

7. Glossary

Accessibility	The extent to which a service can be used by people with disabilities or special access requirements. With reference to e-assessment, the accessibility of an e-assessment or e-test is the extent to which the e-assessment system (including the physical environment, test software itself, and the administration system) can be accessed, including by the student using special software access tools (such as screen readers, screen magnifiers, Braille readers and speech recognition software).
Adaptive test	<p>A test in which successive questions are presented based primarily on the properties and content of the items, and the candidate's response to previous items, that is the questions become harder or easier depending on performance.</p> <p>Note: Adaptive tests are widely used for diagnostic purposes, allowing a more detailed exploration of strong and weak areas in a student's knowledge within a given time for a test.</p>
Assessment	The process of making judgements about the extent to which a candidate's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment objective	A single unit of knowledge, skills or understanding that a test is designed to assess in a candidate, usually set in the context of the programme of study and as part of the test specification.
Assessor	The person who assesses a candidate's work.
Assistive technology	<p>Also called 'access tools' or 'access technology'. Computer-based materials and software designed to provide or improve the accessibility of e-assessments.</p> <p>Note: Tools include aids to test authors for evaluating accessibility or for adding in accessibility features to content, and devices and programmes provided for the candidate to provide an alternative or augmented means of accessing on-screen assessments (such as screen readers, screen magnifiers, Braille readers and speech recognition software).</p>

E-assessment: Guide to effective practice

Authentication (1)	<p>Confirmation that a candidate's work has been produced by the candidate who is putting it forward for assessment, and, where applicable, that it has been produced under the required conditions.</p> <p>Note: Some qualifications require the candidate to make a statement of authenticity. Where work is part of a collaborative effort, authentication may also state the candidate's role in the work.</p>
Authentication (2)	<p>In e-assessment, authentication is increasingly used to describe the function of specialised software to authenticate the identity of a user at a computer terminal, and to pass this data between operating systems.</p>
Automated feedback	<p>Providing feedback to the candidate about their performance, based on automatic scoring of their responses. While automatic feedback will usually include a result (for example pass/fail, a grade), it will often also include formative information such as strong and weak areas of performance in the test and recommendations for further study or progression.</p>
Automated scoring	<p>Marking of candidates' responses electronically. Automatic scoring is largely limited to objective question types such as multiple choice questions.</p>
Awarding body	<p>An organisation or consortium that awards qualifications. To be eligible to award accredited qualifications in the non-higher education sectors (for example in schools, colleges and workplace training), awarding bodies must meet the requirements of the regulatory authorities.</p>
Becta	<p>A UK government agency which supports all four UK nations' education departments in their strategic ICT developments. See www.becta.org.uk.</p>

Browser	<p>A software application that enables users to display and interact with HTML documents (or ‘web pages’) hosted by web servers or held on a file system. The most widely used (web) browser is Microsoft Internet Explorer but there are others such as Mozilla, Netscape Navigator, Opera and Firefox which are also popular in some organisations.</p> <p>Note: Many e-assessment software applications deliver tests to candidates via a browser, which is a popular approach as it reduces the time and effort required to set up a student machine to access the test, given that all modern desktop computer systems have a browser available by default.</p>
BS 7988:2002	<p>The British Standard for the use of information technology in computer-aided examinations. The first draft was published in 2002. It is aimed at a wide audience of both exam providers and exam centres and includes performance criteria and codes of practice. Available from www.bsi-global.com.</p>
Candidate	<p>A person who is registered with an awarding body for a qualification or unit.</p>
CCEA	<p>CCEA is the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. CCEA carries out the principal activities of advising government on what should be taught in Northern Ireland’s schools and colleges; monitoring standards of qualifications and examinations offered by awarding bodies in Northern Ireland; and awarding qualifications including a diverse range of qualifications, awards and certificates in education, training and skills.</p>
Centre for Recording Achievement	<p>See CRA.</p>
Certificate	<p>The record of attainment in a unit or qualification for an individual issued by the awarding body.</p>
Code of practice	<p>Principles and practices which define a required standard of activity in the management and delivery of assessment activities.</p> <p>Note: In the non-higher education sectors of education, these are specified by the regulatory authorities against which, for example, awarding body processes and procedures for the assessing and awarding of particular qualification types are designed and evaluated.</p>

E-assessment: Guide to effective practice

Collusion	The act where two or more people collaborate secretly to obtain an unfair outcome in an assessment (one form of cheating).
Common centre recognition	Proposed system for enabling awarding bodies to collectively recognise a centre as a place for delivering, managing and assessing qualifications.
CRA	<p>The Centre for Recording Achievement. A UK national network organisation seeking to promote the awareness of recording achievement and action planning processes as an important element in improving learning and progression throughout the world of education, training and employment.</p> <p>Note: The CRA is undertaking work in the area of e-portfolios. See www.recordingachievement.org.</p>
Cryptography	A scientific discipline which includes principles, means and methods for the modification ('encryption') of data in order to hide its content, prevent its undetected modification, or prevent its unauthorised use.
Dedicated test centre	An electronic test centre which is not used for other purposes at other times.
DCELLS	Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and qualifications regulator in Wales. Formerly DELLS.
Delivery platform	The final technical destination for an e-assessment on the client computer, for example a desktop PC.
Diagnostic assessment	Non-accredited assessment used to identify a learner's strengths and weaknesses with a view to providing an appropriate learning programme. Often undertaken at the start of a programme, diagnostic assessment therefore needs to evaluate a learner's existing level of attainment across the range of relevant knowledge, skills and understanding.
Dynamically constructed	In a technical context, meaning done at the time it is required, not pre-prepared, and/or personalised for the particular user. For example, a dynamic test generation system will produce a customised test for a candidate just before the candidate starts the assessment rather than selecting a pre-prepared test.
E-assessment	The end-to-end electronic assessment processes where ICT is used for the presentation of assessment activity and the recording of responses. This includes the end-to-end assessment process from the perspective of learners, tutors, learning establishments, awarding bodies and regulators, and the general public.

E-marking	A generic term for all the ways that the use of ICT can contribute to the marking of assessments.
E-portfolio	<p>An electronically based file store and information management system which is modelled on the working method used for paper portfolios, but which takes advantage of the capabilities of ICT. The learner builds and maintains a digital repository of artefacts, which they can use to demonstrate competence (in a summative assessment setting) and/or reflect on their learning (in a formative assessment setting).</p> <p>Note: Within e-assessment, e-portfolios are generally related to a particular course over a particular period of time, and designed for assessment purposes. However, in other settings portfolios may also or alternatively be a ‘complete learning life record’, where students have access to their records, digital repository, feedback and on reflection students can achieve a greater understanding of their individual growth, career planning and CV building.</p>
E-test	An assessment presented to the candidate on screen.
E-test distributor	A general term for the organisation(s) providing the assessment to a test centre, which may be the awarding body and/or the technical partner.
External assessment	An assessment which is set and/or marked by examiners who are not associated with the organisation providing the candidate’s learning.
Fair assessment	Assessment which is free of any bias, that is free of any factor that distorts the true measurement of the candidate’s ability or achievement. Sources of bias can include factors in test design (accessibility, question design and content) and test delivery (physical conditions during assessment) and marking.
Feedback	<p>Qualitative and/or quantitative information about their performance given to students after an assessment.</p> <p>Note: Unlike a grade, feedback is explicitly developmental, that is oriented towards further progress on the part of the student. Feedback is particularly important in formative assessment, when no final grade will be given. Feedback typically includes a correct or model response and an explanation of any incorrect responses made by the student.</p>

E-assessment: Guide to effective practice

First line technical support	A telephone, e-mail and/or fax service providing reactive assistance to computer system users, operated by the assessment provider and answering all initial queries from the user (hence 'first line'). Those queries which cannot be answered are escalated, usually to second line technical support and field support services.
Formative assessment	Assessment that has a primary objective of providing developmental feedback (item, topic and/or assessment level) to a student (and perhaps also their teacher) to adjust the plan for future learning. As such, it usually takes place during the learning programme (rather than at the end — summative, or beginning — diagnostic). Note: It is often called 'assessment for learning'.
Group-based assessment	A process of collective assessment often used for project work and for encouraging collaboration in teaching and learning. Note: Group members can receive an equal mark or a proportion of the group mark supplemented by marks for individual work. Marks can be allocated by the course tutor and/or by the group collectively. Tutors often ask candidates about the distribution of work among group members, group interaction and the way resources were used.
High stakes test	A test which is statutory and/or has results collected and used for statutory reporting, that is when the outcomes are important to the centre and candidates (for example, affecting progress to another phase of education).
ICT systems	Clusters of interconnected information and communications technology (synonymous with IT for almost all purposes, but strictly speaking including the internet and other network-enabled devices).
Initial assessment	A relatively short assessment of a learner which may follow a screening test and which is designed to determine approximately the general level of knowledge or competence.
Internal assessment	An assessment marked within the institution delivering the programme of learning, possibly by the tutor delivering the learning. This marking may then be subject to external modification and/or verification.
Internal verifier	An individual appointed by the centre to ensure accurate and consistent standards of assessment between assessors operating within a centre.

Interoperability	A feature of computer systems' components which allow the components to interact (share data, processes etc.) according to technical standards which define functionality useful to the user. The IMS QTI specification is an example of an interoperability specification within the e-assessment domain which allows tests to be presented on different delivery platforms.
Intranet	A network of computers within an organisation which functions (from a user's perspective) similarly to the internet, and potentially provides additional services to users, while also preventing unauthorised external access. From 'internal' and 'network'.
Invigilation	The supervision of an examination to maintain a fair and consistent testing environment, but having no part in the examination process itself. Invigilation/invigilator are the most commonly used terms in the UK. The USA equivalent terms are proctor/proctoring.
ISO/IEC 23988	The International Standard for the use of information technology in computer-aided examinations. It is aimed at a wide audience of both exam providers and exam centres and includes performance criteria and codes of practice. Available from www.bsi-global.com . BS ISO/IEC 23988:2007 has superseded BS 7988:2002.
Item	The smallest separately identified question or task within an assessment plus its associated information (for example mark scheme, curriculum reference, media content, performance information etc), usually a single objective question. Distinguished from a 'question', which may be a longer and less-objective task but often used synonymously.
Item bank	A storage facility for items which allows them to be maintained and used for automatic and manual test generation purposes (to create tests on paper and/or on screen). Today, almost all item banks are electronic although historically many were physical.
JANET	The Joint Academic NETwork is a British private, government funded computer network dedicated to education and research. All further and higher education organisations are connected to JANET, as are all the research councils and several metropolitan area networks in the UK.

E-assessment: Guide to effective practice

JISC	The Joint Information Systems Committee. An independent advisory body that works with further and higher education by providing strategic guidance, advice and opportunities to use ICT to support learning, teaching, research and administration. JISC is funded by the UK Further and Higher Education Councils and is responsible for the development of this e-assessment glossary.
Joint Information Systems Committee	See JISC.
Learner achievement record	An electronic document, owned by the learner, in which the credits and qualifications achieved in the QCF are recorded.
Lifelong Learning UK	Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is the sector skills council responsible for the professional development of all those working in community learning and development; further education; higher education; libraries; archives and information services; and work-based learning. See www.lluk.org .
Local server	A server which is located within a centre on a LAN rather than on the internet.
Management information system	See MIS.
MCQ	A question where the student is required to select a single correct answer from a range of available options called distracters (usually four or five).
MIS	Management information system. A computer system used in educational institutions which stores administrative information (such as student administrative records, financial information etc.) about the enterprise, its staff, learners, programmes etc.
Moderator	See Verifier.
Multimedia	ICT systems that support the interactive use of text, audio, still images, video and graphics. Each of these elements must be converted in some way from analogue form to digital form before they can be used in a computer application. Thus, the distinction of multimedia is the convergence of previously diverse systems.
Multiple-choice question type	See MCQ.

National Qualifications Framework	See NQF.
Navigation	In an e-assessment context, the on-screen buttons and other controls that move candidates from screen to screen in an on-screen assessment, and provide access to other non-question specific features such as on-screen help, print functions, exit etc. They are generally visually separate from controls that relate to the specific question.
NQF	National Qualifications Framework. Sets out the levels (from Entry to 8, increasing with ability) at which qualifications can be recognised in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. See www.qca.org.uk/493.html . See SCQF.
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification. A large suite of vocational qualifications offered in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are generally portfolio-assessed qualifications which show skills, knowledge and ability in specific work areas. Can be taken at five levels, depending on level of expertise and responsibility of the job — see Scottish Qualifications Authority. See SVQ.
Offline assessment	An on-screen assessment which is conducted without using an internet connection during the test (although an internet connection may be used to deliver the test to the client computer prior to the test starting, and to upload the candidate responses once the test has been completed).
On-demand assessment	Used in examinations. Assessments where there is a high degree of flexibility in the date and time that tests can be offered to suit the student or their learning programme (although it may not necessarily include all days, times and dates). In contrast to many traditional assessments which are provided on a fixed date and time (or a limited range of dates and times).
On-paper assessment	An assessment delivered to the candidate on paper and where the candidate responds on paper (that is, a traditional examination).
PDA	Personal digital assistant. A small hand-held computer. Depending on level of sophistication may allow e-mail, word processing, music playback, internet access, digital photography or GPS reception, but generally less functional than a pocket computer.

E-assessment: Guide to effective practice

PDF	Adobe Corporation's Portable Document Format. A file format that enables people to view documents with their fonts, images, links and layouts displaying exactly as they were created, regardless of the type of computer or other software being used. See www.adobe.com .
Plug-in	A program added to a web browser in order to add capabilities, often multimedia capabilities, for example Flash plug-in and Java plug-in.
QCA	The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. An English non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Roles include the maintenance and development of the English schools national curriculum and associated assessments, tests and examinations in England, and the regulation of publicly funded qualifications in further and continuing education. The QCA is also responsible for the regulation of NVQs in Northern Ireland. See www.qca.org.uk .
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework. A unit-based qualification framework underpinned by a system of credit accumulation and transfer.
Qualification	A formal award made by an awarding body for demonstration of achievement or competence.
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	See QCA.
Qualifications and Credit Framework	See QCF.
Qualification regulators	The four bodies, in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, responsible for the regulation of all externally accredited qualifications outside higher education.
RBC	Regional Broadband Consortia. The ten groups of regionally adjacent local education authorities (LEAs) in England working together to procure broadband telecommunications cost-effectively for schools and to develop online content.
Response file	The electronic file which contains the candidate's responses to the assessment, which is returned from the workstation to a central computer for marking.
SCQF	See Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
Score	The total marks achieved by a student on a test.

Scottish Qualifications Authority	The national body in Scotland responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment and certification of qualifications other than degrees — www.sqa.org.uk .
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	The qualifications framework for Scotland which allocates a level and credit value to each Scottish qualification. The aim of SCQF is to facilitate understanding on the range of qualifications available and how these relate to each other — www.sqa.org.uk . See NQF.
Scottish Vocational Qualification	See SVQ.
Screen resolution	The number of distinct dots (pixels) that a screen can display (not the same as screen size). Higher screen resolutions allow presentation of more detail and information on a screen page.
Security (technical)	The technical measures employed in computer software and hardware to prevent unauthorised access to content when stored on a computer or in transmission from one computer to another.
Self-assessment	A judgement a candidate makes about his/her work or level of attainment in relation to the stated learning outcomes for the activity/programme, often supported by an assessment which they administer themselves informally. Self-assessment is generally used to develop the candidate's ability to think critically about his/her learning.
Server	A powerful computer and (in some cases) a software application which supplies files and other resources to client machines over a network. The internet consists of many computer servers supplying web content to client machines. In e-assessment terms, servers generally deliver tests to client computers and store student responses.
Shibboleth	Shibboleth is standards-based, open source middleware software which provides web single sign-on (SSO) across or within organisational boundaries. From a user's perspective this allows one login process to be used to access multiple internet and intranet websites (to avoid multiple logins, passwords etc.). See shibboleth.internet2.edu .
SIF	School Interoperability Framework. A non-profit membership organisation which seeks to create a set of technical specifications to enable software programs from different companies to share information. Abbreviated to SIF. See www.sifinfo.org .

E-assessment: Guide to effective practice

SQA	See Scottish Qualifications Authority.
Summative assessment	An assessment generally undertaken at the end of a learning activity or programme of learning which is used to make a judgement on the candidate's overall achievement. A key purpose of summative assessment is to record, and often grade, the candidate's performance in relation to the stated learning objectives of the programme.
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification. Vocational qualifications identifying skills, knowledge and understanding in specific employment areas. Available at up to five levels. See NVQ for equivalent qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Teacher Qualification Framework	In England from September 2007 all new entrants to teaching in post-compulsory sectors will be required to complete a new award which will prepare them to teach in the sector. This award will be part of a new range of awards available for trainee and practising teachers. See www.lluk.org .
Technical standard	A specification which governs the required performance of software or hardware systems, and which has become ratified by one or more international bodies (for example CEN or IEEE). In practice, there may be considerable delay between a specification becoming widely used and it formally being adopted as a standard. Note: In the case of e-assessment, the IMS QTI specification is not yet a standard (although many people refer to it as a standard because it is widely in use).
UKLeaP	A draft British Standard for the representation of e-portfolio evidence and structures to allow transfer between different e-portfolio systems.
Unit (of a qualification)	The smallest part of a qualification that is capable of certification in its own right. Units may be designed as part of a specific qualification or group of qualifications, or designed independently (for example to be taken for stand-alone certification or to attract credit and be built up towards qualifications). Units may consist of separately assessed components. None of this implies that units must be taught or delivered as discrete entities.
Unit (QCF)	A coherent set of learning outcomes and related assessment criteria with a title, credit value and level.

Usability	A measure of the extent or ease with which a service can be used by users with a broad range of requirements and preferences.
Verification	A process of moderation that includes local checking of assessment processes and decisions.
Verifier	A person who checks that assessment standards have been applied correctly and consistently between assessors, between centres and over time, and makes adjustments to results where required to compensate for any differences in standard that are encountered. Also involves reviewing the work of a sample of candidates
Virtual learning environment	See VLE.
VLE	A virtual learning environment is a set of learning and teaching tools based on networked computer resources (ICT) which provide a focus for students' learning activities and their management and facilitation, along with the provision of content and resources required to help make the activities successful. The functions considered standard in a VLE are curriculum mapping, student tracking, communications tools, tutor and student support, assessment and learning delivery tools. VLE is sometimes used interchangeably with MLE (managed learning environment) but an MLE can also be defined as comprising the complete learning environment, including a VLE and offline elements.
Workstation	In an e-assessment context, a client computer on a network that is used by the candidate to take the on-screen test.

Reproduced with permission of the Joint Information Systems Committee. Some additional definitions are included and other definitions have been amended slightly. The full JISC glossary can be found at www.qca.org.uk/ or www.jisc.ac.uk/assessment.

