Digital Entitlement. We will be providing more information about what they will look like and running webinars for centres in the coming weeks and months.

For details on how to join these webinars and how to get involved, look out for announcements in future editions of this newsletter, email alerts and on the City & Guilds website:

<https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/it/essential-digital-skills-qualifications>

To contact City & Guilds directly about getting involved, email us at:

pre-employment@cityandguilds.com

Note from David and Ken

We always urge you to Stay Alert and Stay Safe. Please make sure you check the Covid-19 webpage.

www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19