

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Please read these regulations in conjunction with Signature Qualification Specification on our website.

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Entering Candidates for Assessment

1.1 Reasonable adjustments for candidates with particular assessment requirements

Centres requesting a reasonable adjustment on behalf of a candidate must make the request when they register the candidate online via 'My Signature'. Following this, all supporting medical evidence must be sent to Signature.

Signature will contact the centre to indicate whether the adjustment requested has been approved. Centres should not assume that all requests for reasonable adjustments will be approved.

Awarding bodies are responsible for assuring and maintaining the assessment standards within each of their qualifications. The Equality Act (2010) and other provisions allow for 'reasonable adjustments' to the assessment process, to make it more accessible under certain circumstances. Awarding Bodies are not required to alter the assessment standards themselves, if these are a justifiable measure of the competence that is being assessed. Reasonable adjustments must not give the candidate an unfair advantage or disadvantage in relation to other candidates taking the assessment.

Before requesting a reasonable adjustment on behalf of a candidate, the centre should be satisfied that the adjustment applied for will enable the candidate to attempt to meet the

same standards of assessment as a candidate without the disability, difficulty or special need concerned. Please read the Reasonable Adjustment to Assessment Arrangements policy, available on Signature website.

1.2 Candidate registration

Signature will only accept candidate registrations from centres that are approved to offer this qualification. Centres must also be approved at the time of the assessment taking place.

Approved centres must register candidates online for this assessment, via 'My Signature', at least 7 days prior to the assessment date, using the Candidate Registration process. The assessment date is chosen by the teacher or centre. It is the date when the registered candidates will complete the assessment as one group.

Centres must register existing candidates using their Signature unique learner ID number. New candidates will be issued with a unique learner ID number, by Signature, upon registration.

Centres (excludes Scotland) should also enter the candidates national Unique Learner Number (ULN) in to the appropriate field. New candidates should be allocated a national ULN by the centre.

Centres will be invoiced for candidate registration fees. Centres wishing to use an official purchase order should quote the order number on the online registration form.

Following submission of the assessment request, centres will receive an email to confirm that the assessment has been processed.

1.3 Changes to assessment arrangements

The centre administrator can change the date of an assessment after submission providing the new date still allows for the notice period stipulated in these regulations. This should be done via 'My Signature' in the 'view assessments' section.

The centre administrator can add candidates to an assessment after submission during the period between the assessment being booked and the notice period stipulated in these regulations. No additions can be accepted after the minimum notice period allowance. This should be done via 'My Signature' in the 'view assessments' section.

Once within the minimum notice period for the assessment if, for any reason, a candidate registered on the submitted assessment, cannot attend at the time or on the date of the assessment, the centre must not permit the candidate to take the assessment at any other time or on any other date. The centre must mark the candidate as 'not assessed'. If the centre does allow the candidate to complete the assessment at any other time or on any date, other than the agreed assessment date, it will be marked as not assessed by Signature.

Candidates who withdraw from an assessment, due to medical or bereavement reasons, will be entitled to a full refund of their candidate registration fee upon production of appropriate evidence.

Under exceptional circumstances, centres may request to change arrangements for their assessments already submitted to Signature. Centres must contact their Signature Customer Support Officer. Signature cannot guarantee that all the changes requested can be accommodated. Charges will apply.

1.4 Assessment arrangements

Assessment topic titles will be issued to centres online, via 'My Signature', 5 days prior to the assessment date. These must be kept secure until the day of the assessment and must not be communicated to candidates until they are in the preparation room, on the agreed date of the assessment.

The content of all assessment materials is strictly confidential. The centre must not discuss or show the content of any assessment materials (DVD/assessment papers/topic titles) to candidates or any other third party before the assessment takes place. A breach of this regulation would be considered malpractice and the centre would be dealt with accordingly. Please refer to Signature's Malpractice Policy on the website.

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Carrying out the Assessment

Assessments must be carried out under 'examination conditions', that is, the candidate must not receive help from anyone during the assessment.

2.1 People involved in the assessment at the centre

Signature requires centres to appoint a teacher **and** an assessment co-ordinator for each assessment.

a) Teacher

It is the responsibility of each centre to appoint suitably qualified and experienced people to act as teachers. Centres are responsible for briefing teachers on their role in the assessment, and for ensuring that they conduct the assessment in accordance with Signature regulations. It is not acceptable for the teacher to also act as an assessment co-ordinator.

b) Assessment co-ordinator

It is the responsibility of each centre to appoint an assessment co-ordinator. Centres are responsible for briefing assessment co-ordinators, and for ensuring that they are familiar with the appropriate regulations governing the conduct of external assessments.

Assessment co-ordinators act for the centre, and are responsible for ensuring that Signature regulations are followed. The assessment co-ordinator may not take part in the assessment as a candidate or teacher.

2.2 Rooming requirements

The centre will provide three rooms:

The waiting room/area:

- for the candidates to wait undisturbed for their assessment
- no unauthorised personnel are allowed in the waiting room/area. Where another person has been given permission by Signature to be in the waiting room/area (for example as a result of a reasonable adjustment request), Signature will have informed the centre in advance

The preparation room:

- for the candidates to view topic titles and prepare undisturbed for their assessment
- a 'restricted area' for the purposes of the assessment
- no unauthorised personnel are allowed in the preparation room. Where another person has been given permission by Signature to be in the preparation room (for example as a result of a reasonable adjustment request), Signature will have informed the centre in advance

The assessment room:

- must be identified by an appropriate sign outside the room
- no unauthorised personnel are allowed in the assessment room. Where another person has been given permission by Signature to be in the assessment room (for example as a result of a reasonable adjustment request), Signature will have informed the centre in advance
- must not contain displays of material which could be deemed to be of assistance to candidates in their completion of the assessment (however, teachers may have materials to assist them with the assessment)
- must be set up correctly with recording equipment checked and in place. The teacher and candidate should **both** be viewable, in the viewing frame of the camera, and **all** BSL features fully visible.

2.3 Preparing for the assessment

Thirty minutes before the first candidate is due to arrive in the preparation room, the assessment co-ordinator will:

- give the teacher the three topic titles and ensure that the teacher goes to the assessment room to prepare for at least 20 minutes
- write the three topic titles on a flipchart or other suitable display in the preparation room. It is permissible for the choice of topic titles to be communicated to the candidate in BSL. No further coaching or other assistance with BSL can be given to candidates whilst in the preparation room, except where previously authorised by Signature.

The centre must ensure that all candidates arrive together in the waiting area in good time.

It is advised that centres arrange a timetable to ensure a smooth operation of the assessments. Please refer to the qualification specification, available on Signature website, for an example of an assessment timetable.

For a large number of candidates, it is suggested that the teacher take appropriate breaks.

When candidates arrive for their assessment, the assessment co-ordinator will:

- ensure that mobile telephones are switched off
- carry out adequate checks to confirm the identity of all candidates
- remain in the waiting area with candidates waiting to be prepared (there is no need for the co-ordinator to be present in the preparation room)
- ensure that candidates have checked that the spelling of their names is correct on the Application for Achievement Form (AAF)
- ensure that candidates have signed the Application for Achievement Form (AAF)

The Application for Achievement Form (AAF) for each assessment can be downloaded on-line from 'My Signature'. Candidates whose name do not appear of the AAF are must not be permitted to take the assessment.

- ensure that candidates do not take any unauthorised items into the preparation room or assessment room unless agreed to by Signature beforehand
- inform candidates that they are now subject to the rules of the assessment
- at the appropriate time, instruct each candidate to move to the preparation room
- explain to candidates that they have **at least five minutes to prepare for the assessment**, and will be collected by the teacher
- instruct the candidates to leave the building once their assessment has finished, without communicating with other candidates waiting to be assessed

2.4 Assessment of candidates

Recording Equipment

The centre is responsible for ensuring that suitable electronically-operated (not battery) equipment is provided and in good working order. Suitable equipment includes:

- Video recorder
- DVD recorder
- Tablet that complies with the following specification:
 - 5 or above megapixels
 - sufficient background lighting

- does not automatically save via media accounts. i.e. itunes or icloud
- has a locking screen password (DDA)
- is the property of the centre and not an individual

Phones are not permitted as suitable recording equipment.

Carrying out the assessment

For BSL102/103 assessment

The teacher must:

- collect each candidate in turn from the preparation room to carry out their assessment
- ensure that the camera is switched on for each candidate and that they are visible before the assessment starts. The teacher and candidate should **both** be viewable, in the viewing frame of the camera, and **all** BSL features fully visible.
- ensure sound is switched on during the recording of the assessment
- ensure that no other person is being recorded with the candidate and teacher
- ensure that no other person is in the assessment room (apart from the candidate and teacher). It is acceptable for a responsible person, authorised by the centre, to be present only to operate the video camera and/or time the assessment, providing that they do not disrupt or take part in the assessment
- ensure that each candidate fingerspells his/her name in full at the start of their assessment in order to identify themselves. This is not marked as part of the assessment and is not included in the assessment timing
- ensure the candidate sign their choice of topic title. This is not marked as part of the assessment and is not included in the assessment timing
- **start the assessment time** when the conversation starts.
- **switch off** the recording equipment after each candidate has finished their assessment
- check (before the candidate leaves the room) that the media is viewable. If their media is not viewable contact your Signature Customer Support Officer immediately.
- reset the media at the right place for the next candidate
- ensure candidates are not distracted or disturbed during their assessment.

- ensure the assessment is only completed once. No editing of the assessment is permitted. No additional recording can be made after the original assessment.

2.5 Late arrival of candidates

Candidates who arrive after the timetabled start of their assessment may be allowed to complete their assessment. This is at the discretion of the centre and teacher.

2.6 Misconduct

If the teacher or assessment co-ordinator observes any misconduct, they must take steps to stop it.

They should:

- inform the candidate of what they propose to do
- make a note on the Application for Achievement Form
- note the time of the action
- email their Customer Support Officer (quoting the assessment ID) with a brief description of the incident

2.7 Special Consideration/Emergencies

Please see Signature's website for Special Consideration policy.

Special consideration may be agreed for candidates where performance in an assessment is affected by unforeseen circumstances.

If an unforeseen circumstance affects a candidate's performance in their assessment, the teacher should:

- **permit the candidate to carry on with their assessment from where the candidate left off, prior to the unforeseen circumstance.** This assessment would only be considered for marking by Signature if:

- a) the candidate is willing and able to carry on with their assessment
- b) if the candidate has been closely supervised and the teacher and co-ordinator can be assured that there has been no breach of assessment security, i.e. candidate did not communicate with any other person, nor consult any books or notes.

If the candidate re-starts their assessment from the beginning, this will be marked as not assessed.

- ensure a special consideration request form is completed and sent to Signature

If an emergency occurs during the assessment, e.g. fire alarm, bomb warning:

- the assessment room must be evacuated in accordance with the instructions of the appropriate authority
- if the candidates have been closely supervised and the teacher and co-ordinator can be assured that there has been no breach of assessment security, i.e. candidates did not communicate with each other, nor any other person, nor consult any books or notes whilst they were out of the assessment room, then the assessment may be resumed
- if a candidate was affected by the emergency occurring during their assessment, the assessment must begin from where the candidate left off, prior to the emergency.

This assessment would only be considered for marking by Signature if:

- c) the candidate is willing and able to carry on with their assessment
- d) if the candidate has been closely supervised and the teacher and co-ordinator can be assured that there has been no breach of assessment security, i.e. candidate did not communicate with any other person, nor consult any books or notes.

If the candidate re-starts their assessment from the beginning, this will be marked as not assessed.

- a completed special consideration request form must be sent to Signature
- if the security of the assessment has been compromised or the timing of the assessment is integral to the assessment, the centre should complete a special consideration request form and send to Signature

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After the Assessment

3.1 Copying the assessment

The entire assessment must be copied on an unused 8cm or 12cm DVD. More than one DVD may be used depending on length as long as each DVD is fully used before starting a new one. The candidate must be clearly visible on the recording. Signature will not accept a DVD that displays more than one assessment (assessment ID number). This will be returned to the centre, so that it can be copied to separate DVDs.

All candidates must appear on the DVD, and the order in which they are recorded must be entered on the Application for Achievement Form ('Video Order Number').

A copy of each assessment must be kept by the centre.

3.2 Appointment of external assessors

It is the responsibility of Signature to train and appoint suitably experienced people to act as external assessors.

3.3 Sending to the assessor for marking

The centre must:

- ensure that the Application for Achievement (AAF) is correctly completed online, via 'My Signature', **within seven days of the assessment date**:
 - complete the video order column
 - inform Signature of any incorrect spelling of candidates names
 - ensure that candidates have signed the form
 - keep the signed copy

Signature reserves the right to refuse to process any assessments which have not been sent in accordance with these instructions.

- ensure that all candidates' recordings are viewable
- ensure that the assessment ID number is visible on both the DVD and the outside cover
- ensure that the DVD and relevant documentation are sent to the assessor for marking **within seven days of the assessment date**. We recommend that assessment material is sent by first class post only. Sending it by recorded or special delivery may cause delays in the assessment material being received by the assessor as they will be required to sign for the package. This may cause a delay in the results being issued online.

3.4 External quality assurance

If, as a result of quality assurance checks, there is cause for concern about the assessment, results may be delayed beyond the normal processing time.

Candidates' recorded evidence will be viewed by Signature approved staff only.

3.5 Issue of results

Signature will issue the results of the assessment online within six weeks of assessment date for onward distribution to candidates. Signature will issue results using the spelling of the name as it appears on the Application for Achievement Form (AAF). It is important that the candidate has verified that the spelling is correct. Centres will be notified by email when results are ready.

3.6 Issue of certificates

Signature will issue certificates, for those who have achieved the full qualification, within two weeks of the results released date, for onward distribution to candidates. Signature will issue certificates using the spelling of the name as it appears on the Application for Achievement Form (AAF). It is important that the candidate has verified that the spelling is correct.

Credit certificates for single units are available, on written request, for those candidates who did not intend to complete the full qualification.

3.7 Appeals

See Signature's website for appeals procedure.

3.8 Retention of evidence

Centres must securely store candidates' recorded evidence and signed Application for Achievement Form (AAF) for a period of three years. All evidence can be stored electronically if a centre desires.