

Additional Centre Guidance: ESOL Skills for Life Assessments 2020-21

Following the [Centre guidance published on 21st October](#), Ascentis has facilitated a number of online quality meetings with ESOL providers to discuss the implementation of EERF adaptations and to learn how assessments are being undertaken or planned at the moment.

Many suggestions and questions have arisen from these meetings. Lots of Centres have already started to undertake assessments and are finding effective ways of working within the many restrictions imposed because of Coronavirus. We have listed the ideas and suggestions that were made by Centres in the recent meetings below, along with questions that arose. Thank you to all our Centre colleagues who contributed to these meetings.

Questions from us	Centre responses / suggestions
How has your delivery model changed due to Coronavirus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller classes • Lower numbers, Entry Level classes no bigger than 6 • 50% face to face and 50% online • We've moved Speaking & Listening to Term 3 in the hope we will be better able to deliver and assess it by then • Instead of two 3-hour classes we have one in College and one online so we can split learners to ensure social distancing • E3 and above is online. We moved some E1/E2 to classrooms but max 8 learners • Blended learning for all levels except E1 • RARPA for Term 1, then assessments in Terms 2 and 3
What measures have you put in place for face to face ESOL classes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE for staff / clear visors for teachers • One-way system in operation • Spaced out desks, one learner per desk • Desks are sanitised between classes • 2 metre distancing • Face coverings, opened/removed when in a discussion or other necessary activity • No masks for S&L as it causes problems and is not clear what they are saying • We offer all students clear visors • Visors can be sanitised between uses • Teachers stay at the front and use pointers • Anti-bac/hand sanitiser in the classroom, used at start and end of lesson, learners clean their own desks before and after class • No mingling exercises, minimal contact between learners • Teachers use disposable gloves to handle paper

Questions from us	Centre responses / suggestions
<p>What measures have you put in place for face to face ESOL classes? (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners put their papers in a box, and these are left for 48 hours before the teacher marks them • Limit or reduce peer checking • Less/no pair or group work, distanced pair work, lots more whole class work • Minimal handouts (displayed on board instead) • ILPs are now completed online • eILPs and Learner journals • Learners use their phones to text messages or answer questions to the whiteboard instead of on paper • Students use their own devices in class - no shared electronic devices / computers
<p>How do you conduct group role plays, discussions and presentations in S&L assessments under social distancing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the size of the groups, ideally to two or three at a time with an assessor • Ensure 2m spacing and use individual audio recorders to capture each learner's contribution • Use Perspex screens if they face each other in a discussion • For presentations, let the presenter stand or sit at the front and deliver to the others • Give candidates clear plastic visors to wear instead of masks if face coverings are required at all times • Ensure the room is well ventilated <p>Note: The Further Education Operational Guidance states that “Face coverings could have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.”</p> <p>There are also clear grounds for exemption from wearing face coverings for candidates in speaking assessments.</p>

Questions from Centres	Our responses
<p>If we are separating tasks, will there be clean breaks between tasks i.e. no tasks on both sides of the paper?</p>	<p>As papers are printed in Centres, it is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that tasks are printed separately.</p>
<p>Where new learners are enrolled on an Award for one term ending in December 2020 can we use Set 4 as a final resit?</p>	<p>Set 4 has been retained to accommodate the needs of learners taking delayed assessments from the summer ERF period. It is not intended for use with new learners. However, as learners are entitled to 3 opportunities to sit assessments, if there is no other option, as a last resort, set 4 tasks can be used as a final resit before 31st December 2020. Ideally, learners requiring a third opportunity would use the new set (set 7) which will be available to them from January 2021. You must notify your ESOL EQA if you need to use Set 4 for learners who were not due to take assessments prior to 31st July 2020.</p>

Questions from Centres	Our responses
<p>Can assessors take live materials from secure storage to mark them at home?</p> <p>Can IQA be done outside of centres?</p>	<p>When Centres were closed during the lockdown earlier this year, we permitted live assessments to be marked and quality assured by assessors/IQAs at home in some instances, with clear requirements and conditions in place. Current government guidance indicates that there is no expectation that Centres will need to close this year so this should not be necessary.</p> <p>However, if your Centre is closed due to exceptional circumstances relating to Covid-19 and you have to mark or quality assure live assessments from home, you must contact your EQA before removing live materials from secure storage, to outline your Centre's specific circumstances. Your EQA will then discuss the options and conditions with you.</p>
<p>Can assessors assess speaking and listening tasks remotely online, by viewing video evidence, if the assessment tasks are facilitated by another member of staff working with learners in the centre?</p>	<p>The person facilitating live ESOL speaking and listening assessments must be a competent assessor and a trained ESOL specialist with knowledge of the qualification requirements. This is to ensure that the learners undertaking the assessment have appropriate opportunities to achieve.</p> <p>Some Centres use one member of staff to facilitate the tasks (as interlocutor) and also have a second person in the room to make and record assessment decisions. Both of these individuals must be competent assessors and subject specialists.</p> <p>If your Centre has a well-established system of 'doubling up' staffing during assessments, then the person acting as assessor can assess using video evidence rather than be in the room at the same time.</p> <p>Video evidence is already used to support the IQA process and it supports the assessment process where one member of staff acts as both interlocutor and assessor. When a member of staff acts as interlocutor and assessor, they may assess 'live', but they are able to revisit recorded evidence afterwards if necessary, to complete the process, possibly when considering 'borderline' decisions.</p>
<p>Can Ascentis provide Word versions of the practice papers so that they are easier to use on our platform?</p>	<p>In order to support Centres teaching online or using a blended teaching model, Word versions of all the ESOL practice papers are now available via a Moodle site. The Word versions can then be adapted by Centres to suit individual Centre requirements, including adding them to a Centre platform. While the papers can be adapted, we would recommend changes to the format only, leaving the content as provided by Ascentis. It is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that any changes allow the papers to remain as valid and reliable assessments and reflect the appropriate assessment level. In order to access the Word versions of the practice papers, Centres should contact: support@ascentis.co.uk.</p>