

**Awards and Certificates in Education, Training and
Skills (ACETS) Qualifications**

2011/2012

**INSTRUCTIONS TO
TEACHERS/TUTORS**

**Key Skills
Conduct and Administration of External Tests**

Key Skills Levels

The National Qualifications Framework is a way of organising qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is like a map that shows how qualifications, including Key Skills, relate to each other. The higher the level of the qualification, the greater the depth and breadth of knowledge, skill and understanding a learner has to demonstrate in order to achieve it.

Each Key Skill comprises of units at increasing levels of difficulty from Level 1 to 5. Levels 1 and 2 are designed to develop skills and techniques for routine situations while Levels 3 to 5, deal with more complex situations.

Overview of the Qualifications Framework

Framework Level	General	Applied	Occupational	Key Skill Level
Higher 5	Postgraduate/Professional		NVQ 5	5
Higher 4	Degree/HND		NVQ 4	4
Advanced 3	A/AS	Advanced GNVQ	NVQ 3	3
Intermediate 2	GCSE A* - C	Intermediate GNVQ	NVQ 2	2
Foundation 1	GCSE D – G	Foundation GNVQ	NVQ 1	1
	Entry Level 3 2 1			

Key Skills Units

Main Key Skills

- Application of Number;
- Communication;
- Information and Communication Technology.

Wider Key Skills

- Improving own Learning and Performance;
- Problem Solving;
- Working with Others.

UCAS Points for Key Skills

Grade	Tariff points
Level 3	20
*Level 2	10

***NB:** For admission to Higher Education from 2011 onwards, UCAS Tariff points will only be allocated to level 2 qualifications if **both** the following criteria are met:

- They are broad skills qualifications - Core Skills, Essential Skills, Essential Skills Wales, Functional Skills, Key Skills.
- They are being studied as part of a wider composite qualification, such as 14-19 Diplomas or Welsh Baccalaureate.

Key Skills at levels 3 will continue to attract Tariff points in their own right.

Information current December 2010 as stated on www.ucas.ac.uk.

Each Key Skill unit has three main sections:

- Part A** describes what students need to know and understand.
- Part B** describes what students must do to demonstrate the skills and what evidence they must provide to meet the required level.
- Part C** provides guidance and some examples of types of evidence that they may include in their portfolio.

What are Proxies?

A proxy is a subject that when taken at GCSE, GCE or Vocational Qualification level provides exemption from the Key Skills tests or from both the test and portfolio assessment. A number of English, Mathematics and ICT proxy qualifications give partial or full exemptions.

A full list of proxies is available in the 'Specification and Entry Codes' section of the Qualification Administration Handbook on the CCEA website at www.ccea.org.uk. The qualifications on this list have been mapped for the type of overlap required and can guarantee that the learner has been assessed in the appropriate knowledge and skills. The list has been agreed for use from September 2007 and is reviewed periodically to ensure that it is appropriate. Only qualifications that can be controlled by the Regulators for England (QCDA), Wales (DELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA) can be included on the list of proxy qualifications. Qualifications from other countries or qualifications that do not appear on this list are not agreed proxies and cannot be used.

Time Limits for claiming proxy qualifications

Exemptions claimed by proxy qualifications must be made no longer than three years from the date of award to the date of claim for certification of the Key Skill. The 3-year rule applies to all approved proxy qualifications.

As there is much variation in awarding bodies' actual certification dates for national qualifications, the following will apply:

- Where learners have taken GCEs, Vocational A Levels, GNVQs or GCSEs during the summer exam season, (for example, a GCSE English qualification sat during the summer of 2004), then that qualification will be deemed to have been certified on the last day of August the same year (in this instance, 31 August 2004).
- Where learners have taken GCEs, Vocation A Levels, GNVQs, or GCSEs during winter exam season, (for example, a GCSE Mathematics qualification sat during the winter of 200/2004), then that qualification will be deemed to have been certified on the last day of March immediately following, (in instance, 31 March 2004).

Learners who achieve Key Skills are achieving a skill at a nationally agreed standard. The achievement provides assurance that the learner has the knowledge and understanding required by the Key Skill, but also has demonstrated the ability to apply that knowledge in everyday situations. In order to maintain this assurance of knowledge, skills and application, the 3-year rule means that a learner can only claim the exemption based on a proxy qualification achieved in the recent past. This ensures that the skills are current skills, not those that they may have been achieved many years ago, which the learner may not be able to recall and reproduce with assurance.

How is the proxy system administered?

All Key Skills awarding bodies must recognise agreed qualifications. For centres claiming a proxy through CCEA the procedure is as follows:

- Entry submitted for relevant proxy option or in the case of simultaneous proxy for CCEA ICT, the relevant Cash-in Code.
- CCEA undertakes search for relevant result.
- Where a match is found, the appropriate award will be made.
- If no match is found CCEA will dispatch a report to obtain proof of learner achievement in proxy qualification.

Information on simultaneous proxies can be found in the 'Specification and Entry Codes (All other qualifications)' section of the Qualifications Administration Handbook on the CCEA website at www.ccea.org.uk.

How will the main Key Skills be assessed?

To achieve a unit, a learner must gain a pass in both the portfolio component and the external test. In order to achieve a level, the portfolio and test must be achieved at least at that level. Different levels of portfolio and test may be combined to achieve an overall level for a unit. The overall unit level will be

defined by the lower level achieved for either the portfolio or the test. For example, a Level 2 portfolio and a Level 3 test combine to give an overall level of 2 for the unit, and vice versa.

Internal assessment will be through a portfolio of evidence, which will be marked by teachers (known as assessors). The portfolio will contain a learner's assessed evidence and will consist of an index/table of contents, evidence gathered from their studies together with documents providing the details of their achievements in Key Skills. The assessment will be ongoing throughout the course.

Levels 1 and 2 in ICT and Communication are 1 hour long while Levels 1 and 2 in Application of Number are 1 hour 15 minutes. All 3 comprise of multiple-choice questions.

How will the wider Key Skills be assessed?

Assessment of the wider Key Skills is via portfolio moderation only.

Return of Assessments

Assessors must assess their learners' portfolio evidence against the criteria set out in Part B of the standards of the targeted key skill, using any guidance and/or exemplar materials issued by CCEA or the Regulatory Authorities.

In order to leave sufficient time for internal standardisation assessors should collect portfolios from their learners in advance of the date of the submission of their learners' pass levels. They must ensure that all Candidate Record of Assessment Sheets are properly and accurately completed.

Centres will receive instructions from CCEA on the sample to be submitted for moderation.

Substitutions are not permitted. The Record of Assessment Sheets of those learners included in the sample must accompany the sample portfolios submitted to CCEA. It is recognised that the portfolio work submitted for a specific key skill may, by virtue of the type of tasks undertaken by the learners, include evidence relating to other key skills. Where this is the case it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the evidence relating to the targeted key skill has been clearly identified and assembled.

The following points must be taken into consideration before the portfolios are submitted:

- Care must be taken to ensure that each piece of each learner's portfolio is clearly identified with the learner's examination number and centre number. The complete work of each learner should be attached to their Record of Assessment Sheets. Each learner's work should be submitted in A4 manilla or plastic folder/envelope file which itself is clearly labelled.
Hardback ring binders should not be used.
- In accordance with CCEA's Rules and Programme, the same piece of coursework may be accepted for assessment in more than one subject unless a restriction is referred to in the Subject Specification. The use of key skills for more than one purpose must be relevant to the requirements of both Specifications and, for each Specification, must be assessed only according to the criteria for that Specification.
- If the work has been used for more than one Specification and is required for moderation, the work must be made available to each Moderator.

- Where portfolio evidence for a single learner is requested for more than one key skill on the same occasion and where some or all such evidence cannot be easily separated and/or copied, centres should indicate on the appropriate CCEA Record of Assessment Sheet(s) where precisely the evidence resides within a sample submitted for another key skill.

Centres must submit the following documentation for each identified learner:

- Portfolio;
- Completed assessment documentation (including Tac2 form).

External Tests

The conduct and administration of Key Skills external tests in centres will be governed by the normal rules and regulations applied by CCEA to public examinations. However, Key Skills tests differ from public examinations in two important ways:

- The Key Skills tests are national tests. The test papers are identical, irrespective of the awarding body offering them.
- There are multiple test sessions, i.e. within one examination series the same Key Skills test may be taken by learners at different times on the same day(s). This flexibility is permitted because of the 'skills based' rather than the 'knowledge based' nature of the tests. **Invigilators must ensure, however, that at the end of each test session learners hand in all materials and centres must return *all* question papers in their possession.**

Other notable test features include:

- Levels 1 and 2 tests consist of multiple-choice questions;
- Level 1 and 2 tests are confidential. It is the responsibility of the centre to destroy Level 1 and 2 question papers after the examination. Please note that all Key Skills question papers including spare papers should be destroyed confidentially after each series. If centres do not have the facility to destroy Key Skills question papers confidentially then they should contact Distribution to arrange for these to be collected and returned to CCEA.
- Level 3 tests consist of short answer and extended response questions;
- ICT tests at Levels 3 and 4 must be taken using a suitable computer. Learners will also need access to a printer. Data files are needed by learners taking the ICT (Level 3) Key Skills test during 2010-2011. Data files are available on the QCDA website <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/resources/5774.aspx>. Alternatively you can find the data files from the QCA homepage by following the link to the Key Skills section. Centres should ensure that each data file is downloaded and stored locally in a form which is accessible to learners. There is **no** restriction on learner's access to the data files for preparation purposes **prior** to the test. The data files can be downloaded at any time in advance of the test itself. Not all data files will be used each time. The instructions on what Centres are required to do with these data files are provided on the web page. Centres are advised to give learners access to the full set of data files early in their programmes so they have plenty of opportunity to practice their skills and to become familiar with the forms of data files being used.
- Calculators and dictionaries in tests will be restricted;
- Pass marks for tests will be determined through a joint awarding process involving all Key Skills awarding bodies;

- Examiners' reports will be available after each test series.

Invigilation Arrangements

Free invigilation of one session at Levels 1 and 2 for Application of Number, Communication and Information Technology and one at Level 3 for each of the key skills of Communication and Application of Number . The ratio of Invigilators to learners will be the same as that used for GCSE and GCE examinations. When nominating Key Skills Invigilators centres should name only those to be used in the session(s) CCEA is paying for.

Additional Guidance for Information and Communication Technology Tests (Level 3)

There must be one Invigilator to every 15 learners. In these tests it is essential that an Information and Communication Technology teacher/tutor as well as an IT technician be present in the test room at the start of the test and as necessary thereafter to deal with technical difficulties that may arise and to assist with the invigilation in general.

*A teacher/tutor who has prepared the learners for the subject of the test during the academic year of the test must not be the **sole** Invigilator at any time during the test.*

Each page of work printed out must be clearly marked with the candidate number and centre number. This may be conveniently achieved by using an appropriate footer (See also the instruction in the test paper). Learners must always print out under the supervision of the Invigilator.

Learners may, under the supervision of the Invigilator, print out documents, queries etc, as required during the test and as necessary after the test.

Prohibited Combination

A learner is not permitted to enter for the same Key Skill at two different levels in the same examination series.

Change of Level

If a learner wishes to change their level of entry the Centre must withdraw the original entry and submit an entry for the new level.

Unit Cash-in

Centres may indicate that a unit qualification and certificate is required by using the appropriate unit 'cash-in' code at the time of entry once a learner has passed both components of a Key Skill following the normal entry procedure.

A centre may submit a request to cash in a qualification award for a learner:

- after all three main Key Skills units have been completed and passed;
- when an entry is being made for all of the required Key Skills units;
- when entries are being made which complete the required Key Skills units.

CCEA will issue a Qualification Certificate stating the pass level achieved by the learner for each of the Key Skills. Note that a different result level may be awarded for each unit.

Entry Codes

The Key Skills entry codes are listed in the ‘Specification and Entry Codes (All other qualifications)’ section of the Qualifications Administration Handbook on the CCEA website at www.ccea.org.uk. The entry codes consist of Key Skill/level/option, each Key Skill will be identified by a letters listed below:

Application of Number	Letter A
Communication	Letter C
Information and Communication Technology	Letter I
Improving Own Learning and Performance	Letter L
Working with Others	Letter W
Problem Solving	Letter P