

IMPORTANT UPDATE:

ADULT NUMERACY/LITERACY (3792)
KEY SKILLS QUALIFICATIONS (3638)
ESOL SKILLS FOR LIFE (3692)

AUGUST 2013

This update contains information about:

- Last certification date for Level 1-2 Adult Numeracy/Literacy – including test booking deadlines
- Last certification date for ‘first three’ Key Skills qualifications – including test booking deadlines
- Update on full-mode Level 1-2 ESOL Skills for Life – including short-term arrangements for accessing Reading test
- Update on Entry level ESOL Skills for Life assignments – including policy on resits, and removal of previous versions.

This update follows the previous one relating to Adult Numeracy/Literacy issued in July 2013, and the previous one relating to ESOL Skills for Life issued in May 2013.

Last certification date for Level 1-2 Adult Numeracy/Literacy (3792-11, -12, -13, -14, -21, -22, -23 and -24)

Applies to: England only

Following our update on 22 July 2013 about the last certification date for these qualifications having been brought forward to 30 September 2013, we wish to reiterate some key points and provide further information for centres intending to book any Adult Numeracy/Literacy tests over the next few weeks.

The operational end-date for these qualifications was **31 August 2012**, and since that date access to the tests has been strictly limited to learners whose numeracy/literacy learning programme began before that date. Whilst we had hoped to continue making the tests available to these learners until 31 August 2014, Ofqual has instructed all awarding organisations to bring the last certification date forward by 11 months so that it aligns with the last certification date for the Key Skills qualifications that also use these tests.

We are required to comply with this request from our regulator; however we recognise that this earlier closure date might inconvenience some centres and learners that had planned to sit (or resit) the national tests during 2013-14. We can only apologise in advance for any inconvenience caused as a result of this.

Last dates for booking tests

Scheduling arrangements differ slightly between paper-based on onscreen tests, although in both cases all tests will need to have been taken **with sufficient time allowed for results processing** to ensure certificates are issued no later than 30 September 2013. To ensure this happens, the following deadlines will apply:

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Onscreen tests

Candidate registrations may be created via the Walled Garden and tests scheduled on the e-volve system up until **Friday 20 September 2013**. Any tests booked for 21 September or later will be **removed**.

Product code	Title	Latest date for which tests can be scheduled	Last certification date for qualification
3792-983	Adult Numeracy Level 1 Test	20 September 2013	30 September 2013
3792-984	Adult Numeracy Level 2 Test		
3792-985	Adult Literacy Level 1 Test		
3792-986	Adult Literacy Level 2 Test		

On Demand (paper-based) tests

In order to ensure sufficient time for results processing and certification, orders for paper-based tests must be received no later than **Friday 16 August 2013**. The **test date** must be no later than **Friday 30 August 2013**, and all completed materials must be returned to City & Guilds **immediately** after the test has been taken.

Product code	Title	All test bookings to be received by	Tests must be taken no later than	Last certification date for qualification
3792-300	Adult Numeracy Level 1 Test	16 August 2013	30 August 2013	30 September 2013
3792-500	Adult Numeracy Level 2 Test			
3792-400	Adult Literacy Level 1 Test			
3792-600	Adult Literacy Level 2 Test			

Entry level (including Entry 3 Adult Numeracy test)

Please note the Entry Level Adult Numeracy/Literacy qualifications are not affected by these end-dates, although they are in any event due to close to new candidate registrations on 31 August 2013, with last certification in August 2015.

We'll issue further guidance on the last certification arrangements for the Entry 3 Adult Numeracy onscreen test (3792-03) nearer the time, although it's likely that similar arrangements will apply (ie test scheduling switched off approximately two weeks before the end of August 2015).

Last certification date for 'first three' Key Skills qualifications (3638-01)

Applies to: *England only*

The operational end-date for the 'first three' Key Skills qualifications (Communication, Application of Number and ICT) was 30 September 2012, and the last certification date for these qualifications will be 30 September 2013.

Please be aware that there will be **no further extensions** to these dates. The Key Skills qualifications were originally due to close in 2010, and the extension until last year was just temporary measure to allow Apprenticeship providers more time to manage the transition to Functional Skills.

Implications for Apprenticeships

Under the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE), only Key Skills qualifications achieved by **September 2013** may be counted towards Apprenticeship framework completion, and any Key Skills qualifications achieved previously must be less than five years old at the time of the learner's Apprenticeship start-date in order to be counted towards framework completion.

Please also note that it is not possible to 're-achieve' a Key Skills qualification for this purpose if it is more than five years old. Although advice should be sought from the relevant framework Issuing Authority in the first instance, it is generally expected that these learners should be supported to achieve relevant Functional Skills or GCSE qualifications.

Last dates for accessing the test component

The most recent opportunity to access any of the paper-based Key Skills tests was in June 2013, and there will be **no further opportunities** before these qualifications close to certification.

However, onscreen tests (for levels 1 and 2) will remain available for registered Key Skills candidates until shortly before the last certification date. As with Adult Numeracy/Literacy, the final date for which tests may be scheduled on the e-volve system is **Friday 20 September 2013**. Please note any tests booked for 21 September or later will be removed.

Product code	Title	Latest date for which tests can be scheduled	Last certification date for qualification
3638-973	Application of Number Level 1 Test	20 September 2013	30 September 2013
3638-974	Application of Number Level 2 Test		
3638-975	Communication Level 1 Test		
3638-976	Communication Level 2 Test		
3638-977	Information and Communication Technology Level 1 Test		
3638-978	Information and Communication Technology Level 2 Test		

Portfolio completion

All Key Skills portfolios must be completed, quality assured and claimed well before the qualification last certification date. Please note a certificate will only be generated once both the test and portfolio components have been completed.

Where candidates are entitled to proxy exemption from the Key Skills test component, the relevant test proxy component will need to be claimed at the same time as the portfolio result is submitted.

Implications for wider Key Skills

The wider Key Skills qualifications (Improving Own Learning and Performance, Problem Solving and Working With Others) ceased to be eligible for public funding in England in 2011, although they remain available to learners in Wales.

Access to these qualifications via 3638-01 will cease on 30 September 2013, although they may still be accessed via 3638-21; centres in Wales may also access them via any of the Essential Skills Wales (3768) qualification numbers.

Update on full-mode Level 1-2 ESOL Skills for Life (3692-11 and -12)

Applies to: *England, Northern Ireland and Wales*

As we indicated in our last update in May, Ofqual has prohibited awarding organisations from extending the full-mode ESOL Skills for Life qualifications at levels 1 and 2 unless an alternative assessment is developed to assess the Reading unit.

Despite all of the ESOL Skills for Life awarding organisations seeking to have this decision overturned, Ofqual has regrettably refused to reconsider its position. We are therefore now working with Ofqual to agree an alternative assessment model that will enable us to continue offering full-mode qualifications at levels 1 and 2 during 2013-14. We will provide further details as soon as we receive confirmation that Ofqual is happy with these plans, although they are appreciative of the need to have the situation clarified in time for the new academic year.

Last dates for accessing current Reading tests

In the meantime, Ofqual is also insisting that we close-off access to the existing Level 1 and 2 Reading tests on 30 September 2013 (even though these qualifications currently remain available for certification until 31 August 2014). In this case the deadlines for test booking are not quite as stringent as for Adult Numeracy/Literacy and Key Skills (the requirement is only to ensure all tests are taken before the end of September, not that candidates are certificated), although the following deadlines will apply:

On Demand (paper-based) tests

Product code	Title	All test bookings to be received by	Tests must be taken no later than	Last certification date for qualification <i>(unless extended)</i>
3692-304	Reading - Level 1	15 September 2013	30 September 2013	31 August 2014
3692-404	Reading - Level 2			

Onscreen tests

Product code	Title	Latest date for which tests can be scheduled	Last certification date for qualification <i>(unless extended)</i>
3692-983	Reading - Level 1	30 September 2013	31 August 2014
3692-984	Reading - Level 2		

Please note candidates must be registered for the qualification before any tests (onscreen or paper) may be booked. As things stand, the last registration date is 31 August 2013.

New Framework-based ESOL qualifications

The current ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and will therefore cease to be eligible for public funding in England after August 2014. We will therefore be launching a replacement suite of Framework-based ESOL qualifications before that date.

As we indicated in our last update, we'd be grateful for your views on anything in particular we should take into account when designing these new qualifications. We recognise that the Government is looking for these qualifications to be more flexible than the current suite, and especially that they can support ESOL learners into work or further learning. However, we are also very conscious of the need to ensure these qualifications are appropriately sized (especially as this will determine their funding rate).

We'll be holding a series of consultations during the autumn, but in the meantime please let us know your thoughts via mathsandenglish@cityandguilds.com.

Update on Entry level ESOL Skills for Life assignments (3692-01, -02, -03 and -07)

***Applies to:* England, Northern Ireland and Wales**

Finally, we are pleased that the revised Entry level ESOL Skills for Life assignments introduced before the summer have been well received by centres. These new assignments **replace** the nine original titles and have a simplified mark scheme (structured in the same way across all titles), as well as more work-related topics.

Withdrawal of old assignment documents

As we indicated in our last update, the last date on which any assessments may be carried out using the old assignments is **31 August 2013**. The old assignment documents have remained available to download from our website in the meantime to allow assessors and internal quality assurers (IQAs) time to migrate to the new titles, although they will be **removed** within the next few days.

Centres must not retain copies of the old assignments for practice, since many of the topics used also appear in the new titles.

Policy on resits, where candidates have been unsuccessful

We have been asked by a number of centres to clarify precisely what candidates need to re-sit if they are unsuccessful in any part of these assignments. We are aware that other qualifications (eg our Entry level Adult Numeracy/Literacy assignments) allow candidates to 'in-fill' just the equivalent activities from a different assignment title rather than necessarily work their way through a whole new assignment.

The following guidance appears in the Assessment Pack for each of the new assignments:

If a candidate is unsuccessful in one or more activities, he/she will need further practice in the relevant mode before being given another opportunity to demonstrate his/her skills at a later date when he/she is ready. The candidate should take a different assignment from the bank provided by City & Guilds. If a

candidate does not achieve one mode, they must retake that as a single mode assessment using a different topic.

Whilst it's clearly not necessary for candidates to re-sit the whole of an integrated assignment if they have been unsuccessful in just one or two of the modes, we appreciate that this statement could be interpreted to mean candidates taking single-mode assignments need only sit the equivalent activity from another single-mode assignment – rather than the whole of that mode.

We have considered the implications of allowing 'in-filling' within modes, and have concluded that it is **not** acceptable for the following reasons:

- the extent to which the assignment activities are compensatory, and the amount of tolerance allowed between them (unlike Adult Literacy where assignment activities are more clearly self-contained)
- the implied lack of general readiness if candidates are not able to complete all of the activities to the minimum required standard.

Where candidates have been unsuccessful in any one mode, we would therefore expect them to re-sit the **whole** of that mode using a different assignment title.

The only potential circumstances in which an exception might possibly be made would be if a candidate had **narrowly** failed one of the three Writing activities but performed strongly in the other two. This definitely wouldn't be appropriate for Reading or Speaking and Listening because of the way these activities overlap, and even for Writing it could only ever be applied **by exception** for individual candidates rather than as a general rule – and only if the assessor and internal quality assurer (IQA) are satisfied that the candidate is operating at the level.