

Asset Management Group Proposed Changes to the Essential Skills Wales Design Principles for September 2022

The Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications have existed in their current form since 2016. In recent months, the four ESW awarding bodies have been working with Qualifications Wales to review the Design Principles in order to:

- improve manageability of the controlled tasks for candidates
- further improve the clarity of expectations for each subject at each level, and
- increase the available options for questions (items) in the confirmatory tests.

The review has taken into consideration feedback from all stakeholders including our centres, question writers, external quality assurance personnel and cross awarding body standardisation events.

This document provides a summary of the changes, for EAoNS, ECommS and EES, which are due to be implemented from September 2022.

Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS)

Controlled Task

- The mark allocations for the three components of the controlled tasks have been changed to give a reduced weighting for planning (N1.1, N2.1, N3.1). This change has been made to increase the manageability of the task. Centres and candidates will be provided with clear guidance on evidence expectations for planning going forward.
- Candidates will no longer be required to evidence a manual calculation in the controlled task. This skill is evidenced sufficiently within the confirmatory test.
- The wording of other controlled task requirements within the Design Principles has been refined for clarity, but this has not altered the current expectations of the tasks. (see table A)

Updated controlled tasks will be shared with centres in the spring of 2022.

Confirmatory Test

- The range of marks for each skill is being increased to give greater flexibility when writing questions (see table B)
- The wording of the standards has changed in places. This is to clarify the specification requirements for teaching and learning purposes. This will have no effect on the current test expectations. (see table B)
- At level 2 a new skill has been added to the confirmatory test: *Solve problems involving 2D shapes and parallel lines*. This skill is covered at level 1 and level 3 but had previously been omitted at level 2. Its inclusion will allow a better coverage of the specification and aid progression between the levels.
- At level 3 a new skill has been added: *Compare distributions using measures of average and interquartile range, and estimate mean, median and range of grouped data*. This skill is included in the controlled task and its addition here will allow inclusion of questions involving statistical measure, thus giving a more

comprehensive coverage of the specification. Statistical measure is also considered a valuable skill for the workplace.

Updated practice confirmatory tests will be shared with centres in the spring of 2022.

Essential Communication Skills (EComms)

Controlled Task

There are no proposed changes to the EComms controlled task.

Confirmatory Test

- The range of items (questions) required for each skill has been broadened to enable the use of source documents of different text types, see Table C. For example, the current requirement to identify inference limits the text types by potentially excluding the use of reports and limiting the use of recount texts. The increase in range should also enable the creation of more appropriate items for the text.
- No skills have been added or deleted.

Updated practice confirmatory tests will be shared with centres in the spring of 2022.

Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS)

We are currently looking at the expectations at each level of the Digital Literacy Standards and how these can be amended to reflect current practice and to allow for a greater range of evidence for the controlled task, for example the creation of spreadsheets. Further information on these changes, to be implemented in September 2023, will be available in due course.

Essential Employability Skills (EES)

There are no changes proposed for EES.

Table A Controlled task – Essential Application of Number Skills

Controlled task specification		
<p>The task must be designed to integrate the assessment of the three components. Marks must be allocated within the following ranges:</p>		
Understanding Numerical Data	Levels 1, 2 and 3 (N1.1, N2.1, N3.1)	25-30%
Carry out calculations	Levels 1, 2 and 3 (N1.2, N2.2, N3.2)	35-45%
Interpret and Present Results and Findings	Levels 1, 2 and 3 (N1.3, N2.3, N3.3)	30-35%
<p>When completing the task, candidates must show all their workings, the values and operators they input into a calculator and/or the formulas they use in a spreadsheet</p>		
Task plan		
<p>Candidates will be required to follow the process below in line with the three skill areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I want to find out? • How will I do it? • How do I present my findings? 		
Level 1 Understand Numerical Data	Level 2 Understand Numerical Data	Level 3 Understand Numerical Data
<i>N1.1 Understand Numerical Data</i>	<i>N2.1 Understand Numerical Data</i>	<i>N3.1 Understand Numerical Data</i>
<p>The task must require candidates to select relevant numerical data and information from at least two different source documents. A range of source documents must be provided to support the task.</p> <p>The source documents must include at least two of the following at the appropriate level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tables • charts • graphs 	<p>The task will require candidates to select relevant numerical data and information from at least three different source documents. A range of source documents must be provided to support the task.</p> <p>The source documents must include at least two of the following at the appropriate level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tables 	<p>The task must require candidates to select numerical data and information from at least three different source documents. A range of source documents must be provided to support the task.</p> <p>The source documents must include at least two of the following at the appropriate level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tables

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diagrams <p>The task must require candidates to plan how they will approach the task, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information they will use • the calculations they will do • how they will present their results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charts • graphs • diagrams <p>The task must require candidates to plan how they will approach the task, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information they will use • the calculations they will do, with reason(s) for their choice • how they will present their results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charts • graphs • diagrams <p>At least one source document must be a large, complex data set.</p> <p>The task must require candidates to plan how they will approach the task, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information they will use • the calculations they will do, with a justification for their choice • how they will present their results.
<p>Level 1 Carry Out Calculations</p>	<p>Level 2 Carry Out Calculations</p>	<p>Level 3 Carry Out Calculations</p>
<p><i>N1.2 Carry Out Calculations</i></p>	<p><i>N2.2 Carry Out Calculations</i></p>	<p><i>N3.2 Carry Out Calculations</i></p>
<p>The task must be designed to require the candidate to carry out calculations from at least two of the following three categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) amounts or sizes 2) scales or proportion 3) handling statistics <p>The task must require candidates to demonstrate the skills that comprise these categories in a way that provides evidence of</p>	<p>The task must be designed to require the candidate to carry out calculations from at least two of the following three categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) amounts or sizes 2) scales or proportion 3) handling statistics <p>The task should require the use of formulae in at least one of the above categories.</p> <p>The task must require candidates to demonstrate the skills that comprise these categories in a way that provides evidence of proficiency at the level. This must include</p>	<p>The task must be designed to require the candidate to carry out calculations from at least two of the following three categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) amounts or sizes 2) scales or proportion 3) handling statistics <p>The task should require the use of formulae in at least one of the above categories.</p> <p>The task must require candidates to demonstrate the skills that comprise these categories in a way that provides evidence of proficiency at the level. This must include</p>

<p>proficiency at the level. This must include a minimum of four of the underpinning skills from N1.2 b – k.</p> <p>The task must require candidates to show they have worked to the levels of accuracy required for the purpose and context.</p>	<p>a minimum of five of the underpinning skills from N2.2 b, d-m.</p> <p>The task must require candidates to show that they have worked to the levels of accuracy required for the purpose and context.</p>	<p>a minimum of six of the underpinning skills from N3.2 b-d, f-o.</p> <p>The task must require candidates to show that they have worked to the levels of accuracy required for the purpose and context.</p>
<p>Level 1 Interpret and Present Results and Findings</p>	<p>Level 2 Interpret and Present Results and Findings</p>	<p>Level 3 Interpret and Present Results and Findings</p>
<p><i>N1.3 Interpret and Present Results and Findings</i></p>	<p><i>N2.3 Interpret and Present Results and Findings</i></p>	<p><i>N3.3 Interpret and Present Results and Findings</i></p>
<p>The task must require candidates to choose how to present the results of their calculations, using two different and appropriate ways, from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tables • charts • graphs or • diagrams <p>The task must require candidates to present and describe their findings – they must explain their results and how they relate to the purpose of the task.</p>	<p>The task must require candidates to select how to present the results of their calculations, using two different and appropriate ways, from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tables • comparative / component bar charts or pie charts • line graphs or • diagrams <p>The task must require candidates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present their results and findings effectively • explain how their results meet the purpose of the task • identify main points of findings, 	<p>The task must require candidates to select how to present the results of their calculations, using two different and appropriate ways, from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complex tables • comparative / component bar charts or pie charts • multiple line graphs / line graphs or • complex diagrams • and justify their choice of methods of presentation, with reference to the purpose of the task. <p>The task must require candidates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the main points of their findings, draw conclusions, make comparisons and give valid explanations • explain how their results meet the purpose of the task

	<p>draw conclusions, make comparisons and give valid explanations</p> <p>The task must require candidates to explain, emphasising the key points, what their results mean and how, and / or if, their methods and results meet their purpose, and are appropriate to the task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how possible sources of error might have affected the results.
--	--	---

Table B (i)

<p>Confirmatory test specification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Essential Application of Number Skills test at level 1 will assess aspects of N1.1 and N1.2. The test should consist of a maximum of 20 items, structured as follows to address these areas of the specification for Essential Application of Number Skills at level 1: 				
Skill Standard	Skills being assessed (<i>Candidates need to know how to</i>)	Covered	Number of items / marks (current value)	Weighting
N1.1	read, understand and extract information from tables, diagrams, charts and simple graphs	Always	2-3 (2)	7-9 items
	read and understand numbers presented in different ways, including large numbers in figures or words, simple fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios and negative numbers	Always	2	
	read scales on familiar measuring equipment using everyday units	Always	1-2 (2)	
	read, measure and record time in common date and time formats and in context	Sampled	0-1	
	use scales on diagrams to find and interpret information	Sampled	0-1	

	use mathematical properties of 2D shapes to record measurements	Sampled	0-1	
N1.2	add and subtract with whole numbers and simple decimals	Always	2	11-13 items
	multiply and divide a whole number or a simple decimal by a whole number	Always	2	
	use simple fractions and percentages	Always	2	
	use equivalences between common fractions, percentages and decimals	Always	2	
	add, subtract, multiply, divide and record sums of money	Always	2	
	calculate within a system by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adding and subtracting common units of measure converting units of measure 	Sampled Sampled	0-1 0-1	
	work out perimeters, areas and volumes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perimeter of regular or irregular 2D shapes area of a rectangle volume of a cuboid 	Sampled	0-1	
	use ratios and proportions	Sampled	0-1	
find the range and average (mean) of up to 10 items	Always	1		
Total			20	

Table B (ii) Confirmatory test - Essential Application of Number Skills Level 2

Confirmatory test specification				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Essential Application of Number Skills test at level 2 will assess aspects of N2.1 and N2.2. The test should consist of a maximum of 20 items, structured as follows to address these areas of the specification for Essential Application of Number Skills at level 2: 				
Skill Standard	Skills being assessed (<i>Candidates need to know how to</i>)	Covered	Number of items / marks (current value)	Weighting
N2.1	read, understand and interpret information from tables, diagrams, charts and graphs	Always	2-3 (2)	4-6 items
	read and understand numbers presented in different ways	Sampled	0-1	
	read scales on a range of equipment to given levels of accuracy	Sampled	0-1	
	calculate time in different formats	Sampled	0-1	
	understand compound measures	Sampled	0-1	
N2.2	carry out calculations involving two or more steps, with numbers of any size	Always	2	14-16 items
	fractions, decimals and percentages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i convert between fractions decimals and percentages ii express one number as a fraction or percentage of another 	Always	2	
	calculate with sums of money and convert between currencies	Always	2	
	calculate within a system and between systems using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. conversion tables and scales ii. approximate conversion factors 	Sampled	0-1	
		Sampled	0-1	
	solve problems involving 2D shapes and parallel lines	Sampled	0-1	
	use proportions and calculate using ratio	Always	2	
identify the range of possible outcomes of combined events through probability and record the information	Sampled	0-1		

	compare sets of data of a suitable size, selecting and using the mean/median/mode as appropriate	Sampled	0-1	
	use range to describe the spread within sets of data	Sampled	0-1	
	understand and use relevant formulae	Always	2	
	calculate (efficiently) using whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages (increase or decrease a number or quantity by a fraction or percentage)	Always	2	
	Total			20

Table B(iii) Confirmatory test - Essential Application of Number Skills Level 3

Confirmatory test specification				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Essential Application of Number Skills test at level 3 will assess aspects of N3.1 and N3.2. The test should consist of a maximum of 30 items, structured as follows to address these areas of the specification for Essential Application of Number Skills at level 3: 				
Skill Standard	Skills being assessed (<i>Candidates need to know how to</i>)	Covered	Number of items / marks (current value)	Weighting
N3.1	read and understand numbers presented in different ways	Always	1-3 (2-3)	7-10 items
	read, understand and interpret information from tables, diagrams, charts and graphs	Always	4-7 (5-7)	
N3.2	carry out multi-stage calculations efficiently with numbers of any size	Always	3	20-23 items
	use powers and roots	Always	2-3 (3)	
	use compound measures	Always	2-4 (3)	
	calculate missing angles and sides in right-angled triangles from known side and angles	Always	1-2	
	calculate, measure, record and compare time in different formats	Always	1-2	
	calculate within and between systems and make accurate comparisons	Always	2-4 (3)	
	solve problems involving irregular 2D shapes	Always	1-3 (1-2)	
	work out actual dimensions from scale drawings and scale quantities up and down	Always	1-2	
	work out proportional change	Always	1-2	
	compare distributions using measures of average and interquartile range, and estimate mean, median and range of grouped data	Sampled	0-1	
rearrange and use formulae, equations and expressions	Always	2-3 (3)		
Total			30	

Table C(i) Confirmatory test - Essential Communication Skills Level 1

Confirmatory test specification				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Essential Communication Skills test at level 1 will assess both reading and writing skills. It will involve at least two source documents, each providing a scenario and/or information to support a series of questions. The test should consist of a maximum of 20 items, structured as follows to address these areas of the specification for Essential Communication Skills at level 1: 				
Skill Standard	Skills being assessed (<i>Candidates need to know how to</i>)	Covered	Number of items / marks (current value)	Weighting
C1.2	1.2a identify the main points and ideas in documents and images	Always	2-3	9-12 (10-12) items
	1.2b read and understand relevant key words and phrases to suit purpose	Always	2-3	
	1.2c recognise the purpose of a variety of documents	Always	1-3 (2-3)	
	1.2e obtain information from text and images, including inferring meaning that is not explicit in the document, if required	Always	1-3 (2-3)	
C1.3	1.3d construct sentences accurately, including compound sentences, using appropriate conjunctions	Always	2-3 (2)	8-11 (8-10) items
	1.3g use language suitable for purpose and audience	Always	1-2 (2)	
	1.3i spell correctly	Always	1-2	
	1.3j use punctuation correctly	Always	1-2	
	1.3k use grammar correctly	Always	1-3 (1-2)	
Total				20

Table C(ii) Confirmatory test - Essential Communication Skills Level 2

Confirmatory test specification				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Essential Communication Skills test at level 2 will assess both reading and writing skills. It will involve at least two source documents, each providing a scenario and/or information to support a series of questions. The test should consist of a maximum of 20 items, structured as follows to address these areas of the specification for Essential Communication Skills at level 2: 				
Skill Standard	Skills being assessed (<i>Candidates need to know how to</i>)	Covered	Number of items / marks (current value)	Weighting
C2.2	2.2a use a variety of strategies to identify: i) the main points ii) ideas, including by inference iii) lines of argument, and reasoning from text and images, including by inference	Always Always Always	2-3 (3) 2-3 (3) 2-3	9-12 (10-12) items
	2.2b recognise the writer's purpose and intentions, including where they are implicit	Always	2-3	
C2.3	2.3e construct complex sentences using a variety of appropriate conjunctions	Always	1-3 (2)	8-11 (8-10) items
	2.3i use formal and informal language to suit different purposes and audiences	Always	1-3 (2)	
	2.3j spell correctly	Always	1-2	
	2.3k use punctuation correctly	Always	1-2	
	2.3l use grammar correctly	Always	1-2	
Total				20

Table C (iii) Confirmatory test - Essential Communication Skills Level 3

Confirmatory test specification				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Essential Communication Skills test at level 3 will assess both reading and writing skills. It will involve at least three source documents, each providing a scenario and/or information to support a series of questions. The test should consist of a maximum of 30 items, structured as follows to address these areas of the specification for Essential Communication Skills at level 3: 				
Skill Standard	Skills being assessed (<i>Candidates need to know how to</i>)	Covered	Number of items / marks (current value)	Weighting
C3.2	3.2b use a variety of strategies to identify: i) the main points ii) ideas, including by inference iii) lines of argument, and reasoning from text and images, including by inference	Always Always Always	3-4 3-4 3-4 (4)	14-16 items
	3.2c recognise the writer's purpose and intentions, including where they are implicit	Always	3-4	
C3.3	3.3d use an appropriate style and tone to suit your audience, the degree of formality required and the nature of the subject	Always	3-5 (4)	14-16 items
	3.3g spell correctly	Always	3-4	
	3.3h use punctuation correctly	Always	3-4	
	3.3i use grammar correctly	Always	3-5 (3-4)	
Total			30	