

Digital Skills Newsletter

Summer 2020

The new normal

We understand that these are extraordinary and unprecedented times, and we are working closely with education providers, employers and governments to monitor the Covid-19 situation, and putting in place measures to support our employees, customers and stakeholders.

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The Digital Skills portfolio team – David and Ken – will continue to run Keep In Touch webinars and will provide guidance on Assessment Mitigation as well taking questions and looking to you for best practices you have found to work in the current situation with your learners.

Please take the opportunity to join us and discuss issues with colleagues.

- 23 June 2020 (9.30-11.00) Update/Keep in Touch
<https://bit.ly/CGDigital23JuneKIT>
- 14 July 2020 (9.30-11.00) Update/Keep in Touch
<https://bit.ly/CGDigital14JulyKIT>
- 4 August 2020 (9.30-11.00) Update/Keep in Touch
<https://bit.ly/CGDigital4AugKIT>

VRQ and NVQ Assessment mitigation

Following an extensive consultation with Ofqual, City & Guilds were asked to put its qualifications (all of them) into three categories:

- Calculated results
- Adapt
- Delay

In the Digital Skills and ICT space, we have chosen ADAPT for all out qualifications, which includes the on-programme tests for the Digital Technology Standards Apprenticeships. The details on assessment mitigation for all industry sectors can be found on the City & Guilds Cov-19 web page;

- <https://bit.ly/CGVRQNVQMitigation>

Ensuring all learners have an opportunity to achieve

You will find that in many cases we have given providers the option of Remoter Test invigilation OR Witness Testimony/Provider Report with Q & A/Professional Discussion. This has been done because we realise that many learners may have to share devices, may not have substantial broadband or lack required equipment to undertake the remote testing.

You need to decide with the learner what would be the most appropriate assessment mitigation to use, depending on their and your circumstances.

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Where a provider and the learner selects the remote test invigilation, make sure you follow the guidelines around what we expect you to do and how the tests should be administered.

The information for this can be found;

- Online tests at home
<https://bit.ly/CGTestatHome>
- Technical guidance and 'how-to'
<https://bit.ly/CGRemoteInv>

Gateway and End Point Assessment

Gateway

The rules around apprentices passing through Gateway have not been relaxed. To be able to book your apprentices for their End Point Assessment, they still need to achieve:

- Knowledge on-programme tests – ours or Vendor as appropriate to the standard.
 - The Assessment Mitigation should now allow you to complete this activity with apprentices where they have had some or all of the Knowledge components left to complete
- English and maths at Level 2 – either through qualifications already achieved or by undertaking Functional Skills

You will need to complete a Gateway Declaration Form that needs to be signed by the apprentice, employer and you the provider. We understand that getting signatures will not be easy and so City & Guilds will allow the following:

- Digital Signatures allowed on declaration and evidence authenticity documentation.
- We will also accept a **typed** in signature of the **learners name only. Employer and Training provider digital signatures must be provided.**
- If it is not possible to get a digital signature we will accept a letter from the Apprentices' employer stating the learner is able to go through gateway. This must be stated in the email and include the Employers email signature from the organisations email address.
- For further please click the link <https://bit.ly/CGSignatureGuide>

End Point Assessment

Providers and apprentices will have been collecting evidence electronically that can be used to create the Summative Portfolio and be uploaded to the EPA Portal. Remember this needs to be with us 14 days (10 working days) prior to the Interview date.

National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR), the External Quality Assurer for Digital have allowed some flexibility around the Synoptic Project to allow apprentices to do this without having to be at the employer or providers premises.

- NSAR have agreement from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) that the following will be allowed;
 - The training provider may seek agreement from the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), for where it is appropriate, to allow the apprentice to complete their Synoptic Project at home while in isolation. *City & Guilds is providing guidance on how this should happen and a template for the apprentice to record their "working" hours for the Synoptic Project.*





You will find more details around EPA issues at:

<https://www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19/epa/frequently-asked-questions>

The Packet Tracer virtual environment can be used for;

- 2 Network Engineer projects specifically written to work on the system
- 2 Infrastructure Technician specifically written to work on the system
- All Unified Communication Technician projects should be able to be carried out using the system – please test the one your apprentice selects before agreeing to its use

Apprentices can download Packet Tracer at home, simply follow the instructions in the two documents on our website under the End-point assessment EPA and then Virtual Assessment Service tabs.

	VAS Packet Tracer Learner User Guide pdf	1 MB	20 Jun 2019	
	VAS Packet Tracer Technical Requirements v1-1 pdf	235 KB	12 Dec 2019	

Lead Independent Assessor feedback

Our LEIPAs are constantly providing insights into what they are seeing within the evidence they review from you and your apprentices on the Digital Skills Standards Apprenticeships. While in the main we are seeing good work and a wide range of evidence – hence the average pass rate being over 93% - there is still some issues that training providers need to be aware of.

- While we will accept all sorts of evidence in the Summative Portfolio that may include witness testimony, professional discussion and observation, there are some rules to follow around their use to make sure you are not disadvantaging your apprentices:
 1. We have said at events and in webinars that using any one of the above items almost to the exclusion of any other evidence will not be acceptable unless there are truly mitigating circumstances that have been discussed with us and checked with the LEIPA to formulate how best to tackle the issue.
 2. Witness Testimony should be on a formal document or provided on letterheaded stationery of the employer. A plain sheet of paper that might be signed does not provide sufficient authentication of its origin.
 3. If you do a Professional Discussion, make sure that is what it is. If it becomes more of a Q & A session, then please label it accordingly – its still valid evidence, just not a PD.
- We are looking for demonstration of skills, application of knowledge and interaction with others – What, How and Who. There needs to be the range of evidence that clearly shows this and if they have done some activity get them to; video it, photograph it, take screenshots, etc. Then write the narrative (not needed with the video if they are seen and explaining what they are doing) to tell us what it is all about.
- There is a difference between being confident about what you do and competent (yes, you can be both). Please do not be surprised if the person you think is quiet gets a Distinction, it just shows they have proved to us how good they are and this will have come from their evidence submitted and the Interview.
- Get them to tell the story of what they do, it sound simple but is not always seen. It is about them and that's what we want to here.

Again our thanks to all our centres. All the Digital Standards are achieving over 91% pass rates and one is currently at 100%. YOU DID THAT! YOUR APPRENTICES DID THAT!

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General Support

In addition, City and Guilds is providing some of its learning material for free, as well as advice and guidance on managing the COVID-19 situation. Check out the COVID-19 webpage;

www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19

As always, Ken Gaines and David Wackett are only at the end of an email if you have specific questions or issues you need to resolve. Please contact them with your questions or to book a consultation call.

Our EPA Partnership Managers, Business Account Managers and Customer Service teams are here to answer your questions. Keep in touch and we will look to continue to provide the quality support that you have come to expect from City & Guilds.

Other update links

- New FAQs on EPA dispensations
- <https://www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19/frequently-asked-questions>
- Technicals statement live on website
- <https://www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19/technical-qualifications>
- Nations page live - <https://www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19/nations>
- ESOL page live - <https://www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19/esol>

The COVID-19 web pages are constantly being updated, please keep checking them for issues you may be experiencing to see if there has been a City & Guilds statement or solution to help you.

Newsletters and webinars

The recordings from the webinars we have been doing since lockdown was imposed and the this plus previous newsletter are available on our web site:

<https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/it/updates-and-webinars>

You will find:

- the original 5 Minute Facts webinars
- Level 2 Technical Award in Digital Technology webinar
- Webinars that include
 - EPA Lessons learned for Synoptic Projects, Interviews and Summative Portfolio
 - Keep In Touch and Assessment Mitigation
- Newsletters since 2018

Message from David and Ken

We appreciate lockdown rules are easing, but still urge you and your learners to keep social distancing to help combat Covid-19. Your work has help see the Digital have the highest average pass rate of any of the Apprenticeship Standards that City & Guilds offers. Thank you!

We urge everyone Stay Alert, Stay Safe, Stay Well.