



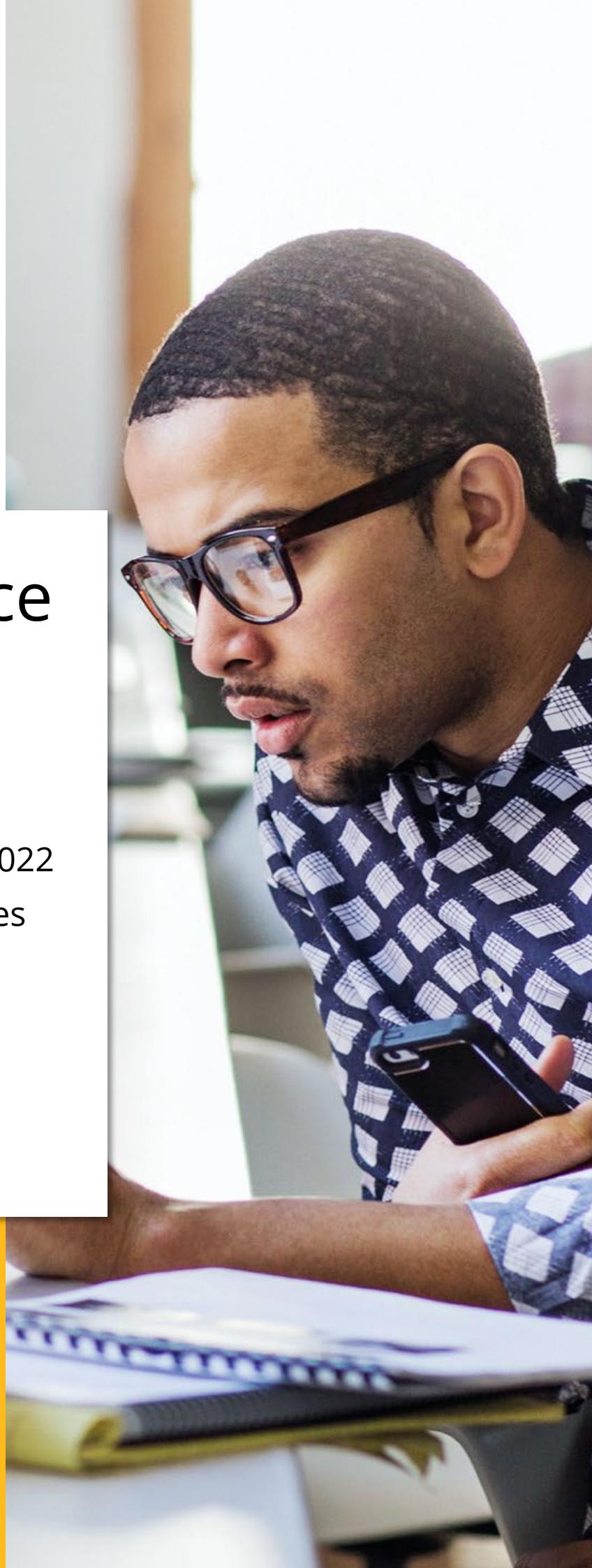
Pearson

Health Service Sciences

Contingencies for 2021-2022
for Health Service Sciences

October 2021

Last updated October 2021



Overview

Contingency Planning for VTQs for professional or competence-based qualifications

The policy direction for this academic year is that teaching, learning and assessment should continue. As permitted by Ofqual and DfE, we will have [adaptations](#) available across many vocational qualifications to support centres and learners.

We continue to work with Ofqual, other regulators, and VTQ Awarding Organisations to ensure that qualification and assessment delivery this academic year is resilient to the impacts of the pandemic. As part of this work, and alongside the announcements on 30 September regarding [GQ contingencies](#), the Department for Education have released [guidance for vocational qualifications](#), to support parity of contingency planning for all learners this year.

This guidance has been produced to support you with assessments should the following scenarios occur:

- a) There has been further disruption, but other assessments are able to go ahead
- b) If it is decided that assessments are no longer viable

This guidance details the adaptations available should scenario a) occur.

However, should scenario b) occur and assessment are no longer safely viable, assessments for qualifications in this guidance should be delayed until it is safe to continue.

Summary of changes

- Updated guidance on adaptations included, following joint awarding organisation agreement
- Update to Standards Verification guidance, which will continue to take place remotely.
- We have added a statement on malpractice and maladministration.

This guidance includes the following topics:

- Updated overview as per DFE Contingencies for VTQs Oct 2021
- Guidance on adapting assessments
 - Part 1 List of Health Service Sciences Qualifications
 - Part 2 List of Health Service Sciences Qualifications
 - Part 3 List of Health Service Sciences Qualifications
 - Part 4 List of Health Service Sciences Qualifications
- Standards Verification
- Recording adaptations and delays to assessment
- Qualifications on Pearson's Self-Regulated Framework
- Equalities and Objectivity
- Malpractice and Maladministration
- Appendix A: Qualifications this guidance applies to

Guidance on adapting assessments

Part 1 List of Health Service Sciences Qualifications

- Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Laboratory and Associated Technical Services
- Pearson NVQ Level 2 in Laboratory Science
- Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Laboratory Science
- Pearson NVQ Level 2 in Optical Retail Skills
- Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Optical Retail Skills
- Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Pathology Support

For the qualifications listed above, where (a) Assessors are unable to produce observation reports or (b) where learners are working long hours due to the Covid-19 (coronavirus) situation, then the centre may wish to consider the use of summative expert witness testimonies. In such cases, centre Assessors could ask expert witnesses, who line-manage the learner within the workplace, to produce a written statement of the learner's performance and competence in relation to specific unit/s. Rather than focus on a single activity, as would be normal for such a witness account, the witness would instead provide a summative discussion of performance in relation to a specific unit/s. Such expert witnesses must be recognised as holding a position of authority and where appropriate (i.e. licence to practise), registered with the sectors regulator (e.g. the GOC or GPhC). This witness statement could then support competence and state that such performance has been maintained over a period of time.

In terms of knowledge associated with NVQ qualifications, it may be useful for Assessors to conduct recorded professional discussions in order to address criteria which makes use of command verbs such as describe or explain.

Part 2 List of Health Service Sciences Qualifications

- Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Pharmaceutical Science
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate for Optometric Clinical Assistant
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate for Ophthalmic Dispensing Assistant
- Pearson BTEC Level 2 Technical Diploma in Laboratory Science

- Pearson BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Healthcare Science
- Pearson BTEC Level 4 Diploma in Healthcare Science
- Pearson BTEC Level 4 Diploma for Hearing Care Assistant
- Pearson BTEC Level 4 Certificate in Optical Dispensing

For the qualifications listed above, centres may wish to consider supporting learners by providing extensions to written assignments and facilitating online training. A limited number of criteria in the qualifications listed above are competency-based and in such circumstances the use of a summative expert witness as described in Part 1 may be used.

Part 3 List of Health Service Sciences Qualifications

- Pearson Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians

For the qualification listed above, the current assessment principles include the following requirements:

The primary method of assessment for the skills-based units is observation in the workplace by the assessor. Across the qualification's skills-based units there must be at least three observations which cover the required skills. Evidence should be generated over a period of time to show consistent performance. Expert witness testimony may be used where it is difficult for an assessor to observe aspects of practice. Expert witness testimony is NOT a substitute for the requirement of three observations by the assessor across the qualification.

Learners will be expected to achieve all learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Where learners are not able to achieve the skills-based learning outcomes in their usual place of employment (e.g. a custodial setting), the training provider and employer must ensure that the learner is given opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes in a work placement or another suitable setting. This may include simulation. Prior to starting the qualification, an assessment of the learner's employment setting should be carried out by the training provider and employer to identify such gaps.

In circumstances where the assessor is not able to gain access to the workplace to carry out observations in the workplace, the information provided in 'Part 4 List of

Health Service Sciences Qualifications' may apply to the skills units. Where Expert Witness Testimony (EWT) is used, it may replace assessor observation as long as there are three records of observations by either the assessor or the EW across the qualification. These mitigations update and replace those communicated in Summer 2020 and apply to:

- Any learners who were registered and on-programme on or before 31 August 2020 and have yet to complete.
- Any new learners registered from 01 September 2020

For knowledge-based units, evidence will be assessed using internally set, internally marked written assignments. Pearson will provide sample assignments and assessment guidance to centres. The assignments will be internally quality assured, then subject to externally quality assurance sampling by the Awarding Organisation.

Part 4 List of Health Service Sciences Qualifications

- Pearson Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians
- Pearson Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Support Staff
- Pearson NVQ Level 2 Certificate in Pharmacy Service Skills
- Pearson NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Pharmacy Service Skills

For the qualifications listed above, the current assessment principles include the following requirements:

Observation of practice – competency-based qualifications:

Where it is safe (i.e. does not contravene national and/or local restrictions and following a robust and appropriate Covid-19 risk assessment) to do so, observation by an occupationally competent and qualified assessor is preferred as the main source of evidence for all learners.

Where this is not possible due to protracted disruption caused by Covid-19 restrictions, Pearson will accept testimonies provided by a suitably experienced employer/manager/leader recruited by the centre to undertake the role of an Expert Witness (EW). Centres must ensure that EWs fulfil the specific requirements detailed in the Skills Health Assessment Principles and/or their recently published

'flexible arrangements' document. This includes the requirement to provide EWs with induction, training and ongoing support that is timely, meaningful and appropriate.

Additionally, centres must adapt their Internal Quality Assurance strategies to ensure that Assessor judgements based on Expert Witness Testimony (EWT) are prioritised for standardisation and sampling activities.

The appropriate use, recording, standardisation and sampling of EWT and the process of EW recruitment, induction, training and support will be subject to External Quality Assurance by the Awarding Organisations.

Certification will not be possible for any competency-based qualification unless substantial assessor observations and/or EWT are present in a learner's portfolio and that these are based on experience within a real work setting.

Recording of Expert Witness Testimony

Centres should enable Expert Witnesses to provide and present their testimony in an efficient way ensuring that this does not compromise validity and reliability. This could include:

- the use of voice and audio recordings, or
- through remote discussions where the main assessor could scribe the EW contributions. Please note that both paper and online forms are permitted.

Throughout the process centres must ensure that the confidentiality, dignity and privacy of individuals, children, young people, or families using services remains paramount and must not be compromised. This is particularly important when video and/or audio streaming or recording is being used.

Use of technology to support assessment

In order to protect their confidentiality, dignity and privacy the use of video and/or audio streaming or recordings is not permitted for direct observation where an individual, child or young person, or their families may be present or wherein personal information about their health or care is being discussed. Additionally, it is not permitted to use technology to record supervision or appraisal meetings.

Video and/or audio streaming and recording **can** be used to gather evidence in the following situations only:

- assessment planning, feedback and review
- team meetings – only aspects of the Agenda that are general in nature e.g. not linked to the care of a specific care of an individual, child or young person, or their families
- Planning and/or review of the learner's training and development
- Planning of supervision/appraisal
- Professional discussion
- Planning and recording EWT
- Learner reflection

Triangulation of evidence

The requirement to capture evidence of competence, and applied knowledge and understanding, continues to be best practice and is essential to robust assessment.

Triangulation of evidence during this period **must** include:

- Assessor observation and/or EWT
- Learner reflection
- Professional discussion

Simulation

Simulation is a useful way to learn new skills and to develop and gain confidence in a safe and supported environment. Within competency qualifications, simulation is ONLY permitted where explicitly detailed within a specific unit. Simulation must NOT be used in any other circumstances.

Mandatory work experience/practice hours

Where a work experience/practice requirement is a mandatory requirement within a qualification, wherever possible Awarding Organisations/Bodies expect all learners to achieve this requirement in full.

In addition, where Level 3 qualifications are approved by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) and are included in the GPhC list of approved qualifications for Pharmacy Technicians, the following must also apply:

Within the two-year period of training and work experience a minimum of 1260 hours of work experience must be undertaken under the supervision, direction or guidance of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician to whom the applicant is directly accountable, excluding sickness absence, maternity or paternity leave and holidays

(1.6) of the Criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician in Great Britain
September 2019

Applicants must provide evidence they have completed a minimum of two years' relevant work-based experience in the UK under the supervision, direction or guidance of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician to whom the applicant was directly accountable for not less than 14 hours per week of the Criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician in Great Britain September 2019. If the placement/qualification is delayed for whatever reason, documented evidence should be kept by the centre provider as this may have an impact on the trainee being able to register in terms of the registration requirements.

Centres must inform their Awarding Organisation if there are issues with learner access to the required practice/work experience hours. If the placement is delayed for whatever reason, documented evidence should be kept by the centre as this may have an impact on the trainee being able to register in terms of the five year registration rule of the Criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician in Great Britain September 2019, which can be found on the web page below.

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/registration/registering-pharmacy-technician>

Details of GPhC approved qualifications can be found at this link

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/pharmacy-technician/accredited-courses>

General Pharmaceutical Council Requirements

Centres need to consider all GPhC standards and guidance when delivering or assessing qualifications and share these with employers to apply the guidance for employers. The following documents can be found on the GPhC website

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/standards>

- Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians,
- GPhC requirements for the education and training of pharmacy support staff
- Guidance on tutoring and supervising pharmacy professionals in training
- Requirements for the education and training of pharmacy support staff
- Guidance for employers on the education and training requirements of pharmacy support staff
- Criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician in Great Britain September 2019

Qualifications on Pearson's Self-Regulated Framework

The same principles for adaptation should be applied here for any Pearson Self-Regulated Framework qualifications within the Health Service Sciences sector.

Standards Verification

For the 2021-22 sampling window, standards verification will continue remotely by your allocated Standards Verifier for the qualifications listed in Appendix A to enable certification for learners as appropriate. We will look to prioritise verification activities for learners completing their courses or requiring certification. Please ensure all portfolios, assessment and IQA records are retained for retrospective sampling by your Standards Verifier.

We will be regularly monitoring registrations and certification claims made during this period and will apply further quality assurance measures and checks if there are unexpected shifts in registrations and claims that are unusual for this time of year.

Recording adaptations and delays to assessment

If your learners are impacted and you need to provide adapted assessments for your learners, you may liaise with your Lead SV or Standards Verifier for advice before certification. Your Senior Standards Verifier will also be available to support you should you need additional support.

For any adapted assessment or delays to assessment, it is important that you notify your Standards Verifier, this is to ensure that Pearson retains sufficient oversight to ensure that we know what adaptations are being implemented and/or can support where there are delays to assessment.

Any adapted assessments or delays to assessment will need to be recorded in your Standards Verifier report. This data may be passed onto the DfE/Ofqual should they require it.

Equalities and Objectivity

It is important that when making adapted assessment available for learners, centres consider the ability of some groups of learners in accessing adapted assessments. We should look to, as far as possible, to ensure that any adaptations do not advantage or disadvantage any learner and minimise any disadvantage to learners with a protected characteristic. For learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerable learners, whilst we have published guidance to support adapted assessment across sectors, we acknowledge that centres will be best placed to accommodate this when making adapted assessments available for their learners.

Ofqual has concluded that Pearson remain subject to a number of equalities obligations, both under the Equality Act and under the General Conditions (Condition [D2](#)) and these will continue to apply in addition to the extended extraordinary regulatory framework. Reasonable adjustments must be made available wherever possible, and we will be obligated to monitor any disadvantages for groups of learners and remove these where they are not justified.

In its published outcomes, Ofqual has recognised the importance of ensuring non-bias during this time and has provided additional guidance to Awarding Organisations and Heads of Centres to support this. If you need support or guidance please do contact our sector specialists, whose details are [here](#).

Malpractice and Maladministration

Assessments can be adapted so that students are able to progress in their learning and life despite the current disruptions to our normal way of teaching, learning and assessing. It is important that centres ensure standards are maintained when assessments are adapted. As with all of our internally assessed assessments, we expect our centres to deliver and assess them appropriately. Centres should

also be aware of the heightened potential of learner malpractice where assessments are adapted – through personation for online assessment or collusion between learners for example.

We may need to investigate where there are concerns centres may not have delivered adapted assessments appropriately or not followed the centre assessed grade process guidance. Centres are reminded to report all instances of suspected malpractice to Pearson via candidatemalpractice@pearson.com (for learner malpractice) or via pqsmalpractice@pearson.com (teacher malpractice and maladministration).

Appendix A: Qualifications this guidance applies to¹

Pearson NVQ Level 2 in Pharmacy Services

Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Pharmacy Services

Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Laboratory and Associated Technical Services

Pearson NVQ Level 2 in Laboratory Science

Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Laboratory Science

Pearson NVQ Level 2 in Optical Retail Skills

Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Optical Retail Skills

Pearson NVQ Level 3 in Pathology Support

Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science

Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Support Staff

Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Support Staff (Integrated Apprenticeship)

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Pharmaceutical Science

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate for Optometric Clinical Assistant

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate for Ophthalmic Dispensing Assistant

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians

¹ Qualifications in scope of this guidance must be publicly funded and will be from Entry through to Level 6. For qualifications that do not appear in this guide, we will determine on a case by case basis whether we are able to apply the same approaches to ensure that assessments remain fit for purpose and results remain valid.

Health Service Sciences

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (Integrated Apprenticeship)

Pearson BTEC Level 2 Technical Diploma in Laboratory Science

Pearson BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Healthcare Science

Pearson BTEC Level 4 Diploma in Healthcare Science

Pearson BTEC Level 4 Diploma for Hearing Care Assistant

Pearson BTEC Level 4 Certificate in Optical Dispensing