

Guidance Document

Exceptional Arrangements for Scotland Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) Assessment 2020

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DOCUMENT PURPOSE

This document is for those working in approved EAL Centres where assessments for Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ's) were scheduled to be taken in summer 2020. This guidance explains EAL's approach as an Awarding Organisation (AO) for the awarding of SVQ's.

The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in restrictions that have led to the cancellation of exams and prevented many assessments from being taken as planned.

EAL have been working closely with other Awarding Organisations (AO) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to design an approach that is fair to candidates and ensures, as far as possible, that they receive positive outcomes to enable them to progress to the next stage of their journey without further disruption. EAL will be, drawing on a range of internal quality assured evidence presented by the Centre to ensure that outcomes will be as reliable and consistent as possible, so that they are worthy of public confidence and valued by education providers and employers as much as in any other year and future years. It is also important that Candidates receiving results this year are neither advantaged or disadvantaged compared to Candidates in previous or subsequent years.

OVERVIEW

The implementation of these temporary arrangements is challenging, especially when we are living and working within the necessary public health restrictions. These arrangements implemented by EAL will require time, effort, understanding and different ways of doing things – by Candidates, Colleges, Training Providers or Centres to carefully balance these impacts with the need to generate fair and reliable outcomes that allow candidates to progress.

It has been recognised that the SVQ landscape is complex, there is no single approach to awarding that would work for all types of SVQ's because of the very different qualification structures and assessment methods used. EAL expect that the way in which results are arrived at, will vary and that arrangements for different types of qualifications will differ depending on the qualifications primary purpose Arrangements for different Candidates may differ depending on their individual status.

The expectation as an AO is that through these arrangements, most candidates who planned to undertake assessments this summer will be able to undertake an adapted assessment. It is recognised that for various reasons assessment will not be possible for all Candidates planned for assessment during the period of COVID-19 restrictions. As such they may have to wait for the next available assessment opportunity.

It is EAL's purpose that where adapted assessments are undertaken, all reasonable measures are taken to ensure these assessments and results are safe, valid reliable with standards maintained.

More information can be found for SVQ assessments here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020>

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93778.html>

GUIDANCE TERMINOLOGY DESCRIPTIONS

The table below provides a breakdown for the different types of terminology used when developing the SVQ exceptional arrangements document and its meaning. This will further support Candidates, Colleges, Training Providers and Centres during this temporary arrangement.

Document Terminology	Descriptions
Arrangements	A designed approach that is fair to Candidates and ensures, as far as is possible, that they receive results to enable them to progress to the next stage of their journey, whereby temporary alternative assessment measures have been put place.
Adaption	General assessment methods are required for qualifications that are used to signal occupational competence, having the necessary skills required for the job or that could have professional or health and safety implications. EAL will provide alternative assessment guidance options on adaptations that are suitable and practicable under the current health restrictions.
Delay/Rescheduled	This is where the delay of assessment of some qualifications have been delayed or will be rescheduled for a later date. EAL has no means of calculating results or adapting the assessment in a manner that does not undermine reliability and confidence in the qualifications.

More information can be found for SVQ assessments here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020>

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93778.html>

WHICH LEARNERS DO THESE NEW ARRANGEMENTS APPLY TO?

These arrangements apply to Candidates who were due to undertake assessments towards unit or qualification achievement between 20th March (when classroom-based delivery was suspended) and 31st July 2020. This includes those Candidates who may be only part way through their programme of study and will continue with learning towards their qualification after this date e.g. if they had planned to take assessment on one or more units of a modular course half-way through a two year programme of study.

EAL expect, the vast majority of, these Candidates will have been registered with us before 20th March. EAL recognise that this is not always the case for some on-demand qualifications where Candidates may be registered with us when they are ready to take the assessment. Where candidates had not already been registered, EAL will work with you to confirm that all, and only those, Candidates who genuinely would have been registered to undertake assessments this summer are included, and that they are legitimate candidates.

CENTRE REQUIREMENTS

EAL has already asked you to confirm which Candidates have or would have been entered for assessments due to be taken between 20th March and 31st July 2020. You will be asked to evidence that these are legitimate candidates for these qualifications during the submission process.

HOW WILL CENTRE ASSESSMENTS BE ADAPTED?

Information and guidance on how Centres will be able to apply an adapted assessment method can be found in Appendix 1 (A1) and any associated Annexe.

It is expected that Centres must ensure that the evidence is Valid, Authentic, Reliable, Current and Sufficient to cover the requirements of the assessment criteria and / or learning outcomes.

The adapted assessment process must not differ from that outlined within the relevant assessment strategy and national standards due to the COVID-19 situation. Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance practices must continue.

EAL REQUIREMENTS

EAL will provide guidance on what Centres need to do to ensure that adapted assessments for SVQ's continue to operate effectively and what arrangements will need to be made for candidates who need reasonable adjustments or are unable to take an adapted assessment. Guidance can be found in Appendix 1 (A1).

ERRORS AND UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

EAL are aware that reasonable adjustments may need to be made which could potentially disrupt candidate experience this summer and EAL remain alert to risks as is practicable. Robust processes are in place to minimise disruptions which should be identified as quickly as possible. As an Awarding Organisation we will remain vigilant to the risk of malpractice and it is our expectation that every effort is made by Centres to prevent any Candidate gaining unfair advantage through these arrangements.

EAL will continue to take active steps to prevent malpractice and to investigate and address any suspected malpractice or other improper behaviour, we are obliged to promptly report any incidents to SQA which will be monitored by them and us throughout the exceptional arrangements period.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CENTRES?

EAL trusts that you will work within the requirements and guidelines that have been set to prevent mistakes and errors which would lead to any Candidate being unfairly disadvantaged. EAL expects that centres who identify potential disadvantage seek advice from EAL directly by contacting EQA.Support@eal.org.uk

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Following the outcome of regulatory consultation on Exceptional Arrangements for Assessment in 2020, for final adapted results that have been approved by the AO, there will be no right of appeal by the centre or candidate against the result. An appeal based on whether the process was followed will be offered.

KEY DATES

The dates that have been listed below may not impact all Centres in relation to the adaption for SVQ Assessments:

Dates	Description
29 th May	Cut off for submitting certification information to EAL
1 st June	Beginning of a 3-week window for the collection of evidence contributing towards the calculation of a result from the Centre
30 th June	The cut-off date for applications to EAL for calculations or adaptations
20 th August	Final day for issuing results for calculations or adaptations

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – A1 - SVQ Centre guidance for Adaption

Appendix 1

CENTRE GUIDANCE FOR EXCEPTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SVQ ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES 2020

1. Centres must apply for approval to employ Adaption for assessments, for Learners that are expected to complete qualifications during the period of **20th March 2020 and 31st July 2020**.
2. Applications must be made through SmarterTouch by using a reasonable adjustment / special consideration (RA / SC) form.
3. Centres must be prepared to provide evidence that Learners are expected to complete qualifications for the aforementioned period.
 - a. Evidence can be a combination of the following:

- Completed work to date	- Progress / Tracking charts	- Funding contract information	- Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- Assessment Plan	- Apprenticeship Agreement / Contract	- Individualised Learning Record (ILR)	- Apprenticeship review records

- b. Or any other form of evidence that clearly indicates the expected completion period / date.
- c. Video guidance for this is available and can be found within the documents library within SmarterTouch.

COMPETENCE QUALIFICATIONS

4. Adapted assessment methods can be applied to competence qualifications that are due to be completed in the aforementioned period.

WORKPLACE COMPETENCE QUALIFICATIONS (SVQ Levels 4 & 5, other workplace qualifications)

5. All unit performance criteria must be met with a minimum of two examples of performance. The remainder such as scope/skills, may be assessed by any valid, recognised methods of assessment.
6. All knowledge must be covered as required (describe / explain).
7. It is the assessor's judgement and decision that the evidence presented is valid, authentic, sufficient, and reliable for this adaption.

COMPETENCE QUALIFICATIONS DELIVERED IN THE SHELTERED ENVIRONMENT PERFORMING ENGINEERING OPERATIONS LEVEL 4 & 5 (PEO L4 & L5)

8. For shelter environment PEO only where training has been completed.
9. All unit performance criteria must be met with a minimum of two examples of performance. The remainder such as scope/skills, may be assessed by any valid, recognised methods of assessment.
10. All knowledge must be covered as required (describe / explain).
11. Evidence of the following may also be considered:
 - a. Performance observed based on training activities leading up to summative assessment.
 - b. Reference and evidence to training tasks, GLH, SOW and assessor statements.

12. It is the assessor's judgement and decision that the evidence presented is valid, authentic, sufficient, and reliable for this adaption.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE FOR MODERN APPRENTICES (MA)

13. If the Learner is enrolled onto a Modern Apprenticeship and has only achieved part of the Level 5 Qualification requirements for the MA, the Learner could potentially continue to gather evidence for the performance criteria whilst carrying out their apprenticeship in the workplace.
14. The Learner could gather evidence for Level 5 whilst gathering evidence for Level 6 should the Unit performance & Knowledge criteria be conducive with each other.
15. If the Assessors judge the evidence gathered to have meet the higher Level 6 criteria, then this could be referred to the Level 5 units which were appropriate.

SVQ LEVEL 6 QUALIFICATIONS AND ABOVE

16. Learners registered on Level 6 SVQ & above who have not yet completed the PEO units may consider additional distance learning to support development of the Learner's knowledge across a range of units that may be appropriate to be assessed when the Level 6 workplace skills are evident and the knowledge can be contextualised into their job role.

CANDIDATES NEAR COMPLETION FOR SVQ LEVEL 6 AND ABOVE

17. Where centres have learners that would have completed during the aforementioned period and up to 3 months after ensuring and there is sufficient evidence that has been gathered and has also been reviewed by the assessor, that minimum requirements of the qualification have been met. The learner has not been fully assessed or had the appropriate IQA activities carried out.
18. Those Learners falling into that category who are complete with exception to knowledge and/or the assessing of evidence will be assessed in line with the normal conditions of assessment and IQA practice.

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF COMPETENCE BASED QUALIFICATIONS

19. Internal Quality Assurers must ensure that the adaptations approved are quality assured prior to claiming Learner achievement and apply the same expected practices for these adaptations as they would for the qualification being assessed under normal conditions.

PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION

20. Professional Discussions need to be prepared so that they clearly address criteria and learning outcomes. Professional Discussions must be conducted live to support the authenticity of the Learners knowledge. Conduct of Professional Discussions must not be conducted in a way that leads or coaches the Learner. The PD dialogue and learner response must be recorded so that quality assurance can understand how assessment judgement and decisions have been made. (accurate written record or recording device). Example and guidance can be found at Annex 1.0.

SUPPORT

21. Should you need any support in completing your application, please use the following contact:
EQA.Support@eal.org.uk

Annexes

- 1.0 - Professional Discussion Guidance / Example.



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