

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

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

PART 1 of 3

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.

Formal Presentation

Approved centres must register candidates online, via 'My Signature' at least 4 weeks prior to the assessment date, using the Candidate Registration process.

Informal Conversation

Approved centres must register candidates online, via 'My Signature' at least 7 days prior to the assessment date, using the Candidate Registration process.

Receptive Skills Exam

Approved centres must register candidates online, via 'My Signature' at least 14 days prior to the assessment date, using the Candidate Registration process.

Please note: BSL users who want to answer questions in BSL can do this without requesting a reasonable adjustment.

The assessment dates are 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 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

Formal Presentation

- Three topic titles will be selected at random and issued to the centre online, via 'My Signature', 3 weeks prior to the assessment date.
- The centre must forward these topic titles to the candidates **14 days** before the agreed date of the assessment.
- The candidate will have 14 days to prepare for this assessment and must choose one of the topic titles from the list of three topic titles provided by Signature.

Informal Conversation

Three topic titles will be selected at random and issued to the centre 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 candidate will have 30 minutes to prepare for this assessment and must choose one of the topic titles from the list of three topic titles provided by Signature.

Receptive Skills Exam

Ten days prior to the assessment, Signature will send assessment material to the centre. The assessment materials will be provided in a sealed envelope. This must be kept secure until the day of the assessment and must not be communicated to candidates until they are in the assessment room, on the agreed date/time of the assessment. The assessment materials should be checked on receipt to ensure it is viewable. Any problems should be reported to your Signature Customer Support Officer immediately.

The content of all assessment materials is strictly confidential. The centre must not discuss or show the content of any assessment materials to candidates or any other third party, unless stated in these regulations. 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.

PART 2 of 3

Carrying out the Assessment

The assessments are administered by the invigilator on the assessment date requested by the centre and agreed by Signature. 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 assessments at the centre

a) Teacher

It is the responsibility of each centre to appoint suitably qualified and experienced people to teach. Centres are responsible for briefing teachers and for ensuring they are familiar with the appropriate regulations governing conduct of Signature assessments, and responsible for ensuring that Signature Assessment Regulations are followed. **It is not acceptable for the teacher to act as an assessment co-ordinator or invigilator.**

b) Invigilator/assessment co-ordinator

It is the responsibility of each centre to appoint suitably qualified and experienced people to act as invigilators/assessment co-ordinators. Centres are responsible for briefing invigilators/assessment co-ordinators and for ensuring that they are familiar with the appropriate regulations governing the conduct of Signature external assessments. Invigilators/assessment co-ordinators act for the centre, and are responsible for ensuring that Signature regulations are followed. They must not take part in the assessment as a teacher or candidate.

2.2 Rooming requirements

Formal Presentation

The centre will need to provide one room for this assessment:

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 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

Informal Conversation

The centre will need to provide three rooms for this assessment:

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 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 centre must ensure that all candidates arrive together in the waiting room/area in good time.**

The preparation room:

- For the candidates to view topic titles and prepare undisturbed for their assessment
- Must be 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 be set up correctly with recording equipment checked and in place. The teacher and candidate should be viewable, in the viewing frame of the camera , and all BSL features fully visible

Receptive Skills Exam

The centre will need to provide one room for this assessment:

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
- Must be set up correctly with recording equipment checked and in place.
- DVD equipment must be set up correctly and the DVD should be ready to play at the start.
- Appropriate screening should be put in place to prevent candidates being visible to each other during the assessment.

2.3 Preparing for the assessment

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

When candidates arrive for the assessment, the assessment co-ordinator/invigilator 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
- 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 names do not appear on the AAF are not permitted to take the assessment.

- ensure that candidates do not take any unauthorised items into the rooms unless agreed to by Signature beforehand
- inform candidates that they are now subject to the rules of the assessment
- at the relevant time, instruct each candidate to move to the appropriate room

Informal Conversation

Fourty 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 in to the assessment room on their own to prepare for 30 minutes.
- Write the topic titles on a flipchart or other suitable display in the preparation room. The topic titles can be communicated to the candidate in BSL if necessary.
- explain to candidates that they have 30 minutes to prepare for their assessment with their teacher and during this time they can access the internet for research.
- Instruct the candidates to leave the building once their assessment has finished, without communicating with other candidates waiting to be assessed.

Receptive Skills Exam

Before starting the DVD, the invigilator must ensure that:

- assessment papers and blank paper to take notes on, are given to candidates no earlier than five minutes before the start of the assessment. **If the centre discovers there are insufficient papers for the number of candidates on the Application for Achievement form (AAF), they must contact their Customer Support Officer and seek advice.**
- candidates are advised that they must not make notes on the assessment paper. Candidates can make notes on separate sheets of paper but should take care that this does not cause them to miss part of the narrative, as the DVD cannot be paused or replayed. **Note sheets are part of the assessment paper and must be returned to Signature with the assessment materials.**
- candidates are given clear instructions on how and when to complete their assessment papers and are told what personal details they need to enter on the paper.
- candidates understand that they must cross out any incorrect answer and initial the error. This must be done clearly as answers that are unclear will be invalid.
- candidates are reminded that they must not communicate with any other candidate during the assessment.
- the invigilator must announce clearly when candidates can begin

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:

- DVD recorder
- Video 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.

During the assessment

Formal Presentation

Informal Conversation

The teacher must:

- collect each candidate in turn 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 candidate and teacher should both be 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 in the assessment room. 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 that each candidate clearly signs their chosen topic in full. **This is not marked as part of the assessment and is not included in the assessment timing.**
- Start the assessment time when the presentation/conversation starts.
- Ensure that 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.
- For the presentation, allow candidates to take notes/visual aids e.g. powerpoint into the assessment room. Candidates should be careful that using notes/visual aids does not affect the fluency of their presentation.
- For the presentation, if the candidate is struggling the teacher may prompt the candidate to help them to keep their presentation flowing. The teacher must not help them with their signing but can comment or ask a question related to the topic. The teacher can prompt the candidate twice during the presentation if necessary. **External assessors will inform Signature of any centre that demonstrates excessive prompting and the candidate will be marked as not assessed.**
- For the conversation, allow candidates to take brief notes from their 30 minute preparation time into the assessment room to prompt them during the conversation, e.g.

bullet points on a flipchart/whiteboard placed behind the teacher. Candidates should be careful that using these notes does not affect the fluency of their conversation.

- End the presentation/conversation at an appropriate time and within the time limits for the assessment.
- Switch off recording equipment after each candidate has finished.
- Check that the assessment is viewable before the candidate leaves the room. If it is not viewable contact your Signature Customer Support Officer immediately.
- Reset the camera at the right place for the next candidate.

Receptive Skills Exam

The invigilator will:

- operate the DVD equipment. **The centre is responsible for ensuring that suitable electrically-operated (not battery) equipment is provided and in good working order**
- ensure the DVD is played in full and is not paused or repeated at any point during the viewing of the DVD
- supervise candidates throughout the whole assessment. They must be alert and observe candidates at all times
- not take part in the assessment as a candidate
- ensure that candidates are not distracted or disturbed during the assessment.
- ensure that no coaching or other assistance with BSL is given to candidates, except where previously agreed by Signature
- **ensure that assessment materials (DVD, candidate note sheets, assessment papers) are not copied under any circumstances. Copying is:**
 - photocopying candidate note sheets/assessment papers
 - taking photographs or videos of the DVD/note sheets/assessment papers
 - taking copies of the DVD on USB/phones/tablets or any other format
 - transcribing the DVD

This list is not exhaustive. Copying of the assessment materials of any kind would be deemed as malpractice and the centre would be dealt with accordingly. Please refer to Signature's Malpractice Policy on the website.

2.5 Late arrival of candidates

Candidates who arrive after the timetabled start of the assessment will not be allowed to enter the room.

2.6 Misconduct

If an invigilator 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 describe any affect on the other candidates

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.
- 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:

- 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.
- 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

PART 3 of 3

After the Assessment

3.1 Copying the assessment

Formal Presentation

Informal Conversation

The entire assessment must be uploaded to 'My Signature'. Signature will not accept a clip that displays more than one assessment (assessment ID number). This will be returned to the centre so that it can be edited.

Alternatively, centres may copy the entire assessment on an unused 8cm or 12cm DVD. More than one DVD may be used. 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 in the clip, and the order in which they are recorded must be entered on the Application for Achievement Form (Video Order Number).

A copy of the candidate's presentation and conversation must be kept by the centre but centres must not copy the receptive skills assessment papers/notes/DVD/answers recorded in BSL.

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 AAF is correctly completed, on-line 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.

- For the Receptive Skills Exam the DVD and relevant documentation (including any notes sheets made by the candidate) must be returned to Signature within seven days of the assessment date.
- **Ensure that actual assessment materials (DVDs/topic titles/candidate note sheets/assessment papers) are not copied under any circumstances. Copying is:**
 - **Photocopying candidate note sheets/assessment papers**
 - **Taking photographs or videos of the topic titles/DVD clip/candidate note sheets/assessment papers**
 - **Taking copies of the DVD on USB/phones/tablets or any other format**
 - **Transcribing the DVD**

This list is not exhaustive. Copying of the assessment materials of any kind would be deemed as malpractice and the centre would be dealt with accordingly. Please refer to Signature's Malpractice Policy on the website.

**** Please note candidate note sheets are part of the assessment materials and must be returned with all other materials.**

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

3.5 Appeals

See Signature's website for appeals procedure.