

Key Skills

Centre guidance for achieving the wider key skills

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

This is guidance for all organisations wishing to offer the wider key skills at Levels 1–4.

The qualifications offered are:

- working with others
- improving own learning and performance
- problem solving.

The purpose of the guidance is to describe the changes to the assessment procedures in the 2004 standards.

Rationale

From September 2004, the wider key skills will be available as pilot qualifications that will come within the National Qualifications Framework.

Certification of the wider key skills will require assessment of Part A, as well as Part B, of the standards. The certification process will rely on internal assessment, quality assurance within the centre and external moderation.

- Part A will be assessed through questioning the candidate's knowledge of the key skill and recording the responses. These questions should be used flexibly by the tutor to enable them to confirm the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the wider key skill.
- Part B will continue to be assessed by portfolio evidence.

Part A: Questions for candidates

Working with QCA, Edexcel has produced a series of questions for each wider key skill, at each level. The questions are designed to ensure the candidate knows how to use the knowledge and understanding listed in Part A of the standards. These questions are not designed to be part of the portfolio that is assessed against Part B.

While it is recognised that many of the activities for Part B in the wider key skills will be carried out with one other person, or within a group, the certification is given to an individual and therefore the answers to the questions must be an individual response by each candidate.

All documentation and questioning should encourage candidates to reflect on their skills and understanding.

The questions aim to recognise candidates' ability to apply the wider key skills in ways appropriate to different contexts in education, training, work and life in general.

The questions should be used by the tutors to assess the knowledge and understanding of the different skills required for each of the wider key skills.

Working with others questions should focus on the knowledge and understanding required to meet the responsibilities and work co-operatively with others for the purpose of achieving shared objectives.

Improving own learning and performance questions should focus the candidate's ability to work towards the achievement of personal, learning and/or career targets for the purpose of improving the quality of their own learning and performance.

Problem solving questions should focus on the knowledge and understanding required to tackle problems systematically, for the purpose of working towards their solution and learning how to improve the process.

Answers to Part A questions

Since answers to questions must be **internally assessed, quality assured within the centre and externally moderated** they should be recorded in an auditable format.

Possible formats include:

- candidate writes answers, either on paper or electronically
- recorded on audio tape
- recorded on video tape
- assessor records answers given.

Record Sheets can be used to record evidence when candidates are questioned about their understanding of Part A of the standards. Examples are shown on page 8.

Working with others

The questions relating to Part A should check that candidates know how to plan work with others, clarify responsibilities, identify resources and work co-operatively towards shared objectives. Candidates need to organise and work safely, consider the rights and feelings of members of the team and check progress, seek help when necessary and reflect on ways to improve their work with others.

For Part A, candidates may need to understand that when working with others there are:

- different types of skills, including:
 - process skills eg planning, organising, reviewing
 - interpersonal skills eg responding appropriately to the views of others, listening to others
- useful personal qualities such as confidence, empathy, persistence and reliability
- a variety of useful roles within a team eg chairperson, scribe, supervisor
- task functions, including setting agendas, time limits and seeking information
- relationship functions, including reaching agreements and conflict resolution
- a variety of ways to describe how people behave when working in teams eg action-orientated, people-orientated and cerebral roles (Belbin, 1981)
- stages of development for many teams, including forming, storming, norming and performing (Tucker).

For Part B, candidates should focus on the appropriate skills for the particular examples of working with others and ensure they record their use in the portfolio evidence. This includes recognising personal qualities, the use of interpersonal skills, eg motivating team members and task functions eg planning, organising, carrying out and reviewing work.

Part A questions – working with others

At **level 1**, at least one question from each of the three component sections (WO 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) must be asked. Questions should be chosen that allow the candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding that is not explicitly shown within the portfolio they have produced. This will mean that some candidates are asked more questions than others.

For example, a candidate's portfolio may include evidence of working in two teams both of which had successful outcomes. The assessor may wish to ask more about the working relationships in the teams. How can you support others and how can you overcome disagreements?

At **levels 2 and 3**, all questions must be asked.

Candidates can be invited to expand/develop their answers with follow up prompts such as 'What if...' or 'How would you...'

Candidates should be encouraged to give examples of how they would apply their knowledge and understanding.

Level 1 questions

WO 1.1

How could you check what you have to achieve?

How does working in a group/team differ from working with one other person?

Explain how you can identify and carry through tasks and set deadlines when working with others?

Explain how you can identify and access help, materials, equipment and tools when working with others?

WO 1.2

Explain how you can identify and carry out your individual responsibilities when working with others? eg tasks, health and safety, respect for others

How can you check progress?

Who can you ask for help?

How can you support others?

How can you overcome disagreements?

WO 1.3

How do you know when you are working well with other people?

Why is it important to offer support to others?

How would you improve your work with others?

Level 2 questions

What have you learnt about planning work with others?

What have you learnt about working cooperatively towards achieving objectives you have identified?

What have you learnt about reviewing your contributions and agreeing ways of improving your work with others?

Level 3 questions

With reference to planning, doing and reviewing, what have you learnt about working with others?

Part A exemplar comments: Working with others

Working with others Level 1

Exemplar comments completed by tutor

WO 1.2 Work with others towards achieving given objects

How can you check progress? You always prepare well for any treatments and closely follow standard procedures. You keep a log of your work and your clients requests in your workbook.

Who can you ask for help? You always work safely and if you are not sure about a mixture, or procedure you always ask your supervisor and make a note of the decision in your workbook.

How can you support others? You have achieved your first aid certificate and you are always willing to help with minor injuries in the workplace. You will offer help but if people do not want it you accept their response. However, you always log the incidents in the Accident Book.

Working with others Level 2

Exemplar comments completed by candidate

WO 2.3 Review your contributions and agree ways to improve work with others

What have you learned about reviewing your contributions and agreeing ways of improving your work with others? I use a reflective logbook to record my own strengths and weaknesses and what I feel went well and not so well when I work with groups of people.

We always give feedback to each other in the group after an activity. This activity is much better since we used some role-play activities, practicing giving positive and negative feedback. We used to video these meetings to record how we work together, but now we usually make notes in our logbooks, trying to identify ways to improve.

I always discuss what went well and not go so well with my tutor and we agree a way I could improve. We usually sign this agreement.

Working with others Level 3

Exemplar comments completed by candidate

WO 3.1 Plan work with others

With reference to planning what have you learnt about working with others? I enjoyed the self-analysis using Belbin, identifying my strengths and how different people work together in groups. I am good at using my energy to finish projects and I used this analysis to help in planning a project with a group of people. The project lasted for a whole term. The best plans have timetables and clearly show individual responsibilities. I like to work with everyone to agree roles, so that everyone is motivated and their responsibilities are clear.

You need to do research and then keep a file on all the Health & Safety procedures that applied to our work. Each member of the group can share this responsibility.

Improving own learning and performance

The questions relating to Part A should check that candidates know how to work towards the achievement of personal, learning and/or career targets for the purpose of improving the quality of their own learning and performance.

For Part A, candidates may need to understand that when improving own learning and performance there are:

- different types of skills, including:
 - process skills eg target setting, learning, reviewing
 - interpersonal skills eg communicating own needs, accepting constructive feedback, negotiating learning opportunities
- useful personal qualities such as persistence and reliability
- different learning styles (visual, verbal, aural, physical) and different methods of learning that suit those styles
- different types of planning processes, including personal development plans or individual learning plans
- planning tools, including SMART target setting, time management.

For Part B, candidates should focus on the appropriate skills for the particular examples of improving own learning and performance and ensure they record their use in the portfolio evidence. This includes setting targets, planning how to achieve the targets, using interpersonal skills, eg seeking support, recognising their own preferred learning style(s), monitoring their progress against targets and reviewing progress in learning.

Part A questions – improving own learning and performance

At **level 1**, at least one question from each of the three component sections (LP 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) must be asked. Questions should be chosen that allow the candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding that is not explicitly shown within the portfolio they have produced. This will mean that some candidates are asked more questions than others.

For example, a candidate's portfolio may include evidence that reflect successful learning in both study and practical activities.

At **levels 2 and 3**, all questions must be asked.

Candidates can be invited to expand or develop their answers with follow up prompts such as 'What if...' or 'How would you...'

Candidates should be encouraged to give examples of how they would apply their knowledge and understanding.

Level 1 questions

LP 1.1

What were your targets?

Why do you need action points to meet your targets?

Why is it important to have deadlines?

What information should you include in a learning plan?

Why do you think you need to review targets?

Who could help you in achieving your targets?

LP 1.2

Why might you need to change the way that you work?

What ways can you use (reading, listening, doing) to help you learn?

How do you know when to ask for support?

LP 1.3

What change or changes can you make to the way that you work?

What do you know about the way you learn?

How do you know if you have met your targets?

What can you do if you need to continue to improve, eg quality of work, the way you work?

Level 2 questions

What have you learnt about helping set targets and planning how these will be met?

What have you learnt about taking responsibility for some decisions about your learning?

What have you learnt about reviewing progress and providing evidence of your achievements?

Level 3 questions

With regard to planning, doing and reviewing, what have you learnt about improving your own learning and performance?

Part A exemplar comments: Improving own learning and performance

Improving own learning and performance Level 1

Exemplar comments completed by candidate

LP 1.3 Review your progress and achievements in meeting targets, with an appropriate person
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How do you know you if you have met your targets?
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I always talk to my supervisor about how well things are going and I check my progress with the action plan. I can then see what I have done and not done. We agree what I need to do, I write it down on the action plan and we sign it.

My tutor thinks I leave things to the last minute and I think I need to spend less time in the canteen.

Improving own learning and performance Level 2

Exemplar comments completed by candidate

LP 2.1 Help set targets with an appropriate person and plan how these will be met
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What have you learnt about helping set targets and planning how these will be met?

I have done a computer test and know I am a visual learner, so I like learning things by looking at pictures and I make a lot of notes.

I now use an ILP to help plan my learning and I am getting better at planning because I try to follow my smart targets.

I meet my tutor every month to check my progress.

Improving own learning and performance Level 3

Exemplar comments completed by candidate

LP 3.2 Take responsibility for your learning, using your plan to help meet targets and improve your performance
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With regard to doing, what have you learnt about improving your own learning and performance?
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I now plan my learning up to the end of each term. I include my plans in my ILP and this has really helped with organising things like my portfolio preparation.
--

I am aware of ways of learning that suit my learning style. I do like reading books but prefer using ICT to research topics, so I have to plan my access to the resource centre.
--

When planning I have learned to build in extra time at the end of projects, as I am usually rushed at the end.
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Problem solving

The questions relating to Part A should check that candidates know how to tackle problems systematically. That they can make plans, follow plans, log evidence and review progress and success.

For Part A, candidates may need to understand that when problem solving there are:

- different types of problems including:
 - diagnostic problems eg improving quality of service to customers, reorganising a process for a quicker solution
 - design problems eg stage set for new play, produce an information display
 - contingency problems eg organising an event involving the public
- a variety of skills involved in problem solving, including interpersonal skills eg negotiating and process skills eg reviewing
- a variety of methods used to identify factors in problem solving, including using post-it notes to generate ideas in groups, force field analysis, SWOT analysis, flow charts
- different solutions depending on resources available. For example, solving a problem in the short term may require a different outcome to a long-term solution
- a variety of factors involved including emotional, organisational, cultural and environmental.

For Part B, candidates should focus on the appropriate skills for the particular problem and ensure they record their use in the portfolio evidence. This includes interpersonal skills, eg consulting and collaborating as well as process skills eg writing evaluation reports.

Part A questions – problem solving

At **level 1**, at least one question from each of the three component sections (PS 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) must be asked. Questions should be chosen that allow the candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding that is not explicitly shown within the portfolio they have produced. This will mean that some candidates are asked more questions than others.

For example, a candidate's portfolio may include two plans to solve problems, both of which had successful outcomes. The moderator may wish to ask if a problem arose who may help the candidate to tackle the problem or how the candidate would set about planning what needs to be done.

At **levels 2 and 3**, all questions must be asked.

Candidates can be invited to expand/develop their answers with follow up prompts such as 'What if...' or 'How would you...'

Candidates should be encouraged to give examples of how they would apply their knowledge and understanding.

Level 1 questions

PS 1.1

How do you explain what a problem is?

How can you find out more about any problem and how to solve it?

How can you check that a problem has been solved?

What different ways might you use to tackle a problem?

PS 1.2

Who might help you to tackle a problem?

How would you set about planning what needs to be done?

What things must you consider when making a plan?

How do you check you are following a plan?

PS 1.3

How can you decide how well a plan has worked?

Without thinking about a particular problem, how might you improve your skills in solving problems?

Level 2 questions

What have you learnt about identifying a problem and identifying different ways of tackling a problem?

What have you learnt about planning and trying out ways of solving problems?

What have you learnt about checking if a problem has been solved and identifying ways to improving problem solving?

Level 3 questions

With regard to planning, doing and reviewing, what have you learnt about problem solving?

Part A exemplar comments: Problem solving

Problem solving Level 1

Exemplar comments completed by tutor

PS 1.1	Confirm with an appropriate person that you understand the given problem and identify different ways of tackling it.
PS 1.1	What is a problem? How do you check you have solved it? You always check through Q & A with your supervisor that you understand that there is a problem, agree the problem and the solution. You both signed a record of your agreement.
PS 1.2	How do you plan? You usually produce a spider gram with different ways in which the problems could be tackled. However, you are also aware you can use other methods including brainstorming and asking advice.
PS 1.3	How might you improve your skills in solving problems? You have learned that judging success is best done by more than one method. You now always include a questionnaire, or other type of external evaluation, as well as your own self-appraisal.

Problem solving Level 2

Exemplar comments completed by candidate

PS 2.2	Plan and try out at least one way of solving the problem.
	What have you learnt about planning and trying out ways of solving problems? I always meet my supervisor to agree the option I chose. I write down why I chose it and try to think of factors that would stop my success. eg sickness, and what I might do. I have improved my planning skills. I can do SMART targets and list resources like, people, equipment, time etc that I need for the project. I now use a work log of actual events to check my plan and record changes to plans. I always record the changes to the plan discussed with my supervisor.

Problem solving Level 3

Exemplar comments completed by candidate

PS 3.3	Check if the problem has been solved and review your approach to problem solving.
	With regard to reviewing, what have you learnt about problem solving? I learned that if I kept notes of research methods and used them to check progress it really helped my problem solving. I developed my ability to write clear reports: identifying successes, checking methods and action taken. I make sure I review my plan regularly throughout the project, checking alternative options. I always try to predict ways to make my plan more effective including improving team building skills and forward planning for resources.

Assessment and verification: Frequently asked questions

When do candidates have to move to the new KS2004 standards?

All candidates will be eligible to be assessed to the KS2004 pilot qualifications of working with others, improving own learning and performance and problem solving from 1 September 2004.

Edexcel will support existing candidates working towards the wider key skill units to become candidates for the new qualifications in these areas using the new assessment regime if they wish to receive qualification certificates.

Can candidates choose between the KS2000 specifications and the KS2004 standards?

Existing candidates who wish to remain on KS2000 have until August 2006 to receive certification. See QCA website for more information www.qca.org.uk/types/603.html

How long should I spend questioning the candidate?

Assessors should use this questioning session to be confident that candidates have understood the skills and knowledge required for the appropriate wider key skill at the appropriate level. This time will vary with each candidate.

Can I share the questioning activity with a colleague to speed up the process?

It is unlikely to be appropriate to share the questioning of an individual candidate between two assessors. However, in the interest of quality assurance of the centre an observer may be present at a questioning session. Nevertheless, the observation should only take place if the candidate has agreed to it.

At what time during the course should the questioning take place?

The questioning session should take place when the candidate feels they understand the skills and knowledge required at the particular level of the wider key skill. This is a matter of judgement for the assessor, the centre and the candidate. However it is likely to be after the candidate has produced the portfolio evidence for Part B, so that they have experience and understanding of choosing the appropriate skills and knowledge to apply to the situation.

Have you any strategies for success with wider key skills?

Experience shows that successful centres involve a wide range of tutors, in a range of activities and often, in a range of locations, in the achievement of the wider key skills.

‘Successful candidates have the ability to face their future more able to deal with changes in their circumstances and working with a variety of people. They can approach a situation not necessarily knowing all the outcomes but at least knowing how to approach the problem.’

Darren Angelsea, Director, Dynamic Adventures

Appendix 1

Working with others Level 1 – Part A (pro forma)

WO 1.1 Confirm you understand the given objectives, and plan for working together.

How could you check what you have achieved?

How does working in a group/team differ from working with one other person?

Explain how you can identify and carry through tasks and set deadlines when working with others.

Explain how you can identify and access help, materials, equipment and tools when working with others.

WO 1.2 Work with others towards achieving given objectives.

Explain how you can identify and carry out your individual responsibilities when working with others. eg asks, health and safety, respect for others

How can you check progress?

Who can you ask for help?

How can you support others?

How can you overcome disagreements?

WO 1.3 Identify ways you helped to achieve things and how to improve your work with others.

How do you know when you are working well with other people?

Why is it important to offer support to others?

How would you improve your work with others?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

Working with others Level 2 – Part A (pro forma)

WO 2.1 Plan work with others.

What have you learnt about planning work with others?

WO 2.2 Work co-operatively towards achieving the agreed objectives.

What have you learnt about working co-operatively towards achieving objectives you have identified?

WO 2.3 Review your contributions and agree ways to improve your work with others.

What have you learnt about reviewing your contributions and agreeing ways of improving your work with others?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

Working with others Level 3 – Part A (pro forma)

WO 3.1 Plan work with others.

With reference to planning, what have you learnt about working with others?

WO 3.2 Seek to develop co-operation and check progress towards your agreed objectives.

With reference to doing, what have you learnt about working with others?

WO 3.3 Review work with others and agree ways of improving collaborative work in the future.

With reference to reviewing, what have you learnt about working with others?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

Improving own learning and performance Level 1 – Part A (pro forma)

LP 1.1 Confirm your targets and plan how to meet these with the person setting them.

What were your targets?

Why do you need action points to meet targets?

Why is it important to have deadlines?

What information should you include in a learning plan?

Why do you think you need to review targets?

Who could help you in achieving your targets?

LP 1.2 Follow your plan to help meet targets and improve your performance.

Why might you need to change the way you work?

What ways can you use to help you learn eg reading, listening, doing?

How do you know when to ask for support?

LP 1.3 Review your progress and achievements in meeting targets, with an appropriate person.

What change or changes can you make to the way that you work?

What do you know about the way you learn?

How do you know if you have met your targets?

What can you do if you need to continue to improve, eg quality of work, the way you work?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

Improving own learning and performance Level 2 – Part A (pro forma)

LP 2.1 Help set targets with an appropriate person and plan how these will be met.

What have you learnt about helping set targets and planning how these will be met?

LP 2.2 Take responsibility for some decisions about your learning, using your plan to help meet targets and improve your performance.

What have you learnt about taking responsibility for some decisions about your learning?

LP 2.3 Review progress with an appropriate person and provide evidence of your achievements.

What have you learnt about reviewing progress and providing evidence of your achievements?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

Improving own learning and performance Level 3 – Part A (pro forma)

LP 3.1 Set targets using information from an appropriate person and plan how these will be met.

With regard to planning, what have you learnt about improving your own learning and performance?

LP 3.2 Take responsibility for your learning, using your plan to help meet targets and improve your performance.

With regard to doing, what have you learnt about improving your own learning and performance?

LP 3.3 Review progress and establish evidence of your achievements.

With regard to doing, what have you learnt about improving your own learning and performance?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

Problem solving Level 1 – Part A (pro forma)

PS 1.1 Confirm with an appropriate person that you understand the given problem and identify different ways of tackling it.

What is a problem?

How do you check you have solved it?

How can you check that a problem has been solved?

What different ways might you use to tackle a problem?

PS 1.2 Confirm with an appropriate person what you will do and follow your plan to solve the problem.

Who might help you tackle a problem?

How would you set about planning what needs to be done?

How do you check you are following a plan?

PS 1.3 Check if the problem has been solved by following given methods and describe the results, including ways to improve your approach to problem solving.

How do you decide how well your plan has worked?

Without thinking about a particular problem, how might you improve your skills in solving a problem?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

Problem solving Level 2 – Part A (pro forma)

PS 2.1 Identify a problem, with help from an appropriate person, and identify different ways of tackling it.

What have you learnt about identifying a problem and identifying different ways of tackling a problem?

PS 2.2 Plan and try out at least one way of solving the problem.

What have you learnt about planning and trying out ways of solving problems?

PS 2.3 Check if the problem has been solved and identify ways to improve your problem solving skills.

What have you learnt about checking if a problem has been solved and identify ways to improve problem solving?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

Problem solving Level 3 – Part A (pro forma)

PS 3.1 Explore a problem and identify different ways of tackling it.

With regard to planning, what have you learnt about problem solving?

PS 3.2 Plan and try out at least one way of solving the problem.

With regard to doing, what have you learnt about problem solving?

PS 3.3 Check if the problem has been solved and review your approach to problem solving.

With regard to reviewing, what have you learnt about problem solving?

Assessor	Date	Candidate	Date

December 2004

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