

WJEC

Essential Skills Wales Suite of Qualifications

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR ESW ENTRY 1-3
CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT**

**Essential Application of Number (EAoNS)
Essential Communication Skills (EComms)**

Please note: Arrangements for Essential Digital Literacy Skills (EDLS) and Essential Employability Skills (EES) are covered in the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite of Qualifications Handbook'.

1. About this guide

This guide has been produced to provide advice and guidance to Centres on the controlled assessment arrangements for the Essential Skills Wales Entry qualifications for Application of Number (EAoNS) and Communication (ECommS) Entry 1-3.

It has been designed to support internal assessors and verifiers with their assessment of candidate evidence arising from the completion of the Controlled Task. It seeks to explain the purpose of internal verification and specific aspects of internal verification, and to explain the purpose of external verification and what the Centre can expect from their external verification visit.

This guide should be read in conjunction with:

- Essential Skills Wales Suite of Qualifications Handbook (July 2023)
- Essential Skills Wales Guide Guidance for Practitioners (August 2018)
- Developing Essential Skills Controlled Tasks (Qualifications Wales) January 2019

2. Qualification Approval

A Centre must first be approved to offer the relevant ESW qualification by completing a Qualification Approval Form. This can either be completed online via Connect or by submitting a hard copy to WJEC. Please contact WJEC's ESW Team on essentialskills@wjec.co.uk for more information.

3. Registering Candidates

As soon as a Centre has been approved to offer an ESW qualification, the Centre can begin to deliver the relevant qualification. Once the assessor is satisfied that the necessary skills as outlined in the ESW Suite Delivery Guidance for Practitioners have been mastered and at the correct level, the candidate is ready to take their Controlled Assessment. The Centre must then complete their internal quality assurance procedure before candidate registrations are made with WJEC. **Registrations must NOT be made until the candidate has completed the task and has passed the Centre's internal quality assurance procedures.**

Centres will be charged for each registration, irrespective of whether or not that candidate takes the Task. Registrations can be submitted to WJEC via Connect at any time between 1 September and 31 August.

4. Assessment Requirements

4.1 Controlled Assessments

Essential Skills Wales Entry qualifications for Application of Number (EAoNS) and Communication (ECommS) are available from Entry 1 to 3. Each Skill is assessed through Controlled Assessment.

The Controlled Tasks are either produced collectively by the awarding bodies or designed by the Centre and approved by WJEC. Centres intending to produce their own tasks should refer to the publication, *Developing Essential Skills Controlled Tasks* (Qualifications Wales) January 2019. Tasks are designed to be a valid measure of the accuracy of an assessment.

Assessment is valid when it:

- is appropriate for its purpose
- has been designed to allow candidates to demonstrate sufficient subject-specific skills to meet the requirements of the relevant ESW specification

- allows all assessors to make reliable assessment decisions
- allows the interpretation and inferences which can be drawn from the assessment outcomes to be meaningful and justifiable.

The Controlled Task is a **summative assessment**. Candidates can only undertake these assessments following teaching and learning when they have developed relevant skills at the required level.

Centre staff will need to ensure candidates have developed all the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding before attempting live assessment. **Under no circumstances may candidate be given any formative support or feedback whilst undertaking their controlled task, structured discussion, or test;** all work produced and submitted must be entirely their own.

Assessments can be taken only once. Where candidates have been unsuccessful in the controlled task, they will need further support and opportunity to address any apparent gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding before re-attempting a **different** controlled task.

Controlled tasks are:

- externally set (or approved) by WJEC
- presented unseen to candidates, and completed under controlled conditions (as specified in section 4.5.3, below)
- internally assessed by Centres, using the supplied marking criteria
- internally quality assured by Centres
- externally quality assured by WJEC

4.2 Obtaining the controlled tasks

Controlled Tasks are available via WJEC's secure website: [Portal by WJEC](#). To register, the Examinations Officer should email securewebsite@wjec.co.uk stating Centre number, Centre name, contact name and contact email address. Once registered, the Examinations Officer can set up additional limited access accounts themselves.

Any live controlled tasks may **only** be used for their intended purpose, i.e. to carry out live candidate assessments. Any electronic or printed copies of the task documents must be held securely at all times. **On no account** may learners access any live assessment material until they have been registered as a candidate for the Essential Skills qualification(s) they are working towards.

A separate set of sample-controlled tasks is available on [Essential Skills Wales Qualification Suite \(wjec.co.uk\)](#) to help with candidate preparation and Centre staff training/standardisation. These replicate the format and structure of the live controlled tasks.

4.3 Format of the controlled tasks

Each controlled tasks comprises at least two documents:

- **Candidate's paper**
 - setting out the task instructions, questions and related source material
- **Assessment pack**
 - containing the marking criteria and recording sheets, along with further information for assessors and internal quality assurers about conduct requirements and the assessment process.

The controlled tasks for Essential Application of Number Skills has a separate record sheet, which should be used to record marks awarded and rationales for assessment decisions made.

The Essential Communication Skills controlled task has an additional speaking and listening record sheet which must also be completed for each candidate.

4.4 Taking the Controlled Assessment

Candidates will take a Task under 'informal supervision' conditions i.e. during their normal contact time or other defined sessions. The Centre must ensure that:

- plagiarism does not take place
- the outcomes of the Task are wholly the candidate's own work (other than the assessor's checking of the candidate's drafts for the Communication writing task and of calculations for Application of Number)
- dates and times are recorded where a Task is completed in stages
- candidates who have finished a Task do not collude with those who are yet to complete.

The Task is not time bound and there is no time limit for its completion. **Please note that this arrangement does not apply to EDLS, where separate procedures apply. Please refer to the 'Essential Skills Wales Suite of Qualifications Handbook (Version 1.3 September 2018)'**.

The whole Task does not have to be completed in a single session but can be completed in 'bite sized chunks' over a period as determined by the candidate and their assessor. However, it is not expected that this will be an inordinate length of time as this will risk disadvantaging the candidate and trivializing the assessment.

4.5 Storage of candidate work

Centres must ensure that the Task is securely stored throughout the assessment process, including all associated resources issued by WJEC. All such material must be collected or shut down at the end of each session; it must not be removed from where the Task is being taken except when WJEC has first given approval. The outcomes of each Task must always be stored securely within the Centre. Work may be stored either by departments or the Exams Office. Secure storage is defined as a secure locked steel cabinet, a metal cabinet or similar cabinet. Work produced over several sessions must be collected at the end of each and stored securely. Where there is a practical need, secure storage may be defined as a classroom, a studio or a workshop which is locked from the end of one session to the start of the next. Work produced electronically must be saved securely to ensure that it cannot be amended between sessions. Files must also be backed-up in case of corruption.

4.6 Best Practice

Centres must carefully consider how they manage the conduct of the Tasks, especially in relation to the number of candidates that can realistically be managed at any one time. Centres should stagger the number of candidates who take a Task at the same time by taking advantage of WJEC's flexible entries procedures. Whilst the Task is taken under informal supervision conditions, there is still the paramount need for authenticity and rigor.

4.7 Feedback to candidates

Formative feedback cannot be given to the candidate once they begin a Task.

4.8 Authenticity

The Centre will be responsible for ensuring authenticity of all work produced by its candidates and for their management throughout the duration of each Task.

It is a statutory requirement for all candidates to confirm that the work they submit for assessment is their own. Each candidate is required to sign a declaration upon completion of the whole Task. Ensuring that candidates do so is the responsibility of the Centre. Centres should record 'not yet achieved' for any candidate who cannot confirm the authenticity of their work.

Candidates must not:

- submit work which is not their own
- lend their own work to others or allow their work to be copied
- allow others access to, or the use of, any sourced material
- collude with other candidates.

It is also a requirement that assessors confirm to WJEC that all the work submitted for assessment was completed under the required conditions and that they are satisfied that the work is solely that of the candidate concerned. If they are unable to do so, the work should not be accepted for assessment. All assessors must sign the declaration of authentication which is attached to the assessment record for each Task. Failure to do so will delay or prevent the issuing of certificates. If, during external moderation, there is no evidence that the work has been properly authenticated, WJEC will 'not yet achieve' all entries.

Centres are referred to the JCQ documentation the link to which is found on WJEC's website [JCQ Documentation \(wjec.co.uk\)](https://www.wjec.co.uk).

4.9 Resits

All controlled tasks are graded pass/fail, and where candidates have been unsuccessful following internal assessment and/or standardisation will need to resit using a **different** controlled task on a separate occasion.

Should a candidate be unsuccessful on several occasions the Centre must consider whether that learner is working at too high a level or are taking the Task before they have mastered the required skills.

5 Internal Assessment

Assessors must be wholly familiar with the requirements of the ESW standards. WJEC will provide a marking scheme for assessors to record the assessment of each Task; this record should also be used to record the dates and times where a Task was taken over several sessions.

If it is not clear how assessment was carried out, then the Tasks of all candidates will be returned to the Centre and further explanation requested. This will interrupt the external quality assurance process and either delay or prevent the issuing of certificates.

Before the Task is assessed, it may be useful to undertake a trial assessment exercise. Assessors could assess the same relatively small sample of work to allow for the comparison of standards. The exercise can take place at appropriate stages during the candidate's programme as this will help:

1. ensure greater comparability in standards
2. early identification of potential misapplication of the standards.

Centres should use reference and archive materials, such as example material provided by WJEC, to help set the standard of marking within the Centre.

6 Internal standardisation

It is essential that all assessors share a common understanding of the ESW specification prior to assessment, especially where a Task is being assessed by more than one assessor. Standardisation is an essential part of ensuring the consistency of assessors' judgements across different assessors, teaching groups and from year to year. By undertaking a standardisation exercise, assessors will become confident in their judgements and are correctly and consistently applying the mark schemes.

There are different ways of carrying out standardisation, depending on the nature of the evidence. The internal verifier should ensure that the most appropriate method is used.

The following examples are standardisation exercises used by Centres:

- Double marking of Controlled Task outcomes against the completed mark scheme allows assessors to review the same candidate evidence to check each other's application of the mark scheme. Alternatively, the evidence can be divided so that the same assessor assesses the same section across all candidates. This allows each assessor a better chance to understand and apply associated assessment schemes. In either case, particular attention should be paid to 'borderline' decisions.
- Blind marking is where evidence is marked by two assessors, but each is unaware of the other's mark. Discrepancies between the marks can then be resolved. In another form, evidence can be made anonymous by removing the candidate's details.

Where standards are found to be inconsistent, the relevant assessor should adjust their assessment and/or re-consider the assessment of all candidates for whom they were responsible. Any adjustments should be checked by the Internal Moderator/Verifier.

Samples of candidate's work should be retained for archive purposes along with evidence that internal standardisation has been carried out e.g. sampling records, feedback, minutes/records etc. together with copies of WJEC feedback.

7 Internal Verification

As ESW assessment includes some internally assessed and externally verified components the purpose of internal verification is to ensure that these principles are met, regardless of the particular system used by a Centre.

The internal verifier's role is critical in ensuring that assessments are appropriately conducted, and that any possibility of malpractice is minimised. An effective internal verification system will ensure that assessments are capable of generating sufficient evidence to allow candidates to show that:

- they have met the ESW standards
- all assessors are familiar with the ESW standards
- assessors reach accurate and consistent decisions for the same qualification for all candidates in their Centre in line with ESW standards.

Please note that no individual can act as assessor and internal verifier for the same group of candidates.

8 External Verification

WJEC's External Verifiers will re-assess a sample of Tasks by remote inspection and/or Centre-visit. The purpose of their role is to ensure that all assessments are valid, reliable and fair and meet the requirements of the qualification specification.

Upon receipt of the Centre's registrations, WJEC will request a sample for external quality assurance.

WJEC reserves the right to call for the Tasks of all candidates and also to observe, with advance agreement of the Centre, the conduct of a Controlled-Assessment event.

WJEC may decide to call for the work of other candidates once the initial sample has been externally verified. Therefore, all Tasks and associated material must be retained under secure conditions until after certificates are issued.

9 Returning Work to Centres

Tasks submitted electronically will not be returned. Any Tasks posted to WJEC will normally be returned directly to Centre.

Centres are required to retain all Tasks, whether part of the moderation sample, under secure conditions, until the possibility of enquiries about results (EAR) has been exhausted (approximately 3 weeks after results are issued). Tasks must be confidentially destroyed after EAR. **Under no circumstances should Tasks be given back to the candidates.**

Centres are requested to keep a record of the examination numbers and names of those candidates whose work is sent for external moderation. This information may be required if there are EAR enquiries. In the case of work stored electronically within the Centre, protection from corruption should also be considered.

10 Centre-Devised Controlled Assessment

Centres can devise their own Tasks, thereby further increasing the relevance of the assessment for their candidates. The proposed Tasks must be submitted to WJEC for approval before being used by candidates for assessment and certification. Each Task when submitted to WJEC for approval will be judged against the following criteria: each must

- be realistic, interesting and relevant
- require the application of knowledge, skills and understanding
- assess process skills and the outcome of their application
- differentiate explicitly between each level
- be equal in demand to WJEC's Tasks at the corresponding level
- use straightforward and accessible language.

Whilst the skills specified in 'In order to show that you are competent, you need to know how to:' should not be regarded as an assessment tick-list, WJEC must be satisfied that a Centre-devised task is sampling these skills sufficiently to confirm the candidate's competence at that level.

Centre-devised tasks must adhere to all the conditions outlined above without exception. Centres are also required to periodically review and 're-fresh' each Task to ensure its continued effectiveness as an assessment instrument. Centre interested in devising its own tasks should contact WJEC who will outline the approval process.

Guidance on the conduct of ESW Entry Application of Number

Some questions require candidates to calculate answers or to check their calculations. Where they are asked to do so with a calculator the following image will appear:



Where candidates are required to calculate answers or to check their calculations **without** the use of a calculator the following image will appear:



In such cases the candidates should show some workings out.

The assessor can check whether the calculations are correct at various points as the candidate works through the Controlled-Assessment. It is important to remember that the assessor can 'point-out' as part of their feedback where errors occur but they must **not** identify or correct these errors for the candidate. The assessor should use their judgement in determining for how long any checking/correcting should continue.

In addition to the question-and-answer booklet the following Tasks have an accompanying Resource Sheet:

- Entry 1 – Food
- Entry 1 – On the Road
- Entry 2 – On the Road
- Entry 3 – On the Road

Each Task includes a 'Practical Task'. If the candidate is unable to collect the required data, then it is acceptable for their assessor to provide suitable data to allow the Task to be completed.

The 'Practical Task' can be taken at anytime during the Controlled-Assessment; it does not have to be carried out at the end.

Assessors may use real-life material represented diagrammatically in the Task to assist the candidate's understanding e.g. money, providing it is feasible to do so and such use does not in any way compromise the assessment process.

Guidance on the conduct of ESW Entry Communication

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening is not assessed as part of the Tasks set by WJEC; instead these skills can be assessed at a time and context determined by the assessor and candidate. In this way, it is hoped the assessment will be more relevant.

As the candidate is being formally assessed, the assessor should complete the relevant parts of the 'Speaking and Listening' assessor-record by adding a ✓ against each criterion when achieved by the candidate. Each criterion should be supported by qualitative assessor comments; the candidate may also include any supporting material used to prepare for and/or when taking part in the speaking and listening.

Reading and Writing

Both skills are assessed through the Task.

Reading at each level contains two tasks.

The Writing task requires a draft to be written which, once checked by the assessor and feedback has been given, the candidate will correct and re-draft. The assessor can again check the draft and give feedback and this process continues until such time as the candidate is ready to write the final document. The assessor should use their judgement in determining for how long the drafting/re-drafting process should continue.

Candidates should correct any errors and re-draft, not the assessor.

The marking criteria will allow a small level of tolerance for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Candidates will need access to a suitable dictionary.