

Assessor guidance

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of guiding principles by which the health & social care qualifications offered by City & Guilds are assessed.

While the majority of health & social care assessments will conform to the principles set out here, some qualifications may contain variations. In such cases, this will be clearly stated within the qualification's specific assessment documents.

If you have any questions about this guidance document, please contact your external verifier or health & social care advisor.

Assessments

Health and social care qualifications are assessed in a number of ways to provide a clear indication of a candidate's knowledge and abilities. The types of assessments include:

- research and report tasks
- candidate portfolios
- short-answer questions
- practical tasks.

Further information on these types of assessments is available below.

The assessments are set by City & Guilds and are administered by the centre when the candidate is ready. They are then marked internally using the information/ marking guidance provided and the outcomes recorded on the documentation provided by City & Guilds. All assessments are subject to internal and external verification.

It is the centres' responsibility to ensure that all assessment material is stored securely.

Assessments can be completed in any order. Centres are expected to organise the assessments according to the requirements of the candidates' assessment plan. Tutors must not simply teach to the tasks, but it is expected that candidates will be fully prepared for the assessment. Candidates should be aware of what it is they are to be assessed on and what is required of them in order to achieve a pass.

The assessments set for health and social care qualifications should be fully accessible by all eligible candidates. For example, if asked to produce a presentation, a candidate should only be required to present it to an audience where this itself is directly relevant to the learning outcomes of the unit. If a task is still thought to unfairly prevent access due to the type of evidence requested, advice should be sought from the external verifier (EV) on adapting the assessment. Note, however, that any changes to the assessments must be agreed with the EV prior to being made available to candidates. Any changes must still ensure the full coverage of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria and that the marking/ grading criteria can still be applied.

Research and report tasks/ reflective accounts

Research and report activities within these assessments are not closed book tests and research may be completed away from the centre, in the candidates' own time and at their own pace. This also applies to reflection and preparation for a reflective account. However, it is expected that the production of the final evidence is completed in conditions that allow the centre to be confident of the authenticity of the work and within the time constraints set by the centre.

Candidates are required to submit evidence by using reports, information sheets, leaflets etc. This is only a guide, however, and candidates should not be penalised for providing evidence in another suitable form, eg a poster instead of an information sheet.

Candidate portfolios

Where required, candidates are expected to keep a portfolio, or e-portfolio, as evidence of their learning. It should demonstrate the continued evidence of acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, understanding and achievements. Portfolios are used to record and organise training and regular contribution to the portfolio will help monitor the candidate's progress and assessment achievements over time. The portfolio should contain documentary evidence with the inclusion of personal reflection as necessary.

Short-answer questions

Short-answer question tasks should be taken under controlled conditions as closed-book tests (unless explicitly stated otherwise in the qualification documentation). These can be conducted in the normal learning environment with the tutor/ assessor acting as the invigilator. Alternatively, tutors/ assessors may prefer to ask candidates the questions orally and record candidates' responses; this is something which can be conducted in the candidate's own working environment.

The marking guide attempts to be comprehensive, however, where this is not possible the tutor/ assessor should use their professional judgement.

Practical tasks

The practical tasks set out in a number of assessments are required to assess candidates' practical skills. Where candidates are currently working/ volunteering in a health and social care setting, they should, where possible, be observed in that situation. Where this is not possible, observation should be undertaken within a simulated but realistic scenario. In this context, the tutor/ assessor should take the role of the candidate's supervisor where this is called for.

Candidates are not permitted to use any observation checklist provided as part of the assessment to work from when completing their practical task, but may familiarise themselves with it prior to an assessment.

Introducing the assessments to candidates

Tutors/ assessors should introduce each assessment, ensuring that the candidates fully understand the task(s) involved. Candidates should have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the way the tasks are graded and know what is expected of them in order to achieve the requirements of the assessment(s).

It is important that candidates are not disadvantaged if they have poor literacy skills, as assessing these skills is not the purpose of these assessments.

Should tutors/ assessors wish to prepare candidates in advance, they may devise their own formative assessments internally and provide feedback on these.

Timings for assessments

A submission schedule should be worked out by the centre, governed by the overall assessment plan for the qualification and to be negotiated between the assessor and each candidate individually.

Similarly, there is no time limit set by City & Guilds for assessment by short-answer questions however any specific guidance for the centre/ assessor is given with each written assessment.

The relationship between assessment delivery, the handing out of assessments and the deadlines for their return are matters for agreement between the assessor and the candidates in each centre.

Submission of assessment work

All health and social care assessments are summative and, for this reason, candidates may not submit drafts of their written work in order to gain feedback. Completed, written work must be submitted at the end of the learning period when a candidate is deemed 'ready'.

Marking and grading

Research and report tasks, short-answer questions and practical tasks should be marked using the relevant marking guidance provided by City & Guilds for each assessment. Candidates must achieve the number of marks or the criteria specified in order to achieve a pass (or merit/ distinction where graded).

Resubmission of research and report tasks

Candidates who fail a research and report task within an assessment can, at the centre's discretion, repeat the full task and are able to use the research previously undertaken in order to amend or add to the evidence as required. In this case, a candidate cannot achieve higher than a pass grade for this resubmission.

The tasks are summative assessments and, other than to achieve a pass, candidates may not repeat a task/ assessment in order to improve their grades. It is therefore essential that these tasks are not considered formative and that candidates only attempt them when they are judged to be fully ready.

Guidance for individual assessments

Individual assessments will, where necessary, contain their own guidance which provides additional, specific direction on how that assessment should be delivered. Tutors/ assessors should refer to this in advance of conducting any assessments.

Authenticity of assessments

Centres are reminded to check for authenticity of work where candidates may be using texts or the internet to complete tasks. Candidates should reference all sources of information.

Feedback

A feedback sheet has been provided for each assessment. Although some feedback may be given verbally, assessors should complete the feedback sheet and capture the key information provided to each candidate. This should also serve as an action plan for candidates who are unsuccessful in an assessment and need to do further work before taking the assessment again.

General information

Codes of practice and health and safety

The importance of safe working practices, the demands of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Codes of Practice associated with the industry must always be adhered to. The requirement to follow safe working practices is an integral part of all City & Guilds qualifications and assessments, and it is the responsibility of centres to ensure that all relevant health and safety requirements are in place before candidates start practical assessments.

Should a candidate fail to follow correct health and safety practices and procedures during practical assessment, the assessment must be stopped and the candidate advised of the reasons why. The candidate should be informed that they have not reached the standard of assessment required. Candidates may retake the assessment at a later date, at the discretion of the centre. In any cases of doubt, guidance should be sought from the external verifier.

Verification of assessments

Centres must use the provided documentation to ensure that external verifiers can check that evidence for an assessment is complete and can ensure that the allocation of marks is fair and beyond dispute. Centres may devise additional documentation/forms to support those provided by City & Guilds.

If a candidate's work is selected for verification, samples of work must be made available to the appointed external verifier who will ensure that

- the quality assurance co-ordinator is undertaking his/her responsibilities
- the quality assurance co-ordinator is given prompt, accurate and constructive feedback on centre operations
- a report is written on centre activities for City & Guilds.

Internal quality assurance

Approved centres must have effective quality assurance systems to ensure optimum delivery and assessment of qualifications.

Quality assurance includes initial centre approval, qualification approval and the centre's own internal procedures for monitoring quality. Centres are responsible for internal quality assurance, and City & Guilds is responsible for external quality assurance.

Full details and guidance on the internal and external quality assurance requirements and procedures are provided in the 'Supporting Customer Excellence' centre manual. This document also explains the tasks, activities and responsibilities of quality assurance staff.

Retention of evidence

In order to fully support candidates, centres are required to retain copies of candidates' assessment records for **three years** after certification.

Entry for assessment and certification

Results of assessments should be submitted in the form of grades via the Walled Garden or by using Form S. Only those components which have been achieved should be included. Each component number is entered, followed by P (pass) to indicate the grade the candidate has achieved.