

# News story: Removing key skills criteria

Ofqual announces intention to withdraw redundant regulations for key skills criteria

Today, 3 August 2017, we are announcing our intention to withdraw our [Criteria for Key Skills Qualifications](#).

The criteria were originally developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in 2000, and set out rules and regulations for Key Skills qualifications.

From 2012, the government introduced Functional Skills qualifications, which largely replaced Key Skills. There are currently just [9 Key Skills qualifications](#) available to new learners in England, all offered by a single awarding organisation.

We have reviewed the criteria in detail, and set out our analysis in the table below.

Our view is that none of these rules are needed, and we can continue to regulate the remaining Key Skills qualifications effectively using our [General Conditions of Recognition](#).

As a result, we think retaining the criteria would impose an unnecessary regulatory burden. We intend to formally withdraw them on 31 August 2017.

## Detailed analysis of current criteria

Current rule	Our view
Qualifications that use any of the following terms in their titles must be based on the specifications developed by the regulators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key Skills</li><li>• Key Skills qualifications</li><li>• application of number</li><li>• communication</li><li>• information technology</li><li>• improving own learning and performance</li><li>• problem solving</li><li>• working with others</li></ul>	Rule not needed Developing qualification specifications is outside Ofqual's remit. We do not think it is appropriate to require awarding organisations to continue using a specification developed by a predecessor organisation many years ago.

## Current rule

Qualifications in Key Skills must use the assessment model specified by the regulators.

If the assessment method includes tests, awarding organisations must use the agreed national tests and allow candidates to take the tests as many times as they want. If the tests do not have pre-set pass marks, the awarding organisations must agree the pass marks at meetings that include all of the awarding organisations involved in the relevant assessment series.

Awarding organisations must:

- participate in cross-awarding organisation moderation activities for internal assessment
- carry out random checks, after the final date of completion, where nearly completed portfolios were included in the Moderation process

## Our view

Rule not needed

Our General Conditions of Recognition already require qualifications to use the most appropriate assessment methods (Condition D1), and assessments to be fit for purpose (Condition E4.2).

Rule not needed

This requirement is redundant because it could conflict with, for example, General Conditions D1 and G1 – and awarding organisations must comply with the Conditions where they conflict with the criteria.

In addition, it is not currently possible to comply with this rule, because there is no longer a bank of “agreed national tests”.

Rule not needed

Our General Conditions of Recognition already require awarding organisations to carry out effective moderation (Condition H2)