

CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Level 3 Alternative Academic  
Qualifications and Technical  
Occupation Qualifications  
Qualification Level Conditions

January 2023

**ofqual**

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# Introduction

## About this document

This document is part of a suite of documents which sets out our regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering Alternative Academic and Technical Occupation Qualifications at Level 3. These conditions and requirements come into effect at 9.30am on 10 January 2023.

This document sets out the following rules:

- our Qualification Level Conditions for Alternative Academic and Technical Occupation Qualifications, which we have set using our powers under [section 134 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#), and
- our requirements in relation to assessment strategies, qualification purposes, assessments, and standard setting.

With respect to all Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our [General Conditions of Recognition](#), which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications, and
- all relevant [Regulatory Documents](#).

## Qualifications to which these rules and guidance apply

These conditions and requirements apply only to Level 3 qualifications that are approved for public funding, after a specified date, by the Secretary of State as an Alternative Academic Qualification or a Technical Occupation Qualification (as defined).

In the case of Alternative Academic Qualifications, these do not include:

### *Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Conditions*

- qualifications to which qualification-level conditions other than these apply, e.g. Advanced Extension Awards, GCEs or a project qualification
- an International Baccalaureate diploma
- a performing arts graded examination
- a core maths qualification

In the case of Technical Occupation Qualifications, these do not include:

- Technical Qualifications within T Levels
- Qualifications that do not fall within one of a number of categories (as set out in the definition of 'Technical Occupation Qualification' below) as defined by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

These conditions and requirements apply also to Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications that were approved for public funding after the relevant date, but subsequently had that funding removed. Ofqual has a power to disapply the conditions in such cases.

## Condition ATQ1: Interpretation and Definitions

- ATQ1.1 The rules of interpretation and definitions outlined in General Condition J1 shall apply to the Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Conditions.
- ATQ1.2 Except in the circumstances described in Condition ATQ1.3, the requirements imposed by the Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Conditions apply in addition to the requirements imposed by the General Conditions of Recognition.
- ATQ1.3 To the extent that there is any inconsistency between –
- (a) a requirement of an Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Condition and an awarding organisation's ability to provide either a particular type of Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration, such that the awarding organisation is prevented from providing that Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration, the awarding organisation may provide that Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Condition,
  - (b) in all other cases, a requirement of an Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Condition and a requirement of a General Condition of Recognition, such that an awarding organisation could not comply with both such requirements, the awarding organisation must comply with the requirement of the Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the General Condition of Recognition.
- ATQ 1.4 In these Conditions, the following words shall have the meaning given to them below (and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly) –

## Alternative Academic Qualification

A qualification –

- (a) that the Secretary of State for Education has approved for public funding as an Alternative Academic Qualification in a decision made on or after these Qualification Level Conditions have come into force,
- (b) to which an awarding organisation has assigned Level 3 under Condition E9.1, and
- (c) that is not –
  - (i) a qualification to which any Qualification Level Conditions other than the Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Conditions apply,
  - (ii) an International Baccalaureate diploma,
  - (iii) a performing arts graded examination, or
  - (iv) a core maths qualification.

This includes a qualification that fell within criterion (a) at any time on or after the date on which these conditions came into effect, but which is no longer publicly funded for any reason.

## Technical Occupation Qualification

A qualification –

- (a) that the Secretary of State for Education has approved for public funding as a Technical Occupation Qualification in a decision made on or after these Qualification Level Conditions have come into force,
- (b) to which an awarding organisation has assigned Level 3 under Condition E9.1,
- (c) that is not a Technical Qualification within a T Level, and
- (d) that falls within one of the following categories as defined by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education –
  - (i) Level 3 occupational entry technical qualifications - 16-19 and adult
  - (ii) Level 3 occupational entry technical qualifications - adult only
  - (iii) Level 3 additional specialist technical qualifications - 16-19 and adult

- (iv) Level 3 occupational progression technical qualifications - 16-19 and adult
- (v) Level 3 cross-cutting function technical qualifications – 16-19 and adult
- (vi) Level 3 employer-proposed technical qualifications - adult only

This includes a qualification that fell within criterion (a) at any time on or after the date on which these conditions came into effect, but which is no longer publicly funded for any reason.

## Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification

An Alternative Academic Qualification or Technical Occupation Qualification, as the case may be.

## Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Condition

A Condition of Recognition that applies to an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification, except where that Condition has been disapplied under Condition ATQ6.2, and which uses the numbering format 'ATQn.n', where 'n' denotes a number.

## Condition ATQ2: Assessment strategies

- ATQ2.1 In respect of each Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must –
- (a) establish and maintain an assessment strategy for that qualification,
  - (b) ensure that the assessment strategy complies with any requirements which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time, and
  - (c) have regard to any guidance in relation to assessment strategies which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.
- ATQ2.2 In particular, an awarding organisation must ensure that the assessment strategy for an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification sets out how the awarding organisation intends to secure, on an ongoing basis, compliance with its Conditions of Recognition in respect of the assessments for that qualification.
- ATQ2.3 An awarding organisation must ensure that all assessments for an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, are designed, set, delivered and marked in compliance with its assessment strategy for that qualification.
- ATQ2.4 An awarding organisation must –
- (a) keep under review its assessment strategy for an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification, and revise it where necessary, so as to satisfy itself that the assessment strategy meets at all times the requirements of Conditions ATQ2.1 and ATQ2.2,
  - (b) review its assessment strategy for an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification promptly upon receiving a request from Ofqual to do so, and subsequently ensure that its assessment strategy complies with any requirements that Ofqual has communicated to it in writing, and



- (c) promptly notify Ofqual of any revisions made by it to any assessment strategy.

ATQ2.5 An awarding organisation must –

- (a) upon receiving a request from Ofqual to do so, demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that it has complied with its assessment strategy for an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification in respect of any particular assessment for that qualification, or provide an explanation to Ofqual as to why it has not so complied, and
- (b) give effect to any recommendation that Ofqual may make in respect of its compliance with its assessment strategy.

## Condition ATQ3: Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification Review

- ATQ3.1 Following any review by Ofqual of an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must comply with any requirements, and have regard to any guidance, specified to it by Ofqual in relation to the qualification.

## Condition ATQ4: Assessment

- ATQ4.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each assessment for an Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, it complies with any requirements, and has regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.
- ATQ4.2 An awarding organisation may apply for an exemption from any requirement published under Condition ATQ4.1 with respect to which Ofqual has stated that it will accept such an application.
- ATQ4.3 Condition ATQ4.1 does not apply to the extent that an awarding organisation has been granted an exemption by Ofqual following an application under Condition ATQ4.2.

## Condition ATQ5: Specified levels of attainment

- ATQ5.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that in setting out the specified levels of attainment in the specification for each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, it complies with any requirements and has regard to any guidance which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.
- ATQ5.2 An awarding organisation may apply for an exemption from any requirement or guidance published under Condition ATQ5.1 with respect to which Ofqual has stated that it will accept such an application.
- ATQ5.3 Condition ATQ5.1 does not apply to the extent that an awarding organisation has been granted an exemption by Ofqual following an application under Condition ATQ5.2.

## Condition ATQ6: Withdrawal of public funding from Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications

- ATQ6.1 In respect of an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification which it makes available, an awarding organisation must –
- (a) promptly notify Ofqual where for any reason that qualification will, or is likely to, no longer be approved for public funding by the Secretary of State for Education, and
  - (a) provide, as part of the notification, a description of the circumstances in which the need for the notification has arisen.
- ATQ6.2 Where Condition ATQ6.1(a) applies –
- (a) Ofqual may decide, upon application by the awarding organisation or otherwise, that the Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Conditions should no longer apply to that qualification, and
  - (b) the awarding organisation must comply with any requirements communicated to it by Ofqual in writing as part of that decision.
- ATQ6.3 Any decision by Ofqual under Condition ATQ6.2 may include a decision that the Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications Qualification Level Conditions shall not apply to the relevant qualification from a particular date.

## Condition ATQ7: Alternative Academic Qualification purposes

- ATQ7.1 In respect of each Alternative Academic Qualification which an awarding organisation makes available, or proposes to make available, Conditions E1.1 – E1.2 do not apply.
- ATQ7.2 An awarding organisation must ensure that each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available –
- (a) meets the general purposes for such qualifications published by Ofqual and revised from time to time, having regard to any guidance which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time, and
  - (b) has one or more specific purposes which are consistent with the general purposes.
- ATQ7.3 An awarding organisation must ensure that each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, is designed so as, where there is a conflict between two or more purposes such that compliance with one purpose will reduce the degree to which an awarding organisation can comply with another –
- (a) priority is given to the principles in accordance with their hierarchy, with the greatest priority being given to compliance with purposes further up the hierarchy, and
  - (b) without prejudice to the above requirement, compliance is secured with all of the purposes to the greatest extent possible.

## Condition ATQ8: Content

ATQ8.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that the knowledge, skills and understanding that will be assessed as part of each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, are appropriate in relation to –

- (a) the qualification's purposes,
- (b) the level of the qualification,
- (c) the design of the assessments to be taken for the qualification, and
- (d) the number of hours for Total Qualification Time assigned to the qualification.

## Condition ATQ9: Standard setting

- ATQ9.1 In respect of each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, an awarding organisation must comply with any requirements, and have regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time in relation to –
- (a) the promotion of consistency between the measurement of Learners' levels of attainment in that qualification and similar qualifications made available by other awarding organisations, and
  - (b) the setting of specified levels of attainment.
- ATQ9.2 In setting the specified levels of attainment for an Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, an awarding organisation must have regard to an appropriate range of qualitative and quantitative evidence.
- ATQ9.3 In respect of each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, the range of evidence to which an awarding organisation has regard for the purposes of Condition ATQ9.2 will only be appropriate if it includes evidence of –
- (a) the Level of Demand of the assessments for that qualification,
  - (b) the level of attainment demonstrated in those assessments by an appropriately representative sample of Learners taking that qualification,
  - (c) where available, the level of attainment demonstrated by Learners taking that qualification in a –
    - (i) prior assessment (which was not for that qualification), whether or not that assessment was for a regulated qualification, or
    - (ii) prior qualification, whether or not that qualification was a regulated qualification, and
  - (d) the level of attainment demonstrated by Learners who have previously been awarded the qualification.



ATQ9.4 An awarding organisation must maintain a record of –

- (a) the evidence to which it has had regard in setting the specified levels of attainment for each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, and
- (b) its rationale for the selection of and weight given to that evidence.

## Assessment strategy requirements

Condition ATQ2.1(a) requires an awarding organisation to establish and maintain an assessment strategy for each Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification which it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition ATQ2.2 requires an awarding organisation to ensure that the assessment strategy for an Alternative Academic Qualification and Technical Occupation Qualification sets out how the awarding organisation intends to secure, on an ongoing basis, compliance with its Conditions of Recognition in respect of the assessments for that qualification.

Condition ATQ2.4 requires an awarding organisation to keep its assessment strategy under review, and to promptly notify Ofqual of any revisions made. An assessment strategy should be treated as a live working document which should be updated as necessary, considering evidence from assessment development, delivery and monitoring so qualifications and assessments continue to be fit for purpose.

Condition ATQ2.1(b) requires an awarding organisation to have regard to any requirements in relation to assessment strategies published by Ofqual.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition ATQ2.1(b) below.

## Assessment strategy requirements for Alternative Academic Qualifications

### General Requirements

There are three key properties of effective assessment strategies:

1. A coherent and logical narrative
2. The use of argument and justification with evidence
3. A focus on the fitness for purpose of the qualification

## 1. A coherent and logical narrative

An assessment strategy must present a coherent and logical narrative demonstrating how an awarding organisation will seek to ensure that the qualification meets the requirements in the Conditions in relation to assessments. The detailed requirements section below sets out the aspects of the qualification that need to be covered within the assessment strategy. However, the assessment strategy should not be presented as a set of discrete responses to the matters set out below, as this approach risks lacking coherence. Rather, it must demonstrate consistency between different justifications and explanations, by –

- linking back to previously referred aspects (for example the assessment model should be demonstrably consistent with the purpose of the qualification), and
- demonstrating clear consideration and understanding of the consequences of decisions (for example, of the implications of the assessment model used for the approach to setting and maintaining standards).

Many decisions entail trade-offs (for example between Comparability and Manageability in tasks where Centres might have a choice of task depending on their access to resources). These should be addressed as appropriate, so that the thinking behind the key decisions that the awarding organisation has made in developing the qualification is clear.

## 2. The use of argument and justification with evidence

In an assessment strategy, all statements that may have implications for the fitness for purpose of the qualification should be underpinned with clear and concise argument and evidence. Such statements should not constitute only assertion. For example, the following statements provide no evidence or justification to support the assertions that they make -

The two external assessments will comprise only multiple-choice questions. This question type aligns best with the type of content we are assessing in this qualification.

The types of evidence produced by the assessments lends itself to internal marking.

The reasoning and evidence behind such assertions must be provided. An awarding organisation should focus on the inclusion of material that supports its arguments for the fitness for purpose of the qualification.

For example, an awarding organisation should not include descriptions of processes or include or refer to pre-existing process documentation if the relevance of this content to the Validity and fitness for purpose of the assessments has not specifically been drawn out.

### 3. A focus on the fitness for purpose of the qualification

The purpose of an assessment strategy is to explain the choices that have been made in the development of the qualification and the approach to its ongoing monitoring will help ensure that the qualification meets the Conditions and is thus Valid and otherwise fit for purpose.

In particular, where an awarding organisation seeks an exemption under Condition ATQ4.2 from any requirement in relation to assessment, it must highlight this intention and ensure that its alternative approach is fully justified within the assessment strategy, including consideration of the consequential risks.

## Assessment strategy structure

It is up to an awarding organisation to decide how to structure its assessment strategy. The assessment strategy is a live document that will be used and updated throughout the lifetime of the qualification. The awarding organisation should structure it in a way that supports this.

In doing this an awarding organisation may, for example, choose to develop separate parts of its assessment strategy that:

- reflect aspects that are common to all qualifications that are in scope
- reflect aspects that are specific to individual qualifications.

The separate parts of the assessment strategy could be submitted as separate documents, or as a main document with annexes. An awarding organisation should explain clearly how any separate parts of an assessment strategy relate to each other. It should also explain how each of these separate parts will be kept under review, and revised where necessary, in light of the others. Taken together, such parts should form a coherent and integrated whole.

## Detailed requirements

We set out below our detailed requirements on the specific information and evidence an awarding organisation must include in its assessment strategy. The requirements are set out in eight sections, as shown below. These sections are intended to represent the key stages in the lifecycle of a qualification, and an awarding organisation's assessment strategy must be structured so as to reflect them. Depending on the approach to structuring its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation may find it useful to cover content from these sections in both an overarching document that covers its approach to a suite of qualifications and a document specific to an individual qualification.

1. Qualification purpose
2. Content
3. Assessment design
4. Assessment delivery
5. Marking or assessing performance and standardisation
6. Attainment and reporting
7. Standard setting and maintenance
8. Qualification monitoring

For each of the eight sections, indicative content is provided within a table that includes subheadings, corresponding questions, an explanation of the importance of those questions, and the Conditions to which they relate. In many cases, the column explaining the importance of information will also make clear where links should be made to other aspects of the qualification to aid the coherence of the document.

The subheadings, key questions and explanations in each section have been specifically written to reflect the key areas of qualification development that should be addressed and to reflect their approximate sequence as part of the qualification lifecycle. Assessment strategies must address the subheadings and questions contained in them. They may be structured according to the sections in the table. However, they must also reflect the need for decisions to be linked back appropriately to previous sections and must demonstrate clear consideration and understanding of their consequences (see general requirements under 'A coherent

and logical narrative' above). Depending on the nature of a particular qualification, there may also be additional areas that require focus. Similarly, some areas covered in the table may require more extended focus, while other areas may not be applicable.

Assessment strategies should refer, as appropriate, to the proposed or existing assessment materials (for example questions, tasks and mark schemes) to exemplify any points or arguments made within the document. Assessment strategies should also refer, as appropriate, to existing policies or procedures to support the awarding organisation in demonstrating how it will seek to ensure that the qualification meets the requirements in the Conditions in relation to assessments (for example Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny strategies).

## Section 1: Qualification purpose

This refers to the initial approach to scoping the specification, including clearly defining the purposes of the assessment.

Subheading	Key questions	Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy	Examples of relevant conditions
Purposes	<p>How does the qualification fulfil the general purposes specified under Condition ATQ7.2 for Level 3 Alternative Academic qualifications?</p> <p>What are the specific purposes of the qualification? How does the qualification fulfil those purposes?</p> <p>Where there are competing purposes (including general purposes specified under Condition ATQ7.2), what trade-offs have been</p>	<p>Key aspects of the qualification, including the content and assessment structure, must be designed to be consistent with the qualification purpose.</p> <p>A clear purpose will ensure that Users of the qualification are not misled.</p> <p>A qualification typically has a number of different purposes that it is seeking to fulfil. When defining the purposes of a qualification, awarding organisations should consider them from different perspectives. These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The use to which the qualification outcomes will be put. The results of a qualification are likely to be used in different ways by a range of potential Users. For</li> </ul>	Condition ATQ7

	<p>considered, and how have these been resolved?</p>	<p>example, results for individual Learners may be used to identify appropriateness for recruitment to employment or further study, to signify licence to practise, and/or by the Learner to make decisions regarding their own future. Results may also be used in aggregate from across Learners. For example, results may be combined across Learners taking qualifications within a Centre for measures used to hold that Centre to account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The expertise that Learners will acquire through participation in the qualification, and the nature of that expertise. For example, a qualification may develop understanding of a broad body of knowledge, skills and understanding in a particular area, or it may support the mastery of specified skills relevant to a defined discipline.</li> <li>- The role participation in the qualification plays in engaging Learners. The existence of a qualification and the assessment(s) it contains will play a role in engaging Learners. That may be engaging Learners in education or training in general or be in relation to the specific area to which the qualification is relevant. For example, some qualifications may have the specific purpose of seeking to (re)engage Learners likely to have particular previous experiences or reflect a particular context within which the qualification will be encountered.</li> </ul>	
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		Defining the purposes of a qualification in these terms, and considering their relative importance – including in terms of the intended priority order set out in Condition ATQ7.3 – is likely to aid an effective qualification design process by informing the range of trade-offs required when making design decisions. These trade-offs and design decisions should be documented in the assessment strategy.	
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## Section 2: Content

This refers to the skills, knowledge and understanding to be taught and assessed in the qualification.

Subheading	Key questions	Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy	Examples of relevant conditions
Structure	<p>What are the fundamental knowledge and skills inherent in the qualification, and how are they represented? Refer to the key elements of the content where applicable, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning outcomes</li> <li>• topics (and their weightings)</li> <li>• content statements</li> <li>• assessment objectives</li> </ul> <p>How will it be ensured that the knowledge, skills and understanding that will be assessed as part of the qualification are appropriate in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the qualification's purpose</li> </ul>	<p>Poorly defined content can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners being insufficiently prepared for assessments</li> <li>• the development of assessments and assessment criteria or mark schemes that fail to appropriately target the content in a way that is fair and/or transparent</li> <li>• the qualification failing to meet one or more of its general or specific purposes.</li> </ul> <p>An awarding organisation must describe how the content has been developed to align with the purposes, level and target group(s) of the qualification.</p>	Condition ATQ8

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the level of the qualification</li> <li>• the design of the assessment to be taken for the qualification</li> <li>• the size of the qualification.</li> </ul>		
Qualification Size	What is the size of the qualification and what is the rationale for this?	The awarding organisation must justify the Total Qualification Time and number of Guided Learning Hours in relation to the purposes, level, content and target group(s) of the qualification.	Condition E7
Demand	What steps were taken to ensure that the demand of the qualification content is set appropriately?	The awarding organisation must demonstrate that it has considered the demand of the qualification in relation to the target group(s) and, where appropriate, to other qualifications at the same level.	Condition D1

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<p>Optional content</p>	<p>Is there optional content in the qualification? Where there is content that is intended to be optional, how has it been ensured that the content for optional routes is appropriate?</p>	<p>The presence of optional routes may have implications for content coverage (for example, where one or more routes may omit key elements of the content).</p> <p>Where optional routes are included, the awarding organisation must explain its rationale for including them and how it has determined the content for each optional route. This may include justification as to how different routes represent a comparable Level of Demand and volume.</p>	<p>Condition G1.2(a)</p>
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## Section 3: Assessment design

This refers to all aspects of the structure and development of the assessments.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Assessment structure	<p>What is the model of assessment used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many assessments are there in total and what is the rationale for this?</li> <li>• What different elements of the content are targeted by the different assessments and is there a differential weighting between the assessments? What is the justification for the approach?</li> <li>• Does a 'nested' structure apply? (Where a number of different sizes of related qualifications)</li> </ul>	<p>An awarding organisation must justify how the key structural aspects of the assessment have been designed to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistent with the purposes of the qualification</li> <li>• appropriate in relation to the content</li> <li>• conducive to the development of robust standard setting and</li> </ul>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition ATQ4.1</p>

	<p>share individual assessments.) How does this this approach support Learner and Centre needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the overall assessment time, and what is the rationale for this?</li> <li>• What are the theoretical and practical considerations that have been taken into account when determining the best method of assessment to assess a particular construct?</li> <li>• What is the balance between Assessment by Examination and other assessments (Non-exam Assessment) and how has this been determined?</li> <li>• How has the awarding organisation taken account of the needs of Learners with particular protected characteristics in designing the assessment model?</li> </ul>	<p>standards maintenance processes</p>	
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<p>Assessment development</p>	<p>What is the process for developing assessment materials?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the different stages involved?</li> <li>• Who is involved at each stage?</li> <li>• What is the approach to training individuals who will be responsible for setting assessments, including ensuring security and mitigating any Conflicts of Interest?</li> <li>• Will any assessments be developed by the Centre? If so, what support will be offered to ensure these are Valid and fit for purpose?</li> <li>• What is the approach taken to develop assessment criteria, for example, mark schemes or performance criteria?</li> </ul>	<p>The process of assessment development must facilitate the development of Valid and fit for purpose assessments.</p>	<p>Condition A4                      Condition D1                      Condition E4.2                      Condition G1                      Condition G3                      Condition G4                      Condition G9.1 – G9.2                      Condition ATQ4.1</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the principles or controls that are utilised when articulating assessment criteria, to ensure the reliability of the judgements that are made against the criteria?</li> <li>• What steps are taken to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from the awarding organisation's approach to developing assessments?</li> </ul>		
<p>Question and task Validity</p>	<p>How does each assessment method seek to maximise Validity?</p> <p>What steps are taken to ensure that assessment tasks elicit the assessment evidence they ought to elicit? For example:</p>	<p>Poorly designed assessments could impact on their ability to elicit reliable information regarding the proficiency of Learners.</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G3</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that each task elicits its intended learning outcomes</li> <li>• that Learners understand what each task is asking them to do</li> <li>• that bias and other construct irrelevant factors are minimised</li> </ul> <p>that Learners have sufficient time to complete tasks.</p>		
<p>Approach to content coverage</p>	<p>What is the approach to covering the range of content through the assessments? For example, is the content sampled over time or covered in its entirety in an individual assessment or set of assessments?</p> <p>If a sampling approach is used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how is content sampled?</li> </ul>	<p>If a sampling approach is used, the methodology must demonstrate adequate coverage of the full range of content both over time and in relation to individual assessments.</p> <p>Alternative Academic Qualifications may be intended to be curriculum-based with the assessments sampling from across a range of content and skills. An</p>	<p>Condition A6 Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G9.3</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• over what period will the full range of content be sampled?</li> <li>• if a sampling grid or equivalent is used to track coverage over time, what parameters will this record and what is the rationale for these?</li> </ul>	<p>awarding organisation must fully justify its approach to content coverage in the context of the purpose of the qualification.</p>	
<p>Assessment by Examination</p>	<p>Which parts of the content are assessed through Assessment by Examination, and why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What question or task types are used and why were these selected?</li> <li>• How has the balance between different question or task types been determined?</li> <li>• How are mark schemes designed, and what steps are taken to ensure they support reliable application?</li> <li>• What are the conditions in which the Assessments by</li> </ul>	<p>Assessments by Examination must be justified in relation to their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alignment with the purposes of the qualification</li> <li>• effectiveness in assessing the knowledge and skills set out in the content</li> <li>• conduciveness to achieving reliable outcomes for Learners.</li> </ul> <p>An awarding organisation may request an exemption from the</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition ATQ4.1</p>

	<p>Examination must be taken?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the awarding organisation seeking an exemption to the requirement for simultaneous sitting of the Assessment by Examination? If so, what is the justification for this?</li> </ul>	<p>requirement that the Assessment by Examination should be taken simultaneously. For example, in certain subjects like performing arts, it may be more challenging for all Learners to take assessments at the same time. Awarding organisations should explain the mitigations of the risks that might arise from the chosen form of assessment and approach to sitting that assessment.</p>	
Non-exam Assessment	<p>What parts of the content are assessed through Non-exam Assessment, and why?</p> <p>What type(s) of Non-exam Assessments are used, and why?</p>	<p>The use of Non-exam Assessment must be justified, with a particular emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>why this type of assessment is required in order to maximise assessment Validity</li> <li>what the key threats to Reliability and Validity are,</li> </ul>	<p>Conditions A6 Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G9.3 Condition ATQ4.1</p>

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	<p>What question or task types are used and why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the balance between different question or task types been determined?</li> <li>• How are mark schemes or performance criteria designed, and what steps are taken to ensure they support reliable application?</li> <li>• What are the conditions in which assessments must be taken?</li> </ul> <p>Are the same Non-exam Assessments used over time, and if so, how will it be ensured that the Non-exam Assessments are not susceptible to issues of predictability and malpractice?</p> <p>What is the approach taken to determining the narrowness or</p>	<p>and how these have been mitigated.</p>	
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	<p>flexibility of Non-exam Assessment briefs?</p> <p>What are the risks or benefits to validity of the narrowness or flexibility of the assessment?</p> <p>What are the principles that determine the approach for any given assessment?</p>		
Centre adaptation	<p>What approach is taken to whether Centre adaptation of tasks will be permitted? To what extent will Centres be otherwise required to interpret or expand tasks set by the awarding organisation?</p> <p>What is the rationale for the approach?</p> <p>What measures are in place to support Centres in making</p>	It is important to demonstrate how Comparability is assured in relation to any Centre adaptation (or similar) of assessments set by the awarding organisation.	<p>Condition D1</p> <p>Condition E4.2</p> <p>Condition G1</p> <p>Condition G9</p> <p>Condition ATQ4.1</p>

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	<p>acceptable and effective adaptations where appropriate?</p> <p>What monitoring is in place to ensure that the awarding organisation has visibility of any modifications and their appropriateness?</p>		
<p>Controls</p>	<p>What are the principles that determine which level of control or configuration of variable is selected for each task?</p> <p>What controls are specified?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will Learners have access to any assessment materials before the assessment is taken?</li> <li>• Are assessments to be completed within specified time limits?</li> </ul>	<p>It is important that any controls have been fully considered and specified to ensure assessments are Valid, Reliable and appropriate for the qualification purpose.</p>	<p>Condition G8 Condition G9</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are Learners permitted to ask for support?</li> <li>• Are Learners permitted to access resources (for example, class notes or the internet)?</li> <li>• How are Learners supervised?</li> <li>• Is collaboration permitted between Learners?</li> <li>• How is work Authenticated?</li> </ul>		
<p>Generating outcomes (assessment level)</p>	<p>What is the approach to generating outcomes for individual assessments?</p> <p>Are outcomes based only on a Learner's overall attainment within a Component? Or are there any areas that must be demonstrated, irrespective of performance elsewhere?</p>	<p>It is important to ensure that the approach to generating outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discriminates effectively between Learners of different abilities</li> <li>• enables awarding organisations to monitor and control standards.</li> <li>• is in line with the purposes of the qualification and the</li> </ul>	<p>Condition G1.2(a)</p>

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		<p>aspects of the content that it is assessing.</p> <p>An awarding organisation must justify how their approach will ensure this.</p>	
Optional assessment	<p>If applicable, what elements of the assessments are optional?</p> <p>How will the Comparability of optional routes be appropriately managed?</p>	<p>It is important to ensure that standards are maintained when there are optional routes.</p>	Condition G1.2



## Section 4: Assessment delivery

This refers to the available modes of delivery and the availability of assessments.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Modes of assessment delivery (all assessment)	What modes of assessment delivery are available (for example, paper-based, computer-based)?	<p>The modes of delivery must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate for the target group</li> <li>• Manageable for Centres</li> <li>• optimal in terms of eliciting evidence of the knowledge, skills and behaviours described in the content.</li> </ul> <p>An awarding organisation must justify its approach to this. Any prioritisation between these requirements must be detailed.</p>	Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G9
Assessment availability	What approach is taken to the availability of assessments, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of assessments to be available</li> <li>• type of assessment (for example, online and/or paper-based)</li> </ul>	<p>An awarding organisation must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• justify its approach in relation to the purpose of the assessment.</li> <li>• detail specific risks that have been identified (such as to the Comparability and predictability</li> </ul>	Condition A6 Condition D1 Condition E4.2

	<p>What is the approach to permitting Learners to re-take assessments?</p> <p>Will the awarding organisation be providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•one or two opportunities for the Assessment by Examination on set dates per academic year?</li> <li>•one or two windows for submitting outcomes for Non-exam Assessment per academic year?</li> </ul> <p>For Non-exam Assessment, where a Learner re-takes, is entirely new evidence required from the Learner for the re-take, or are they permitted to re-work evidence where a requirement for new evidence would be unreasonable? What is the rationale for the approach?</p> <p>In light of the approach to availability, what specific risks have been identified, how will these be mitigated, and how will particular challenges be addressed, including:</p>	<p>of assessments), and how these have been mitigated.</p> <p>If an awarding organisation has applied for an exemption to the simultaneous sitting of the Assessment by Examination, it may also apply for an exemption to the requirement to provide two opportunities for the Assessment by Examination on set dates. An awarding organisation should explain and justify its approach.</p>	<p>Condition G1 Condition G9</p> <p>Condition ATQ4.1</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring Comparability of assessments</li> <li>• minimising predictability of assessments</li> <li>• ensuring security of assessments.</li> </ul>		
Security	<p>What approach is taken to ensuring the secure transmission, distribution and storage (including by Centres) of assessment materials?</p> <p>What approach is taken to ensuring the security of any assessment materials that Learners have access to prior to assessments being taken?</p>	Inadequate approaches to security can undermine Reliability – if, for example, assessment scores do not accurately reflect Learners’ attainment.	Condition G4 Condition G9
Centre feedback	<p>What approach is taken to ensuring that Centres provide appropriate feedback on Centre marked assessments to Learners?</p> <p>What mitigations are in place to prevent Centre Assessors from providing feedback that is excessively frequent or excessively directive?</p>	If feedback from Centre Assessors to Learners is provided excessively frequently and/or is excessively directive about what must be included or addressed as part of the assessment, this creates the potential that assessment scores do not accurately reflect Learners’ attainment.	Condition C1 Condition C2 Condition G9

## Section 5: Marking or assessing performance and standardisation

This refers to the approach taken to the marking of all assessments.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Approach to marking or assessing performance (all assessments)	<p>What approach is taken to marking or assessing performance?</p> <p>What steps are taken to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from the awarding organisation's approach to marking or assessing performance?</p>	<p>The approach to marking or assessing performance is key to ensuring that outcomes are as consistent and accurate as possible.</p> <p>An awarding organisation must justify its approach to marking in relation to the qualification purposes and the need for Reliable outcomes.</p>	<p>Condition A6 Condition D1 Condition H1 Condition H2 Condition H5</p>

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<p>Monitoring marking or assessing performance (all assessments)</p>	<p>What processes are in place to monitor accuracy and consistency of marking or assessing performance and issuing of results, and to take remedial action where necessary?</p>	<p>An awarding organisation must justify its approach to monitoring in relation to the need for Reliable outcomes.</p>	<p>Condition H1 Condition H2 Condition H5 Condition H6.1(d)</p>
<p>Assessor standardisation (all assessments)</p>	<p>What are the characteristics of reliable Assessors? What steps are or will be taken to recruit such Assessors?</p> <p>What approach is taken to training and standardising Assessors, including details of standardisation procedures and any wider training?</p>	<p>It is important to clearly articulate the knowledge, skills and experience that Assessors will need in order to ensure the Reliability of the judgements that are made. An awarding organisation must explain the steps it will take to recruit such Assessors.</p> <p>An awarding organisation must describe its approach to training and standardising Assessors (both external Assessors and Centre Assessors). This could include, for example, any specific training for new or senior Assessors, as well as any wider training available. An awarding organisation must describe its standardisation procedures, including, for example, how it will determine</p>	<p>Condition G1.3 Condition H1 Condition H2 Condition H5</p>

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		whether an Assessor can assess reliably.	
Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (Centre marking or assessing)	<p>What is the approach to Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny, and the rationale for this approach?</p> <p>What are the risks with this approach, and how will they be managed?</p>	<p>An awarding organisation must justify its approach to Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny in relation to the need for Reliable outcomes.</p> <p>It will be important for an awarding organisation to link to its Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny strategy in the justification of its approach.</p>	<p>Condition A6 Condition C1 Conditions C2.1 and C2.3(j) Condition D1 Condition H2 Condition H5</p>
Centre training and monitoring (Centre marking or assessing)	<p>What approach is taken to the provision of guidance and training to Centres around marking or assessing performance?</p> <p>How are Centres monitored?</p>	<p>An awarding organisation must justify its approach to training in relation to the need for Reliable outcomes.</p>	<p>Condition C1 Condition H1 Condition H5</p>

## Section 6: Attainment and Reporting

This refers to the identified levels of attainment and the grading structures used to characterise these levels.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Specified levels of attainment	<p>What are the specified levels of attainment (i.e. grading scales) for the qualification? What is the justification for the approach?</p> <p>How do the assessments generate Reliable information in line with the proposed grading?</p> <p>If specifying different levels of attainment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what characteristics differentiate Learners who have demonstrated different levels of attainment?</li> </ul>	<p>The characteristics of the intended levels of attainment must follow clearly from relevant elements of the content.</p> <p>An awarding organisation’s approach to differentiating between adjacent levels of attainment must be justified in terms of the scope to generate Reliable information.</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1.3 Condition ATQ5.1</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what steps have been taken to ensure that there is sufficient difference between adjacent levels of attainment?</li> </ul>		
Aggregation (qualification level)	<p>What is the approach to aggregation? For example, to what extent do Learners' results for the qualification reflect their overall attainment across all assessments, or their attainment in particular assessments? What is the justification for the approach?</p> <p>If applicable, what is the approach to scaling marks from individual assessments for the purpose of aggregation?</p> <p>If individuals are permitted to re-take assessments, are there any changes to the aggregation rules in these</p>	<p>The approach must be justified in relation to the content and purposes of the qualification.</p> <p>An appropriate aggregation method and, if relevant, scaling method is needed to ensure appropriate discrimination between Learners.</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition H5.4 Condition ATQ9.1(b)</p>



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	instances, and what is the rationale for the approach?		
Reviews and/or Appeals	<p>What steps are taken to ensure that concerns over inaccuracy of assessment results are addressed adequately and appropriately? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that they are investigated fairly, thoroughly and in a timely fashion</li> <li>• that justified concerns over inaccuracy are resolved by following an appropriate process.</li> </ul>	An appropriate process is fundamental to ensuring that appropriate inferences are drawn from results.	Condition I1

## Section 7: Standard setting and maintenance

This refers to the processes for setting and maintaining standards, and the types of evidence that are used.

Subheading	Key questions	Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy	Examples of relevant conditions
Approach	<p>What is the approach to setting and maintaining appropriate grading standards within the qualification? For example, are grading standards determined up-front by individual Assessors and applied at the point of assessment, or are they determined through an awarding process separate to marking?</p> <p>If standards are determined through an awarding process separate to marking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within an individual Component, are the requirements (such as number of marks) to achieve a</li> </ul>	<p>If qualifications include directly graded outcome-based assessments, it is important that the approach to standard setting and maintenance links to marking or assessing performance, standardisation, Assessor training and the approach to Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny.</p> <p>If standards are determined through an awarding process separate to marking, it is important the approach to standard setting and maintenance follows an appropriate technical methodology. An awarding organisation must set out the technical methodology for determining</p>	<p>Condition H3</p> <p>Condition ATQ9</p>

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	<p>given grade set out upfront or determined after the assessment(s) have been taken?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the process for setting grade boundaries at qualification level?</li> </ul> <p>If qualifications have a nested structure, how will the awarding organisation manage and mitigate any risk in being able to effectively set and maintain standards?</p> <p>For all approaches, how will the awarding organisation take account of any impact on Learners who share a particular protected characteristic?</p>	<p>Component and qualification level grade boundaries.</p> <p>In each case, an awarding organisation must fully justify its approach to effectively setting and maintaining appropriate grading standards within the qualification, both over time and with similar qualifications it makes available. Where possible, an awarding organisation must also demonstrate how it will effectively set and maintain standards with similar qualifications offered by other awarding organisations.</p>	
Evidence	<p>What quantitative and qualitative information is used?</p> <p>How is the weighting of evidence</p>	<p>It is important the approach to standard setting and maintaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• includes full consideration of the strengths and limitations of the different</li> </ul>	<p>Condition H3</p> <p>Condition ATQ9</p>

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	determined when multiple sources of evidence are used? (This may include worked examples, for illustrative purposes, as necessary.)	types of available evidence, and the weight given to different evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leads to securing fair and Reliable outcomes over time and between Learners.</li> </ul>	
Modes of assessment	Where there are multiple modes (for example, paper and computer), how is Comparability of standards maintained?	It is important to ensure that standards are maintained when there are multiple modes of assessment.  An awarding organisation must describe how it ensures comparability between different modes of assessment, for example when assessments are set, marked and assessed, including any separate awarding processes.	Condition D1 Condition E4.2

## Section 8: Qualification monitoring

This refers to the processes that are applied on an ongoing basis to monitor the Validity of key aspects of the specification, such as its assessments, susceptibility to malpractice and maladministration, and standard maintenance processes.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Approach	<p>Describe the techniques and measures used to monitor all key aspects of the qualification that may affect its Validity. This may include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing of functioning of previous assessments</li> <li>• security or malpractice issues or incidents</li> <li>• feedback through engagement with Users of the qualification</li> </ul> <p>What sources of evidence are evaluated to identify any issues with the ongoing Validity of qualifications?</p>	Failure to consider the ongoing Validity of the qualification increases the likelihood of threats manifesting themselves and/or assessment processes ceasing to remain fit for purpose.	Condition A5.2(b) Condition A6 Condition A8.1 Condition D1 Condition D3 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G4 Condition G9.3

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	How does the awarding organisation assess whether any aspect of the qualification may be disadvantaging a group of Learners who share a protected characteristic?		
Availability of data	<p>What data will be collected to monitor the delivery and performance of the qualification?</p> <p>What systems and procedures are in place to ensure that any qualification or Component-level data that may be required by Ofqual can be provided within a reasonable time?</p>	It is important to demonstrate that this data is used where appropriate by awarding organisations at relevant points in qualification development.	<p>Condition A5.2(b)</p> <p>Condition B4</p>
Reviewing the assessment approach	How is the assessment approach reviewed and, where applicable, refined over time, based on evidence of its effectiveness?	It is important to have appropriate processes in place to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the qualification to maintain its ongoing Validity.	Condition D3

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	What sources of evidence and feedback are included when reviewing the effectiveness of a qualification?		
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## Assessment strategy requirements for Technical Occupation Qualifications

### General requirements

There are three key properties of effective assessment strategies:

1. A coherent and logical narrative
2. The use of argument and justification with evidence
3. A focus on the fitness for purpose of the qualification

#### 1. A coherent and logical narrative

An assessment strategy must present a coherent and logical narrative demonstrating how an awarding organisation will seek to ensure that the qualification meets the requirements in the Conditions in relation to assessments. The detailed requirements section below sets out the aspects of the qualification that need to be covered within the assessment strategy. However, the assessment strategy should not be presented as a set of discrete responses to the matters set out below, as this approach risks lacking coherence. Rather, it must demonstrate consistency between different justifications and explanations, by –

- linking back to previously referred aspects (for example, the assessment model should be demonstrably consistent with the purpose of the qualification), and
- demonstrating clear consideration and understanding of the consequences of decisions (for example, of the implications of the assessment model used for the approach to setting and maintaining standards).

Many decisions entail trade-offs (for example, between Comparability and Manageability in tasks where Centres might have a choice of task depending on their access to resources). These should be addressed as appropriate, so that the thinking behind the key decisions that the awarding organisation has made in developing the qualification is clear.



## 2. The use of argument and justification with evidence

In an assessment strategy, all statements that may have implications for the fitness for purpose of the qualification should be underpinned with clear and concise argument and evidence. Such statements should not constitute only assertion. For example, the following statements provide no evidence or justification to support the assertions that they make –

The two external assessments will comprise only multiple-choice questions. This question type aligns best with the type of content we are assessing in this qualification.

The types of evidence produced by the assessments lends itself to internal marking.

The reasoning and evidence behind such assertions must be provided. An awarding organisation should focus on the inclusion of material that supports its arguments for the fitness for purpose of the qualification.

For example, an awarding organisation should not include descriptions of processes or include or refer to pre-existing process documentation if the relevance of this content to the Validity and fitness for purpose of the assessments has not specifically been drawn out.

## 3. A focus on the fitness for purpose of the qualification

The purpose of an assessment strategy is to explain the choices that have been made in the development of the qualification and the approach to its ongoing monitoring will help ensure that the qualification meets the Conditions and is thus Valid and otherwise fit for purpose.

## Assessment strategy structure

It is up to an awarding organisation to decide how to structure its assessment strategy. The assessment strategy is a live document that will be used and updated throughout the lifetime of the qualification. The awarding organisation should structure it in a way that supports this.

In doing this, an awarding organisation may, for example, choose to develop separate parts of its assessment strategy that:

- reflect aspects that are common to all qualifications that are in scope
- reflect aspects that are specific to individual qualifications

The separate parts of the assessment strategy could be submitted as separate documents, or as a main document with annexes. An awarding organisation should explain clearly how any separate parts of an assessment strategy relate to each other. It should also explain how each of these separate parts will be kept under review, and revised where necessary, in light of the others. Taken together, such parts should form a coherent and integrated whole.

## Detailed requirements

We set out below our detailed requirements on the specific information and evidence an awarding organisation must include in its assessment strategy. The requirements are set out in eight sections, as shown below. These sections are intended to represent the key stages in the lifecycle of a qualification, and an awarding organisation's assessment strategy must be structured so as to reflect them. Depending on the approach to structuring its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation may find it useful to cover content from these sections in both an overarching document that covers its approach to a suite of qualifications and a document specific to an individual qualification.

1. Qualification purpose
2. Content
3. Assessment design
4. Assessment delivery
5. Marking/assessing performance and standardisation
6. Attainment and reporting
7. Standard setting and maintenance
8. Qualification monitoring

For each of the eight sections, indicative content is provided within a table that includes subheadings, corresponding questions, an explanation of the importance of those questions, and the Conditions to which they relate. In many cases, the column explaining the importance of information will also make clear where links should be made to other aspects of the qualification to aid the coherence of the document.

The subheadings, key questions and explanations in each section have been specifically written to reflect the key areas of qualification development that should be addressed and to reflect their approximate sequence as part of the qualification lifecycle. Assessment strategies must address the subheadings and questions contained in them. They may be structured according to the sections in the table. However, they must also reflect the need for decisions to be linked back appropriately to previous sections and must demonstrate clear consideration and understanding of their consequences (see general requirements under 'A coherent and logical narrative' above). Depending on the nature of a particular qualification, there may also be additional areas that require focus. Similarly, some areas covered in the table may require more extended focus, while other areas may not be applicable.

Assessment strategies should refer, as appropriate, to the proposed or existing assessment materials (for example, questions, tasks and mark schemes) to exemplify any points or arguments made within the document. Assessment strategies should also refer, as appropriate, to existing policies or procedures to support the awarding organisation in demonstrating how it will seek to ensure that the qualification meets the requirements in the Conditions in relation to assessments (for example, Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny strategies).

## Section 1: Qualification Purpose

This refers to the initial approach to scoping the specification, including clearly defining the purposes of the assessment.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy?</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Purposes	<p>How does the qualification fulfil the relevant category purpose set out by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education?</p> <p>Does the qualification have any further specific purposes? If so, how does the qualification fulfil those specific purposes and ensure their coherence with the relevant category purpose set out by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education?</p> <p>Where there are competing specific purposes, what trade-offs have been</p>	<p>Key aspects of the qualification, including the content and assessment structure, must be designed to be consistent with the qualification purpose.</p> <p>A clear purpose will ensure that Users of the qualification are not misled.</p> <p>A qualification typically has a number of different purposes that it is seeking to fulfil. When defining the purposes of a qualification,</p>	Condition E1.1 and E1.2

	<p>considered, and how have these been resolved?</p>	<p>awarding organisations should consider them from different perspectives. These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The expertise that Learner will acquire through participation in the qualification, and the nature of that expertise. For example, a qualification may develop understanding of a broad body of knowledge, skills and understanding in a particular area, or it may support the mastery of specified skills relevant to a defined discipline.</li> <li>- The use to which the qualification outcomes will be put. The results of a qualification are likely to be used in different ways by a range of potential Users. For example, results for individual Learners may be used to identify appropriateness for</li> </ul>	
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		<p>recruitment to employment or further study, to signify licence to practise, and/or by the Learner to make decisions regarding their own future. Results may also be used in aggregate from across Learners. For example, results may be combined across Learners taking qualifications within a Centre for measures used to hold that Centre to account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The role participation in the qualification plays in engaging Learners. The existence of a qualification and the assessment(s) it contains will play a role in engaging Learners. That may be engaging Learners in education and/or training in general or be in relation to the specific area to which the qualification is relevant. For example, some qualifications may have the specific purpose of seeking to (re)engage Learners likely</li> </ul>	
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		<p>to have particular previous experiences or reflect a particular context within which the qualification will be encountered.</p> <p>Defining the purposes of a qualification in these terms, and considering their relative importance – including in terms of any intended priority order set out by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education – is likely to aid an effective qualification design process by informing the range of trade-offs required when making design decisions. These trade-offs and design decisions should be documented in the assessment strategy.</p>	
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## Section 2: Content

This refers to the skills, knowledge and understanding to be taught and assessed in the qualification.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy?</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Structure	<p>How has the content been developed with reference, as appropriate, to the qualification category, and to the relevant employer-led occupational standard(s) published by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education? Where there is no such standard, how has suitable content been established?</p> <p>How are the relevant knowledge skills and behaviours represented in the specification? Refer to the key elements of the specification content where applicable, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning outcomes</li> <li>• topics (and their weightings)</li> </ul>	<p>Poorly defined content can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners being insufficiently prepared for assessments</li> <li>• the development of assessments and assessment criteria or mark schemes that fail to appropriately target the content in a way that is fair and/or transparent</li> <li>• the qualification failing to meet one or more of its purposes.</li> </ul> <p>An awarding organisation may draw as necessary on the detailed information it provides to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to give an overview of the content structure</p>	Condition D1



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• content statements</li> <li>• performance criteria</li> </ul>	<p>and how this has been developed. This may include, as appropriate, references to the mapping of relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours, evidence of employer engagement, and further specific information and/or rationale about how content has been developed in cases where there is no existing standard.</p>	
Qualification Size	What is the size of the qualification and what is the rationale for this?	An awarding organisation must justify the Total Qualification Time and number of Guided Learning Hours in relation to the purposes, content, level and target group(s) of the qualification.	Condition E7
Demand	What steps were taken to ensure that the demand of the qualification content is set appropriately?	An awarding organisation must demonstrate that they have considered the demand of the qualification content, in relation to	Condition D1

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		the relevant occupational standard(s) as applicable.	
Optional content	Is there any optional content in the qualification? Where there is content that is intended to be optional, how have you ensured that the content for optional routes is appropriate and comparable?	<p>The presence of optional routes may have implications for content coverage (for example, where one or more routes may omit key elements of the content).</p> <p>Where they are included, an awarding organisation must explain its rationale for including optional routes and how it has determined the content for each optional route. This may include how different routes reflect expectations of competence in Technical Occupation qualifications.</p>	Condition G1.2(a)

## Section 3: Assessment design

This refers to all aspects of the structure and development of the assessments.

Subheading	Key questions	Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy?	Examples of relevant conditions
Assessment structure	<p>What is the model of assessment used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many assessments are there in total and what is the rationale for this?</li> <li>• What different elements of the content are targeted by the different assessments and is there a differential weighting between the assessments? What is the justification for the approach?</li> <li>• What is the overall assessment time, and what is the rationale for this?</li> <li>• What are the theoretical and practical considerations that have been taken into account when</li> </ul>	<p>An awarding organisation must justify how the key structural aspects of the assessment have been designed to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistent with the purposes of the qualification</li> <li>• appropriate in relation to the content</li> <li>• conducive to the development of robust standard setting and standards maintenance processes.</li> </ul>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition ATQ4.1</p>

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	<p>determining the best method of assessment to assess a particular construct?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the balance between different assessment methods and how has this been determined?</li> <li>• What is the approach to Learners having the opportunity to draw, as appropriate, on outcomes from across a range of qualification content as part of demonstrating occupational competence?</li> <li>• How has the awarding organisation taken account of the needs of Learners with particular protected characteristics in designing the assessment model?</li> </ul>		
Assessment development	<p>What is the process for developing assessment materials?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the different stages involved?</li> <li>• Who is involved at each stage? How have employer representatives been engaged in the development process?</li> <li>• What is the approach to training individuals who will be responsible</li> </ul>	<p>The process of assessment development must facilitate the development of Valid and fit for purpose assessments.</p>	<p>Condition A4                      Condition D1                      Condition E4.2                      Condition G1                      Condition G3                      Condition G4                      Condition G9.1 – G9.2                      Condition ATQ4.1</p>

	<p>for setting assessments, including ensuring security and mitigating any Conflicts of Interest?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will any assessments be developed by the Centre? If so, what support will be offered to ensure these are Valid and fit for purpose?</li> <li>• What steps are taken to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from the awarding organisation's approach to developing assessments?</li> </ul>		
<p>Question and task Validity</p>	<p>How does each assessment method seek to maximise Validity?</p> <p>What steps are taken to ensure that assessment tasks elicit the assessment evidence they ought to elicit? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that each task elicits its intended learning outcomes</li> <li>• that Learners understand what each task is asking them to do</li> <li>• that bias and other construct irrelevant factors are minimised</li> </ul>	<p>Poorly designed assessments could impact on their ability to elicit reliable information regarding the proficiency of Learners. It is important that Users of the qualifications, including those in industry, can rely on the evidence generated.</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G3</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that Learners have sufficient time to complete tasks.</li> </ul>		
Approach to content coverage	<p>What is the approach to covering the content through the assessments? For example, is the content sampled over time or covered in its entirety in an individual assessment or set of assessments?</p> <p>If a sampling approach is used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how is content sampled?</li> <li>over what period will the full range of content be sampled?</li> <li>if a sampling grid or equivalent is to be used to track coverage over time, what parameters will this record and what is the rationale for these?</li> </ul>	<p>If a sampling approach is used, the methodology must demonstrate adequate coverage of the full range of content both over time and in relation to individual assessments.</p> <p>Some qualifications aligned to occupational standards may be intended to signal competence. An awarding organisation must consider this in any justification of its approach to content coverage.</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G9.3</p>
Assessment methods	<p>What assessment methods are used to assess the content and why?</p>	<p>Assessments methods must be justified in relation to their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>alignment with the purposes of the qualification</li> </ul>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2</p>

	<p>For all assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What question or task types are used and why?</li> <li>• How has the balance between different question or task types been determined?</li> <li>• How are mark schemes or performance criteria designed, and what steps are taken to ensure they support reliable application?</li> <li>• What are the principles and controls that are utilised when articulating assessment criteria, to ensure the reliability of the judgements that are made against the criteria?</li> </ul> <p>In addition, for assessments which may be set and marked by Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the same assessments are used over time, including where the same assessments are available on demand, is predictability a risk to Validity? If so, how will it be ensured that they are not susceptible to issues of predictability and malpractice?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effectiveness in assessing the knowledge, skills and behaviours laid out in the content</li> <li>• conduciveness to achieving reliable outcomes for Learners.</li> </ul> <p>The use of assessment which may be set and marked by Centres must be justified, with a particular emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• why this type of assessment is required in order to maximise assessment Validity</li> <li>• what the key threats to Reliability and Validity are, and how these have been mitigated.</li> </ul>	<p>Condition G1 Condition G9.3</p> <p>Condition A6</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Where assessment briefs are used:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ what is the approach taken to determining the narrowness or flexibility of these?</li> <li>○ what are the risks or benefits to Validity of the narrowness or flexibility of these?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Centre adaptation	<p>What approach is taken to whether Centre adaptation of tasks will be permitted? To what extent will Centres be otherwise required to interpret or expand tasks set by the awarding organisation?</p> <p>What is the rationale for the approach?</p> <p>What measures are in place to support Centres in making acceptable and effective adaptations where appropriate?</p> <p>What monitoring is in place to ensure that the awarding organisation has visibility of any modifications and their appropriateness?</p>	It is important to demonstrate how Comparability is assured in relation to any Centre adaptation (or similar) of assessments set by the awarding organisation.	Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G9 Condition ATQ4.1



<p>Controls</p>	<p>What are the principles that determine which level of control or configuration of variable is selected for each task?</p> <p>What controls are specified?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will Learners have access to any assessment materials before the assessment is taken?</li> <li>• Are assessments to be completed within specified time limits?</li> <li>• Are Learners permitted to ask for support?</li> <li>• Are Learners permitted to access resources (for example, class notes or the internet)?</li> <li>• How are Learners supervised?</li> <li>• Is collaboration permitted between Learners?</li> <li>• How is work Authenticated?</li> </ul>	<p>It is important that any controls have been fully considered and specified to ensure assessments are Valid, Reliable, and appropriate for the qualification purpose.</p>	<p>Condition G8</p> <p>Condition G9</p>
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<p>Generating outcomes (assessment level)</p>	<p>What is the approach to generating outcomes for individual assessments?</p> <p>Are outcomes based only on a Learner's overall attainment within a Component? Alternatively, is there a requirement for some or all aspects of the Component to be attained individually? Linked to this, does the assessment for the Component use numerical marks or an alternative such as grading criteria?</p>	<p>It is important to ensure that the approach to generating outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discriminates effectively between Learners of different abilities</li> <li>• enables awarding organisations to monitor and control standards.</li> <li>• is in line with the purposes of the qualification and the aspects of the content that it is assessing.</li> </ul> <p>An awarding organisation must justify how their approach will ensure this.</p>	<p>Condition G1.2(a)</p>
<p>Optional assessment</p>	<p>If applicable, what elements of the assessments are optional?</p> <p>How will the Comparability of optional routes be appropriately managed?</p>	<p>It is important to ensure that standards are maintained when there are optional routes.</p>	<p>Condition G1.2</p>

## Section 4: Assessment delivery

This refers to the available modes of delivery and the availability of assessments.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy?</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Modes of assessment delivery (all assessment)	What modes of assessment delivery are available (for example, paper-based, computer-based)?	The modes of delivery must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate for the target group</li> <li>• Manageable for Centres</li> <li>• optimal in terms of eliciting evidence of the knowledge, skills and behaviours described in the content.</li> </ul>	Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1 Condition G9

<p>Assessment availability</p>	<p>What approach is taken to the availability of assessments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of assessments to be available</li> <li>• type of assessment (for example, online and/or paper-based)</li> <li>• scheduling of assessments (for example, timetabled or on-demand)</li> </ul> <p>What is the approach to permitting Learners to re-take assessments? Is entirely new evidence required from the Learner for the re-take, or are they permitted to re-work evidence where a requirement for new evidence would be unreasonable?</p> <p>In light of the approach to availability, what specific risks have been identified, how these will be mitigated, and how particular challenges will be addressed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring Comparability of assessments</li> <li>• minimising predictability of assessments</li> <li>• ensuring security of assessments.</li> </ul>	<p>An awarding organisation must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• justify its approach in relation to the purpose of the assessment.</li> <li>• detail specific risks that have been identified (such as to the Comparability and predictability of assessments), and how these have been mitigated.</li> </ul>	<p>Condition A6                  Condition D1                  Condition E4.2                  Condition G1                  Condition G9                    Condition ATQ4.1</p>
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<p>Security</p>	<p>What approach is taken to ensuring the secure transmission, distribution and storage (including by Centres) of assessment materials?</p> <p>What approach is taken to ensuring the security of any assessment materials that Learners have access to prior to assessments being taken?</p>	<p>Inadequate approaches to security can undermine Reliability – if, for example, assessment scores do not accurately reflect Learners’ attainment.</p>	<p>Condition G4 Condition G9</p>
<p>Centre feedback</p>	<p>What approach is taken to ensuring that Centres provide appropriate feedback on Centre marked assessments to Learners?</p> <p>What mitigations are in place to prevent Centre Assessors from providing feedback that is excessively frequent or excessively directive?</p>	<p>If feedback from Centre Assessors to Learners is provided excessively frequently and/or is excessively directive about what must be included or addressed as part of the assessment, this creates the potential that assessment scores do not accurately reflect Learners’ attainment.</p>	<p>Condition C1 Condition C2 Condition G9</p>

## Section 5: Marking or assessing performance and standardisation

This refers to the approach taken to the marking of all assessments.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy?</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Approach to marking or assessing performance (all assessments)	<p>What approach is taken to marking or assessing performance?</p> <p>What steps are taken to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from the awarding organisation's approach to marking or assessing performance?</p>	<p>The approach to marking / assessing performance is key to ensuring that outcomes are as consistent and accurate as possible.</p> <p>An awarding organisation must justify its approach to marking in relation to the qualification purposes and the need for Reliable outcomes.</p>	<p>Condition A6 Condition D1 Condition H1 Condition H2 Condition H5</p>
Monitoring marking or assessing	What processes are in place to monitor accuracy and consistency of marking or	An awarding organisation must justify its approach to monitoring in	<p>Condition H1 Condition H2</p>

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performance (all assessments)	assessing performance and issuing of results, and to take remedial action where necessary?	relation to the need for Reliable outcomes.	Condition H5 Condition H6.1(d)
Assessor standardisation (all assessments)	<p>What are the characteristics of reliable Assessors? What steps are being, or will be, taken to recruit such Assessors?</p> <p>What approach is taken to training and standardising Assessors, including details of standardisation procedures and any wider training?</p>	<p>It is important to clearly articulate the knowledge, skills and experience that Assessors will need in order to ensure the Reliability of the judgements that are made. An awarding organisation must explain the steps it will take to recruit such Assessors.</p> <p>An awarding organisation must describe its approach to training and standardising Assessors (both external Assessors and Centre Assessors). This could include, for example, any specific training for new or senior Assessors, as well as any wider training available. An awarding organisation must describe its standardisation procedures, including, for example,</p>	Condition G1.3 Condition H1 Condition H2 Condition H5

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		how it will determine whether an Assessor can assess reliably.	
Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (Centre marking or assessing)	<p>What is the approach to Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny, and the rationale for this approach?</p> <p>What are the risks with this approach, and how will they be managed?</p>	<p>An awarding organisation must justify its approach to Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny in relation to the need for Reliable outcomes.</p> <p>It will be important for an awarding organisation to link to its Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny strategy in the justification of its approach.</p>	<p>Condition A6 Condition C1 Conditions C2.1 and C2.3(j) Condition D1 Condition H2 Condition H5</p>
Centre training and monitoring (Centre marking or assessing)	<p>What approach is taken to the provision of guidance and training to Centres around marking or assessing performance?</p> <p>How are Centres monitored?</p>	<p>An awarding organisation must justify its approach to training in relation to the need for Reliable outcomes.</p>	<p>Condition C1 Condition H1 Condition H5</p>



## Section 6: Attainment and Reporting

This refers to the identified levels of attainment and the grading structures used to characterise these levels.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy?</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Specified levels of attainment	<p>What are the specified levels of attainment (i.e. grading scales) for the qualification? What is the justification for the approach? Where appropriate, what characteristics signal the minimum competence standard?</p> <p>How do the assessments generate Reliable information in line with the proposed grading?</p> <p>If specifying different levels of attainment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what characteristics differentiate</li> </ul>	<p>The characteristics of the minimum competence standard and, if applicable, different levels of attainment identified, must follow clearly from relevant elements of the content.</p> <p>An awarding organisation's approach to differentiating between adjacent levels of attainment must be justified in terms of the scope to generate Reliable information.</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2 Condition G1.3</p> <p>Condition ATQ5.1</p>

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	<p>Learners who have demonstrated different levels of attainment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what steps have been taken to ensure that there is sufficient difference between adjacent levels of attainment?</li> </ul>		
<p>Aggregation (qualification level)</p>	<p>What is the approach to aggregation? For example, to what extent do Learners' results for the qualification reflect their overall attainment across all assessments, or their attainment in particular assessments? What is the justification for the approach?</p> <p>If applicable, what is the approach to scaling marks from individual assessments for the purpose of aggregation?</p> <p>If individuals are permitted to re-take assessments, are there any changes to the aggregation rules in these instances, and what is the rationale for the approach?</p>	<p>The approach must be justified in relation to the content and purposes of the qualification.</p> <p>An appropriate aggregation method and, if relevant, scaling method is needed to ensure appropriate discrimination between Learners.</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2</p> <p>Condition H5.4</p>

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<p>Reviews and/or Appeals</p>	<p>What steps are taken to ensure that concerns over inaccuracy of assessment results are addressed adequately and appropriately? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• that they are investigated fairly, thoroughly and in a timely fashion</li><li>• that justified concerns over inaccuracy are resolved by following an appropriate process.</li></ul>	<p>An appropriate process is fundamental to ensuring that appropriate inferences are drawn from results.</p>	<p>Condition I1</p>
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## Section 7: Standard setting and maintenance

This refers to the processes for setting and maintaining standards, and the types of evidence that are used.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy?</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Approach	<p>What is the approach to setting and maintaining appropriate grading standards within the qualification? For example, are grading standards determined up-front by individual Assessors and applied at the point of assessment or are they determined through an awarding process separate to marking?</p> <p>If standards are determined through an awarding process separate to marking:</p>	<p>If qualifications include directly graded outcome-based assessments, it is important that the approach to standard setting and maintenance links to marking or assessing performance, standardisation, Assessor training and the approach to Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny.</p> <p>If standards are determined through an awarding process separate to marking, it is important the approach to</p>	Condition H3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within an individual Component, are the requirements (such as number of marks) to achieve a given grade set out upfront or determined after the assessment(s) have been taken?</li> <li>• What is the process for setting grade boundaries at qualification level?</li> </ul> <p>For all approaches, how will the awarding organisation take account of any impact on Learners who share a particular protected characteristic?</p>	<p>standard setting and maintenance follows an appropriate technical methodology. An awarding organisation must set out the technical methodology for determining Component and qualification level grade boundaries.</p> <p>In each case, an awarding organisation must fully justify its approach to effectively setting and maintaining appropriate grading standards within the qualification, both over time and with similar qualifications it makes available. Where possible, an awarding organisation must also demonstrate how it will effectively set and maintain standards with similar qualifications offered by other awarding organisations.</p>	
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<p>Evidence</p>	<p>What quantitative and qualitative information is used?</p> <p>How is the weighting of evidence determined when multiple sources of evidence are used? (This may include worked examples, for illustrative purposes, as necessary.)</p>	<p>It is important that the approach to standard setting and maintaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• includes full consideration of the strengths and limitations of the different types of available evidence, and the weight given to different evidence</li> <li>• leads to securing fair and Reliable outcomes over time and between Learners.</li> </ul>	<p>Condition H3</p>
<p>Modes of assessment</p>	<p>Where there are multiple modes (for example, paper and computer), how is Comparability of standards maintained?</p>	<p>It is important to ensure that standards are maintained when there are multiple modes of assessment.</p> <p>An awarding organisation must describe how it ensures comparability between different modes of assessment, for example when assessments are set, marked and assessed,</p>	<p>Condition D1 Condition E4.2</p>

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		including any separate awarding processes.	
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## Section 8: Qualification monitoring

This refers to the processes that are applied on an ongoing basis to monitor the Validity of key aspects of the specification, such as its assessments, susceptibility to malpractice and maladministration, and standard maintenance processes.

<b>Subheading</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Why this is important and what must an awarding organisation include in its assessment strategy?</b>	<b>Examples of relevant conditions</b>
Approach	<p>Describe the techniques and measures used to monitor all key aspects of the qualification that may affect its Validity. This may include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing of functioning of previous assessments</li> <li>• security or malpractice issues or incidents</li> <li>• feedback through engagement with Users of the qualification</li> </ul>	<p>Failure to consider the ongoing Validity of the qualification increases the likelihood of threats manifesting themselves and/or assessment processes ceasing to remain fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Condition A5.2(b)</p> <p>Condition A6</p> <p>Condition A8.1</p> <p>Condition D1</p> <p>Condition D3</p> <p>Condition E4.2</p> <p>Condition G1</p> <p>Condition G4</p> <p>Condition G9.3</p>



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	<p>What sources of evidence are evaluated to identify any issues with the ongoing Validity of qualifications?</p> <p>How does the awarding organisation assess whether any aspect of the qualification may be disadvantaging a group of Learners who share a protected characteristic?</p>		
Availability of Data	<p>What data will be collected to monitor the delivery and performance of the qualification?</p> <p>What systems and procedures are in place to ensure that any qualification or Component-level data that may be required by Ofqual can be provided within a reasonable time?</p>	<p>It is important to demonstrate that this data is used where appropriate by awarding organisations at relevant points in qualification development.</p>	<p>Condition A5.2(b)</p> <p>Condition B4</p>

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Reviewing the assessment approach	How is the assessment approach reviewed and, where applicable, refined over time, based on evidence of its effectiveness?  What sources of evidence and feedback are included when reviewing the effectiveness of a qualification?	It is important to have appropriate processes in place to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the qualification to maintain its ongoing Validity.	Condition D3
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## Assessment requirements

Condition ATQ4.1 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to the assessment of Alternative Academic Qualifications and Technical Occupation Qualifications.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition ATQ4.1 below.

We also set out the requirements in relation to which an awarding organisation may apply for an exemption under Condition ATQ4.2.

## Requirements for Alternative Academic Qualifications

### Assessment by Examination

An awarding organisation must ensure that the assessments for an Alternative Academic Qualification include one or more Assessments by Examination<sup>1</sup> through which at least 40% of the contribution to the overall qualification grade is made available.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of these requirements an Assessment by Examination is defined as an assessment which is -

- (a) set by an awarding organisation,
- (b) designed to be taken simultaneously by all relevant Learners at a time determined by the awarding organisation, and
- (c) taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisation (including conditions relating to the supervision of Learners during the assessment and the duration of the assessment).

In each academic year, an awarding organisation must provide up to two assessment series on set dates during which Learners can complete the Assessment(s) by Examination for an Alternative Academic Qualification.

An awarding organisation may apply for an exemption to the requirement that the Assessment by Examination is taken simultaneously by all Learners. Where it applies for such an exemption, it may also apply for an exemption to the requirement to provide up to two assessment series on set dates. However, an awarding organisation may not apply for an exemption to the assessment series requirement where it is not also applying for an exemption to the requirement that the Assessment by Examination is taken simultaneously by Learners.

Any exemption to the requirements above will be only granted where an awarding organisation is able to demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that –

- (a) its alternative assessment approach will improve the Validity of the qualification, and
- (b) the controls which it proposes to put in place are sufficient to manage any risks to which its alternative approach gives rise.

## Non-exam Assessments

An awarding organisation must set all assessments for an Alternative Academic Qualification which are not Assessments by Examination ('Non-exam Assessments').

An awarding organisation may permit a Centre to adapt questions or tasks in Non-exam Assessments for the purpose of making those assessments more accessible to Learners.

In each academic year, an awarding organisation must provide up to two deadlines for the submission of proposed marks (or, where approved, grades) in relation to any Non-exam Assessment marked by Centres.

## Retaking Non-exam Assessments

An awarding organisation may allow a Learner to retake a Non-exam Assessment for an Alternative Academic Qualification through submission, in a new or revised form, of evidence generated by that Learner which he or she has submitted for the purposes of taking the assessment on a previous occasion.

## Marking of assessments

An awarding organisation must ensure that evidence generated by Learners in the Assessments by Examination for an Alternative Academic Qualification is marked by the awarding organisation or a person connected to it.

Evidence generated by a Learner in a Non-exam Assessment for an Alternative Academic Qualification may be marked –

- (a) by the awarding organisation or a person connected to the awarding organisation,
- (b) by a Centre, or
- (c) through a combination of (a) and (b).

In any event, the awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction in its assessment strategy that –

- (a) it has taken all reasonable steps to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from its approach to marking the assessments (and to Moderation where appropriate), and
- (b) where such a risk is identified, it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent that Adverse Effect or, where it cannot be prevented, to mitigate that Adverse Effect.

## Qualification purposes for Alternative Academic Qualifications

Condition ATQ.2(a) allows us to specify requirements in relation to the general purposes which an Alternative Academic Qualification must meet, as well as how the qualification's general and specific purposes must be balanced.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition ATQ7.2(a) below.

### General purposes

An awarding organisation must ensure that each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, meets the following general purposes –

- (a) Providing Users of the qualification with reliable evidence to differentiate between Learners' attainment in relation to the knowledge, skills and understanding assessed as part of the qualification and, in particular, supporting decisions regarding the selection of Learners for further study (General Purpose A).
- (b) Providing an engaging course of learning for, while being accessible to, both Learners in full-time education and those studying part-time (General Purpose B).
- (c) Providing Learners with knowledge and understanding of theoretical content, and the skills required to apply it in a range of contexts, preparing them for progression into higher education (General Purpose C).
- (d) Providing a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of their Learners (General Purpose D).
- (e) Either –
  - (i) is likely to be the sole element of a Learner's programme of study or the majority qualification that forms the core element of a Learner's programme of study (General Purpose E(i)), or

- (ii) forms a substantial part of a Learner's programme of study, typically delivered alongside a number of other qualifications in the case of a full-time Learner (General Purpose E(ii)).

In the design of each Alternative Academic Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, if there are potential trade-offs to be made between the general purposes, an awarding organisation must –

- (a) give priority to the general purposes in accordance with their hierarchy, with the greatest priority being given to compliance with purposes further up the hierarchy, and
- (b) without prejudice to the above requirement, secure compliance with all of the purposes to the greatest extent possible.



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