Functional Skills



VQA Functional Skills Qualifications in English at Entry Level

Speaking, Listening, and Communicating (SLC) Remote Delivery Guide

Version 1.1

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Summary of changes

The following table provides a summary of the changes that have been made to the qualification specification since the publication of the previous version.

Version number	Summary of changes
V1.1	Updates to Facilitating the Assessment section.

Introduction

This document aims to provide clear and consistent guidance to tutors preparing and delivering remote assessments for the Speaking, Listening, and Communicating (SLC) assessment component for the following qualifications:

- VQA Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 1 (RQF) (610/6263/7)
- VQA Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 2 (RQF) (610/6264/9)
- VQA Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 3 (RQF) (610/6265/0).

In this document, the term 'remote assessment' refers to the assessment of a learner without requiring them to be physically present in a setting, such as a classroom or the centre. It typically involves the use of digital tools and platforms, allowing tutors to administer assessment tasks online. This method enables flexibility in terms of location and timing, making it accessible to learners in various locations.

To support valid, reliable, and consistent assessments for all learners, regardless of their location, tutors must adhere to the information provided in this document and refer to the following VQA policies and guidance documentation:

- *VQA Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment*
- *Appeals Policy*
- *Complaints Policy*
- *Conflict of Interest Policy*
- *Equality and Diversity Policy*
- *GDPR and Privacy Policy*
- *Malpractice and Maladministration Policy*
- *Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy*
- *VQA Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Quality Assurance and Standardisation Guide.*

The VQA policy documents may be accessed via our website **www.vqa.org**.

Remote assessment may not be suitable for all learners. However, we have provided this option for centres and they may determine if it is appropriate for their learners.

It is essential that learners:

- agree to being video **and** audio recorded during the remote assessments
- provide consent to the recording and understand:
  - how the recording will be used (for example, monitoring or for quality checks)
  - how their data will be securely stored
  - who will have access to the recording
  - how long the recording will be kept
  - that their privacy will be protected.
- are informed about their right to withdraw consent and the potential impact this may have on completing the assessment.

Centres must also ensure they apply their own data protection and safeguarding policies when delivering remote Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level assessments.

Preparing for the Remote Assessment

Centres have the flexibility to choose the online software package they wish to use. However, the package must allow for webcam, audio, and screen sharing. This allows the nominated tutor to communicate with the learner, complete the necessary validation checks prior to the assessment taking place, view the learner's screen, and record the assessment to aid both internal and external quality assurance processes.

Where online video software cannot be accessed (for example, no internet, company firewalls) then the use of a smartphone, where video and audio recording is possible and viable, is permitted. There must be a valid reason as to why the learner cannot access an online platform, which must be made known to the IQA for the centre. The tutor/IQA should create a record of this validation to support both internal and external quality assurance processes.

Centres must ensure that the tutor(s) conducting assessments is/are fully trained in the equipment to be used during remote delivery and is/are familiar with the VQA Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment.

It is important to conduct a test of the video and recording equipment for both the tutor and the learner before the live assessment. This ensures the equipment is functioning correctly, with a clear audio and video recording facility that captures all learner movements. This also helps the learner become more comfortable with the system.

Additionally, it is advisable for learners being assessed remotely to have the opportunity to practise the assessment in this format, ensuring they are fully prepared.

It is the tutor's responsibility to ensure that the remote environment requirements stated in the VQA Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment are communicated to learners before the assessment.

The tutor is responsible for ensuring that all reasonable adjustments are implemented during both the preparation and delivery of the remote SLC assessment.

For further details, please refer to the ***VQA Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy*** on our website.

The tutor should work with the learner to decide if remote assessment is suitable and that video and audio recording is achievable.

Facilitating the Assessment

Once the learner joins, they should be asked to confirm that they are settled, are ready to begin, and have ensured they have enabled their webcam-enabled device and audio.

The learner must be informed that the assessment session will be recorded and the point at which it will be activated.

Following this, the tutor must conduct validity and assessment environment checks. The assessment environment check must be conducted once the video and audio recording has started. The validity check must be confirmed by the tutor but does not need to be included in the video recording. These checks must not be included in the assessment time.

Validity Check

The purpose of a validity check is to confirm the learner's identity by ensuring that the individual appearing on the webcam-enabled device matches the ID provided. The tutor must ask the learner to display their ID for the webcam. This does not need to form part of the video recording.

Examples of learner identification/authentication:	
Webcam-enabled	• Passport • Driving license/EEA Photocard • Student ID Card (issued from an educational institution with learner photo) • National Identity Card • Residence permit issued by the Home Office • Citizen Card • Post Office PASS card • MY ID Card • Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) Card • Other forms of photographic ID may also be accepted but should be agreed in advance.

It is important that the tutor confirms which learner is being assessed to ensure successful quality assurance processes.

Assessment Environment Check

The purpose of an assessment environment check is to ensure that the learner's surroundings are suitable for the assessment and free from potential distractions or any unauthorised resources.

The tutor must conduct a visual 360 sweep (using a webcam-enabled device) of the room (no background filters or video call effects are allowed) to confirm that the environment complies with the VQA Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment. The tutor must ask the learner to verbally confirm that the requirements have been met. Statements may include (where relevant to the arrangement and as often as is necessary dependent on the number of learners involved):

- 'Can you confirm that you are the only person present?'
- 'Can you confirm that no other person currently has access to this room/area?'
- 'Can you confirm that you feel this assessment environment is suitable for your assessment to take place and that it will not cause any restrictions on your ability to perform to your best ability?'
- 'Can you confirm that this assessment environment is safe and free from harm?'

These confirmations will also help the tutor verify that the acoustics and audio recording quality are adequate.

Where the tutor (or the learner) does not feel that the allocated environment is conducive to enabling a valid, safe, and fair assessment to take place, they can cancel and rearrange the assessment. The decision and reason why should be recorded on the Learner Assessment Record (LAR).

These checks must be recorded before the SLC assessment commences and completed in line with the VQA Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment.

To confirm both the validity and assessment environment checks have been carried out, the tutor should record completion on the LAR to support internal quality assurance processes.

Where the tutor (or the learner) is satisfied that the above checks have met the specified requirements, the tutor should confirm that the assessment can proceed.

If able to proceed, the tutor must:

- reiterate that the assessment will be recorded
- confirm the assessment details such as its duration

- remind the learner(s) of the format and any evidence they can access/utilise during the assessment
- recap that they should feel free to ask for questions to be reworded or clarified if required.

Starting the Assessment

At the beginning of the assessment, the tutor must ensure the following information is audible on the recording:

- Tutor name
- SLC component
- Learner(s) name
- Qualification title
- Assessment date
- Confirm that a validity check of the assessment environment and identification check have been confirmed.

Tutors may use the below script at the start of each assessment:

> **"This is [tutor name], recording the [SLC component] for [learner(s) name] for [qualification title], on [assessment date]. I can confirm that I have conducted a validity check of the assessment environment and can also confirm that the identification of the learner(s) has been confirmed. The assessment is now able to proceed."**

If the assessment includes the presence of another person (an Internal Quality Assurer for example), or other support, they should also be introduced, and their role explained.

If the above checks are conducted and satisfied, the tutor should confirm that the assessment can commence. However, if the checks are conducted and the tutor is not satisfied that they can validate the assessment, they must not proceed and should rearrange the assessment.

If able to proceed, the tutor must:

- reiterate that the assessment will be recorded
- confirm the assessment details such as its duration
- remind the learner(s) of the format and any evidence they may access/utilise during the assessment
- recap that they should feel free to ask for questions to be reworded or clarified if required.

During the Assessment

The SLC internally-set, controlled assessment is conducted remotely and does not require an additional invigilator. The learner's subject tutor will conduct the assessment, however, to prevent malpractice the tutor should also carry out the responsibilities of the invigilator as outlined in the VQA Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Quality Assurance and Standardisation Guide.

If an incident occurs this must be managed appropriately. An incident is defined as anything that interrupts the natural flow of the assessment and causes it to be paused, such as:

- fire alarm tests
- extreme weather (such as heavy rain/hail)
- minor and temporary technical difficulties
- a coughing/sneezing fit
- malpractice
- emergencies
- incidents that put the learner, learners, or tutor at risk, such as faulty electrical equipment
- general concerns about the quality of the controlled environment.

In some cases, it may be acceptable to continue the assessment after an interruption. However, in other cases, the assessment may have to be stopped, voided, and rescheduled.

If an incident occurs, the tutor must evaluate whether the assessment can continue or should be terminated. Factors to consider include:

- whether the incident provides an opportunity for a learner to gain an unfair advantage
- whether a learner becomes distressed or overly nervous as a result of the incident
- whether the unforeseen event adversely affects the ability of a learner to fully and fairly demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

If any of these factors are deemed advantageous or detrimental to the learner, the assessment should be terminated. All incidents must be thoroughly documented on the LAR and shared with the appropriate members of the centre after the assessment concludes.

Examples of incidents where assessments may be able to continue include:

- fire alarm tests where the learner does not have to leave the room
- extreme weather (such as heavy rain/hail) that does not impact on audio quality

- minor and temporary technical difficulties
- a coughing/sneezing fit, provided the learner recovers quickly and is able to continue the assessment.

Examples of incidents where assessments must be voided include:

- malpractice
- emergencies
- incidents that put the learner(s) or the tutor at risk, such as faulty electrical equipment
- general concerns about the quality of the controlled environment.

Concluding the Assessment

At the end of the assessment, the tutor should read the following statement or a suitable equivalent:

> **"Thank you for taking part in today's SLC assessment. You will receive the provisional results of this assessment after it has been reviewed. Your final result will be issued once the quality assurance processes are complete. Thank you again and enjoy the rest of your day."**

Storage of Assessments

All SLC recordings must be securely stored to facilitate both internal and external quality assurance reviews. Each recording should be saved in a suitable format with a file name that includes the centre's name, learner name, and qualification level, ensuring secure storage throughout the process.

All relevant documents and recordings must be kept for at least three years, starting from the end of the year in which they were created.