

Specification

First teaching September 2015

**Pearson Essential Skills Wales
suite of qualifications**

Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications

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Qualifications overview

Subject Area	Essential Skills Wales
Age groups approved	14+
Assessment	Controlled Tasks, Confirmatory Tests, Structured Discussions. See qualifications for their individual requirements.

Title and level	Qualification number
Essential Communication Skills (EComMS)	
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 1)	500/8914/6
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 2)	500/8916/X
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Communication (Entry 3)	500/8918/3
Level 1 Essential Communication Skills	601/6835/3
Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	601/6839/0
Level 3 Essential Communication Skills	601/6843/2
Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS)	
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 1)	500/8912/2
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 2)	500/8920/1
Entry Level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Entry 3)	500/8926/2
Level 1 Essential Application of Number Skills	601/6834/1
Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	601/6838/9
Level 3 Essential Application of Number Skills	601/6842/0

Title and level	Qualification number
Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS)	
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 1)	601/6830/4
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 2)	601/6831/6
Entry Level Essential Digital Literacy Skills (Entry 3)	601/6832/8
Level 1 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	601/6836/5
Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	601/6840/7
Level 3 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	601/6844/4
Essential Employability Skills (EES)	
Entry Level Essential Employability Skills (Entry 3)	601/6833/X
Level 1 Essential Employability Skills	601/6837/7
Level 2 Essential Employability Skills	601/6841/9
Level 3 Essential Employability Skills	601/6845/6

Version and date	Change detail
1.0 January 2016	First edition
1.1 April 2016	Amended edition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added guidance on Structured Discussions in tasks involving collaborative work (Section 4.4.1). • Extended times for duration of Confirmatory tests (Section 4.5.1) • Added guidance on candidates accessing plain paper and a pen or pencil whilst completing the confirmatory tests (Section 4.5.3.5) Updated Frequently Asked Questions (Appendix 1)
1.2 June 2017	Amended edition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated referencing to 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' documents produced by ColegauCymru/CollegeWales Sections 1, 2.2.1 and 3.2) • Additional clarification around permitted equipment and resources for controlled tasks (Section 4.3.7) • Confirmation that structured discussions (for EDLS and EES) may be conducted in small groups (Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2) • Additional tables detailing permitted access arrangements for EDLS and EES (Section 4.6.1)
1.3 February 2018	Amended edition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated guidance on the '8 week rule' for Controlled Tasks (Section 4.3.4)

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1 Introduction

The Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is designed to assess the range of skills that learners need for successful learning, employment and life. They provide a single ladder of progression, spanning six levels and comprising qualifications in:

- Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS) (Entry 1 – Level 3)
- Essential Communication Skills (ECommS) (Entry 1 – Level 3)
- Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS) (Entry 1 – Level 3)
- Essential Employability Skills (EES) (Entry 3 – Level 3)

The Essential Skills qualifications are intended for use in a range of settings. They focus on the practical application of these skills, especially learners' capacity to transfer their knowledge and understanding between contexts and purposes.



This handbook sets out the administration and assessment conduct requirements for the Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications.

Whilst it should be read in conjunction with the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' documents developed by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales, please note that for assessment and qualification achievement purposes any requirements in **this** handbook take precedence.

Except where indicated otherwise, the administration and conduct requirements set out in this handbook are common to all Essential Skills Wales awarding bodies. At the time of writing this version, these were:

- Agored Cymru
- City & Guilds
- Pearson
- WJEC.

Note: the Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is regulated by Qualifications Wales, and approved for use in **Wales**.

Key features of Essential Skills

The Pearson Essential Skills Wales suite (ESW) was redeveloped and extended with new qualifications in September 2015. The new qualifications were developed in response to the Welsh government review of qualifications in 2012, which resulted in the following key changes:

- an increased emphasis on rigour and more robust quality assurance
- a renewed focus on development and assessment of the skills needed for learning and work, developed through engaging learning activities
- a revised subject specification for Essential Employability Skills replacing Wider Key Skills
- coherence with the Welsh government's Literacy and Numeracy Framework, the emerging wider skills and digital literacy frameworks and the revised Welsh Baccalaureate
- clear, purposeful assessment of the skills including Controlled Tasks
- all assessments being made available in English and Welsh
- the Essential Employability Skills will replace the Wider Key Skills.

Our new suite includes:

- Essential Employability Skills (EES) – New for 2015-16
- Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS) – New for 2015-16
- Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS)
- Essential Communication Skills (EComms)

Guided Learning Hours

Our Essential Skills Wales qualifications have the same number of Guided Learning Hours at each level:

ESW Subject	Guided Learning Hours
Essential Employability Skills (EES)	120
Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS)	60
Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS)	60
Essential Communication Skills (EComms)	60

From **1 January 2016**, candidates working towards ESW can only be registered on this new suite.

The Entry Level qualifications in Communication and Application of Number are not part of this redevelopment and will remain available for registration until 31 August 2020.

Qualifications structure and content

The Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is based on design principles that were developed by the Welsh Government following the 2012 Review of Qualifications, and published by Qualifications Wales in 2015. The qualifications' specifications, and in most cases the assessment requirements, are common across all Essential Skills Wales awarding bodies.

The only exceptions to this are the Entry level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number and Communication qualifications, which are based on the previous (2010) evidence and knowledge requirements.

For information about the Pearson Entry Level qualifications in Application of Number and Communication, see the Essential Skills Wales pages on our website.

qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-essential-skills-wales.html



Detailed information about the subject content, along with the range of skills and knowledge that are expected to be taught and learned at each level, are set out in the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' documents developed by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales.

The qualifications' assessments in each case reflect these standards.

Requirements for certification

With the exception of the Entry level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number and Communication qualifications, all Essential Skills qualifications feature a **two-part** summative assessment comprising:

- controlled task
- confirmatory element (test or structured discussion).

Each qualification requires the successful completion of **both** parts of the summative assessment at the **same** level; no partial or 'unit' certification is available.

See the *Quality Assurance handbook 2017-18 Essential Skills Wales* document for more information on Pearson's certification requirements.

2 Centre requirements

2.1 Centre and qualification approval

Centres that have not previously offered Pearson Essential Skills Wales qualifications need to apply for, and be granted, centre recognition as part of the process for approval to offer individual qualifications.

All centres are required to enter into an approval agreement with Pearson, in which the head of centre or principal agrees to meet all the requirements of the qualification specification and to comply with the policies, procedures, codes of practice and regulations of Pearson and relevant regulatory bodies. If centres do not comply with the agreement, this could result in the suspension of certification or withdrawal of centre or qualification approval.

As part of the approval process, centres must make sure that the resource requirements in the following sections are in place before offering the qualifications.

- Centres must have appropriate physical resources (for example IT, learning materials, teaching rooms) to support delivery and assessment.
- Centres must have appropriate health and safety policies in place that relate to the use of equipment by learners.
- Centres must have in place robust internal verification systems and procedures to ensure the quality and authenticity of learners' work as well as the accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions between assessors operating at the centre. For information on the requirements for implementing assessment processes in centres, please refer to the *Quality Assurance Handbook 2015-16 Essential Skills Wales*, available on our website.
- Centres must deliver the qualifications in accordance with current equality legislation. For further details on Pearson's commitment to the Equality Act 2010, please see *Section 4.6 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments*. For full details of the Equality Act 2010 visit www.legislation.gov.uk

2.2 Resource requirements

2.2.1 Centre staffing

Staff involved in the assessment or internal quality assurance of these qualifications **must** have a detailed understanding of the qualification specifications and assessment requirements, as set out in

- this handbook
- the relevant controlled task (and structured discussion, where applicable) assessment pack.

They must also be familiar with the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' documents developed for each of the four subject areas by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales.

In order to perform these functions effectively, assessors and internal quality assurers will need to be personally competent in the Essential Skill(s) being taught and assessed, as well as familiar with the assessment and internal quality assurance arrangements applicable to these qualifications. These are summarised in Section 5 of this handbook, with more detailed guidance in *Quality Assurance Handbook 2017-18 Essential Skills Wales*, *Standards Verifier Handbook 2017-18 Essential Skills Wales* and *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments 2017-18 Essential Skills Wales*, documents available on our website.

2.2.2 Teaching and subject content qualifications

Whilst Pearson needs to be assured that centre staff are capable of assessing these qualifications consistently to the required standard, it is important to appreciate that Pearson have no direct responsibility for determining their suitability to teach or prepare learners.

Nevertheless, it is vital that any learners working towards the Essential Skills qualifications are adequately supported by capable staff, and in practice it will be common for staff to be involved in both teaching and the assessment process.

Whilst we do not require assessors and internal quality assurers to hold any specific assessment, quality assurance, subject content or teaching qualifications, they **must** be able to fully understand and apply the relevant assessment/marking criteria. This will require them to be personally competent in the skills being assessed, as well as being familiar with the assessment process.

Centres must also ensure that they keep abreast of any emerging workforce expectations or specific requirements that might emerge from other bodies for contracting, funding or inspection purposes.

It is therefore strongly recommended that centre staff work towards an appropriate Essential Skills practitioner qualification (at Level 3 or higher) if they do not already hold one.

2.2.3 Continuing professional development (CPD)

Centres must support Essential Skills staff to ensure that their subject knowledge, as well as their understanding of the requirements of these qualifications, remains current. Approaches to delivery, mentoring, training, assessment and quality assurance must also be in line with best practice and take account of any relevant public policy or other developments.

2.3 Key roles for assessment

2.3.1 Controlled tasks and structured discussions

Entry level Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number and Communication where assessments remain unchanged, see individual specifications on our website for full details.

All 2015 Essential Skills qualifications involve a summative controlled task. Whilst the controlled tasks are externally set, they are internally assessed and quality assured by centres.

In addition, Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS) and Essential Employability Skills (EES) also involve a structured discussion that takes place **after** the controlled task has been successfully completed.

To meet the assessment conduct and quality assurance requirements for the controlled tasks and structured discussions, centres must ensure that each of the following roles are fulfilled:

- Head of Centre
- Examination Officer
- Lead Internal Verifier
- Programme Manager
- Tutors
- Internal Verifiers
- Assessors
- Controlled Task Supervisor.

The responsibilities of the controlled task supervisor role are defined in section 4.3 of this handbook. For details of what each of the other roles entail, please refer to *Quality Assurance Handbook 2015-16 Essential Skills Wales* on our website.

2.3.2 Confirmatory tests

In addition to the controlled task, Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS) and Essential Communication Skills (EComms) at levels 1, 2 and 3 involve a short confirmatory test that is externally set and externally marked.

To meet the assessment conduct requirements for the confirmatory tests, centres must ensure that each of the following roles are undertaken:

- Head of Centre
- Examination Officer
- Invigilator(s).

Responsibilities of the invigilator role are set out in section 4.5 of this handbook. Because of the diverse range of settings in which the Essential Skills Wales qualifications are accessed, please note that the security and conduct requirements for the confirmatory tests differ in a number of respects from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) *Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)*.

For details of where the security and conduct arrangements for the confirmatory tests differ from the JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)* document and our standard examination conduct requirements, please see Section 4.5 of this specification.

For details of what the head of centre and examination officer roles entail, please refer to *Quality Assurance Handbook 2017-18 Essential Skills Wales* on our website.

2.3.3 Entry level ESW Application of Number and Communication assessments

This information remains unchanged. Please refer to the individual subject specifications on our website for full details.

2.4 Candidate entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements for these qualifications, although centres must ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to gain any Essential Skills qualifications they work towards.

Where learners are not immediately capable of achieving an Essential Skills qualification, or may require further support to address specific gaps in their skills profile, the Essential Skills for Work and Life unit-based qualifications might be suitable.

2.4.1 Age restrictions

Whilst there are no formal age restrictions on registering for these qualifications, the Essential Skills qualifications at Entry level are approved by Qualifications Wales for learners over the age of 14. The Essential Skills qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 are intended primarily for learners over the age of 16, although may be accessed in some pre-16 contexts such as pupil referral units (PRUs).

2.4.2 Other legal considerations (if applicable)

Learners and centres should be aware of and comply with regulations affecting those who deal with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

See the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document *Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations (ICE)* for further details. This is available on our website.

3 Delivery of these qualifications

3.1 Initial assessment and induction

Centres can access the Initial Assessment Tool (IAT) on our website at:

qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-functional-skills/teaching-support/initial-assessment-tool.html

Publicly funded Essential Skills providers are expected to make use of the Wales Essential Skills Toolkit (WEST). WEST is an initial assessment and skills screening test resource.

3.2 Standards and delivery guidance

Detailed information about subject content and standards applicable to each of the Essential Skills qualifications can be found in the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners' documents developed for each of the four subject areas by ColegauCymru/CollegesWales. These four documents set out the range of skills, knowledge and understanding that need to be taught and learned; they also describe the standard expected of candidates undergoing assessment in these qualifications.

They are therefore required reading for all Essential Skills tutors/teachers, assessors and internal quality assurers.

3.3 Support materials

Sample assessment materials and assessment support packs can be found at

qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-essential-skills-wales.html

4 Assessment requirements

4.1 Overview of assessment requirements

The Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications is designed to enable learners to develop and demonstrate an understanding of, and proficiency in, the essential skills that employers and next-stage educators value and that candidates need for progression and effective performance in learning, work and life.

Each of the Essential Skills qualifications aims to:

- structure and consolidate learning, making incidental, naturally occurring, practices explicit
- encourage articulation and analysis of and reflection on the skills and on learners' own proficiency in them, in personalised terms
- increase confidence and effectiveness in the use and application of these skills
- develop an understanding of how to transfer skills to new purposes and contexts
- provide positive and engaging opportunities to further explore, develop, practise and apply the skills, in a range of meaningful and 'real-life' contexts for real-life purposes.



The assessment model for these qualifications is summative. In each case it involves a concentrated activity **after** a period of teaching and learning.

There is no 'on-going' portfolio-type assessment, and candidates must be supervised throughout all formal assessment activity.

All assessment of the new 2015 qualifications is **externally-set** by Pearson. In most cases candidates' work is **internally assessed** by centres; the only exceptions to this are the confirmatory tests within Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS) and Essential Communication Skills (EComms) which are externally set and marked by Pearson.

Assessment arrangements for each of the Essential Skills qualifications are as follows:

Levels	Title	Description of assessment model	Internal vs external
Entry (1-3)	Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number	Portfolio of evidence	Internally assessed
Entry (1-3)	Essential Skills Wales in Communication	Portfolio of evidence	Internally assessed
Levels 1-3	Essential Application of Number Skills (EAoNS)	Controlled task <i>and</i> confirmatory test	<i>Task:</i> externally set, internally assessed <i>Test:</i> externally set, externally assessed
Levels 1-3	Essential Communication Skills (EComms)	Controlled task <i>and</i> confirmatory test	<i>Task:</i> externally set, internally assessed <i>Test:</i> externally set, externally assessed
Entry (1-3), Levels 1-3	Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS)	Controlled task <i>and</i> confirmatory structured discussion	Externally set, internally assessed
Entry (1-3), Levels 1-3	Essential Employability Skills (EES)	Controlled task <i>and</i> confirmatory structured discussion	Externally set, internally assessed

The controlled tasks, structured discussion guidance and confirmatory tests used to assess EAoN, EComms, EDLS and EES have been developed jointly by the Essential Skills awarding bodies. Assessment conduct requirements are likewise consistent across all awarding bodies.

Centre staff will need to ensure candidates have developed **all** of the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding before attempting live assessment. **Under no circumstances may candidates be given any formative support or feedback whilst undertaking their controlled task, structured discussion or test;** all work produced and submitted must be entirely their own.

The head of centre is ultimately responsible for ensuring the administration of all assessments follows the instructions and guidance set out in this handbook, and that all centre staff involved with the process are familiar with these requirements.

Candidates must successfully complete all parts of the required assessment for any Essential Skills qualification that they attempt; there is no mechanism for awarding 'partial achievement' of any Essential Skills qualification.

Where candidates have been unsuccessful in the controlled task, they will need further support and opportunity to address any apparent gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding before re-attempting a **different** controlled task.

The confirmatory element (ie structured discussion, in the case of EDLS and EES; test, in the case of EAoNS and ECommS) is designed to confirm the standard of work demonstrated through the controlled task, and therefore should not be attempted before the controlled task has been completed.

4.2 Entry Level ESW Application of Number and Communication assessment – administration and conduct arrangements

Please see the Entry Level specifications on our website for details.

4.3 Controlled tasks – administration and conduct arrangements

This instructions and guidance in this section should be read in conjunction with the relevant controlled task candidate and assessment packs.

4.3.1 Controlled tasks are:

- externally set (or approved) by Pearson
- presented unseen to candidates, and completed under *controlled conditions* (as specified in section 4.3.5, below)
- internally assessed by centres, using the supplied marking criteria
- internally quality assured by centres
- external quality assured by Pearson.

4.3.2 Obtaining the controlled tasks

The Pearson Essential Skills Wales controlled task materials are available on a secure website and can be accessed via the website:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/secure-tests/essential-skills-wales.html>

Access to the secure materials will be made available to Examination Officers once candidates have been registered.

Any live controlled tasks may **only** be used for their intended purpose, ie to carry out live candidate assessments. Any electronic or printed copies of the task documents must be held securely at all times.

On no account may learners access any live assessment material until they have been registered as a candidate for the Essential Skills qualification(s) they are working towards.

Each controlled task is based on a given theme or context, with centres able to choose from the range of available topics. Centres should ensure any topic(s) they select are appropriate for, and likely to engage, their learners; however they must **not** give candidates:

- prior sight of the controlled task
- any *detailed* information about the task topic/context (general advice, eg whether the topic relates to something they might encounter within their vocational programme or job role, is acceptable)
- any coaching or specific 'hints' about what may come up in the controlled task.

The range of controlled tasks available for use at any one time will vary, and the task documents will be updated periodically. **Centres must therefore always ensure that they are working from the latest versions, and that the particular controlled task they intend to use is still available.**

A separate set of sample controlled tasks is available on our website to help with candidate preparation and centre staff training/standardisation. These replicate the format and structure of the live controlled tasks.

4.3.3 Format of the controlled tasks

Each controlled task comprises at least two documents:

- **Candidate's paper**
 - setting out the task instructions and related information
- **Assessment pack**
 - containing the marking criteria and recording sheets, along with further information for assessors and internal quality assurers about conduct requirements and the assessment process.

In some cases there will be further documents containing source material for candidates' use whilst completing the controlled task. Centres must ensure that they have obtained **all** of the documents relating to any controlled tasks they use. Candidates must **not** be given the assessment pack.

4.3.4 Assessment scheduling: working time allowance, maximum working period and research parameters

Controlled tasks should only be attempted after candidates have undergone a period of learning, once the centre is satisfied that they are ready for assessment.

Each controlled task is a substantial and holistic set of activities that will take a number of hours to complete. There is a maximum amount of time

candidates are permitted to spend working on their controlled task¹, known as the **working time allowance**.

¹ In some cases candidates will be expected to carry out additional **supervised** research; this does not count towards the working time allowance, although must be carried out within the maximum working period (see section 4.3.8, below).

The allowance in each case is:

Level	Working time allowance
Entry (EDLS and EES only)	up to 6 hours
Level 1	up to 4 hours
Level 2	up to 5 hours
Level 3	up to 8 hours

Candidates must not exceed their working time allowance (unless permission for additional time has been granted for Access reasons – see Section 4.6 of this handbook). It is therefore important that they are taught to manage their time carefully.

Candidates must be supervised **throughout** their time working on the controlled task. They are not expected to complete the whole controlled task in one session, although where multiple sessions take place centres will need to ensure:

- **Sessions are arranged as close together as possible, and should in each case be long enough to be meaningful.**
Otherwise there is a risk candidates may be disadvantaged by losing sense of the holistic nature of the task activities, and/or wasting time at the start of each session re-familiarising with the task.
- **All work is collected in and stored securely between sessions.**
Candidates are not permitted to access the candidate's paper, supplied source material, or any of the work they have already done between sessions; they also must not bring in any additional work completed outside between sessions. Centres should take particular care with any work stored in electronic form to ensure candidates do not access it remotely between sessions (e.g. by checking files have not been accessed or updated).
- **Sessions are not interspersed by any further teaching of the subject.**
There also must **not** be any formative assessment or feedback given to candidates between sessions. Assessors may **only** mark work once the whole task has been completed, or once the candidate's maximum working time allowance has been used up.

NB: unrelated teaching, learning and assessment associated with other subjects may still take place between sessions.

The controlled task must be presented unseen; the first time candidates are permitted to see the candidate's paper and supplied source material is at the **beginning of the first session when they start working** on that controlled task. From that moment, their working time allowance begins and all of their time spent with access to the task materials must be monitored and supervised.

Centres must:

- plan in advance when each controlled task session will take place;
- keep a record of the date, time and duration of each session (the front cover of each candidate's paper includes space for this);
- **plan for a time period of no more than eight weeks** between the beginning of the first session and end of the final session, known as the **maximum working period** (sometimes described as the '**eight-week rule**').

Applying the 'eight week rule'

For the avoidance of doubt, centres' normal academic holiday periods and valid learner absence (eg through illness or incapacity) may be disregarded when calculating the maximum working period.

Best practice - longer sessions planned as close together as possible allowing candidates to complete the assessments well within the maximum working period

Centres' assessment planning, including their application of the maximum working period, will be scrutinised as part of the external quality assurance process.'

4.3.5 Assessment location and environment

All controlled tasks must be completed under *controlled conditions*. These are distinct from traditional 'examination' conditions, and it is recognised controlled tasks will take place in a range of settings such as workplaces and community halls, as well as classrooms.

In all cases candidates must be provided with an environment that enables them to work effectively and access the range of equipment they would routinely expect to use whilst working on a task of this nature. Candidates must be able to devote their full attention to the controlled task, so the location used must be free from disturbance or interruption.

4.3.6 Supervision requirements

Candidates must be supervised **throughout** the time that they have access to any live controlled task assessment material. This includes any time spent actively working on the controlled task, as well as any instances where candidates are expected to carry out additional supervised research (see section 4.3.9, below).

Controlled task supervisors must be reliable and responsible people who have been suitably briefed. They are accountable to the head of centre for ensuring adequate supervision and control of the assessment environment is maintained. At least one supervisor must be present **at all times**, to ensure:

- the relevant working time allowance and maximum working period are not exceeded²
- each candidate produces all work independently.

It is likely that controlled task supervisors will also perform other roles within the centre (eg tutor/teacher, assessor or internal quality assurer). Whilst supervisors need to appreciate how *this* role differs from others they might perform, in principle there is no reason why controlled tasks cannot be supervised by candidates' tutor or assessor³.

² Unless additional working time has been granted for Access reasons (see Section 4.6, or if an exceptional and unforeseen event has made it necessary to exceed the maximum working time to be exceeded (see Section 4.3.4).

³ NB: an assessor will need to be present for the speaking and listening activities within the ECommS controlled tasks.

4.3.7 Permitted equipment and resources

Controlled tasks are designed to assess the purposeful **transfer** and **application** of the relevant essential skills. To assist with this process, candidates may access a range of routine equipment and resources that might typically be available to them in a 'real life' situation. These might include, but are not limited to:

- PCs/laptops/tablets/smartphones
- paper/electronic dictionaries
- spelling/grammar checking software
- calculators
- general reference material
- (not course or qualification-specific textbooks)
- relevant class or course notes
- (as long as these do not contain and specific guidance on completing the controlled task)
- online resources (where openly available and sourced independently by the candidate).

Particular care is needed around the use of electronic devices with transmitting/receiving capabilities (e.g. smartphones, tablets, smart watches); depending on local circumstances, it might be appropriate for centres to operate tighter restrictions than those described here – **as long as this will not impede candidates from completing the controlled task successfully.**



Care must also be taken to ensure any work produced or shared online whilst completing a controlled task (eg the footprint from a digital collaboration) is not left publicly accessible afterwards.

As part of the Quality Assurance process, Pearson will monitor centres' conduct of these assessments. This might include site visits to check how candidates' access to permitted equipment and resources is managed.

4.3.8 Assistance with controlled tasks

Candidates must be able to complete any controlled tasks they attempt independently, and are not permitted third party 'human' assistance with anything material to the assessment.

Candidates may be supported with aspects of the assessment process that are not material to the assessment itself. For example, it would potentially be acceptable for supervisors to:

- read out information on task instructions page
- read out the contents of the task
(except in the case of ECommS where reading forms part of the assessment)

- accept verbal responses in lieu of written ones (except in the case of ECommS where writing forms part of the assessment).
- Please also refer to Section 4.6 of this handbook for further information about the scope of any reasonable adjustments permitted for Access reasons.

Whilst the task instructions may be repeated or reiterated to candidates whilst they are working on their controlled task, they must **not** be given any formative feedback or other advice about the *content* of the assessment whilst working on the controlled task.



For example, it would be acceptable for a supervisor to remind candidates completing an ECommS controlled task that they are being assessed on the accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and grammar; it would **not** be appropriate for a supervisor to suggest to individual candidates that they should review *their* spelling, punctuation and grammar accuracy.

The candidate, assessor and internal quality assurer declarations contained within the candidate's paper and assessment pack must be completed, as instructed, to confirm the authenticity of any work presented for assessment.

4.3.9 Additional independent research

Whilst candidates are supplied with most of the source material they need to complete the controlled task, in some cases the task might require them to carry out some additional **supervised** research. Where this is the case, it will be noted on both the candidate's paper and assessment pack.



Whilst candidates must be supervised whilst carrying out any expected research, time spent on this does not count towards the working time allowance. Nevertheless, since the research relates directly to the task activities, it will need to be fitted around the planned task sessions and must therefore take place within the maximum working period.

Whilst not required, it is recognised that some candidates may wish to carry out further background research between task sessions. It would be neither practical nor desirable to prevent them from doing so, although they must understand that they **cannot** bring in any notes or other outputs from work completed outside of the supervised environment. Likewise, they must not access the assessment documents, or any of the work they have already done, outside of the supervised controlled task sessions.

4.3.10 Collaboration

Whilst the controlled tasks are designed to measure individual learners' capabilities, in a few cases (within EDLS and EES, as well as the speaking and listening part of EComms) candidates are required to work collaboratively.

In most settings this is likely to involve working with other candidates, although it could potentially involve other individuals if appropriately briefed. In such situations, it might be necessary to give the other participants access to the controlled task candidate's paper and source materials, although this must be on a strictly confidential basis, and under no circumstances may they retain copies of any live assessment material.

Where candidates are required to collaborate, controlled task supervisors and assessors must ensure that they are able to discern each individual candidate's contribution. They must also remain alert to the possibility of collusion; any potential instances of collusion must be investigated and action taken in accordance with our guidance on candidate malpractice. Please see Section 6 of this handbook for further information about dealing with cases of suspected malpractice.

4.3.11 Resits

All controlled tasks are graded pass/fail, and where candidates have been unsuccessful they will need to resit using a **different** controlled task from the range of available controlled task topics.

Whilst there is no fixed minimum period before a resit may take place, nor a cap on the number of permitted resits, in practice candidates will need further opportunity to develop and practise the relevant skills before resitting. As part of the external quality assurance process Pearson will be monitoring the number of instances where resits are required.

On no account may candidates attempt the same controlled task more than once, and where they are resitting they must complete **that entire** controlled task, including any activities or sections where they were successful in the equivalent part of the other controlled task on the previous occasion.

4.4 Confirmatory structured discussion – administration and conduct arrangements

This instructions and guidance in this section should be read in conjunction with the specific structured discussion guidance contained within the relevant EDLS or EES controlled task assessment packs.

4.4.1 Format and purpose of the structured discussion

A structured discussion is a conversation between candidates and their assessor, conducted either one-to-one or in small groups (with a maximum of five candidates). It is intended to complement the controlled task and confirm candidates' knowledge and understanding, as well as providing opportunity for candidates to reflect on the controlled task they have recently completed.

Since the structured discussion relates to the controlled task candidates will have just completed, in practice it cannot be conducted until after the controlled task, and for assessment purposes there is no need for it to take place if the candidate has not achieved a pass in the controlled task.

Unlike the controlled task, the structured discussion is not formally time-bound, as it is separate from the controlled task and does not count towards candidates' working time allowance. However, a structured discussion should not last for longer than around 30 minutes and centres must maintain records to justify any longer duration for quality assurance purposes.

Whilst the structured discussion should take place as soon as possible after the controlled task has been completed and assessed (whilst still fresh in the candidate's memory), this does **not** have to be within the controlled task's maximum working period.

4.4.2 Conducting the structured discussion

The structured discussion should take place in a location where the assessor and candidate(s) are able to have a conversation without disturbance or interruption. This might include suitable rooms within for example a workplace, community setting or school/college.

Candidates are expected to spend at least some time preparing for their structured discussion, although this should not involve a substantial period of revision, nor should it extend to producing scripted statements for use during the discussion.

Candidates must not have unsupervised access to their completed controlled task, although they can be shown it whilst receiving feedback and **during** the structured discussion (if applicable). In addition, whilst **preparing** for their structured discussion they may be given copies of the **relevant pages** from the controlled task candidate's paper that advises them how to prepare for the structured discussion.

The controlled task assessment pack includes guidance for the assessor on conducting the structured discussion, including the mark scheme that must be completed to record the assessment decision (see section 4.4.3, below). The discussion is supposed to be a conversation, so should not be simply a question and answer session. Where more than one candidate is involved in the discussion, the contribution of each candidate must be assessed individually.

4.4.3 Evidencing the discussion

The completed mark scheme is the formal record of the structured discussion having taken place, so **must** be completed in all cases. This must include details of the location, date, and time started and completed, people present and the outcome achieved.

However, for standardisation purposes, it is crucial that each assessor's structured discussions are corroborated in some way. This could be through one or more of the following:

- video recording
- audio recording
- contemporaneous notes by assessor
- preparation/contemporaneous notes by candidate
- internal quality assurance observation

Where video/audio recording or observation are used, it is important to ensure this happens as unobtrusively as possible so that it does not impede or detract from the discussion.

4.4.4 Resitting the structured discussion

It is important to appreciate that the structured discussion is intended to confirm the standard of work the candidate has *already* demonstrated through the controlled task. Whilst it has a mark scheme and is therefore technically possible to 'fail', in practice it is acceptable to reconvene the discussion if necessary in order to give the candidate another opportunity.

4.5 Confirmatory test – administration and conduct arrangements

The confirmatory tests for EAoNS and ECommS at levels 1 to 3 perform a similar function to the structured discussions within EDLS and EES. The tests are designed to *confirm* the standard of work that has been demonstrated through the controlled task, and are therefore not intended to be attempted before the controlled task.

4.5.1 Format of the confirmatory tests

The confirmatory tests are externally set and are externally marked. They follow a common multiple choice format across all of the Essential Skills awarding bodies, structured as follows:

Test	Number of questions	Maximum duration
Level 1 Essential Application of Number Skills	20	30 minutes
Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	20	45 minutes
Level 3 Essential Communication Skills	30	60 minutes
Level 1 Essential Communication Skills	20	30 minutes
Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	20	45 minutes
Level 3 Essential Communication Skills	30	60 minutes

Each test must be completed in a one session, with no breaks permitted (unless authorised for individual candidates for Access reasons, see Section 4.6 of this handbook). The candidates must determine responses to every question independently.

Each test is graded pass/fail, with the pass mark intended to be approximately 70%. Pearson makes the confirmatory tests available onscreen and paper-based on-demand.

4.5.2 Ordering the confirmatory tests

The test paper will be allocated to each candidate by Pearson. Unlike the controlled tasks, centres are unable to choose a particular test paper or range of topics for their learners. This is because the Essential Skills qualifications are intended to assess learners' ability to transfer their application of these skills between contexts and purposes.

4.5.3 Test conduct requirements

The confirmatory tests require a more formal 'exam' environment than the controlled tasks, although it is recognised that the Essential Skills qualifications are accessed in a diverse range of settings where some of the more rigid security and conduct requirements of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) *Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)* might be impractical or inappropriate.

For full details, see the *Essential Skills Wales Instructions for Conducting Examinations* document, which will be available on our website. The required conditions are as set out in the rest of this section.

4.5.3.1 Test sites

Confirmatory tests should ideally be completed on the centre's own premises, although where they do need to take place in other locations such as candidates' workplaces or community settings Pearson must be informed that the location is an assessment site.

For full details, see the *Essential Skills Wales Instructions for Conducting Examinations* document.

4.5.3.2 Receiving and storing test materials

Where candidates are taking a paper-based test, the test papers are supplied in sealed packets that must be stored securely and **not opened until immediately before use** – ideally in front of candidates once they are in the test room, although if not no more than one hour before the test is due to start⁴

Whilst these tests are not formally subject to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) *Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)*, storage arrangements must involve similar access control arrangements to ICE.

Live tests must not be viewed by anyone within the centre prior to their use, and any access to the packets must be restricted to a limited number of individuals authorised by the Head of Centre. Particular care must be taken if any test papers need to be transported to another site (see 4.5.3.1, above). Where possible, this should be on the day

⁴ Unless longer is required to make local adjustments to a paper for Access reasons – see Section 4.6 of this handbook.

of the assessment using a lockable case. If assessment materials need to be stored overnight away from the centre address, the conditions must meet those listed above, with the location known to Pearson. All assessment sites' storage arrangements will be checked as part of Pearson's examination audit process.

4.5.3.3 Test room

All confirmatory tests must take place in a suitable location that enables candidates to complete their assessments without disruption or interruption. It should be made clear to those in adjoining rooms/corridors that the test is taking place.

Candidates must not be seated in such a way that they can overlook each other's work (even unintentionally). The recommended method is to ensure that the minimum distance in all directions between candidates' chairs is at least 1.25 metres. Other approaches are acceptable, for example screening, providing that candidates cannot see each other's work so long as the invigilator can clearly observe each candidate working.

Centres must create a seating plan so that there is a clear record of where each candidate was seated during the assessment. Centres must keep a copy of the seating plan until at least 65 working days after the release of results.

Care should be taken to ensure there is nothing visible in the test room that might give candidates an unfair advantage (please see 4.5.3.5, below, for further guidance).

A reliable clock must be clearly visible to each candidate throughout the assessment.

4.5.3.4 The invigilator role

The confirmatory tests require **continuous** supervision by suitably informed and briefed adults. Anyone acting as an invigilator for these tests needs to be absolutely clear about the scope and purpose of this role, i.e. to facilitate the assessment and:

- ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities
- ensure the security of the assessment – before, during and afterwards
- prevent possible candidate malpractice
- prevent possible administrative failures.

Invigilators must:

- be familiar with the requirements of the role as set out in this handbook. An electronic or printed copy of this handbook, (or at least this section of it) must be available during **every** test sitting
- give all their attention to overseeing the test and ensuring it is conducted properly
- be able to observe each candidate that they are responsible for supervising at all times
- be able to summon help without leaving candidates unsupervised at any time – eg if there is only one invigilator, that person should have access to a mobile phone (on silent) or two-way radio
- inform the head of centre (or other person in authority within the centre) immediately if they suspect the security of the assessment may have been compromised
- the head of centre is responsible for notifying Pearson of any security breach.

Invigilators must not carry out any other task whilst invigilating.

Who can act as invigilator?

Whilst invigilators must be suitably informed and briefed, determining who can or cannot fulfil the Invigilator role is ultimately an internal staffing matter for centres. As with any form of assessment, centres must consider the potential for any malpractice that could occur and ensure that there are adequate internal safeguards in place to mitigate the risk of this happening.

Particular care needs to be taken if an invigilator might be perceived to have a conflict of interest as a result of other roles they perform. As far as possible centres should avoid situations where candidates are invigilated solely by the main tutor/assessor who has prepared them for the essential skill being assessed. Where this is genuinely unavoidable, the centre must take all reasonable steps to prevent any conflict of interest which could lead to, or be perceived as, malpractice. Candidates' relatives or peers must not act as sole invigilator under any circumstances.

If only one invigilator is present, that person must be able to get help easily, without leaving the room or disturbing the candidates. **There must be at least one invigilator present at all times during the test.**

4.5.3.5 Permitted and prohibited equipment

Unlike the controlled tasks, there are strict limits on the range of equipment candidates may access and use whilst completing their confirmatory test. This is deliberate, and reflects the confirmatory purpose of these tests.

In each case the front cover of the test paper or onscreen instructions lists the range of items candidates may or may not use. In particular, candidates must **not** have access to:

- a calculator (of any kind) in the case of EAoNS
- a dictionary (of any kind) in the case of ECommS.

Care must also be taken to ensure there are no posters or similar visible in the test room that might conceivably give candidates an unfair advantage (eg number charts, word/spelling lists).

Candidates may have access to plain paper and a pen or pencil whilst completing the confirmatory tests. This applies to both onscreen and paper-based versions. At the conclusion of the test invigilators must collect in and securely destroy any paper that has been used during the tests.

4.5.3.6 After the test

All test papers and related material must be collected in as soon as the test has finished.

For full details of this process, see the *Essential Skills Wales Instructions for Conducting Examinations*.

The test papers remain live assessment material, even after they have been taken, so all copies must be returned to Pearson after use. On no account may they be retained for use as practice or 'past' papers. A separate set of sample tests is available from our website for this purpose: qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-essential-skills-wales.html

4.5.4 Resits

All confirmatory tests are graded pass/fail, and where candidates have been unsuccessful they will need to resit.

Whilst there is no fixed minimum period before a resit may take place, or a cap on the number of permitted resits, in practice candidates will need further opportunity to reflect on their reasons for being unsuccessful before resitting. As part of the external quality assurance process Pearson will be monitoring the number of instances where resits are required.

Where candidates do need to resit, the test paper will again be allocated by Pearson rather than the centre, and is most likely to be a different test from the one attempted previously.

4.6 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

The Essential Skills qualifications are designed to measure learners' ability to work independently and problem-solve. It is therefore crucial that they undergo a rigorous process of initial assessment to ensure they are personally capable of meeting the required standard for any Essential Skills qualifications they work towards.

4.6.1 Permitted adjustments

The qualifications' assessments are designed to be inclusive and reflect common variations in learners' normal methods of working, although some candidates may still need specific access arrangements and reasonable adjustments to allow for their particular methods of working. **Any such adjustments must not compromise *independent* achievement of the required standard, so must not involve third party assistance with anything material to the assessment.**

Adjustments may be allowed, where necessary for any essential skills qualification and can apply to controlled tasks, structured discussions and confirmatory tests. In the case of EAoNS and ECommS, the following inclusion statements set out the range of reasonable adjustments that might **potentially** be considered for both the controlled task and confirmatory test.

Essential Application of Number Skills		
Adjustment/ allowances	Permitted for controlled task	Permitted for confirmatory test
Additional time	Yes	Yes
Human Reader	Yes	Yes
Human Scribe	Yes (but must not draw diagrams, charts or graphs on behalf of candidate)	Yes
Assistive reading/ writing software	Yes	Yes
Practical assistants	Yes (the assistant must not perform any skills for which marks can be accredited)	Yes
Rest breaks	Yes (although tasks can in any event take place over a number of sessions)	Yes
Modified paper (e.g. enlarged print or Braille)	Yes	Yes
BSL interpreter	Yes	Yes
Transcripts	Yes (although any diagrams, charts or graphs must be created independently by the candidate)	Yes

Essential Communication Skills

Key Principles:

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening is defined as non-written communication conducted within a purposeful context.

Reading

Reading is defined as the independent decoding and understanding of written language to obtain information in a purposeful context. 'Text' is defined as materials that include the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille.

Writing

Writing is defined as the independent construction of written text to communicate in a purposeful context. 'Text' is defined as materials that include the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille and which are presented in a way that is accessible for the intended audience.

Adjustment/ allowances	Permitted for controlled task	Permitted for confirmatory test
Additional time	Yes	Yes
Interaction through the medium of BSL or SSE	Yes (only for speaking and listening, all reading/writing activities must be completed through the medium of English or Welsh)	No
Human Reader	No	No
Human Scribe	No	Yes - to record multiple choice responses
Assistive reading/ writing / speech software (if used independently by the candidate)	Yes	Yes
Practical assistants	Yes (the assistant must not perform any skills for which marks can be accredited)	Yes
Rest breaks	Yes (although tasks can in any event take place over a number of sessions)	Yes
Modified paper (e.g. enlarged print or Braille)	Yes	Yes
Transcripts	Yes (although any text must be created independently by the candidate)	Yes

Essential Digital Literacy Skills		
Adjustment/ allowances	Permitted for controlled task	Permitted for confirmatory structured discussion
Additional time	Yes	Yes
Human Reader	Yes	Yes
Human Scribe	Yes	Yes
Assistive reading/ writing software	Yes	Yes
Practical assistants	Yes (the assistant must not perform any skills for which marks can be accredited)	Yes
Rest breaks	Yes (although tasks can in any event take place over a number of sessions)	Yes
Modified paper (e.g. enlarged print or Braille)	Yes	Yes
BSL interpreter	Yes	Yes
Transcripts	Yes (although any outputs must be created independently by the candidate)	Yes

Essential Employability Skills		
Adjustment/ allowances	Permitted for controlled task	Permitted for confirmatory structured discussion
Additional time	Yes	Yes
Human Reader	Yes	Yes
Human Scribe	Yes (although any digital equipment/devices must be operated independently by the candidate)	Yes
Assistive reading/ writing software	Yes	Yes
Practical assistants	Yes (the assistant must not perform any skills for which marks can be accredited)	Yes
Rest breaks	Yes (although tasks can in any event take place over a number of sessions)	Yes
Modified paper (e.g. enlarged print or Braille)	Yes	Yes
BSL interpreter	Yes	Yes
Transcripts	Yes (although any outputs must be created independently by the candidate)	Yes

4.6.2 Arrangements for making reasonable adjustments

Pearson's existing published arrangements for providing access to assessment and making reasonable adjustments apply. For example, these might include presenting the task materials in a particular format, allowing additional time or practical help with aspects of the task that are not part of, or intrinsic to, the assessment. Please see the *Supplementary guidance for reasonable adjustment and special consideration in vocational internally assessed units* (available on our website) for further information.

Further information on access arrangements can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration for General and Vocational qualifications*.

Both documents are on the policy page of our website.

5 Quality assurance requirements

5.1 Internal quality assurance

Centres must have effective internal quality assurance systems and processes in place to ensure any internal assessment of these qualifications is consistently carried out to the required standard.

Centres internal quality assurance arrangements are in turn subject to external quality assurance monitoring by Pearson.

Full details and guidance on the internal and external quality assurance requirements and procedures are provided in the *Quality Assurance Handbook 2017-18 Essential Skills Wales* document available on our website.

5.2 External quality assurance

Standards Verifiers are appointed to approve centres and to monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance carried out by centres. Standards verification is carried out to ensure there is validity, reliability and good practice in centres.

See the *Quality Assurance Handbook 2017-18 Essential Skills Wales* document on our website for full details.

6 Dealing with suspected malpractice

Malpractice means acts that undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or may damage the authority of those responsible for delivering the assessment and certification.

Pearson does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions) of malpractice by candidates, centre staff or centres in connection with Pearson qualifications. Pearson may impose penalties and/or sanctions on learners, centre staff or centres where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice have been proven.

Malpractice may arise or be suspected in relation to any unit or type of assessment within the qualification. For further details on malpractice and advice on preventing malpractice by candidates, please see Pearson's *Centre Guidance: Dealing with Malpractice*, available on our website. The Head of Centre must report all cases of suspected or actual malpractice in connection with the assessment to Pearson at **pqsmalpractice@pearson.com**

6.1 Candidate malpractice

The head of centre is required to report incidents of suspected candidate malpractice that occur during Pearson examinations. We ask centres to complete JCQ Form M1 (www.jcq.org.uk/malpractice) and email it with any accompanying documents (signed statements from the candidate, invigilator, copies of evidence, etc) to the Investigations Team at pqsmalpractice@pearson.com. The responsibility for determining appropriate sanctions or penalties to be imposed on learners lies with Pearson.

Candidates must be informed at the earliest opportunity of the specific allegation and the centre's malpractice policy, including the right of appeal. Candidates found guilty of malpractice may be disqualified from the qualification for which they have been entered with Pearson.

6.2 Centre malpractice

The head of centre is required to inform Pearson's Investigations Team of any incident of suspected malpractice by centre staff, before any investigation is undertaken. The head of centre is requested to inform the Investigations Team by submitting a JCQ M2(a) form (downloadable from www.jcq.org.uk/malpractice) with supporting documentation to pqsmalpractice@pearson.com. Where Pearson receives allegations of malpractice from other sources (for example Pearson staff, anonymous informants), the Investigations Team will conduct the investigation directly or may ask the head of centre to assist.

Incidents of maladministration (accidental errors in the delivery of Pearson qualifications that may affect the assessment of learners) should also be reported to the Investigations Team using the same method.

Heads of centres/principals/chief executive officers or their nominees are required to inform learners and centre staff suspected of malpractice of their responsibilities and rights, please see 6.15 of *JCQ Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments Policies and Procedures*.

Pearson reserves the right in cases of suspected malpractice to withhold the issuing of results/certificates while an investigation is in progress. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, results and/or certificates may not be released or they may be withheld.

We reserve the right to withhold certification when undertaking investigations, audits and quality assurances processes. You will be notified within a reasonable period of time if this occurs.

Sanctions and appeals

Where malpractice is proven, we may impose sanctions or penalties.

Where learner malpractice is evidenced, penalties may be imposed such as:

- mark reduction for affected external assessments
- disqualification from the qualification
- debarment from registration for Pearson qualifications for a period of time.

If we are concerned about your centre's quality procedures we may impose sanctions such as:

- working with centres to create an improvement action plan
- requiring staff members to receive further training
- placing temporary blocks on the centre's certificates
- placing temporary blocks on registration of learners
- debarring staff members or the centre from delivering Pearson qualifications
- suspending or withdrawing centre approval status.

The centre will be notified if any of these apply.

Pearson has established procedures for centres that are considering appeals against penalties and sanctions arising from malpractice. Appeals against a decision made by Pearson will normally be accepted only from the head of centre (on behalf of learners and/or members or staff) and from individual members (in respect of a decision taken against them personally). Further information on appeals can be found in our *Enquiries and appeals about Pearson vocational qualification policy* on our website. In the initial stage of any aspect of malpractice, please notify the Investigations Team (via pqsmalpractice@pearson.com) who will inform you of the next steps.

Appendix 1

Frequently asked questions

1. What does the term ‘controlled’ mean in relation to the controlled task?

Please see [Section 4.3](#) of this handbook for a detailed overview of the expectations and requirements.

2. Who can supervise the controlled task; can this be the candidate’s tutor or assessor?

Please see [Section 4.3.5](#) of this handbook for the details of supervision requirements, the role of controlled task supervisor, and who may perform it.

3. Who can invigilate the confirmatory tests; can this be the candidate’s tutor or assessor?

Please see [Section 4.5.3.4](#) of this handbook for details of the invigilator role, and who may perform it.

4. Do the confirmatory tests have to be complete within the specific timescale?

The confirmatory test should not be attempted until after the controlled task has been successfully completed, although are separate from the controlled task so do not need to be completed within the controlled task maximum working period. See section 4.5 of this handbook for details.

5. Can candidates be allowed additional time for their controlled task and/ or confirmatory test?

Time allowances are an important aspect of the Essential Skills qualifications’ revised assessment approach. Both the controlled tasks and confirmatory test are a concentrated activity (with a ‘deadline’, like many of the activities learners are likely to encounter in the workplace.)

Nevertheless, individual candidates with a specific disability likely to affect their pace of work can potentially be allowed additional times as a reasonable adjustment. Please see [Section 4.6](#) for further details.

6. At what point does the working time allowance for the controlled tasks begin?

Please see [Section 4.3.3](#).

7. Can controlled task materials be issued to candidates before they start the task?

No. Please see [Section 4.3.3](#).

8. What arrangements can be made for candidates with specific learning needs and/ or assessment requirements?

Please see [section 4.6](#).

9. Getting a group together to complete the speaking and listening discussions within the ECommS controlled tasks is likely to be an issued for work-based candidates. As an alternative, could their colleagues make up their group?

Please see [Section 4.3.9](#). The group must comprise at least three people (excluding the assessor) although these need not all be the candidates, as long as those who are undergoing assessment have the opportunity to meet the relevant assessment criteria.

10. Can the plan for the discussion in the ECommS controlled tasks also be the basis of the plan for the written piece?

Yes.

11. Does time spent collecting data within the EAoNS controlled tasks count towards the working times allowance and/or maximum working period?

Please see [Section 4.3.8](#).

12. Can the structured discussion be used to compensate for the shortcomings in a candidate's work during the controlled task?

Please see [Section 4.4.1](#).

13. Can candidates have access to plain paper and a pen or pencil whilst completing the confirmatory tests?

Please see [Section 4.5.3.5](#).

