



Assessment Creation Guidance

Guidance for teachers devising tasks to support centre determined grades

Where current WJEC past papers are not used in the production of learner evidence, centres should follow the guidance contained in this document to ensure that assessment tasks

- i) meet the key principles of assessment: fairness & accessibility, validity, reliability
- ii) are developed in line with WJEC's Qualifications Assessment Frameworks, and
- iii) are developed with reference to the provided qualification grade descriptors and/or current specification assessment criteria/mark schemes.

Key principles of assessment

- **Fairness & Accessibility**
A fair assessment should not discriminate against sub-groups of candidates or give an advantage to other groups. Assessment should be free from bias, inclusive, non-discriminatory and accessible. It should also be fair to those who rely on the results (such as employers, further education colleges and universities) by accurately assessing what a learner knows, understands and can do.
- **Validity**
A valid assessment task will measure the **intended** learning outcomes of a topic/unit of study. The structure of the assessment will tally with the contents of the specification.
- **Reliability**
"The extent to which assessment results are an accurate measurement of the learners' demonstration of the abilities specified by the assessment criteria"¹. A reliable assessment is one that will produce the same outcome each time it is used in a similar context; if a different Assessor marked the assessment, would they reach the same decision?

Assessment preparation and planning

Consider the topic/theme/assessment objective from the qualification specification that you wish to assess in line with the published adaptations made to qualifications for assessment in Summer 2021.

Decide on the knowledge and/or skills you are going to assess.

¹ <https://www.qualificationswales.org/media/4739/fair-access-by-design.pdf> p81

Decide on the item types/tasks that you would like to set. Make sure that you are clear on the knowledge and/or skills that you wish to assess. Marking criteria should be developed in parallel with the individual task/question.

Find information that you can use to create your tasks/questions appropriate to the level of the qualification – this may be a resource such as a diagram, table, chart, data etc., a case study, a scenario, extract. You may need to adapt the resource to meet the specific needs of your learners. Information on how to adapt/modify resources can be found in the [‘Further support’](#) links at the end of this document.

Consider how the assessment task will be delivered. This may influence how you develop the task. You should consider the following:

- the levels of control relative to the context of your setting and your learners’ needs
- the manageability of the task – will learners need specialist equipment?
- how you will ensure authenticity
- any access arrangements that your learners may need – for example, extra time, a scribe, use of a computer reader etc.

Tips for adapting an existing past paper to align with content taught

- Use the framework of an existing question including familiar wording, layout, bullet points etc.
- Understand the difference between the carrier language² and the technical language³
- Where possible, keep the skeleton of the question and customise only the parts of content to be assessed
- Use established question stems to ensure that assessment objectives are being addressed
- Keep the balance right – some assessments will usually have a variety of question types requiring brief or shorter responses assessing knowledge and application of knowledge – breadth of content – and some requiring longer form responses such as essays allowing learners to demonstrate depth of understanding, analysis and evaluation skills; other assessments may consist entirely of one question type
- Familiarise yourself with the structure of the marking guidelines of past papers to support you in creating your own marking guidelines, particularly when creating indicative content to support reliable assessment
- Use the framework of the mark scheme to develop the indicative content for the questions you have written and use the WJEC assessment grids or, for assessments without those, ensure that that marking guidance is as aligned as possible to past mark schemes (for example, including marks for mathematical content in science qualifications).

Developing marking criteria

When developing marking criteria to mark centre-designed tasks, it is essential that the existing marking guidelines form the basis to support both consistency and the determination of grades aligned to the grading descriptors. The marking schemes test the intended

² carrier language – the language used to set up the task, not the subject specific concepts being assessed

³ technical language – specialised vocabulary, terminology and concepts associated with the subject domain

outcomes for the assessment that has been created. The function of the marking criteria is to ensure that markers are awarding marks in a fair and consistent manner, based on evidence presented by the learner.

When developing marking criteria, including indicative content, it is important to consider the responses that the learner might produce. For questions that do not have a right/wrong answer, the marking criteria for some subjects can only be finalised after scrutiny of learner responses and a judgement made about possible alternative responses that could be given credit.

The language of assessment

Clarity – following the guidance above regarding using an existing past paper as a template for creating an assessment will help to alleviate some of the potential issues in this area. A question or task could be compromised by unclear instructions, confusing and ambiguous terminology, overly verbose and complicated vocabulary and/or sentence structure plus unnecessary distracting detail. Keep it simple and straightforward, and do not fall into the trap of mistaking simplicity for low levels of difficulty. See links below, notably the documents ‘Fair Access By Design’ and the ‘BATOD Guide to writing accessible assessments’ and The Plain English Campaign’s website.

Avoiding unconscious bias in task setting

Be aware of your duties under The Equality Act (2010)⁴ in relation to learners with protected characteristics and also your Public Sector Equality Duty⁵.

An accessible and fair assessment will not include any irrelevant features that could prevent certain groups of learners from fully demonstrating what they know, understand and can do.

The difficulty with unconscious bias is that it can catch us unawares and we often don’t realise that we are demonstrating a particular bias as it is, by its very nature, implicit.

Implicit or unconscious bias operates outside of the person's awareness and can be in direct contradiction to a person's beliefs and values. This implicit form of bias is often based on stereotyping and conditioning and can present itself in a number of different ways. One way you could check for bias and discrimination as part of the quality assurance process could be for a peer to review the assessment task that you have designed.

Some examples of types of bias pertinent to assessment material creation are given below:

Colour/Culture bias - the socio-cultural environment we have been brought up in can greatly impact the way we think and act. We often seek to align ourselves with those with whom we are familiar and who are like us.

In developing assessments, choose examples that are counter-stereotypical. For example there are widely-held beliefs about groups being associated with certain traits: black athletes; men rather than women in leadership positions. Using examples which contradict these beliefs helps to minimise biases. It is important to ensure that assessment materials illustrate diversity.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2011/1064/contents/made>

⁵ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-wales>

Age: we may have different ideas about individuals based on their age and may make assumptions about them based on their potential life experiences; we could generalise that an older demographic is less likely to be skilled at using technology.

Affinity: also known as similarity bias – gravitating to people similar to ourselves; in assessment terms, this could lead to selecting materials with content that promotes our own beliefs or interests.

Class: questions could be considered to be ‘elitist’ or ‘middle-class’ and therefore exclude learners from poorer socio-economic backgrounds. For example, using skiing as a topic to assess ability in speaking a modern foreign language could be seen to highlight ‘class biases’ where learners with no experience of skiing could feel alienated by the assessment.

Gender: discrimination based on gender is probably one of the more obvious areas where bias can be experienced. However, it may be that gender bias is overlooked in a particular context because in that context it is considered ‘the norm’. While research into bias in this area is largely in the context of males and females, gender inclusivity goes beyond the concept of inequality and gender stereotyping of males and females and extends to the transgender and non-binary community. When considering whether language used in assessments reinforces stereotypes, we must also explore whether our language is truly inclusive of all gender types – think about use of the terminology to describe gender and also the use of pronouns – this applies equally to acceptable responses noted in marking schemes. For example, rather than using the terms male or female, a candidate may choose acronyms AMAB (Assigned Male At Birth) or AFAB (Assigned Female At Birth).

Further support – hyperlinks

[Fair Access By Design](#)

[Mark Schemes in Knowledge-based Qualifications: A practical Guide](#)

[BATOD Guide to writing accessible exam questions](#)

[UKAAF Best-Practice-Guidance-Document-For-Producers-and-Modifiers](#)

RNIB - Well Prepared! Making exam papers work for learners with sight problems (2nd edition) (PDF) – www.rnibbookshare.org

[Colour Blind Awareness](https://www.colourblindawareness.org/) – <https://www.colourblindawareness.org/>

NatSIP (The National Sensory Impairment Partnership) – https://viewweb.org.uk/exam_access

British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) – [Language of Examinations v3 2020](#)

British Dyslexia Association – www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

The Reading Well – <https://www.dyslexia-reading-well.com/dyslexia-font.html>

Plain English Campaign – <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk>

University of Leicester Inclusive Writing Resources –

February 2021

https://www.le.ac.uk/oerresources/ssds/studyskills/page_37.htm

Show Racism the Red Card resources for teachers - www.theredcard.org/resources-and-activities