



Using technology to support assessment remotely: questions and answers

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Note: please ensure that you always follow the most up-to-date public health advice.

Questions and answers

I am unable to use a camera to invigilate assessments and/or coursework completion — what should I do?

We recognise that the academic year 2020–21 is taking place in very challenging and exceptional circumstances. If there is no possible way to use cameras for invigilation or no other means of carrying out the assessment (for example postponing the assessment until it can be administered in person), then you should try to limit the time that the assessment is available to the candidate before it is submitted.

You can remind candidates of the conditions of assessment, and ask for confirmation from the candidate, and (perhaps) another witness, that these have been adhered to. It is worth centres considering whether this mode of delivery has an impact on assessment outcomes. If you are providing an assessment as evidence, you may need to make clear the conditions under which the assessment was taken. If you are concerned about issues such as plagiarism, you may wish to consider using software that can detect this. If you decide to do this, you will need to make sure that students are fully aware of this from the outset.

Can I use GLOW or another environment such as Google Classrooms to make an assessment available to candidates?

We recognise that academic year 2020–21 is taking place in very challenging circumstances. Most digital learning and assessment environments are technically very secure and can be used to make assessment instruments available to candidates, and to store evidence. However, you will need to consider how you will limit visibility to other candidates and minimise the risk of exposure of any SQA-supplied secure assessment material through that environment.

What equipment will candidates need to do an assessment remotely?

This will depend on a few factors including: the type of platform that you're using and what is expected of the candidate during the assessment. For example, for a speaking assessment, a smartphone may be sufficient but if a candidate is expected to type responses, they would need access to a laptop or desktop, potentially with a webcam. Not all candidates will have easy access to appropriate technology — they may not have any suitable equipment in their home or be sharing with other family members. For these candidates, it is worth exploring what options there are and whether postponing the assessment would be the best option.

What's an appropriate setting for sitting an assessment remotely?

One of the challenges with remote assessment is making sure that you can, as far possible, ensure suitable conditions of assessment. With candidates sitting assessments at home, you have less control over their assessment environment. It's worth discussing this with the candidate — do they have a quiet, solitary space with a suitable desk and chair that they can use? This is in addition to any technical requirements. Some candidates may not be able to find a suitable space, especially if they are isolating with other members of their family. With this in mind, it is worth considering whether remote assessment is appropriate and whether an alternative (such as postponing the assessment) may be a better option.

You know your candidates well, and so you will need to make the decision, along with the candidate, as to whether sitting an assessment remotely is the right decision for them. The duty of care extends to the digital space and so if you think that a candidate may be overly anxious or will have difficulty concentrating on an assessment (for example if they are isolating with a family member who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms), then it is worth considering what other options may be available.

Can a candidate demand to undertake an assessment remotely?

No, it is for the centre to determine how an assessment is delivered. And, as noted above, there may be assessments where SQA has stipulated that the assessment must take place and be invigilated in a physical environment. However, there will be specific circumstances which make the use of remote invigilation a suitable option — such as illness, immobility, self-isolation or great distance from the centre. In these cases, the advice given above should provide options which the centre and the candidate can agree on.

What options do I have when sharing secure assessment content (such as ASPs [assessment support packs]) with candidates?

Live assessment materials must be stored and shared securely in line with SQA requirements. You should carefully consider the methods used to store and share assessment materials prior to delivering an assessment. Under normal circumstances or unless otherwise stated, assessment materials should not be shared with candidates prior to the assessment taking place unless that is explicitly supported by the conditions of assessment. You should also keep a record of when the candidate has had access to assessment materials.

As in normal circumstances, you may be able to share assessment content with candidates in person. If that option is not available to you, it may be possible for you to share the assessment content with candidates in a time-limited and secure manner on a virtual learning environment such as GLOW or Moodle. Some assessment support packs will be made available via SQA's SOLAR platform (please see below for further details). If none of these options are available, you may need to consider other alternatives such as email. If doing so you will need to think about how you can ensure that the assessment content remains secure.

Can I use ASPs and NABs to assess candidates remotely?

Yes, but you will need to ensure that you consider all aspects of the conditions of assessment that may be required and how candidates will access them securely.

What is the difference between remote invigilation and remote assessment?

The remote invigilator plays no part in the assessment other than ensuring that the process conforms to the required arrangements. The role of the remote assessor is more extensive and will include making assessment judgements remotely through the use of technology.

What is the difference between remote invigilation and online proctoring?

Proctoring is the term used by the companies who provide software solutions which can support the remote delivery of assessment. The term used by SQA is **invigilation**.

Can a candidate refuse to undertake an assessment by remote invigilation?

In normal circumstances, the physical learning environment would also be available to host any assessments which are required. Where learning is delivered remotely, then it may be that assessments are online too, and therefore remotely invigilated. If that is clear from the outset — and all steps put in place to support this mode of delivery — then it may be unreasonable at this point for a candidate to ask the centre to switch the mode of assessment and assessment location.

During the current situation with COVID-19, it may be more difficult to manage on-site assessment delivery. If a candidate does not wish to undertake an assessment remotely, then they may have to wait until it is possible to carry out the assessment in person. Candidates should be made fully aware of any consequences of deferred assessment.

What software can I use for remote assessment and/or remote invigilation?

As every centre has different IT set-ups and support, beyond the digital assessments that SQA offers on our [SOLAR](#) platform, we are unable to give specific advice. However, many of the currently available tools to support video conferencing and remote working (for example Microsoft Teams) can be used to contribute towards a suitable model to support controlled assessment remotely.

In choosing suitable software, we would recommend considering the following:

- ◆ How will you use the software to uphold SQA's conditions of assessment?
- ◆ How are you ensuring that the software is secure? For example:
 - is it regularly updated?
 - is usage password protected?
 - are accounts locked after a specified number of failed access attempts?
 - if it is web-based does it use https to secure all pages?
 - can you monitor users and usage?

Will SQA make ASPs available through the SOLAR platform for use this year?

SQA already has a number of assessments available in [SOLAR](#) to support a range of qualifications. We are offering the opportunity for centres to request that additional prior verified assessments (either SQA or centre-devised) are made available through SOLAR to support SQA qualifications. Once converted they will be made available securely in SOLAR to all centres delivering those qualifications. To find out more information about how to request an assessment support pack or other assessment to be put onto SOLAR, please go to www.sqasolar.org.uk for more information. Before making a request, please consider if the assessment you are requesting is suitable for the SOLAR platform or online delivery at all. Depending on demand, there may be some time between request and availability of the assessment on SOLAR, so please allow sufficient time for this when making your request.

Can all the assessments for a qualification be delivered entirely remotely?

There are no technical reasons why this may not be possible. For some qualifications however, remotely delivering assessments may not be suitable, either due to the nature of the assessment, stipulations from SQA, regulatory restrictions, and in some licence to practice qualifications. You will need to consider carefully remote assessment, especially if your programme of learning is also delivered remotely. The risk is that you are entirely dependent on the integrity of the remotely invigilated model, and we know that there is much online discussion on how a candidate could subvert this. That, of course, is true of all invigilation methods and — over time — measures are introduced to limit this as much as possible. But this model is still relatively new and does involve a diminished level of oversight from the centre.

It may be prudent, for now at least, to run with a mixed model of centrally- and remotely invigilated assessments. Confidence in the integrity of the process will also be strengthened by a good understanding of your candidates' progress and when it is appropriate to present them for assessment. Results should be broadly in line with your expectations and any significant discrepancies should be investigated.