

Instructions for the conduct of EDSQ assessments

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 gateway
qualifications

learning your way

General document information

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Introduction

Qualifications covered by this guidance

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

Assessment structure

The online assessments for both the Entry Level 3 and Level 1 EDSQ qualifications are externally set by Gateway Qualifications.

Assessments are on-demand, and Candidates are permitted to take the assessments on different devices, including a laptop or desktop computer. Candidates are required to complete the assessment within Surpass, Gateway Qualifications' online assessment platform.

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 within a 14-day period	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

Preparing for assessment

Equipment and software

Suitable equipment and software must be available for the assessments. Suitable hardware could be a laptop or PC. Further details on [System and Hardware Requirements](#) are provided on our website.

Staff and tutor laptops must not be used for assessments. Devices used must allow the download of image and text files.

Suitable software must be provided as follows:

Candidate/Centre Access Requirements	Entry Level 3	Level 1
Internet browser(s)	✓	✓
Email programme(s)	✓	✓
Word processing software	✓	✓
Presentation software	✗	✓
Spreadsheet software	✗	✓

Clean drives for assessments

Each Candidate must be provided with a secure, clean area to save assessment files to.

This area **must not** contain any existing files, either belonging to the Candidate or any other person. Candidates must not have access to files created prior to the assessment during their assessment.

This may be achieved, for example, through the use of:

- laptops designated for assessment only, which have no access to network files and do not contain any saved files
- specific exam logins with profiles that contain no access to any other folders or files

Note that a breach of this requirement may constitute maladministration or malpractice as per Gateway Qualifications' Malpractice and Maladministration Policy. It is the Centre's responsibility to ensure there is an adequate process in place to ensure drives are wiped before and after each assessment. The Centre's process may be called upon for review by Gateway Qualifications in instances where concerns are raised as to the effectiveness of said process.

Internet access

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

Unique login

Candidates must be provided with a unique login to the assessment. Under no circumstances should Candidates sit assessments using tutor/staff logins or other Candidate logins. As outlined above, the use of specific exam logins is recommended.

A breach of this requirement may constitute maladministration or malpractice as per Gateway Qualifications' Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Registering Candidates

Candidates sit EDSQ assessments in the Surpass system, and these can take place at any time. However, Candidates must first be registered via the Quartz portal prior to scheduling an assessment. Candidate details will then automatically appear in Surpass for an assessment to be scheduled.

Guidance on registering Candidates via the Quartz portal can be found on our website on the [Registering Learners](#) page.

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

Gateway Qualifications understands its requirement as an awarding organisation to make reasonable adjustments for Candidates with a disability (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010) so 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 EDSQ. Guidance for Centres on the reasonable adjustment applications process is set out in the Centre Handbook, which is available on the 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 Candidates with additional time.
- Centres may provide Candidates 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](#).

Scheduling an assessment in Surpass

Both mock and live EDSQ assessments are scheduled in Surpass.

Assessments should be scheduled **a minimum of 24 hours before** the assessment date and ideally at least five days before.

The following guidance for using Surpass can be found on our [website](#):

- System and hardware requirements
- Scheduling assessments
- Rebooking or cancelling assessments
- Administration and invigilation
- Marking and internal quality assurance

Scheduling mock assessments

Take care not to book a live assessment in error when scheduling a mock, as this may constitute maladministration or malpractice as per Gateway Qualifications' Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

The process is almost the same for both. Refer to our Surpass guidance for further details.

Accessing the assessments

Once assessments have been booked in Surpass, supervision (invigilation) packs will be available for download.

The packs contain the following:

- Attendance Register
- Invigilation Report
- Keycode slips for Candidates

Invigilation packs must be stored securely before and after the assessment.

Mock assessments

Mock assessments provide Candidates with the opportunity to use the Surpass system and experience the structure of the assessments before taking the live test. Mock assessments can be scheduled on the online platform Surpass in the same way as live assessments. Detailed written guidance and step-by-step videos are available on our website, and they show the entire process.

These are marked in the same way as live assessments, so they also provide an opportunity for Markers and IQAs to familiarise themselves with the Surpass system prior to working with any live assessments.

Unannounced Visits

Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to visit Centres at any time, including during assessment activity, without prior notification of the visit. Centres are required to accommodate such monitoring activity in accordance with Centre Agreement terms and conditions.

Assessment taking conditions

EDSQ assessments must be taken under supervised conditions. This means Candidates are directly supervised at all times during the assessment. This process of supervision is known as invigilation in the Surpass system.

Assessment supervision

A Tutor/Assessor may take on the supervision duties but must not assist a Candidate with answering a question. Where a Candidate is given improper support or over-assistance during assessment, this constitutes malpractice, as stated in the [Gateway Qualifications Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure](#).

All assessment Supervisors must be trained by the Centre to ensure they are able to administer the assessments securely and in compliance with the regulations in this guide.

The Centre must retain records of competency for Supervisors, such as details of the training provided and signed declarations by participating staff members. These may be called upon during any instances of investigation into maladministration or malpractice.

Supervision Guidance

The Centre must ensure that:

- all Candidates are within direct sight of the Supervisor/Invigilator throughout the assessment
- Candidates complete their work independently
- interaction with other Candidates does not occur
- staff overseeing the assessment are familiar with the specific instructions relating to the assessments contained in this document
- Candidates are not offered any advice or assistance other than accessing the assessment.

Surpass Invigilate screen

During assessments, Supervisors should have access to the Invigilate screen in Surpass to:

- monitor Candidate progress
- pause/resume assessments if required, for example, during an emergency
- ensure all Candidates have submitted their assessments properly once completed

Refer to the EDSQ Surpass Guidance for Centres for further details.

Assessment room

When more than one Candidate is taking an assessment in the same room, the assessments should be scheduled with the same start time to cause the least disruption to Candidates.

Any room in which an assessment is held must provide Candidates 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 Candidates with disabilities (in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010).

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

Recording attendance

The Supervisor should check the Attendance Register prior to starting the assessment to ensure:

- the date is correct
- the correct assessment type has been booked (e.g. a mock rather than a live test)

The Supervisor will be required to complete the Attendance Register (downloaded from Surpass as part of the invigilation pack) prior to the start of each assessment session. They should also indicate Candidates who were booked on the assessment and did not attend.

You can find guidance on creating and printing invigilation packs on our [website](#) and in our Surpass guidance documents/videos.

Candidate instructions

Prior to starting the assessment, the Supervisor must:

- advise Candidates to avoid using personal information such as existing passwords
- inform the Candidates they are now subject to supervised conditions
- warn Candidates that any unauthorised material (e.g. teaching materials, mock assessment materials) must be handed in
- remind Candidates that they are forbidden to communicate in any way with, seek assistance from, or give assistance to another Candidate while they are in the assessment room
- ensure any electronic bilingual dictionaries are on the same device as the assessment, i.e., Candidates may not use a bilingual dictionary on a mobile phone
- remind Candidates which assessment type/level they are sitting and ask them to double-check that all details shown on the screen are correct before starting (e.g., Candidate name, level, assessment type)

Timings

Note that Essential Digital Skills assessments are not automatically timed in Surpass.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to time the assessments and ensure Candidates are aware of start and finish times.

Contact during the assessment

The Supervisor may advise Candidates of their individual key codes. Input from the Supervisor, such as clarification of requirements, is acceptable. However, the Supervisor must not provide answers to the assessment questions. The Supervisor should keep a record of feedback and advice provided to groups of Candidates and to an individual Candidate where this may affect the assessment outcome.

Evacuation Procedures

Supervisors and Candidates must be aware of the evacuation procedure in case of an emergency. The following action should be taken:

- stop the assessment and pause the online assessment
- collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all Candidates are present)
- evacuate the assessment room - Candidates should leave the room in silence
- Candidates must be supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the assessment room to ensure there is no discussion about the assessment being sat
- the time of the interruption and how long it lasted should be noted on the invigilation record
- Candidates should be allowed the full working time for the assessment
- a full report of the incident should be made, and a copy should be sent to the Customer Excellence Team at Gateway Qualifications.

Supervised breaks

- Between Part 1 and Part 2 of the assessment, Candidates are allowed a supervised break of 15 minutes to leave the assessment room temporarily.
- Candidates must be accompanied by a member of staff if leaving the assessment room.
- During this time, it is recommended that the assessment is paused in Surpass.

Assessment support and contingency planning

The Supervisor should be familiar with the software and system used by Candidates to deal with technical difficulties that may arise.

However, it is strongly recommended that:

- technical help is available within the Centre during the test to deal with device crashes and other possible complications
- several spare devices are available during the test to allow Candidates to move to another device if necessary
- up-to-date virus prevention measures are in place.

Conduct of Candidates during assessments

Communication between Candidates is not allowed at any time during the assessment.

Candidates must be supervised throughout the assessment process. The Supervisor must give complete attention to this duty at all times, be vigilant, remain aware of emerging situations, and look out for possible cheating, malpractice, or Candidates feeling unwell. The Supervisor is required to move around the assessment room quietly and at frequent intervals.

The Supervisor should be aware that Candidates may only use the internet as required by the assessment and not for any other purpose.

Any irregularities must be recorded.

Accessing and using files

During the assessment, Candidates must only have access to work on files that have been provided as part of the assessment. Candidates must not have access to prepared templates or other files.

Candidates will be required to download documents from the Surpass system and work on them outside of Surpass. They will then be required to upload completed files. It is important that this is only carried out within the assessment room.

Files can be uploaded in the following formats – .doc, .docx, .pdf, .jpg, .png, .ppt, .pptx, .xls, .xlsx, .pub, .pubx.

The available formats will vary according to the question type; for example, a .jpg file would not be an appropriate format for evidence for a spreadsheet task.

Where Candidates are required to produce work outside of the assessment system, the Supervisor must make sure that it is the Candidate's own work and the work is completed during the assessment session.

Candidates are not permitted to have access to memory sticks, textbooks, Centre-prepared manuals, software-specific help facilities or other similar material during the assessment.

Details for Assessments

Supervisors may provide the following which Candidates may require for the assessment:

- Access to an email account
- A postcode
- An email address
- A telephone number

Candidates are not required to enter any of their personal details (for example, passwords) as part of the assessments.

Authentication of Candidate work

Where assessments are Tutor/Assessor observed, Tutors/Assessors must provide confirmation of authenticity within the Observation Record which is uploaded in Surpass.

Misconduct

These types of assessments rely heavily on the integrity of the Candidates. In cases where misconduct occurs or is thought to have occurred, Centres are required to inform Gateway Qualifications without delay. Gateway Qualifications will then determine the next course of action to be taken. This may involve an investigation whereby results may be withheld in accordance with the [Gateway Qualifications Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure](#).

Following Assessment

The Supervisor must ensure all Candidate assessments are submitted by Candidates and marked as “Finished” within the Surpass Invigilation Screen.

All records relating to the assessments (e.g. records of reasonable adjustments, attendance records, invigilation records) must be retained for a period of three years and may be requested as part of a Centre compliance visit.

To maintain the confidentiality of the assessments, **the Supervisor must ensure any downloaded files are deleted from the device** used by the Candidate at the end of the assessment.

Maintaining Confidentiality

The confidentiality of assessments and mark schemes must be maintained throughout the assessment and quality assurance processes. Failure to do so may result in Gateway Qualifications conducting an investigation in accordance with the [Gateway Qualifications Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure](#). Appropriate security systems must be put in place to prevent unauthorised access to the assessment materials.

Marking must be carried out in a location where the confidentiality of the assessments and mark schemes can be maintained.

The Centre must advise 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.

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.
- Centres must maintain the confidentiality of Candidate responses and Candidate details.

Screenshots of assessment questions **must not** be made from Surpass.

Assessment content must not be duplicated or emailed.

Observed task and assessment adaptation at Entry Level 3

At Entry level 3, a small proportion of the specifications are assessed through Tutor/Assessor observation, e.g. making a video call. Observed tasks will be set by Gateway Qualifications and undertaken at any time from registration to 14 days after the timed assessment on Surpass. The outcomes of these tasks must be recorded on an Observation Record, which the Tutor/Assessor will need to complete and upload to Surpass. It contains an authentication statement to be signed electronically by the Tutor/Assessor to confirm that all work is the Candidate's own.

External quality assurance staff may request evidence as part of the ongoing Centre monitoring.

For these tasks, Candidates may use different devices such as a mobile phone, a tablet or a laptop. Tutors should select the most appropriate device.

Centres may make minor adaptations to each task to suit the device being used as illustrated on the Observation Record. It is recognised that Centres may need to adapt these tasks to reflect the different Candidate groups and the devices available and to meet the requirements of their safeguarding or other policies. The amount of adaptation that Centres can make to a task is minimal, and Centres are not required to submit them before they use them.

Potential Maladministration/Malpractice

Potential Maladministration/Malpractice	Appropriate Mitigations
Candidates are not provided with clean drives for their assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specific exam logins or use dedicated laptops • Ensure all logins used for assessments are cleared of all folders/files after use or are single use only • Establish a rigorous process to ensure Candidates do not use their own logins • Do not allow Candidates to use inappropriate logins, such as those used by staff • Train assessment Supervisors fully in the processes for setting up, running, and concluding assessments, including the use of clean drives for Candidates
Centre staff book a live assessment in error instead of a mock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure assessments are booked at least 24 hours in advance of the assessment date • Check that attendance/invigilation records reflect the required level/type prior to commencing the assessment • Ask Candidates to closely check and confirm their Surpass onscreen details prior to starting the assessment • Ensure all staff have access to and follow the EDSQ Surpass Guidance for Centres
Assessments are not marked or moderated within a suitable timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all assessments are marked within 14 days of the assessment date • Ensure all internal quality assurance activity takes place within 28 days of the assessment date
There is a breach of confidential assessment material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not screenshot live assessments • Do not email details of live assessment material
Centre staff mark assessments before undertaking the mandatory training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all relevant staff register for the Delivering & Assessing EDSQ webinar and attend prior to commencing any marking of assessments



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