

Advice note on SOLAR — on-screen assessments

SQA, through our on-screen assessment delivery service SOLAR, has released Unit-level assessments to support each of the Units in the Lifeskills Mathematics qualifications at National 3, 4 and 5.

Each assessment is generated from a bank of quality-assured question items, to provide variety and the opportunity for centres to deliver assessment more flexibly to suit the needs of candidates. These new assessments are additional to the Unit assessment support packs already published for Lifeskills Mathematics Units, and can be used in combination with these.

All the SOLAR assessments are split into two sections, one for each Outcome, although the result will be given at Unit level. Within each section the questions are randomised. This means that they will not necessarily appear in the same order as the Assessment Standards within the Unit Specification.

The three qualifications/subjects will be listed in SOLAR as:

Lifeskills Mathematics: NAT3 Lifeskills Mathematics: NAT4 Lifeskills Mathematics: NAT5
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To access these assessments, centres must be registered on SOLAR and have access to the Lifeskills Mathematics subjects there. To check whether your centre already has access to SOLAR for their delivery of other qualifications, go to www.sgasolar.org.uk and click on the 'Resources' button.

Using the 'find centre' function will establish whether a centre is already registered. If it is not, after reading the guidance and training materials on this page, access can be requested by clicking on the 'request access' link and following the instructions provided.

There is no cost for registering or delivering any assessments in SOLAR.

Once registered with access to these assessments, assessors can create individual candidate records in SOLAR and can schedule assessments at times to suit the centre and the candidates. The assessment duration is untimed which means that it will not 'time out' a candidate who takes longer to complete their assessment.

Within the assessments, most questions are automatically marked. A number of questions have been set to require human marking by the assessor. To mark these questions, the assessor logs into SOLAR and clicks on the Marking tab. They will then be presented with a list of those assessments which contain questions requiring human marking. On-screen marking instructions are provided for each question. Once marking is complete, the system will show the result for the candidate as having either Achieved or Not Achieved the minimum standard across the Unit.

The SOLAR system will also provide detailed information on how the candidate has performed within each Outcome against each Assessment Standard/topic. This information can be used by assessors to inform remediation and then re-assessment if necessary.

Formative assessment

In addition to the summative assessments described above, SQA has also developed three formative assessments for Lifeskills Mathematics, one at each level. The questions sample from across the three Units within each qualification. They provide supporting feedback on candidates' responses, as well as allowing candidates to become familiar with the process of taking an on-screen assessment and the types of questions they will experience. These formative assessments are not intended to be used as a practice assessment before taking the full Unit assessment.

At the end of each formative assessment, the candidate receives feedback on each Unit, Outcome and Assessment Standard covered.

These formative assessments are available through the Lifeskills Mathematics subject page and also through OpenAssess on the [SOLAR website](#). They are listed under Lifeskills Mathematics as:

Formative Support: National 3 Formative Support: National 4 Formative Support: National 5

Further support and guidance on use of SOLAR generally and these new assessments specifically is available at www.sgasolar.org.uk or from solar@sqa.org.uk.