# Principles and Guidance for Digital Evidence: Questions and Answers

## General

**Does the principles and guidance document relate to all types of SQA qualification?**

The principles within the document have been designed for internally assessed units of Higher National qualifications and vocational qualifications, and are mainly aimed at colleges and external training providers. Work is underway to review how the principles and guidance may need to be updated to also cover digital evidence of other qualifications including National Courses.

## Retention of digital assessment evidence

**How long should centres retain digital assessment evidence and resources for SQA qualifications?**

The retention period for digital assessment evidence should be no different to evidence held on paper. See our advice on evidence retention requirements and retention of candidate assessment records.

## Video evidence

**Where should video evidence be stored?**

Video evidence must be stored securely, so open websites such as YouTube or Vimeo should be avoided as these can be accessed by the general public. However, centres can offer their own secure YouTube channel which is not open to the general public. Where video evidence is not uploaded to a secure website, such as the centre's own secure YouTube channel, it must be stored safely and in secure conditions.

**How long should a piece of video evidence be and what is the most appropriate way to present it to the verifier?**

There is no general rule about how long a piece of video evidence should be. When presenting it to the verifier, it is important that they are provided with information that will enable them to identify where the learning outcomes can be viewed within the video. For example, the centre could provide them with a document that includes time stamps for the points in the recording where claims are made. This will allow the verifier to easily locate these points during assessment and during internal and external verification activities.

The centre could also consider using a time-lapse approach when demonstrating practical abilities on video, as the verifier may not need to witness the full activity in real-time from start to finish.

**How can the assessor or verifier confirm the identity of the candidate in a video recording?**

It is good practice for the candidate to film a short video introduction where their face is clearly seen and in which they provide their full name. During filming, we also advise that the candidate's face is visible most, if not all, of the time.

# E-portfolios

### Does SQA provide an e-portfolio product?

No, we recognise that centres select e-portfolios which best meet the centres' requirements. It is your centre's responsibility to ensure that the e-portfolio it selects is fit for purpose and meets the assessment requirements of the qualifications the e-portfolio will support. You may wish to look at SQA's e-portfolio requirements.

### Will the external verifier be familiar with a centre's e-portfolio before they visit the centre?

It is your centre's responsibility to provide the external verifier with sufficient information about the e-portfolio it uses. The centre is also responsible for ensuring that someone is available during visiting verification activities to provide the external verifier with support and guidance on the use of the e-portfolio. This should also be the case where the external verifier is viewing an e-portfolio remotely.

### What happens if there are problems with the e-portfolio system during visiting verification?

E-portfolio systems and tools should be used to facilitate the location, tracking and assessment of evidence, ideally linking items of evidence to the areas of the qualification to which they apply.

If there are issues with an e-portfolio system, where it does not meet the requirements of the qualification, the centre should resolve these issues with the company that it purchased the e-portfolio system from. The external verifier may not be able to extend the length of the visit if an e-portfolio system is not working effectively or if the external verifier is having difficulty navigating the system.

# Online testing

### Can a centre use any e-assessment system to deliver online tests for SQA qualifications?

SQA offers free online formative and summative assessment via Solar. Solar is our online e-assessment system and it is based on banks of quality-assured question items. Summative e-assessments on Solar are prior-verified so centres know that they are quality assured and meet the required standards, so post-delivery verification of the assessments is not required. Where a centre uses an alternative system for online testing of SQA qualifications, it must ensure that the system is robust and secure in terms of the following:

- ♦ access to onscreen testing
- ♦ access to and storage of items within the question bank
- ♦ storage and backup of candidate responses

Whichever system the centre uses, it must be able to lock down the computer during closed-book online summative assessments to prevent unauthorised access to the internet.

**Can centres use Chromebooks to deliver online tests?**

We are aware that some centres are providing candidates with Chromebooks. The Chromebook could be configured to deliver online tests; however, unlike a Windows laptop, its operating system is web-based. The centre would therefore need to lock down the device in a different way to ensure the assessment is delivered securely. We are exploring the use of these systems for the assessment of SQA qualifications and will provide further guidance on this in due course.

# Digital signatures

**What is SQA's guidance in relation to the use of digital signatures?**

Assessors and verifiers must be able to signify in a legitimate way that they have confirmed assessment or verification decisions. With digital signatures, the assessor or verifier could use a code, such as an appropriate password, PIN, electronic signature or symbol — or a combination of these. Whichever code is used, it must be secure and only be available for use by the assessor or verifier whose code it is. This will prevent other people from using the digital signature.

# Examples of good practice

**Are there case studies or exemplars on using digital evidence?**

Not at the moment. However we are planning to gather case studies from centres to exemplify best practice and will make these available as soon as they are available. We would like to hear from centres interested in sharing their good practice in this area.