VQA Functional Skills Exam System

Invigilator Guidance

Contents

Introduction 3
Responsibilities of the Online Invigilator 3
Exam Conditions 4
Logging in 6
Unlocking the Exam 6
Completing the Invigilation Form 7
Plagiarism and Cheating 9
Troubleshooting 9
Further Guidance 10

Introduction

This guidance sets out mandatory requirements for delivering VQA Functional Skills Level 1 and Level 2 online exams in English and mathematics. It defines rules and expectations to protect security, integrity, and fairness, and supports consistent compliance with JCQ Functional Skills guidance and relevant JCQ examination standards.

This guidance does not replace JCQ requirements. It should be read alongside:

- JCQ Instructions for conducting Functional Skills assessments (English and Mathematics)
- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) (where applicable)

Where this policy adds VQA-specific steps, those steps are mandatory in addition to JCQ requirements.

The following guidance relates only to online Functional Skills exams that are invigilated in person by either a centre employee or the learner's employer. In both cases, the Invigilator must not be:

- involved in the teaching or assessment of the learner in any way
- the direct line manager of the learner.
- a friend, relative, spouse or peer of a learner.

Please read the information below for step-by-step guidance about the roles and responsibilities of the Invigilator and use the links provided to access the exam system.

Responsibilities of the Online Invigilator

Invigilators are to conduct the exam in the presence of learners and must be suitably qualified and experienced adults. The Invigilator must not be:

- involved in the teaching or assessment of the learner in any way
- the direct line manager of the learner
- a friend, relative, or peer of the learner.

As part of their responsibilities, it is expected that the Invigilator will:

- be familiar with on-screen assessment software
- ensure learners are seated according to the seating plan and informed they are under exam conditions

- draw learners' attention to the instructions on screen at the beginning of the exam and ask them to check they have been provided with the correct exam, subject and level
- ensure that the exam is conducted in exam conditions as specified in this document
- prevent malpractice and maladministration wherever possible
- ensure any occurrences of malpractice are documented and reported to VQA using the Invigilation Form
- be aware of authorised and unauthorised materials
- where required, check physical dictionaries brought in by learners for notes added to the original published text
- ensure you are aware of any learners who have reasonable adjustments in place
- ensure learners' ID has been checked and verified prior to the exam taking place
- remain fully vigilant for the duration of the exam
- only admit the learners into the exam when the learners are ready to start the test, and they are present in the room
- ensure that all sections of the Invigilation Form are completed within one hour of the exam being sat
- do not allow a learner to log in under the name of another learner.

Failure to complete all sections of the Invigilation Form will result in the exam being voided.

Exam Conditions

Before the exam

When carrying out online invigilation, centres should locate a quiet, appropriate space free from the risk of disturbance. The centre is responsible for informing any other individuals present in the building/exam environment that an exam is taking place.

The centre needs to ensure sufficient invigilator coverage (minimum 1 invigilator per 20 learners). The invigilator needs to be able to summon help without leaving the room when invigilating alone.

An IT Technician must be available at the start of the exam. While they do not need to remain in the room for the duration, they must stay nearby and be contactable by phone to address any technical issues that may arise.

An appropriate space is defined as:

- being quiet
- not having unauthorised materials, such as notes, posters or textbooks
- not having any electronic devices, except for the computer used for the exam
- not having a second computer monitor for learners.

If there is a need to change location during an exam, due to the loss of internet connectivity, Invigilators must ensure that the new location meets exam requirements. A change of location must be documented in the invigilation report, detailing the reason for the change in location and confirming that the new location met exam requirements.

The Invigilator must also display an 'Exam in Progress' sign. This must be printed before the exam begins and placed in a clearly visible location (for example, on the exam room's entrance door). The sign can be found on JCQ's website.

During the exam

The Invigilator must ensure exam conditions are met throughout the full duration of the exam. In addition to the conditions set out above, the Invigilator must also ensure that the following conditions are met.

- Mobile phones and electronic devices, except for the computer being used to undertake the exam, must be switched off and stored in an inaccessible location to minimise the risk of distraction.
- Headphones must not be worn.
- Learners must not access any programs or websites during the exam other than the exam system.
- Food and drink are permitted only at the discretion of the Head of Centre. Where permitted, drinks must be in a transparent container with labels removed (centres may apply stricter local rules such as 'water only').
- **For Functional Skills Maths Level 1 and 2 only**, learners are permitted to bring **one** piece of rough (blank) paper into the exam to support any working out. Any working out that is done on rough paper must be replicated in the digital working out area on the exam system to be marked. Any working out that is not in the digital working out area will **not be marked and therefore will not count** towards additional marks for this exam.
- **For Functional Skills English Level 1 and 2**, learners must not bring any materials or items that may assist them during the exam. This includes writing and reading materials, notebooks, rough paper, and textbooks. A single physical dictionary is permitted for Functional Skills English reading exams

only. It must be placed on their desk, contain no notes or other handwritten additions to the original published text, and be checked by the Invigilator before the exam starts.

Unforeseen circumstances

Unforeseen circumstances are defined as any emergency, unpredicted or unusual incidents which compromise exam conditions. Examples could include:

- A fire alarm requiring temporary evacuation.
- A medical incident affecting the learner or Invigilator.
- An unintentional interruption from a third party.

Should such an incident occur, the Invigilator must provide a full description on the Invigilation Form. Unforeseen circumstances will not necessarily lead to a voided exam, but the Invigilator's report will be critical when our team makes that decision.

In the event of an emergency occurring during an exam, the training provider/recognised centres and/or the location's policies on emergencies must be followed.

Logging in

Please note: these instructions are for the Invigilator and not the learner. The learner will use a different URL to access their exam. Please make sure they are using the Google Chrome web browser, which can be downloaded here.

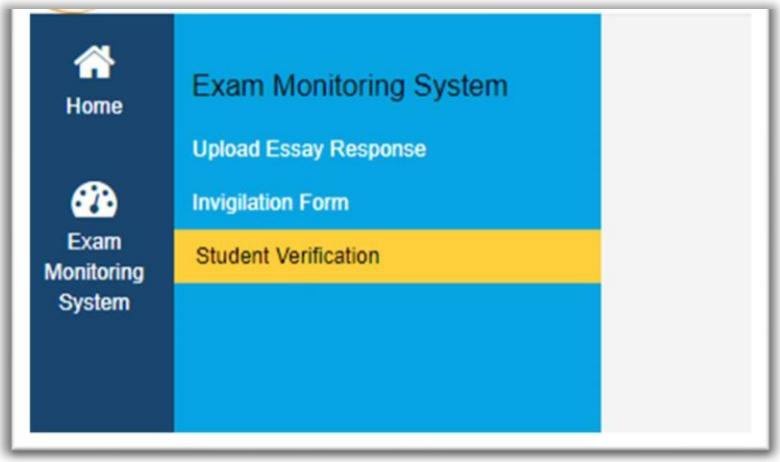
Once a booking has been made and you are named as the appointed Invigilator, you will receive an email from the exam system containing the URL and your Invigilator login details. These details will remain the same for any future exam bookings that you invigilate for this learner or another learner. To access the exam system, follow this link.

Unlocking the Exam

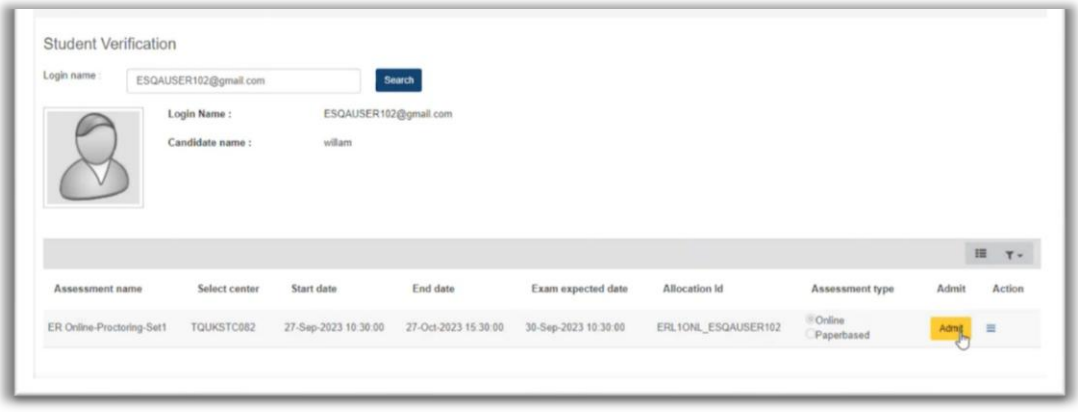
Once the learner has successfully logged in and completed the system checks, you will need to unlock the exam. You will receive an email with login details and the necessary next steps to do this. The learner will have their own booking email with instructions on how to log into the exam platform.

First, confirm that the exam environment meets the exam conditions specified above. Then, follow the steps below:

1. Select 'Exam Monitoring System' on the left side panel.
2. Select 'Student Verification' from the list.



3. Search for the learner using their email address.
4. Ensure the details match the exam due to be sat.
5. Click 'Admit' beside the learner's details to unlock the exam. The learner will then be presented with the exam and able to move through each question in turn.



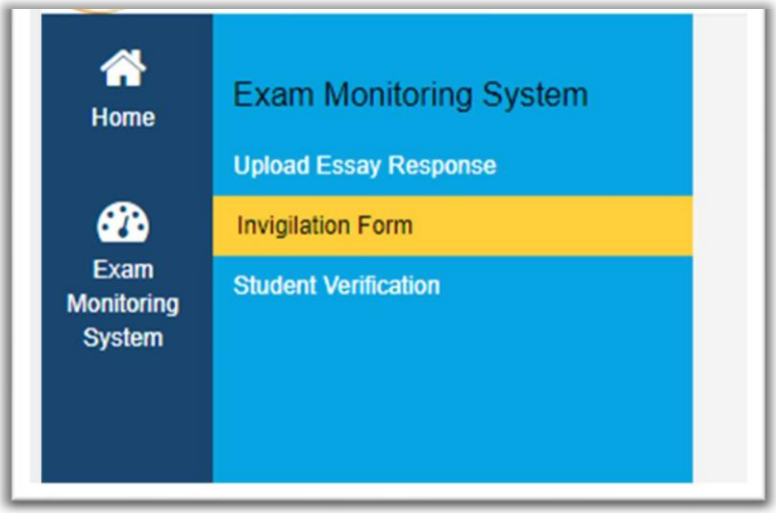
Completing the Invigilation Form

Once the learner has finished their exam, **you must complete the Invigilation Form within one hour**. In exceptional circumstances, where a genuine operational issue prevents this, a maximum timeframe of up to 24 hours is permitted.

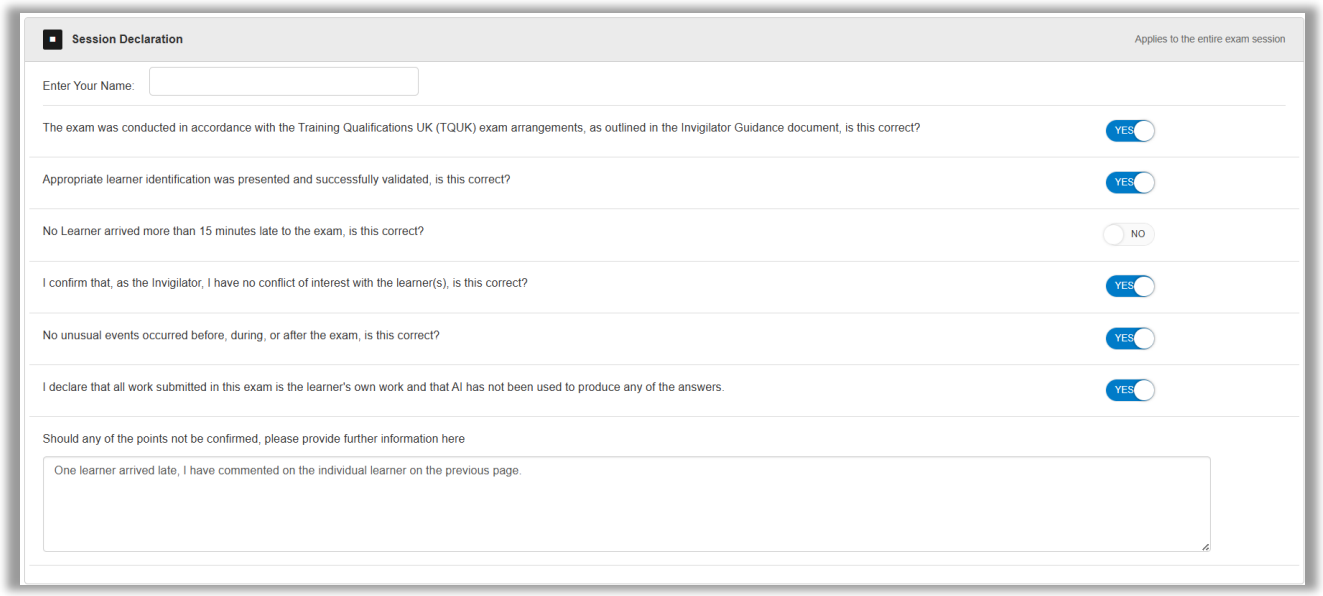
If an invigilator or centre contact is unable to access the form or experiences any technical difficulties, they must contact VQA Support immediately for assistance.

The form can be completed by following the steps below:

1. Select ‘Exam Monitoring System’ on the left side panel.
2. Select ‘Invigilation Form’ from the list.



3. Fill in the Customer and Test Centre fields with your centre name, then enter the Exam Booking Date and End Date.
4. Select the Batch dropdown and find your batch in the list (this is labelled at the time of the booking and can be found in the booking email received when the booking was made).
5. Should you wish to fill the form for **only one learner,** enter the learner’s First Name, Last Name, or Email Address.
6. Select ‘Continue to Candidates’, and review to ensure the details match the learner and assessment name of the exam you have just invigilated.
7. Select ‘Continue to Exam Report’, enter your name, then toggle either ‘yes’ or ‘no’, against each of the six confirmation statements. If any are ‘no’ answers, you must provide further details in the text box at the bottom of the form.
   There is also a comments box beside the learner's name on the previous page where you can provide further information. This is especially useful if you are invigilating multiple learners at the same time. Remember: the more detail you can give, the better.
   Once you are certain you have fully completed the form, click ‘Save’.



Once the Invigilation Form has been completed and has been verified by VQA, the exam will be released for marking.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism occurs when a learner copies someone else's work as their own, and as such, VQA will classify this as cheating. This includes the misuse of content generated by Artificial Intelligence where it is submitted without appropriate acknowledgement or represents work not genuinely produced by the learner.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Cutting or copying material directly from a website, textbook, or other source without proper reference or acknowledgement.
- Paraphrasing – altering a few words from books, websites, AI-generated content, or another individual's work to present it as your own.
- Use of AI tools to generate responses, assignments, or content that is submitted as original work without disclosure or permission.

You can read VQA's full Plagiarism Policy here.

Troubleshooting

If you have any questions or experience any issues, please feel free to contact our Customer Service Team on 0333 3583 344 or email us at support@vqa.org. Our office hours are 08:30-17:00 Monday-Friday.

Further Guidance

Further invigilation guidance can be found on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website by following this link. (ICE guidance)

For specific JCQ guidance relating to invigilating Functional Skills assessments please click here.

For 'On-screen tests" please refer to this guidance here.

www.vqa.org

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