



**Extended
Extraordinary
Regulatory
Framework:
Vocational
Qualifications –
Conditions and
Requirements**

**IN FORCE
FOR LIMITED
PURPOSES**



OCTOBER 202

Refer to Notice under Condition ExtVQCov1.1(b)

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Introduction

This document is part of a suite of documents which sets out our regulatory requirements for awarding bodies offering vocational qualifications following summer 2020.

On 3 June 2020, Qualifications Wales published the 'Extraordinary Regulatory Framework: Vocational Qualifications, COVID-19 Conditions and Requirements' ("the ERF"). The ERF put in place a framework to facilitate the issue of results in summer 2020 to Learners taking vocational qualifications in circumstances where normal assessments were disrupted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This framework follows on from the ERF by allowing awarding bodies to adapt their qualifications in 2020 and 2021 in recognition of the fact that, although assessments may take place after summer 2020, learners may have experienced disruption to teaching, learning and assessment because of the pandemic.

This document sets out the Extended VQ Covid-19 Conditions. These Conditions come into effect on 12 October 2020 for all vocational qualifications as defined in Condition ExtVQCov1.8.

It also sets out our requirements in relation to the following –

- the Adaptation of vocational qualifications;
- the principles to be applied by awarding bodies when Adapting vocational qualifications.

With respect to all vocational qualifications to which the Conditions set out in this document apply, save to the extent set out in those Conditions, awarding bodies must also comply with:

- our Standard Conditions of Recognition¹ which apply to all awarding bodies and qualifications, and
- all relevant Regulatory Documents.²

This document is available in [Welsh](#).

¹ <https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/publications/standard-conditions-of-recognition/>

² <https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/publications/regulatory-documents-list/>

Condition ExtVQCov1 Application, Interpretation and definitions

Application

- ExtVQCov1.1** The ExtVQCov Conditions apply –
- (a) to all VQs, except in circumstances where the VQCov 2 - 9 and VQCov10.2 apply, and
 - (b) until such date as is specified in, or determined under, any notice in writing published by Qualifications Wales under this Condition.
- ExtVQCov1.2** Any such notice published by Qualifications Wales may –
- (a) be issued in respect of one or more –
 - (i) VQs, or
 - (ii) ExtVQCov Conditions,
 - (b) be varied or withdrawn by Qualifications Wales at any time prior to the date specified in or determined under it, and
 - (c) contain any transitional and saving provisions that Qualifications Wales considers appropriate.
- ExtVQCov1.3** An awarding body must comply with the requirements of any transitional and saving provisions contained in a notice published by Qualifications Wales under Condition ExtVQCov1.2.

Interpretation and definitions

- ExtVQCov1.4** Unless alternative provision has been made in Condition ExtVQCov1.8, the following shall apply to the ExtVQCov Conditions –
- (a) the rules of interpretation and definitions outlined in Standard Condition J1;
 - (b) the definitions outlined in the Qualification Level Conditions.
- ExtVQCov1.5** Except in the circumstances described in Condition ExtVQCov1.6, the requirements imposed by the ExtVQCov Conditions apply in addition to the requirements imposed by the Standard Conditions of Recognition and any relevant Qualification Level Conditions.
- ExtVQCov1.6** To the extent that there is any inconsistency between –
- (a) a requirement of an ExtVQCov Condition, and
 - (b) a requirement of a Standard Condition of Recognition or a Qualification Level Condition,

such that an awarding body could not comply with both such requirements, the awarding body must comply with the requirement of the ExtVQCov Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the other Condition.

ExtVQCov1.7 Unless the context suggests otherwise, in the ExtVQCov Conditions references to a 'result' means a result for a unit or the VQ, as relevant.

ExtVQCov1.8 In these Conditions the following words shall have the meaning given to them below (and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly) –

Adaptations

Any changes made by an awarding body to a VQ that it makes available, including changes to the design, setting, delivery or marking of an assessment.

Private Candidate

A Learner in relation to whom there is no Relevant Centre.

Qualification Level Condition

Any Qualification Level Condition that applies to a VQ.

Relevant Centre

In relation to a Learner, a Centre –

- (a) with which the Learner is registered, and
- (b) which materially contributed to the preparation of the Learner for the assessment (whether through teaching or instruction provided by Teachers employed by it or otherwise).

Technical Advice Notice

Advice provided by Qualifications Wales to an awarding body in writing in relation to any matter relevant to the ExtVQCov Conditions.

VQ

A qualification which is not any of the following –

- (a) a GCSE qualification;
- (b) a GCE qualification;
- (c) a Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate qualification or
- (d) an EPA qualification.

Condition ExtVQCov2 Reviewing and Adapting VQs in 2020/2021

- ExtVQCov2.1** In respect of each VQ which it makes available, an awarding body –
- (a) must consider whether it is appropriate to Adapt the qualification for Learners taking it in 2020 and/or 2021 in order to mitigate any disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic to teaching, learning and delivery of assessments in relation to the qualification for those Learners, and
 - (b) where it considers it appropriate to do so on that basis, may Adapt the qualification.
- ExtVQCov2.2** Where an awarding body Adapts a VQ under Condition ExtVQCov2.1(b), it must take all reasonable steps to do so –
- (a) in compliance with any requirements, and
 - (b) having regard to any guidance,
- which may be published by Qualifications Wales and revised from time to time.
- ExtVQCov2.3** Where an awarding body Adapts a VQ under Condition ExtVQCov2.1(b), it must take all reasonable steps to comply with the principles published by Qualifications Wales and revised from time to time.
- ExtVQCov2.4** An awarding body must ensure that any Adaptations that it makes to a VQ under Condition ExtVQCov2.1(b), are sufficiently transparent to –
- (a) preserve public confidence in the qualification, and
 - (b) meet the reasonable needs of Users of the qualification.

Condition ExtVQCov3 Keeping a record of decision-making

- ExtVQCov3.1** In relation to a VQ which it makes available, an awarding body must –
- (a) maintain a record, as relevant, of –
 - (i) the review undertaken under Condition ExtVQCov2.1(a) and its decision as to whether it is appropriate to Adapt the qualification under Condition ExtVQCov2.1(b);
 - (ii) the decisions it has made in Adapting the qualification in compliance with the requirements, and having regard to the guidance, published under Condition ExtVQCov2.2;
 - (iii) how it has complied with Condition ExtVQCov2.3;
 - (iv) the rationale for the decisions referred to in subparagraphs (i) to (iii) of this Condition;
 - (v) any other information specified in any requirements that may be published by Qualifications Wales and revised from time to time, and
 - (b) maintain that record in a form specified in any requirements that may be published by Qualifications Wales and revised from time to time, and
 - (c) provide that record to Qualifications Wales upon request.

Condition ExtVQCov4 Information to be provided to Centres

- ExtVQCov4.1** An awarding body must provide effective guidance to a Centre which the Centre may reasonably require in relation to an Adapted assessment for a VQ which the awarding body makes available.
- ExtVQCov4.2** In respect of a VQ to which it has made Adaptations under Condition ExtVQCov2.2(b), an awarding body must establish, maintain and comply with arrangements which –
- (a) must require details of those Adaptations to be provided upon request to –
 - (i) a Relevant Centre (on a Learner's behalf), and
 - (ii) a Private Candidate, and
 - (b) may require that information to be provided upon request to a Learner who is not a Private Candidate.
- ExtVQCov4.3** The arrangements must –
- (a) provide sufficient information, and
 - (b) allow a reasonable time,
- for Learners and Centres to consider whether to request an appeal under Standard Condition I1.
- ExtVQCov4.4** The arrangements may –
- (a) provide that the awarding body shall only provide the relevant information on payment of a fee,
 - (b) specify other reasonable requirements for the making of a request for the information, and
 - (c) specify a time period during which the information must be requested.

Condition ExtVQCov5 Technical Advice Notices

ExtVQCov5.1 An awarding body must –

- (a) have regard to any Technical Advice Notice issued by Qualifications Wales to the awarding body, and
- (b) notify Qualifications Wales of how it has complied with Condition ExtVQCov5.1(a) within the timescale specified in that Technical Advice Notice.

Requirements in relation to the Adaptation of VQs

Condition ExtVQCov2.2 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to the Adaptation of VQs taken by Learners in 2020 and/or 2021.

We set out our requirements in relation to the Adaptation of VQs.

General requirements in relation to Adaptations

There are a number of ways in which an awarding body may make changes to a VQ which it makes available in order to mitigate any disruption caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to teaching, learning and assessment for Learners taking the qualification in 2020 and/or 2021. These include –

- (a) making more teaching and learning time available, for example by considering alternative conditions under which assessments could take place so that they do not all need to be directly supervised, or by streamlining assessments;
- (b) changing the way in which assessments are delivered, for example by using an online rather than paper-based test, or carrying out an assessment remotely rather than face-to-face;
- (c) adapting assessment methods to take account of social distancing and public health guidance, for example by using a practical simulation in place of an observation, or professional discussion in place of a practical demonstration;
- (d) changing Invigilation requirements, for example by allowing the use of online Invigilation so that assessments can take place in a wider range of settings;
- (e) waiving or adjusting work experience or placement requirements, for example allowing Learners to undertake a shorter period of work experience, or
- (f) changing the way in which a qualification is quality assured, for example by allowing for standardisation or Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny to take place remotely or on-line.

In all cases, an awarding body must ensure that any Adaptations that it makes to a VQ are in line with the principles set out under Condition ExtVQCov2.3.

In particular, an awarding body must take all reasonable steps to minimise risks to Validity by ensuring that coverage of the key areas of the construct of the qualification is retained within any Adapted assessment.

An awarding body must act only within the limits of its capacity and capability.

Equalities considerations

In all cases, an awarding body must comply with the requirements of Standard Conditions D2 (Accessibility of qualifications) and G6 (Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments).

Likewise, an awarding body must ensure that in making any Adaptations to a VQ which it makes available it Minimises Bias, as far as possible.

Professional qualifications and licences to practise

Where a VQ that it makes available acts as a licence to practise, or is used to give access to a particular profession, an awarding body must ensure that it strikes an appropriate balance between –

- (a) maintaining the Validity of the qualification in order to meet its objective, and
- (b) making Adaptations to assessments in order to provide the mitigation outlined in Condition ExtVQCov2.1(a).

In relation to such qualifications, an awarding body should err on the side of maintaining the Validity of the qualification, even where this means that it is not possible to make Adaptations to it.

We recognise that, depending on the objective of the qualification and the uses to which it is put, professional and sector regulatory and oversight bodies may potentially have a view on permissible Adaptations or other approaches to be taken. They may also play a role in ensuring consistent approaches across awarding bodies offering similar qualifications, or which have a similar objective.

In considering any Adaptations to a VQ that it makes available, an awarding body must have regard to any specific requirements or guidance issued by any relevant professional or sector body.

An awarding body must not seek to follow the requirements and guidance issued by such a body where doing so would breach the principles set out under Condition ExtVQCov2.3.

Principles to be applied

Condition ExtVQCov2.3 allows us to specify principles with which an awarding body must comply in Adapting assessments for VQs.

We set out the principles for the purposes of Condition ExtVQCov2.3 below.

The principles

Principle 1 – As far as possible and without prejudice to the other principles, an awarding body must seek to ensure that the Adaptations which it makes to a qualification assist with mitigating the impact on teaching, learning or assessments caused by the Covid-19 pandemic for Learners taking that qualification.

Principle 2 – An awarding body must seek to ensure, as far as possible, that the Adaptations which it makes to a qualification do not serve to advantage or disadvantage Learners taking that qualification against their peers taking general qualifications not covered by the ExtVQCov Framework.

Principle 3 – An awarding body must seek to ensure that, where it makes any Adaptations to its qualifications in accordance with the ExtVQCov Conditions, the Validity and Reliability of those qualifications is maintained.

Principle 4 – An awarding body must seek to maintain standards, as far as possible, within the same qualification in line with previous years, and across similar qualifications made available by the awarding body and by other awarding bodies.