

Guidance Document

Exceptional Arrangements for Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQ's) Assessment 2020

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DOCUMENT PURPOSE

This document is for those working in EAL assessment Centres where results for assessments for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQ's) were scheduled to be released in summer 2020. This guidance explains EAL's approach as an Awarding Organisation (AO) for the awarding of VTQ'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 and the Regulatory bodies to design an approach that is fair to learners and ensures, as far as possible, that they receive results 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 results 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 Learners receiving results this year are neither advantaged or disadvantaged compared to Learners 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. The arrangements implemented by EAL will require time, effort, understanding and different ways of doing things, by Learners, Colleges, Training Providers and Centres to carefully balance these impacts with the need to generate fair and reliable outcomes that allow learners to progress.

It has been recognised that the VTQ landscape is complex, there is no single approach to awarding that would work for all types of VTQ'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 Learners may differ depending on their individual status.

EAL will make judgements on the evidence that has been presented in order to award results fairly and safely. This document has been designed to promote a consistent approach between AO's and recognise other AO's offering similar qualifications (even in, a few exceptional cases, variances for different Learners on the same qualification) it has been recognised that this could lead to complicated arrangements for Centres, EAL will support Centres through the application process.

The expectation is that these exceptional arrangements for the majority of Learners who were scheduled to receive results for exams and assessments this summer for their progression to either further or higher education (FE/HE) or employment, will receive a calculated result, or be able to undertake an adapted assessment or a combination of both. It has also been recognised that, for various reasons, it will not be possible for all Learners who were registered to take an assessment during the period of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions to do so, they may have to wait for the next available assessment opportunity.

Some qualifications, those which are not used for progression, fall outside the scope of the extraordinary regulatory framework which has been put in place (though this does not necessarily mean that awards will not be made). EAL will provide further information about the arrangements for these qualifications.

It is EAL's purpose that where calculated results are to be issued and/or adapted assessments taken, all reasonable measures are taken to ensure these assessments and results are safe, valid, reliable with standards maintained as far as is possible

More information can be found for VTQ assessments here:

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

GUIDANCE TERMINOLOGY DESCRIPTIONS

The table below provides a breakdown for the different types of terminology used when developing the VTQ exceptional arrangements document and its meaning, the information provided follows the initial guidance provided by the regulatory bodies. This will further support Learners, Colleges, Training Providers and Centres during this temporary arrangement.

Document Terminology	Descriptions
Arrangements	A designed approach that is fair to Learners 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.
Principal Mitigation	About how results have been categorised into the three areas which are: calculate, adapt, or delay. Information related to the qualification mitigation breakdown is available from Ofqual (this also covers other Regulatory Bodies).
Calculated Results	A range of different types of Learner generated evidence to secure a consistent approach on the awarding of the result, this may vary depending upon the qualification, assessment grading/structure and delivery models. EAL will consider the evidence that is available to them and develop the most appropriate approach for each qualification.
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. The initial mitigation undertaken by EAL has resulted in no way of calculating results or adapting the assessment in a way that it does not undermine its reliability and confidence in the qualifications.
CAG	Centre Assessment Grade (CAG) – this is derived from evidence held within the Centre and is the judgement about the grade that each learner is most likely to have achieved had they been able to complete their assessments in 2020. A CAG could be at a level or for the qualification overall, depending upon the structure of the qualification and the proportion of units already completed.

WHICH LEARNERS DO THESE NEW ARRANGEMENTS APPLY TO?

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

CENTRE REQUIREMENTS

EAL will have asked you to confirm which Learners 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 learners for the qualifications during the submission process.

HOW WILL CENTRE ASSESSMENTS BE CALCULATED, ADAPTED OR BOTH?

Information and guidance on the process for applying for calculated or adapted assessment methods, or use of a combined approach can be found at Appendix 1 (A1) and the associated Annexes.

It is expected that whichever approach is used to provide evidence, 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 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.

WILL THIS EFFECT APPRENTICESHIP END POINT ASSESSMENTS?

The flexibilities for the assessment of apprenticeships are being overseen by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE). You can find full details of these on their website.

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/covid-19-information-regarding-apprenticeships>

EAL REQUIREMENTS

EAL will provide guidance on the process and requirements for calculating and adaptations of assessments for qualifications and apprenticeships to continue to operate effectively and what arrangements will need to be made for learners who need reasonable adjustments or are unable to take an adapted assessment. Guidance can be found attached to this document (Appendix 1 (A1)) and in SmarterTouch.

ERRORS AND UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

EAL are aware that reasonable adjustments may need to be made in the future which could potentially disrupt learner experience this summer, at this stage EAL are currently alert to risks as is practicable, processes will be 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 other improper behaviour, it is our expectation that every effort is made by Centres to prevent any Learner 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 the Regulatory Bodies which will be monitored by them and us throughout the exceptional arrangements period.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CENTRES?

EAL trusts that centres will work within the requirements and guidelines that have been set in order to prevent mistakes and errors which would lead to any Learner being unfairly disadvantaged. During these arrangements EAL may request additional evidence or information more than we would normally expect.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPEALS

The publication of Exceptional Arrangements for Assessment and Grading in 2020 (VTQs) outlined that there will be no right of appeal by the centre or learner against the CAG result once approved and issued by the AO. However, 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 VTQ Assessments

Dates	Description
29 th May	Cut-off date for submitting certification information to EAL
1 st June	Anticipated publication of consultation outcomes
1 st June	Start date for submission to EAL of application for calculation of a result or adapted assessment methods from the Centres
30 th June	Cut-off date for submission to EAL of application for calculation of a result or adapted assessment methods from the Centres
20 th August	Final day for issuing results for calculations or adaptations

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - A1 - Centre guidance for Calculation and Adaptations

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APPENDIX 1

CENTRE GUIDANCE FOR EXCEPTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT AND GRADING 2020

1. Centres must apply for approval to employ Calculation and or 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 (V2).
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. Guidance for the decision-making process can be found at Annex 2.0.
- d. Video guidance for this is available and can be found in the document library within SmarterTouch.

CALCULATION OF LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT *

4. Calculation may be used for certificating Learner achievement. If this is the selected method, then Centres must use all available sources of information and data to conduct the calculation. A professional judgement must be made by teachers / tutors / assessors and relevant heads of department. The evidence used and method / rationale for the calculation must be made available for quality assurance purposes.
5. Evidence can include and is not limited to:
 - a. Information on already completed assessments in qualification components to date that have been assessed, quality assured and moderated. (i.e. External online exams)
 - b. Information on already completed assessments in qualification components to date that have been assessed and Internal Quality Assured under the normal conditions of the qualification, that have yet to be Externally Quality Assured.
 - c. Other information that the Centre holds about the Learner, such as but not limited to:
 - i. Records and results of formative assessments.
 - ii. Evidence of work Learners have undertaken.
 - iii. Observations of practice tasks (Practical assessments).
 - iv. Data of prior attainment.
 - v. Details of any reasonable adjusts that would impact the Learner.
 - vi. Predicted grade data and method of prediction.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA) AND MODERATION OF CALCULATED ACHIEVEMENT

6. In addition to the normal expected IQA activities required for the qualification the Centre also must include additional IQA activities for calculated achievement. This includes:
 - a. Evaluation of the method / rationale applied for the calculation of the proposed outcome.
 - b. Evaluation of the evidence used for the calculation of the proposed outcome.
 - c. Moderation the judgements made to ensure that a consistent and fair approach has been applied to the calculation process.
 - d. **All IQA activity must be recorded and documented within Annex 3.0.**

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

7. EAL will also consider the historic assessment information gathered by the Centre to support the calculations made.

*** Competence qualifications are unable to be calculated and therefore an adaption will need to be applied. Guidance of adaption is detailed below.**

COMPETENCE QUALIFICATIONS

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

WORKPLACE COMPETENCE QUALIFICATIONS (development competence, NVQ, other workplace qualifications)

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. 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 (PEO)

12. For sheltered environment PEO only where training has been completed.
13. 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.
14. All knowledge must be covered as required (describe / explain).
15. 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.
16. 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 FOUNDATION COMPETENCE

17. All unit performance criteria must be met with a minimum of one example of performance. The remainder such as scope/skills, may be assessed by any valid, recognised methods of assessment.
18. All knowledge must be covered as required (describe / explain).
19. 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.
20. 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 FOUNDATION GATEWAY

21. Where the Foundation Competence qualification has not been completed in full; Learners can progress to the Foundation Gateway qualification if they have completed the relevant and associated units within the Foundation Competence qualification. They can then return to the Foundation Competence qualification to complete the outstanding units not associated with the Foundation Gateway qualification.
22. The Centre can calculate L2 Foundation Gateway behaviours by using evidence of previous behaviour monitoring and development.
23. Employers can state that they do not wish for their apprentice to complete the Foundation Gateway qualification. This must be documented and authenticated and may be requested by the End Point Assessment Organisation at the Gateway stage of the Learners apprenticeship prior to End Point Assessment (EPA).

ADDITIONAL DISTANCE LEARNING FOR EXTENDED DIPLOMA

24. Learners registered on Level 3 NVQ Extended Diplomas 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 3 workplace skills are evident and the knowledge can be contextualised into their job role.

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF COMPETENCE BASED QUALIFICATIONS

25. 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.

QUALIFICATIONS THAT CANNOT BE CALCULATED OR CALCULATED IN FULL (ADAPTION)

26. For qualifications that are unable to be calculated, adapted assessment methods can be considered for exceptional arrangements. This must be recorded using the record found at Annex 4.0.
27. For qualifications that are unable to be calculated in full, adapted assessment methods can be considered for exceptional arrangements combined with part calculation.
28. Assessment methods, such as the list below, can be replaced using an adapted assessment method:
 - a. Online Exam.
 - b. Controlled knowledge assessments.
 - c. Practical assessments that infer knowledge.
 - d. Synoptic assessments.
29. Examples of adapted assessment methods can be:
 - a. Assignments.
 - b. Professional Discussions.
 - c. Viva Voce.
 - d. A combination of adapted assessment methods.
 - e. A combination of calculated elements and adapted assessment methods.

ASSIGNMENT

30. Assignments must be developed to clearly indicate to Learners what they must do to produce evidence that demonstrates their knowledge, at the required level, against unit criteria and learning outcomes. The Assignment brief must; Lead Learners to be able to provide valid responses, provide detail to how authenticity will be judged, designed using the appropriate action verbs for; level, depth and breadth appropriate to the criteria and learning outcomes being assessed, and used for all Learners undertaking the linked unit. An adapted assignment brief can be found at Annex 5.0.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADED QUALIFICATIONS

31. Assignments must be developed to include the appropriate detail for how Learners can achieve each grade:
 - a. "For a Pass you will need to...."
 - b. "For a Merit you will need to...."
 - c. "For a Distinction you will need to...."

MARKING CRITERIA FOR GRADED QUALIFICATIONS

32. Employ the current criteria for EAL assignments and practical assessments:
 - a. 1 Mark = Completed assessment meets specification. Completed assignment gives brief descriptions against the assignment headings.
 - b. 2 Marks = Completed assessment meets specification. Completed assignment gives clear descriptions against all the assignment headings.
 - c. 3 Marks = Completed assessment meets specification. Completed written report gives clear, detailed, and precise descriptions against all the report headings

ADDITIONAL INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADAPTED ASSIGNMENTS

33. In addition to the normal expected IQA activities required for the qualification the Centre also must include additional IQA activities for an adapted assignment. This includes:
- a. Evaluate the assignment brief to ensure that Learners have the opportunity to produce Valid, Authentic, Current and Sufficient evidence. An IQA record can be found at Annex 6.0.
 - b. Ensure that the time period is fair.
 - c. Ensure that the achievement descriptors are clearly defined. (graded)
 - d. Conduct standardisation of expectations.
 - e. Organise and manage Moderation of marking.
 - f. **All IQA activity must be recorded and documented within Annex 3.0.**

PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION

34. 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 judgements and decisions have been made. (accurate written record or recording device). Guidance and examples can be found at Annex 1.0.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADED QUALIFICATIONS

35. Profession Discussion brief must detail how Learners can achieve each grade:
- a. "For a Pass you will need to..."
 - b. "For a Merit you will need to..."
 - c. "For a Distinction you will need to..."

MARKING CRITERIA FOR GRADED QUALIFICATIONS

36. Marking Criteria for Graded qualifications:
- a. 1 Mark = Learner response meets specification. Learner response gives brief descriptions against the criteria and learning outcomes.
 - b. 2 Marks = Learner response meets specification. Learner response gives clear descriptions against the criteria and learning outcomes.
 - c. 3 Marks = Learner response meets specification. Learner response gives clear, detailed, and precise descriptions against the criteria and learning outcomes.

ADDITIONAL INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADAPTED PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSIONS

37. In addition to the normal expected IQA activities required for the qualification the Centre also must include additional IQA activities for adapted Professional Discussion. This includes:
- a. Conduct standardisation of expectations.
 - b. Observe a sample of PD's in practice.
 - c. Sample PD recordings as an IQA theme.
 - d. Organise and manage Moderation of marking.
 - e. **All IQA activity must be recorded and documented within Annex 3.**

VIVA VOCE

38. Viva Voce is an oral exam. The questions to be used for the Viva must be prepared and be at the required level for the qualification. The Viva must be conducted in such a way that the assessor asks the prepared questions and records the Learners response. (accurate written record or recording device). The Assessor must except the response and not expand on the response (this will become a PD).

***The Centre must not use questions detailed in controlled knowledge assessments.**

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADED QUALIFICATIONS

39. Questions must be prepared to assess Learners with a clear marking system for Pass, Merit and Distinction.

ADDITIONAL INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADAPTED VIVA VOCE

40. In addition to the normal expected IQA activities required for the qualification the Centre also must include additional IQA activities for adapted Viva Voce. This includes:
- Conduct standardisation of expectations.
 - Confirm prepared questions met the requirements of the qualification.
 - Observe a sample of Vivas in practice.
 - Sample Viva recordings as an IQA theme.
 - Organise and manage Moderation of marking.
 - All IQA activity must be recorded and documented within Annex 3.**

SUPPORT

41. 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.
- 2.0 - Exceptional Arrangements Decision Process.
- 3.0 - Calculation request and record.
- 4.0 - Adaption request and record.
- 5.0 - Adapted Assignment Brief.
- 6.0 - Adapted Assignment Brief IQA Record.