Level 3 Certificate in Professional Communication Support – Part 1

Vocational Qualification Assessment Regulations

Definitions

- **Candidates:** The individuals registered with a centre to undertake a Signature qualification.

- **Session:** A Session is the term used for booking a Signature assessment. You may have multiple sessions for different candidates on different days.

- **Booking Form**: A booking form is the form used for registering candidates when they begin their qualification. Within Booking forms, you will book candidates onto sessions when they are ready to take an assessment.

- **Lead time:** The minimum period before a Session by which the centre must finalise the booking for that Session to be valid for marking.

- **Appropriate Evidence:** Supporting documentation — such as medical evidence/certificate — is required to substantiate a refund request or a request for a Reasonable Adjustment.

- **Invigilator:** The person who supervises candidates during the assessment to ensure the rules are followed and that no cheating takes place.

- **External Quality Assurance (EQA)**: EQA is an internal process to check candidates are being assessed fairly and consistently in accordance with Ofqual.

- **Recognition of Prior Learning:** RPL evaluates a candidate's previously certified achievements against Learning Outcomes aligned with a Signature qualification.

1. **Introduction and Regulatory Status**

This document explains the rules governing the administration and award of the qualification named. It summarises the responsibilities of candidates, centres and Signature, as the awarding organisation.

It also provides information about Quality Assurance arrangements, assessment, marking, moderation and certification processes and appeals, complaints and malpractice procedures.

This qualification is regulated by Ofqual, CCEA and Qualifications Wales and meets the published requirements of all three regulatory bodies.

This document should be read together with the Qualification Specification and with the following Signature policies:

- Complaints
- Appeals
- Malpractice/Maladministration
- Special Considerations
- EQA
- Conflict of Interest

All centre staff who are involved in the administration, teaching and/or assessing Signature qualifications have a responsibility to ensure they read and understand all of the most recent versions of the above documentation.

In addition to each of these general regulations, assessment-specific regulations are available at the end of this document.

Any failure to comply with any of these regulations will be investigated by Signature as a potential Malpractice by the centre.

2. Centre Approval and Responsibilities

Centre approval requirements

Centres must be approved by Signature for this qualification at the date of candidate registration and on the date of the assessments.

Staff competence requirements

All staff should be suitably qualified and experienced, with defined roles, including, but not limited to:

- Teacher/Assessor
- Assessment Co-ordinator
- Invigilator

3. Candidate Registration

Registration procedures

Centres must confirm the spelling of the candidate's name and then register the candidate on an IRIS Booking Form when the candidate enrols with the centre.

Centres must determine that the candidate has the stated pre-qualification requirements, as set out in the Qualification Specification, prior to registration.

Any staff member who has a conflict of interest with a candidate should declare this to Signature at the time of registration.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Centres must apply for any Recognition of Prior Learning when they register the candidate.

Unique candidate identification requirements

Centres must check to see if the candidate has a Unique Learner Number (ULN) at the time of registration (except in Scotland) and enter it onto IRIS if they do.

4. Booking an Assessment

Centres must choose and agree a session date with candidates when they are confident the candidates are ready to take the assessment; this must be created within the IRIS Booking Form.

The centre must finalise the Session within the assessment lead time for it to be valid for marking.

Changes to Sessions

Finalised sessions cannot be changed. Centres must book a new session for any candidates who cannot attend.

Candidates who do not attend a session for bereavement are entitled to a full refund of their registration fee. If a candidate is unable to attend a session for medical reasons, they are entitled to a full refund of their registration fee on production of evidence from a medical professional.

5. Assessment Regulations

Assessment principles

Centres must ensure that suitable recording equipment is provided and in working order.

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure the security and confidentiality of assessment materials shared by Signature.

No part of assessment materials must be shown/discussed with candidates or third parties outside of agreed assessment timings.

No part of a candidate's assessment should be edited unless specifically stated.

Centres must check in advance of the session to make sure the assessment room has:

1. Sufficient lighting to see both hand gestures and facial expressions

2. Seating arrangements are correct
3. Equipment is positioned correctly and working.

Once candidates enter the waiting room/area, examination conditions apply.

Candidates should NOT come into any contact with any unauthorised personnel (unless agreed through a reasonable adjustment with Signature) once exam conditions apply.

Assessment rooms/areas should contain no display of materials, equipment or unauthorised personnel that could assist the candidate with the assessment.

Centres must:

- Have the facilities to separate waiting candidates from the assessment room where appropriate, including for remote assessments.
- Make sure each candidate fingerspells their name (first name and surname) in full at the start of the assessment to identify themselves; this name must be the same name by which the candidate is registered on the IRIS booking form. This is not marked as part of the assessment and is not included in the assessment timing.
- Make sure all candidates arrive together in the waiting area, all mobile telephones are switched off, and the identity of candidates is verified. Once the assessment is complete, candidates should leave with no interaction with the other candidates.
- Make sure there are no unauthorised items taken into the assessment (unless agreed through a reasonable adjustment).

Centres must ensure that both the teacher and candidate are clearly visible, in the viewing frame of the camera, with all BSL features clear for recorded assessments.

Copying of assessment materials/topics in any way is considered malpractice by Signature and the centre will be dealt with according to the malpractice policy.

Signature does not allow the use of AI. This includes the use of AI for the purposes of proofreading and/or checking English or word count.

Candidate Misconduct

If the centre observes any misconduct by a candidate, they must stop the misconduct and inform the candidate that the centre will report this to Signature, providing all details of the situation.

Remote Assessments

For remote assessments, centres must:

- Ensure that all parties involved in the assessment have a suitable broadband/internet connection to allow online assessments to take place effectively. Connection issues are NOT the responsibility of Signature.
- Ensure the chosen platform for the assessment is available to all parties.
- Ensure they agree the timings of both preparation and the assessment with the candidates.

To ensure the integrity of remote assessments, prior to starting the assessment, the person responsible for the assessment must:

- Ask the candidate to show them the room so they can clearly see no unauthorised person is present.
- Ask the candidate to place their laptop/tablet so its back is against the wall and the area behind the candidate is clearly visible on camera (no blurring or fake background)
- Notify the candidate they are now subject to examination conditions

The centre is also responsible for ensuring the timings of the assessment are compliant with the qualification requirements and that the assessment is recorded and viewable. Failure to do this will result in the assessment not being marked and having to be rebooked.

6. External Quality Assurance (EQA)

External Quality Assurance checks may delay results beyond the normal processing time. Candidates' recorded evidence will be viewed by Signature-approved staff only.

7. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Any teaching and assessment access needs must be discussed and agreed with the candidate when they enrol with the centre.

The request for a Reasonable Adjustment by a centre for a candidate must enable the candidate to attempt to meet the required standards of a Signature assessment.

Application procedures

Reasonable Adjustment applications must be submitted to Signature when the candidate is registered on the IRIS Booking Form.

Evidence requirements

The centre must request the adjustment based on the teaching support identified and be supported by evidence from a medical professional.

Decision-making responsibilities

Signature will provide a decision on the agreed Reasonable Adjustment on the IRIS Booking Form based on the requested support and the teaching support identified.

Special Considerations

If an unforeseen circumstance affects a candidate's performance in their assessment, the centre may permit the candidate to carry on with the assessment from where the assessment stopped/paused. The assessment can resume only if:

- The candidate is willing and able to carry on
- The centre can assure Signature that there has been no breach of assessment integrity.

The centre must add a public comment to the IRIS booking form providing a brief description of the circumstances.

8. Malpractice and Maladministration

Centres must comply with these regulations or will be subject to investigation under the malpractice policy. If centres are uncertain about any of these regulations, please contact Signature for clarification.

9. Results and Awarding

Signature will aim to issue the results of the assessment within 6 weeks of the assessment date via the IRIS booking form.

10. Appeals and Complaints

See the Signature website or IRIS for Appeals and Complaints Policy.

11. Certification

Where a candidate has completed a full qualification, Signature will aim to issue certificates within 2 weeks of the result release date.

Credit certificates for single units are available to download from IRIS.

Replacement certificates

Where a replacement certificate is requested, the centre will be subject to an administration fee. The certificate will be stamped with replacement.

See the website for the Fees booklet.

Certificate withdrawals

Signature has the right to withdraw a certificate where malpractice or maladministration has been investigated and substantiated.

12. Data Protection and Records

Centres must securely store candidates' recorded assessments for a period of 1 year and ensure full compliance with Data Protection and GDPR.

Assessment Specific Regulations

Level 3 Certificate in Professional Communication Support – Part 1

Internal Assessments

These assessments are:

- presentation,
- essay
- written assessment for modifying written English.

Lead times

There is no lead-in time for the internal assessments.

Assessment Process

The Centre must ensure the Portfolio of Evidence is produced for each candidate showing all requirements have been met and must securely store this until Part 1 has been completed.

The Assessor must:

- Ensure the assessment process is compliant with the qualification specification and regulations.
- Assess the evidence of the candidate's knowledge and understanding against the Signature learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the **current** Qualification/Unit specification
- Ensure the candidate's evidence is valid, authentic and sufficient
- Produce accurate assessment achievement records.

All evidence submitted for assessment must be included in a Portfolio of Evidence and referenced within the CAR form against the assessment criteria for each unit.

The use of BSL in the assessment must be recorded.

Assessment times

The Presentation should be 10–12 minutes long (English) or 20 minutes (BSL).

Assessment upload

Centres must send/upload:

- Enter the PASS result against any candidates who have achieved that result for the assessment.
- the completed CAR form
- any Evidence portfolios for candidates selected for EQA

for all candidates to Signature within 7 days of the assessment date.

If, because of quality assurance checks, there are concerns about the standard of assessments or evidence, additional checks may be made and results may be delayed.

Signature cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage of assessment materials during transit.

Results

Once a centre has determined that the candidate has successfully achieved all assessment criteria, they must enter the results onto the IRIS booking form. The centre should not confirm the candidate's result until it is confirmed within the IRIS booking form.

Assessment Specific Regulations

Level 3 Certificate in Professional Communication Support – Part 1

External Essay

This assessment is a written essay.

Lead times

The lead-in time is 28 days.

Assessment Process

The centre must provide the Topic titles to the candidate 14 days prior to the session date.

The centre must receive the completed essay on the date of the session.

The centre must ensure the word count is achieved and shown on the completed assessment.

The use of BSL in the assessment must be recorded.

Assessment upload

Centres must upload the completed written essay within 7 days of the assessment date.

If, because of quality assurance checks, there are concerns about the standard of assessments or evidence, additional checks may be made and results may be delayed.