

Education and Training Qualifications – Permitted Adaptations

Context

2020-21

After the Extraordinary Regulatory Framework (ERF) ended in summer 2020, the regulators implemented an extended version for the 2020-21 academic year. This was due to the further disruption to teaching, learning and assessment that occurred due to lockdowns and social distancing measures. This regulatory framework allowed some of the usual 'rules' to be flexed temporarily by Awarding Organisations, permitting certain adaptations. **The Extended ERF (EERF) was incorporated into the VTQ Contingency Regulatory Framework (VCRF) which ran alongside the General Conditions for the whole of the 2020-21 academic year.** Learners could achieve either under the General Conditions or under the VCRF.

VTQ Contingency Regulatory Framework (VCRF) (up to 31st August 2021)

Awarding Organisations were required by the regulators to consider what adaptations they would make available to Centres under the temporary regulatory framework, **if Centres needed to be more flexible than the General Conditions allow.**

2021-22

The Department for Education and Ofqual's joint [consultation on the arrangements for the assessment and awarding of Vocational and Technical Qualifications and Other General Qualifications in 2021 to 2022](#) took place between 12 July and 26 July 2021.

The government's intention is that exams and assessments including for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) will go ahead in the academic year 2021 to 2022. The government recognises, however, that learners who will be taking exams and assessments may have experienced significant disruption to their education and that these students may also need continued support in the face of any further disruption.

Ofqual have consulted on the impact of changing the categorisation of qualifications in its regulatory framework, the [Vocational and technical qualifications contingency regulatory framework](#) (VCRF). In 2021-22, **Awarding Organisations are permitted to make adaptations to their qualifications and assessments**, and to carry forward any adaptations from academic year 2020 to 2021 where they are still **necessary** and **appropriate**. The intention is that certain adaptations may make VTQs more resilient to any further disruption as a result of a changing public health situation, so that assessments can continue.

Adaptations permitted in Education and Training qualifications

It is in everyone's interest to maintain the rigour and quality of the DET as the recognised teaching qualification for the FE sector and as this, in normal times, means competence to deliver face to face teaching and training, and employers would expect such from a qualification holder, it should always be borne in mind that it is a priority to seek to maximise face to face opportunities and assessments, wherever possible.

Therefore, in the case of the DET which is a large qualification, and opportunities for experience and assessment will extend through the year, centres should seek to delay such, insofar as possible, until face to face opportunities allow. Any deviations from the full qualification guidance should be the exception rather than the rule and every effort to be compliant should be made: these mitigations are to be applied in extremis. It should also be noted that as we are in a dynamic environment: these guidelines may be subject to further review to ensure they are still appropriate.

Under the current covid-related circumstances, it is recommended that learners on two year programmes be observed a maximum of four times in year one, and that the unit 'Developing teaching, learning and assessment in education and training' be delivered and assessed in year two, with knowledge units delivered at the start of the programme.

Therefore, the current position is that centres should comply with the full guidance and 100 hours of teaching practice and 8 observations are required as previously. Should, however the current situation restrict access to face to face teaching opportunities persist or there is a return to lockdown [local or otherwise] the following is permissible with the agreement of the Awarding Body:

- The requirement for 100 hours teaching practice remains, however
- This may include one to one, up to a maximum of 15 hours
- This may include live remote delivery, ie delivery where the tutor and learners are simultaneously present online and engaged and there is live interaction
- This may also now include asynchronous delivery, where the teacher prepares and delivers a session for learners to engage in at a later point providing:
 - 1] a full planning rationale for the session is provided
 - 2] there is robust evidence of teacher follow up eg critical exchanges with learners demonstrating some assessment of learning and clarification/adaptation of presentation for particular learners.Such asynchronous delivery may be counted to a maximum of 30 hours of teaching practice
- The requirement for 8 observations remains, however:
- This can include observations of one to one (to a maximum of two)
- This can include observations of live remote delivery
- Where necessary, one observation of an asynchronous sessions may be counted providing all evidence as above is [present and discussed as part of the review

Recordings of the live remote observation and remote observations of live face to face delivery must be securely stored and made available for IQA and EQA purposes.

The above are deviations from normal, established assessment practices, and therefore centres must obtain the agreement of their Awarding Body, stating clearly their justifications, before proceeding with them.

These conditions apply to DET courses to 31 December 2021, and may be subject to further review during this period.

Centres will have to provide a clear rationale for having to use these adaptations and Ascentis will determine if their use is 'necessary' and 'appropriate'. Here is a link to the [application form](#).

Limits on how these adaptations can be used will vary between the Education and Training qualifications. These limits and other adaptations that can be used are listed below.

Ascentis Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training (601/0307/3)

This guidance is broadly similar to that above in that there should be an attempt to provide face to face experience on these courses and that exceptions to the full qualification guidance are only allowed in extremis and with Awarding Body permission.

Should the current situation re restricted access to face to face teaching opportunities persist or there is a return to lockdown [local or otherwise] the following is permissible with the agreement of the Awarding Body:

- The requirement for 30 hours teaching practice remains, however
- This may include live remote delivery, ie delivery where the tutor and learners are simultaneously present online and engaged and there is live interaction
- This may also now include asynchronous delivery, where the teacher prepares and delivers a session for learners to engage in at a later point providing:

1] a full planning rationale for the session is provided

2] there is robust evidence of teacher follow up eg critical exchanges with learners demonstrating some assessment of learning and clarification/adaptation of presentation for particular learners.

Such delivery may be counted to a maximum of 10 hours of teaching practice

- The requirement for 3 observations remains, however:
- This can include observations of live remote delivery
- Where necessary, one observation of an asynchronous sessions may be counted providing all evidence as above is (present and discussed as part of the review)

Assessor qualifications

Ascentis Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement (501/1730/0)

Ascentis Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement (501/1731/2)

Ascentis Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment (501/1750/6)

Internal Quality Assurance qualifications

Ascentis Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (501/1734/8)

Ascentis Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (501/1733/6)

Awarding Bodies have a responsibility to uphold standards and ensure qualifications are fit for purpose. Therefore, any deviations from accepted qualification specifications must be in extremis and subject to awarding body approval beforehand. The situation as we emerge from the extremities of the Covid lockdown and its consequences means continued challenges for qualifications which require in person observation. A priority should be attached to arranging in person observation but we recognise this may still be problematic and so where this is not possible some adjustment may be made in line with the following guidance.

It is recommended that to provide the best experience for learners, conditions during learning programmes should be as real and as close as possible to those likely to be experienced during their careers. These mitigations will be subject to review again for January 2022

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Whilst the current situation persists, live remote observation may be permitted providing all participants are present during the live observation (ie the person assessing the candidate assessor, the candidate assessor and the learner) and they have a clear view and are able to hear the detail of the assessment activity for the duration of the activity.

Centres must discuss with and get the agreement of their Awarding Body, with have clear justifications for using live remote observations before proceeding with them. Additionally, centres should be mindful of any additional guidance issued by the relevant Awarding Body covering the qualification actually being assessed [by the assessor candidate]. The onus resides with the Awarding Body to ensure this process is valid, sufficient and clear.

Additionally, recordings should be maintained such that evidence can be subject to EQA.

It is recommended that centres start their programmes with the knowledge unit.

Internal Quality Assurance qualifications

Ascentis Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (501/1734/8)

Ascentis Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (501/1733/6)

The IQA qualification requires only one assessed observation, which in normal circumstances must be conducted live, face to face with all participants in the same room or location at the same time. Where this is not possible, centres may conduct the assessed observation remotely on condition that:

- They have the approval of their Awarding Body before carrying out the assessment
- All participants must be present during the live recording

It is strongly recommended that centres delay assessment until a suitable opportunity for face to face assessment does become available, and that delivery and assessment of the knowledge content is prioritised. This guidance applies until end December 2021 and an update issued for January 2022.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

These should be applied in line with our normal policy. Please refer to the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy, which is available on the login section of the Ascentis website.

Appeals and Complaints

Any appeals made in relation to these adaptations will follow the Ascentis Appeals Policy which can be found on the login section of the Ascentis website.

Any complaints regarding these adaptations should be made in line with the Ascentis Complaints Policy which can be found on the login section of the Ascentis website.

Appendix (I) – Application form

[Here is a link](#) to the online application form, which must be completed if a Centre wishes to use the permitted adaptations. The form must be submitted no less than five working days before any adaptations are intended to be used.

N.B. the online form **cannot be partially completed and saved** for completion at a later time. The contents the form are therefore listed below so you can ensure you have all the required information before completing it.

We can only accept your application through the online form.

Before completing this form, it is essential that you have read and understood the latest guidance relating to the approved adaptations for the qualification area.

We will review your application within 5 working days of submission and contact you with a decision, or to ask for further information if necessary.

Centre details

1. Centre Name
2. Name of Quality Nominee
3. Quality Nominee email address
4. Name of Appropriate Subject Leader/ Manager
5. Subject Leader/ Manager email address

Class details

6. Please list the QuartzWeb class IDs of the learners who will be using the adaptation(s)
7. How many learners will be using the adaptation(s) in total?
8. What is the planned course end date(s)?
9. Which qualification area does this application relate to?

Rationale and Arrangements

Please provide details of the rationale and arrangements for using the approved adaptations for Education & Training qualifications

10. Rationale for using this adaptation (please outline the specific centre / learner circumstances)
11. For which of the Education & Training Qualifications do you intend to use the adaptations?
12. Please provide details of the adaptations you intend to use. (Please specify the number of hours of live remote delivery, number of observations of live remote delivery, remote observations etc.)

Declaration

It is the centre's responsibility to:

- determine which learners will be able to use the adaptations and ensure that no learner is either advantaged or disadvantaged by the adaptations
- provide training to all relevant staff in the requirements as specified by Ascentis (as per the latest Ascentis Education and Training Adaptation guidance document) as well as in the processes and systems that will be used
- Ensure that recordings of live remote observations and remote observations of live face to face delivery are securely stored and made available to Ascentis on request

13. I confirm that I have read and understand the above responsibilities

14. Your name

15. Your role within the centre

16. Your email address (if not listed at the beginning of this form)