2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1   Organising for e-assessment

> This guide does not assume either a single operational model for delivering e-assessment, or a predictable range of job structures and responsibilities within organisations that offer e-assessment. Organisations need to consider what approach is most suited to the type and scale of e-assessment they propose to implement (e-testing and/or e-portfolios), given that an increasing number of qualifications are likely to include elements of e-assessment over time.

Recommendations in this document relate to staff available to the centre for e-assessment purposes; it is not assumed that any or all of them will necessarily be involved or employed full-time in an e-assessment role.

Staffing options may include:

- designating one dedicated e-assessment person per centre, or across a number of centres and/or locations

- dividing responsibility for e-assessment between a number of designated staff

- developing e-assessment skills as part of the skills set of all teachers, tutors or trainers in a team

- organising access to specific expertise, such as technical support, when needed.

2.2   Key areas of responsibility

> This guide assumes that a senior manager within the organisation will have overall responsibility for development of the e-assessment strategy, and for successful implementation of that strategy.

The balance of the key areas of responsibility within e-testing and e-portfolio contexts will vary considerably, and it should be emphasised that these are roles, not necessarily job titles. It is recognised that in some organisations all the roles may be undertaken by a single individual, while in others each role may be undertaken by a different person. The guide therefore supports a range of possible relationships between roles and people.

It should also be emphasised that, in many instances, these roles may form part of a number of responsibilities that are not focused exclusively on either the use of technology or even on the process of assessment itself. For example:

- Technical support for e-testing may be part of a wider set of responsibilities for information and communication technology (ICT) systems.

- Support for learners using e-portfolios for assessment may be part of a wider set of learner support or teaching responsibilities.

The roles have been separated out for the purposes of this guide, and to assist in the identification of the individuals who will perform them.

> The key areas of responsibility in the management and delivery of assessments through both e-testing and e-portfolios are:
>
> - senior management (responsibility for developing and supporting an e-assessment strategy for the organisation)
>
> - coordination/operational management (implementation of the e-assessment strategy and policies, and accountability for the e-assessment process)
>
> - administration (responsibility for operational systems and processes)
>
> - technical support (responsibility for the technology), whether provided in-house or via a third party
>
> - working with the learner (maximising the potential for success through the e-assessment process).
>
> In addition, a number of other existing roles will be changed by the use of e-assessment. These include:
>
> - invigilation
>
> - internal and external verification
>
> - examination administration.
>
> The specific allocation of responsibilities may vary according to the organisation, and this should be taken into account when looking both at processes and training needs.

2.3 Generic skills and knowledge in e-assessment

All staff involved in e-assessment should have (or be trained to have) the following skills and knowledge, irrespective of their role in the e-assessment process:

- a general understanding of the principles of fair assessment

- an understanding of the importance of security in the conduct of assessment and a knowledge of the security measures required for e-assessment, especially those applicable to their own centre

- a general familiarity with the e-assessment systems and delivery platform(s) in use at their centre

- an awareness of possible malpractice in e-assessment and the precautions needed to prevent and detect it

- an awareness of legislation and codes of practice relevant to the operation of the centre (see section 8 for examples of such guidelines)

- the general regulations of relevant awarding bodies, and regulatory authority guidelines and codes of practice.

Detailed information on staff knowledge and skills related to e-testing and e-portfolios follows in sections 2.4 and 2.5. The two aspects have been kept separate because the responsibilities within e-testing may not be the same as for e-portfolios, or carried out by the same staff.

These key roles and responsibilities also form the basis on which the formal recognition of e-assessment skills and knowledge is structured in the units developed through LLUK. The relationship between these roles and wider sets of skills and knowledge is reflected in the different ways in which credits achieved through these units may be included within LLUK's new Teacher Qualifications Framework.

A role matrix for e-testing has been developed to support the link between the guide and the units, and has been included in annex A2. The units themselves can be found in section 6, 'The Level 3 Award in delivering e-testing'.

A staffing requirements checklist can be found in annex A1, and this can be used both for establishing links to essential skills and knowledge and for identifying gaps and recruitment/training requirements.

2.4   Roles and responsibilities related to e-testing

Coordinating the e-testing process

Requires the knowledge, skills and authority to:

- assist the development and implementation of strategies and policies relating to the use of e-testing in the organisation

- provide appropriate facilities and resources

- liaise with awarding bodies and/or technical suppliers

- agree operational processes and procedures to enable e-testing to meet specified quality standards consistent with awarding body and regulatory requirements

- ensure that sufficient and appropriate equipment is available for e-testing to be managed and conducted effectively

- identify and allocate appropriate staff to specific roles and responsibilities, and have a working understanding of what is involved and any likely key issues

- ensure availability of appropriately trained staff at each stage of the e-testing process

- ensure that agreed processes are followed and any issues are resolved in conjunction with awarding bodies, technical suppliers and other staff as required

- provide or arrange appropriate staff development (including their own) to ensure the centre's continuing capability to support e-testing consistently, reliably and effectively.

e-Testing administration

Requires the knowledge, skills and authority to:

- set up and maintain the facilities and environment to required quality standards, including a basic understanding of the technologies involved

- set up and maintain agreed operational processes and procedures to ensure that e-testing meets specified quality standards consistent with awarding body and regulatory requirements

- help other staff to identify suitable e-testing opportunities related to units and qualifications

- set up the location and equipment to specified quality standards for an e-test session, including workstation layout, e-testing hardware, software, peripherals and communications links

- support the preparation of learners for e-testing, for example, registering them with an awarding body or assisting others in the running of practice e-test sessions

- run e-test sessions, including authentication of candidates, making final checks related to the centre, equipment and materials, and starting and concluding the session

- transmit candidate details and responses to the awarding body, store response files, communicate any automatic scoring and results, and obtain awarding body certificates when available

- deliver first-line resolution of administrative issues, liaising with other staff and contacts as appropriate

- report and/or escalate issues as necessary

- remain up to date with processes and procedures related to e-testing (through training or other staff development, and contacts with awarding bodies, for example).

Note: Some of the above activities may require technical support and troubleshooting on occasions.

Technical support

Requires the knowledge, skills and authority to:

- provide technical support for any e-testing process or application offered by the centre, consistent with awarding body requirements and the centre's needs

- maintain the equipment in good working order

- in conjunction with management and other staff, identify appropriate hardware and software to enable the centre to deliver the volume and type of e-assessments required, including those delivered away from the centre

- identify the equipment and/or applications required to meet specific accessibility requirements of candidates

- follow agreed processes and procedures to ensure that e-testing is performed to the specified quality standards

- deliver first-line technical problem resolution

- liaise with other staff and any help desk provided by the awarding body or technical supplier

- report and/or escalate issues as necessary

- remain up to date with technical and general processes, and procedures related to e-testing (for example, through training or other staff development).

Note: The technical role noted in this guide (and the related e-assessor units) does not indicate that the role holder is capable of setting up an e-testing system without assistance. However, it does assume a suitable level of technical knowledge and experience to support the activities listed.

Working with learners

Requires the knowledge, skills and authority to:

- ensure that learners are up to date with relevant centre processes and regulations related to taking e-tests

- provide information and guidance relating to e-testing, including (where necessary) identifying suitable e-testing opportunities related to units and qualifications that meet learners' needs

- be responsive to the principles of testing on demand

- prepare learners for e-testing, to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by taking e-tests rather than paper-based testing. This may include ensuring that learners:

  - understand how to use the technology effectively and appropriately

  - are able to identify any specific needs related to e-testing that they may have, and are provided with appropriate assistive technology and know how to use it

  - understand the regulations and procedures related to e-testing

  - are at an adequate stage of readiness before they are entered for any assessment leading to the award of credits or a qualification.

- resolve and/or escalate issues that arise, and liaise with other staff as appropriate

- supplement automated feedback and learner results with additional feedback and guidance on next steps. Counselling facilities should be made available if necessary.

- remain up to date with general and relevant technical processes and procedures related to e-testing (through training or other staff development, for example).

Invigilation of e-tests

Requires the knowledge, skills and authority to:

- verify that the environmental conditions of the e-testing location are suitable

- check that candidates have been authenticated to take the e-test

- check that candidates are familiar with the procedures and regulations for the e-test, and that they are logged on

- invigilate the e-test session according to the requirements of the awarding body

- supervise any planned and unplanned breaks

- report any emergencies, technical failures and irregularities to the centre manager, and ensure that these are resolved appropriately for the candidate

- document any such event, and notify the awarding body of the details if necessary

- supervise the conclusion of the e-test session, and ensure that the candidate's responses and associated information have been submitted to the awarding body.

2.5   Roles and responsibilities related to e-portfolios

Managing the use of e-portfolios

Requires the knowledge, skills and authority to:

- assist in the development and implementation of strategies and policies relating to the use of e-portfolios in the organisation

- provide appropriate facilities and resources

- agree operational processes and procedures to enable e-portfolios to be accessed and used effectively by all authorised parties, and ensure that these are followed

- liaise with awarding bodies and/or technical suppliers

- ensure that sufficient and appropriate ancillary equipment is available for the use of e-portfolios by authorised staff

- have a working understanding of what is involved in using e-portfolios and any likely key issues

- ensure reasonable availability of appropriately trained staff to assist with the use of e-portfolios

- provide or arrange appropriate staff development (including their own) to ensure continuing capability to support the effective use of e-portfolios.

e-Portfolio administration

Requires the knowledge, skills and authority to:

- manage reports, for example:
  - generating a range of reports, both generic and those applying to learners, assessors and employers
  - customising reports to meet the specific requirements of the centre or the system's users
  - maintaining auditable online records of learner progress.

- facilitate access to e-portfolios by others, for example:
  - setting up and managing access by authorised users, to enable them to access both the e-portfolio system and designated learners and evidence, remotely if necessary. Tasks may include sampling learner evidence, confirming the audit trail, and providing reports to internal verifiers and other assessment team members
  - providing access to standards and reports online
  - enabling others to view comments from assessors, and determining who views what data (access rights).

- facilitate use of the e-portfolio system, for example:
  - providing ongoing advice and coaching staff and learners in the use of the e-portfolio system as appropriate
  - performing first-line resolution of any issues that arise, and reporting/escalating as necessary

- deliver first line resolution of administrative issues, liaising with other staff and contacts as appropriate

- report and/or escalate issues as necessary

- remain up to date with processes and procedures related to e-portfolios (for example, through training or other staff development, and contact with awarding bodies).

Technical support

Training and support for users to optimise the use of e-portfolios will be required regardless of which system is adopted.

Most systems are web-based and therefore do not require additional specialist centre-based technical support. However, it should be noted that where virtual learning

environment (VLE) or intranet-based systems are used for e-portfolio purposes, these will require in-house specialist support, which is outside the scope of this guide due to the wide range of systems and processes that may be involved.

Working with learners

Requires the knowledge, skills and authority to assist learners to:

- manage their progress online, for example:

  - planning, monitoring and reviewing learner progress towards assessment online, including action planning online with the learner and selecting appropriate additional courses for/with them

  - looking at draft evidence and giving online feedback to learners

- manage online information, standards and evidence, for example:

  - supporting learners in the collection, uploading and storage of a range of types and formats of evidence that recognises the potential of the technology (for example, the inclusion of multimedia evidence), including signposting materials that are held remotely from the assessment area of the e-portfolio

    Note: Any remotely held materials required for inclusion in the assessment must be demonstrably secure from amendment.

  - supporting learners in using the technology to produce the most appropriate, valid, authentic and sufficient evidence in line with qualifications standards

  - supporting learners in the effective cross-referencing of electronic evidence files to assessment criteria.

    Note: One evidence file (which may contain more than one piece of evidence) may need to link to more than one assessment criterion.

Assessment and verification of evidence in e-portfolios

Key messages (regulatory authorities)

'External and internal verifiers should focus on the accuracy and consistency of assessors' judgements against the requirements of the national standards.

The term "collecting evidence" may have been interpreted too literally in the past and this has led to the notion of the portfolio as a means of collecting evidence.

The primary role of assessors is to make accurate decisions about the competence of candidates against the national standards, and they must be able to justify their decisions.'

Principles (regulatory authorities)

'Assessors must be able to make sound and consistent judgements about the acceptability of evidence. Centres have a responsibility for ensuring the competence of the assessors they employ, so that trust can be placed in the assessment decisions of assessors without the need to insist on paper evidence to back up every assessment decision.

When planning assessment, assessors should make use of a combination of assessment methods. Candidates should be encouraged to cross-reference and avoid an element by element or pc by pc [piece by piece] approach to collecting evidence, whether or not a paper portfolio is used for presenting evidence. "Evidence rich" activities, "project" or "event" approaches to collecting evidence can contribute to a reduction in the overall amount of evidence collected. The presentation of evidence should not be confined to paper-based portfolios, but assessors must keep auditable assessment records.'

In view of these key messages and principles, in addition to existing knowledge and skills, the introduction of e-portfolio evidence will require assessors and verifiers to have the knowledge and skills to:

- understand how the use of e-portfolios will impact on the process of ensuring the validity, authenticity and sufficiency of evidence produced by learners

- incorporate the use of e-portfolios into the assessment planning process

- understand how e-portfolios may be used to improve the quality of evidence through the use of, for example, video, audio and other non-traditional evidence formats

- gain appropriate access to, and make appropriate use of, the facilities within an e-portfolio system, for example, the generation of reports and annotation of evidence with assessor comments

- support learners in the collection of evidence for e-portfolios

- sample learner evidence and monitor progress online.