

# Vocational and technical qualification assessments in 2021

We recognise that some learners taking vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) have experienced lost teaching and training time as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and that appropriate arrangements need to be put in place to mitigate the impact of this disruption and respond to any ongoing or future public health measures.

We consulted on proposals to permit awarding organisations to make adjustments to their qualifications and assessments, which took account of the different ways in which the qualifications are used – ranging from those taken alongside, or instead of general qualifications, to those used to signal occupational competency.

Responses to the consultation have been carefully considered and given the high level of agreement to the proposals, we have today, 7 September, [confirmed our decisions](#) and that the proposed arrangements are being implemented in full.

Dame Glenys Stacey, Acting Chief Regulator, Ofqual, said:

In many cases, awarding organisations will be able to deliver VTQs as normal, but where this is not possible it is important that any changes continue to deliver qualifications that are a valid and reliable indication of knowledge, understanding, skills or practical competence.

We will continue to work with awarding organisations to support their decision-making on when adaptations are necessary and what adaptations are appropriate for different qualifications. The work we are already doing to facilitate the development of common approaches across similar sectors and types of qualifications will also continue.

As government's expectation is that assessments will take place during 2020/21, awarding organisations are being allowed to adapt assessments to enable them to better cater for any future disruptions. We will monitor plans they are putting in place, ensuring that, as far as possible, arrangements are in place to cope with different potential scenarios depending on the progression of the pandemic. It is therefore not necessary to permit awarding organisations to offer calculated results for assessments taken in 2020/21.

Our second draft extended extraordinary regulatory framework, on which [we have launched a consultation today](#), sets out the regulatory arrangements and guidance with which awarding organisations must comply when adapting their qualifications.

Awarding organisations must consider whether their assessments and qualifications can progress as they normally would, or if there is need to adapt assessments and qualifications. This could include widening assessment windows to provide greater flexibility, streamlining assessments to free up time for teaching and learning, or changing some assessment requirements to deal with the impact of any ongoing social distancing measures, such as group performances. However, if they can progress as normal, qualifications and assessments will not be adapted.

It is important that centres receive information about adaptations in a timely and consistent way and we are working with stakeholders to agree deadlines by when awarding organisations will provide qualification specific information to their centres.

Our approach seeks to ensure that, as far as possible, learners taking VTQs and other general qualifications, have the opportunity to receive a fair result and are not disadvantaged by the longer term impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.