

# City & Guilds Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications at Entry Level, Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 (3868)

April 2022  
Version 1.6



## Qualification at a glance

<b>Subject area</b>	<b>Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications</b>
<b>City &amp; Guilds number</b>	3868
<b>Age group approved</b>	All
<b>Entry requirements</b>	None
<b>Assessment</b>	See <b>Key features of the Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications</b> , on pages 8 and 9, for details of the assessment arrangements applicable to each Essential Skills qualification.
<b>Fast track</b>	Available to centres approved to deliver the previous (3768) Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications on 31 August 2015.
<b>Support materials</b>	<p>Please see the Essential Skills Wales (3868) qualifications webpage (follow the links from <a href="http://www.cityandguilds.com">www.cityandguilds.com</a>).</p> <p>For more information about City &amp; Guilds' full range of products and services to support the teaching of maths/numeracy, English/literacy and digital skills, please see <a href="http://www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish">www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish</a>.</p>
<b>Registration and certification</b>	Consult the Walled Garden/Online Catalogue for last dates ( <a href="http://www.walled-garden.com">www.walled-garden.com</a> )

<b>Title and level</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds number</b>	<b>Accreditation number</b>
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 1)	3868-01	500/8939/0
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 2)		500/8952/3
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 3)		500/8942/0
Level 1 Essential Communication Skills		601/6805/5
Level 2 Essential Communication Skills		601/6809/2
Level 3 Essential Communication Skills		601/6813/4
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 1)	3868-02	500/8944/4
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 2)		500/8945/6
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 3)		500/8946/8
Level 1 Essential Application of Number Skills		601/6802/X
Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills		601/6808/0
Level 3 Essential Application of Number Skills		601/6812/2
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 1)	3868-03	601/6800/6
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 2)		601/6803/1
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 3)		601/6801/8
Level 1 Essential Digital Literacy Skills		601/6806/7
Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills		601/6810/9
Level 3 Essential Digital Literacy Skills		601/6820/1
Entry Level Essential Employability Skills (Entry 3)	3868-04	601/6804/3
Level 1 Essential Employability Skills		601/6807/9
Level 2 Essential Employability Skills		601/6811/0
Level 3 Essential Employability Skills		601/6814/6

<b>Version and date</b>	<b>Change detail</b>
1.0 January 2016	<b>First edition</b>
1.1 April 2016	<b>Amended edition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added guidance on Structured Discussions in tasks involving collaborative work (Section 4.4.1).</li> <li>• Extended times for duration of Confirmatory tests (Section 4.5.1)</li> <li>• Added guidance on candidates accessing plain paper and a pen or pencil whilst completing the confirmatory tests (Section 4.5.3.5)</li> <li>• Updated Frequently Asked Questions (Appendix 1).</li> </ul>
1.2 September 2017	<b>Amended edition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated referencing to ‘Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners’ produced by ColegauCymru/CollegeWales Sections 1, 2.2.1 and 3.2)</li> <li>• Additional clarification around permitted equipment and resources for controlled tasks (Section 4.3.7)</li> <li>• Confirmation that structured discussions (for EDLS and EES) may be conducted in small groups (Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2)</li> <li>• Further clarification on Named on Demand (paper) test ordering (4.5.2)</li> <li>• Additional tables detailing permitted access arrangements for EDLS and EES (Section 4.6.1)</li> </ul>
1.3 October 2017	Added TQT and GLH details
1.4 September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated ‘Format of controlled tasks’ with guidance on record sheet usage (Section 4.3.3)</li> <li>• Updated guidance on ‘Assessment scheduling: working time allowance, maximum working period and research parameters’ including further guidance on the 8 week rule (Section 4.3.4)</li> <li>• Updated ‘Resits’ (Section 4.3.11) to include guidance on partial resits for EComms</li> <li>• Updated ‘Appendix 1: Frequently asked questions Q4’</li> </ul>
1.5 April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated ‘Assessment requirements’ to remove references to Agored Cymru (Section 4.1.1)</li> <li>• Updated ‘Useful documents and links’ to include City &amp; Guilds’ new address (Appendix 2)</li> </ul>
1.6 April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLH and TQT clarified and highlighted (Introduction)</li> </ul>



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# 1 Introduction

The Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is designed to assess the range of skills that learners need for successful learning, employment and life. They provide a single ladder of progression, spanning six levels and comprising qualifications in:

- Essential Application of Number Skills (**EAoNS**) (Entry 1 – Level 3)
- Essential Communication Skills (**EComms**) (Entry 1 – Level 3)
- Essential Digital Literacy Skills (**EDLS**) (Entry 1 – Level 3)
- Essential Employability Skills (**EES**) (Entry 3 – Level 3)

The Essential Skills qualifications are intended for use in a range of settings. They focus on the practical application of these skills, especially learners' capacity to transfer their knowledge and understanding between contexts and purposes.

This handbook sets out the administration and assessment conduct requirements for the Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications.

Whilst it should be read in conjunction with the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' developed by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales, please note that for assessment and qualification achievement purposes any requirements in **this** handbook take precedence.

Except where indicated otherwise, the administration and conduct requirements set out in this handbook are common to all Essential Skills Wales awarding bodies. At the time of writing this version, these were:

- Agored Cymru
- City & Guilds
- Pearson
- WJEC.

Note: The Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is regulated by Qualifications Wales, and approved for use in **Wales**. City & Guilds also offers comparable qualifications aligned to local public policy objectives in England and Northern Ireland.

## Key features of the Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications

### Entry level

All assessment at Entry level is externally set by City & Guilds, with internal marking by centres. Assessment decisions are subject to a process of Internal/External Quality Assurance overseen by City & Guilds.

**For further details about the assessment arrangements, please see Section 4 of this handbook.**

	EAoNS	ECommS	EDLS	EES
Available on demand?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Description of assessment model	Externally set, internally assessed, internally and externally quality assured.			
Composition of assessment	Controlled task		Controlled task with confirmatory structured discussion	
How are assessment materials accessed?	Password-protected documents downloaded from City & Guilds Essential Skills Wales qualifications webpage.			
Range of topics to choose from	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supervision requirements	<p>Candidates must be supervised <b>throughout</b> the time that they have access to any live controlled task assessment material. This includes any time spent actively working on the controlled task, as well as any instances where candidates are expected to carry out additional supervised research.</p> <p>Controlled task supervisors must be reliable and responsible people who have been suitably briefed. They are accountable to the head of centre for ensuring adequate supervision and control of the assessment environment is maintained.</p>			
Time restrictions	No time restrictions apply to the Entry level ESW AoN or Comm controlled tasks, although if multiple sessions are required these must be consecutive and should be held as close together as possible.		<p>Candidates have up to <b>6 hours</b> to complete their Entry level EDLS or EES controlled task. This may be split over a number of consecutive sessions, as long as the first and final sessions are no more than <b>8 weeks</b> apart.</p> <p>The structured discussion may only take place after the controlled task has been completed, and should take no longer than 30 minutes.</p>	
Equipment permitted	See assessment pack for details.		Controlled tasks are designed to assess purposeful application; as such they require candidates to work with the range of routine equipment and resources that might typically be available to them in a 'real life' situation.	



## Levels 1, 2 and 3

All assessment at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 is externally set by City & Guilds. The controlled tasks and structured discussions (where applicable) are internally marked by centres, and subject to a process of Internal/External Quality Assurance overseen by City & Guilds.

The confirmatory tests (where applicable) are externally set and marked by City & Guilds.

**For further details about the assessment arrangements, please see Section 4 of this handbook.**

	<b>EAoNS</b>	<b>EComms</b>	<b>EDLS</b>	<b>EES</b>
Available on demand?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Description of assessment model	Controlled task: externally set, internally assessed, internally and externally quality assured. Confirmatory test: externally set and marked.		Externally set, internally assessed, internally and externally quality assured.	
Composition of assessment	Controlled task with confirmatory multiple choice test		Controlled task with confirmatory structured discussion	
How are assessment materials accessed?	Controlled task documents (password protected) downloaded from City & Guilds Essential Skills Wales qualifications webpage. Incorporates structured discussion guidance for EDLS and EES. Confirmatory tests ordered in advance from City & Guilds: onscreen via the e-evolve system, paper-based via the Walled Garden using 'Named on Demand' process.			
Range of topics to choose from	✓ - for controlled task Test is chosen by City & Guilds	✓ - for controlled task Test is chosen by City & Guilds	✓	✓
Supervision requirements	Candidates must be supervised <b>throughout</b> the time that they have access to any live controlled task assessment material. This includes any time spent actively working on the controlled task, as well as any instances where candidates are expected to carry out additional supervised research. The confirmatory tests also require continuous supervision. Controlled task and test supervisors must be reliable and responsible people who have been suitably briefed. They are accountable to the head of centre for ensuring adequate supervision and control of the assessment environment is maintained.			
Time restrictions	Candidates have up to <b>4 hours</b> (L1), <b>5 hours</b> (L2) or <b>8 hours</b> (L3) to complete their EAoNS or EComms) controlled task. This may be split over a number of consecutive sessions, as long as the first and final sessions are no more than <b>8 weeks</b> apart. The confirmatory test should not be attempted until after the controlled task; candidates have up to <b>30 minutes</b> (L1-2) or <b>45 minutes</b> (L3) to complete it.		Candidates have up to <b>4 hours</b> (L1), <b>5 hours</b> (L2) or <b>8 hours</b> (L3) to complete their EDLS or EES controlled task. This may be split over a number of consecutive sessions, as long as the first and final sessions are no more than <b>8 weeks</b> apart. The structured discussion may only take place after the controlled task has been completed, and should take no longer than 30 minutes.	
Equipment permitted	Controlled tasks are designed to assess purposeful application; as such they require candidates to work with the range of routine equipment and resources that might typically be available to them in a 'real life' situation. Confirmatory tests subject to much tighter restrictions, eg no dictionaries or calculators.		Controlled tasks are designed to assess purposeful application; as such they require candidates to work with the range of routine equipment and resources that might typically be available to them in a 'real life' situation.	

## Qualifications structure and content

The Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is based on design principles that were developed by the Welsh Government following the 2012 Review of Qualifications, and published by Qualifications Wales in 2015. The qualifications' specifications, and in most cases the assessment requirements, are common across all Essential Skills Wales awarding bodies.

The only exceptions to this are the **Entry Level** Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number and Communication qualifications, which are based on the previous (2010) evidence and knowledge requirements. Assessment arrangements for these qualifications are specific to City & Guilds.

Detailed information about the subject content, along with the range of skills and knowledge that are expected to be taught and learned at each level, are set out in the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' developed by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales.

The qualifications' assessments in each case reflect these standards.

### Total Qualification Time

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a Learner to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours (which are listed separately) and hours spent in preparation, study and assessment.

<b>Title and level</b>	<b>GLH</b>	<b>TQT</b>
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 1)	60	60
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 2)	60	60
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 3)	60	60
Level 1 Essential Application of Number Skills	60	60
Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	60	70
Level 3 Essential Application of Number Skills	60	80
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 1)	60	60
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 2)	60	60
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 3)	60	60
Level 1 Essential Communication Skills	60	60
Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	60	70

<b>Title and level</b>	<b>GLH</b>	<b>TQT</b>
Level 3 Essential Communication Skills	60	80
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 1)	60	60
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 2)	60	60
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 3)	60	60
Level 1 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	60	60
Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	60	70
Level 3 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	60	80
Entry Level Essential Employability Skills (Entry 3)	60	60
Level 1 Essential Employability Skills	60	60
Level 2 Essential Employability Skills	60	70
Level 3 Essential Employability Skills	60	80

### **Requirements for certification**

With the exception of the Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number and Communication qualifications, all Essential Skills qualifications feature a **two-part** summative assessment comprising:

- controlled task
- confirmatory element (test or structured discussion).

Each qualification requires the successful completion of **both** parts of the summative assessment at the **same** level; no partial or 'unit' certification is available. Candidates receive a certificate for each Essential Skills qualification that they complete.

The Entry level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number and Communication qualifications also feature a summative assessment, now also described as a controlled task.

### **Relationship with Essential Skills for Work and Life qualifications**

The Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is complemented by a separate suite of unit-based qualifications, known as **Essential Skills for Work and Life** (3846).

Launched in 2013, Essential Skills for Work and Life enables learners to develop their communication, number and digital skills through a flexible

and personalised learning programme, ultimately supporting their progression towards qualifications from the Essential Skills Wales suite.

### **Numeracy and literacy teaching and learning resources**

City & Guilds also offers a substantial range of teaching and learning resources to support the development of maths/numeracy and English/literacy. These are *distinct from*, though could potentially be used in conjunction with the mandatory Wales Essential Skills Toolkit (WEST), For further information please see

**[www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish](http://www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish)**.

### **We value your feedback**

We welcome feedback on our Essential Skills assessments. If you have specific queries or comments about the assessments, please email **[mathsandenglish@cityandguilds.com](mailto:mathsandenglish@cityandguilds.com)**.

For operational queries (about any City & Guilds qualification) please contact Customer Services:

**[centresupport@cityandguilds.com](mailto:centresupport@cityandguilds.com)**

**[evolvesupport@cityandguilds.com](mailto:evolvesupport@cityandguilds.com)** (for e-volve system-related issues).

Alternatively, you can speak to your Business Manager or managing Quality Team.



## 2 Centre requirements

### 2.1 Centre and qualification approval

Any centre wishing to offer the Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications with City & Guilds will first need to gain approval following the standard Qualification Approval process. Centre Approval will also be required if the organisation is not already a City & Guilds centre. Please refer to the *City & Guilds Centre Manual* for further information.

Fast-track approval arrangements are available for centres that held approval to offer the previous (3768) Essential Skills Wales qualifications on 31 August 2015. Centres that have previously only been approved to offer Essential Skills Wales (either the previous or current suite) through another awarding body should discuss approval arrangements with their managing Quality Team.

Centre staff should familiarise themselves with the structure, content and assessment requirements of each Essential Skills qualification they intend to offer before designing a course programme.

### 2.2 Resource requirements

#### 2.2.1 Centre staffing

Staff involved in the assessment or internal quality assurance of these qualifications **must** have a detailed understanding of the qualification specifications and assessment requirements, as set out in:

- this handbook
- the relevant controlled task (and structured discussion, where applicable) assessment pack.

They must also be familiar with the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' developed by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales.

In order to perform these functions effectively, assessors and internal quality assurers will need to be personally competent in the Essential Skill(s) being taught and assessed, as well as familiar with the assessment and internal quality assurance arrangements applicable to these qualifications.

These are summarised in Section 5 of this handbook, with more detailed guidance in the *City & Guilds Centre Manual* and the document *Our Quality Assurance Requirements (OQAR)*.

#### 2.2.2 Teaching and subject content qualifications

Whilst City & Guilds needs to be assured that centre staff are capable of assessing these qualifications consistently to the required standard, it is

important to appreciate that City & Guilds has no direct responsibility for determining their suitability to teach or prepare learners.

Nevertheless, it is vital that any learners working towards the Essential Skills qualifications are adequately supported by capable staff, and in practice it will be common for staff to be involved in both teaching and the assessment process.

Whilst we do not require assessors and internal quality assurers to hold any specific assessment, quality assurance, subject content or teaching qualifications, they **must** be able to fully understand and apply the relevant assessment/marking criteria. This will require them to be personally competent in the skills being assessed, as well as being familiar with the assessment process.

Centres must also ensure that they keep abreast of any emerging workforce expectations or specific requirements that might emerge from other bodies for contracting, funding or inspection purposes.

It is therefore strongly recommended that centre staff work towards an appropriate Essential Skills practitioner qualification (at Level 3 or higher) if they do not already hold one.

### **2.2.3 Continuing professional development (CPD)**

Centres must support Essential Skills staff to ensure that their subject knowledge, as well as their understanding of the requirements of these qualifications, remains current. Approaches to delivery, mentoring, training, assessment and quality assurance must also be in line with best practice and take account of any relevant public policy or other developments.

## **2.3 Key roles for assessment**

### **2.3.1 Controlled tasks and structured discussions**

All Essential Skills qualifications involve a summative controlled task. Whilst the controlled tasks are externally set, they are internally assessed and quality assured by centres.

In addition, Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS) and Essential Employability Skills (EES) also involve a structured discussion that takes place **after** the controlled task has been successfully completed.

To meet the assessment conduct and quality assurance requirements for the controlled tasks and structured discussions, centres must ensure that each of the following roles are fulfilled:

- Head of Centre
- Centre Contact
- Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinator (IQAC)  
(if more than one Qualification Co-ordinator)
- Qualification Co-ordinator(s)
- Internal Quality Assurer(s)
- Assessor(s)
- Controlled Task Supervisor.

The responsibilities of the controlled task supervisor role are defined in section 4.3 of this handbook.

For details of what each of the other above roles entail, please refer to the City & Guilds document *Our Quality Assurance Requirements*.

### **Entry level ESW Application of Number and Communication**

The Entry Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number and Communication qualifications are based on the previous (2010) evidence and knowledge requirements, with the assessments used for these qualifications developed solely by City & Guilds.

For clarity, these assessments are now also described as controlled tasks (having previously been known as 'pre-approved assignments'). For the avoidance of doubt, the roles described above are also needed to meet assessment conduct and quality assurance requirements for *these* controlled tasks.

### **2.3.2 Confirmatory tests**

In addition to the controlled task, Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS) and Essential Communication Skills (EComms) at levels 1, 2 and 3 involve a short confirmatory test that is externally set and externally marked.

To meet the assessment conduct requirements for the confirmatory tests, centres must ensure that each of the following roles are undertaken:

- Head of Centre
- Centre Contact
- Invigilator(s).

Responsibilities of the invigilator role are set out in section 4.5 of this handbook. Because of the diverse range of settings in which the Essential Skills Wales qualifications are accessed, please note that the security and conduct requirements for the confirmatory tests differ in a number of respects from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE).

For details of where the security and conduct arrangements for the confirmatory tests differ from JCQ ICE and our standard examination conduct requirements, please see section 4.5 of this handbook.

For details of what the head of centre and centre contact roles entail, please refer to the City & Guilds document *Our Quality Assurance Requirements*.

### **2.4 Candidate entry requirements**

There are no set entry requirements for these qualifications, although centres must ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to gain any Essential Skills qualifications they work towards.

Where learners are not immediately capable of achieving an Essential Skills qualification, or may require further support to address specific gaps in their skills profile, the Essential Skills for Work and Life unit-based qualifications might be suitable.

#### **2.4.1 Age restrictions**

Whilst there are no formal age restrictions on registering for these qualifications, the Essential Skills qualifications at Entry level are approved by Qualifications Wales for learners over the age of 14. The Essential Skills qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 are intended primarily for learners over the age of 16, although may be accessed in some pre-16 contexts such as pupil referral units (PRUs).

#### **2.4.2 Other legal considerations**

Learners and centres should be aware of and comply with regulations affecting those who deal with children, young people and vulnerable adults.





## 3 Delivery of these qualifications

### 3.1 Initial assessment and induction

#### 3.1.1 Initial assessment and induction

An initial assessment of each learner should be made **before** the start of their programme to ensure they are working towards relevant Essential Skills qualification(s) at the appropriate level.

The initial assessment process should identify:

- if the learner has any specific learning needs
- any support and guidance they may need when working towards their qualifications.

It is important that any process of initial assessment takes into account learners' application and problem-solving capabilities, in addition to their technical numeracy/literacy/digital literacy/employability skills.

It should be noted that publicly funded Essential Skills providers are in most cases expected to make use of the Wales Essential Skills Toolkit (WEST). Further details about WEST are available from [walesessentialskills.com](http://walesessentialskills.com).

We recommend that centres provide an induction programme so learners fully understand the requirements of any Essential Skills qualifications they work towards, their responsibilities as a learner, and the responsibilities of the centre.

#### 3.1.2 Delivery strategies

Centre staff should familiarise themselves with the structure, content and assessment requirements of the Essential Skills qualifications before designing a course programme.

Centres should design course programmes in any way that:

- best meets the needs and capabilities of their learners
- satisfies the requirements of these qualifications.

In particular, staff should consider the additional complexity, technical demand, familiarity and independence required of learners at each level. The initial assessment process should be used to ensure learners are working towards appropriate Essential Skills qualification(s)/level(s). These will not necessarily be at the same level as other qualifications that the learners might simultaneously be working towards.

### 3.2 Standards and delivery guidance

Detailed information about subject content and standards applicable to each of the Essential Skills qualifications can be found in the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' developed by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales. A link to this document can be found on the **Essential Skills (3868) qualifications documents webpage**.

This document sets out the range of skills, knowledge and understanding that need to be taught and learned; it also describes the standard expected of candidates undergoing assessment in these qualifications.

**It is therefore required reading for all Essential Skills tutors/teachers, assessors and internal quality assurers.**

### 3.3 Support materials

In addition to this handbook and the Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' developed by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales, the following resources are also available for these qualifications:

<b>Description</b>	<b>How to access</b>
Sample controlled tasks	<b>Essential Skills (3868) qualifications documents webpage</b>
Sample confirmatory tests	<b>Essential Skills (3868) qualifications documents webpage</b>
Maths and English teaching and learning resources	Please see <b><a href="http://www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish">www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish</a></b> for details.



## 4 Assessment

### 4.1 Assessment requirements

#### 1 Overview of assessment requirements

The Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is designed to enable learners to develop and demonstrate an understanding of, and proficiency in, the essential skills that employers and next-stage educators value and that candidates need for progression and effective performance in learning, work and life.

Each of the Essential Skills qualifications aims to:

- structure and consolidate learning, making incidental, naturally occurring, practices explicit
- encourage articulation and analysis of and reflection on the skills and on learners' own proficiency in them, in personalised terms
- increase confidence and effectiveness in the use and application of these skills
- develop an understanding of how to transfer skills to new purposes and contexts
- provide positive and engaging opportunities to further explore, develop, practise and apply the skills, in a range of meaningful and 'real-life' contexts for real-life purposes.

**The assessment model for these qualifications is summative. In each case it involves a concentrated activity after a period of teaching and learning. There is no 'ongoing' portfolio-type assessment, and candidates must be supervised throughout all formal assessment activity.**

All assessment is externally-set by City & Guilds. In most cases candidates' work is internally assessed by centres; the only exceptions to this are the confirmatory tests within Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS) and Essential Communication Skills (EComms) which are externally set and marked by City & Guilds.

Assessment arrangements for each of the Essential Skills qualifications are as follows:

<b>Levels</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description of assessment model</b>	<b>Internal vs external</b>
Entry (1-3)	Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number	Controlled task	Externally set, internally assessed
Entry (1-3)	Essential Skills Wales in Communication	Controlled task	Externally set, internally assessed
Levels 1-3	Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS)	Controlled task <i>and</i> confirmatory test	<i>Task:</i> externally set, internally assessed <i>Test:</i> externally set, externally assessed
Levels 1-3	Essential Communication Skills (ECommS)	Controlled task <i>and</i> confirmatory test	<i>Task:</i> externally set, internally assessed <i>Test:</i> externally set, externally assessed
Entry (1-3), Levels 1-3	Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS)	Controlled task <i>and</i> confirmatory structured discussion	Externally set, internally assessed
Entry (3), Levels 1-3	Essential Employability Skills (EES)	Controlled task <i>and</i> confirmatory structured discussion	Externally set, internally assessed

The controlled tasks, structured discussion guidance and confirmatory tests used to assess EAoN, ECommS, EDLS and EES have been developed jointly by the Essential Skills awarding bodies. Assessment conduct requirements are likewise consistent across all awarding bodies.

Centre staff will need to ensure candidates have developed **all** of the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding before attempting live assessment. **Under no circumstances may candidates be given any formative support or feedback whilst undertaking their controlled task, structured discussion or test;** all work produced and submitted must be entirely their own.

The head of centre is ultimately responsible for ensuring the administration of all assessments follows the instructions and guidance set out in this handbook, and that all centre staff involved with the process are familiar with these requirements.

Candidates must successfully complete all parts of the required assessment for any Essential Skills qualification that they attempt; there is

no mechanism for awarding 'partial achievement' of any Essential Skills qualification. However, for the Essential Communication Skills qualification, candidates may resit elements of the task where they were initially unsuccessful, by undertaking the corresponding part within a new controlled task.

Where candidates have been unsuccessful in the controlled task, they will need further support and opportunity to address any apparent gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding before re-attempting a **different** controlled task.

The confirmatory element (ie structured discussion, in the case of EDLS and EES; test, in the case of EAoNS and EComms) is designed to *confirm* the standard of work demonstrated through the controlled task, and therefore it is recommended the controlled task is completed first.

## **4.2 Entry level Essential Skills Wales (ESW) Application of Number and Communication assessment – administration and conduct arrangements**

Whilst the controlled tasks used to assess these qualifications are **similar in many respects** to those used to assess EAoNS and EComms at levels 1, 2 and 3, there are some important differences to note:

1. These tasks are **not** subject to a working time allowance or maximum working period, although there are restrictions on the number of sessions permitted (in each case detailed within the assessment pack).
2. The range of permitted equipment is more tightly prescribed.
3. The mark schemes are structured differently, with marking criteria based on the previous (2010) Essential Skills Wales evidence and knowledge requirements.

**Arrangements for obtaining and conducting these controlled tasks are otherwise in line with those outlined below.**

## **4.3 Controlled tasks – administration and conduct arrangements**

This instructions and guidance in this section should be read in conjunction with the relevant controlled task candidate and assessment packs.

### **4.3.1 Controlled tasks are:**

- externally set (or approved) by City & Guilds
- presented unseen to candidates, and completed under *controlled conditions* (as specified in section 4.3, below)
- internally assessed by centres, using the supplied marking criteria
- internally quality assured by centres
- external quality assured by City & Guilds.

### 4.3.2 Obtaining the controlled tasks

Live versions of the controlled tasks are available to download from the City & Guilds Essential Skills (3868) qualification documents webpage (follow the links from [www.cityandguilds.com](http://www.cityandguilds.com)).

Any live controlled tasks may **only** be used for their intended purpose, ie to carry out live candidate assessments. Any electronic or printed copies of the task documents must be held securely at all times.

On no account may learners access any live assessment material until they have been registered as a candidate for the Essential Skills qualification(s) they are working towards. A separate set of sample controlled tasks will be available to help with candidate preparation and centre staff training/standardisation. These replicate the format and structure of the live controlled tasks.

Please ensure that only the **live** materials are used to carry out candidate assessments. The sample assessments are intended for assessment preparation/practice or staff training purposes.

The live task documents are password-protected; the passwords can be accessed on the City & Guilds' Walled Garden. Assessors, Qualification Co-ordinators and, if applicable, Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinators (IQAC) will require regular and ongoing access to the complete range of live assessments – partly so they can select titles appropriately, but also to facilitate internal standardisation. Therefore, the Centre Contact must ensure that there are rigorous, but appropriate, internal controls on access to the live assessment bank. Security login details for the Walled Garden should be obtained, where appropriate from your centre's Walled Garden administrator.

Centres must inform City & Guilds immediately that they become aware of any password being accessed by an unauthorised person.

Centres may download (and store securely) hard copies of the assessment documents locally in the immediate period before assessments take place, although should avoid 'stockpiling' large quantities as these assessments are periodically updated and/or replaced.

All hard and electronic copies of the materials must be stored **securely** at all times, and any live assessments must **always** be conducted using the most up-to-date version.

All of the assessment documents are designed to be printed double-sided. The documents must be printed on A4 paper to their **exact intended size** (with printer page scaling set to 'None' rather than 'Shrink to printable area' or 'Fit to printable area'). Not doing so is likely to distort any scaled graphics or diagrams included within these documents and could impact on candidate performance. If the candidate's paper is enlarged to A3, the candidate must also be given an 'actual size' copy of the paper as well – or at the very least any pages on which scaled graphics or diagrams appear.

Please contact [policy@cityandguilds.com](mailto:policy@cityandguilds.com) if you require further guidance about the use of modified assessment materials.

**On no account** may learners access any live assessment material until they have been registered as a candidate for the Essential Skills qualification(s) they are working towards.

Each controlled task is based on a given theme or context, with centres able to choose from the range of available topics. Centres should ensure any topic(s) they select are appropriate for, and likely to engage, their learners; however, they must **not** give candidates:

- prior sight of the controlled task
- any *detailed* information about the task topic/context (general advice, eg whether the topic relates to something they might encounter within their vocational programme or job role, is acceptable)
- any coaching or specific 'hints' about what may come up in the controlled task.

The range of controlled tasks available for use at any one time will vary, and the task documents will be updated periodically. **Centres must therefore always ensure that they are working from the latest versions, and that the particular controlled task they intend to use is still available.**

A separate set of sample controlled tasks is available to download from the City & Guilds Essential Skills (3868) qualification documents webpage (follow the links from [www.cityandguilds.com](http://www.cityandguilds.com)) to help with candidate preparation and centre staff training/standardisation. These replicate the format and structure of the live controlled tasks.

#### 4.3.3 Format of the controlled tasks

Each controlled task for EDLS AND EES comprises at least two documents:

- **Candidate's paper**
  - setting out the task instructions and related information
- **Assessment pack**
  - containing the marking criteria and recording sheets, along with further information for assessors and internal quality assurers about conduct requirements and the assessment process.

The controlled task for EAoNS has a separate record sheet which should be used to record marks awarded and rationales for assessment decisions made.

The EComms controlled task has an additional speaking and listening record sheet which must also be completed for each candidate.

Centres must ensure that they have obtained **all** of the documents relating to any controlled tasks they use. Candidates must **not** be given the assessment pack.

### 4.3.4 Assessment scheduling: working time allowance, maximum working period and research parameters

Controlled tasks should only be attempted after candidates have undergone a period of learning, once the centre is satisfied that they are ready for assessment.

Each controlled task is a substantial and holistic set of activities that will take a number of hours to complete. There is a maximum amount of time candidates are permitted to spend working on their controlled task<sup>1</sup>, known as the **working time allowance**. The allowance in each case is:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Working time allowance</b>
Entry (EDLS and EES only)	up to 6 hours
Level 1	up to 4 hours
Level 2	up to 5 hours
Level 3	up to 8 hours

Candidates must not exceed their working time allowance (unless permission for additional time has been granted for Access reasons – see Section 4.6 of this handbook). It is therefore important that they are taught to manage their time carefully.

Candidates must be supervised **throughout** their time working on the controlled task. They are not expected to complete the whole controlled task in one session.

Centres must:

- plan in advance when each controlled task session will take place;
- keep a record of the date, time and duration of each session (the front cover of each candidate's paper includes space for this);
- ensure sessions take place as close together as possible;
- plan for a time period of no more than eight weeks between the beginning of the first session and end of the final session, known as the maximum working period (sometimes described as the 'eight-week rule').

#### **Applying the 'eight week rule'**

For the avoidance of doubt, centres' normal academic holiday periods and valid learner absence (eg through illness or incapacity) may be disregarded when calculating the maximum working period.

Best practice - longer sessions planned as close together as possible allowing candidates to complete the assessments well within the maximum working period.

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<sup>1</sup>In some cases, candidates will be expected to carry out additional **supervised** research; this does not count towards the working time allowance, although must be carried out within the maximum working period (see section 4.3.9, below).



Centres' assessment planning, including their application of the maximum working period, will be scrutinised as part of the external quality assurance process.

**All work is collected in and stored securely between sessions.**

Candidates are not permitted to access the candidate's paper, supplied source material, or any of the work they have already done between sessions; they also must not bring in any additional work completed outside between sessions. Centres should take particular care with any work stored in electronic form to ensure candidates do not access it remotely between sessions (eg by checking files have not been accessed or updated).

**Sessions are not interspersed by any further teaching of the subject.** There also must **not** be any formative assessment or feedback given to candidates between sessions. Assessors may **only** mark work once the whole task has been completed, or once the candidate's maximum working time allowance has been used up.

NB: unrelated teaching, learning and assessment associated with other subjects may still take place between sessions.

The controlled task must be presented unseen; the first time candidates are permitted to see the candidate's paper and supplied source material is at the **beginning of the first session when they start working** on that controlled task. From that moment, their working time allowance begins and all of their time spent with access to the task materials must be monitored and supervised.

#### **4.3.5 Assessment location and environment**

All controlled tasks must be completed under *controlled conditions*. These are distinct from traditional 'examination' conditions, and it is recognised controlled tasks will take place in a range of settings such as workplaces and community halls, as well as classrooms.

In all cases candidates must be provided with an environment that enables them to work effectively and access the range of equipment they would routinely expect to use whilst working on a task of this nature. Candidates must be able to devote their full attention to the controlled task, so the location used must be free from disturbance or interruption.

#### **4.3.6 Supervision requirements**

Candidates must be supervised **throughout** the time that they have access to any live controlled task assessment material. This includes any time spent actively working on the controlled task, as well as any instances where candidates are expected to carry out additional supervised research (see section 4.3.9, below).

Controlled task supervisors must be reliable and responsible people who have been suitably briefed. They are accountable to the head of centre for ensuring adequate supervision and control of the assessment environment is maintained. At least one supervisor must be present **at all times**, to ensure:

- the relevant working time allowance and maximum working period are not exceeded<sup>2</sup>
- each candidate produces all work independently.

It is likely that controlled task supervisors will also perform other roles within the centre (eg tutor/teacher, assessor or internal quality assurer). Whilst supervisors need to appreciate how *this* role differs from others they might perform, in principle there is no reason why controlled tasks cannot be supervised by candidates' tutor or assessor<sup>3</sup>.

#### **4.3.7 Permitted equipment and resources**

Controlled tasks are designed to assess purposeful application of the relevant essential skill; as such they require candidates to work with the range of *routine* equipment and resources that might typically be available to them in a 'real life' situation. This might include, but is not limited to:

- PCs/laptops/tablets/smartphones
- paper/electronic dictionaries
- spelling/grammar checking software
- calculators
- general reference material (not course or qualification-specific textbooks)
- relevant class or course notes (as long as these do not contain any specific guidance on completing the controlled task)
- online resources (where openly available and sourced independently by the candidate).

Supervisors must also ensure that candidates' internet activity remains focussed on the controlled task.

Candidates will need to have access to any material gathered during supervised research where the controlled task is completed over a number of sessions (see section 4.3.9, below). They must not access or bring in any other material that has been gathered or generated outside the controlled environment, although photographs or other images taken to include in final tasks are permissible. However, please note candidates cannot bring in copyrighted images taken directly from websites or other sources. Centres must be fully aware of this and ensure images used are solely the candidate's own.

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<sup>2</sup> Unless additional working time has been granted for Access reasons (see Section 4.6, or if an exceptional and unforeseen event has made it necessary to exceed the maximum working time to be exceeded (see Section 4.3.4).

<sup>3</sup> NB: an assessor will need to be present for the speaking and listening activities within the ECommS controlled tasks.

Centres' internal quality assurance processes must take into account any potential risks surrounding the assessment process. This includes, but is not limited to:

- ensuring that candidates can only access routine equipment and resources
- removing materials designed specifically to assist with the assessment from any class or course notes before the candidate enters the controlled environment
- collecting and securely storing candidates' papers and materials produced during the session.

Particular care is needed around the use of electronic devices with transmitting/receiving capabilities (eg smartphones, tablets, smart watches); depending on local circumstances, it might be appropriate for centres to operate tighter restrictions than those described here – **as long as this will not impede candidates from completing the controlled task successfully.**

Care must also be taken to ensure any work produced or shared online whilst completing a controlled task (eg the footprint from a digital collaboration) is **not** left publicly accessible afterwards.

As part of the External Quality Assurance process, City & Guilds will monitor centres' conduct of these assessments. This might include site visits to check how candidates' access to permitted equipment and resources is managed.

#### **4.3.8 Assistance with controlled tasks**

Candidates must be able to complete any controlled tasks they attempt independently, and are not permitted third party 'human' assistance with anything material to the assessment.

Candidates may be supported with aspects of the assessment process that are not material to the assessment itself. For example, it would potentially be acceptable for supervisors to:

- read out information on task instructions page
- read out the contents of the task (except in the case of ECommS where reading forms part of the assessment)
- accept verbal responses in lieu of written ones (except in the case of ECommS where writing forms part of the assessment).

Please also refer to Section 4.6 of this handbook for further information about the scope of any reasonable adjustments permitted for Access reasons.

Whilst the task instructions may be repeated or reiterated to candidates whilst they are working on their controlled task, they must **not** be given any formative feedback or other advice about the *content* of the assessment whilst working on the controlled task.

For example, it would be acceptable for a supervisor to remind candidates completing an ECommS controlled task that they are being assessed on the accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and grammar; it would **not** be appropriate for a supervisor to suggest to individual candidates that they should review *their* spelling, punctuation and grammar accuracy.

The candidate, assessor and internal quality assurer declarations contained within the candidate's paper and assessment pack must be completed, as instructed, to confirm the authenticity of any work presented for assessment.

#### 4.3.9 Additional independent research

Whilst candidates are supplied with most of the source material they need to complete the controlled task, in some cases the task might require them to carry out some additional **supervised** research. Where this is the case, it will be noted on both the candidate's paper and assessment pack.

Whilst candidates must be supervised whilst carrying out any expected research, time spent on this does **not** count towards the working time allowance. Nevertheless, since the research relates directly to the task activities, it will need to be fitted around the planned task sessions and must therefore take place within the maximum working period.

Whilst not required, it is recognised that some candidates may wish to carry out further background research between task sessions. It would be neither practical nor desirable to prevent them from doing so, although they must understand that they **cannot** bring in any notes or other outputs from work completed outside of the supervised environment. Likewise, they must not access the assessment documents, or any of the work they have already done, outside of the supervised controlled task sessions.

#### 4.3.10 Collaboration

Whilst the controlled tasks are designed to measure individual learners' capabilities, in a few cases (within EDLS and EES, as well as the speaking and listening part of ECommS) candidates are required to work collaboratively.

In most settings this is likely to involve working with other candidates, although it could potentially involve other individuals if appropriately briefed. In such situations, it might be necessary to give the other participants access to the controlled task candidate's paper and source materials, although this must be on a strictly confidential basis, and under no circumstances may they retain copies of any live assessment material.

Where candidates are required to collaborate, controlled task supervisors and assessors must ensure that they are able to discern each individual candidate's contribution. They must also remain alert to the possibility of collusion; any potential instances of collusion must be investigated and action taken in accordance with our guidance on candidate malpractice. Please see Section 6 of this handbook for further information about dealing with cases of suspected malpractice.

### 4.3.11 Resits

All controlled tasks are graded pass/fail, and where candidates have been unsuccessful they will need to resit using a **different** controlled task from the range of available controlled task topics.

Whilst there is no fixed minimum period before a resit may take place, nor a cap on the number of permitted resits, in practice candidates will need further opportunity to develop and practise the relevant skills before resitting. As part of the external quality assurance process City & Guilds will be monitoring the number of instances where resits are required.

On no account may candidates attempt the same controlled task more than once. Candidates who are unsuccessful in one or two parts of the ECommS controlled task do not have to resit elements of the task that were successful. For example, a candidate at level 2 or level 3 who successfully completed the presentation element of the task will not be required to do the presentation component of the resit task.

The maximum time allowed for partial resits for Essential Communication Skills are detailed in the table below

Level	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
Level 1	Reading, discussion and writing	Reading and Writing	
	2 hours and 20 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes	
	Reading, Discussion and Writing	Writing	Presentation
Level 2	2 hours 45 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes	45 minutes
Level 3	4 hours 30 minutes	2 hours 30 minutes	1 hour

The resit tasks should be completed within the 8 week period as described in 4.3.4

For EAoNS, EES and EDLS all candidates who are resitting must complete **the entire** controlled task, including any activities or sections where they were successful in the equivalent part of the other controlled task on the previous occasion.

## 4.4 Confirmatory structured discussion – administration and conduct arrangements

The instructions and guidance in this section should be read in conjunction with the specific structured discussion guidance contained within the relevant EDLS or EES controlled task assessment packs.

### 4.4.1 Format and purpose of the structured discussion

A structured discussion is a conversation between candidates and their assessor, conducted either one-to-one or in small groups (with a maximum of five candidates). It is intended to complement the controlled task and confirm candidates' knowledge and understanding, as well as providing opportunity for candidates to reflect on the controlled task they have recently completed.

Since the structured discussion relates to the controlled task candidates will have just completed, in practice it cannot be conducted until after the controlled task, and for assessment purposes there is no need for it to take place if the candidate has not achieved a pass in the controlled task.

Unlike the controlled task, the structured discussion is not formally time-bound, as it is separate from the controlled task and does not count towards candidates' working time allowance. However, a structured discussion should **not** last for **longer than around 30 minutes** and centres must maintain records to justify any longer duration for quality assurance purposes.

Whilst the structured discussion should take place as soon as possible after the controlled task has been completed and assessed (whilst still fresh in the candidate's memory), this does **not** have to be within the controlled task's maximum working period.

### 4.4.2 Conducting the structured discussion

The structured discussion should take place in a location where the assessor and candidate(s) are able to have a conversation without disturbance or interruption. This might include suitable rooms within for example a workplace, community setting or school/college.

Candidates are expected to spend at least some time preparing for their structured discussion, although this should not involve a substantial period of revision, nor should it extend to producing scripted statements for use during the discussion.

Candidates must not have unsupervised access to their completed controlled task, although they can be shown it whilst receiving feedback and **during** the structured discussion (if applicable). In addition, whilst **preparing** for their structured discussion they may be given copies of the **relevant pages** from the controlled task candidate's paper that advises them how to prepare for the structured discussion.

The controlled task assessment pack includes guidance for the assessor on conducting the structured discussion, including the mark scheme that must be completed to record the assessment decision (see section 4.4.3, below). The discussion is supposed to be a **conversation**, so should not be simply a question and answer session. Where more than one candidate is involved in the discussion, the contribution of each candidate must be assessed individually.

### 4.4.3 Evidencing the discussion

The completed mark scheme is the formal record of the structured discussion having taken place, so **must** be completed in all cases for each candidate. This must include details of the location, date, and time started and completed, people present and the outcome achieved.

However, for standardisation purposes, it is crucial that each assessor's structured discussions are corroborated in some way. This could be through one or more of the following:

- video recording
- audio recording
- contemporaneous notes by assessor
- preparation/contemporaneous notes by candidate
- internal quality assurance observation

Where video/audio recording or observation are used, it is important to ensure this happens as unobtrusively as possible so that it does not impede or detract from the discussion.

### 4.4.4 Resitting the structured discussion

It is important to appreciate that the structured discussion is intended to confirm the standard of work the candidate has *already* demonstrated through the controlled task. Whilst it has a mark scheme and is therefore technically possible to 'fail', in practice it is acceptable to reconvene the discussion if necessary in order to give the candidate another opportunity.

## 4.5 Confirmatory test – administration and conduct arrangements

The confirmatory tests for EAoNS and EComms at levels 1 to 3 perform a similar function to the structured discussions within EDLS and EES. The tests are designed to **confirm** the standard of work that has been demonstrated through the controlled task, and therefore it is recommended that the controlled task is completed first.

### 4.5.1 Format of the confirmatory tests

The confirmatory tests are externally set and are externally marked. They follow a common multiple choice format across all of the Essential Skills awarding bodies, structured as follows:

Test	Number of questions	Maximum duration
Level 1 Essential Application of Number Skills	20	30 minutes
Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	20	45 minutes
Level 3 Essential Application of Number Skills	30	60 minutes
Level 1 Essential Communication Skills	20	30 minutes
Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	20	45 minutes
Level 3 Essential Communication Skills	30	60 minutes

Each test must be completed in one session, with no breaks permitted (unless authorised for individual candidates for Access reasons, see Section 4.6 of this handbook). The candidates must determine responses to every question independently.

Each test is graded pass/fail, with the pass mark intended to be approximately 70%.

The confirmatory tests are available from City & Guilds in both **Named on Demand** (NoD) (paper-based) and **onscreen delivery (e-volve)** formats.

### 4.5.2 Ordering the confirmatory tests

Regardless of the format chosen, each confirmatory test must be booked in advance. In both cases, the test paper will be allocated by City & Guilds. Unlike the controlled tasks, centres are unable to choose a particular test paper or range of topics for their learners. This is because the Essential Skills qualifications are intended to assess learners' ability to transfer their application of these skills between contexts and purposes.

#### 4.5.2.1 Named on Demand (paper-based) tests

The Named on Demand (NoD) model involves the use of paper-based question papers and scannable multiple choice answer sheets. There are no fixed assessment windows, although each test sitting must be pre-booked via the Walled Garden.



Named on Demand assessments are ordered using the On Demand screen within the Walled Garden (or alternatively as an EDI file). A fee is charged for each candidate included on the order, for prices please see the 3868 Catalogue pages on the Walled Garden.

The order must specify a date and time for the test (at least 14 clear calendar days ahead), as well as the names of **all** candidates sitting the confirmatory test on this occasion (all of whom will need to have already been registered for the relevant Essential Skill and are expected to have completed the corresponding controlled task). Please ensure this information is correct, as it **cannot** be amended after the order has been placed<sup>4</sup> and will appear on all stationery relating to the booking, ie the Invigilation Certificate and pre-printed answer sheet.

**Candidates cannot be added to, or removed from a booking after it has been made. This is critically important for the accurate and timely processing of results.**

The assessment is expected to take place on the date and time specified, though it **may be held up to five working days either side of the specified date without notifying City & Guilds**. Please see the section 'Setting up the assessment', below, for further details. It is therefore advisable to book as close to the assessment date as possible.

Each assessment order must be for a **unique** sitting, and all candidates included on a booking are expected to sit the assessment at the same time on the same site. The number of orders per day is unlimited, so a separate order must be placed for each sitting if candidates cannot all be accommodated at the same time on the same site (there must be a gap of at least one hour between each sitting's designated start time). **All materials relating to the booking must be received, stored, used and returned together.**

#### **4.5.2.2 Onscreen (e-volve) tests**

Onscreen tests are available via e-volve, City & Guilds' e-assessment platform. As with Named on Demand, there are no fixed assessment 'windows', and each assessment must be pre-booked via e-volve (this can be as little as 30 minutes before it takes place).

#### **4.5.3 Test conduct requirements**

The confirmatory tests require a more formal 'exam' environment than the controlled tasks, although it is recognised that the Essential Skills qualifications are accessed in a diverse range of settings where some of the more rigid security and conduct requirements of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) might be impractical or inappropriate.

**The confirmatory tests are therefore not formally subject to JCQ ICE conditions, although most of the principles of ICE do apply.** The required conditions are as set out below:

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<sup>4</sup> Our standard candidate amendment policy applies, allowing minor errors to be corrected via the Walled Garden. However, if a wholesale name change is required then proof of this must be provided.

#### 4.5.3.1 Test sites

Confirmatory tests should ideally be completed on the centre's own premises, although where they do need to take place in other locations such as candidates' workplaces or community settings, City & Guilds must be informed that the location is an assessment site.

Once the site is known to City & Guilds as an assessment location, it not necessary to inform us on every occasion that a confirmatory test takes place at this location. However, we may request this information periodically for examination audit purposes.

#### 4.5.3.2 Receiving and storing test materials

Where candidates are taking a paper-based test, the test papers are supplied in sealed packets that must be stored securely and **not opened until immediately before use** – ideally in front of candidates once they are in the test room, although if not no more than one hour before the test is due to start<sup>5</sup>

Whilst these tests are not formally subject to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE), storage arrangements must involve similar access control arrangements to ICE.

Live tests must not be viewed by anyone within the centre prior to their use, and any access to the packets must be restricted to a limited number of individuals authorised by the Head of Centre. Particular care must be taken if any test papers need to be transported to another site (see 4.5.3.1, above). Where possible, this should be on the day of the assessment using a lockable case. If assessment materials need to be stored overnight away from the centre address, the conditions must meet those listed above, with the location known to City & Guilds. All assessment sites' storage arrangements will be checked as part of City & Guilds' examination audit process.

Where candidates are taking an onscreen test, the selected test is scheduled for delivery at the centre. The test is then allocated to a testing platform and remains locked until released by the candidate entering their unique pin on the individual test platform.

#### 4.5.3.3 Test room

All confirmatory tests must take place in a suitable location that enables candidates to complete their assessments without disruption or interruption. It should be made clear to those in adjoining rooms/corridors that the test is taking place.

Candidates must not be seated in such a way that they can overlook each other's work (even unintentionally). The recommended method is to ensure that the minimum distance in all directions between candidates' chairs is at least 1.25 metres. Other approaches are acceptable, for example screening, providing that candidates cannot see each other's work so long as the invigilator can clearly observe each candidate working.

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<sup>5</sup> Unless longer is required to make local adjustments to a paper for Access reasons – see Section 4.6 of this handbook.

Centres must create a seating plan so that there is a clear record of where each candidate was seated during the assessment. Centres must keep a copy of the seating plan until at least 65 working days after the release of results.

Care should be taken to ensure there is nothing visible in the test room that might give candidates an unfair advantage (please see 4.5.3.5, below, for further guidance).

There is no requirement to display the standard Joint Council for Qualifications JCQ 'Warning to Candidates' posters for these tests although it might be appropriate to do so if the same room is also used for other tests or examinations.

A reliable clock must be clearly visible to each candidate throughout the assessment.

#### **4.5.3.4 The invigilator role**

The confirmatory tests require **continuous** supervision by suitably informed and briefed adults. Anyone acting as an invigilator for these tests needs to be absolutely clear about the scope and purpose of this role, ie to facilitate the assessment and:

- ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities
- ensure the security of the assessment – before, during and afterwards
- prevent possible candidate malpractice
- prevent possible administrative failures.

Invigilators must:

- be familiar with the requirements of the role as set out in this handbook. An electronic or printed copy of this handbook, (or at least this section of it) must be available during **every** test sitting
- give all their attention to overseeing the test and ensuring it is conducted properly
- be able to observe each candidate that they are responsible for supervising at all times
- be able to summon help without leaving candidates unsupervised at any time – eg if there is only one invigilator, that person should have access to a mobile phone (on silent) or two-way radio
- inform the head of centre (or other person in authority within the centre) immediately if they suspect the security of the assessment may have been compromised (the head of centre is responsible for notifying City & Guilds of any security breach).

Invigilators must not carry out any other task whilst invigilating.

### **Who can act as invigilator?**

Whilst invigilators must be suitably informed and briefed, determining who can or cannot fulfil the Invigilator role is ultimately an internal staffing matter for centres. As with any form of assessment, centres must consider the potential for any malpractice that could occur and ensure that there are adequate internal safeguards in place to mitigate the risk of this happening.

Particular care needs to be taken if an invigilator might be perceived to have a conflict of interest as a result of other roles they perform. As far as possible centres should avoid situations where candidates are invigilated solely by the main tutor/assessor who has prepared them for the essential skill being assessed. Where this is genuinely unavoidable, the centre must take all reasonable steps to prevent any conflict of interest which could lead to, or be perceived as, malpractice. Candidates' relatives or peers must not act as sole invigilator under any circumstances.

If only one invigilator is present, that person must be able to get help easily, without leaving the room or disturbing the candidates. **There must be at least one invigilator present at all times during the test.**

### **4.5.3.5 Permitted and prohibited equipment**

Unlike the controlled tasks, there are strict limits on the range of equipment candidates may access and use whilst completing their confirmatory test. This is deliberate, and reflects the confirmatory purpose of these tests.

In each case the front cover of the test paper or onscreen instructions lists the range of items candidates may or may not use. In particular, candidates must **not** have access to:

- a calculator (of any kind) in the case of EAoNS
- a dictionary (of any kind) in the case of ECommS.

Care must also be taken to ensure there are no posters or similar visible in the test room that might conceivably give candidates an unfair advantage (eg number charts, word/spelling lists).

Candidates may have access to plain paper and a pen or pencil whilst completing the confirmatory tests. This applies to both onscreen and paper-based versions. At the conclusion of the test invigilators must collect in and securely destroy any paper that has been used during the tests.

### **4.5.3.6 After the test**

#### ***Named on Demand (paper) tests:***

All test papers and answer sheets must be collected in as soon as the test has finished. All completed answer sheets and accompanying stationery **must** be returned to City & Guilds within one working day, following the supplied instructions.

The centre contact in particular is responsible for ensuring:

- all candidates included on the booking completed the assessment at the **same time** (or if not, that the security of the assessment materials was maintained at all times, with all completed materials returned to City & Guilds **together** in the same envelope)
- the date/time pre-printed on the IC is **not** altered (even if the assessment did not actually take place at that time)
- the IC has been completed as instructed to record all the candidates who were listed on the original booking (and must **not** be photocopied)
- no additional candidates may be added to the IC
- each answer sheet displays the correct candidate's name.
- any unused papers and answer sheets are destroyed separately.

**Any spare copies of the test paper and any unused answer sheets must be securely destroyed and on no account may any assessment material be retained as it remains 'live'.**

Named on Demand results are processed and issued a maximum of **20 working days** after the completed answer sheets have been sent back to, and received by, City & Guilds.

#### ***Onscreen (e-volve) tests:***

Candidates' responses are marked automatically by the e-volve system, with a provisional result normally available immediately (the test may need to be uploaded first if it has been conducted offline).

As well as an overall grade, this provisional feedback (known as a 'score report') also provides feedback on performance across each area of the standards.

#### **4.5.4 Resits**

All confirmatory tests are graded pass/fail, and where candidates have been unsuccessful they will need to resit.

Whilst there is no fixed minimum period before a resit may take place, or a cap on the number of permitted resits, in practice candidates will need further opportunity to reflect on their reasons for being unsuccessful before resitting. As part of the external quality assurance process City & Guilds will be monitoring the number of instances where resits are required.

Where candidates do need to resit, the test paper will again be allocated by City & Guilds rather than the centre, and is most likely to be a different test from the one attempted previously.

#### **4.6 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments**

The Essential Skills qualifications are designed to measure learners' ability to work independently and problem-solve. It is therefore crucial that they undergo a rigorous process of initial assessment to ensure they are personally capable of meeting the required standard for any Essential Skills qualifications they work towards.

### 4.6.1 Permitted adjustments

The qualifications' assessments are designed to be inclusive and reflect common variations in learners' normal methods of working, although some candidates may still need specific access arrangements and reasonable adjustments to allow for their particular methods of working.

**Any such adjustments must not compromise independent achievement of the required standard, so must not involve third party assistance with anything material to the assessment.**

Adjustments may be allowed, where necessary for any essential skills qualification and can apply to controlled tasks, structured discussions and confirmatory tests. In the case of EAoNS and ECommS, the following inclusion statements set out the range of reasonable adjustments that might **potentially** be considered for both the controlled task and confirmatory test.

<b>Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS)</b>		
<b>Adjustment/allowances</b>	<b>Permitted for controlled task</b>	<b>Permitted for confirmatory test</b>
Additional time	Yes	Yes
Human reader	Yes	Yes
Human scribe	Yes (but must not draw diagrams, charts or graphs on behalf of candidate)	Yes
Assistive reading/writing software	Yes	Yes
Practical assistants	Yes (the assistant must not perform any skills for which marks can be accredited)	Yes
Rest breaks	Yes (although tasks can in any event take place over a number of sessions)	Yes
Modified paper (eg enlarged print or Braille)	Yes	Yes
BSL interpreter	Yes	Yes
Transcripts	Yes (although any diagrams, charts or graphs must be created independently by the candidate)	Yes

<b>Essential Communication Skills (ECommS)</b>		
<p><b>Key principles:</b></p> <p><i>Speaking and Listening</i> Speaking and listening is defined as non-written communication conducted within a purposeful context.</p> <p><i>Reading</i> Reading is defined as the independent decoding and understanding of written language to obtain information in a purposeful context. 'Text' is defined as materials that include the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille.</p> <p><i>Writing</i> Writing is defined as the independent construction of written text to communicate in a purposeful context. 'Text' is defined as materials that include the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille and which are presented in a way that is accessible for the intended audience.</p>		
<b>Adjustment/allowances</b>	<b>Permitted for controlled task</b>	<b>Permitted for confirmatory test</b>
Additional time	Yes	Yes
Interaction through the medium of BSL or SSE	Yes (only for speaking and listening, all reading/writing activities must be completed through the medium of English or Welsh)	No
Human reader	No	No
Human scribe	No	Yes – to record multiple choice responses
Assistive reading/writing/speech software (if used independently by the candidate)	Yes	Yes
Practical assistants	Yes (the assistant must not perform any skills for which marks can be accredited)	Yes
Rest breaks	Yes (although tasks can in any event take place over a number of sessions)	Yes
Modified paper (eg enlarged print or Braille)	Yes	Yes
Transcripts	Yes (although any text must be created independently by the candidate)	Yes

<b>Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS)</b>		
<b>Adjustment/allowances</b>	<b>Permitted for controlled task</b>	<b>Permitted for confirmatory structured discussion</b>
Additional time	Yes	Yes
Human reader	Yes	Yes
Human scribe	Yes (although any digital equipment/ devices must be operated independently by the candidate)	Yes
Assistive reading/writing software	Yes	Yes
Practical assistants	Yes (the assistant must not perform any skills for which marks can be accredited)	Yes
Rest breaks	Yes (although tasks can in any event take place over a number of sessions)	Yes
Modified paper (eg enlarged print or Braille)	Yes	Yes
BSL interpreter	Yes	Yes
Transcripts	Yes (although any outputs must be created independently by the candidate)	Yes



<b>Essential Employability Skills (EES)</b>		
<b>Adjustment/allowances</b>	<b>Permitted for controlled task</b>	<b>Permitted for confirmatory structured discussion</b>
Additional time	Yes	Yes
Human reader	Yes	Yes
Human scribe	Yes	Yes
Assistive reading/writing software	Yes	Yes
Practical assistants	Yes (the assistant must not perform any skills for which marks can be accredited)	Yes
Rest breaks	Yes (although tasks can in any event take place over a number of sessions)	Yes
Modified paper (eg enlarged print or Braille)	Yes	Yes
BSL interpreter	Yes	Yes
Transcripts	Yes (although any outputs must be created independently by the candidate)	Yes

#### **4.6.2 Arrangements for making reasonable adjustments**

The City & Guilds existing published arrangements for providing access to assessment and making reasonable adjustments apply. For example, these might include presenting the task materials in a particular format, allowing additional time or practical help with aspects of the task that are not part of, or intrinsic to, the assessment. Please see the City & Guilds document *Access arrangements – when and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds* for further information.

#### **4.6.3 Access arrangements within the e-volve system**

When scheduling assessments on e-volve, it is possible to arrange time extensions where candidates are entitled to additional time. Any instances where candidates require extra time **must** be approved in advance by City & Guilds. Please see the **Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments** section of City & Guilds' website for details of how to do this.

Candidates can change the background colour and it is possible to use some types of screen reading and text generation software for further details, please see [www.cityandguilds.com/e-volve](http://www.cityandguilds.com/e-volve).



## 5 Quality assurance requirements

### 5.1 Internal quality assurance

The controlled tasks (and structured discussions) are designed to provide a clear assessment structure, and thus help ensure consistency across all centres in Wales offering these qualifications. Nevertheless, the integrity of the Essential Skills suite of qualifications rests on those assessment decisions being subject to a rigorous process of internal (centre) quality assurance that is in turn monitored externally by City & Guilds.

Centres must have effective internal quality assurance systems and processes in place to ensure any internal assessment of these qualifications is consistently carried out to the required standard.

Full details and guidance on the internal and external quality assurance requirements and procedures are provided in the *City & Guilds Centre Manual* and the document *Our Quality Assurance Requirements (OQAR)*. These documents also explain the tasks, activities and responsibilities of quality assurance staff.

To meet the quality assurance requirements for these qualifications, the centre must ensure that the internal roles set out in this handbook are undertaken.

### 5.2 External quality assurance

External quality assurers are appointed to approve centres and to monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance carried out by centres. External quality assurance is carried out to ensure there is validity, reliability and good practice in centres.

To carry out their quality assurance role, external quality assurers must have appropriate occupational and quality assurance knowledge and expertise. City & Guilds external quality assurers attend training and development designed to keep them up-to-date, to facilitate standardisation between external quality assurers and to share good practice.

#### **External quality assurers:**

The role of the external quality assurer is to:

- provide advice and support to centre staff
- ensure the quality and consistency of assessments within and between centres by the use of systematic sampling
- visit centres, as required to ensure they continue to meet the centre and qualification approval criteria
- provide feedback to centres and City & Guilds.

External quality assurance for these qualifications will be provided by the usual City & Guilds external quality assurance process which includes the use of reports designed to provide an objective risk analysis of individual centre assessment and internal quality assurance practice.

Further details of City & Guilds quality assurance requirements and the role of external quality assurers are available in the *City & Guilds Centre Manual* and the document *Our Quality Assurance Requirements (OQAR)*.

### **5.3 Examination audits**

The confirmatory tests are externally set and marked by City & Guilds, and therefore subject to **separate** process of external quality assurance. This includes the process of setting and determining pass marks for each test.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all of the confirmatory tests they administer are completed under the required conditions. City & Guilds in turn monitors this through conducting examination audits. In some cases these will be 'unannounced'.



## 6 Dealing with suspected malpractice

### 6.1 Dealing with suspected malpractice

City & Guilds is committed to providing high quality qualifications which are assessed and awarded consistently, accurately and fairly. To this end we require everyone involved in the implementation, assessment and internal quality assurance of our qualifications and/or assessments to demonstrate honesty and integrity.

Malpractice is defined by City & Guilds as an act or an instance of improper practice and includes maladministration. Malpractice is any activity, practice or omission which is either wilfully negligent or deliberately contravenes regulations and requirements and compromises one or more of the following:

- internal or external assessment process
- integrity of a qualification
- validity of a result or certificate
- reputation and credibility of City & Guilds.

Maladministration is defined as any activity, practice or omission which results in centre or learner non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements.

### 6.2 Candidate malpractice

Candidate malpractice might include:

- Breach of examination or assessment rules, regulations and requirements
- Inappropriate conduct during an examination/assessment session

### 6.3 Centre malpractice

Centre malpractice might include:

- Failure to meet City & Guilds' centre and qualification approval requirements
- Influencing the assessment or certification process.
- Failure to meet the requirements for the conduct of examinations.

Specific examples are provided in the City & Guilds document, *Managing cases of suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

If a centre discovers or suspects malpractice, it is required to report it to the City & Guilds Investigation and Compliance team within 10 working days and prior to the commencement of any internal investigation. For further information on malpractice and how to report it, please refer to the City & Guilds document *Managing cases of suspected malpractice in assessment and examinations* which is available on our website. Further information is also provided in *Our Quality Assurance Requirements*.



## Appendix 1      **Frequently asked questions – Essential Skills**

**1      What does the term ‘controlled’ mean in relation to the controlled tasks?**

Please see **Section 4.3** of this handbook for a detailed overview of the expectations and requirements.

**2      Who can supervise the controlled task; can this be the candidate’s tutor or assessor?**

Please see **Section 4.3.5** of this handbook for details of supervision requirements, the role of controlled task supervisor, and who may perform it.

**3      Who can invigilate the confirmatory tests; can this be the candidate’s tutor or assessor?**

Please see **Section 4.5.3.4** of this handbook for details of the invigilator role, and who may perform it.

**4      Do the confirmatory tests have to be complete within a specific timescale?**

The confirmatory tests do not need to be completed within the controlled task maximum working period. See **Section 4.5** of this handbook for details.

**5      Can candidates be allowed additional time for their controlled task and/or confirmatory test?**

Time allowances are an important aspect of the Essential Skills qualifications’ revised assessment approach. Both the controlled tasks and confirmatory tests are a concentrated activity (with a ‘deadline’, like many of the activities learners are likely to encounter in the workplace).

Nevertheless, individual candidates with a specific disability likely to affect their pace of work can potentially be allowed additional time as a reasonable adjustment. Please see **Section 4.6** for further details.

**6      At what point does the working time allowance for the controlled tasks begin?**

Please see **Section 4.3.3**.

**7      Can controlled task materials be issued to candidates before they start on the task?**

No. Please see **Section 4.3.3**.

- 8 What arrangements can be made for candidates with specific learning needs and/or assessment requirements?**  
Please see **Section 4.6**.
- 9 Getting a group together to complete the speaking and listening discussions within the ECommS controlled tasks is likely to be an issue for work-based candidates. As an alternative, could their colleagues make up the group?**  
Please see **Section 4.3.9**. The group must comprise at least three people (excluding the assessor) although these need not all be candidates, as long as those who are undergoing assessment have the opportunity to meet the relevant assessment criteria.
- 10 Can the plan for the discussion in the ECommS controlled tasks also be the basis of the plan for the written piece?**  
Yes.
- 11 Does time spent collecting data within the EAoNS controlled tasks count towards the working times allowance and/or maximum working period?**  
Please see **Section 4.3.8**.
- 12 Can the structured discussion be used to compensate for shortcomings in a candidate's work during the controlled task?**  
No - please see **Section 4.4.1**.
- 13 Can candidates have access to plain paper and a pen or pencil whilst completing the confirmatory tests?**  
Please see **Section 4.5.3.5**.



## Appendix 2 Useful documents and links

The following documents contain essential information for centres delivering City & Guilds qualifications. They should be referred to in conjunction with this handbook. To download the documents and to find other useful documents, go to the Quality Assurance Documents at [www.cityandguilds.com/delivering-our-qualifications](http://www.cityandguilds.com/delivering-our-qualifications).

**City & Guilds Centre Manual** contains detailed information about the processes which must be followed and requirements which must be met for a centre to achieve 'approved centre' status, or to offer a particular qualification, as well as updates and good practice exemplars for City & Guilds assessment and policy issues.

**Our Quality Assurance Requirements** encompasses all of the relevant requirements of key regulatory documents and sets out the criteria that centres should adhere to pre and post centre and qualification approval. It also outlines the potential outcomes of centres **not** adhering to these criteria.

**JCQ access arrangements and reasonable adjustments** provides general information and guidance on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for assessments and qualifications.

**Access arrangements – when and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds** provides a short summary of the process for applying for access arrangements or special consideration for candidates.

**Managing cases of suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments** provides examples of centre and learner malpractice and explains the responsibilities of centre staff, external quality assurers, examiners and City & Guilds staff to report malpractice, actual or suspected.

It also contains useful information on such things as:

- **Walled Garden:** how to register and certificate candidates online
- **Events:** dates and information on the latest Centre events
- **Online assessment:** how to register for e-assessments.

For more information about City & Guilds entire Maths and English offer, please visit [www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish](http://www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish).

You can sign up to receive email updates, including alerts linking to our regular *All About...* newsletter, by visiting [www.cityandguilds.com/emailupdates](http://www.cityandguilds.com/emailupdates).

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[www.cityandguilds.com](http://www.cityandguilds.com)



## Useful contacts

### UK learners

#### General qualification information

E: [learnersupport@cityandguilds.com](mailto:learnersupport@cityandguilds.com)

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#### International learners

General qualification information

Please contact your local office:

<http://www.cityandguilds.com/about-us/international>

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#### UK Centres

Registrations, Exam entries (Dated/On-Demand/e-volve Scheduling), Invoices, Missing or late exam materials, Results entries, Certification, Publications.

F: +44 (0)20 7294 2413

E: [centresupport@cityandguilds.com](mailto:centresupport@cityandguilds.com)

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#### International centres

Results, Entries, Enrolments, Invoices, Missing or late exam materials

Please contact your local office:

<http://www.cityandguilds.com/about-us/international>

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#### Walled Garden

New account enquiries or amendment of existing account details, password resets and on-line technical problems.

F: +44 (0)20 7294 2413

E: [online@cityandguilds.com](mailto:online@cityandguilds.com)

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#### General e-assessment support enquiries

E: [evolvesupport@cityandguilds.com](mailto:evolvesupport@cityandguilds.com)

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#### SmartScreen

General SmartScreen queries

E: [subscribe@Smartscreen.co.uk](mailto:subscribe@Smartscreen.co.uk)

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#### Employers

Employer solutions, Mapping, Accreditation, Development Skills, Consultancy

If you are an employer, please contact City & Guilds Kineo:

[www.kineo.com/contact-us](http://www.kineo.com/contact-us)

E: [business@cityandguilds.com](mailto:business@cityandguilds.com)

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#### Feedback and complaints

E:

[feedbackandcomplaints@cityandguilds.com](mailto:feedbackandcomplaints@cityandguilds.com)

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[feedbackandcomplaints@cityandguilds.com](mailto:feedbackandcomplaints@cityandguilds.com)

## About City & Guilds

As the UK's leading vocational education organisation, City & Guilds is leading the talent revolution by inspiring people to unlock their potential and develop their skills. We offer over 500 qualifications across 28 industries through 8500 centres worldwide and award around two million certificates every year. City & Guilds is recognised and respected by employers across the world as a sign of quality and exceptional training.

## City & Guilds Group

The City & Guilds Group operates from three major hubs: London (servicing Europe, the Caribbean and Americas), Johannesburg (servicing Africa), and Singapore (servicing Asia, Australia and New Zealand). The Group also includes the Institute of Leadership & Management (management and leadership qualifications), City & Guilds Licence to Practice (land-based qualifications), the Centre for Skills Development (CSD works to improve the policy and practice of vocational education and training worldwide) and Learning Assistant (an online e-portfolio).

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