QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

g gateway
qualifications

Essential Digital Skills
(Entry 3 – Level 1)

This qualification specification covers the following qualifications:

Qualification Number	Qualification Title
603/5985/7	Gateway Qualifications Entry Level 3 in Essential Digital Skills
603/5986/9	Gateway Qualifications Level 1 in Essential Digital Skills

Version and date	Change detail	Section/Page Reference
1.0 June 2020	n/a	n/a
1.1 Nov 2020	Updated wording on IQA requirements	5.3, pg. 21
1.2 Dec 2020	Age updated and funding statement updated	1.1, pg. 7 1.3, pg. 7 2.1, pg. 9
1.3 Aug 2021	Onboarding process and resources updated	4.13, pg. 18 6, pg. 23
1.4 Jan 2022	Bilingual dictionary references updated	4.7, pg. 16 4.10, pg. 17
1.5 Oct 2022	Guidance around observed tasks updated Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations updated New resource guide added Resitting an assessment updated	4.4, pg. 13 4.11, pg. 16 4.13, pg. 18 7.2, pg. 24
1.6 Dec 2022	Changed back cover	Pg 44
1.7 Aug 2023	Amended reasonable adjustments information	4.11 pg. 16
1.8 June 2025	7.2 Resitting an assessment – resit charges clarified	7.2 pg.24

About this qualification specification

This qualification specification is intended for tutor/assessor, 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 learner in order to achieve the qualifications. It also contains information specific to managing and delivering the qualifications including specific quality assurance requirements.

The guide should be read in conjunction with the Gateway Qualifications Centre Handbook and other publications available on the website which contain more detailed guidance on assessment and quality assurance practice.

In order to offer these qualifications, you must be a Gateway Qualifications recognised centre and be approved to offer the qualifications.

If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact our Development Team to discuss becoming a Gateway Qualifications Recognised Centre:

Telephone: 01206 911211

Email: enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk

Website: https://www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk/advice-guidance/delivering-our-qualifications/become-recognised-centre/

Contents

1. Qualification Information

1.1 About the qualifications

The qualifications have been designed to meet the content, conditions and requirements set out by the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation that regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

The content of the qualifications is based on the National standards for essential digital skills April 2019 (reference: DfE-00082-2019) and covers 5 skills areas:

1. Using devices and handling information
2. Creating and editing
3. Communicating
4. Transacting
5. Being safe and responsible online.

The standards and amplification are included in Appendix 1.

The qualifications are appropriate for learners (16+) across a wide range of settings.

The qualifications have been developed in collaboration with FE colleges, private skills/training providers, adult community learning providers and digital skills experts.

1.2 Purpose

The qualifications have the following purposes:

- to enable learners to develop the digital skills they need for life, work or further study as set out in the national standards for essential digital skills
- to provide reliable evidence of learners' attainment in relation to the national standards for essential digital skills.

At Entry level 3, the focus is on developing digital skills for life and introducing learners to digital skills for work. At Level 1 the focus is primarily on digital skills for work with a secondary focus on digital skills for life. Many of the digital skills learners will acquire through these qualifications will be applicable in both life and work settings.

1.3 Funding

For information on potential sources of funding in England please visit the Education and Skills Funding Agency:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/qualifications-approved-for-public-funding

https://hub.fasst.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx

For information regarding potential sources of funding in Wales please visit Qualification Wales:

https://www.qualificationswales.org/

1.4   Geographical coverage

These qualifications are approved by Ofqual to be offered in England and by Qualification Wales to be delivered in Wales.

If a centre based outside England or Wales would like to offer these qualifications, they should make an enquiry to Gateway Qualifications. The qualifications are not available for delivery in Northern Ireland.

1.5   Progression opportunities

The qualifications are intended to develop essential digital skills to enable learners to have access to and actively engage in the digital world. Following successful achievement learners may wish to further develop their understanding and skills and progress onto digital qualifications at a higher level.

The qualifications may also support learners to progress into or within employment.

2. Learner Entry Requirements

2.1 Key information

Qualification Titles	Gateway Qualifications Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills Qualification
	Gateway Qualifications Level 1 Essential Digital Skills Qualification
Age	16+
Prior qualifications or units	No previous formal qualifications are required for entry to these qualifications.
Prior skills/knowledge/ understanding	Learners should normally have English skills at the level below their chosen qualification.
	As suggested by the DfE, some adults may need support to handle and use digital devices for the first time and to learn the following foundation skills before enrolling on an Entry level 3 course:
	• Turning on a device (including entering and updating any account information safely, such as a password)
	• Using the available controls on a device (such as a mouse and keyboard for a computer, or touchscreen on a smartphone or tablet)
	• use of accessibility tools (including assistive technology) to make devices easier to use (such as changing display settings to make content easier to read)
	• Interacting with the home screen on a device
	• Connecting to the internet (including Wi-Fi) safely and securely, and opening a browser
	• Opening and accessing an application on a device.
Restrictions	There are no restrictions to entry.
Initial Assessment	Centres should carry out an initial assessment of each learner prior to the start of the qualification to identify their current digital skills capabilities and areas for development. The initial assessment will also help determine whether a learner should work towards an Entry level 3 or Level 1 Essential Digital Skills qualification.
Additional requirements/guidance	There are no additional rules or guidance regarding learner entry requirements.

2.2   Recruiting learners with integrity

Centres must recruit learners with integrity. They must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification and that the qualification will meet their needs.

Centres must assess each potential learner and make justifiable and professional judgements about their potential to successfully complete the assessment and achieve the qualification. Such an assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the qualification.

2.3   Verifying learner identity

Under no circumstances should a learner be allowed to sit an assessment without prior registration and assessment booking.

Centres must verify each learner's identity prior to taking the assessment.

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

Where this may prove culturally challenging, for example, learners who wear face veils then centres may require female staff to perform the identity check in a private space.

3. Qualification Details

3.1 Qualification Structure

Each qualification is a single component, learners are required to pass an externally set, internally marked and external quality assured assessment. The assessment is online and on-demand.

The qualifications are awarded at a pass. The result for learners who do not meet the required standard for a pass will be recorded as a fail.

3.2 Subject Content

Subject content for both the Entry level 3 and Level 1 qualifications is based on the DfE national essential digital skills standards covering 5 skill areas:

1. Using devices and handling information
2. Creating and editing
3. Communicating
4. Transacting
5. Being safe and responsible online.

The standards include amplification, alongside the skills statements. This amplification should support tutor/assessor when planning their delivery of the qualification. A few aspects of the standards, such as 'Level 1: Identify and use appropriate online learning resources to maintain and improve digital skills' are not formally assessed but should be covered in the teaching and learning.

The DfE standards and amplification are provided in Appendix 1.

3.3 Qualification size

Qualification	Total Qualification Time	Guided Learning Hours
Gateway Qualifications Entry Level 3 in Essential Digital Skills	45	45
Gateway Qualifications Level 1 in Essential Digital Skills	45	45

Total Qualification Time is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could be reasonably expected to be required for a Learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification.

Total Qualification Time is comprised of the following two elements:

- the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and;

- an estimate of the number of hours a Learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place by – but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor/assessor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

3.4 Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning for these qualifications should ensure that learners develop essential digital knowledge and skills at the appropriate level, as set out in the national standards. Wherever possible, tutor/assessor should tailor learning programmes to meet individual learner needs. They should take into consideration the types of digital skills that learners want to develop and the circumstances in which they want or need to use these. They should make optimal use of learners' own digital devices and the applications they wish to use. Learners should be given the opportunity to practise their skills in a variety of contexts, prior to taking the assessment.

The qualifications can be delivered as stand-alone courses or could be integrated into broader programmes including, for example, ESOL or vocational courses.

3.5 Resources

Learners should have access to a suitable device such as a laptop, desktop computer or tablet with internet access.

Learners will also need access to suitable software to enable them to create documents and charts to complete the assessment such as word-processing and spreadsheet software.

Centres must set up a separate private user area (on computers or servers used by learners) where candidates can save assessment evidence. This area must be accessible to individual learners and centre staff only. Each user area must be allocated sufficient storage space to allow learners to save their work.

3.6 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

For these qualifications, recognition of prior learning does not apply.

4. Assessment

4.1 Assessment overview

Online assessments for both the Entry level 3 and Level 1 qualifications are externally set by Gateway Qualifications. The assessments are marked by centres (with the exception of objective items that are auto-marked) and externally quality assured by Gateway Qualifications.

The assessments:

- are on-demand
- are summative and must take place under supervised conditions
- are time-bound
- are numerically mark-based
- must be presented to candidates unseen, without prior knowledge of the assessment topic
- must be entirely the learners' own unaided work.

As assessment is on-demand, it should take place when the learner is ready, i.e. when the tutor/assessor deems that the learner has reached an appropriate level of competence in all areas covered by the qualification. Sufficient time should be built into the learning programme to allow learners to build up knowledge and skills and progress at their own rate.

Learners who meet the pass mark for the assessment as a whole will be deemed to have achieved the qualification. That means that a weaker performance in one part of the assessment can be compensated for by a stronger performance in another part.

Should a learner not achieve the required standard to pass an assessment, further teaching and learning should take place before the formal assessment is re-scheduled.

4.2 Assessment format

The assessment is on-demand and learners are permitted to take the assessment on different devices including a laptop, desktop or tablet.

Learners will be required to complete the assessment within Surpass, Gateway Qualifications' online assessment platform.

4.3 Assessment language

The qualifications are assessed in English only.

4.4   Assessment structure and timings

Qualification	Entry level 3	Level 1
Assessment structure	A single assessment component comprising 3 parts	A single assessment component comprising 3 parts
Duration	Up to 1 hour 30 minutes plus a 15 minute supervised break, plus observed tasks taken prior to the timed assessment on Surpass	1 hour 45 minutes plus a 15 minute supervised break in between Parts 1 and 2.
Conditions	Supervised conditions	Supervised conditions
Total marks	44	54

At Entry level 3, a small proportion of the skill standards is assessed through tutor/assessor observation, e.g. making a video call. Observed tasks will be set by Gateway Qualifications and undertaken prior to the timed assessment on Surpass. The tutor will be required to complete a Gateway Qualifications observation record for each candidate which will be uploaded to Surpass.

The total assessment time must not exceed the total permitted time unless reasonable adjustments/special considerations apply.

No extra time can be permitted for slow machines and/or networks. If unforeseen technical difficulties arise, the centre may use its discretion on extending the time limit, but this must be documented within the invigilation report.

4.5   Assessment weightings

The weightings for each skill area have been determined by:

- the volume and nature of their content
- the extent to which it contributes to helping learners achieve essential digital skills in line with the purpose of the qualification
- their demand.

Entry level 3 Skill area	Weighting
1. Using devices and handling information	20%
2. Creating and editing	23%
3. Communicating	23%
4. Transacting	23%
5. Being safe and responsible online	11%
Total	100%

Level 1 Skill area	Weighting
1. Using devices and handling information	20%
2. Creating and editing	43%
3. Communicating	13%
4. Transacting	13%
5. Being safe and responsible online	11%
Total	100%

4.6   Assessment booking

Centres must first register learners on the qualification. See Section 7 Learner Registration and Results.

To ensure assessments are available for the learners at the time of the assessment sitting, bookings must be made in advance. Assessments must be booked a minimum of 24 hours in advance of the assessment sitting.

4.7   Resources for the assessment

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that candidates have individual access to appropriate hardware such as a laptop, tablet, desktop computer and suitable software to complete the assessment.

Candidates must have access to the internet during the assessment. Centres must plan ahead to manage internet access.

Candidates may use a paper based or online bilingual dictionary in the assessment room. Where learners access an online dictionary, it should be on the same device that is being used for the live assessment.

Further details on resource requirements are provided in the Essential Digital Skills Guide for Centres.

No other materials or items are permitted (e.g. memory sticks).

4.8   Assessment Preparation

Learners must have sufficient workspace to allow them unrestricted access to the device. The workstations should be arranged to prevent learners viewing each other's work.

Learners must be able to save files produced during the assessment in an individual, central location.

4.9   Conduct of assessment

All assessments must be taken under **controlled conditions**. This means that candidates are directly supervised by a tutor/assessor at all times during the assessment including monitoring candidates' internet access and use is appropriate.

If the assessment is conducted over a number of sessions, centres must ensure that candidates do not work on assessments between sessions.

The assessment must be conducted according to the requirements set out in this specification and the Essential Digital Skills Guide for Centres.

There is also more information on the conduct of controlled assessment available on our website.

4.10   Assessment taking

Detailed guidance on assessment taking requirements is provided in the Essential Digital Skills Guide for Centres and includes:

- recording attendance
- candidate instructions
- contact during the assessment
- misconduct
- authentication of learner work

- candidates leaving the room
- evacuation procedures.

Candidates may use a paper based or online bilingual dictionary in the assessment room. Where learners access an online dictionary, it should be on the same device that is being used for the live assessment.

No other materials or items are permitted (e.g. memory sticks) including access to textbooks, centre-prepared manuals or software-specific help facilities during the assessment.

4.11 Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Gateway Qualifications understands its requirement as an awarding organisation to make reasonable adjustments for learners with a disability (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010) in order that they are not at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who does not have a disability.

The standard Gateway Qualifications policy on reasonable adjustments will apply to the EDSQ. Guidance for centres on the reasonable adjustment applications process is set out in the Centre Handbook available on Gateway Qualifications website. This guidance is reviewed and updated regularly as required to align with new external guidance.

Gateway Qualifications has identified reasonable adjustments permissible for EDSQ as detailed below. A reasonable adjustment is unique to an individual and should reflect their normal way of working.

The following adjustments are centre permitted:

- Centres may provide learners with additional time.
- Centres may provide learners with a reader.

Centres will be able to submit requests for other reasonable adjustments that are not included above.

Those providing assistance should refer to appropriate access regulations detailed in the Centre Guidance for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.

4.12 Assessment materials and adaptation

Sample assessments and mark schemes are provided for both levels of the qualifications.

Adaptation will only be permitted at Entry level 3 in the observed tasks. Information will be provided in the tutor/assessor guidance, Essential Digital Skills Guide for Centres, on the type of adaptation allowed. Adaptation will only be permitted in relation to context of the task; the skill being assessed; the level of demand and conditions must remain unchanged. Adaptation is not permitted at Level 1.

4.13 Support materials and resources

In addition to this qualification specification, the following resources are available on the Gateway Qualifications website:

- the Gateway Qualifications Centre Handbook which includes requirements and guidance on:
    - quality and compliance
    - external assessment
    - access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special considerations.
- sample assessments and marking guidance
- Guidance for candidates including a glossary of terms

The following will also be available for centres approved to offer the qualifications:

- Essential Digital Skills Guide for Centres including a glossary of terms
- Instructions for the conduct of EDSQ assessments
- Practice papers (retired papers)
- EDSQ Initial Assessment Tool
- Observation record template (Entry 3 only)
- EDSQ Chief Examiner Report
- Pass Marks for Papers
- EDSQ Surpass Candidate Guide
- EDSQ Surpass Guidance for Centres
- EDSQ Standardisation Materials Samples and Sample Marking
- EDSQ Webinar Calendar
- Teaching and learning resources for:
    - Developing Basic Digital Skills - Introductory Activities
    - Unit 1 Using Devices
    - Unit 2 Create and Edit
    - Unit 3 Communicating Online
    - Unit 4 Transacting
    - Unit 5 Being Safe and Responsible Online
- IQA Sampling Form
- Lead IQA Sampling Form

External Resources

- National standards for essential digital skills (See Appendix 1)

4.14 Assessment marking

The assessments are marked by centres (with the exception of objective items that are auto-marked).

Tutor/assessors are responsible for marking work in accordance with the marking criteria provided by Gateway Qualifications.

Marking will be undertaken and recorded within the Surpass system. Once a marking session has been completed the centre's Internal Quality Assurer should be notified. Please refer to Section 6 Quality Assurance.

5. Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval

5.1   Centre Recognition

Both centre recognition and qualification approval must be gained before centres are permitted to deliver these qualifications.

Guidance on the centre recognition and qualification approval processes is available on the website.

5.2   Qualification Approval

In order to be approved to offer Essential Digital Skills qualifications centres must be able to provide evidence that they:

- have appropriate systems and processes in place including operating a robust internal quality assurance process to ensure that tutor/assessor are interpreting and applying mark schemes consistently and accurately and that the quality of learners' work is at the right standard
- have appropriately qualified and experienced staff
- have suitable resources to support the delivery of the qualifications (e.g. IT equipment, reliable access to the internet for teaching, learning and assessment purposes, learning materials, teaching rooms)
- have an appropriate health and safety policy relating to the use of equipment by learners to support delivery and assessment
- can deliver the qualifications in accordance with current equalities legislation
- have systems in place that ensure continuing professional development (CPD) for staff delivering the qualifications
- have attended the training set out in 5.4 Centre guidance and training

5.3   Staffing

Tutors/Assessors

Tutors/assessors must have relevant experience of teaching digital skills to the intended cohorts for whom these qualifications have been designed.

Tutor/assessors are responsible for:

- undertaking initial assessments to assess a learner's readiness for their chosen course and guiding them to the right level of course
- developing a course which covers the underpinning knowledge and skills required for learners to successfully complete assessments for the EDS qualifications
- identifying when learners are ready to take assessments
- ensuring that appropriate supervision arrangements are made during assessments
- ensuring all learners have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities
- ensuring the security of the assessment before, during and after the assessment
- carrying out the assessment of observed tasks according to the instructions in the Essential Digital Skills Guide for Centres

- identifying where learners may be entitled to and benefit from a reasonable adjustment
- marking assessments ensuring that the correct mark schemes are used and that they are applied fairly and consistently
- participating in internal standardisation exercises and adjusting marking accordingly if required
- maintaining accurate and verifiable learner records
- authenticating candidates' assessment evidence.

A tutor/assessor may take the roles of assessment supervisor and marker; indeed, this will be highly recommended for the portfolio style assessment in Entry level 3 EDSQ as they are best placed to authenticate that the candidate's work is their own.

Internal Quality Assurer

An Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) in addition to being an EDSQ tutor/assessor (or alternatively a member of the Digital delivery team), will have knowledge and experience of carrying out internal quality assurance/verification. Internal quality assurers are responsible for ensuring that:

- assessment marking within the Centre is carried out in line with Gateway Qualifications' requirements
- assessment by all tutor/assessors is appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not discriminate against any learner
- tutor/assessors receive on-going advice and support
- they identify where learners who have a protected characteristic may need reasonable adjustment.

5.4   Centre guidance and training

Gateway Qualifications provides training and guidance on the delivery and assessment requirements. Ongoing support is available through the website and direct contact with our support staff.

Centres are expected to support staff with ongoing training and CPD.

Gateway Qualifications conducts regular training that all centre staff involved in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of EDSQs should attend. The training covers:

- the qualification requirements including EDSQ standards
- conduct of the assessment
- how to use Surpass
- quality assurance requirements.

The training will be delivered in the form of 2 webinars;

- Quick Start to EDSQ
- Delivering and Assessing EDSQ

Staff are required to attend the Delivering & Assessing EDSQ webinar prior to marking any assessments.

On-going support

Support materials available on the Gateway Qualifications website include:
- "Help with Administration" pages of the website including a section on external assessment with guidance on using the online assessment system, Surpass.
- Signposting to teaching and learning materials on the Gateway Qualifications website. These will include 'online quizzes' and access by request to practice papers which learners will be able to use to familiarise themselves with the item types, structure, layout and functionality of the online assessments.

Additional support is available for centres by telephone and email via the Customer Excellence team (registration, approval and certification) and the Quality team (quality assurance processes).

CPD

The Education Training Foundation is developing a CPD programme for the qualifications (available from February 2020): https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/edtech-support/essential-digital-skills-eds-cpd-programme/.

6. Quality Assurance

Centres should refer to the online Centre Handbook for further guidance.

The quality assurance process for these qualifications is through risk-based external quality assurance monitoring through reviews of centres' internal quality assurance systems against key quality standards and sampling of assessment decisions and internal quality assurance activity to ensure that qualification standards are maintained.

6.1 Centre monitoring

Centre monitoring is undertaken by an External Quality Assurer (EQA). The EQA plays a critical role in the Gateway Qualifications approach to centre assessment standards scrutiny as they are responsible for:

- carrying out an annual compliance visit
- validating the centre's procedures for delivery of qualifications and assessment
- completing reports for each visit with clear action points where needed
- risk rating centres on the above.

An EQA carries out an initial risk assessment at the centre recognition stage and then annually on an on-going basis using Gateway Qualifications' risk assessment criteria, and gives a high/medium/low risk rating in each of the following categories:

- centre resourcing and arrangements: this includes consideration of centre staffing, induction and training, policies and compliance with our centre agreement
- internal assessment and delivery: including reference to staff knowledge and skills, understanding of requirements, and appropriateness of delivery arrangements; also, delivery of external assessments including invigilation, adaptation of tasks at Entry 3, conduct of assessments and confidentiality (where appropriate)
- internal quality assurance: covering IQA procedures, whether staff are appropriately trained, and standardisation arrangements in place
- learner experience: that embraces appropriateness of initial assessment and learners being on the correct programme, learner induction and course support.

EQAs arrange quality monitoring visits to all recognised Centres. These visits:

- monitor the centre's compliance with the centre recognition terms and conditions by reviewing programme documentation and meeting managers and centre staff
- 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 of completion to learners is secure.

EQAs contact the centre in advance of a visit, however Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to undertake unannounced visits including during assessment times.

EQAs will request information from the centre in advance of a planned 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 is available.

If a centre cancels a pre-arranged monitoring visit at short notice the EQA 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 EQA completes a Quality Monitoring Report with actions set where required, which will be sent to the centre for reference afterwards.

The frequency of the quality monitoring visits will be determined by the learner registration volume of and actions arising from previous monitoring activity.

Centres found in breach of these procedures may be subject to sanctions by Gateway Qualifications. Please refer to the Gateway Qualifications Sanctions Policy.

6.2   Internal Quality Assurance

As the assessments are tutor/assessor marked (with the exception of objective items that are auto-marked) the centre must operate an internal quality assurance process. This ensures that EDSQ standards are being applied consistently within a centre through training, standardisation, sampling of marking and feedback. A centre's internal quality assurance process is led by the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) who is responsible for ensuring that all tutor/assessors are marking assessments in line with the standards set by Gateway Qualifications.

Internal Standardisation

Internal standardisation is a collaborative process by which tutor/assessors within a centre consider work that they have marked and, using pre-determined criteria, reach a common agreement on standards as being typical of work at a particular level by comparing samples and providing peer evaluation.

Having participated in the initial training (see Section 5.4 Centre guidance and Training) and a Gateway Qualifications standardisation event, centres will be expected to conduct regular internal standardisation exercises to support the interpretation and application of the mark schemes and mitigate the risk of inconsistent marking between tutor/assessors. Where a centre is offering both qualification levels, internal standardisation exercises will be required for both qualifications.

Standardisation will be facilitated by the Centre's IQA and should include all those involved in marking assessments. Centre standardisation events should be held at regular intervals and to a schedule which reflects delivery patterns and supports the marking of live assessments. Centres will be required to keep records of each internal standardisation event including the date, attendees and notes on any outcomes and actions. Centres will be required to store these reports securely for three years and Gateway Qualifications may ask to see these records as part of the centre quality assurance and monitoring activities.

Further guidance on running internal standardisation is provided in the Centre Guide for Essential Digital Skills.

6.3 Quality assuring centre marking

Once the internal quality assurance process is complete, a Digital EQA will be allocated to a centre to sample the centre marking remotely within Surpass. Where a Centre is offering both qualification levels, separate samples will be taken for each qualification.

The Digital EQA considers whether the sample provides evidence that the centre understands the standard as represented in the mark scheme and is applying it consistently. If they are satisfied that this is the case results are issued. A report will be completed by the Digital EQA and made available to the Centres once sampling activity has been completed.

The sample selected is based on the number of learners and the centre's risk rating, derived from centre monitoring.

Evidence of inconsistent marking and actions taken informs the centre's risk rating and this information will be taken into account with the sampling of future assessments, for example, leading to an increase in sampling size.

As part of the qualification delivery monitoring process, from time-to-time centres will be asked by the Quality Team to provide the following:
- Invigilation reports
- Attendance records
- Internal Quality Assurance reports
- Records and evidence relating to any Reasonable Adjustments

These documents will be reviewed and reported on by an EQA, with feedback and any actions provided to the centre. The outcome will contribute to the centre's risk rating for EDSQ.

6.4 Malpractice

Malpractice is any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the internal and external assessment process, and/or the validity of certificates. It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:

- the assessment process
- the integrity of a regulated qualification
- the validity of a result or certificate
- the reputation and credibility of Gateway Qualifications
- the qualification to the public at large.

Centre staff should be familiar with the contents of Gateway Qualifications' Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

7. Learner Registration and Results

7.1   Registration

Centres will register learners via the online registration portal, Quartzweb and then schedule the assessment in Surpass.

Learner registration guidance is available on our website.

Late entries are not permitted for these qualifications as these qualifications are available on-demand.

7.2   Resitting an assessment

A learner who does not achieve a pass and wishes to re-take the assessment may resit. There will be no cap on the number of resits a candidate may take. There is no minimum time period set out for Essential Digital Skills to ensure that all learners have access to resits. However, centres will be advised to ensure that additional teaching and learning takes place before a learner resits. Resit patterns will be monitored by Gateway Qualifications.

Gateway Qualifications will ensure that learners are allocated a different assessment to that originally taken.

The first resit is provided at no additional cost; any subsequent resits will incur a fee.

7.3   Awarding

The qualifications will be awarded as Pass or Fail. Learners must pass the assessment to be awarded a Pass.

7.4   Issuing results

Results for learners who do not reach the minimum standard for a pass will be recorded as fail.

A candidate results report will be available for centres to download from Surpass.

Guidance on how to produce this report is available on the website.

As the qualifications are new, the issue of results and certificates will take longer initially in order that the standard setting process can be completed. Once the standard setting process has been completed it is anticipated that certificates will be processed within the standard turnaround time once results have been confirmed.

7.5   Appeals

Centres must have internal appeal arrangements which learners can access if they wish to appeal against a decision taken by Centres, which will include a named contact at the

Centre. These arrangements have to be transparent and accessible in order that appeals from learners can be received, considered and resolved fairly.

Please refer to the Gateway Qualifications' Appeals policy.

7.6   Enquiries

Enquiries about assessment decisions should be made once the centre has followed its internal enquiries and appeal procedures.

Contact details are available on our website.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 National standards for essential digital skills

Extract from National standards for essential digital skills (Reference: DfE-00082-2019): skill areas, statements and amplification.

1. Using devices and handling information

1.1 Skills statements

		Entry level	Level 1
Using devices	1	Know what is meant by hardware, software, operating systems and applications; locate and install an application; apply system settings, including those for accessibility.	Keep operating system and applications up to date.
Finding and evaluating information	2	Navigate online content using hyperlinks, menus and other navigation elements to locate required information; carry out searches to find information and content.	Use appropriate techniques to carry out and refine searches, taking into account currency, relevance, and reliability, and be aware that results are ranked by search engines.
Managing and storing information	3	Open, read and save information from/to a file using appropriate naming conventions; work with files and folders to store, organise and retrieve information using local and remote storage.	Organise and store information using files, folders, hierarchy and tagging to enable efficient information retrieval on a device and across devices.
Identifying and solving technical problems	4	Recognise when a technical problem has been encountered, solve simple technical problems, and seek assistance when unable to solve a technical problem.	Identify and apply solutions to common technical problems, using online tutorials, FAQs and help facilities.

Developing digital skills	5		Identify and use appropriate online learning resources to maintain and improve digital skills.

1.2   Amplification

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
Using devices	***Devices*** will include computers (desktop/laptop) and mobile devices, smart devices, and wearable technology. ***Hardware*** means main physical elements that make up computers, (desktop/laptop) and mobile devices, smart devices, and wearable technology. It does not include an understanding of computer architecture. ***Software*** means the various kinds of programs providing functionality on devices. ***Operating systems*** include those typically used for computers (desktop/laptop) and mobile devices. ***Applications*** include applications for computers (desktop/laptop) and mobile devices. ***System settings*** include display, sound, connecting to Wi-Fi, time, language settings and accessibility settings. Accessibility settings include use of a magnifier, the use of screen readers and use of voice controls. Know main features and uses of devices. Know the role of operating systems and applications. Know that programs and data require storage, and that different devices have different storage capacities. Know how	***Operating systems*** (OS) include those typically used for computers (desktop/laptop) and mobile devices. ***Applications*** include applications for computers, (desktop/laptop) and mobile devices. Know how to check for OS and application updates, and to choose how and when an operating system or application is updated.	*accessibility, operating system*

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
	to find and install an application. Know how to select and adjust system settings.		
Finding and evaluating information	*Navigation elements* include: • menus • hyperlinks • browser navigation controls (back and forward buttons, bookmarks). *Searching* refers to searching online for a specific and clearly defined piece of information or content. Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to web pages: • websites • hyperlink navigation • URLs • search engines • keywords • web browsers types of information, documents and media.	*Searching* refers to searching online for information or content and on a device for files or applications. Searching **online** may include: • using quotation marks to look for specific terms • using an image database or image search service if searching for images • applying filters relating to time or origin • searching within a specific website or social media platform for information, images, music or video. It may also include adopting an iterative approach of refining search terms to narrow or broaden searches as required. Searching online may be using a "traditional" search engine (text-based) or using a digital assistant (for example, through voice control). Searching **on a device** may include searching on: • file names • partial file names • file content *Use appropriate techniques* includes adopting an appropriate approach to searching based on the type of information sought.	*browser, search engine, content, search engine ranking, URL, reliable, currency, HTTPS*

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
		Methods of identifying the **relevance** and **reliability of** sources when searching **online** include: • checking that a website uses HTTPS and has a valid certificate • being wary of poor-quality websites (low quality design/graphics, broken links, poor English etc.) • checking the date of the information provided • checking more than one source when searching for information or consuming news online • considering the source of the information and whether they might have a reason to provide biased or false information. Have an awareness that the top online search results may include paid for or sponsored listings.	
Managing and storing information	Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to: • files and file types • file size • applications typically associated with file types • folders • digital storage (memory, hard drives) • local and remote storage.	***Across devices*** refers to storing files on cloud storage using one device and accessing the files using another device. Know and understand folder structures, file information including metadata and tagging, and accessing data across devices. Know and understand limitations on file sizes when using some services (e.g. email attachments, file size upload limits) and the benefits of using file compression to make	*information, file, remote storage, file naming convention, folder, hierarchy, tagging, device, credentials*

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
		effective use of storage capacity and to reduce data transfer times. Understand and be able to use terminology describing data storage requirements: bytes, kilobyte (KB), megabyte (MB), gigabyte (GB), terabyte (TB). Understand and be able to use terminology describing data transfer speeds: Megabits per second (Mbps).	
Identifying and solving technical problems	***Recognise when a technical problem has been encountered*** includes recognising when there is a problem with a device or software and knowing that some problems are caused by user errors. User errors may include: • using incorrect credentials • incorrectly connecting hardware • attempting to open a file with an unsuitable application • attempting to save a file using a filename with inappropriate characters. ***Solving simple problems*** refers to solving issues (such as system or application freeze, or internet connection issues) with a simple solution, such as an application re- start, device re-boot or network re- connection.	***Common technical problems*** refers to solving commonly encountered issues with a straightforward solution such as: • resetting login credentials • changing Wi-Fi settings • following the instructions in an online tutorial to change a software or app setting • disabling an app, or uninstalling and reinstalling software. Know and understand how to use help facilities, online forums and tutorials.	

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
	Be aware of typical technical problems, e.g. on-screen error messages arising from application or peripheral hardware malfunctions, or online connectivity and communication issues.		
Developing digital skills	None required	*Online learning resources* include FAQs, guides, videos, tutorials and advice forums.	

2. Creating and editing

2.1 Skills statements

		Entry level	Level 1
Creating and editing documents	6	Use a suitable application to enter, edit and format information (including text, numbers and graphics).	Use applications to enter, edit, format, layout information (including text, tables, graphics, charts) for a range of purposes and audiences.
Creating and editing digital media	7	Capture and save images, sound and video.	Edit and enhance an image.
Processing numerical data	8		Enter, edit, sort, process, format, and chart numeric data.

2.2   Amplification

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
Creating and editing documents	*Editing text* includes entering or amending, selecting, copying, cutting and pasting text. *Formatting text* includes bold, underline, italics, font sizes and colours, text alignment, bulleted and numbered lists. *Formatting graphics* includes positioning, sizing, borders. Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to documents (including types e.g. word processed, presentations, etc.) and associated applications), with understanding of the purpose of different applications and typical uses of different document types.	*Format tables/graphics/charts* includes positioning, sizing, captioning, borders, flow of text. *Layout* includes adopting appropriate common conventions for specific purposes and audiences e.g. a formal report for managers, an advertisement for consumers, a presentation for colleagues, etc. Know and understand layout conventions and styles for different document purposes and audiences and be familiar with a range of formatting and layout features for different information including text, tables, images and charts.	*document, graphic, application, information, digital content*
Creating and editing digital media	"Capture and save" means using a device to grab an image, record video, or record sound, and storing the result on the device. Know and understand terminology relating to digital devices and digital media, including common file types such as JPEG, MPEG and WAV.	*Edit and enhance* includes altering the appearance of an image by adjusting the contrast or colour balance, adding a text caption to an image, cropping an image to keep only the section required, resizing etc. The application used may be a desktop application, or it may be an application on a touch-screen device. Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to image editing and enhancing.	*digital media*

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
Processing numerical data	None required	*Format* includes cell alignment, number formatting (e.g. number, currency, date, percentage), merging/splitting cells, etc. *Process and chart* includes using an application's functionality to carry out simple calculations (such as totalling), filtering, using simple formulae and creating simple charts (e.g. with a single data series, no trend lines or data labels etc.). Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to entering and editing information in a worksheet, formatting using row and column size adjustment, cell borders and data types (including formatting currency, percentages, and number of decimal places for numeric data). Know how to sort data on one criterion, use simple filters, complete calculations using relative cell references and formulae with up to two mathematical operators, and replicate values and formulae. Know how to create and format charts from data, including bar/column charts, pie charts and line graphs with suitable titles, axis category labels, data labels and legends.	

3. Communicating

3.1 Skills statements

		Entry level	Level 1
Communicating and sharing	9	Create, edit and use contacts when sending and receiving online communications comprising text and other digital content to individual and multiple recipients; initiate and participate in a video call.	Identify and use appropriate modes of online communication for a range of contexts and audiences.
Managing traceable online activities	10	Identify the types of digital activities that leave a 'digital footprint' and understand the implications.	Take steps to manage online identity.

3.2   Amplification

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
Communicating and sharing	***Sending… digital content*** includes sharing access to online content. ***Video call*** refers to a simple one-to-one communication via live video. It does not include a video conference involving groups of people, nor does it require scheduling meetings or inviting participants. Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to emailing, texting and using other messaging apps, contacts and groups, and video calls.	***Modes of online communication*** include email, instant message, text message, social media, blog, collaboration tools and services. ***Contexts*** refers to the range of circumstances in which an online communication could be made e.g. at work, socially, in general public. ***Audiences*** refers to different individuals or groups of people e.g. a colleague, a friend, a group of friends, users of a social media platform etc.	*contacts, online communication*

| Managing traceable online activities | Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to private and public communications (including the characteristics and benefits of each) and the actions which contribute to an individual's digital footprint.

Know that a digital footprint is data left by online activity, including search history and websites/social media platforms visited, emails, uploaded photos and information sent to online services, blogs and social media activity. | *Managing online identity* includes:

• using an appropriate online name and email address
• understanding that online activities leave traces, and taking action such as being careful about the information shared and choosing appropriate location settings
• searching for yourself online in order to understand what data you are sharing publicly
• using a secondary email account to sign up to sites
• unsubscribing from mailing lists
• deleting unwanted social media accounts, and old posts | *digital footprint,* |

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
		• instigating right to be forgotten under data protection law. Know and understand how an individual's digital footprint can be managed. This may include the use of privacy settings, managing the number of accounts in use, using secondary email accounts, avoiding oversharing information, using private browsing, and using digital security and privacy tools.	

4. Transacting

4.1 Skills statements

		Entry level	Level 1
Using online services	11	Complete and submit a form as part of an online transaction, complying with verification checks.	Interact with online transactional services and manage account settings.
Buying securely online	12	Buy an item/service online using a chosen method of online payment.	Compare online buying options for an item/service and identify best option.

4.2 Amplification

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
Using online services	***Online form*** typically comprises a simple single page form used to enter information (e.g. name and/or contact details) to register for, or to request a service e.g. make an appointment, or collection of household rubbish. Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to online forms and data validation, verification checks, entering data (including numerical data, for example in an online form or calculator).	Online transactional services include online shopping, finance (e.g. online banking), utilities (e.g. gas, electricity, water), government services (paying council tax online, booking a doctor's appointment, applying for benefits) media (e.g. streaming services) etc. ***Interact*** will include uploading/downloading of documents and images as required. ***Manage*** includes setting account preferences. Understand that file sizes, e.g. for images can involve large amounts of data and the file size may need to be reduced before sending.	*verification check, transactional online service, authentication*

| Buying securely online | *Online payment* methods may include: credit/debit cards; third party online and/or mobile payment services; third party online and/or mobile digital wallet services etc. | *Compare online buying options for an item/service* includes comparing different product options, prices, delivery options etc. across multiple providers or retailers and selecting the best option in terms of fitness for purpose, price and delivery. It also includes being aware of possible scam sites.

Know how to establish and compare price and delivery options for products and services. Know how to identify scam sites. Methods for identifying scam sites could include:

• checking for the padlock next to the website's URL
• being aware that scammers sometimes register domain names similar to those of reputable organisations | |

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
		• checking if the website looks professional and is written in good English and does not make unsubstantiated claims • checking site reviews on consumer review / comparison sites, being aware of the possibility of fake reviews • checking that a company offering goods and services lists a place of business, that it is possible to contact them and that they have a returns policy.	

5. Being safe and responsible online

5.1 Skills statements

		Entry level	Level 1
Protecting privacy	13	Identify situations where personal information may be stored by devices and online activity; identify and use simple methods to protect personal information and privacy.	Protect personal information and privacy, understanding personal rights and options for controlling the use of personal data.
Protecting data	14	Be aware of online risks and threats; identify and use simple methods to protect a device and data from online risks and threats; be aware of the security risks of using public Wi-Fi.	Protect devices and data from online risks and threats.
	15	Configure and use secure ways to access devices and online services.	Configure and use multifactor authentication to access and use online services.
	16		Backup data locally and using a cloud provider.
Being responsible online	17	Know how to report concerns with online content.	
	18		Use appropriate language and behaviour online.
Digital wellbeing	19	Recognise and minimise the effects of physical stresses of being online.	Apply simple methods to avoid physical and psychological health risks while using devices.

5.2 Amplification

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
Protecting privacy	***Personal information … stored by devices and online activity*** refers to the collection and use of personal information and data by organisations (often used to personalise online experiences and target advertisements). *Methods of **protecting personal information and privacy** may include:* • guarding your date of birth and telephone number online • using a pseudonym on social media sites • looking for HTTPs when entering login credentials or other personal data • being aware that the security of your digital devices can be compromised, hacked and/or hijacked etc. Know and understand implications of sharing personal information. Know when personal information may be stored by devices.	*Methods of **protecting personal information and privacy** may include:* • using multiple email addresses (to separate life and work or to hide identity if required) • considering the access privileges for apps carefully during installation • using private browsing • using the appropriate settings to keep your social network activity private • using the appropriate settings on a mobile device to restrict or grant GPS location information • block unwanted communications from selected users etc. Know and understand key rights available under data protection law: the right to see what personal data organisations hold about you, to withdraw consent and demand that personal data can be rectified or deleted. It should be understood that options are available to control the use of personal data, e.g. cookie settings. It is not necessary to understand issues of data protection compliance relating to organisations.	*personal information, device, personal data, GPS*
Protecting data	***Methods of protecting devices and data*** include: • using anti-virus and firewalls	***Methods of protecting devices and data*** include: • using multi-factor authentication • encrypting hard drives	*device, patch, multifactor authentication, external storage,*

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
	• securing mobile devices (using screenlock etc.) • using secure passwords • being mindful of the security risks of using public Wi-Fi networks • being mindful of phishing emails • being mindful of risks associated with clicking on links found in emails or other digital messages. ***Secure ways to access a device*** include strong passwords, fingerprint, facial, voice recognition, or similar. Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to online risks and threats, how personal data may be compromised or stolen, how data and a device can be protected. Know that the security of digital devices can be compromised, hacked and/or hijacked, and be aware of the nature of and threats posed by viruses and phishing.	• using a VPN where appropriate (to access a work network, for example) • using a password manager application • understanding that browsers can cache login details and the dangers of this on public computers. Know and understand the advantages of backing up the data locally and to the cloud. Be aware of the nature of and threats posed by: • worms • trojans • ransomware • identity theft. Be aware of commercial aspects and risk in a work environment.	*browser, cloud provider, phishing*
Being responsible online	***Concerns with online content*** could include illegal, inappropriate or harmful content.	***Use appropriate language and behaviour online*** includes: • respecting others online and not using inappropriate language, trolling or online harassment	*online content*

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
		• recognising that threatening, abusive or grossly offensive online communications could be a criminal offence • blocking, filtering or reporting inappropriate content • respecting copyright and other intellectual property rights such as trademarks and software licenses that may restrict access or reuse of online content. Know and understand that sending communications regarded as threatening, abusive or grossly offensive to another person using an online method including email, instant messaging or social media could be committing a criminal offence such as harassment or malicious communication. Understand that company policies may prohibit activities, and carry serious sanctions for employees. Know personal obligations with respect to copyright and other intellectual property rights and why you should not access such content without permission/license, and the risks and consequences of music / TV / film piracy. Know how to block or filter inappropriate content or behaviour.	

Skill Statement	Entry level	Level 1	Glossary terms
Digital wellbeing	***Physical stresses*** include pain from poorly positioned equipment and/or bad posture, repetitive strain injury caused by repeated movements over a long period of time, eyestrain, headaches, etc. Know and understand the terminology and concepts relating to potential physical stresses of using devices. Know that the effects can be minimised by using an adjustable chair which supports good posture, and not being too close or too far away from the screen/device and peripherals e.g. keyboard, mouse etc.	***Physical health risks*** refers to the risk of health problems developing as a consequence of physical stresses. ***Psychological health risks*** include addiction to online activity, or stress caused by factors including overuse of devices, cyber-bulling, fatigue, poor sleep patterns, etc. ***Methods to avoid physical and psychological health risks while using devices*** include taking regular breaks, using a wrist rest when using a mouse, limiting screen time, avoiding screen time close to bedtime, reporting cyberbullying, etc. Know and understand the potential physical and psychological health risks arising from stresses of being online / using devices, and know how to avoid or minimise these, including: • knowing not to respond to cyberbullying and knowing how to report it • knowing that setting time limits on device use reduces the risk of overuse and associated fatigue.	