

[Home](#) ▾ [Education, training and skills](#) ▾ [School curriculum](#) ▾ [Exam regulation and administration](#)
▾ [V Level qualification level guidance](#)



Regulation

V Level qualification-level guidance

Published 10 September 2026

Applies to England

Contents

[Assessment guidance](#)

[Standard setting guidance](#)

Assessment guidance

Condition VL6.1 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to the assessment of V Levels.

We set out our guidance for the purposes of Condition VL6.1 below.

Approach to assessment design

Condition E4 requires an awarding organisation to ensure an assessment is fit for

purpose and can be delivered.

In line with the V Level qualification purposes, when determining its approach to assessment design, an awarding organisation should consider -

- how to promote learning and development approaches appropriate to the vocational context and the intended curriculum as set out in the subject content, and
- how to use authentic, vocationally relevant contexts and scenarios so that Learners encounter assessments which are aligned with workplace practice and support progression to the intended destinations.

Assessment methods

In determining which aspects of a V Level should be assessed by which assessment method, an awarding organisation should consider which method of assessment would be most appropriate, given –

- (a) the V Level qualification purposes,
- (b) the nature of the knowledge, understanding and skills that Learners are required to demonstrate,
- (c) the need for the assessment to reliably differentiate between Learners' levels of attainment and to support accurate classification across the grading scale,
- (d) the assessment requirements including the need to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in response to authentic, vocationally-related contexts and scenarios, and
- (e) the impact of assessment design on teaching and learning.

Differences between Assessment by Examination and Non-exam Assessment

Assessment by Examination is defined in Condition VL1.4. The definition does not require written examinations – other forms of assessment, including those which

allow students to demonstrate practical or performance skills, may also fall within this definition. For example, if all Learners complete a practical task set by an awarding organisation, taken simultaneously at a time determined by the awarding organisation, under conditions specified by the awarding organisation, and marked by the awarding organisation, this will be Assessment by Examination.

Assessment by Examination can provide the opportunity to directly test Learners' knowledge and understanding of the subject area they are studying and so ensure that the foundations of essential knowledge for vocational ability are in place. It can also assess learning across the full range of the subject content and, in so doing, provide an opportunity to compare Learner performance in Assessment by Examination and Non-exam Assessment. It can also assess the ability of Learners to apply their knowledge and understanding, either by mirroring work-place activities or by situating the tasks in authentic vocational scenarios, using case studies or pre-release materials.

Assessment by Examination can also be used to assess practical skills, supporting the vocational nature of these qualifications. Awarding organisations should consider how assessment arrangements can be designed to support secure and manageable delivery across Centres. For example, where a practical task requires specialist equipment, the assessment design should take account of the resources Centres may need to provide for Learners to complete the assessment as intended.

The definition of Non-exam Assessment covers any assessment which does not meet the definition of Assessment by Examination. A wide range of assessment tasks set by the awarding organisation may fall within the definition of Non-exam Assessment, with task types including extended tasks involving multiple stages or steps and taken over period of time and practical, performance or skills-based tasks.

For example, an on-screen assessment that all Learners in a Centre take at the same time, under controlled conditions, but where the date and time is determined by each Centre and so may therefore differ between Centres, would be Non-exam Assessment. Alternatively, Non-exam Assessment may include one or more extended task(s) over multiple sessions.

The final product of Non-exam Assessment may be a single document (for example, a write-up of an activity), which may be accompanied by indirect evidence (for example, relating to a professional discussion) of a practical activity. Alternatively, there may be a range and combination of product formats, including written text, artefacts, live performances and recordings. In determining and specifying the

product of Non-exam Assessment to be generated by the Learner, an awarding organisation should consider –

- (a) the Validity of the assessment, in terms of measuring appropriately the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills,
- (b) the Manageability of the assessment,
- (c) any threats to the Reliability and integrity of the assessment including risks around the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and
- (d) the need for the assessment to reliably differentiate between levels of attainment across the grading scale and to support accurate classification across the grading scale.

Assessment by Examination is distinct from Non-exam Assessment because the former is designed to be taken simultaneously by all relevant Learners at a date and time determined by the awarding organisation whereas the latter is not. Assessment by Examination must be marked by the awarding organisation. This means that Assessment by Examination is appropriate for the assessment of particular knowledge, understanding or skills for which an awarding organisation identifies that it is important for all relevant Learners to be assessed simultaneously. For example, this may be the case if the nature of the content being assessed or how it is being assessed mean it is important that Learners are not aware of the specific assessment tasks in advance of the assessment to maintain the Reliability of the assessment.

Ensuring the integrity and Validity of assessment

There is a greater potential for malpractice in Non-exam Assessment because Learners are not taking the assessment at the same time and/or are doing so over an extended period. For example, this could give Learners greater opportunity to access inappropriate assistance, such as by using AI.

In determining its approach to Non-exam Assessment, an awarding organisation should consider –

- (a) any risks of malpractice that may arise,
- (b) the extent to which these risks are likely to crystallise, given the knowledge,

understanding and skills that are to be assessed – for example, tasks designed to assess knowledge and understanding only and tasks which are not changed every academic year may be more at risk of malpractice using AI,

(c) the extent to which these risks may undermine the ability of the assessment to accurately reflect Learners' attainment, and

(d) the controls that may be required to address risks, such as the specifying the conditions under which tasks should be attempted by Learners, the level of supervision, and arrangements for the security and storage of assessment materials and assessment evidence.

Taking reasonable steps to prevent and manage AI-related malpractice

Where vulnerability to AI-related malpractice is identified, Conditions A6 and A8 will require an awarding organisation to consider what reasonable steps may be needed to prevent malpractice from occurring and, where relevant, to manage its effects. In considering possible steps, the awarding organisation should take account of how far different approaches address the risks identified, and whether they could have unintended consequences for the construct being assessed or for assessment Validity more broadly.

Preventative arrangements aimed at reducing the likelihood of AI-related malpractice occurring should be identified. These may relate to task design, delivery arrangements and to the information and guidance provided to Centres and Learners. Awarding organisations should take account of how far these arrangements can be implemented consistently and effectively across Centres, and how well they support Valid assessment outcomes.

Synoptic assessment

The definition of synoptic assessment for a V Level in the assessment requirements is set out as -

Questions or tasks which allow Learners to –

(a) demonstrate the ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, understanding and/or skills from across the full course of study, and

(b) construct and develop an extended line of reasoning which is relevant, coherent and effectively structured.

For a task or question covering (a), a Learner should be expected to demonstrate how they have selected and applied relevant knowledge, understanding and/or skills from across the course of study to address the demands of the task or question. Learners do not need to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills from every element of the content in the course of study in an individual task or question.

For a task or question covering (b), a Learner should be expected to produce a response of sufficient length to enable them to demonstrate their ability to develop, connect and organise knowledge, understanding and/or skills. This may take a variety of forms, depending on the vocational context. For example, a written response, the production of an artefact or a live performance could demonstrate an extended line of reasoning that is relevant, coherent, and effectively structured.

Any individual task or question intended to address the synoptic requirement may be designed to assess (a) only, (b) only, or both (a) and (b) together.

A set of assessments within a V Level must address both (a) and (b), with each being assessed through both Assessment by Examination and Non-exam Assessment. This does not mean that every task or question in an Assessment by Examination or Non-exam Assessment Component has to meet the synoptic requirement.

Depending on the approach taken to the qualification structure and the coverage of the subject content, there may be opportunities for synoptic assessment at the end of the first year as well as in the second year.

Setting and adaptation of assessments

The assessment requirements state that an awarding organisation must set all assessments.

Condition G1.1 requires an awarding organisation in setting an assessment to ensure that the content of the assessment is -

- (a) fit for purpose,
- (b) appropriate for the method of assessment chosen, and
- (c) consistent with the specification for that qualification.

In doing so, an awarding organisation should specify, at least -

- (a) the evidence to be generated by the Learner,
- (b) the knowledge, understanding and skills covered through the assessment,
- (c) the nature of any support that can be provided to Learners,
- (d) whether the assessment must be completed in a specified amount of time,
- (e) any other specified conditions under which the assessment must be completed, and
- (f) any requirements relating to the submission of evidence.

Whilst the awarding organisation must set all assessments, the assessment requirements permit an awarding organisation to allow a Centre to adapt questions or tasks in Non-exam Assessments. This is for the purpose of tailoring the assessment to take account of local contexts and Manageability for Centres. This might, for example, be based on the geographical location of a Centre, or the resources it has available. Such adaptations must relate only to the context presented by that question or task, such as to reflect the facilities or equipment available. For example, if an assessment ordinarily requires the use of a specific software package, an awarding organisation could permit Centres to use a different but equivalent software package. This would ensure the same knowledge, understanding and skills were assessed, with the same Level of Demand and the conditions of the assessment unchanged.

Where an awarding organisation permits a Centre to adapt questions or tasks, it must ensure that the adaptations do not adversely impact the Validity or Reliability of the assessment or change –

- (a) the knowledge, understanding and skills assessed, or
- (b) the Level of Demand of the assessment, and

must not limit a Learner's ability to achieve any of the specified levels of attainment.

The awarding organisation should consider the measures it will put in place to support a Centre in making acceptable and appropriate adaptations and the monitoring it will undertake to ensure that the awarding organisation has visibility of any adaptations and their appropriateness.

Marking

Condition H1.1 states as follows –

For each qualification which it makes available, an awarding organisation must have in place effective arrangements to ensure that, as far as possible, the criteria against which Learners' performance will be differentiated are –

- (a) understood by Assessors and accurately applied, and
- (b) applied consistently by Assessors, regardless of the identity of the Assessor, Learner or Centre.

The assessment requirements allow the Non-exam Assessments for a V Level to be marked by –

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

Whichever approach an awarding organisation takes, it must still achieve compliance with General Condition H1.1.

When determining the approach to marking Non-exam Assessment, an awarding organisation should consider –

- (a) the Validity of the assessment, in terms of measuring appropriately the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills, including -
 - (i) the nature of the knowledge, understanding and skills being assessed and who may be best placed to assess them,
 - (ii) the nature of the assessment evidence, including whether the evidence generated by Learners is likely to arise naturally (i.e. not be planned) and/or be ephemeral in nature,

- (b) the need for the assessment to reliably differentiate between levels of attainment across the grading scale and to support accurate classification across the grading scale
- (c) the Manageability of the assessment, and
- (d) any threats to the Reliability and integrity of the assessment, including the need for marking standards to be consistently applied across Centres over the lifetime of the qualification

Standard setting guidance

Condition VL7.2(b) allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to the setting of specified levels of attainment for V Levels.

We set out below our guidance for the purposes of Condition VL7.2(b).

Evidence to be taken into account in setting specified levels of attainment

Condition VL7.3 states that in setting the specified levels of attainment for a V Level which it makes available, an awarding organisation must have regard to an appropriate range of qualitative and quantitative evidence.

Condition VL7.4 states that such evidence 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 appropriate, the level of attainment demonstrated by Learners taking that qualification in –
 - (i) a prior assessment (which was not for that qualification), whether or not that assessment was for a regulated qualification, or
 - (ii) a prior qualification, whether or not that qualification was a regulated qualification, and

(d) following the first year in which the qualification was awarded, the level of attainment demonstrated by Learners who have previously been awarded the qualification.

Without prejudice to any requirements that Ofqual may set in relation to the weight to be given to evidence in the first awards, examples of the evidence that may be used by an awarding organisation in setting the specified levels of attainment for a V Level which it makes available may include –

- any description of performance or exemplification materials for key grades,
- question papers or tasks and final mark schemes,
- senior Assessor input into decisions – for example, comments on how the assessments have worked or are likely to work, and recommendations for the setting of specified levels of attainment,
- technical information about how the assessments and/or any similar assessments previously available have functioned – for example, mark distributions, mean marks, standard deviations, item-level statistics,
- samples of current Learners' work selected from a range of Centres and assessed or Moderated by Assessors or moderators whose work is known to be reliable,
- details of changes in entry patterns and choices of options,
- archive Learners' work exemplifying specified levels of attainment in previous assessment series for the qualification, together with the relevant question papers or tasks and mark schemes,
- inter-awarding organisation evidence for V Levels,
- pertinent material deemed to be of equivalent standard from similar qualifications or other relevant qualifications,
- information on Learners' performance in previous assessment series for the qualification, and
- marking guides for assessments where the evidence is of an ephemeral nature

In determining whether it has sufficient evidence of the level of attainment demonstrated in the assessments for a V Level by an appropriate percentage of the Learners taking that qualification, an awarding organisation should consider whether the marks on its system reflect –

- all possible routes through the qualification, and

- a representative proportion of Learners' marks for the qualification and Component.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. [Please fill in this survey \(opens in a new tab\)](#).



Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, death, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

Government activity

[Departments](#)

[News](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency](#)

[How government works](#)

[Get involved](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Contact](#)

[Terms and conditions](#) [Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#)

[Government Digital Service](#)

OGI

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



[© Crown copyright](#)