



# Frequently asked questions about Street Works assessment

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## **Section 1 – Using and operating SOLAR software iPads and tablets for Street Works exams**

### **We hear that we cannot use iPads, tablets, or Chromebooks but we need to use laptops, is this correct?**

No, this is incorrect. You can still use iPads or tablets. To do this, you can download the Surpass Viewer app, which will allow you to access SOLAR and run flash-based subjects or content on iPads and tablets. HTML-based subjects and content are not compatible with the Surpass Viewer app and therefore cannot be delivered on iPads or tablets. However, we are currently working with our supplier on a solution for this. We will not retire the Flash-based version until an HTML-based app has been tested and is available for use.

Please note that candidates are not permitted to use their own personal equipment during the exam process.

Since January 2021, it has been mandatory for all centres delivering Flash-based content on SOLAR to download the Surpass Viewer app. Guidance on this is available from the SOLAR website, which you can view [here](#). The Surpass Viewer is used for scheduling exams and other centre administration processes such as checking results. Flash-based content is not compatible with Chromebooks.

Centres who wish to deliver exams via internet browser on PCs or laptops (including Chromebooks) should request access to the HTML versions. Both exam delivery and administration processes, such as scheduling, can be completed on the browser. All HTML content is available through the browser, you do not require the Surpass Viewer to schedule and complete exams. You can contact the SOLAR helpdesk on 0345 213 5060. If you need any assistance, a member of staff will be available to help within Helpdesk hours

[View Helpdesk hours.](#)

After reviewing the above information, should you wish to request access to the HTML version, please complete an additional subject request using the [SOLAR Helpdesk form](#) to confirm. Please note, after switching to the HTML version, you will no longer be able to view results for previous candidates who have completed exams through the Flash-based version. We advise that you record any previous results and agree a date when you are ready to switch to the HTML version.

### **My centre purchased iPads/tablets at considerable cost. Will these no longer be compatible?**

iPads and tablets are compatible with the Flash-based version of the exam. You will need to download the Surpass Viewer app on to the device to access this. Please be assured that we will not retire the Flash-based version until an HTML-based app has been tested and is available for use with iPads and tablets.

Please note that it is vital that only an iPad or standard android tablet, which is able to access the Google and Apple stores, is used (not Amazon Fire or Huawei tablets).

[View the minimum specifications for iPads and tablets](#)

## **In the Street Works assessment strategy, it states that laptops and tablets etc are not to be used by candidates. If that is the case, how do candidates access the SOLAR exam?**

There is a section of the Street Works assessment strategy that states 'Only those documents listed in Appendix A are to be available to candidates. No use of notes, handouts, smart phones, laptops, internet or other media device are permitted. Electronic documents listed in Appendix A may be used if provided by the centre on a secured media device which does not have internet access.'

This requirement is specifically about giving candidates access to the allowed documents. Where it mentions smart phones, laptops and internet access this is referring to candidates using their own devices, which is not permitted during the exam. Please refer to the SOLAR website for guidance on delivery methods or contact the SOLAR helpdesk.

## **Is there a written version of the step-by-step video guide on how to set up the exam and how the candidate completes the exam?**

There is not a written version of this guide, however we are happy to answer any additional queries you might have.

[View the Surpass training videos on the SOLAR website.](#)

## **Why do we need to create a user on SOLAR as well as enter candidate details and schedule exams?**

Users are the administration staff who schedule exams. We allow each centre to have more than one person who schedules exams, which is a good practice for staff cover, however all users should have reviewed our training materials before getting an account. Candidates need to be entered on SOLAR to allow them to be scheduled for an exam.

Further details are available on our [website](#).

## **Has the way the exams are scheduled changed? The latest training video on this looks a little different to the original video on SOLAR.**

Our system was updated in January 2019 and has been amended to include new HTML screens for future delivery. Our training materials explain each method and the screens involved to show you the step-by-step process for each function.

## **When scheduling an exam, there are only re-assessment units available on SOLAR and no new unit codes to use. If a candidate passes the exams and their results come through to upload on to SQA Connect, it would show the re-assessment unit codes. If I upload this to SQA Connect will it show the incorrect code on the certificate?**

The exams have been combined into one version, which is used for both the initial assessment and re-assessment. You can find information about this the news section of the

SOLAR website and the [List of Available Assessments](#). At present, candidates' results must be uploaded to the SOLAR system with a valid Scottish Candidate Number (SCN), as well as being registered and certificated on SQA Connect, at this point you would be registering entering a result either for the Initial Assessment based on combined practical assessment and exam or reassessment based purely on the exam. At this point you would register the correct code to produce the candidate's certificate.

### **It is very time-consuming scheduling each unit re-assessment individually. Is there a more efficient way of doing this?**

The best approach to scheduling candidates is by determining how many candidates you need to schedule for an exam, instead of how many exams to schedule for a candidate. For example, if you have 30 candidates who will sit Signing and Lighting in the next three weeks, you can schedule all 30 candidates for the exam during that 'exam window' or three-week period (from the date the first candidate is expected to sit the exam until the last candidate is expected to sit the exam). This means that each candidate can sit the exam at any point during those three weeks. However, please bear in mind that you should only schedule exams in this way for limited time periods and for no longer than three months. Also, each candidate can only sit the exam once using the keycode produced by scheduling. If the candidate needs to re-sit the exam, you will need to schedule the exam again to create a new keycode.

### **Once the candidates have been registered, how quickly can we access the key codes for the exam?**

Keycodes are generated five days prior to the exam, or straight away if the exam is in less than five days' time. Keycodes can be found in the invigilate screen under Test Administration.

### **Can additional key codes be accessed the same day or instantly if the candidate fails a unit?**

An exam can be rescheduled at any time after the candidate has finished the previous exam. However, it is not good practice to reschedule an exam straight away without allowing the candidate time to study and receive centre feedback on the areas that they have failed in. SQA recommends a maximum of two re-sits before having a further discussion with the learner on what retraining may be required.

### **What is the time frame for the centre user to access each key code?**

Keycodes are generated 5 days prior to the exam or straight away if the exam is in less than 5 days' time. Keycodes can be found in the invigilate screen under Test Administration.

### **Is there a video that shows candidates how to enter keycodes and work through the exam?**

Yes, there is a video for candidates on how to enter their Keycodes. This is available from the [training videos section of the SOLAR website](#).

## **How long does each exam take?**

The Street Works Assessment Strategy states that time allowed is 45 minutes for each examined certificate.' However, candidates with additional support needs can be provided with an additional 30 minutes on the SOLAR platform

## **Is there a limit on how many candidates can be in the exam room at the same time? For example, if the room has enough computers for 10 candidates, can we have 10 candidates sitting the online exam at the same time?**

As stated in the Street Works Assessment Strategy, 'No maximum candidate to invigilator ratios is set for multiple choice examinations for initial assessment and reassessment, although the examination facility must be suitable and comply with the Awarding Organisation and Joint Council for Qualifications policies.'

## **Can centre staff complete the pre-assessment information, including the keycode, before candidates begin the exam?**

Yes, centre staff can enter the keycode but they cannot enter the exam. Once a keycode is entered, candidates are asked to confirm that they are the ones sitting the exam and centre staff cannot do this on their behalf.

## **How do we download the exam to iPads or tablets and then upload the results to the main system?**

To schedule the exam, you need to download and install the Surpass Viewer onto a PC or laptop. This will allow the centre user (member of staff) operating SOLAR software to enter candidates onto SOLAR, link them to the subjects you have and schedule the exams. Access to this is through the SOLAR website Centre Login.

[View guidance notes on installing the Surpass Viewer.](#)

[View video training guides on other functions of Surpass Viewer](#)

To deliver the exam for candidates, the centre needs to install the Surpass Viewer app (available through the Google or Apple stores online) on to the iPad or tablet. This will install an app on to the device that will enable the candidate to sit the exam.

### **Installing Surpass Viewer and requesting the correct Subject to use**

We suggest that your centre users take control of doing these installations and do not use third parties or network controls. This will make it easier to install and update the app, although we can help you if you have any problems. Some key points to note:

For scheduling, centres should request the Flash version of the subject, not the HTML version. The subjects are listed separately. You can complete a 'Request for new subjects' using the helpdesk form on the SOLAR website.

[Complete the form.](#)

If your centre is using tablets to deliver the exam, it is vital that only iPads or standard android tablets that can access the Google and Apple stores are used. You must not use Amazon Fire or Huawei devices.

[View the minimum specifications –for iPads and tablets.](#)

## **If using a PC or laptop, are we allowed to have the permitted reference documents on the same device for candidates to access during the exams?**

Yes, providing they are saved on the PC or laptop (ie on the hard drive) and candidates are not accessing them on the internet. Internet access is not allowed during the exam.

## **How do I deliver the exam offline?**

Once you have scheduled the exam, it can be downloaded to the iPad or tablet with the Surpass Viewer app or laptop or Chromebook and the exam can be completed offline.

(Please see the [training videos on how to schedule an exam and find the keycodes.](#) -)

You can do this by opening the app on your iPad/tablet and entering the keycode, which you will find in the Invigilate tab of the staff software after scheduling. Once you input the keycode, you will be presented with an option to 'download to take later'. There is no need to look for folders like you would on a PC or laptop as the app finds this each time by the keycode. The exam will only start on the date and time your centre has scheduled it. You can download the exam up to a maximum of five days before the exam is due to start.

## **How do I make sure the download is successful and where can I get any help?**

You can check that the exam is downloaded by looking in the Invigilate tab and checking the Status column. You can then see the status to check if it has uploaded again. You can contact the SOLAR helpdesk on 0345 213 5060. If you need any assistance, a member of staff will be available to help within Helpdesk hours

[View Helpdesk hours.](#)

## **How do I upload the exam result to my centre's system?**

When delivering the exam, the device should be offline. Once the exam is finished, the iPad/tablet needs to be re-connected to the internet. When your device is connected to the internet you can press the upload button in the Surpass Viewer app. This will then push the exam to be marked and resulted and it will be visible in the staff software, which you can see on your laptop or PC by logging into the system through the SOLAR website (Centre Login). The exams must be uploaded within seven days of the exam being completed or you will lose them.

## **Can I practice uploading the exam result?**

The SOLAR Team can provide a sample subject for you to test the download and upload options. For this, you need to request Centres Practice as a subject on [the SOLAR helpdesk form.](#)

The following video guides may help you to see what you are doing with the devices for delivery:

- [Guidance video for centres to download and install the app to a tablet](#) (iPad is the same except the Apple store is used) –
- [Guidance video on how to run an exam on the device using the Surpass Viewer app](#) (This does not cover downloading to take later but please follow the steps above)

## **How soon can the centre user access the results of each candidate?**

If the exam is completed online, the results should be available straight away as it is automatically marked. Centres can schedule a candidate review to go through the exam with a candidate. A guidance video is available for this [here](#) on our website.

If the exam is completed offline, the device needs to be re-connected to the internet to enable it to be marked and push the result to the main system. You will need to check the 'Results' tab once uploaded to see this and pass to the candidate.

## **If the exam is completed offline, does the candidate still get a result at the end of the exam?**

No. The exam is only automatically marked when it is completed online. If the exam is completed offline, the device will need to be re-connected to the internet to enable it to be marked and push the result to the main system. You will need to check the 'Results' tab once uploaded to see this and pass to the candidate.

## **How does the centre know where candidates have failed if the exam is done offline?**

As stated before, once uploaded the Results section updates to show candidates information on the exams taken offline.

## **Can candidates review their answers prior to finishing the exam?**

Yes, candidates can review their answers, provided they have not hit the 'Finish' button.

## **It is advised that, should the candidate fail, they should be given feedback on where they have failed. However, the Invigilator does not necessarily have that underpinning knowledge to discuss with the candidate?**

We would normally expect someone with the necessary knowledge to provide this feedback to the candidate, however an invigilator does not necessarily have to be someone without the necessary knowledge, as long as they have not been involved in the training of anyone undertaking the exam.

## **Our centre was notified by SQA that there has been an issue with correct answers on SOLAR being marked as wrong. Has this issue**

## **been addressed and how, as an Invigilator, can we be expected to identify this?**

You are not expected to identify this. As an Invigilator, your role is to ensure the exam is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Joint Council for Qualifications only. The exam questions are under review by HAUC to address issues and will be revised in time for 1 June 2021. If a candidate feels that they have received an incorrect mark they should follow the centres appeals policy.

## **Can the assessor also invigilate the SOLAR exams?**

No. As detailed in section 10.5 of the [Street Works assessment strategy](#), 'centre staff providing any training prior to examination cannot carry out invigilation. Invigilators should receive adequate training to enable them to conduct examination in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications guidance.' The assessment strategy also states, 'To prevent becoming distracted, the invigilator must not mark completed examinations whilst examinations are being undertaken.' There are no further restrictions.

## **Do the exam results still need to be entered on the candidate's record via SQA Connect or are they updated automatically?**

At present, candidates' results must be uploaded to the SOLAR system with a valid Scottish Candidate Number (SCN), as well as being registered and certificated on SQA Connect. SOLAR is not linked to the SQA registration and certification systems, although we are currently investigating options to link SOLAR with other SQA systems.

## **Can a candidate complete a third re-sit if necessary or appropriate, or do they have to come back to for more training?**

SQA recommends up to two re-sits before having a discussion with the candidate on what retraining may be required, which may require the candidate having to return to the centre for further training where necessary.

## **Can multiple exams be downloaded with additional key codes to allow for possible re-sits?**

No, you cannot schedule a candidate for more than one version of the same exam at the same time. The system will recognise that an exam is scheduled for this candidate and it will not allow you to schedule another until the first one is done. The candidate must complete the exam and be resultted to allow for another one to be scheduled. If the candidate completed the exam offline, it must be uploaded and resultted to allow for another to be re-scheduled.

If you have the Flash subject version you can have more than one candidate's exam on the same device, using the download option. So, you could use one device with six exams downloaded (although this will depend on the storage capacity of the device).

## **Can the user access sample exams to familiarise themselves with the system?**

Yes, we do have some formative (practice) assessments available. Centres can schedule exams on Surpass Viewer or [access them through this link on our website](#). Although there is not a formative assessment available for Street Works (not all subjects have formative assessments), it would provide candidates with some practice on using the system in a test environment.

## **Is there a telephone number that centres can use for direct assistance?**

You can contact the SOLAR helpdesk on 0345 213 5060. If you need any assistance, a member of staff will be available to help within Helpdesk hours

[View Helpdesk hours](#).

## **Are you aware if there are any grants available to centres to implement the move to online assessment?**

Please contact your SQA Regional Manager, who may be able to advise you of any local funding opportunities that they are aware of from other centres in your area.

## **Section 2 – Other practical operational questions**

### **When setting up or registering a candidate on SOLAR, who has not been allocated an SQA number, what should we do?**

The Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) must be included when registering a candidate on SOLAR. You should not attempt to register a candidate before an SQA number has been allocated. More details about setting up candidates are available on our [website](#).

### **Is the current need to employ a separate Invigilator to oversee the knowledge assessment going to be compulsory for the observation of practical skills as well? Is the 'conflict of interest' assumed to influence the questions the same for assignments, exercises, and practical works?**

There is no foreseeable circumstance that would lead to a requirement for invigilation of the practical assessment process and there is no need to employ a separate invigilator. The Invigilator could be within the centre as long as they are compliant with the requirements of the Joint Council for Qualifications guidance, which could include a reciprocal arrangement between centres.

### **What is the expectation on quality assurance for the questions to be carried out at planned times? Currently, a centre can turn to a question session to help accommodate bad weather or a break**

**down in plant or delivery. However, if the centre needs to have an invigilator for every question session, the flexibility will be lost or the cost will rise substantially.**

As stated in the [Street Works assessment strategy](#), 'Centres must provide the Awarding Organisation with their current assessment programme and, **if requested, dates of assessments**. This should also incorporate the assessment programme that covers any planned assessment event. This will allow the Awarding Organisation to assess that sufficient time is allocated for assessments. (See example outline programme in Appendix B).'

SQA has not asked for specific dates of assessment as yet.

**What options are there for candidates who have difficulties with reading or writing? Will there be an audio version of the exam or will there be an option to scribe for a candidate?**

As per Section 10.3 of the [Street Works assessment strategy](#), candidates who have additional requirements or reasonable adjustments for exams should inform the centre and any such arrangements must be in accordance with the Awarding Organisation's policies and procedures.

**Are there any plans to match the old units (eg 102) to the new units (eg R01) on SOLAR and SQA Connect?**

The old units are still applicable to centres in Wales and Northern Ireland, so for the time being they are applicable to two different numbering systems.

**Can you confirm when the paper-based exam will no longer be current, and the SOLAR exam must be used?**

All centres must switch to the SOLAR exam from 1 June 2021. SQA has issued previous communications to centres on this and official communications from HAUC were distributed to centres on Friday 12 March 2021.

**Will candidates still need to complete the unit summary paperwork and other exercises on paper?**

Yes, for practical assessments the assessment paperwork still needs to be completed and retained as per the assessment strategy.

For the knowledge elements, paper-based assessment can only take place until 31 May 2021. From 1 June 2021, you can no longer use paper-based assessments for the knowledge elements and must switch to the SOLAR exam. However, results for paper-based assessments can continue to be accepted up until 14 June 2021.

**If someone fails a test how soon can they retake the test?**

An exam can be rescheduled at any time after the candidate has finished the previous exam. You can also review a full breakdown in the results section to see if additional training is

required. SQA also provides guidance that two resits may be undertaken. If further resits are required, the centre should discuss additional training needs with the learner and carry out the additional training identified before a further resit takes place.

**With regards to Scottish Candidate Numbers (SCNs)s, if candidates do not have one, are we allowed to create them on SQA Connect? Also, with the results on SOLAR, will this generate a certificate, or will we have to add the results on to SQA Connect?**

You can create a candidate number on SQA Connect, however please check with SQA to ensure the candidate does not already have a candidate number before creating a new one.

At present, candidates' results must be uploaded to the SOLAR system with a valid SCN, as well as being registered and certificated on SQA Connect. SOLAR is not linked to the SQA registration and certification systems, although we are currently investigating options to link SOLAR with other SQA systems.

**Is the SQA Centre Hub where we need to upload the candidate's additional paperwork?**

In addition to being created in SOLAR, candidates should be registered, and their result provided through [SQA Connect](#). The SQA Centre Hub is where centres can upload evidence to meet the Quality Assurance Criteria, who have been selected for QV or SV activity. Centres must sign up to use the SQA Centre Hub and can do so by contacting [operationshmvq@sqa.org.uk](mailto:operationshmvq@sqa.org.uk).

**Do we need to keep the registers and Invigilator reports?**

Yes.

**If we have a candidate with no SCN, how do we create them as a new candidate on SOLAR?**

The Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) must be included when registering a candidate on SOLAR. You should not attempt to register a candidate before an SQA number has been allocated. More details about setting up candidates are available on our [website](#).