

Signature



Qualification Specification

Level 2 Award in Communicating with
Deafblind People

500/9866/4

Sept 2025

QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

Signature Level 2 Award in Communicating with Deafblind People

(RQF Accreditation Number: 500/9866/4)

(Signature Qualification Reference: DBC2)

Qualification aim

Signature Level 2 Award in Communicating with Deafblind People is designed to enable learners to develop knowledge, understanding and skill in relation to communication with deafblind* people who use English, and who make use of residual sight and hearing in communication. The deafblind experience is explored in depth and the individuality of the dual sensory loss is the priority. This qualification is seen as the starting point for those who wish to work in the deafblind field.

* In this specification, the term 'deafblind' relates to all of the following: people with acquired deafblindness, Deaf visually impaired people, blind hearing impaired people, and people with congenital deafblindness.

Qualification objectives

At the end of the qualification candidates will be able to:

- understand and know how deafblindness affects communication for deafblind people
- use a range of communication methods to support conversation with a deafblind person
- take part in an conversation with a deafblind person.

Qualification structure

To achieve the full Level 2 Award in Communicating with Deafblind People, learners are required to achieve two units. Unit K202 is the theory unit, and Unit T201 is the practical unit.

Units can be taken in any order and can be achieved separately.

Signature unit code	RQF unit number	Unit title	Assessment	Unit details
K202	L/601/8630	Understanding Communication with Deafblind People	External: written examination	See Unit K202 Unit Specification
T201	R/601/8631	Communicating with Deafblind People	Internal assessment of practical skills	See Unit T201 Unit Specification

The recommended guided learning hours are 40 as shown below.

Unit	Guided learning hours	Additional study hours	Total learning time	Credit value at Level 2
K202	20	10	30	3
T201	20	5	25	3

Total Qualification Time

Guided learning hours (GLH)	Additional study hours	Total Qualification Time	Credit value at Level 6
40	15	55	6 Credits at Level 2

Guided learning hours include assessment time. Additional study hours include private study, homework, practice, etc.

Pre-qualification requirements

It assumes no previous knowledge or experience, but candidates will benefit from having achieved Signature Level 1 Award in Deaf Awareness and Communication before they start this qualification.

Candidates for assessment must have clear speech or the ability to use BSL to achieve the requirement listed in unit T201. It is the responsibility of the centre to explain this requirement before accepting a candidate for this qualification.

Target group

Level 2 Certificate in Communicating with Deafblind People is suitable for those who:

- wish to gain knowledge, perhaps in connection with their work (paid or voluntary), about how deafblindness affects communication for the four main groups of deafblind people
- wish to improve their skills, for use in the workplace or elsewhere, when communicating in English with deafblind people.

Progression routes

On completion of Signature Level 2 Award in Communicating with Deafblind People, a range of further qualifications are available, including:

- Signature Level 2 Award in Communicating and Guiding with Deafblind People (DBG2)
- Signature Level 3 Award in Insights into Communication with Congenitally Deafblind People (DBK3).

A range of professional qualifications and a range of other qualifications at Levels 2 and 3 are also available.

UNIT SPECIFICATION

Unit K202 – Understanding Communication with Deafblind People

(RQF Unit Accreditation Number: L/601/8630)

This theory unit covers key facts about deafblindness, and the communication methods used by deafblind people. It also covers the impact of deafblindness on mobility and access, and aids to successful communication.

Unit summary

Guided learning hours (GLH)	Additional study hours	Total learning time	Credit value at Level 2
20	10	30	3

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner will:	At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner can:
1. Know key facts about deafblindness	1.1 State statistics relating to deafblindness 1.2 Describe the causes of the types of deafblindness
2. Understand the impact of being deafblind	2.1 Describe factors affecting the deafblind person's identity, sense of well-being, and place in society
3. Understand the importance of environmental factors in successful communication with deafblind people	3.1 Describe the optimum environmental conditions for successful communication with deafblind people
4. Understand the purpose of a range of aids to successful communication with/for deafblind people	4.1 Describe communication methods and other factors that maximise the effectiveness of communication between deafblind and hearing people 4.2 Explain the advantages and disadvantages of these methods for different groups of deafblind people

<p>5. Know how deafblindness impacts on mobility, movement and orientation</p>	<p>5.1 Explain the impact of deafblindness on the mobility, movement and orientation of the individual</p> <p>5.2 Outline the key principles of safe guiding in an emergency</p>
<p>6. Know a range of language and communication services for deafblind people</p>	<p>6.1 Describe the role of Language Service Professionals working with deafblind people</p> <p>6.2 Describe the role of others who support communication between deafblind and hearing people</p> <p>6.3 Describe technological services and devices that can be used to provide deafblind people with language and communication support</p>

Topic content

A. About deafblindness

UK statistics relating to the incidence of deafblindness:

- How many people in the UK have a severe degree of combined visual and auditory impairment resulting in problems of communication, information and mobility
- How many people in the UK have some degree of visual and auditory impairment
- How many congenital rubella births and effect of MMR vaccination.

Types of deafblindness:

- Acquired deafblindness
- Deaf visually impaired
- Blind hearing impaired
- Congenital deafblindness.

Causes of deafness.

Causes of blindness.

Causes of deafblindness.

B. The impact of deafblindness

The effect of deafblindness on the individual's:

- identity and sense of belonging (including the difference between deafblind and Deaf visually impaired people, in terms of their language and cultural affiliation)
- opportunities to socialise
- well-being.

Factors influencing the above:

- Age of onset
- Support given at onset
- How dual sensory loss occurred
- Attitudes of others
- Attitudes of the deafblind person – coming to terms with deafblindness
- The educational experiences of deafblind people.

The deafblind person in society:

- Entitlements for deafblind people
- Legislation specifically aimed at deafblind people.

C. The importance of the environment

The importance of environmental factors in ensuring optimum conditions for communication with a deafblind person:

- Getting the deafblind person to where they need to be in order to communicate (see also D)
- Setting up the physical environment
- Accommodating the communication needs and preferences of the deafblind person
- How the environment and other factors affect communication
- The importance of informing the deafblind person about what is happening in the environment.

D. Aids to communication

Principles of communication with people with a dual sensory loss:

- Principles of communication with people who have a hearing loss and a sightloss (identifying and meeting the person's communication needs)
- Importance of confidence, trust and respect for successful communication with a deafblind person.

Communication methods and devices used by the four groups of deafblind people:

- Methods and devices that make use of residual sight and hearing
- Tactile methods
- Their advantages and disadvantages
- How and why they are used by different groups of deafblind people.

E. Mobility

How deafblindness impacts on the mobility, movement and orientation of the individual and how this in turn impacts on communication:

- Barriers to mobility
- Access to mobility
- Importance of communicating information about location and movement.

Tactics for alerting a deafblind person to danger, and for supporting them in their move to a safe place:

- Importance of planning for emergencies with a deafblind person
- Principles of safe guiding.

F. Language and communication services

The role of the following communication professionals working with deafblind people:

- LSP – Deafblind Manual
- BSL/English Interpreter (Visual Frame – Hands On)
- Lipspeaker
- Notetaker (Manual and Electronic)
- Speech to Text Reporter
- Cued Speech Transliterater.

The role of the following, who also support communication between deaf and hearing people:

- Communicator-Guide
- Versabrilie provider (Electronic Notetaker linked to Braille output reader)
- Communication Support Worker
- Specialist teacher for multi sensory impaired/deafblind children
- Teaching support staff
- Social worker.

Technological services and devices that can be used to provide deaf people with language and communication support:

- Technology to assist hearing
- Technology to assist vision.

ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Please read this specification in conjunction with Signature Assessment Regulations and Signature General Regulations on our website.

This unit is externally assessed.

Assessment takes the form of a 60-minute written paper. The assessment paper will consist of structured questions on topics in the specification. All questions must be attempted.

The pass mark is 70%.

Learners can produce their answers in either written English or BSL.

UNIT SPECIFICATION

Unit T201 – Communicating with Deafblind People

(RQF Unit Number: R/601/8631)

This practical unit is designed for people who need a range of communication skills in order to be more effective in communicating with deafblind people, in work or social settings. It is assumed that the deafblind individual has some residual hearing and sight.

Unit summary

Guided learning hours (GLH)	Additional study/ practice hours	Total learning time	Credit value at Level 2
20	5	25	3

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner will:	At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner can:
1. Be able to manage environmental and other factors to optimise successful communication with a deafblind person	1.1 Select a suitable environment for communication with a deafblind person taking into account acoustics, lighting, positioning and equipment 1.2 Explain selection of chosen environment

Learning outcomes At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner will:	Assessment criteria At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner can:
2. Be able to use a range of communication methods and tactics to optimise successful communication with a deafblind person	Take an effective part in a conversation with a deafblind person: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. using clear spoken language or BSL that can be lipread by a deafblind lipreader 2.2. using appropriate gestures and displaying regional signs and BSL signs 2.3. using appropriate Deafblind Manual Alphabet 2.4. using notes*, in situations where the use of spoken language is not appropriate 2.5. using an alternative method of communication (Block alphabet) 2.6. repeating or rephrasing where necessary 2.7. seeking clarification if needed <p>*Need not be handwritten</p>

Topic content

A. Features of successful communication

- Manage acoustic conditions ensuring minimum background noise and other sources of interference with sound/equipment.
- Manage lighting conditions to maximise opportunities for lipreading and use of facial expression.
- Position her/himself and the deafblind person in an appropriate place and at an appropriate distance apart.

- Take turns appropriately in a conversation.
- Manage and maintain eye contact.
- Maintain appropriate pace and flow of the conversation.
- Be alert to potential communication breakdowns.
- Be able to use different communication methods and tactics, should communication breakdown occur.

- Repeat or rephrase when necessary.
- Request clarification and interrupt appropriately, if the deafblind person is not understood.

B. Using communication methods and tactics

- Use clear speech in a conversation:
 - Speaking without obstructing the lips
 - Moving top lip
 - Keeping tongue within mouth
 - Showing awareness of speech movements that cannot be seen
 - Keeping head still
 - Giving eye contact.
- Use appropriate pace, tone and volume.
- Use visual clues to support the spoken message in a conversation:
 - Gesture, mime and facial expression
 - Writing letter shapes in the air
 - Where numbers are not easy to distinguish on the lips, use any visual numbering system to support the spoken message. NB: the number gesture must be understood by non-BSL user.
- Use the Manual alphabet (fingerspelling) as an aid to lipreading.
- Organise thoughts in a concise way to enable note-writing to assist communication in conversation.
- Produce notes* that convey key points of the message in a concise and accessible way, so as to sustain the flow of the conversation.
- Use legible writing for handwritten notes, or accurate spelling for all types of notes.

**Need not be handwritten – could be created on computer or mobile phone.*

- Use the Block alphabet to sustain conversation.

ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Please read this specification in conjunction with Signature Assessment Regulations and Signature General Regulations on our website.

This unit is internally assessed. The assessment consists of using a range of conversation methods between the candidate and the teacher/assessor, taking into account environmental factors.

The assessment will last approximately seven minutes for each candidate.

External moderation will be undertaken by qualified Signature staff.

N.B If required the centre must provide communication support for the teacher/assessor. It is the responsibility of the centre to appoint an assessor who can assess all criteria within the assessment.

Assessment procedure

1. Prior to the start of assessment, the candidate selects a topic of their own choice to talk to the assessor about for at least five minutes.
2. Before the candidate is admitted to the assessment room, the assessor ensures that the chairs to be used in the assessment are **incorrectly** placed. If the circumstances allow, the assessor may also make changes to the lighting and other environmental conditions, to allow the candidate to make appropriate adjustments to optimise communication during the assessment.
3. The candidate enters the assessment room. The candidate prepares the room for the conversation with the assessor: the candidate places two chairs in an appropriate place for the conversation with the assessor, taking account of and/or adjusting lighting, acoustics, background and any other environmental conditions.

4. The candidate invites the assessor to sit in the chair they have placed for her/him.
5. The candidate and assessor introduce themselves.
6. The assessor begins the conversation by asking the candidate a few questions about why they arranged the room in the way they did.
7. The candidate uses clear speech or BSL to respond.
8. The assessor then invites the candidate to speak on the topic they have chosen (using clear speech or BSL), and conversation continues.
9. After about one minute, the assessor asks the candidate to add visual clues (gesture, mime, writing in the air, visual clarification of numbers, etc) to support clear speech, and conversation continues.
10. After about one minute, the assessor asks the candidate to add Manual alphabet (fingerspelling), which includes acronyms and names, to support clear speech, and the conversation continues.
11. After about one minute, the assessor asks the candidate to add note-writing to support clear speech, and conversation continues.
12. After about one minute, the assessor asks the candidate to conclude the conversation by conveying a short piece of information using the Block alphabet.
13. The candidate moves their chair, if necessary, to sit in an appropriate place to use Block with the assessor.
14. The assessor indicates the end of the assessment, and the candidate leaves the assessment room.
15. The assessor re-sets the assessment room (Step 2 above) for the next candidate.

CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT RECORD FORM

Centre: Assessment ID:

Candidate name: Candidate ID:

All boxes must be ticked, except where ‘no penalty’ is listed as an option, or where two out of three is specified.

Assessment criteria	The candidate can:	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1 Select a suitable environment for communication	Positioning Sit 1-2 metres	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select plain background	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Lighting Check light is on candidate’s face	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Acoustics Ensure the room is quiet (no distractions from people or equipment)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Equipment Check there is no EM interference (if applicable) <i>No penalty if not applicable</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Explain selection of chosen environment	Explain why decisions in 1.1 were made.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1 Take an effective part in a conversation with a deafblind person, using clear speech, or BSL or Visual Frame Hands on signing.	Clear speech	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Keep lips clear of obstructions	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Move top lip	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Keep tongue within mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Demonstrate awareness of unseen speech movements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Keep head still	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Give eye contact	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Use pace and rhythm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use tone and volume (where applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p>2.2 Take an effective part in a conversation with a deafblind person, using appropriate mime and gestures to enhance lipreadability</p>	<p>The candidate must demonstrate two of these three</p> <p>Gesture Use natural gesture</p> <p>Facial expression Use -appropriate facial expression</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2.3 Take an effective part in a conversation with a deafblind person, using appropriate Manual Alphabet (fingerspelling) to enhance lipreadability</p>	<p>The candidate must demonstrate two of these three</p> <p>Fingerspelling Fingerspell the first letter of words that may be mistaken</p> <p>Fingerspell name(s)</p> <p>Fingerspell acronym(s)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2.4 Take an effective part in a conversation with a deafblind person, using notes*, in situations where the use of spoken language is not appropriate</p> <p><small>*Need not be handwritten – could be created on computer or mobile phone</small></p>	<p>The candidate must demonstrate two of these three</p> <p>Produce notes Convey key points of a message</p> <p>Use legible clear handwriting or text display for deafblind person</p> <p>Spelling is mostly accurate</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2.5 Take an effective part in a conversation with a deafblind person, using an alternative method of communication (Block alphabet), when the deafblind person is not able to lipread or read notes.</p>	<p>The candidate must demonstrate two of these three</p> <p>Use Block alphabet Adopt appropriate position for communication (seating and hand support)</p> <p>Form letters correctly</p> <p>Spelling is mostly accurate</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2.6 Take an effective part in a conversation with a deafblind person, repeating or rephrasing where necessary</p>	<p>Repeat or rephrase Check that assessor is following by repeating where necessary</p> <p><i>No penalty if assessor follows candidate without needing repeats or rephrasing</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>2.7 Take an effective part in a conversation with a deafblind person, seeking clarification if needed</p>	<p>Clarification Ask assessor for clarification if necessary <i>No penalty if assessor follows candidate without needing clarification</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Result: **Pass** **Fail**

Signature of Assessor..... Date.....

Assessment ID



Signature

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