



Functional Skills Centre Handbook

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Table of Contents

About this Functional Skills Centre Handbook.....	5
Approval to offer Functional Skills	8
Centre Requirements	14
Quality Assurance Systems.....	17
Assessment and Quality Assurance Overview	19
Accessing the Assessments.....	22
Learner Registration.....	22
Assessment Taking.....	24
Conduct of Assessment	24
Additional information for the conduct of ICT Assessments at levels 1 and 2	24
Maintaining confidentiality in the conduct of assessment tasks	24
Verifying Learner Identity	25
Support Arrangements	26
Supervision Arrangements	26
The Assessment Room	28
Time Limits.....	28
Before the assessment.....	29
During the assessment.....	30
Candidates leaving the room.....	30
Conducting Speaking, Listening and Communication Assessments.....	31
Transporting Assessment Materials	32
Prior Accreditation (English components).....	33
Transferable Skills.....	34
Re-sitting an Assessment.....	34
Assessment Marking.....	35
Returning Assessments	38
Issue of Results.....	39
Enquiries about Results and Appeals.....	39
Replacement Certificates	40
Internal Quality Assurance	42
External Quality Assurance	Error! Bookmark not defined.
External Training.....	49
Retaining Learners' Evidence	49
Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations	50
Communication and interaction needs	53
Cognition and learning needs.....	54
Sensory and physical needs.....	54
Behavioural, Emotional and Social needs	54
Learners for whom English is an additional language.....	54
Range of reasonable adjustments	54
English - Reading	55
English – Speaking, Listening and Communication	55
English - Writing	56
Mathematics.....	56
ICT	56
Making special considerations	59
Qualification Withdrawal.....	60
Gateway Qualifications' policies and procedures	61
Appendices.....	62
Appendix 1 Secure Storage Requirements.....	62

Appendix 2 Assessment Display Notice	64
Appendix 3 Seating Plan Record Form	65
Appendix 4 Conduct of candidates for external assessments.....	66
Appendix 5 Functional Skills: Guidance on Access Arrangements	67
FAQs	81

About this Functional Skills Centre Handbook

This Functional Skills Centre Handbook is intended for tutors/assessors, invigilators, internal quality assurers, centre quality managers and other staff within Gateway Qualifications recognised centres and/or prospective centres.

It sets out what is required of the centre in order to deliver Functional Skills qualifications. It also contains information specific to managing and delivering the qualification(s) including specific quality assurance requirements.

The guide should be read in conjunction with the Gateway Qualifications' Functional Skills qualification specification and other supporting material.

In order to offer the Functional Skills qualifications you must be recognised by Gateway Qualifications. If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact us:

Telephone: 01206 911 211
Email: enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk
Web: www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk

Post: Gateway Qualifications
Gateway House
3 Tollgate Business Park
Colchester
CO3 3AB

Gateway Qualifications' Support

We aim to provide you with the best possible service, to enable you to cater for the needs of all your learners. We will do this by ensuring our service is:

- Prompt
- Efficient
- Responsive
- Supportive
- Professional.

General Support

We will endeavour at all times to:

- Respond to all telephone and e-mail enquiries the same working day.
- Ensure a respectful, friendly and supportive attitude at all times to everyone visiting and associated with the company, in whatever capacity.
- Acknowledge a complaint within two working days.
- Listen to and respond positively in respect of feedback and suggestions.
- Ensure that the staff and associates of the company are appropriately qualified.

Who We Are

These are the departments that you will come into contact with here at Gateway Qualifications.

Development

The Development team consists of our Development Officers and Development Managers. Development Officers are office based and are usually contactable between the hours of 8.30am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday. Our Development Managers are field workers and have work mobile numbers which you can call. If you are not able to reach them, please leave a message and they will call you back.

The Development team is here to help with any queries you may have relating to choosing a qualification, designing your programme and applying for approval to deliver. They are also here to help you if you are thinking about becoming a recognised centre: they can offer advice and guide you through the process.

Customer Service

The Customer Service team are here to help you with any queries you may have relating to the registration of learners, assessment administration, certificate claims or replacement certificates.

The team consists of our Customer Service Officers and the Customer Service Manager. They are contactable between the hours of 8.30am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

Quality Assurance

The Quality team for Functional Skills consists of the Quality and Assessment Manager, the Assessment Officer, and associate roles including Chief Examiners, Lead Examiners and External Quality Assurers. The Quality team will be available Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm.

Finance

The Finance team consists of our Finance Officer and our Director of Finance and Operations. It is most likely that our Accounts Officer will be able to assist you with any queries you have but in their absence then you could speak to the Director of Finance and Operations. Contact the Finance department with any queries relating to invoices or other finance related matters. They are available Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm.

Approval to offer Functional Skills

To deliver Functional Skills qualifications your centre will need to be approved as a Gateway Qualifications recognised centre and have qualification approval to offer Functional Skills. There are a number of steps to becoming a recognised centre to offer Functional Skills and these are detailed below.

Step 1	Express your interest
Step 2	Complete the application forms
Step 3	Gateway Qualifications approval review
Step 4	Approval confirmation
Step 5	Qualification induction
Step 6	Centre commences qualification delivery

Step 1 - Initial Interest

If you wish to offer the Gateway Qualifications Functional Skills qualifications please contact us by telephone, email or via the website. A member of the Development team will be in touch with you to discuss the following:

- Centre recognition criteria
- Qualification specific Functional Skills requirements
- Quality assurance requirements
- Approval process.

Whether your centre is an existing Gateway Qualifications' recognised centre or new to us, all centres must meet the following criteria to offer Functional Skills qualifications:

- Appropriate systems and processes in place
- Appropriately qualified and experienced staff available
- Suitable resources available to support the delivery of the qualifications.

Step 2 - Application

New centres	Centres that are not yet recognised by Gateway Qualifications will need to submit the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre Recognition Application form
Existing centres	Centres that are currently recognised by Gateway Qualifications will need to submit the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualification Approval application form

Centre Recognition

Becoming a Gateway Qualifications recognised centre involves an agreement made between your centre and Gateway Qualifications, specifying the minimum requirements the centre must commit to.

The Centre Recognition application:

- Provides information about your centre and your key contacts.
- Forms the basis of, and details the arrangements for, the review of provision within the centre.
- Locates responsibility for the overall delivery of Functional Skills at the appropriate level within the centre.

Gateway Qualifications has the authority to apply sanctions or withdraw Centre Recognition if your centre fails to comply with the terms and conditions set out in the Centre Recognition Application.

Key Contacts

When you complete your Centre Recognition application you will be asked to provide us with details of contacts within your centre. This is to ensure that we contact the right person. We will send these contacts emails and call them from time to time with updates or to ask them questions so it is very important that these are kept up to date. It is the centre's responsibility to update centre's contacts.

Centres must have the expertise to access, administer and support assessments. The centre must ensure that all assessments are conducted in accordance with Gateway Qualifications' requirements irrespective of where an assessment takes place.

Centres must have a designated person responsible for each of the following roles (individuals can take on more than one area of responsibility):

Head of Centre:	<p>E.g. Chief Executive. This person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs the Centre Recognition Application form • Will act as the overall point of accountability.
Centre Contact:	<p>This person will be the key contact between Gateway Qualifications and the centre. This person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will commit resources for your centre • Will be the primary conduit for all correspondence between the centre and Gateway Qualifications, being responsible for disseminating information within your centre appropriately • Will identify future resource and development needs.
Curriculum Development Contact:	<p>The person with overall responsibility for curriculum planning and development within your centre. This person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures qualification approvals submitted to Gateway Qualifications have been through an internal approval process.
Quality Assurance Contact:	<p>This person is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining internal quality systems including assessment, internal quality assurance, standardisation, response to quality assurance reports and annual reviews • Ensuring the training and updating of staff involved with internal quality systems • Liaising with Gateway Qualifications' Quality staff.
Administration Contact:	<p>Key responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring accurate and prompt completion of administrative forms/processes relating to the registration, assessment booking and awarding of learners within specified time frames. • Liaising with Gateway Qualifications staff and forwarding necessary learner registration documents to tutors/assessors and other staff. • Maintaining accurate records of all qualification and learner registrations. • Receiving certificates from Gateway Qualifications and ensuring the prompt distribution of certificates to learners. • Updating the annual estimated learner plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return completed assessments for external marking to Gateway Qualifications.
Finance Contact:	<p>Key responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring timely payment of invoices. Liaising with Gateway Qualifications' Finance staff.

Centres will also be required to complete the Qualification Approval Application which will require details of the staffing and resources in place to support qualification delivery. In addition to the above roles, Functional Skills centres will also be required to have appropriately qualified and experienced staffing in place.

Qualification Specific Roles

Tutor/Assessor

Tutors/assessors delivering the Gateway Qualifications Functional Skills qualifications must hold a recognised teaching qualification or be occupationally competent in English, Mathematics or ICT or achieved the qualification themselves at Level 2.

Tutors/assessors are responsible for:

- Delivering the skills required for learners to successfully complete assessments for the Functional Skills qualifications
- Undertaking a detailed diagnostic with appropriate materials required to support learners
- Identifying when learners are ready to take assessments
- Ensuring that appropriate supervision arrangements are made for the conduct of assessments
- Ensuring all learners have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities
- Ensuring the security of the assessment before, during and after the assessment
- Following the guidance and instruction for conducting the assessment
- Conducting the Speaking, Listening and Communication assessments
- Identifying where learners who have a protected characteristic may need reasonable adjustment

- Marking assessments (where applicable)
- Ensuring that the correct mark schemes are used and that they are applied fairly and consistently
- Maintaining accurate and verifiable learner records.

Invigilator

The invigilator is responsible for conducting an assessment session under formal examination conditions in the presence of the learners. Invigilators have a key role in upholding the integrity of the assessment process. An invigilator who is a relative of a learner undertaking the assessment cannot act as the sole invigilator.

The role of the invigilator is to ensure that the assessment is conducted according to the following principles:

- Ensure all learners have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities
- Ensure the security of the assessment before, during and after the assessment
- Prevent possible learner malpractice
- Prevent possible administrative failures.

Invigilators must not perform any additional tasks, e.g. marking, in the assessment room.

Internal Quality Assurer

Internal Quality Assurers, in addition to being Functional Skills tutors/assessors, will need to hold a recognised internal quality assurance/verification qualification or be working towards one, examples are as follows:

- D34 qualification
- V1 qualification
- Internal Verifier Award
- Internal Verification of Credit Based Learning: Continuing Professional Development for Practitioners Award
- Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (QCF)
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (QCF).

The role of the Internal Quality Assurer is to ensure that:

- Assessment is appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not unintentionally discriminate against any learner.
- Tutors/assessors receive on-going advice and support.
- Facilitate appropriate staff development and standardisation for Tutors/assessors.

- Learners' work is presented in a manner that enables effective internal quality assurance to take place.
- Evidence of learner achievement is clearly mapped to the assessment criteria.
- Certification claims are valid, reliable and consistent.
- Assessment setting (contextualising assessments tasks where applicable) and marking (where applicable) is appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not discriminate against any learner.
- Certification claims are valid, reliable and consistent.
- Sample planning based on the principles of CAMERA
 - Candidate (Learner)
 - Assessment
 - Method of assessment
 - Evidence
 - Records
 - Assessment site.

Under no circumstance can the role of both the assessor and Internal Quality Assurer be covered by only one person.

All centre recognition and qualification approval applications will be subject to an internal review prior to proceeding to the next step. If an application is unsuccessful then the centre will receive notification in writing.

Conflicts of Interest

Centres must take all reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest and or an adverse effect. For example, where a staff member has a personal interest in the result of an assessment undertaken by a learner the centre must take all reasonable steps to avoid the conflict of interest from occurring. However, where, having taken all such reasonable steps, an assessment by a member of staff with conflicts of interest cannot be avoided then the centre must declare and notify Gateway Qualifications of the arising conflict of interest.

Centre Requirements

When applying for approval to deliver Functional Skills qualifications centres will be asked to ensure that they can meet the minimum quality assurance requirements. These requirements relate to:

- Staff and physical resources
- Qualification Delivery
- Assessment

Centres will also be asked to confirm that they have the following policies in place:

- Equality
- Learner Appeals
- Complaints
- Malpractice and Maladministration

Staff and Physical Resources

Centres will be required to:

- Retain staffing levels of appropriate size, competence, experience and track record to undertake the delivery of Functional Skills qualification(s) - this includes taking reasonable steps to ensure their competence where this is required for the assessment.
- Ensure that it has available sufficient managerial and other resources to enable it to effectively and efficiently undertake the delivery of the qualification(s) as required by Gateway Qualifications.
- Undertake to provide staff with appropriate inductions and professional development (including a development plan) to ensure staff can maintain their expertise and competence for the qualification(s).
- Ensure that staff involved with a qualification will fully understand the relevant qualification specification(s) provided by Gateway Qualifications, and will comply with its provisions.
- Ensure that assessments are not undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.
- Use buildings that provide access for learners for assessment purposes, in accordance with relevant equalities legislation.
- Ensure that the appropriate range of relevant and current equipment required to deliver and assess the qualification(s) are available in accordance with the associated qualification specification(s) and that these are reasonably maintained.
- Have the necessary level of financial, technical and staffing resources and systems necessary to support the delivery of Functional Skills qualifications.

Qualification and Assessment Delivery

Centres will be required to:

- Have appropriate internal quality assurance arrangements in place to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of Functional Skills qualifications and that these are underpinned by appropriate records.
- Have appropriate arrangements and agreements in place with any third parties who provide goods or services to the centre which contribute to the delivery and/or assessment of the qualification(s).
- Have appropriate and effective systems and records for the management of all sub-contracted services and ensure that all policies and requirements will apply to any satellite sites affiliated to the centre.
- Ensure it has effective communications systems in place with third parties and sub-contractors to keep them up to date with the requirements of Gateway Qualifications and the regulatory authorities.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent the loss or theft of, or breach of confidentiality in assessment materials and should such an incident occur immediately inform Gateway Qualifications.
- Ensure the security of any examination/assessment material in respect of storage and the handling process in line with the requirements of Gateway Qualifications.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent incidents of malpractice or maladministration from occurring.
- Take all reasonable steps to investigate any suspected incidents of malpractice or maladministration and rectify any negative impact of these incidents.
- Promptly notify Gateway Qualifications of any incidents of malpractice or maladministration in line with the requirements of Gateway Qualifications' Malpractice and Maladministration policy.
- Provide access to documents, records, data, staff, third parties, sub-contractors, learners, satellite centres or any other resource required by Gateway Qualifications and/or the regulatory authorities during an investigation of centre.
- Regularly review internal procedures for preventing and investigating incidents of malpractice or maladministration and make any improvements necessary to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.
- Develop a full action plan for managing and rectifying the negative impact caused by any incident of malpractice or maladministration, and which may include taking proportionate action to ensure it does not reoccur in the future.
- Register/enter learners in an efficient manner and in doing so abide by any restrictions regarding the minimum amount of time that learners must be registered with Gateway Qualifications after the course start date.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that all relevant centre staff understands how and when to apply for learner registration, assessment and certification.

- Ensure that appropriate and reasonable arrangements are in place to confirm the identity of all learners enrolled at the centre and registered on Functional Skills qualifications.
- Maintain all learner records and details of achievement in an accurate, timely and secure manner in line with the requirements of Gateway Qualifications and Data Protection legislation and make these records available for external quality assurance as required.
- Ensure that learners receive appropriate induction and support when registered on Functional Skills qualification.
- Have appropriate administrative systems in place to track the progress of learners towards their target awards and to ensure the validity of any claims for certification.
- Where appropriate and unless a learner chooses not to have one, has arrangements in place to obtain on behalf of its learners a Unique Learner Number (ULN/SCN) and a learner record.
- Have appropriate staff, resources and systems necessary to support the assessment of qualifications and recording of exemptions (where appropriate).
- Take all reasonable steps to guard against fraudulent or mistaken claims for certificates.
- Keep relevant assessment and learner records, for at least three years from the end of the year to which they relate, for all qualifications and make these available to Gateway Qualifications upon request.
- Agree to undertake assessments in accordance with any requirements in the associated qualification specification and in doing so will take account of all admissible evidence generated by each learner.
- Have in place effective arrangements to ensure that, as far as possible, the criteria against which learners' performance will be marked are understood by Tutors/assessors and are accurately applied consistently by Tutors/assessors.
- Adhere to the requirements for delivery and supervision of the qualifications and externally set assessments as specified by Gateway Qualifications.

Quality Assurance Systems

Quality Assurance is a term that covers a number of key aspects of the way that a centre operates including:

- Assessment practice
- Internal quality assurance systems
- External monitoring
- Standardisation

Gateway Qualifications has two key requirements:

- There must be an appropriate quality assurance system in place.
- There must be evidence that it is implemented effectively.

A centre's quality assurance system must deliver the following outcomes:

- A team of well-informed, committed and supported Tutors/assessors sufficient in number for the planned provision.
- Adequate resources to support learners' study.
- Guidance and support for learners and provision for individual needs.
- Equal opportunities in practice that help to maximise the participation of learners.
- Assessment procedures which are inclusive and offer participation, equality and reliable standardisation.
- Systems which provide efficient recording and evaluation.

Step 3 - Centre and Qualification Review Visit

If the centre is able to meet the approval criteria then a visit may be undertaken by a member of staff from Gateway Qualifications who will consider the centre's application and whether or not the centre will be able to meet the minimum quality assurance requirements as set out in this handbook.

If a visit is required then Gateway Qualifications will contact the centre to arrange a visit at a mutually convenient time. Once the visit has been undertaken we will write to the centre to confirm the approval outcome which may require further actions by the centre prior to approval.

If the decision is made not to proceed with a visit then feedback will be provided to the Centre Contact in writing.

Step 4 - Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval

Once recognised, Gateway Qualifications sends the following to centres:

- Confirmation of approval.
- Centre recognition certificate.
- Centre recognition invoice.

Centres (as a minimum 1 Quality representative and 1 Tutor/Assessor per subject) will be required to undertake a Functional Skills induction before they will be allowed to deliver Functional Skills qualifications.

If the decision is made not to approve a centre then feedback will be provided to the Centre Contact in writing.

Step 5 - Qualification Induction

Following the confirmation to offer Functional Skills the centre will be required to undertake induction training. The training will cover:

- Administration processes.
- Secure storage of assessments.
- Conduct of assessments.
- Exemplification of standards (including marking for internally marked assessments).
- Quality assurance requirements.

Assessment and Quality Assurance Overview

Gateway Qualifications has developed a Qualifications and Assessment Strategy for Functional Skills that sets out the assessment approach for each qualification and ensures a robust, rigorous approach to assessing the skills of learners and that meets regulatory requirements. Gateway Qualifications provides externally set assessments that are either internally or externally marked depending on the qualification and level with the exception of the Speaking, Listening and Communication component of English whereby centres can develop assessments based on parameters set by Gateway Qualifications detailed within the Functional Skills Controlled Assessment Guidance for Speaking, Listening and Communication.

The assessment specification (task setting, taking and marking controls) for each qualification is set out within separate subject (and level) specific Qualification Specifications.

English

Reading – Entry Level	<p>Gateway Qualifications has set six tasks for centres to select.</p> <p>Learners will take two tasks to cover the skill standard.</p> <p>Tasks will be marked by the centre subject to internal quality assurance and external quality assurance.</p>
Reading – Levels 1 and 2	<p>Gateway Qualifications sets and allocates assessments to centres.</p> <p>Assessments will be allocated and made available electronically 5 working days prior to the assessment date notified by the centre in advance to Gateway Qualifications.</p> <p>Paper-based assessments must be stored securely before and after the assessment time and date as per the Appendix 1 Secure Storage Requirements</p> <p>Papers will be externally marked.</p>

Writing – Entry Level	<p>Gateway Qualifications has set six tasks for centres to select.</p> <p>Learners will take two tasks to cover the skill standard.</p> <p>Tasks will be marked by the centre subject to internal quality assurance and external quality assurers.</p>
Writing – Levels 1 and 2	<p>Gateway Qualifications sets and allocates assessments to centres.</p> <p>Assessments will be allocated and made available electronically 5 working days prior to the assessment date notified by the centre in advance to Gateway Qualifications.</p> <p>Paper-based assessments must be stored securely before and after the assessment time and date as per the Appendix 1 Secure Storage Requirements</p>

Speaking, Listening and Communication All Levels	<p>Centres develop assessments based on parameters set by Gateway Qualifications detailed within the Functional Skills Controlled Assessment Guidance for Speaking, Listening and Communication.</p> <p>Assessments will be marked by the centre subject to internal quality assurance and external quality assurers. Gateway Qualifications External Quality Assurers will also conduct assessment observations.</p>
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Mathematics

Entry Level	<p>Gateway Qualification sets the assessments which centres can select.</p> <p>Tasks will be marked by the centre subject to internal quality assurance and external quality assurers.</p>
Levels 1 and 2	<p>Gateway Qualifications sets and allocates assessments to centres.</p> <p>Papers will be externally marked.</p>

	<p>Assessments will be allocated and made available electronically 5 working days prior to the assessment date notified by the centre in advance to Gateway Qualifications. This is to allow centres time to contextualise the assessment (where applicable).</p> <p>Paper-based assessments must be stored securely before and after the assessment time and date as per the Appendix 1 Secure Storage Requirements.</p>
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ICT

Entry Level	<p>Gateway Qualification sets the assessments which centres can select.</p> <p>Tasks will be marked by the centre subject to internal quality assurance and external quality assurers.</p>
Levels 1 and 2	<p>Gateway Qualifications sets and allocates assessments to centres.</p> <p>Assessments will be allocated and made available electronically 5 working days prior to the assessment date notified by the centre in advance to Gateway Qualifications. This is to allow centres time to contextualise the assessment (where applicable).</p> <p>Paper-based assessments must be stored securely before and after the assessment time and date as per the Appendix 1 Secure Storage Requirements</p> <p>Papers will be externally marked</p>

Accessing the Assessments

Learner Registration

Learners are registered by the nominated Administration Contacts using the Gateway Qualifications secure online portal, QuartzWeb. A username, password and guidance (which includes timescales for registering learners and claiming certificates) for using QuartzWeb are sent to these Contacts upon approval and if the contact changes. Passwords must not be shared with anyone else.

For short courses (less than 15 weeks long), Centres are required to register learners with 25 working days from the course start date. For all other courses, learners must be registered within 60 working days of the start date. A late registration fee will be charged for learners received after the specified deadlines.

Following registration of learners online, centres will receive an invoice, which will be sent to the Finance contact.

Any additional or late learners must be registered as a new cohort.

Learners can be marked as withdrawn on QuartzWeb.

Assessments will be issued through QuartzWeb to the Administration Contact who will download the assessments and print out copies. The Administration Contact is responsible for their secure storage (this will be monitored by Standard Verifier during scheduled and/or unannounced visits).

Once learners have been registered with Gateway Qualifications, centres will be required to book the learners' assessments. Guidance for this process can be found on our [website](#).

For Functional Skills English, Centres should register independently onto each component of Reading, Writing, and Speaking, Listening and Communication.

What happens if a learner moves to a different centre during the course?

It may be possible to help learners who move centres during the course.

Possible solutions depend on the stage at which the move takes place. Contact Gateway Qualifications for advice about individual cases.

Contextualisation

At Entry levels the centre is permitted to make alterations to the contextual detail within an externally set assessment to reflect the age, experience and culture of the learners. For example, a centre might decide that creating a flyer for a farm open day was not appropriate for their learners and change the context to producing a flyer for an open day at a local nursery; this would mean altering the text and images. Any alterations must reflect the mark scheme, assess all the criteria for the level and not change the difficulty or complexity of the tasks.

Where centres contextualise assessments they do not need to notify Gateway Qualifications but must retain records and evidence that will be reviewed during External Quality Assurers visits.

For the Speaking, Listening and Communication component (all levels) assessment is by centre devised tasks based on parameters defined by Gateway Qualifications detailed within the Functional Skills Controlled Assessment Guidance for Speaking, Listening and Communication available on the website. As part of the quality assurance monitoring process, External Quality Assurers will undertake assessment observation visits at the centre, therefore centres will be required to notify Gateway Qualifications by booking an assessment time through the QuartzWeb portal when Speaking, Listening and Communication assessments are due to take place.

Centres must ensure that they use 'live' tasks.

All assessments will have a unique assessment code. Centres will be notified via a bulletin when a paper/task is expired. Centres must ensure that they only print sufficient copies for assessments sittings and not hold a bank of papers, i.e. that papers/tasks are downloaded when assessments are due to be taken.

What action should be taken if the wrong task is given to learners?

The centre must make arrangements for learners to undertake the correct task. Gateway Qualifications will do all they can to protect learners' interests but in some cases it may not be possible to accept work based on the wrong task. Centres should therefore take great care to ensure that they issue the correct task to learners.

Gateway Qualifications will monitor the management of assessments as part of its external monitoring process.

Assessment Taking

Conduct of Assessment

The centre will:

- Make available only enough copies for the learners undertaking the assessment.
- Provide a suitable room to undertake the assessment as set out in 'The Assessment Room'.
- Provide tutors/assessors and invigilators (if required) to conduct the assessment to the specified supervised conditions.
- If the assessment is conducted over a number of sessions (where allowed); ensure that learners do not work on assessments between sessions.
- Conduct the assessment in accordance with the requirements set in this handbook, the qualification specification and within the assessment.

If the assessment is taken over more than one session (where permissible) learners must return all work, which must be [stored securely](#).

Are learners allowed to use their own computers or other electronic devices?

No.

Additional information for the conduct of ICT Assessments at levels 1 and 2

Due to the nature of these assessments additional guidance and information is available in a separate document, Guidance on the Conduct of Assessments Functional Skills in ICT Levels 1 and 2.

Maintaining confidentiality in the conduct of assessment tasks

If centres suspect that confidential arrangements have been breached they must inform Gateway Qualifications immediately.

Gateway Qualifications will conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the breach to determine whether or not a breach of confidentiality has occurred.

Scheduling

Assessments must be arranged to minimise the possibility of candidates colluding.

What can centres do to reduce logistical problems?

1	Plan ahead – draw up an annual schedule for assessment sessions and involve relevant centre staff.
2	Refer to the assessment tasks for guidance on the amount of time required. Decide how many sessions will be needed, and what will work best for your centre in terms of the intervals between sessions.
3	Review the centre's day-to-day procedures with respect to IT security and storage of confidential materials. Provided that day-to-day security arrangements are sufficiently robust, there is no requirement to implement additional measures for assessment.

Verifying Learner Identity

Centres must ensure verification of each learner's identity at every assessment by means of viewing original, valid, officially issued, photographic identification.

Acceptable forms of photo ID include:

- Centre ID.
- Passport or other photo ID issued by a government agency or local authority.
- Photo driving licence.
- UK Armed Forces photo ID card.
- Other official ID such as a College ID card or Employee ID number or National Insurance number.

Photo ID must be shown to the invigilator or tutor/assessor by each learner on the day of the assessment.

Where this may prove culturally difficult for some learners, such as those with a facial covering, centres may make arrangements for female members of staff to confirm learner identity. Where photographic identification is not available then centres will be required to verify learner identification via 2 pieces of official documentation, e.g. National Insurance number, payslip, birth certificate.

At every assessment session the invigilator or tutor/assessor must record and sign the identity declaration on the Attendance Register (available to download from the QuartzWeb portal) as confirmation that appropriate identification has been evidenced.

All learners must sign the attendance register so as to confirm their attendance on the day of assessment.

Under **no** circumstances may a learner partake in an assessment if suitable identification is not produced.

Any failure by the centre to confirm identification appropriately will result in certificates being delayed or withheld, and may be considered as malpractice.

Any attempt of impersonation or to deceive by use of fake identification by an individual will also be deemed as malpractice and will be dealt with as detailed in the Malpractice and Maladministration policy.

Support Arrangements

What if a learner requires assistance over and above that allowed for the assessment?

Please refer to the Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations section within this handbook, the relevant Qualification Specification and Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy

Supervision Arrangements

English Reading and Writing, Mathematics & ICT Level 1 and Level 2	The centre must ensure that assessments are taken under examination conditions. This means that an invigilator is required at all times during the assessment.
Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3 (all subjects)	The centre must ensure that assessments are taken under controlled conditions. This means that the learner must be supervised at all times during the assessment.
English Speaking, Listening and Communication Level 1 and 2	

The invigilator is the person in the assessment room responsible for conducting an assessment session under examination conditions. Invigilators have a key role in upholding the integrity of the assessment process.

The role of the invigilator is to ensure that the assessment is conducted according to these instructions in order to:

- Ensure all learners have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.
- Ensure the security of the assessment before, during and after the assessment.
- Prevent possible malpractice or maladministration.

Invigilators must:

- Give all their attention to conducting the assessment properly.
- Be able to observe each learner in the assessment room at all times.
- Be familiar with any specific instructions relating to the assessments.
- Ensure that assessment materials in their possession are kept securely until the time of the assessment, i.e. they must not be left, for example, in an unattended vehicle.
- Inform the Centre Contact if they are suspicious about the security of the assessment papers. In such cases, the Centre Contact **must** inform Gateway Qualifications immediately and send a full written report within 7 days of the suspicion arising.

Invigilation Arrangements

A sufficient number of invigilators must be appointed to ensure that the assessment is conducted in accordance with the following requirements:

- At least one invigilator must be present for every 15 - 20 candidates. Invigilators may be changed, provided that the number present in the assessment room does not fall below the number required.
- When one invigilator is present, they must be able to summon assistance easily, without leaving the assessment room and without disturbing the candidates.
- An assessor/teacher who has prepared the candidates for the subject of the examination can be the sole invigilator during an examination in that subject. However, this is permissible only in circumstances whereby an alternative sole invigilator is not practicably possible, for example, a remote learner sitting the test in the work place. On such occasions, the reason must be documented and retained by the centre with the seating plan and other invigilation records. This will not be acceptable for large centres using an examination hall.
- Arrangements must be such that an invigilator can observe every learner in the assessment room at all times.

The Assessment Room

Any room in which an assessment is held must provide learners with appropriate conditions for taking the assessment. The centre must pay attention to conditions such as heating, lighting, ventilation and the level of outside noise. The centre must ensure that the room is accessible and appropriate for learners with disabilities (in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010).

Display material (such as maps, diagrams, wall charts and projected images) which might be helpful to the learner must not be visible in the assessment room.

A reliable clock must be visible to each candidate in the assessment room. The clock must be big enough for all learners to read clearly.

Persons present

Only candidates taking the assessment and authorised centre staff, i.e. the invigilator/s are allowed in the assessment room.

Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to visit centres during the assessment to inspect the arrangements made for the security of confidential examination material and for the conduct of the assessments.

A sign must be placed on the door to alert others that an exam is taking place etc. Please see [Appendix 2 Assessment Display Notice](#).

Time Limits

Please refer to the relevant qualification specifications for time limits.

Seating Arrangements (Level 1 and 2 English Reading & Writing, Mathematics & ICT)

The seating arrangements must prevent candidates from overlooking (intentionally or otherwise) the work of others. The minimum distance in all directions from centre to centre of candidates' chairs must be 1.25 metres.

Wherever possible all candidates should face in the same direction and each candidate should have a separate desk or table big enough to hold assessment papers and answer booklets. Candidates who are not working at individual desks must be far enough apart so that their work cannot be seen by, and contact cannot be made, with other learners.

Centres must keep signed records of the seating plan for each assessment and invigilation arrangements which must be retained for view by Gateway Qualifications. A Seating Plan Record is available for centres to use see [Appendix 3](#).

Before the assessment

Assessment conditions are deemed to be in progress from the time the candidates enter the room until all candidates have completed the assessment and left the room.

The invigilator must not offer any advice or comment on work.

Before candidates are permitted to start work the invigilator must:

- Ensure that candidates are seated in accordance with the prescribed seating arrangements
- Inform the candidates that they are now subject to assessment conditions and read out the relevant notices and warnings
- Warn candidates that any unauthorised material must be handed in (this should also include any food or drinks, which may only be allowed at the express discretion of the centre)
- Check that candidates have all the necessary material to enable them to complete the assessment, including a check that they have been issued with the correct question paper
- Remind candidates that they are forbidden to communicate in any way with, seek assistance from, or give assistance to, another learner whilst they are in the assessment room.

Conduct of Candidates during Assessments

Centres should read aloud the Conduct of candidates for external assessments contained in [Appendix 4](#) prior to the start of the assessment.

During the assessment

Invigilators must supervise candidates throughout the progress of the assessment and give complete attention to this duty at all times, being vigilant and remaining aware of emerging situations, looking out for possible cheating, malpractice or candidates feeling unwell. Any irregularities must be recorded. Invigilators are required to move around the assessment room quietly and at frequent intervals.

How should contact between the invigilator/tutor/assessor and the candidate be monitored and recorded?

The invigilator/tutor/assessor should keep a record of feedback and advice provided to groups of learners and to an individual learner where this may affect the assessment outcome. When group work is permitted, the tutor/assessor's record should describe the learner's contribution to any group work.

Misconduct

This type of assessments relies heavily on the integrity of the learners. In those cases where misconduct occurs, or is thought to have occurred, this will be investigated by Gateway Qualifications and results may be withheld.

Candidates leaving the room

Candidates who are allowed to leave the assessment room temporarily must be accompanied by a member of staff. Those candidates may be allowed extra time at the discretion of the centre.

Candidates can leave the room quietly once they have completed their assessment.

Evacuation procedures

Staff, invigilators and candidates must be aware of the evacuation procedure in case of an emergency, such as a fire alarm or bomb alert. The following action should be taken:

- Stop the candidates writing.
- Collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present).
- Evacuate the assessment room.
- Advise candidates to leave all assessment materials in the examination room.
- Candidates should leave the room in silence.
- Make sure the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the assessment room to make sure there is no discussion about the assessment being sat.
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
- Allow the candidates the full working time for the assessment.
- If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with papers and scripts) to another place to finish the assessment.
- Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken, and send to the Customer Service Department at Gateway Qualifications.

Conducting Speaking, Listening and Communication Assessments

Important note: Audio or video recordings are not mandatory for Speaking, Listening and Communication assessments though centres may do so if they wish. They could be useful in teaching/training sessions and may well make the internal quality assurance process more manageable if sessions take place in inaccessible locations. We suggest 10% of this component is recorded for standardisation purposes. Each centre will be observed conducting the Speaking, Listening and Communication component over the year.

Centres should refer to the Controlled Assessment Guidance: Functional Skills in English Speaking, Listening and Communication for further information and recording documentation for this component.

Transporting Assessment Materials

What security arrangements are required where handling and moving assessments between venues?

The security and integrity of confidential assessment materials can be placed at risk where an assessment is taking place at another venue other than the centre's main site.

Where an assessment is to take place at a venue other than the main site (i.e. location of the secure storage area) then the centre must take all reasonable steps to maintain the security of assessments by transporting assessment materials between locations in a secure, efficient and timely manner in sealed envelopes marked "Private and Confidential". Packages must not be labelled as containing 'assessment material'.

Packages containing completed assessment materials may be transported in person by a centre's staff:

- Between venues.
- Between a centre venue and a staff member's residence, but only for marking purposes and excluding where travel involves the loss of continuous and personal supervision of the assessments (e.g. where luggage is checked in or left in an unattended vehicle etc.).

A record must be maintained of all assessment materials that are transported to another venue. The record must specify the name of the member of staff with responsibility for the assessment materials, the number of assessments taken and date of dispatch.

All staff are responsible for ensuring the security of assessment material transported to and from their respective place of residence for marking.

When assessment materials have been lost, destroyed or suspected stolen, the centre must inform Gateway Qualifications immediately.

Loss of work

What are the criteria for a learner whose work has been lost, to be eligible for special consideration?

Learner responsible for loss	The loss is a consequence of negligence on the part of the learner.	Not eligible for special consideration.
Centre responsible for loss	<p>The loss is not a consequence of negligence on the part of the learner.</p> <p>The centre is able to verify that the work was completed or partially completed and had been monitored whilst it was in progress.</p>	Eligible for special consideration.

What is the procedure for requesting special consideration for a learner whose work has been lost?

Centres should refer to the section on [Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations](#).

When can internally marked assessments be removed from secure storage?

Please refer to section on [Retaining Learners' Evidence](#).

Prior Accreditation (English components)

Gateway Qualifications will recognise the achievement of any Functional Skills English component (i.e. Reading; Writing; Speaking, Listening and Communication) issued by another awarding organisation offering the qualifications as long as the component achievement is valid (based on qualification accreditation period).

Transferable Skills

Functional Skills within Apprenticeship Frameworks

A guidance document has been provided by Apprenticeships Certificates England on transferable skills within Apprenticeship frameworks. The purpose of this document is to give some additional guidance and clarity around the issue of the Transferable Skill (English, Maths and ICT) requirements within Apprenticeships in England.

Guidance for use of transferable skills is available via the following link [ACE-Transferable-Skills-September-2014-V3](#).

Re-sitting an Assessment

Learners may re-sit any of the components/qualifications. There is no minimum time between assessment attempts; although where candidates have been unsuccessful in a particular skill area they will need adequate opportunity for further practice in the relevant skill.

There is no limit on the number of times a candidate could re-sit. However, where a learner continues to fail an assessment a review should be undertaken by the centre to ensure the learner is being entered at the appropriate level and may instigate further investigation by Gateway Qualifications.

English Reading and Writing (Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3)	Learners will only be required to re-sit the task or tasks that they have not passed.
English Speaking, Listening and Communication (all levels)	Learners will be allocated new tasks for re-sitting by the centre.
English Reading and Writing (Levels 1 and 2), Mathematics & ICT (all levels)	Learners will be required to re-sit another assessment paper which will be allocated by Gateway Qualifications. Centres are required to re-register candidates.

Learners cannot be assessed through the same task or paper more than once. If a learner is unsuccessful in an assessment they may be given another opportunity for assessment, but this must be through different tasks. It is a centre's responsibility to monitor the use of the assessments and their security.

Where a candidate is undertaking a re-sit of an externally marked assessment Gateway Qualifications will allocate assessments, monitor and record the assessment attempts to ensure that candidates are allocated a different assessment.

Assessment Marking

Who marks the assessment?

This depends on the qualification.

Externally marked	Functional Skills Levels 1 and 2 English Reading and Writing, Functional Skills Levels 1 and 2 Mathematics Functional Skills Levels 1 and 2 ICT
Internally marked	Functional Skills Entry Levels English (all components) and Speaking, Listening and Communication (Levels 1 and 2) Functional Skills Entry Levels Mathematics Functional Skills Entry Levels ICT

Centres will return completed assessments for Gateway Qualifications to undertake marking as per the guidance on [Returning Assessments](#).

Will externally marked work be returned to centres automatically?

No. Externally marked assessments/question papers are treated in the same way as examination scripts.

Is it possible to obtain an extension to the deadline for submission of assessment decisions?

Where a centre has been affected by circumstances beyond its control, it may, in exceptional cases, be possible to grant a short extension. This is at the discretion of Gateway Qualifications.

Internally marked	Functional Skills all Entry Levels English, Mathematics & ICT Functional Skills all Levels Speaking, Listening and Communication.
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Tutors/assessors are responsible for marking work in accordance with the marking criteria provided by Gateway Qualifications within the Assessor Pack.

Centres will need to retain completed assessments for external quality assurance purposes including standardisation and as per the 'retaining learners' evidence' requirements.

The centre should plan ahead for the assessment to take place, to be marked and to schedule internal quality assurance arrangements.

Annotation and marking

Annotate the work	<p>Provide evidence to support assessment decisions.</p> <p>Be clear and unambiguous.</p> <p>Insert annotations at the appropriate point in the work - in the margin or in the text – or write comments on the cover sheet.</p>
Assessment Decisions	<p>If some work was done in groups assessment decisions should be made that reflect the contribution of each individual learner</p> <p>No learner should receive feedback and guidance over and above that which is permissible, take this into account.</p> <p>Record on the mark sheet what has been achieved by each learner to meet all the assessment criteria.</p>
Complete the tutor/assessor mark sheets	Record the feedback and guidance that you have given.

It is important that all tutors/assessors involved in the assessment mark to common standards. Centres must ensure that the internal standardisation of marks across tutors/assessors and teaching groups takes place. The following sequence is an example of good practice.

<p>Obtain reference materials at an early stage</p> <p>All staff involved in the marking process to participate in Gateway Qualifications training, at least annually, delivered by the External Quality Assurers.</p> <p>In subsequent years, obtain exemplar material provided by Gateway Qualifications and use your centre's own archive material (ensuring live papers are not used).</p>

Hold a preliminary trial assessment marking session prior to marking

- Include all the tutors/assessors involved in assessment.
- Compare standards through cross-marking a small sample of work.
- Agree a common understanding of the assessment criteria.

Carry out further trial marking at appropriate points during the marking period

- Repeat the trial marking/cross-marking exercise.
- Ensure that any discrepancies in marking are resolved.

After most marking has been completed

- Hold a further meeting to make final adjustments or assign responsibility for comparing marks to the tutor/assessor responsible for internal standardisation.

Make final adjustments to marks prior to submission

- If there are inconsistencies ensure that the tutor/assessor(s) concerned make(s) adjustments to their marks.
- The tutor/assessor responsible for internal standardisation checks the new marks.

What are the requirements for internal quality assurance for internally marked tasks?

Centres will be required to undertake internal quality assurance of internally marked tasks. Please refer to the section on [Internal Quality Assurance](#).

Returning Assessments

This only applies to Levels 1 and 2 English Reading and Writing components and Levels 1 and 2 Mathematics & ICT assessments which must be sent to Gateway Qualifications for marking.

When returning assessments to Gateway Qualifications for marking, centres must:

- Despatch completed assessments and accompanying attendance registers to the address provided on the same day of the assessment wherever possible.
- Ensure that any assessments that cannot be despatched on the scheduled day of the assessment are despatched no later than the next working day.
- Retain completed assessments in secure storage if kept within the centre overnight.
- Obtain proof of postage/despatch for each packet of assessments, which **must** be retained on the centre's files until the results are published in case of loss or damage. Proof of postage will provide evidence that the learners' assessments have left the centre. This is taken to indicate that the assessments were written at the appointed time and that, should the assessments not be received by Gateway Qualifications, then special consideration may be possible.
- Use a method of despatch which is trackable, reliable and ensures prompt delivery.

Guidance on packing assessments

Centres must:

- Check that they have enough large envelopes to despatch all assessments.
- Ensure that every completed assessment has been included.
- Ensure that all assessments for a component are collected together, including those for any learners who have been accommodated separately.
- Enclose the relevant attendance registers with the assessments, collated in the same order as listed on the attendance register.
- Ensure cover sheets accompany completed assessments where appropriate for those learners granted access arrangements. The cover sheet **must** be attached to the assessment.
- Always use only one label per package.
- Always use the whole address label, stick it securely to the largest face of the package and ensure it is flat and crease free.
- Fasten envelopes securely, but do not use staples, string or brown tape.

Advice: If you need to print an address label ensure that your printer is printing clearly.

Centres must not:

- Include anything other than the completed assessment and the attendance register(s).
- Overfill packages as they may split open during transit.

Issue of Results

Internally marked

Functional Skills all Entry Levels English, Mathematics and ICT

Functional skills Levels 1 and 2 English: Speaking, Listening and Communication

Centres will complete a Report of Achievement or Completion (RAC) form to claim successful completion. The form contains details of the qualification/component and learners for each cohort that the centre has registered.

Following the External Quality Assurance, Gateway Qualifications will issue certificates for learners who have successfully completed the qualification/component(s). All certificates will be sent to centres via a secure route (courier, recorded delivery or by hand), for the attention of the Administration Contact.

Externally marked

Functional Skills Level 1 and 2 English (Reading and Writing), Mathematics and ICT

Centres will return assessments as set out in the section above where they will be externally marked by Gateway Qualifications. The expected timescales for the publication of results is 10 working days.

Gateway Qualifications will issue certificates for learners who have successfully completed component(s). All certificates will be sent to centres via a secure route (courier, recorded delivery or by hand), for the attention of the Administration Contact.

Enquiries about Results and Appeals

Where a learner has not met the requirements of an internally marked assessment as expected; the learner then has the opportunity, if appropriate, to appeal against the result in accordance with the Centre's Appeals Policy. If the appeal is upheld and the learner is still dissatisfied then the learner may formally complain to Gateway Qualifications following the Gateway Qualifications Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Where a learner has not met the requirements of an externally marked assessment as expected; the centre then has the opportunity, if appropriate, to either:

- Request a remark of the assessment.
- Request a candidate feedback report.
- Make an appeal against the result depending on the outcome of the above.

If situations arise that call into question the validity of an awarding decision (e.g. via an appeal in accordance with Gateway Qualifications' Appeals Policy) the issue will be investigated by the Quality and Assessment Manager with the outcome reported to the Director of Quality who will make a final decision. Where the awarding decision is changed the Quality and Assessment Manager will liaise with the Customer Service Manager and the outcome will be communicated to the Centre.

Gateway Qualifications will then carry out, as stated in the Appeals Policy, a review across other learners/centres to see if they too were affected by the same original decision/error, and review internal processes to inform its approach to the award of qualifications.

Centres can apply for feedback on the performance of a candidate in an externally marked assessment where the candidate has not performed as expected. Centres will receive a report identifying areas of the relevant level Skills Standards and Coverage and Range for Functional Skills on which the candidates require development. Due to the nature of our assessments we can't give specific examples of tasks/questions that candidates failed to achieve.

Fees apply for the above. For further information please refer to the Gateway Qualifications website or contact the office.

Replacement Certificates

Replacement certificates are any certificates where a name has been misspelt or the certificate has been lost or damaged. Requests for replacement certificates need to be made by centres using the Replacement Certificate (RC) form.

If there is an inaccuracy in the certificate this is not a replacement certificate and Gateway Qualifications must be notified immediately. Appropriate steps will then be taken to correct the error.

The charges for replacement certificates are set out in the Qualifications Catalogue. In cases where the error is on the part of Gateway Qualifications the certificate will be replaced as a priority and without charge.

For security reasons, all replacement certificates will be marked 'REISSUE'.

Internal Quality Assurance

Internal quality assurance is the process through which internal assessment is monitored by the centre, through sampling and evaluating its assessment practice, to make sure that it meets required standards and through which adjustments to results can be made where required to ensure consistency and fairness.

It involves two key processes – monitoring assessment practice and standardising assessment judgements – and is carried out by one or more Internal Quality Assurer.

Centres will need to develop a suitable quality assurance strategy which will depend on the size and extent of the qualifications delivered. Centres will need to set out their internal quality assurance systems within a plan. It is advisable to schedule internal quality assurance when the qualification delivery is being planned.

Internal quality assurance arrangements must include as a minimum:

- An identified individual responsible for co-ordinating the internal quality assurance process.
- A planned structure for internal quality assurance that incorporates all of a centre's Gateway Qualifications Functional Skills provision.
- An agreed and published annual timetable for internal quality assurance, including internal quality assurance meetings.
- Clear and documented roles and responsibilities for all those involved.
- A forum for discussion of borderline cases and good practice in assessment.
- Sampling of marked work.
- Standardisation of marked work.
- Full and clear records of standardisation and the internal quality assurance process, including action plans.
- Regular evaluation of the process and outcomes.

Internal Standardisation

Standardisation is the process by which centres ensure that assessment principles and processes for a component are applied consistently by tutors/assessors and Internal Quality Assurers.

The function of standardisation is to set the standard by discussing and mutually assessing a sample of assessments, and reaching a consensus. Once agreement has been reached, the assessors can then individually assess the learner work they are responsible for. The internal quality assurance process should then take place, monitoring these assessors.

Internal standardisation must be carried out within the centre for Entry level Functional Skills in English, Maths and ICT. Standardisation should happen before any assessment or internal quality assurance takes place.

Standardisation must be facilitated by the centre's Quality Assurance contact and should include all the centre's tutors/assessors and Internal Quality Assurers.

A report must be written identifying the outcomes and actions from the standardisation event, and this must be made available to Gateway Qualifications.

As part of a centre's quality system, standardisation events should be held frequently and on an on-going basis. This will be monitored by the External Quality Assurers.

Internal Quality Assurance must be ongoing. If action to adjust assessment is found necessary, a plan should be in place to ensure that this is completed before External Quality Assurance takes place.

The aim should be to put in place procedures that will provide ongoing support and feedback to assessors and Internal Verifiers.

Monitoring assessment practice

Monitoring assessors and Internal Quality Assurers is necessary to:

- ensure that national standards of assessment are adhered to
- identify problems or areas where assessors and Internal Quality Assurers require advice/development
- ensure that learners are aware of, and satisfied with, the assessment process.

The monitoring process includes observations of assessment decisions made by assessors. The number of assessments observed depends on:

- the experience of the assessor
- the size of the group of learners
- if the assessments are new to the assessor.

Monitoring also includes reviewing the internal quality assurance records completed by each assessor and evaluating all aspects of their performance when conducting assessments.

Assessors should be given feedback following this process and any development needs identified to be recorded within an action plan.

An Internal Quality Assurer therefore has a central role in the operation of the centre's quality system. A centre may have one or more Internal Quality Assurer, according to the size and variety of its provision. All must have experience relevant to the area(s) for which they quality assure. They should also have an understanding of quality assurance and improvement, and the centre must ensure that they develop their practice in this field. To ensure the integrity of the internal quality assurance process, Internal Quality Assurers must not verify work that they have marked.

External Quality Assurance

As part of the quality assurance process, centres are subject to External Quality Assurance during course delivery. A Functional Skills External Quality Assurers will be allocated to your centre who will then contact you to arrange a suitable time to visit. The External Quality Assurers is responsible for the standards verification of internally marked Functional Skills assessments and ensuring that your internal quality assurance systems meet the key quality standards set out by Gateway Qualifications.

During the visit, they will provide advice and guidance, undertake sampling activity, check that systems and evidence is in place and complete a report. If the visit reveals inaccuracies in the assessment and internal quality assurance process, certification may be suspended which could also lead to the loss of Direct Claims Status if this has been granted.

The External Quality Assurers will advise on appropriate actions and the timescale in which the agreed actions are to be taken.

The External Quality Assurers role

Standards verification is the quality assurance method that is used to ensure that centres are assessing to the national standards for Functional Skills where centres are internally assessing (Entry level Functional Skills English Speaking, Listening and Communication, mathematics and ICT). The role of the External Quality Assurers is to ensure that centre staff involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of qualifications:

- Maintain the national standard of qualifications
- Assess learner performance in accordance with national standards
- Maintain a robust mechanism for internal quality assurance
- Have a clear commitment to assuring and improving quality.

The key tasks of the External Quality Assurers are to:

- Verify assessment practice and procedures to ensure that national standards are applied consistently
- Take action to deal with identified problems
- Provide centre staff with information, advice and support
- Maintain accurate records and provide feedback to us
- Promote and improve the quality of Functional Skills qualification assessment.

The External Quality Assurance process

External Quality Assurers will arrange External Quality Assurer visits directly with the centre. An External Quality Assurer will contact your centre in advance of a centre visit, however Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to undertake unannounced visits including during assessment times.

The Standard Verifier will:

- Agree a schedule with the centre which will normally include reviewing internal quality assurance reports and records, assessment records and validating assessment judgements through observing learner assessments
- Validate the quality and consistency of assessor judgements against national standards by sampling assessment decisions during the observation of assessment activity
- Undertake External Quality Assurance by sampling assessment outcomes and internal quality assurance decisions and where there is an inconsistency to report back to the Chief Examiner via the monitoring report.
- Where there is an inconsistency of centre marking, oversee the remarking of assessments
- Review the internal quality assurance for the qualification – checking internal quality assurance records, sampling strategy and feedback to assessors
- Inform the centre of any areas of weakness and agree an action plan for improvement
- Provide positive feedback and encouragement when good practice is identified
- Check that the centre's internal quality assurance systems are sufficiently robust to ensure that problems will be identified and resolved quickly
- Identify any staff development needs.
- Ensure that all procedures are being complied with, through an audit trail, and make sure that the award of certificates on completion to learners is secure.
- Request samples of assessed work for standardisation purposes.

An External Quality Assurer may decide to request information from you in advance of the visit to help inform the evidence to be reviewed during the visit. Centres are obliged to comply with any requests for access to premises, people and records for the purposes of the monitoring visit.

If a Centre fails to provide access then Gateway Qualifications will take appropriate action.

Once a visit date has been agreed the Centre should ensure that the appropriate members of staff attend the meeting, all requested documentation is provided and access to qualification, learner and staff records are available.

If a Centre cancels a pre-arranged visit at short notice the External Quality Assurers must be satisfied that there was a legitimate reason for the cancellation. If this cannot be established Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to withhold certification claims until a monitoring visit is completed.

Following the visit the External Quality Assurers completes a report which will be sent to the centre for reference afterwards.

The frequency of the visits will be determined by the volume of learners and actions agreed by the centre and the External Quality Assurer.

Changes to marks

Where marking criteria are deemed to have been applied inconsistently by a centre, as reported by the External Quality Assurers, Gateway Qualifications will discuss these concerns with the quality assurance contact at the centre. Further sampling will take place and if necessary all evidence will be remarked by Gateway Qualifications which may result in the amendment to the centre's marking of the assessment.

Additional support and training will also be provided with close monitoring and sanctions applied where necessary.

Monitoring of procedures

- Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to carry out unannounced visits to the centre to check that the procedures are being adhered to.
- Centres found in breach of these procedures may be subject to sanctions by Gateway Qualifications. Please refer to the Gateway Qualifications [Sanctions Policy](#).

Observation of Speaking, Listening & Communication assessments (all levels)

Observation of assessments, by Gateway Qualifications' External Quality Assurers, of Speaking, Listening & Communication at all levels is a vital part of the quality assurance process.

Centres will be required to notify Gateway Qualifications of times and dates and cohort details of when assessments are due to take place. Gateway Qualifications will either undertake a scheduled or unannounced visit. Centres must make learner assessments available for observation. Failing to provide access to learner assessments may result in the cancellation of the visit which could then delay certification claims.

The number of observation visits and the number of learners observed will be based on:

- the number of assessors in the centre
- the number of satellite sites at which Functional Skills are delivered

Please note that the External Quality Assurers will need to view assessments containing a minimum of 3 learners across levels for entry level and 5 per level for levels 1 and 2 with a minimum of 10%; however this is dependent on how many learners are registered for Functional Skills English at the centre. The number of learners seen should reflect the size of the centre; however failure to comply with this can result in limited certification.

It is essential that the observed assessments are 'live', i.e. actual assessments with current registered learners and not 'mock' assessments.

Direct Claims Status

Centres wishing to make direct claims for certification need to establish that they have suitably qualified Internal Quality Assurers and a robust and effective system of internal quality assurance which is fit for purpose and applied effectively for a minimum of one complete cycle of course delivery, learner registration and certification.

This is usually undertaken at centre recognition and subsequent External Quality Assurance visits to the centre. The External Quality Assurers therefore lies at the heart of these processes and has the responsibility of endorsing applications from nominees for Approved Internal Quality Assurer status and approving centres to move to Direct Claims Status.

At times more than one cycle may be required to demonstrate that all aspects of internal quality assurance are in place. For example, where delivery is over a very short period or small numbers of staff are involved. The External Quality Assurers needs to be satisfied that systems are robust before applying Direct Claims Status.

The following examples are acceptable qualifications for an Approved Internal Quality Assurer to hold (although Gateway Qualifications will consider other internal verification upon submission):

- D34 qualification
- V1 qualification
- Level 4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certification in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice.

External Quality Assurers will be responsible for both the endorsement of Internal Quality Assurer nominees and the award and review of Direct Claims Status for their centres.

An application for Direct Claims Status can be made through the Quality and Assessment Manager.

External Training

Gateway Qualifications will facilitate Functional Skills training - the dates of which will be published in advance. The purpose of these events is to share and promote best practice and to provide on-going support to tutors/assessors and Internal Quality Assurers.

Centres must participate in these events and contribute to them as part of their on-going centre and qualification approval. Failure to do so may result in Gateway Qualifications imposing sanctions on the centre such as removal of Direct Claims Status, withdrawal of approval to offer the qualification.

Retaining Learners' Evidence

The retention of learners' work by centres will assist the development of consistency of centre quality assurance systems.

Centres will need to retain samples of learners' work as part of their internal quality management process:

- To ensure year on year monitoring of standards of assessment.
- For use in the induction of new tutors/assessors.
- For the development of existing tutors/assessors.
- To provide understanding of the requirements at different levels.

The result will be a representative sample of learners' work which is retained in the year following certification. The sample of retained learners' work must be kept for a rolling three year period.

In developing the strategy for retaining learners' work the following factors will need to be incorporated:

- Samples should be retained at all levels across all the Functional Skills subjects for all qualifications delivered by the centre.
- Samples retained should include all tutors/assessors.

The factors that will constrain the size of the retained sample:

- Availability of storage space.
- The frequency of change of tutors/assessors.

A justification of why the sample is retained should be clearly referenced, with the sample to include:

- Assessment task.
- Learner's work.
- Tutor/assessor feedback.

Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Gateway Qualifications understands its requirement as an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a learner, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

Assessment should be a fair test of learners' knowledge and what they are able to do, however for some learners the usual format of assessment may not be suitable. Gateway Qualifications ensures that its qualifications and assessments do not bar learners from taking its qualifications.

We recognise that reasonable adjustments and/or special consideration may be required at the time of assessment where learners:

- Have a permanent disability or specific learning needs.
- Have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning needs.
- Are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessment easier for learners, nor advantages to give learners a head start.

There are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained:

- Through reasonable adjustments and
- Through special consideration.

A reasonable adjustment is unique to an individual and therefore may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

Gateway Qualifications has identified reasonable adjustments permissible for Functional Skills qualifications which are within the Qualification Specifications for Functional Skills. A reasonable adjustment is unique to an individual and therefore may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

Internally marked

Functional Skills all Entry Levels English, Mathematics & ICT

Functional Skills all Levels Speaking, Listening and Communication.

For qualifications which are internally marked, centres do not need to apply to Gateway Qualifications for approval of reasonable adjustments. All reasonable adjustments made by the centre must be recorded on the Gateway Qualifications' Reasonable Adjustments Form and should be made available to Gateway Qualifications upon request.

Externally marked

Functional Skills Levels 1 and 2 English Reading and Writing, Mathematics & ICT

For qualifications which are externally marked, centres must apply to Gateway Qualifications for approval no less than 10 working days prior to the booked assessment date. The Gateway Qualifications' Reasonable Adjustments Form must be completed and submitted to apply for approval.

Centres have a duty to seek advice from Gateway Qualifications in any case where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed or how it should be applied.

Principles of making reasonable adjustments

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for adjustments to assessment should:

- Not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification.
- Not give the learners an unfair advantage.
- Reflect the learner's normal way of working.
- Be based on the individual need of the learner.

Gateway Qualifications and recognised centres have a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows the learner to show what they know and can do without compromising the assessment process.

When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, Gateway Qualifications and recognised centres need to consider the following (where appropriate):

1. The reasonable adjustment **must not compromise the competency standard**.
Examinations and assessments must be rigorous standards so that all learners are genuinely tested against a benchmark. While Centres and Gateway Qualifications will want to ensure reasonable adjustments are in place to allow disabled students, learners will want to ensure reasonable adjustments are in place to allow disabled learners,

learners with health conditions or specific learning difficulties an equal opportunity to demonstrate their competence, it is important that standards are not compromised.

2. The reasonable adjustment **must not give the learner an unfair advantage**. While the process for examinations and assessments might be modified, the learner must demonstrate the skills and competence required by the assessment to maintain the quality, validity and reliability of the assessment.
3. The reasonable adjustment **must be based on individual requirements**. Decisions about the reasonable adjustment/s required by each learner must be taken after careful consideration of the assessment needs of each individual. Different learners with the same impairment may have very different reasonable adjustment requirements. Similarly, Centres should not assume that the reasonable adjustment required by a learner for a particular assessment will be required for all assessments.
4. The reasonable adjustment **must reflect the learner's normal way of working**. The learner should have experience of and practice in the use of the adjustment. For example, if the reasonable adjustment is for additional time for an examination, the learners must have had this reasonable adjustment in place for other examinations such as practice tests while the learner has been studying for the qualification at the Centre.
5. The reasonable adjustment **must be accompanied by suitable evidence**, where appropriate. Centres will want to satisfy themselves that a learner's request for a reasonable adjustment is legitimate. On some occasions, this will involve obtaining evidence that is sufficient, valid and reliable. Further information about obtaining evidence can be found in the [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy](#).
6. The reasonable adjustment **must meet the requirements of the specification**. There are some restrictions to the provision of reasonable adjustments for Functional Skills qualifications. Further details are provided within the Qualification Specifications.

Process for requesting reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations

If a centre is making a request on behalf of its learners it should complete a reasonable adjustment request form for the specific subject and in doing so supply relevant supporting information. For example:

- Learner's name and Gateway Qualification centre registration number
- Nature of, and rationale for, the request
- Supporting information/evidence (eg medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate information).

Where the assessment is externally marked or the adjustment is a request that may a modification to the paper, then this should be submitted to Gateway Qualifications no later

than 10 working days before the assessment is due to take place. When making the request Centres need to refer to the permissions detailed within the qualification specific guidance.

Requests for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible after the assessment and not later than 5 working days after the assessment. Please refer to the [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy](#) for circumstances where requests for special consideration may be accepted after the results of assessment have been released.

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid. A centre should maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments that have been made.

All adjustments to assessment/s must be authorised by the centre's named Quality Assurance nominee or a member of staff with delegated authority where a centre is permitted to make reasonable adjustments, i.e. for internally marked assessments.

Centres should keep records of adjustments they have permitted and those they have requested from Gateway Qualifications. These records should normally be kept for 3 years following the assessment to which they apply.

It is recommended that centres nominate members of staff to take responsibility for demonstrating the implementation and recording of adjustments to assessments for monitoring by Gateway Qualifications or the regulatory authorities.

Identifying learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustments

Learners will only be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their disability or difficulty places them at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation, in comparison to a person who is not disabled or affected.

Any adjustment to assessment will be based on what the learner needs to access the assessment. Below are some examples of learner needs that may be eligible for adjustments to assessments. This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that some learner needs will fall within more than one of the categories set out below.

Communication and interaction needs

A learner with communication and interaction difficulties may have problems with reading or writing, the effects of which could be reduced through the use of a reader, word processor, scribe, British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter, screen reading software or voice

activated software. They may also benefit from extra time during assessments that are time-constrained to allow them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Cognition and learning needs

A learner with learning difficulties and difficulties with comprehension may benefit from extra time in time-constrained examinations. They may also need assistance with reading and writing where this is permissible.

Sensory and physical needs

A learner may need to have assessment material modified for hearing impairment and visual impairment. They may also need to use a BSL/English interpreter, practical assistant, reader and scribe. In addition they may benefit from the use of assistive technology and extra time to complete assessments.

Behavioural, Emotional and Social needs

The learner may benefit from supervised rest breaks and separate accommodation, either within the centre or at an alternative venue. A learner with attention difficulties may need the use of a prompter.

Learners for whom English is an additional language

A learner may benefit from extra time during assessments that are time constrained or who are using a bilingual dictionary.

The learner's need of the dictionary does not in itself justify allowing the learner extra time, unless the learner has to refer to the dictionary so often that examination time is used for this purpose instead of answering the questions.

Range of reasonable adjustments

Centres should note that:

- Not all the adjustments to assessments listed will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. If in doubt, the centre is advised to contact Gateway Qualifications for advice.
- The learner may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all components (for English) or qualifications. Some learners may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments.
- Adjustments to assessments will mostly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions.

The following inclusion statements set out the scope of any permitted reasonable adjustment which might be considered for each linguistic mode of English, Mathematics and ICT without compromising the purpose of the qualifications.

English - Reading

The Reading component requires learners to independently decode and understand written language and text in a purposeful context in the medium of English. 'Text' is defined as including words that are written, printed, onscreen or in Braille.

Learners must be able to decode and indicate their understanding of texts independently and without third party assistance, although in doing so they may deploy their normal methods of working where these involve using routinely available equipment and do not compromise independent achievement of the subject criteria.

For example, it would be acceptable for learners to use screen reading technology if this is how they would normally read written documents and they are able to do so to the standard required by the assessment. It would not be acceptable for candidates to be supported by a human reader.

Please refer to the published qualification specification for the permitted range of adjustments that might be considered.

An exemption may be permissible, as a last resort, from the reading component for learners with disabilities who cannot use assistive technology.

English – Speaking, Listening and Communication

This component requires learners to obtain and convey information via non-written communication in the medium of English. The term 'speaking, listening and communication', as covered by the subject criteria for Functional Skills, is intended to be interpreted in a broadly inclusive way and is not intended to create any unnecessary barriers to candidates with speech or hearing impairment.

Therefore, for some disabled candidates, the term can be interpreted as meaning communication, discussion and presentation. This means that the following would be acceptable, the use of sign language — e.g. British Sign Language (BSL) and sign-supported English, provided this is made accessible to all participants in the discussion. It is recognised that BSL is a language in its own right and not a form of English. BSL is, however, permitted as an alternative to English for the assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communication where BSL is the candidate's normal way of communicating in the contexts described by the standards. No other languages are permitted as alternatives to English.

Please refer to the published qualification specification for the permitted range of adjustments that might be considered.

An exemption may be permissible, as a last resort, from the speaking, listening and communication component for learners with disabilities who have no means of communication.

English - Writing

The Writing component requires learners to convey information via text in the medium of English. 'Text' is defined as words that are written, printed, onscreen or in Braille, and which are presented in a way that is accessible for the intended audience.

Learners must be able to construct text independently and without third party assistance, although in doing so they may deploy their normal methods of working where these involve using routinely available equipment and do not compromise independent achievement of the assessment criteria.

For example, it would be acceptable for learners to use voice recognition technology if this is how they would normally produce written documents and are able to operate this equipment to the level of accuracy required by the assessment criteria. It would not be acceptable for learners to be supported by a human scribe.

Please refer to the published qualification specification for the permitted range of adjustments that might be considered.

An exemption may be permissible, as a last resort, from the writing component for learners with disabilities who cannot use assistive technology.

Mathematics

In completing assessment leading to Functional Skills in Mathematics qualifications, candidates can have access to all forms of equipment, software and assistance (e.g. scribe, reader) that constitute their normal way of working. However, these must not affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes or give the candidate an assessment advantage over other candidates undertaking the same or similar assessments.

Please refer to the published qualification specification for the permitted range of adjustments that might be considered.

ICT

In completing assessment leading to Functional Skills ICT qualifications, candidates can have access to all forms of equipment and software that constitute their normal way of working, provided that these do not affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes.

or give a candidate an assessment advantage over other candidates undertaking the same or similar assessments.

Please refer to the published qualification specification for the permitted range of adjustments that might be considered.

Further guidance and information on access arrangements is contained within [Appendix 5](#).

Identifying learners' needs

Any adjustment to assessment should be based on the individual learner's needs to access the assessment.

The centre has a responsibility to ensure it has effective internal procedures for identifying learners' needs and that these procedures comply with the requirements of disability and equal opportunity legislation.

A centre may choose to use the following guide:

1. Identify those learners who are having difficulties or are likely to have difficulties accessing assessments

A learner should be encouraged to make any access-related assessment needs known to the centre at the earliest opportunity, and preferably before they are registered or entered for a qualification. To assist with the early identification of learners with access-related assessment needs, the centre should ensure that all staff who recruit, advise or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of access-related issues. Once the learner's need has been identified, it should be documented for audit purposes.

2. Identify whether reasonable adjustments may be needed

Relevant centre staff should decide, in conjunction with the learner, whether they are able to meet the requirements of the assessment or whether adjustments will be required. It is important that the learner is involved in this discussion as they know best what the effect of their particular disability or difficulty is on how they do things. Where the implications of a particular difficulty are unclear, the centre should make use of specialist advice in order to determine how the difficulty will affect the learner's performance in the assessment. The centre should avoid making assumptions, on the basis of previous experience, about whether adjustments may be necessary. Judgments should be made on the basis of individual need. If an adjustment is needed, it should be documented for audit purposes.

3. Identify the appropriate adjustment

When identifying which adjustments the learner will need in the assessment, centre staff should take into consideration the learner's normal way of working, history of provision during teaching and during informal assessments and the assessment requirements of the

qualification. Certain simple adjustments may be all that is required, e.g. adjusting seat height or providing an arm rest, etc. The same learner may not require the same adjustment for all types of assessment. Once the adjustment has been identified, it should be documented for audit purposes.

4. Identifying and obtaining supporting evidence

Any application for an adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is valid, sufficient and reliable using the Reasonable Adjustments form from the Gateway Qualifications website.

In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the learner with the necessary assistance without giving them an unfair advantage over others, the centre must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty.

Where the centre can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, the centre does not need to provide further evidence of these physical difficulties.

Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, the centre will have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner's performance in the assessment. The centre should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the learner's situation. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable:

- **Evidence of assessment of the learner's needs in relation to the particular assessment, made within the centre by the relevant member of staff with competence and responsibility in this area; staff include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff.**

If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner. This evidence should include an indication of how the centre plans to meet the learner's needs and should show that the learner can cope with the level and content of the assessment. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous centres attended by the learner may also be included.

- **Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists.**

This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who carried out the assessments and wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the learner may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the learner is affected by the

difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. The demands of the qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

Applying for adjustments

Guidance on the process for applying for formal adjustments can be found on the [Forms and Guidance](#) page of Gateway Qualifications' website.

Making special considerations

A special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or other indisposition at the time of the assessment, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Gateway Qualifications review the circumstances and evidence surrounding each request for special consideration to ensure that the decision made maintains the equity, validity and reliability of the assessment for the learner and does not give the learner an unfair advantage.

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment.
- Alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate.
- Part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner.
- There is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which special consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

A learner will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- No evidence is supplied by the centre that the learner has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition.
- Any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence.

Preparation for an assessment is affected by difficulties during the course, e.g. disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

Applying for special consideration

The Special Consideration form can be found on the [Forms and Guidance](#) page of Gateway Qualifications' website.

Qualification Withdrawal

Where a centre has not offered a Functional Skills qualification for over 24 months approval to run the qualification will be withdrawn by Gateway Qualifications. It will only be reinstated following an visit to ensure the centre has the appropriate staff and resources to resume delivery. The centre may also be subject to qualification induction.

Gateway Qualifications takes all reasonable steps to protect the interests of learners in the event that a centre withdraws from the delivery of qualifications.

In cases where Gateway Qualifications withdraws approval for a qualification / suite of qualifications this is undertaken in line with the Sanctions Policy.

Gateway Qualifications' policies and procedures

This document should be read in conjunction with the following Gateway Qualifications' policies and procedures.

- [Gateway Qualifications Appeals Policy](#) and [Appeals form](#)
- [Gateway Qualifications Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Gateway Qualifications Equality Policy](#)
- [Gateway Qualifications Invoicing Policy](#)
- [Gateway Qualifications Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy](#)
- [Gateway Qualifications Malpractice and Maladministration Policy](#)
- [Gateway Qualifications Sanctions Policy](#)
- [Gateway Qualifications Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Gateway Qualifications Customer Service Statement](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 Secure Storage Requirements

Secure storage is defined as a securely locked cabinet or cupboard.

The following instructions apply to all confidential materials relating to the administration and delivery of assessments.

- Centres must be able to demonstrate that the appropriate security systems are in place to prevent unauthorised access to the assessment materials.
- Assessment materials must be stored securely at all times.
- Only persons authorised by the Head of Centre and the Centre Contact must be allowed access to the centre's secure storage facility.
- Centres must maintain the confidentiality of learner responses and learner details.
- Centres must ensure that all timed assignments are stored securely both before and after assessment sessions.

Assessments and any other confidential material, e.g. answer booklets, must be stored securely at the centre's registered address in a secure room solely assigned to the Examination Department, restricted to two to four key holders only. This is commonly referred to as a "box within a box". The following requirements must be met.

Requirement- "a box within a box"	Note
Secure room solely assigned to examinations in a fixed building, i.e. not a Portakabin or similar; meeting all of the following requirements:	Preferably on an upper floor with no windows.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walls, ceiling and floor of strong, solid construction 	Stud partition walls are only acceptable with metal reinforcement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid door or reinforced door with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong secure/heavy duty hinges • Security lock e.g. 5 lever mortice lock or coded keypad lock or electronic security lock • 2 to 4 key holders only 	A hollow panel door would require extra metal reinforcement.
The following must also be met (where applicable):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If question papers are stored in a room with windows, which are easily accessible, bars must be fitted or the room alarmed. If the room has a glass panel in or above the 	Upper floor window(s) with a balcony or flat roof must be fitted with bars or the room alarmed.

<p>door, e.g. for health and safety reasons, the glass must be toughened safety glass.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the volume of question papers is too great for secure storage in one room, you must use additional rooms within the centre. <p>These additional rooms must also meet the requirements for secure storage.</p>	
<p>The secure room(s) must contain one of the following: (with 2 to 4 key holders only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong non-portable safe <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-portable security cabinet with multi point locking system <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metal cabinet with full length external locking bar, bolted to wall or floor <p>or where a centre has large numbers of question papers to store:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metal security screen, e.g. roll down shutter, in front of open shelving. 	<p>Small safes must be fixed securely in place.</p> <p>A filing cabinet will need additional security features to increase its robustness.</p> <p>For example, an external locking bar will ensure that question papers are stored in a secure environment at all times.</p>

Secure materials downloaded on the day of an assessment, e.g. encrypted question papers received via e-mail or downloaded from Gateway Qualifications' secure extranet site, must be stored as per above.

The centre must tell Gateway Qualifications immediately if the security of the question papers or confidential supporting instructions is put at risk. Any natural disaster, fire, theft, loss, damage or any other circumstances which render the existing accommodation or secure storage of assessment materials at risk must be reported immediately to Gateway Qualifications.

Appendix 2 Assessment Display Notice



**NO MOBILE PHONES, NO IPODS,
iWATCHES, MP3/4 PLAYERS**

**NO PRODUCTS WITH AN ELECTRONIC
COMMUNICATION / STORAGE DEVICE
OR DIGITAL FACILITY**

Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone, is a serious offence and could result in **DISQUALIFICATION** from your assessment and your overall qualification.

Candidates are advised that mobile phones in particular **must not** be in their possession whether switched on or not.

This poster must be displayed in a prominent place both inside and outside each assessment room.

Appendix 3 Seating Plan Record Form

The Seating Plan

To be completed for paper-based assessments.

Please include the candidate name and number of the assessment paper.

(Centres may produce an alternative document to represent their particular assessment room and layout, providing it shows each candidate name and assessment paper number, date of assessment and Invigilator signature, and is retained on file by the Centre).

Date of assessment.....

Invigilator name (printed).....

Invigilator signature.....

Invigilator			

Appendix 4 Conduct of candidates for external assessments

To be read out at the beginning of the assessment for paper based assessment:

1. Hand in your mobile phone if you have not already done so. This is your final chance. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
2. Write your name as it appears on your statement of entry centre number, candidate number and unit or component code or paper details on your assessment paper and on any additional notes made during the assessment.
3. Fill in any other details as necessary.
4. Do not communicate with any other candidate.
5. You may not give help to another candidate; or ask for help from another candidate.
6. You should put your up hand to attract me (or another Invigilator) if you need attention.
7. Assessment conditions apply throughout this assessment.
8. In the unlikely event of the fire alarm going off please stay seated and wait for instructions.

Appendix 5 Functional Skills: Guidance on Access Arrangements

Changes to assessment conditions

Extra time

- Where assessment activities are time constrained a learner may be allowed extra time during an assessment if they have a condition which affects the speed of processing.
- The amount of extra time allowed should accurately reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the learner's difficulty. 'Unlimited' extra time will not be allowed. It is the centre's responsibility to specify the amount of extra time the learner will need, using as a guide the extra time required during formative assessments in the centre.
- Extra time may be available for computer based assessments where the manipulation of software, and not processing speed, is the primary aim of the assessment.
- Extra time for onscreen assessments may have to be customised for each learner. In these cases the centre is advised to contact Gateway Qualifications to apply for a time extension to be set up.
- Before the centre allows extra time for the learner, the centre should be satisfied that the learner can cope with the content of the qualification and that the learner is medically fit to undertake the extended assessment.
- Extra time will not be allowed in practical activities where the timing is a crucial part of the assessment or in group activities where the learner's performance will be assessed in conjunction with others.

Supervised rest breaks

- Where assessment activities are time constrained, a learner may, if there is demonstrated need, be allowed supervised rest breaks during an assessment.
- Supervised rest breaks may be taken either in or outside the assessment room. The duration of the breaks will not be deducted from the assessment time. The centre should be aware that, during the supervised rest breaks, the learner is still under assessment conditions and that the usual regulations governing conduct of assessments will apply during this time.
- Rest breaks are not applicable where speed or time is a component of what is being assessed, although, if there is a natural break in the assessment, i.e. between tasks, supervised rest breaks can be allowed.

Change in the organisation of the assessment room

- Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some learners with autistic spectrum disorder, with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties.
- Visually impaired learners may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.
- Deaf learners may benefit from sitting near the front of the room and in good light.
- Some learners may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.
- Autistic learners may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the room.

Separate accommodation within the centre

- It may be necessary to accommodate the learner separately if they are using readers, scribes, BSL interpreters, or word processing equipment which may disturb other learners.

Taking the assessment at an alternative venue

- In certain circumstances the learner may be permitted to take an assessment at an alternative venue. Gateway Qualifications advice must be sought on this.
- The centre should ensure that the learner is medically fit to take the assessment.

Use of mechanical, electronic and technological aids

Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles and OCR scanners

- The centre should ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of these aids and that any electronic aids are in good working order.
- For assessments taken under examination conditions, the learner should be accommodated separately with separate invigilation if the use of any of these aids will disturb other learners. In these cases the invigilator should be fully informed of the learner's support.
- A centre should contact Gateway Qualifications if they are unclear about whether any new technology will unfairly advantage the learner or invalidate the assessment requirements.

Use of assistive technology, for example speech/screen reading software and voice activated software

- Some learners may benefit from the use of software that reads the assessment material to them and records their spoken responses.
- Speech software should not be allowed for qualifications where reading is the competence being assessed.
- The centre should ensure that the use of assistive technology will not invalidate the assessment requirements or give the learner an unfair advantage. Due to the rapid development of such technology, centres should seek advice from Gateway Qualifications if the implications of using certain kinds of assistive technology are unclear.
- It should be noted that the use of such software may introduce a hidden assessment agenda, in that the learner has to master the use of the software in addition to mastering the assessment criteria. Some learners may need extra time if they use such software.

Modifications to the presentation of the assessment material

Assessment material in enlarged format

- For paper-based assessments enlargements may be used. Examples of these include:
 - unmodified enlarged papers where the standard paper is photocopied from A4 to A3, thus enlarging the whole paper and retaining the original layout and visual presentation.
 - modified enlarged paper where the paper is modified by simplifying the layout and where necessary reducing the content while still meeting the same objectives as those tested in the original paper.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material in enlarged format, the centre must apply no later than 25 working days before the date of the assessment.
- Where the centre is permitted to make the enlargements to externally set assessment material, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is enlarged. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of incomplete enlargement of the material.
- Centres should note that assessment material containing scale diagrams cannot be enlarged.
- It is the centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material in a suitable format for the learner.

On-screen assessments

- If the default font and text size used for an onscreen assessment is not suitable for the learner, screen magnification software programmes may provide an option to magnify the text to a suitable size. Advanced screen software programmes used by Gateway Qualifications provide options to change screen colours and fonts.
- Learners should become familiar with the ways the screen may be adapted in onscreen exams by using the practice tests.

Assessment material in Braille

- Assessment material may be provided in Braille for a blind or visually impaired learner.
- The material will be modified to remove any visual content prior to brailleing.
- Diagrams in the assessment material can be produced as tactile diagrams.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material in Braille, the centre must apply not later than ten weeks before the date of the assessment. If Braille assessment material has been ordered, but is no longer required, the centre should inform Gateway Qualifications immediately as any costs incurred in producing such material may be passed to the centre.
- Permission may be given to the centre to Braille externally set assessment materials. Gateway Qualifications will advise when this can be permitted.
- Where the centre is permitted to Braille externally set assessment material, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is brailled. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of errors in the brailled material.

- Braille is not always an appropriate adjustment for the learner, not all blind people are fluent in Braille.
- It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the braille of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials.

Assessment material in BSL (British Sign Language)

- Where the centre cannot provide a BSL interpreter for the assessment, and if language modified assessment material does not provide sufficient assistance, a BSL version of assessment material may be provided on DVD instead of (or in addition to) the assessment material in written English. This facility may not be permitted for assessments where reading is the competence being assessed.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material in BSL, the centre will have to apply no later than ten weeks before the date of the assessment.
- Where the centre is permitted to translate externally set assessment material into BSL, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for the accuracy of the translation. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of errors in the material.
- It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the translation of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL.
- Centres should note that translation of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL will not be suitable for all assessments and that they need to contact Gateway Qualifications for further advice if they are unclear whether this adjustment is appropriate.

Assessment material on coloured paper

- It is the centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material on coloured paper, if required.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material on coloured paper, the centre will have to apply by the deadlines set by Gateway Qualifications normally not later than ten weeks before the date of the assessment.
- Where the centre is permitted to photocopy externally set assessment material onto coloured paper, it should take responsibility for the security of the assessment material and for ensuring that the entire document is copied.
- The learner may be penalised for any errors in their script which occur as a result of incomplete copying of the document.

Assessment material in audio format

- Where there is evidence of need, assessment material may be provided in audio format. This facility is not available if reading is the competence being assessed or if the assessment material has visual content that is crucial to the understanding of the questions, such as illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketches.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material in audio format, the centre will have to apply no later than 25 working days before the date of the assessment.
- Where the centre is permitted to produce an audio version of externally set assessment material, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the recording is accurate. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of errors in the recording.

- It is the centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material in a suitable format for the learner.

Alternative ways of presenting learner responses

A learner should be provided with the means to present their responses by the method most appropriate and familiar to them, as long as the use of methods will not invalidate the requirements of the assessment.

The guidance given below relates to the use of ICT in written assessments.

Use of ICT to present responses

- The use of ICT in this context should be taken to include word processors, personal computers (PCs) and other microprocessor controlled devices producing output in text or other forms such as graphics and diagrams.
- For many learners with additional support needs, computers provide an effective means of independent communication. Consideration should be given to whether the learner can meet the assessment criteria using a computer.
- A computer should only be used if it is appropriate to the learner's needs and if the learner is confident in its use, can use it effectively and if it reflects his / her normal way of working. The learner should be consulted before a decision is taken whether the use of ICT is an appropriate adjustment.
- When a computer is used, other than as a basic word processor, the centre needs to consider the effect and appropriateness of facilities like spell-checkers, electronic dictionaries, thesauri, calculators, predictive software, etc. that are available.
- The use of the computer should not create a misleading impression of the learner's attainment or confer an unfair advantage over other learners.
- The centre should ensure that workstations are adapted for the needs of the learner, and that enabling technologies, (for example screen reading software, coloured background, adapted keyboard, large tracker ball mouse, sticky keys) are available.
- Where it is apparent that assessment objectives cannot be met fully if a computer is used, alternative arrangements should be considered.
- The computer is used solely by the learner and not by someone acting on the learner's behalf unless the learner has permission to use a scribe.
- The computer is working correctly at the time of an assessment. It is the centre's responsibility to arrange the ICT provision for the learner.
- The learner is not able to gain access to existing files or documents. Where a system operates from CD, the learner must be supplied with a formatted disk containing only the software required for the assessment.
- The computer should be free-standing and not be connected to the Internet, unless this is required in the assessment and if it is connected to the Internet then access to the Internet is strictly monitored by a supervisor.
- The learner is accommodated separately if the use of a computer is likely to distract other learners. In this case separate invigilation should be arranged.
- The learner is present when their work is printed. It is normal practice for a printed version of the learner's work to be submitted and authenticated for assessment, and not the disk.

- Where a question/answer booklet is provided, the learner might need to answer some questions in the booklet and type other answers. Answers should be clearly labelled and the printout must be attached to the question paper/answer booklet.
- The learner should be familiar with and able to use of the computer and its software.
- The learner's work is saved frequently and, if possible, using an auto-save facility.

Spoken responses using electronic recording devices, for example CD ROMs, memory sticks, audio cassettes

- Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be permitted to record their responses electronically.
- Spoken responses will only be available for assessments where there is no requirement for the learner to produce visual material.
- Where the learner's responses are recorded electronically, the centre should provide an authenticated transcript on paper of the learner's responses.
- The centre should check whether permission should be sought from Gateway Qualifications to record the learner's responses electronically.
- Recording the learner's responses electronically should not be allowed where it will invalidate the assessment requirements.
- The centre should ensure that the appropriate recording equipment is provided in full working order.
- The learner using recording equipment should be accommodated separately, with separate invigilation, where its use will not disturb other learners.

Responses in BSL

- Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be allowed to sign their responses to questions.
- Signing of responses should not be permitted if the ability to write or speak English is being assessed.
- A learner can sign full responses in BSL. Where the learner is required to show knowledge of an expression / name in their response, this must be finger spelt.
- The centre will provide a paper translation of the responses for validation purposes.
- The centre should ensure that the person doing the translation is appropriately qualified.
- Where the centre provides a transcript of the learner's response, the centre should ensure that the transcript is authenticated and an accurate reflection of the learner's responses. The centre should keep this as a record of the assessment.
- The centre should check whether permission should be sought from Gateway Qualifications to sign the learner's responses.

Responses in Braille

- Where there is evidence of need, a learner may be permitted to present their responses in Braille.
- In these cases an authenticated paper transcript of the learner's responses should be provided by the centre.
- It will be the centre's responsibility to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner's responses and to keep the transcript for their records.
- The centre should select a transcriber with the required level of skill in Braille and fully brief him / her on their responsibilities.

Use of access facilitators

Reader

- A reader is a person who, when requested, will read to the learner all or part of the assessment material and the learner's written responses.
- Where there is evidence of need a reader may be allowed in all assessments where reading is not being assessed.
- The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a reader will be an effective arrangement. The learner may be more comfortable with:
 - The use of speech/screen reading software which reads out the material without decoding or interpreting it.
 - Accessing the assessment material in electronic format, in Braille or through sign language.
- The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a reader.
- The reader should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except in circumstances where it is absolutely necessary to do so. In such cases, Gateway Qualifications should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a reader.
- The centre should select the reader on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate and should have sufficient knowledge of the subject to read technical terms accurately.
- A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the reader and should have used this arrangement during any training programme leading up to the assessment.
- The centre should select a reader and fully brief them on their responsibilities.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and reader are clear about the limitations of the reader's role.
- A separate invigilator must be present when a reader is used to ensure that the guidance regarding readers is followed.
- The centre should give the reader clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.
- For a learner requiring a reader and a scribe, the same person may act as both as long as permission has been given for both arrangements.

- The learner using a reader should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.
- Where a learner is not eligible for the use of a reader, it may be helpful for the learner to read the questions aloud. In these circumstances the learner must be accommodated in a separate room so that other learners are not disturbed. Separate invigilation should be arranged in these cases. The invigilator may not correct the reading of the learner.
- The reader is responsible to, and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.
- A reader should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

The reader:

- Should read only as requested by the learner. The learner may choose to read some parts of the assessment him/herself.
- Should read accurately. If the reader is working with a deaf or hearing impaired learner, the reader should articulate clearly.
- Should only read the exact wording (instructions and questions), and not give meanings of words, rephrase or interpret anything.
- Should repeat instructions and questions on the paper only when specifically requested to do so by the learner.
- May consult a dictionary, where this is allowed, at the learner's request and read out entries.
- Should read, as often as requested, the answers already recorded, but may not act as proof-reader.
- Should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- May enable a visually impaired learner to identify which piece of visual material relates to which question, but should neither give factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestion.
- Is permitted to help a visually impaired learner using diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the information that the print/amended print copy would give to a sighted learner.
- Should, if requested, give a visually impaired learner the spelling of a word which appears on the paper, but otherwise spellings must not be given.
- Should refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

Scribe (sometimes called amanuensis)

- A scribe is a person who, in an assessment, writes down or word processes a learner's dictated responses. Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may be allowed in all assessments where writing or keyboarding is not the competence being assessed. The most common need for a scribe is where a learner has injured their arm and is unable to write.
- The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a scribe is an appropriate adjustment. As the effective use of a scribe requires high

level communication skills from the learner, the centre is advised to consider whether the learner would be more comfortable with the use of a computer.

- For a learner requiring a scribe and a reader, the same person may act as both, provided permission has been given for both.
- The use of a scribe should not affect the assessment requirements for the qualification being assessed. In some cases the writing of answers by the learner may be the skill being assessed. Voice recognition technology (assistive technology) may be used in the writing component of qualification where its use reflects the learner's normal way of writing.
- The centre should select a scribe on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. A scribe should be able to produce an accurate record of the learner's responses, write legibly and/or word process at a reasonable speed, and have sufficient knowledge of the subject to be able to record technical terms correctly.
- The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a scribe.
- A scribe is not permitted in an assessment requiring word processing or ICT.
- A scribe should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it is absolutely necessary to do so. In such cases, Gateway Qualifications should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a scribe.
- A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the scribe and used this arrangement during their learning programme.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and scribe are clear about the limitations of the scribe's role.
- The centre should give the scribe clear instructions as to what he/she is required to do and what he/she is not allowed to do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.
- The learner using a scribe should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used to ensure that the guidance regarding scribes is followed.
- The scribe is responsible to and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.
- During the assessment a scribe:
 - Should check with the learner for which parts of the assessment they wish to have their responses scribed. The learner may choose to write some responses him/herself.
 - Should neither give factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestions.
 - Should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be answered.
 - Should write down answers exactly as they are dictated. Where spelling accuracy and punctuation is being tested, the scribe must follow explicit instructions from the learner. The scribe may not take responsibility for spelling technical words.

- Should write a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet if requested to do so by the learner.
- Should not assist the learner to produce any diagrammatical or graphical material. If assistance with this is needed, approval should be obtained from Gateway Qualifications in advance of the assessment. Exceptions to this are Entry Level qualifications where the scribe is allowed to draw or add to diagrams in accordance with the learner's instructions.
- May, at the learner's request, read back what has been written but no comment must be made about any part of the learner's response.
- Should immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the invigilator.
- The centre should check that the use of scribe is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The centre should select a scribe and fully brief him / her on their responsibilities.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used.
- A scribe should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

British Sign Language (BSL)

- Although British Sign Language (BSL) is recognised as an official language of the UK, it is not a statutory language, unlike English, Welsh and Irish (Gaelige).
- The regulatory criteria state: *"A Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted by an awarding organisation for the purpose of Reasonable Adjustment"* (Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition 2011 – G2.2)
- Where BSL is the primary means of communication for a deaf learner, these learners may have the support of a BSL/English interpreter to sign the questions (or part questions) where they are undertaking written assessments.
- For assessments where reading is the competence being assessed, BSL or any other sign language may only be used for the assessment material rubric and instructions.
- The centre should ensure that the BSL interpreter has an appropriate qualification in the sign language and a good working knowledge of the content of the assessment.
- A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous experience of working with a BSL/English interpreter and should have used this arrangement during the learning programme leading up to the assessment.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and the person providing the interpretation is clear about the limitations of the latter's role in the assessment situation.
- The centre should ensure that the person providing the interpretation has access to the assessment material in advance of the assessment, to prepare for the signing. This arrangement should be agreed with Gateway Qualifications.
- The interpretation should not give the learner an unfair advantage and care must be taken not to indicate the meaning of technical words, where the learner's understanding of these words is inherent in the purpose of the question. The interpretation should not explain or clarify. In some instances it may be more appropriate to finger-spell a word.

- Any words or phrases interpreted for the learner because a standard sign is not available or appropriate should be underlined on the assessment material, which, if separate from the answer book, should be attached to the learner's answer book. Amended versions of questions should be shown on the assessment material.
- The learner using a BSL/English interpreter should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a BSL/English interpreter is used to ensure that guidance regarding BSL/English interpreters is followed.

The BSL interpreter:

- Should have access to the assessment material in advance of the examination to prepare for the signing. Gateway Qualifications will advise how long before the assessment the BSL/English interpreter can have access to the assessment material.
- Should not interpret technical language or give additional explanations.
- May, at the learner's request, sign any labels or text connected with reference material such as maps, diagrams or graphs. The learner should, however, study the reference material independently.

Prompter

- A learner with severe attention problems may benefit from the use of a prompter in timed assessment situations to draw their attention back to the assessment task.
- The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a prompter is an appropriate arrangement.
- The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a prompter.
- Where the problem is one of concentration, consideration should be given to allowing supervised rest breaks rather than a prompter.
- A prompter should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it may be necessary to do so. In such cases Gateway Qualifications should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a prompter.
- Prompters should be sufficiently familiar with the learner to recognise when his / her attention is no longer on the assessment task and that he or she is not, for example, looking away from the paper whilst thinking.
- Under no circumstances may the prompter draw the attention of the learner to part of the question paper or the learner's answer paper.
- The prompter should sit near enough to be able to observe the learner and draw his / her attention back to the task. This should, however, be organised as unobtrusively as possible. The learner's attention may be drawn back to the task using a light tap on the learner's arm or shoulder or, alternatively, on the desk (though not in a way that may be taken to indicate any part of the examination question paper). Verbal prompting should not normally be used. The method used by the prompter to bring back the learner's attention should be agreed before the assessment between the learner and the prompter and should be acceptable to the centre. It should be noted that some learners with emotional and behavioural sensitivity/vulnerability and/or

mental health conditions may not be comfortable with a 'light tap' prompt. A form of verbal prompting should be considered and agreed for these learners.

- In the case of an epileptic learner where the problem is one of temporary absencing, the normal procedure to help that learner will be allowed.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and prompter are clear about the limitations of the prompter's role.
- The centre should give the prompter clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and the prompter have had experience of working together.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a prompter is used to ensure that the guidance regarding prompters is followed. The invigilator should be fully informed of the strategies used to regain the learner's attention.
- The prompter is responsible to and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

During an assessment a prompter:

- Should draw the learner's attention back to the task in hand.
- Should use the method of prompting agreed with the learner.
- Should not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions.
- Should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be done.
For Entry Level qualifications it may be appropriate for the prompter to direct the learner to where they were last.
- Should be prepared for periods of inactivity during the assessment, but should remain vigilant.
- Should immediately refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

Practical assistant

- A practical assistant is a person who, during an assessment, carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the learner. Examples of the kinds of tasks with which the practical assistant may assist are, turning the pages of the question paper or, guiding a learner using a Braille paper to the correct page they need.
- The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a practical assistant is an appropriate arrangement. A practical assistant will not normally be allowed in those qualifications where the practical skill is the focus of the assessment.
- The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a practical assistant.
- The practical assistant should be familiar with the requirements of the assessment, but should not normally be the learner's own teacher/tutor/assessor except when it is necessary to do so. In such cases, Gateway Qualifications should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a practical assistant.

- A practical assistant should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the learner and carry out his/her instructions accurately.
- The centre should prepare clear written instructions for the practical assistant on the assistance they are able to give the learner. A copy of these instructions should also be given to the invigilator and learner. The centre should note that the practical assistant may not perform tasks for which the learner will receive credit.
- The use of a practical assistant should not modify the specification requirements. For example, where the manipulation of apparatus or making accurate visual observations may be the skill being assessed, the use of a practical assistant will not be permitted.
- A learner using a practical assistant may need to be accommodated separately from other learners. In these cases a separate invigilator should be present to ensure that the guidance regarding practical assistants is followed. During practical assessments, the assessor should be present in addition to the practical assistant.
- During a practical assessment, a practical assistant:
 - Should follow the instructions prepared by the centre on the level and kind of assistance that can be given to the learner.
 - Should ensure the safety of the learner and those around him / her.
 - Should not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions.
 - Should not advise the learner which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be done.
 - Should carry out instructions exactly as they are given unless to do so would cause a hazard. If the practical assistant does not understand the learner's instructions, he/she may ask for clarification but must not lead the learner in any way or attempt to interpret the learner's wishes; if incorrect or inadequate instructions are given by the learner this must be reflected in the outcome of the assessment.
 - Should not expect to assist the learner throughout the entire assessment (there may be parts of the assessment which the learner can do without help and thus gain credit for demonstrating the required skills).
 - Should immediately refer any problems during an assessment to the invigilator/supervisor.

Transcriber

- This arrangement may be used by a learner in the following circumstances:
 - Where the learner's handwriting is illegible, but he or she is unable to use a computer or dictate responses - it may not be allowed where writing by hand is the competence being assessed.
 - Where the learner's responses are produced in Braille or in BSL.
- The transcriber will produce a transcript to assist the examiner/assessor in the assessment of a learner's work. The examiner/assessor will assess the learner's work and will only refer to the transcript if it is impossible to decipher any part of the learner's response(s). (For responses produced in Braille or BSL the examiner/assessor may refer solely to the transcript).
- The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a transcript will be an effective arrangement.

- The centre should give the transcriber clear instructions regarding what he/she is required to do after the assessment.
- The transcript should be produced by a member of the centre's staff who is familiar with the learner's handwriting, is fully competent in Braille (where the transcription is for learner's responses produced in Braille), or who has the required skills in BSL (where the transcription is for learner's responses produced in BSL).
- The transcript(s) should be securely attached to the back of the learner's work and be included with the other work from the centre for dispatch to the assessor in the normal way. The production of the transcript should not delay the dispatch of scripts to the assessor/marker.
- The centre should not inform the assessor/marker of the reason why a transcript was necessary.

The transcriber:

- Should produce the transcript in a separate copy of the question paper/answer booklet or on lined or unlined white paper as appropriate.
- May handwrite or word process the transcript. If handwritten, dark blue or black ink should be used. Pencil must never be used.
- Should, for examinations, produce the transcript immediately after the examination under secure conditions.
- Should not involve the learner in the production of the transcript.
- Should normally transcribe complete answers. In cases where only occasional words need to be transcribed, these may be written on a photocopy of the learner's script. On no account should the learner's original script be marked or annotated in any way.
- Should normally be a word-for-word transcription, i.e. an exact copy of what the learner has written. The transcriber may not insert or omit words or alter their order. In English, any errors, including those of spelling, punctuation and grammar, must be transcribed as given by the learner and must not be corrected. In other qualifications, the transcriber may correct the spelling of non-technical words.
- Should indicate any corrections to spelling on the verbatim transcript using a different colour ink, but not red, green or purple ink. Pencil must not be used for this purpose.
- Should not transcribe diagrammatical material. Assessment of such material will be based on the learner's own work.

FAQs

Do assessments need to be taken in one sitting?

- This depends on the qualification or component being taken and the level. For English Reading and Writing at Entry Level candidates are required to successfully pass two tasks. Tasks can be taken in more than one sitting. For Reading, Writing at levels 1 and 2, and all levels for Mathematics and ICT assessments must be taken in one sitting. The English, Speaking Listening and Communication component can be completed in different sessions.

Does a centre need an Internal Quality Assurer?

- Yes but only for the internally assessed elements.

Are dictionaries permissible during assessments?

- Yes dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries are permissible.

Can a tutor act as an invigilator?

- As long as they do not invigilate own group of learners.

Can we keep copies of the papers?

- No copies are to be kept of any papers except sample papers available on the web site. This could lead to malpractice and the loss of approval to run the qualification(s).

Why do we need to provide candidate's names in advance?

- Learners need to be registered before you can download an assessment and be prepared for the assessment in advance.

What happens if a candidate doesn't turn up?

- Once registered they can sit at a different time but you need to notify our customer service department about this.

What is the turnaround time for results and certification?

- The expected turnaround time for externally marked assessments is as soon as possible but no later than 10 working days for results and certification within 5 working days after results are confirmed.
- For internally marked assessments, certificates will be issued within 5 working days of results confirmation.

What is Malpractice/ Maladministration?

- Your centre will have a Malpractice and Maladministration policy which you should follow. An example of maladministration is where registrations are not completed or completed incorrectly.
- Malpractice is where, for example, you have not followed the rules of invigilation, layout of the classroom or exam conditions.
- If either an incident of malpractice or maladministration occurs sanctions will be placed on the centre and an investigation will be conducted.

Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in preparing the information published in this document, Gateway Qualifications cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions and accepts no liability whatsoever for any loss or damage howsoever arising. Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to make changes to processes and procedures as necessary and to alter any content at any time with due notice. The most up to date version of this document will be made available on our website www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk.

Notes

This document does not apply to Access to HE provision or qualifications other than Functional Skills.

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