

Electronic assessment

Of interest to:

- Admission staff
- Curriculum managers
- Exam officers
- Heads of departments
- NVQ training and assessment managers
- Programme leaders
- Teaching staff
- Training providers

Qualifications:

- Adult Literacy/Adult Numeracy
- BTEC First Diploma
- BTEC Higher National Certificate and Diploma
- BTEC Introductory Certificate and Diploma
- BTEC National Award, Certificate and Diploma
- BTEC Short Courses
- Diploma in Foundation Studies (Art and Design)
- Entry Level Certificate (Life Skills/Skills for Working Life)
- GCE
- GCSE
- GNVQ
- Key Skills
- NVQ
- VCE

Policy on electronic assessment

1. For this policy, electronic assessment is defined as any or all of the recording, transmission, presentation and subsequent processing of assessment materials and evidence using computers and associated hardware, including information input and display terminals. Besides textual evidence, the medium extends to include evidence such as digital videos of performances, digital photographs and digital audio records of oral work.
2. Electronic assessment may be used for any Edexcel qualification, unless there is a decision to the contrary by the regulator or by the controlling authority in the country where the assessment takes place. Electronic assessment may be used with learners studying and being assessed at Edexcel approved centres or by learners on distance learning programmes (please refer to Distance Assessment policy).
3. Electronic assessment evidence should be an option. That is all learners being assessed for a particular qualification are not required to use this medium; unless there is a mandatory requirement in the qualification specification.
4. When electronic assessment is used, the following three criteria must apply:
 - 4.1. Any additional quality assurance, control regulations and procedures for electronic assessment of a qualification must complement and be of the same standard stipulated for that particular qualification
 - 4.2. Use of electronic assessment must neither advantage nor disadvantage any learner compared to one using any other medium for assessment (e.g. paper).
 - 4.3. There must be equality of opportunity to succeed between learners who are assessed and produce evidence using different media to achieve the same qualification.

Links:

- Distance Assessment
DA 03-02

Policy review:

Review date 03-2004

Useful contacts

For more information on Edexcel qualifications please contact Edexcel Customer Services

Tel: 0870 240 9800

E-mail:

enquiries@edexcel.org.uk

You can also visit the Edexcel website: www.edexcel.org.uk

5. Criteria 5.1 to 5.14 are to be used in the implementation of appropriate quality assured operating procedures, for any qualification where electronic assessment may be possible. Criteria 5.1 to 5.14 represent a minimum set.
 - 5.1 For the internal assessment of a qualification, the Edexcel approved centre/organisation, must take responsibility for ensuring compliance with legal requirements, regulations and codes of practice (e.g. Data Protection Act, Disability Discrimination Act, copyright, Health and Safety) that apply in the country where the assessment takes place. For external assessment, Edexcel will endeavour to take responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant legal requirements, regulations and codes of practice.
 - 5.2 Use of electronic assessment must not reduce the overall validity of the assessment for the qualification.
 - 5.3 Due diligence must be exercised by the Edexcel approved centre to ensure the appropriate security of electronic assessment materials and evidence.
 - 5.4 Due diligence must also be exercised by the Edexcel approved centre to verify the authenticity of both the learners and their assessment evidence. Authenticity declarations will require signatures on paper until such a time as acceptable electronic alternatives are developed.
 - 5.5 Learners with special requirements must neither be advantaged nor disadvantaged by the use of electronic assessment.
 - 5.6 The integrity, availability and where necessary, the confidentiality, of learner data and evidence must be maintained at all times.
 - 5.7 Compatible hardware and software must be used in every stage of the assessment process; from its initial setting, through production of the evidence by the learner, standardization, moderation and to archiving.
 - 5.8 All non-experts associated with any stage of electronic assessment must be able to understand any technical instructions.
 - 5.9 Where it is necessary to annotate learner assessment evidence, such annotations must be clearly differentiated from the learner's evidence.
 - 5.10 The use of electronic assessment must not compromise any standardisation processes.
 - 5.11 Archiving and disposal of electronically stored assessment materials and learner evidence must meet the same timelines as stipulated for the qualification concerned.
 - 5.12 Appropriate backup systems and contingency procedures must be established and in place to minimise disruptions caused by any hardware or software failures, to ensure that no learner is disadvantaged.
 - 5.13 An audit trail of the electronic assessment process must exist in order to deal with potential irregularities and queries.
 - 5.14 All staff in the centre tasked with reviewing the standard of the learner's evidence and the operation of any electronic assessment must have the appropriate technical expertise to make valid judgements.

Introduction

Use of electronic assessment provides many new opportunities. These range from enabling learners to process and analyse data of varying complexity in many different forms (e.g. numeric, text, pictorial) and to the use of digital video for recording performance. However, the effective use of electronic assessment will require an appropriate infrastructure to be in place to ensure that all stages of the assessment are to the required standards. This policy statement is for centres to use to implement electronic assessment procedures for Edexcel qualifications. An audit trail of such assessment will be expected to show compliance with this policy.

The policy statement applies to both internal (e.g. coursework, portfolios) and external assessments. However, the procedures for a particular qualification, may be different to those for any other according to the assessment context. For instance the emphasis where electronic assessment is used for testing will be different to that where it is used for coursework.

The existence of this policy does not imply that a centre can demand an assessment and the processing to be conducted electronically; this is a matter for Edexcel to decide. It is an enabling policy and Edexcel may use it proactively or in response to customer or other demands.

Guidance on Electronic Assessment

Guidance on paragraph 2

- In centres all staff responsible for assessment and quality assurance must examine and report on plans for the use of electronic assessment and make the necessary changes to procedures and methods of working. The centre must keep pace with changing technology, as it becomes available to learners.
- Electronic assessment can be used at the Edexcel approved centre where the learner is based or it can be used with remote learners on distance learning programmes. When electronic assessment is used in conjunction with distance assessment Edexcel's Distance Assessment policy DA 03-02 must also be adhered to.

Guidance on paragraph 3

- Unless the specifications state that electronic assessment is mandatory for all learners, any local attempt to make it so must ensure that there is equal opportunity to succeed for those learners affected, compared to others being assessed for the same qualification.

Guidance on paragraphs 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3

- These three criteria form a linked set. The common theme is one of equal opportunity. Information technology offers many innovative ways of presenting assessment materials and evidence. However, the qualification's assessment and grading criteria must obviously be used for judging achievement and the learner's use of electronic assessment must not influence assessment decisions, unless it is a mandatory requirement.

Guidance on paragraph 5.2

- Use of electronic assessment, particularly for internal assessment, provides different opportunities for presenting materials and evidence, some of which can be impressive. The specification's assessment and grading criteria and/or agreed mark schemes, however, must be used solely to establish the validity of the assessment.

Guidance on paragraph 5.4

- It is expected that to comply with this statement and that in 5.3 above, procedures will be no more or less rigorous than for other assessment media (e.g. paper). Appropriate steps must be taken to ensure that the evidence presented for assessment is the work of the learner concerned and no other, unless referenced and the centre will be expected to supply a signed authenticity declaration.

Guidance on paragraph 5.5

- Edexcel's regulations on learners with special requirements will apply to learners using electronic assessment for a particular qualification, as far as is possible. Care, nevertheless, needs to be taken to ensure no learners are advantaged or disadvantaged. For instance, an electronic amanuensis could be a voice recognition system. In a time constrained assessment this could lead to more evidence being produced in the time given than by learners using keyboards, thus potentially creating an unfair situation.

Guidance on paragraph 5.6

- Care must be taken to ensure that learner data and evidence is available when required, protected from corruption, unauthorised modifications and loss during transmission and storage.

Guidance on paragraph 5.7

- In establishing the infrastructure to handle electronic assessment it is important to investigate at the outset what hardware and software is suitable and compatible. This will allow all concerned to check they have the correct equipment. While many may use a common platform, such as PC machines and Microsoft software, others, such as those in the Art and Design field, may use a different platform. For instance, to view video evidence, the software and hardware for viewing the video and whether all involved can access the materials and assessment evidence will have to be reviewed. Such reviews will need to include informing, for example, the verifiers, moderators and examiners.

Guidance on paragraph 5.8

- No one should be disadvantaged by jargon beyond that expected for the qualification. It may be necessary to test instructions prior to use. One obvious case is the use of acronyms and abbreviations; care must be taken to ensure that recipients of the instructions are not disadvantaged by use of these terms.

Guidance on paragraph 5.9

- With paper-based evidence it is normally easy to differentiate learner work from any written annotations by examiners/assessors and verifiers/moderators. Annotations on computer files will not be hand-written and could be in the same typeface and colour. It is vital that such annotations must be clearly differentiated from the learner's work. There is a variety of means to do this (e.g. use of separate files or groupwork software). This may have implications for the supporting infrastructure and training of those involved.

Guidance on paragraph 5.10

- This statement applies to the standardisation process of internal assessment in centres. Whether a learner's evidence is entirely electronic or a mix of electronic and other forms (e.g. paper), standardisation must be carried out to the required level. Electronic assessment evidence must be available to all concerned in the same way as it would be for any other medium. As noted in 5.2 above of this policy, use of different, perhaps impressive, means of presenting evidence, must not affect the validity of the assessment and this must be taken into account during standardisation.

Guidance on paragraph 5.11

- If materials and evidence are stored on a computer network, arrangements must be made for the storage to continue according to the regulations for the qualification or for it to be transferred to another type, such as CD-ROM with no loss of quality or data.

Guidance on paragraph 5.12

- The nature and extent of backup systems and fallback procedures will depend on the context. In the case of time constrained computer-based tests, such systems and procedures are vital. For coursework and portfolios, these systems and procedures are necessary (particularly backup systems to prevent irretrievable data loss) but may be different to that found for external assessment.

Guidance on paragraph 5.13

- The requirements for an audit trail must be no more or less rigorous than for assessment using any other medium (e.g. paper). Records must be kept of who made decisions and when they were made. For example, if a CD-ROM is sent to an examiner, verifier or moderator, a record must be kept of when it was sent and by whom. Also, if a member of staff in a centre assesses evidence then a record must be kept of who conducted the assessment and when it was conducted as well as the outcome.

Guidance on paragraph 5.14

- Any review of electronic assessment will require a level of information technology expertise above that normally expected of those who review paper-based assessment. For example, an understanding of the applications of software packages must be understood by the assessor to ensure the learner is fully demonstrating the demands of the assessment outcomes of the specification. This requirement may have human resource implications.

References to third-party material made in this specification are made in good faith. London Qualifications does not endorse, approve or accept responsibility for the content of materials, which may be subject to change, or any opinions expressed therein. (Material may include textbooks, journals, magazines and other publications and websites.)

Prepared by Samina Khan
Authorised by Jill Lanning

All the material in this publication is
copyright © London Qualifications Limited
2003