

Equality Review Summary



Qualification	English for Speakers of other Languages (ESoL)
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Level	National 5
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REVIEW OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS EQUALITY REVIEW

Date of review	
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Coursework and/ or Question Paper revisions

The performance (speaking and listening) component will remain unchanged and will comprise 30% of the total assessment

Following the removal of units, the question papers will be extended by 20 marks to allow an increase in the sampling of the course content. Therefore, the duration of the exam will also increase. The extension of the question papers will allow an increase in the sampling of the course content as follows:

Listening - an additional 5 marks (20 to 25 marks), candidates will complete this question paper in approximately 35 minutes

Reading - an additional 10 marks (25 to 35 marks), candidates will complete this question paper in 1 hour

Writing - an additional 5 marks (25 to 30 marks), candidates will complete this question paper in 1 hour and 10 minutes

Scaling will be applied to retain the current component weightings.

Equality & inclusion issues

No changes have been made to the aims, rationale or content of the course. Only the Course assessment has changed as outlined above. This means that the original equality review carried out and attached remains valid and fit for purpose. It should be noted however, that the Units, which were a feature of the original ERF, have now been removed.

Extension to question papers

Disability

Some disabled candidates who require extra time may find increased focus on externally assessed exams more challenging and they may experience fatigue over the longer examination time. For example, candidates with physical disabilities may have difficulties in maintaining stamina or those unable to concentrate for extended periods may have difficulties in maintaining focus and have difficulties in demonstrating their attainment. Other disabled candidates such as those with mental health difficulties or emotional behavioural difficulties may find the longer examination experience overly stressful leading to increased anxiety which could negatively impact on their ability to demonstrate their attainment.

Religion and belief

Some candidates because of religion and belief may experience a higher level of fatigue and be adversely affected in an extended question paper because they are fasting, for example this could impact on Muslim candidates who fast during Ramadan.

Actions that will mitigate any adverse impact outlined above

While it is not possible to exempt disabled learners from the external QP at National 5 where this is an integral assessment component, the provision of appropriate assessment arrangements and other supportive practices will mitigate the adverse impact for many disabled candidates. For example, by the careful consideration of the amount of extra time being requested and by further consideration being given as to whether there are any other more appropriate assessment arrangements such as using ICT and/or assistive technologies or the inclusion of rest breaks.

SQA recognises that reasonable adjustments or assessment arrangements may be incapable of mitigating all of these potential negative impacts entirely. Nevertheless, the decision to extend the existing question has been taken to ensure that the standards, quality and credibility of the National Qualifications are maintained.

It is not possible for SQA to take all possible religious festivals and periods of observance into account when constructing the exam timetable. SQA will take into account, through its exceptional circumstances process, any negative impact such as a candidate being unwell caused by fasting during an examination.

ORIGINAL NATIONAL QUALIFICATION DEVELOPMENT EQUALITY REVIEW

Date of review	17/04/2015
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Summary of Conclusion and recommendation

Ensuring robust standards and high levels of confidence in the ESOL qualifications is essential, not only to those who require a demonstration of competence but also to the students themselves, whose personal skills, confidence and self-esteem are positively impacted by the achievement of high-quality, highly regarded qualifications.

The development of all four skills and the demonstration of their achievement are deemed to be of key importance to the award of an ESOL qualification

It therefore may not be possible to remove the adverse impact of all of the barriers identified as there needs to be sufficient evidence that the candidate has met the standards in all of the four skills in the ESOL course.

It would not be possible to answer questions based on a transcript as an alternative to listening or present written work as an alternative to speaking. This is because such tasks would simply amount to re-assessment in reading and writing and would also undermine the importance of all four elements.

British Sign Language would not be an appropriate reasonable adjustment to speaking and listening components of ESOL qualifications for two reasons:

- British Sign Language is recognised as a language in its own right
- ESOL qualifications are specifically designed to assess skills in English language and do not include assessment objectives appropriate for the assessment of British Sign Language.

Exemption from the Speaking and Listening Performance could not be considered as a reasonable adjustment of last resort because it comprises 30% of the total mark for the Course assessment.