

IMPORTANT UPDATE: ESOL SKILLS FOR LIFE (3692)

SEPTEMBER 2013

This update contains information about:

- New interim assessment arrangements for ESOL Skills for Life Reading at levels 1 and 2
- Changes to Home Office 'Knowledge of Language and Life' rules for Settlement/Naturalisation from 28 October 2013.
- Future plans for ESOL qualifications on the Framework

This update follows the previous one relating to ESOL Skills for Life issued in August 2013.

New interim assessment arrangements for ESOL Skills for Life Reading at levels 1 and 2

(3692-11 and -12)

Applies to: England, Northern Ireland and Wales

As we indicated in our previous update in August, Ofqual's decision to prohibit use of the Basic and Key Skills (BKS) national tests after September 2013 has made it necessary for awarding organisations to develop an alternative method of assessing the Reading unit of ESOL Skills for Life at levels 1 and 2.

We're delighted to confirm that Ofqual has now accepted our planned alternative Reading assessments at both levels. This enables us to continue offering the full-mode ESOL Skills for Life qualifications during 2013-14.

The review dates for these qualifications have now been extended on the Register of Regulated Qualifications, and the Skills Funding Agency has confirmed their eligibility for public funding in England until 31 July 2014 (see <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/FundingSimplification/>).

About the new Reading assessment

The interim assessment is based on the same assessment specification and format as our existing **Functional Skills English Reading** assessments. The assessment specification has been re-referenced to the National Standards for Adult Literacy and Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (NB: the Functional Skills English Subject Criteria are in any event largely derived from the Adult Literacy standards), although a discrete set of carefully chosen assessment papers will be used.

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Like the BKS tests, the FS English Reading assessments (at both levels) last one hour, although there are some important differences:

- they are not a 'fixed response' assessment – so require human examiner marking (results turnaround will take a maximum of 20 working days)
- they allow candidates to use 'routine' equipment where this reflects normal ways of working – eg there's no constraint on the use of dictionaries (although this does exclude anything that might compromise independent achievement, eg any transmitting/receiving devices, pre-prepared notes, crib-sheets or similar)
- since this is a temporary solution, it is unfortunately not possible to offer onscreen delivery or on-demand availability – instead there will be **three fixed-date assessment opportunities**.

The first assessment opportunity will be **Monday 16 December 2013**, with the two further opportunities in early April 2014 and early July 2014. Each assessment sitting will be on a single specified date, although may take place at any time (starting between 00:01 and 23:59) during that day. Candidates need not all sit the assessment at the same time, although all completed assessment materials **must** be returned together and the assessments must be presented to candidates 'unseen'.

The three assessment dates will be added to the 3692-11 and 3692-12 Walled Garden Catalogue pages within the next few days. In line with our normal [examination late entry policy](#), the last entry date for the December sitting will be Friday 1 November 2013 (8 November if submitted electronically), after which they may be subject to additional late entry fees.

A range of **sample Reading assessments** are available from our [Functional Skills Level 1](#) and [Functional Skills Level 2](#) webpages. We **strongly** advise tutors and learners to spend sufficient time familiarising with the format/content of these samples before entering for any live assessments.

A few more questions:

1. Will existing Level 1 and 2 ESOL Skills for Life full-mode candidates need to sit the new assessment?

Yes, unless they have already achieved the BKS national test, whether as

- a City & Guilds ESOL Skills for Life (3692) candidate
- an ESOL Skills for Life candidate with another awarding organisation, or
- part of another previous qualification (eg Adult Literacy or Key Skills Communication) – either with City & Guilds or another awarding organisation.

Where the BKS test has previously been achieved via another qualification and/or awarding organisation, there is an established process for recognising achievement by 'proxy' (see page 15 of the [ESOL Skills for Life handbook](#)). If the test has already been achieved under a 3692 candidate registration it will be counted automatically.

2. How much do the new assessments cost?

Fees charged will be the same as those for the equivalent Functional Skills English assessment – currently £6.75 per assessment booking. This is considerably cheaper than the fees that were charged for the BKS test (£12.00 for paper, £10.00 for onscreen). All other ESOL Skills for Life (3692) fees are unchanged.

3. Is it still possible to sit the BKS tests?

Access to the BKS tests (via any qualification) will be switched off at the end of September 2013. We are no longer accepting bookings for any paper-based tests, although within 3692-11 and 3692-12 it is still possible to schedule onscreen tests (via e-volve) as long as these are taken **no later** than Monday 30 September 2013.

4. If ESOL Skills for Life candidates subsequently progress to Functional Skills English, will they have to sit the Reading assessment again?

No – because the assessment specification is identical, achievement of the new temporary ESOL Skills for Life Reading assessment may be counted towards the Reading component of City & Guilds' FS English qualifications at levels 1 and 2.

Where candidates are subsequently registered for FS English with City & Guilds (under 3748-01), the existing process for [recognising prior achievement of Functional English components from other awarding organisations](#) should be followed. Candidates will also need to complete the relevant FS English Speaking, Listening and Communication (SLC) and Writing assessments before they can be awarded a Functional Skills qualification.

We cannot guarantee that other awarding organisations will accept achievement of this assessment towards their FS English qualifications if it has been completed under an ESOL Skills for Life, rather than a Functional Skills, candidate registration.

Also, for the avoidance of any doubt, achievement of the BKS test **cannot** under any circumstances be counted towards Functional Skills qualification achievement.

5. And what if any of our Functional Skills English candidates switch to ESOL Skills for Life after achieving the Reading component?

If they have achieved the Level 1-2 Reading component of FS English with City & Guilds, this can be treated as 'proxy' achievement of the ESOL Skills for Life Reading unit (as per the process described on page 15 of the [ESOL Skills for Life handbook](#)).

Again, for this purpose we are only able to accept achievement of City & Guilds' FS English Reading assessment (FS English achievements from other awarding organisations cannot be accepted).

6. Is there any change to the way that Writing or Speaking and Listening are assessed?

No – the assessment of Writing and Speaking and Listening at levels 1 and 2 remains exactly the same (ie supervised portfolio tasks). These can be completed 'when ready' at any time after candidates have been registered; both are centre-assessed.

The assessment model at Entry level (for all three modes) is also unaffected – this continues to be via the bank of live Entry level assignments that were last revised in May 2013. There has also been no change to any of the standalone Speaking and Listening qualifications (3692-21, 3692-22, 3692-23, 3692-24 and 3692-25).

7. Are there new Qualification Aim Codes (QANs) for any of the ESOL Skills for Life qualifications?

No – in regulatory terms the new Reading assessments are an amendment to the existing full-mode Level 1-2 qualifications. All City & Guilds ESOL Skills for Life qualifications have therefore been extended until 31 August 2014, with last certification in 2016 (see complete list on the next page).

The Skills Funding Agency has already confirmed that all regulated ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are eligible for Adult Skills funding in England during 2013-14, as detailed in the new [Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue](#) (NB: this has now become the definitive list of qualifications eligible for Adult Skills funding in England, since the Skills Funding Agency is no longer updating LARA).

The Welsh Government has also extended the Approval Review dates for these qualifications on DAQW until 31 August 2014.

8. Will a new 3692 handbook be produced?

No – given that the current ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are due to be replaced next summer, and the changes to Level 1-2 Reading have no bearing on any of the other qualification requirements.

We will however be publishing a short handbook addendum – detailing the assessment specifications for Reading at levels 1 and 2, as well as a reminder about the additional quality assurance and security requirements that were introduced for the Entry level qualifications in 2010.

9. How will Reading be assessed within the new Framework ESOL qualifications?

It's important to be clear that the use of our Functional Skills English assessment specification is a **temporary** measure, and will apply only to the existing ESOL Skills for Life (3692) qualifications. For reasons of time and other pressures, we have had to accept a number of compromises (eg fixed assessment dates, lack of onscreen delivery) to ensure the continued availability of these qualifications. We fully appreciate that these are not ideal – and that they clearly wouldn't be acceptable as part of a long-term solution.

Any decisions about methods of assessment within our new Framework-based ESOL qualifications will be considered separately as these qualifications are developed. These qualifications will replace 3692 from September 2014.

ESOL Skills for Life (3692) qualification withdrawal dates

City & Guilds number	QAN	Qualification title	Last registration	Last certification
3692-01 <i>and</i> 3692-07	100/3740/8	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Entry 1)	31 August 2014	31 August 2016
3692-02 <i>and</i> 3692-07	100/3741/X	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Entry 2)		
3692-03 <i>and</i> 3692-07	100/3742/1	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Entry 3)		
3692-11	100/3743/3	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life		
3692-12	100/3744/5	Level 2 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life		
3692-21	100/4899/6	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) (Entry 1)		
3692-22	100/4900/9	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) (Entry 2)		
3692-23	100/4901/0	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) (Entry 3)		
3692-24	100/4902/2	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening)		
3692-25	100/4903/4	City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening)		

Changes to Home Office 'Knowledge of Language and Life' rules for Settlement/Naturalisation from 28 October 2014

(3692 - all)

Applies to: England, Northern Ireland and Wales

The Home Office has recently published a guide to its revised 'Knowledge of Language and Life' (KOLL) requirements for permanent Settlement or Naturalisation. These new arrangements come into effect from 28 October 2013 – see

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/britishcitizenship/kol-uk>.

There are two main changes:

1. Applicants will have to pass the Home Office Life in the UK test **as well as** demonstrating knowledge of English. There will no longer be a separate 'ESOL with Citizenship' route that applicants can follow instead of taking the Life in the UK test.
2. Applicants' level of spoken English will need to be at least CEFR B1. This can be evidenced in a number of ways (see below), although unlike the old arrangements there is no requirement to attend a course, show progression or use the NIACE/LLU+ Citizenship learning materials.

The new KOLL requirements effectively split 'language' and 'knowledge of the UK' into two separate conditions. Both need to be met, although the latter is evidenced entirely through the Life in the UK test.

Accepted language qualifications

For the avoidance of doubt, the **Home Office will continue to accept ESOL Skills for Life qualifications for Settlement and Naturalisation purposes**. The new KOLL requirements allow any Ofqual-regulated ESOL qualification at Entry 3, Level 1 or Level 2 to be accepted as long as it

- a) includes assessment of Speaking and Listening, and
- b) has been completed in England, Northern Ireland or Wales.

In addition, qualifications on the Home Office Secure English Language Test (SELT) list are also acceptable under the new KOLL requirements. The SELT list was previously only relevant if needing to demonstrate language ability for an Entry (or Extended Stay) visa, and it therefore only includes qualifications that are available **internationally** – eg City & Guilds' International ESOL (IESOL/ISESOL) qualifications.

Since our ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are only available to UK centres/learners, they are not eligible for the SELT list (and never have been). Nevertheless, they are acceptable to the Home Office for Settlement/Naturalisation purposes as an **Ofqual-regulated ESOL qualification**.

Future plans for ESOL qualifications on the Framework

(3692 - all)

Applies to: *England, Northern Ireland and Wales*

Finally, just a reminder that the current ESOL Skills for Life qualifications will be replaced from next summer by a brand new suite of ESOL qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

There's still time to let us know your thoughts on how the new qualifications should be structured and assessed. We'll be holding a series of focus groups and other consultations over the next couple of months, although feel free to contact us (via mathsandenglish@cityandguilds.com) in the meantime if there's anything in particular you would like us to take into consideration.