

English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) Frequently Asked Questions

ESOL Frequently Asked Questions

Transition from NQF (Expired 31.12.14)

1. *If a learner has completed a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) unit is this recognised as prior learning (RPL) in the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) version?*
2. *Why is Pearson's policy on RPL different to that of other Awarding Organisations?*
3. *So is it possible to get an exemption for my learner who has achieved the NQF version of a unit?*
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QCF ESOL Skills for Life Questions

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Speaking and Listening Paper

1. *Are we required to video record the speaking and listening paper?*
2. *In the speaking and listening paper do all of the assessment criteria have to be met?*
3. *You require assessors to write notes for all criteria for every task. (a) Can you give us some guidance (or model responses) on how detailed these notes should be eg two words, two sentences or more. (b) What should the content of the notes be, do you require the learner's response to be included or a general statement that the criterion has been achieved?*
4. *The record forms included in the SAMs are very long and detailed. Is it possible for them to be amended so that information is all on one page and we only have to write learner names in once?*
5. *The speaking and listening test is a significant test of learner memory. It says learners can take notes which at higher levels will work but E1 learners won't be able to do this. Can the information be split?*
6. *Do the tasks have to be completed in the order that they are presented in the paper?*
7. *For the discussion part in the Entry 3 SAM there is no information about preparation time and note taking. This is clearly stated at Level 1 and Level 2. Please can you confirm the arrangements at E3?*
8. *Can we pre-record and play back the teacher-read aspects of the script?*
9. *Can we read out the gist questions to learners before the second reading of the text?*
10. *Do all the parts of the assessment including preparation and the reading of instructions have to be videoed?*

Writing Paper

1. *Is it true that learners are not allowed to use dictionaries at all in the ESOL Skills for Life papers?*
2. *The rules for the number of spelling mistakes learners can make in the writing paper seem really harsh. Please can you explain this approach?*
3. *Please can it be clarified how strict the Grammar error requirement is in the writing paper. For example, if a learner makes the same mistake twice does it have to be penalised twice?*
4. *Are learners permitted to word process their answers in the writing paper with the spell checker turned off?*

Transition from NQF (Expired 31.12.14)**Q1: If a learner has completed an NQF unit is this recognised as prior learning (RPL) in the QCF version?**

A: NQF units cannot be RPL'd into the new QCF version. Pearson's policy on RPL does not cover qualifications that are assessed externally as ESOL is. In this situation, we would look at a potential exemption rather than RPL.

Q2: Why is Pearson's policy on RPL different to that of other Awarding Organisations?

A: All awarding organisations devise their own policies in relation to the requirements that are set by OFQUAL. Pearson needs to have confidence in the standards set by their qualifications to ensure that the learners' achievements have the highest possible currency amongst educational institutions and employers. As a result we cannot make decisions purely based on those that are made by other awarding organisations.

Q3: So is it possible to get an exemption for my learner who has achieved the NQF version of a unit?

A: It is not possible to get an exemption for an NQF version of a unit. This is because the NQF version does not guarantee full coverage of the QCF criteria. NQF assessments allow for compensation whereas in QCF the learner has to demonstrate that they have met all of the learning outcomes.

Q4: Do existing centres get automatic centre approval for the new QCF qualifications?

A: Active NQF ESOL centres will get automatic approval; this means those who have entered candidates for ESOL in the previous academic year and therefore an SV visit during 2014/5. Inactive centres that currently hold approval for ESOL will have to go through the standard approval process.

QCF ESOL Skills for Life Questions**Qualification Structure****Q1: What qualifications are available in the QCF ESOL Skills for Life Suite?**

A: There are a total of 20 qualifications in the suite from Entry 1 to Level 2. At each level there are three separate awards comprising of one unit in Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening. In addition, there is an overall certificate qualification (including reading, writing and speaking and listening) at each level comprising the 3 units at the same level. A full list of qualifications is at the end of this document.

Q2: Are the credit values for the awards all the same?

A: The credit values differ between speaking and listening, reading and writing. Speaking and listening at all levels is the largest qualification at 12 credits; writing is 9 credits and reading 6 credits. This then equates exactly to the GLH by a factor of 10 (so 120GLH, 90GLH and 60GLH respectively).

Q3: Are the new QCF qualifications suitable for my learners who are seeking work? We used to use ESOL Skills for Work.

A: Yes, we identify developing English of work as being one of the main purposes of the ESOL Skills for Life qualifications. They are also designed to support learners in learning across the whole curriculum and skills for life.

Q4: How do the QCF Skills for Life qualifications support learners with spiky profiles?

A: At each level of ESOL Skills for Life there are 3 award qualifications in reading, writing and speaking and listening. These qualifications can be taken separately and mixed with qualifications at different levels. So a learner can take for example Speaking and Listening and reading at Level 1 and Writing at Entry 3 as part of the same programme. This approach is popular with both centres and learners as the learners are motivated by achieving the individual qualifications which are a clear description of their achievements.

The overarching certificate qualifications are used to certificate learners when they have reached the same level in all three areas, so do not support a spiky programme.

Q5: Where can I find the Specification and Sample Assessment Materials?

A: The Specification and the Sample Assessment Materials can be found in the section of the website for ESOL QCF. <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-esol.html>

Q6: Are the new QCF qualifications funded by the Skills Funding Agency for delivery to Learners aged 19+?

A: All the QCF ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are included in the SFA's '[Simplified funding rates](#)' catalogue for 2015/16. The published rates are as follows for 2015/6:

Qualification	Credits	Funding Rate
Reading Award (All Levels)	6	£300
Writing Award (All Levels)	9	£450
Speaking and Listening Award (All Levels)	12	£600
Skills for Life Certificate (All Levels)	27	£1265

Q7: What about delivering the QCF Skills for Life Qualifications to younger learners? Are they included in Section 96 and performance tables?

A: All of the QCF ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are included on section 96 for all age groups including pre-16. Therefore Education Funding Agency (EFA) per learner government funding can be used to deliver ESOL to young people. ESOL isn't included in performance tables, however as it does not meet the requirements for these. The benefit in relation to performance tables is the improved performance of learners in other areas from undertaking an ESOL programme.

Q8: Are the QCF ESOL Skills for Life qualifications acceptable for UK visa/immigration and citizenship purposes?

A: There are only two qualifications that are accepted for general Visa applications from the 6th April 2015, further details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests>

However, if a learner is required to prove their English proficiency when applying for naturalisation/ settlement (citizenship) then an ESOL qualification including Speaking and Listening at Entry 3 or above fulfils this requirement **until November 2015 only**. The new Pearson QCF ESOL qualifications are suitable for this purpose. However, if a learner

will be submitting their application for citizenship after November then they must have a Secure English Language Test (SELT) from the list linked above.

Support and Training

Q1: What training is Pearson offering?

A: At the present time the following events are open and available for registration:

Course Code	Event Code	Status	Course Title	Date	Location
15BWZ01	15BWZ01/01	Open	Getting started with QCF ESOL Skills for Life	14/09/2015	London
15BWZ01	15BWZ01/02	Open	Getting started with QCF ESOL Skills for Life	12/10/2015	Manchester
15BWZ01	15BWZ01/03	Open	Getting started with QCF ESOL Skills for Life	12/11/2015	Birmingham

Please note that the content of these events is very similar to the 'QCF Launch' events that were delivered during academic year 2014/5. There will be further training available during this year. To book onto an event please visit

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/training-from-pearson-uk.html>

Q2: Is it possible to organise training in-house as we have a significant number of people who need training?

A: Training from Pearson is able to organise training to take place in centres, but there is a charge for this service.

Q3: If I need help with delivery who can I contact at Pearson?

A: ESOL is in the portfolio of the Skills subject adviser, Melanie Williams. Melanie is very knowledgeable about the Edexcel ESOL qualifications and will either know the answer to your query or know how to find it out. Please email teachingesol@pearson.com.

ESOL Assessment and Quality Assurance Questions

Q1: How are the QCF ESOL qualifications assessed?

A: Sample assessment materials, accredited by OFQUAL are available on the website via the link above. Assessment for all levels is via externally set task. This takes the form of a paper-based test for reading and writing, and a task for the speaking and listening components. The papers are then marked internally by assessors in centres.

Q2: When learners re sit do they have to re sit the whole paper or just the part that they failed? Is there a charge for re sits?

A: Learners have to re sit the whole paper. However, there is no charge for re sits and learners can re sit tests 2 weeks after failing as required.

Q3: What is the Quality Assurance Model for QCF ESOL Skills for Life?

Once learners have sat the externally set tasks and these have been internally assessed (including internally verified by a different person and where there is more than one assessor standardised) centres have a visit from a Standards Verifier. The Standards verifier samples learner work and then usually releases certification if there are no concerns for a year. There are some cases where centres will require more than one visit, even where there are not specific concerns, for example if not enough material was available at the first visit to cover all three areas/ sufficient levels or a centre is particularly large.

Further details of the approach to quality assurance can be found in the QA guide <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-esol/esol-qcf-entry-3.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=Pearson-UK:Category%2FForms-and-administration>.

Q4: Do we still need to keep copies of learners' passports?

A: The requirements are unchanged. Centres must retain a photographic record on file of each learner and a copy of the relevant information to confirm identity. The photographic evidence must be either a copy of their passport or identity card.

Q5: When will more practice papers be made available as currently there is only one for each unit?

A: New practice papers will be made available when they are taken down from the live area after a year in use. The first papers will be retired in November 2015 so will be made available then. Further papers will then be made available in January and February 2016. We are aware that there is only one set at the present time, but this is normal when a qualification is new.

Speaking and Listening Paper

Q1: Are we required to video record the speaking and listening paper?

A: The rules for recording speaking and listening assessments are unchanged. Speaking and Listening assessments need to be video-recorded for learners of 18 years and over unless there is a reason why they cannot be identified. For learners under the age of 18 the assessments need to be audio-recorded.

Q2: In the Speaking and Listening paper do all of the assessment criteria have to be met?

A: Yes, the test is designed to give learners the opportunity to demonstrate their competence against all of the assessment criteria. Learners have to meet each assessment criterion once in each paper.

Q3: You require assessors to write notes for all criteria for every task.

(a) Can you give us some guidance (or model responses) on how detailed these notes should be eg two words, two sentences or more.

A: There needs to be specific information to show that the learner has passed the assessment criteria, this may be either one word or two sentences in different situations. Exemplification materials will be made available to centres.

(b) What should the content of the notes be, do you require the learner's response to be included or a general statement that the criterion has been achieved?

A: The purpose is to show each criterion has been met, so potentially the written evidence could be presented either way.

Q4: The record forms included in the SAMs are very long and detailed. Is it possible for them to be amended so that information is all on one page and we only have to write learner names once?

A: The forms have been revisited and shortened significantly. The content is identical but they have been redesigned so they are more compact. Fitting all the required information onto one page isn't possible, however as evidence is needed that learners have met all of the assessment criteria. This takes up significantly more space than recording an overall mark. We are investigating making the mark sheets electronically

editable so that learner names only have to be entered once and we hope to have this in place for set 7 of the papers which will be available in 2016.

Q5: The speaking and listening test is a significant test of learner memory. It says learners can take notes which at higher levels will work but not with E1 learners. Can the information be split?

A: Taking notes is optional. OFQUAL have stated that they require more rigour in the listening component and therefore the changes have been put in place to meet their requirement. The amount of information at entry level 1 is appropriate for that level.

Q6: Do the tasks have to be completed in the order that they are presented in the paper?

A: No, the tasks can be completed in the order than suits you and your learners. Tasks do all have to be completed on the same day, however.

Q7: For the discussion part in the Entry 3 SAM there is no information about preparation time and note taking. This is clearly stated at Level 1 and Level 2. Please can you confirm the arrangements at E3?

A: The Entry 3 discussion is run differently to level 1 and 2 as is appropriate for the level and quite correctly is a lower level of demand. The question states that the assessor needs to **develop** a discussion between the two candidates. In other words it is the assessor who structures the discussion, but does not take part in the exchange directly unless a candidate is floundering. At level 1 and 2 the learners are expected to structure the discussion themselves, which is why there is a requirement for preparation time and note taking. At entry 3 learners must not take notes but the tutor is able to prompt where needed.

Q8: Can we pre-record and play back the teacher-read aspects of the script?

A: Recording of the teacher-read parts of the assessments is not permitted. This is for two main reasons. The first reason is that it may adversely affect the performance of candidates: the distraction of turning the recorder on and off, the recording will not be as clear as if it is spoken and that teachers can adjust the speed of their reading of to the needs of learners. Secondly it is a potential security risk if the recording is lost.

Q9: Can we read out the gist questions to learners before the second reading of the text?

A: The assessment needs to be conducted in the way that it is stated in the paper.

Q10: Do the parts of the assessment including preparation and the reading of instructions have to be videoed?

A: Yes, the whole of the assessment must be videoed. For further details in relation to the video evidence required please see section 9 in the ICE document.

Writing paper

Q1: Is it true that learners are not allowed to use dictionaries at all in the ESOL Skills for Life papers?

A: Learners are not permitted to use dictionaries in the jointly developed ESOL qualifications. This was a rule agreed between all the Awarding Organisations and OFQUAL when the qualifications were developed.

Q2: The rules for the number of spelling mistakes learners can make in the writing paper seem really harsh. Please can you explain this approach?

A: The requirements for spelling, punctuation and grammar for ESOL are not set in isolation from other English language qualifications. Pearson has ensured that the requirements are in line with other qualifications, including GCSE and believe that the approach is appropriate. In order to achieve a learning outcome, learners must achieve a set number of marks, equal to or just above two-thirds. Therefore there is significant opportunity for learners to compensate for one missed mark in this section by strong performance elsewhere.

Q3: Please can it be clarified how strict the Grammar error requirement is in the writing paper. For example, if a learner makes the same mistake twice does it have to be penalised twice?

A: The grammatical errors that need to be assessed refer to the assessment criterion referenced. So, for example in Entry level 3 AC2.4 states 'use grammar in a variety of tenses to denote past/ present/ future as appropriate, subjectverb agreement, pronouns'. As a result the mark scheme is allowing the learners to make one mistake in relation to the assessment criterion and the mark can still be awarded.

Q4: Are learners permitted to word process their answers in the writing paper with the spell checker turned off?

A: No, learners must hand-write their responses in black ink or ballpoint pen. Word processing is only allowed where it is an agreed adjustment for an individual learner.

QCF ESOL Skills for Life Qualifications

QAN	Title	Credits
601/4384/8	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) (Entry 1) (QCF)	12
601/4389/7	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Reading) (Entry 1) (QCF)	6
601/4379/4	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing) (Entry 1) (QCF)	9
601/4383/6	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) (Entry 2) (QCF)	12
601/4388/5	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Reading) (Entry 2) (QCF)	6
601/4378/2	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing) (Entry 2) (QCF)	9
601/4382/4	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) (Entry 3) (QCF)	12
601/4387/3	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Reading) (Entry 3) (QCF)	6
601/4377/0	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing) (Entry 3) (QCF)	9
601/4381/2	Pearson Edexcel Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) (QCF)	12
601/4386/1	Pearson Edexcel Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Reading) (QCF)	6
601/4376/9	Pearson Edexcel Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing) (QCF)	9
601/4380/0	Pearson Edexcel Level 2 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) (QCF)	12
601/4385/X	Pearson Edexcel Level 2 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Reading) (QCF)	6
601/4375/7	Pearson Edexcel Level 2 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing) (QCF)	9
601/3902/X	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Entry 1) (QCF)	27
601/3899/3	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Entry 2) (QCF)	27
601/4301/0	Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Entry 3) (QCF)	27
601/3900/6	Pearson Edexcel Level 1 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (QCF)	27
601/3901/8	Pearson Edexcel Level 2 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (QCF)	27