



Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Skills for Life (QCF)

2025 to 2026

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1. Introduction

In these instructions: a **centre** is an institution approved by Pearson to deliver ESOL Skills for Life (QCF) assessments and an assessment refers to ESOL Skills for Life (QCF) tests and/or tasks. All centres must have relevant approval from Pearson before offering any ESOL Skills for Life (QCF) qualifications or assessments.

For the purpose of this document, the Head of Centre, Principal of the College or the Chief Officer is the named person, known to Pearson, who takes ultimate responsibility for quality assurance within the centre and will be referred to as **Head of Centre** throughout the document.

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring the proper conduct of the ESOL assessments, although they may delegate certain tasks as necessary. Advice should be sought from Pearson in the event of a situation arising that is not covered by this document. For this, and all instances referring to a contact in this document, please submit the query to us using the [Pearson Support Portal](#).

This document covers the conduct of the controlled assessments for ESOL at Entry 1, 2 and 3, and Level 1 and 2. Your Examinations Officer should also access the [UK Information Manual](#) and the [ESOL Centre Guide to Quality Assurance](#) handbook. These documents contain information about procedural matters not covered by this document, such as entries and certification.

The assessments are graded as either 'pass' or 'fail', however centres must refer to the Guidance for Assessors and accompanying mark schemes when marking the papers and for the set pass mark. The Guidance for Assessors that correspond to the assessments must be available and read by Assessors **two working days** before each assessment to allow particular arrangements for each assessment to be accommodated in time. The ESOL controlled assessment documents can be accessed via the [Secure Tests](#) section of the website.

There is no set date or assessment window for ESOL Assessments. Centres do not need to inform Pearson before assessing learners. However, in order to ensure access to the live ESOL assessments, centres should register learners **three weeks** before the assessment date.

Standards Verifiers are allocated throughout the year. Any correspondence relating to the assessments should be addressed directly to your allocated Standards Verifier unless otherwise instructed by Pearson.

2. Safe custody of live assessment materials

Only authorised personnel such as the Examinations Officer(s) and Examinations Assistant(s) (as allocated per role on Edexcel Online) have appropriate access to download live materials from the secure site.

Live assessment materials include: question papers, corresponding mark schemes and Guidance for Assessors documents. These materials must be checked carefully once printed, and Pearson notified immediately if there are any problems or if the assessments cannot be accessed.

Please note: Controlled assessment queries, i.e. the content of the assessment materials, **MUST NOT** be emailed as the content is **secure** and emailing any part of it is considered a **breach of security** – if you have a query about the content of a controlled assessment test, please [Contact Us](#) stating your name and contact details, and request for one of the team to contact you directly via phone to discuss your queries.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that the assessment papers are locked away in a place of high security after they have been printed. Centres are **not allowed** to download and store any live assessments on their computers. All assessment materials are considered 'live' until Pearson has released them as a set of practice papers.

To ensure the security of question papers please ensure the following steps take place:

- The question papers are locked away in a secure place until the scheduled time of assessment and after the assessment is completed.
- All question papers/scripts are collected before the candidates leave the room after the assessment to ensure that none are accidentally removed.
- If the assessments are taking place on more than one site, the Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that the correct number of question papers and supporting materials are delivered to each site, and that security is maintained throughout.
- Ensure the secure site [terms and conditions](#) are followed for ESOL (QCF).
- Only persons authorised by the Head of Centre may have access to the assessment materials and completed question papers.

Assessment material should be printed no earlier than **two working days** before the date the assessments are due to take place and be kept securely at all times. Centres must make

ensure that the correct number of question papers are printed from the secure site before each assessment to ensure the latest version of the assessment is used at all times. Question papers should be sealed inside envelopes after printing and stored securely.

A copy of the Guidance for Assessors must be given to authorised Assessors two working days before each assessment sitting.

Question papers should not be opened until the time of the assessment and must only be opened in front of the candidates. Completed question papers must be treated as live material and therefore stored securely at all times. It is necessary to retain the completed question papers and all assessment materials for at least **15 working days** after certificates have been received and checked. Records of assessment and internal verification of assessments should be maintained for a minimum of **three years**.

As all assessment materials will continue to be live until confirmation has been given from Pearson by the release of the set as practice papers, centres must continue to store all question papers securely even after the Standards Verifier has visited the centre.

Conditions for storing assessment materials

Assessment materials must be stored in a safe or cabinet in a securely locked room conforming to the requirement below (secure storage). This room must be in a fixed building, preferably with no windows and on an upper floor. The room **must not** have a door that directly leads out to the exterior of the building.

Requirement	Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong safe or security cabinet or metal cabinet with locking bar• 2 to 4 key holders only	Bolted to wall or floor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secure room in a fixed building, i.e. not a Portakabin or similar• Walls, ceiling and floor of strong, solid construction	Preferably on an upper floor with no windows. Access must be restricted to staff named and approved by the Head of Centre, who must be accompanied by a keyholder at all times.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solid door• Strong, secure hinges• Security lock, e.g. 5 lever mortise lock	A hollow door would require reinforcement.

Requirement

Recommendation

- 2 to 4 key holders only
- There must be at least 2 keys rather than 1 key with 2 or more members of staff with access to it.
- Centres must not keep a spare set of keys in a cabinet or safe that can be accessed by members of staff who are not involved in exams administration.
- Keys must either be kept on the key holder's person or kept in a coded key safe that is only accessible to the designated key holders.

Centres must make sure that a system for recording when material is taken from or returned to secure storage is used throughout the time the material remains confidential.

If the security of the assessment materials has been put at risk by fire, theft, loss, damage, unauthorised disclosure or any other circumstances the Quality Standards Team must be informed immediately.

Please see sections **Chapter 2, sections 3 to 5** of the [JCQ ICE document](#) for a full list of security/storage requirements and the Conditions for storing and accessing confidential exam material.

Conditions for transporting assessment materials

Assessment materials should not be moved until immediately before the scheduled assessment time. Unless the assessment is scheduled for Monday at 8am and the sub-site is not within reach, there is no problem with moving the assessment materials on Monday morning. If the sub-site is a considerable distance away, the assessment materials can be transported on Friday, provided that:

- the alternative site has secure storage to keep the papers until the scheduled assessment
- assessment materials are sealed in a secure envelope
- assessment materials are transported by a responsible member of staff who has sight/hold of the sealed envelope at all times during the transport. In exceptional circumstances, and when this is not possible, centres will need to contact us for approval to use a recorded delivery postal method such as Royal Mail recorded delivery services.

Whenever assessment materials are moved, a transport log **must** be kept containing the following details (there is no template given to centres, a spreadsheet or a Word-table would be suitable, as long as the following information is captured):

- names of all people handling the assessments
- times when the assessments were removed from secure storage
- means of transport and security measures taken
- time of arrival in sub-site and secure storage arrangements at this site.



Top tip:

- You must inform the Standards Verifier before they visit if you are using additional sites/buildings to deliver live assessments.
- You must seek approval from the Approvals Team if you are using additional sites/buildings to deliver live assessments.

2. Scheduling assessments

Assessments may take place at any time and on any date. Centres may choose which assessment the candidates will sit from the three sets of question papers on the [Secure Site](#) and **must** keep a record of those used.

The Head of Centre must take all reasonable steps to ensure there is no possibility of collusion between candidates taking the same assessment at different times, or between candidates and anybody else with or without access to the question papers.

Re-sit assessments

Candidates who do not pass the assessment the first time and wish to sit it again can re-sit no earlier than **14 days** from taking the original assessment. The centre must ensure that the candidate does not re-sit the same assessment taken in the previous session. A log **must** be kept of all assessments taken, including re-sit assessments, to keep track of which question papers from which set have been used. Standards Verifiers will ask for evidence of which assessment each candidate has sat and any resits taken.

If there are no more sets for the candidate to sit but they still have not achieved a pass, centres are permitted to conduct the assessment from the first set the candidate used. However at this point, we recommend re-assessing whether the candidate has been entered for the correct level.

3. Assessment accommodation

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that all assessment sites meet Pearson requirements. All assessment sites must be under the full control of the Head of Centre.

The assessment venue must be free from extraneous noise and enable candidates to work without disturbance or interruption for the duration of the assessment.

Any room in which an assessment is held must provide candidates with appropriate conditions for taking the assessment. You should pay attention to conditions such as lighting, heating, ventilation and the level of outside noise.

No display materials which might be helpful to candidates should be visible in the assessment room however posters that may already be on the walls do not need to be removed unless they would be helpful to candidates. The centre must display the [JCQ Warning to candidates and JCQ Unauthorised items poster](#) and any specific instructions related to the subjects being examined.

The seating arrangements in the assessment room must be such as to prevent candidates from overlooking, intentionally or otherwise, the work of others, and with sufficient space to accommodate assessment papers and any other required materials

Other assessments may be held simultaneously in the same room, provided no disturbance is caused.

4. Access arrangements

Centres are advised to consult the Special Requirements team if they are unsure that access arrangements will be appropriate before they undertake to register the candidate for an assessment which requires skills to be demonstrated which are beyond the scope of the candidate. Any access arrangements given **must** be documented on the front cover of the candidate's test paper.

The centre is required to have determined the needs of the candidate within the classroom situation and in light of those arrangements that have to be made as part of the normal working practices.

Modified papers i.e. modified enlarged, un-modified enlarged, Braille, should be requested through the Modified Papers team at least **six weeks** prior to the test date. Modified assessments should not be used for future sittings as the assessment could change.

Further information can be found in the JCQ document [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#).

Centres should refer to the Reasonable Adjustments table in [Appendix 2](#) for specific guidance as to which adjustments are suitable for each ESOL unit.

Readers

A reader is required to read, on request, all or part of the assessment or any part of the candidate's response. A reader may assist a visually impaired candidate using tactile diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the information that the printed paper would give to a sighted candidate. Human readers **cannot** be used for reading assessments. When using a reader, the following guidelines should be observed:

- a reader must read accurately and at a reasonable rate
- a reader may repeat, as necessary, any instructions given on the question paper, as well as the question and answers already recorded
- a reader must, if required, spell out any word that occurs in the question paper
- a reader must be prepared for periods of inactivity.

Scribes

A scribe is required to write out answers as they are dictated by the candidate. They should have a working knowledge of the subject. A scribe **cannot** be used for writing assessments. When using a scribe, the following guidelines should be observed:

- a scribe must write legibly and at a reasonable speed
- a scribe must write down the answers exactly as they are dictated
- a scribe must draw or add to diagrams strictly in accordance with the candidate's instructions
- the candidate will not be expected to dictate spellings. If spelling is being assessed, then they must dictate spellings
- a scribe should work at the candidate's pace.

Sign Interpreters

A sign interpreter is required to communicate questions to the candidate upon request. A sign interpreter is **not** a reader. A sign interpreter **cannot** be used for Speaking and Listening assessments. When using a sign interpreter, the following guidelines should be observed:

- a sign interpreter should give the essence of the candidate's signed response on the test paper, without inferring any meaning that was not clear in the signed response
- candidates who are signing their responses **must not** be in a position to see other candidates' signed responses
- a sign interpreter should work at the candidate's pace.

Top tips for the use of readers / scribes / communicators:



- when a candidate is assisted by a reader, scribe or sign interpreter, help must not be given with the subject matter being assessed
- this support must not give the candidate an unfair advantage or disadvantage. It must not invalidate the assessment
- additional time may also be available and a separate room may be necessary if the candidate is to dictate responses, in which case a separate invigilator will be required
- the Head of Centre / Examinations Officer should ensure that readers, scribes and sign interpreters are acceptable and responsible adults, familiar with the subject matter being tested and have worked with the candidate(s) before the assessment
- a relative of the candidate must not act as a reader, scribe or sign interpreter for the candidate.

Word processors (computers, laptops, and tablets)

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) **with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled** to a candidate **where it is their normal way of working within the centre**, unless the qualification specification says otherwise. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet.

5. Invigilation arrangements

Assessments must take place under supervised conditions, that is:

- candidates must be continually supervised by a reliable person
- all necessary facilities must be available to candidates
- any time restrictions must be complied with
- candidates' work must be independent and unaided.

The Head of Centre must ensure that suitably informed and briefed adults carry out invigilation during assessment. The Head of Centre should be fully aware of any potential conflict of interest between a candidate and Invigilator and take all reasonable steps to prevent any such conflict.

Invigilators must give their whole attention to the proper conduct of the assessment for the whole of the time it is in progress, and there **must** be enough Invigilators in the room to effectively monitor all the candidates present. Good practice would have one Invigilator responsible for no more than 30 candidates.

Where an assessment is being supervised by one person, the Invigilator must be able to summon assistance easily without leaving the assessment room or disturbing the candidates.

The Head of Centre may choose to adopt more rigid procedures for the assessments than those set out in this document. This is acceptable, although no candidate should be unfairly disadvantaged as a result.

Please see the [JCQ Invigilator training checklist](#) for further guidance.

6. Resources for assessments

Nominal length for assessments

Level	Reading	Writing	Speaking & Listening
Entry Level 1	1 hour	1 hour	25 mins
Entry Level 2	1 hour	1 hour	25 mins
Entry Level 3	1 hour	1 hour	35 mins
Level 1	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour
Level 2	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour 15 mins

Nominal time for assessments means that there is scope for an Assessor to use their discretion in allowing a candidate to continue for over the allotted time in a way that does not undermine the integrity of the assessment. It is up to the judgments of the Assessor as to what circumstances might necessitate this. However, in all cases the Assessor needs to state on the front of the paper how long the candidate took for the exam and the reasons for giving the candidate additional time.

Test Resources for Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring candidates have or are provided with any equipment required to take the assessment, as well as for taking all reasonable steps to prevent candidates from having access to any unauthorised equipment or resources.

Candidates should only have access to items specified below and must not have access to anything that could compromise the integrity of the assessment.

For all units and levels, candidates **must** have the following items available for use during the assessment:

- Attendance list (or similar)
- Test Paper - this is supplied by Pearson and can be downloaded from Secure tests up to 2 working days before the assessment
- Pen(s) with black/blue ink
- Additional paper.

The following items **must not** be used for all units and levels of assessment:

- English only dictionary
- Dictionary that may contain pictures
- Bilingual Dictionary
- Electronic devices
- Textbooks or similar.

The following items are **not** required to complete the assessment for all units and levels:

- Pencils
- Eraser
- Ruler marked with mm/cm.

Candidates must be informed that possessing any unauthorised equipment or resources during an assessment, whether intended for use or not, may result in disqualification. In particular, candidates must be instructed to switch off any mobile phones and remove smartwatches and place them out of reach before the assessment begins. Ideally, all unauthorised items should be left outside of the assessment room.

Candidates should be made aware that the test paper may be used for any rough notes. Candidates must not under any circumstances take any work or notes away with them after the assessment. Any notes taken for Speaking & Listening must be handed into the Assessor.

The Head of Centre is also responsible for ensuring that the centre has access to good quality video recording equipment (for Speaking and Listening only) to ensure that candidates' Speaking and Listening performances are clearly recorded.

English dictionaries, Bilingual translation dictionaries and picture dictionaries **cannot** be used for any of the ESOL (QCF) assessments.

7. Before the assessment

Guidance for Assessors

It is essential that Assessors are clear about the contents of the assessments and the Guidance for Assessors before administering any of the assessments. The **Guidance for Assessors** documents are included in the assessment documents, which can be obtained from the [Secure area](#) of the website for ESOL (QCF).

Centres should ensure that the **Guidance for Assessors** for the specific assessment is viewed **two working days before the assessment is scheduled** as further guidance is provided that relates to words and phrases that may be relevant and necessary to the specific paper (e.g. particular instructions). Assessors **must not** teach candidates key words from the live assessments.

Please note: Only Examinations Officer(s) and Examinations Assistant(s) will have access to download the secure materials and only members of staff that the Head of Centre feels appropriate can have access to the assessments and any accompanying documents after they have been downloaded. It is the responsibility of the centre to keep a log of who accesses the secure content and when it is accessed.

Persons present at the assessment

Whilst the assessment is taking place, only the candidate(s), Invigilator(s) and other authorised persons should be in the room.

Representatives from Pearson and regulatory authorities reserve the right to observe the assessment provided candidates are not disturbed. Otherwise, only persons authorised by the Head of Centre are to be allowed in the assessment room.

Identifying candidates

The Head of Centre must make sure that appropriate arrangements are in place so that all Invigilators can carry out adequate checks on the identity of all candidates. All candidates must be registered with Pearson and/or entered for the assessment in advance. All candidates must have a registration number.

Centres must retain a photographic record on file of each learner and a copy of relevant information to confirm identity. The photographic evidence must be either a copy of their passport or identity card. The invigilator should have access to these records and must check the identity of the candidates when completing the Test Attendance Register.

The Invigilator(s) must be satisfied as to the identity of every candidate attending each assessment. The Standards Verifier may also ask to look at the candidates' records during their standards verification visit.

8. Starting the assessment

Before candidates are permitted to start the assessment, the Invigilator must:

- ensure that candidates are seated in accordance with the [Assessment accommodation guidelines](#)
- inform the candidates they are now under controlled assessment conditions
- advise candidates that any unauthorised material must be handed in or kept out of reach (including MP3 players, mobiles, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets and other products with text or internet facilities)
- check that candidates have all the necessary material to enable them to complete the assessment as set out in the Guidance for Assessors document for each assessment
- arrange for the Reading and Writing question papers to be handed out immediately before the start of the assessment. Candidates **must not** be given copies of the Speaking and Listening question papers
- check that candidates have been given the correct paper for the assessment
- if necessary, report to the Head of Centre any grounds for suspicion about the security of the question papers and, where appropriate, the Head of Centre must immediately notify Pearson
- draw to the candidates' attention the instructions printed on the front of the test paper, including the time allowed. Centres are permitted to read these instructions to the candidates
- ensure that details of any erratum notices, if applicable, are brought to the attention of candidates
- instruct candidates to record their personal details according to Pearson's requirements
- remind candidates that they must follow Pearson instructions on how to record and submit their work
- remind candidates that they must not communicate in any way with, seek assistance from or give assistance to another candidate during the assessment. They should not communicate in any way with any other candidate except where this is a requirement of a particular assessment
- announce clearly to the candidates when they may begin the assessment.

The Invigilator **must not** give any information to candidates about suspected errors in the question papers unless an erratum notice has been received from Pearson.

9. During the assessment

The assessment must take place under supervised controlled assessment conditions, that is:

- the whole time the assessment is in progress, candidates must be continually supervised by a reliable person who must give complete attention to this duty at all times
- all necessary facilities must be available to candidates.

The Invigilator **must** complete an attendance list detailing the following:

- candidate name, date of birth and signature
- date and time assessment taken
- location of assessment centre
- version of test paper taken by candidate
- Invigilator(s) name(s) and signature(s)
- Interlocutor name and signature (Speaking and Listening only).

Attendance lists must be held securely in centres for a **minimum of three years** following the completion of the assessment.

If a candidate arrives after the assessment has started, the candidate may be allowed to take the assessment provided that undue disruption is not caused to the other candidates and the security of the assessment is maintained.

Candidates who leave the assessment room temporarily must be accompanied to ensure the integrity of the assessment is not compromised. In these circumstances candidates may be allowed extra time to compensate for their temporary absence.

Candidates should be regularly made aware of the time remaining whilst taking an assessment, either through a visible clock or the Invigilator providing periodic time-checks.

Guidance on providing special arrangements for candidates with particular assessment requirements has been agreed between accredited awarding bodies and can be found in the [Access arrangements](#) section of this document. Centres should also refer to the [JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) document. Please contact the Pearson Special Requirements team with any queries on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).

Please ensure that if approval is needed for a specific arrangement, this is obtained **before** the candidate sits the assessment. If any candidate has been given additional help or support during the assessment, details must be given on the Learning Outcome and Unit Achievement Record sheet.

Irregular conduct

If a candidate is suspected of malpractice, the Invigilator must warn the candidate that he/she may be removed from the examination room. The Invigilator must record what has happened. Wherever possible the Invigilator of the assessment must remove and keep any unauthorised material that a candidate may have during the assessment.

It is the duty of the Invigilator to ensure any cases of irregularity or misconduct in connection with the assessment are reported to the Head of Centre as soon as possible. The Head of Centre is empowered to withdraw a candidate from the assessment as a last resort (e.g. when the continued presence of a candidate would cause disruption to other candidates). Any infringement of the regulations may lead to disqualification of the candidate. The decision on disqualification rests with Pearson.

The Head of Centre must report all cases of suspected or actual malpractice in connection with the assessment, including potential malpractice by Invigilators, to the Pearson Malpractice team.

Although Standards Verifiers aim to support centres, any suspicion of irregular conduct by centres will be investigated by Pearson and appropriate sanctions taken. Standards Verifiers may request to visit centres when they carry out assessment.

Emergencies

In the event of an unforeseen emergency (e.g. fire alarm, bomb alert, etc.) that requires the candidate to leave the assessment room, the Invigilator must first ensure the candidates' safety. Where an evacuation is necessary, all candidate paperwork must be left in the assessment room. If possible, the assessment room should be made secure.

If an emergency results in an evacuation, the Head of Centre must ensure Pearson is informed directly by making a full report of the incident, and of the action taken, to the Quality Standards team.

Candidates should remain under supervised conditions, if at all possible, whilst outside the assessment room.

Depending on the circumstances, the Invigilator and Head of Centre may consider the following:

- if an assessment has only just started (e.g. first ten minutes) the candidates can return to the assessment and continue, ensuring candidates are given their overall time allowance
- if an assessment has been under way long enough that some candidates may have seen the majority of the test paper and there is a significant risk that the integrity of the assessment would be compromised if the assessment were allowed to continue, the candidates' work completed so far should be submitted to Pearson
- consideration may be given to the possibility of taking the candidates, with question papers and scripts, to another place in order to complete the assessment.

After the candidates have returned to the assessment room and before the assessment is resumed, indicate on the candidates' work, where it is feasible to do so, the point at which the interruption occurred.

10. Ending the assessment

Candidates may be permitted to leave the room before the end of the assessment provided that no disruption is caused to the remaining candidates and the integrity of the assessments is not compromised. Candidates who have left a supervised environment may not be re-admitted to the assessment room. The Head of Centre must consider any potential for the assessment to become compromised and ensure the Invigilator is advised of the centre's policy.

Candidates must be given their full time-allowance even if they have arrived later than their scheduled start time.

All question papers/scripts must be collected before the candidates leave the room to ensure that none are accidentally removed. The Invigilator should check that candidates taking written assessments have completed all the necessary information on the front page of the question paper.

After collation, the candidates' scripts should be handed to the Head of Centre or Examination Officer and kept securely until marking is due to take place.

Scripts/assessment materials should be stored securely until they are externally verified by the Standards Verifier. For security/storage requirements see **Chapter 2, sections 3 to 5** of the [JCQ ICE document](#) and the table under the [Conditions for storing assessment materials](#) section of this document.

11. Speaking and Listening

The Head of Centre must ensure that the following requirements are adhered to so that the ESOL (QCF) Speaking and Listening assessments are conducted and assessed fairly and consistently across all centres.

In the event where there is a single candidate, a member of staff or a willing student of a similar level can be used to partner a candidate for the Speaking and Listening assessment. A willing student of a similar level is preferred to partner with a candidate. However, a member of staff can also be used, but they cannot act as the Assessor/interlocutor while the assessment is taking place.

Please note:

- the tasks should **not** be pre-recorded and played to candidates. Assessors **must** read the task directly to candidates
- during the assessment, note-taking is only allowed when the Assessor instructs the candidate that they can make notes. It is not allowed at any other time during the assessment. However, candidates **should not be penalised** for taking notes in **Part B** of the **Entry 3** Speaking & Listening paper
- candidates are **not permitted** access to dictionaries during the assessment
- candidates are allowed a pause between parts of the assessments; however, all candidates must complete all parts on the same day.

All performances should be internally assessed **as they occur**. As the person administering the Speaking and Listening assessment has to play the role of the interlocutor, it would be impractical for them to conduct assessment of the candidates' performances as they occur (during the recording of the assessments), therefore alternative arrangements must be made for separate Assessors to mark the candidates' performances as they occur. Any such Assessors must be members of the teaching team and be fully conversant with the national standards and the Pearson criteria. In the event that a separate Assessor(s) is not available on the day, the performances must be internally assessed once they have been recorded.

All assessed candidates' assessments must be video recorded if they are aged 18 or above. There are particular exemptions in place, for example if the candidates are aged under 18, or in a prison, they do not need to be video recorded however they must be audio recorded. Please refer to the [ESOL Centre Guide to Quality Assurance](#) handbook on our website for more information.

All video recording equipment must be tested before formal assessment begins and periodically checked between recordings. If performances are not recorded or are inaudible, the candidate will need to take the assessment again and **must** be re-recorded. If you experience technical issues and/or you lose a group of recordings, you must [contact the Pearson Quality Standards team](#).

Centres must produce good quality video/audio media with clear audio – the Standards Verifier will request to watch these during the standardisation activity. Recordings must take place in a specially allocated quiet room and any extraneous noise kept to a minimum.

Recordings should be completed in a logical order. When there are a large number of candidates, the centre can record all individual assessments first, followed by the group assessments.

At the beginning of each recording, the candidate(s) **must** clearly state their full name and Pearson registration number, before commencing the assessment. For lower levels, Assessors can read this information out or give the candidate(s) a card with the information printed on it to hold up (providing the assessment is videoed). Ensure that the recording is made of the **entire assessment**, including **all** of the interlocutor's speech.

All recordings should be clearly labelled with the centre name and number, the name of the interlocutor(s) and Assessor(s) as well as the candidates' names, registration number(s) and task completed. All recordings must be securely held in centres for a **minimum of three years** following certification of the candidate as they may be required for quality assurance purposes.

How to take and store video evidence

The camera should be firmly mounted on a tripod or other secure base. The camera should be capable of recording digitally (such as miniDV), CD/DVD or a memory card.

The candidate should be clearly visible in the middle of the screen when recording takes place. There is no need for the Assessor to be video recorded.

When recording video evidence please ensure that the candidate:

- is in sharp focus, with a clear difference between the candidate's face and the background
- is facing forward and looking straight at the camera
- has eyes open that are clearly visible (no sunglasses or tinted glasses and no hair across the eyes)
- has nothing covering their face – you should make sure nothing covers the outline of the eyes, nose or mouth.

The candidate's voice must be clearly audible – this may be through the built-in microphone. If the candidate's voice is not clearly audible, then a separate microphone should be used. This could be mounted on the desk in front of the candidate, or you could use a lapel microphone attached to the candidate's clothing. If a separate microphone is used, this should be linked to the camera through the appropriate audio input e.g. XLR, audio jack or phone socket.

The finished recording should be downloaded to an appropriate device such as a desktop computer, laptop or portable device such as a tablet. Care must be taken to ensure that the individual recordings are stored in an appropriate file format.

Please note that recordings must **not** be edited.

The candidate's recording must be finalised in a universally acceptable format for playback such as MP4, MPEG, AVI, MOV or WMV. If the work is saved on to DVD, it must be in a format that can be played on any DVD player in all regions.

The finished recording must be stored securely. The individual candidate recording should be stored as a file with the candidate's name and Pearson registration number in the file name.

A back-up copy of the file must be kept in an appropriate medium such as a CD, DVD or memory stick. This copy must be retained for a **minimum of three years** by the centre in a secure place.

Please note: It may be appropriate, in some cases, to use a handheld device to record the candidate. If this is used there must be facilities to record sound at an appropriate level. There must also be a facility to store the recordings as files and download these files to an appropriate storage device. The same checks on recording levels, clarity of sound and security of the file formats must be carried out.

12. Marking and Internal Verification

Teachers/Assessors must not mark in a public place. Teachers/Assessors who mark papers should ensure that the scripts are kept in a secure place until marking is complete. For security/storage requirements see **Chapter 2, sections 3 to 5** of the [JCQ ICE document](#) and the table under the [Conditions for storing assessment materials](#) section of this document.

All candidates' scripts must be subject to the internal verification sampling process. Centres should refer to the internal verification guidelines provided by Pearson in the [ESOL Centre Guide to Quality Assurance](#) handbook available from our website.

13. Standards verification and disposing of materials

The Standards Verifier will agree with the Programme Manager the levels and components to be sampled and the evidence of candidate work required. A completed Sampling Report Form should be password protected and emailed to the Standards Verifier to enable the selection of a sample of learners' work to be verified. The requested learners' work must be sent to the Standards Verifier using a secure method. Any unused blank assessments (e.g. when a candidate is absent) should be securely destroyed.

Please note that **original** candidate scripts will be accepted by the Standards Verifier for remote verification taking place this academic year. You must make and retain copies of the original scripts being sampled in the centre. You may send scanned copies of scripts electronically.

As all assessment materials will continue to be live until confirmation has been given from Pearson confirming the release of the set as practice papers, therefore centres must continue to store all question papers securely even after the Standards Verifier has visited the centre. Centres must keep all assessments (including question papers) for **15 working days** after their certificate has been received and checked. Records of assessment and internal verification of assessments should be maintained for a minimum of three years.

Question papers must **not** be given to candidates after an assessment has been sat. If a candidate has failed an assessment, formative feedback should be given. Assessors should ensure that they are aware of which questions the candidate did not pass and the criteria covered by those questions. The candidate can then be given information on which skills need more work before another assessment can be taken.

14. Communicating with Us

Pearson communicates with centres by newsletter, telephone and email. To make sure we reach you, please ensure that you maintain accurate contact details on [Edexcel Online](#).

You can submit any queries to us using the [Pearson Support Portal](#). By using the Support Portal, you can get in touch with Pearson directly. We aim to respond to you within five working days.

Please note: The content of the controlled assessment tests is secure and emailing any part of it is considered a **breach of security**. If you have a query about the content of a test or the allocation of marks for a particular question/task, [Contact Us](#) stating your name and contact details, and request for one of the team to contact you directly via phone.

Pearson ESOL homepage

You can find all current information and documents on our [ESOL qualification page](#). Our website pages are regularly updated with all the most current information and documents.

Customer Services

We pledge to provide excellent service in all your dealings with us. Each centre will have a dedicated Accounts Specialist that will be their first point of contact for administration matters relating to learner registrations, exam entries, claiming certification.

Edexcel Online

[Edexcel Online](#) is an invaluable service for administrators, providing support from approval through to registration and entry, reporting of achievement, and results and post-results services.

It also includes access to services for teaching staff, including online booking for training events and Pearson publications ordering.

Your Standards Verifier

Their contact details can be found on Edexcel Online. Your Standards Verifier can assist with assessment issues; provide information, advice and support, sampling size, mark schemes, specification queries, and guidance for Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations.

Key contacts table

All teams in the below table can be contacted via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).

Who to contact	When to contact
Functional Skills Content and Assessment team	For issues with the content of test paper questions or mark schemes and general assessment queries. Also, for appeals against qualification and certification blocks.
Quality Standards team	For reporting emergencies or incidents during assessments, or loss of video recordings.
Approvals team	For gaining approval and approval queries.
Business Improvement and Regulation team	For reporting cases of suspected malpractice or a breach of test paper security.
Exams Officers Support team	For registrations and certifications issues, reporting of grades, amendments to names, grades entered incorrectly, reprinting of certificates or if your centre is experiencing problems downloading live assessments from the secure Pearson website.
Vocational Deployment team	To find out your Standards Verifier details, to have a Standards Verifier allocated to your centre and to report difficulty contacting Standards Verifiers.
Special Requirements team	For issues relating to access arrangements and all special consideration requests.

If you have a question, please contact **FS Assessment** or your **Vocational Quality Assurance Manager** via [The Pearson Contact Portal](#).

In addition, you will find further information on our [Quality Assurance webpages](#).

15. Appendices

Appendix 1. Checklist for Head of Centre and Invigilator

This checklist summarises the main requirements for conducting ESOL Skills for Life (QCF) assessments. It should be read in conjunction with the Guidance for Assessors document supplied with the assessment materials, the [ESOL Centre Guide to Quality Assurance](#) handbook available on our website, and the [JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#) document.

A – Receiving assessment materials

Task No.	Requirements
1	ESOL assessment materials are available on a secure website. Access to the secure materials will be made available to Examination Officers once candidates have been registered.
2	Assessment materials must be stored securely at all times , prior to assessments and after the assessments have taken place. Security and integrity of assessments must be maintained throughout if assessments need to be transported to multiple sites/locations.
3	To ensure the latest version of assessments are used, materials must be printed from the secure website no earlier than two working days before candidates sit the assessment.
4	No unauthorised person should have access to question papers and/or assessment materials. All Assessors should be issued with copies of relevant Guidance for Assessors , (copies of which can be found on the secure website) two working days prior to the assessment(s), in order to ensure that candidates are familiar with words and phrases that may be relevant and necessary for the test.

B – Scheduling the assessments

Task No.	Requirements
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- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Assessments may take place at any time on any date. Centres can choose which assessment the candidates will sit but must keep a log to ensure that assessments and resits are taken appropriately. |
| 2 | Take all possible steps to prevent collusion if candidates are taking assessments at different times. |
| 3 | Ensure assessment room(s) are fit for purpose and supervised conditions can be assured e.g. candidates are not able to overlook each other's work, desks are big enough to accommodate question papers, etc. |

C – Before the assessment

Task No.	Requirements
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- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Invigilators must be satisfied of the identity of every candidate. |
| 2 | Check candidates have, or are provided with, any equipment indicated as required in Section 5 Resources for assessments. |
| 3 | Check candidates do not have access to anything that might compromise the assessment – any additional paper/notes; mobile phones must be switched off and placed out of reach. |
| 4 | Hand question papers out immediately before the assessment starts. |
| 5 | Bring any erratum notices, if applicable, to candidates' attention (do not announce suspected errors on a paper unless confirmation has been received from Pearson). |
| 6 | Ensure candidates record their personal details on the front of the test paper as instructed. |
| 7 | Announce clearly to candidates when they may begin. |

D – During the assessment

Task No.	Requirements
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- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Invigilator(s) must give their whole attention throughout to ensuring proper conduct of the assessment and needs to be able to summon assistance without leaving candidates unattended. |
| 2 | There must be enough Invigilators to properly observe each candidate (it is recommended at least one Invigilator per 30 candidates). |
| 3 | An attendance list or similar must be completed as instructed. |
| 4 | Any candidate leaving the assessment room temporarily must be accompanied. |
| 5 | Make candidates aware of time remaining – either by having a visible clock in the room or by regular time checks. |
| 6 | Follow instructions on what to do in the event of an emergency. |

E – Finishing the assessment

Task No.	Requirements
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- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Candidates must be given the full time-allowance (even if a candidate is admitted after other candidates have started). |
| 2 | Candidates may leave once they have finished provided this does not disturb other candidates or compromise the integrity of the assessment – no candidate may be re- admitted after leaving. |
| 3 | All work must be handed in – candidates must not take any papers or notes on paper (for Speaking & Listening) away with them after assessments. |
| 4 | The Invigilators must collect all work before the candidates leave the room. |

F – Dispatching and disposing of materials

Task Requirements No.

- 1 Collate the candidates' scripts as instructed by Pearson.
- 2 Ensure all candidates' scripts are **internally marked** and **have been through the internal verification** process **before** requesting standards verification.
- 3 Keep all candidates' scripts, recordings and internal verification documents in a secure place. During the standards verification the allocated Standards Verifier will select a sample of scripts for standards verification.

Time frames for assessment materials

Time frame	Requirement
2 working days	Assessment materials printed from secure website prior to assessment.
4 working days	Assessors should be issued with the Guidance for Assessors prior to assessment.
15 working days	All learner assessments (including test papers) are kept after certification has been received and checked.
Minimum 3 years	Records of assessment and internal verification of assessments should be maintained.

Appendix 2. Reasonable Adjustments

The table below provides a basis for what reasonable adjustments will be appropriate to the ESOL (QCF) qualifications. The decisions for each case are in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

The current [JCQ publication on Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) can be used in the decision-making process.

Adjustment	Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening
Use of a reader (human)	<p>Not an appropriate adjustment for a reading assessment.</p> <p>JCQ publication 5.5.3 to 5.5.10.</p>	JCQ publication 5.5 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	<p>Where written instructions are issued to candidates the use of a reader may be permitted.</p> <p>JCQ publication 5.5 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.</p>
Use of assistive technology e.g. speech/screen reading software/reading pens	JCQ publication 5.5, 5.6.5 and 5.7.4 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.5, 5.6.5 and 5.7.4 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.5, 5.6.5 and 5.7.4 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.
Use of assistive technology voice activated software (to record spoken responses).	JCQ publication 5.5 to 5.7 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	<p>Not an appropriate adjustment for writing assessment.</p> <p>JCQ publication 5.5 to 5.7</p>	JCQ publication 5.5 to 5.7 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.

Adjustment	Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening
Read aloud (candidate reads aloud).	JCQ publication 5.6.1 to 5.6.4 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.6.1 to 5.6.4 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	Where written instructions are issued to candidates, read aloud may be permitted.
Use of a scribe	JCQ publication 5.7.	Not an appropriate adjustment unless the candidate spells out every word, letter by letter to the scribe.	Where writing is required by the candidate the use of a scribe may be permitted.
		JCQ publication 5.7	
Use of IT /Word processor/ tablet to present responses	Yes, with facilities such as dictionary that may give the learner an unfair advantage switched off.	Yes, with facilities such as dictionary, spell check and grammar check that may give the learner an unfair advantage, switched off.	Not an appropriate adjustment for speaking and listening assessments.
		JCQ publication 5.8	
Spoken responses using electronic recording devices	Not an appropriate adjustment for reading assessments.	Not an appropriate adjustment for writing assessments.	Answers will usually be spoken and recorded anyway, so this type of adjustment will not usually be required.
Extra time of up to 25%	JCQ publication 5.2 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.2 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.2 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.

Adjustment	Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening
Extra time of up to 50%	JCQ publication 5.3 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.3 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.3 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.
Extra time of over 50%	JCQ publication 5.4 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.4 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.4 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.
Use of a transcriber	JCQ publication 5.9 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.9 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	Answers will usually be spoken and recorded anyway, so this type of adjustment will not usually be required.
Prompter	JCQ publication 5.10 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.10 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.10 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.
Oral Language Modifier (to clarify the carrier language used in the exam paper when requested to do so by the candidate).	Not a reasonable adjustment for reading as the language used in the tests has already been modified to ensure it is suitable for candidates. JCQ publication 5.11	JCQ publication 5.11 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	N/A

Adjustment	Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening
Assessment Materials in British Sign Language	Only appropriate adjustment for general assessment instructions. JCQ publication 5.13.	Only appropriate adjustment for general assessment instructions. JCQ publication 5.13.	Only appropriate adjustment for general assessment instructions. JCQ publication 5.13.
Responses in British Sign Language	JCQ publication 5.13 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	Not an appropriate adjustment for writing assessment. JCQ publication 5.13	Not an appropriate adjustment for speaking assessment. JCQ publication 5.13
Practical assistant	Yes, but not with reading elements of the assessment. JCQ publication 5.14.	Yes, but not with writing elements of the assessment. JCQ publication 5.14.	Yes, but not with speaking/listening elements of the assessment. JCQ publication 5.14
Bilingual translation dictionaries (manual or electronic)	Not an appropriate adjustment. JCQ publication 5.18	Not an appropriate adjustment. JCQ publication 5.18	Not an appropriate adjustment. JCQ publication 5.18
Use of English dictionaries	Not permitted for any of the Reading assessments.	Not permitted for any of the Writing assessments.	Not permitted for any of the Speaking and Listening assessments.
Supervised rest breaks	JCQ publication 5.1 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.1 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.	JCQ publication 5.1 for clarification of where this may be a reasonable adjustment.

