

Your guide to the changes for 2021

Following [Ofqual's consultation](#) on arrangements for the assessment of VTQs in 2020/21, we've reviewed units in our Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals being taken this academic year to provide specific guidance at qualification and unit level on changes to requirements or alternative approaches to support public health guidance.

Our changes are designed to make units to be taken in 2020/21 possible to complete, given the constraints you are all working with, and to make sure that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria can still be met.

We understand that the current disruption continues to change and also varies across regions, so our guidance gives acceptable alternatives you can consider when delivering units in your school /college while following the public health guidance.

Please use the [specification and assignments](#) available on our website, alongside this document, to plan and carry out assessment in 2020-21.

General notes

Centres should consider selecting unit combinations which are easily accessible to all candidates with respect to hardware, software and resources. They should also think about the impact of social distancing/bubble groups,

These adaptations are intended for students in the **final year** of study. The adaptations should only be used if there is no alternative available for the candidate in order to complete the qualification.

Candidates in their first year of study should complete units where no adaptations are needed. The opportunity to complete other units in the appropriate format may then be possible later in the course if social distancing restrictions are lifted.

Currently, practical skills work and access to equipment may be limited. Some online platforms allow virtualisation of practical aspects for units. However, these are a poor substitute for hands-on practical experience with a real system.

Other units are difficult to replicate in a remote learning or restricted learning environment. Practical units can present problems because of social distancing. For example, cleaning equipment between sessions may be impossible given the sensitive nature of the components used.

Software related units may be equally challenging for any remote (or bubble groups) working as students. There may be limited time available to access the packages required. This could lead to less than effective implementation of the software solutions required for the unit assessments.

When considering software units, centres should consider software that is easily accessible to all candidates. This may be open source or free software that carries out similar functions to other software.

Suggested adaptations

| Unit number(s) and title(s) | Learning objectives (LO) | Criteria | Issues identified in the unit(s) | Adaptations / solutions |
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| Unit 4: Installing computer hardware | LO3: Be able to install and test hardware components | <p>P3 prepare a computer system for a specified hardware installation or upgrade</p> <p>P4 install or upgrade hardware components safely, configuring associated software</p> <p>M2 demonstrate the safe installation of hardware components and associated software</p> <p>D1 create a log to identify tasks completed and checks made</p> <p>P5 test the computer system for functionality</p> | <p>LO3 requires students to be able to install and test hardware components.</p> <p>LO4 requires students to be able to document an installation or upgrade.</p> <p>If centres offer this unit then it may be difficult for some centres to provide facilities to all students to complete the LO's tasks.</p> | <p>For P3/P4 no adaptation is possible. Candidates show use of skills, knowledge and understanding when preparing a computer system for hardware installation/upgrade. They then need to install the components safely whilst configuring any associated software.</p> <p>M2: Candidates must demonstrate the safe installation of hardware components. This cannot be shown through discussions or reports.</p> <p>Performance evidence is the only form of acceptable evidence. Therefore, no adaptation is available for this criterion. This will result in candidates not being able to achieve a merit or distinction grade for this unit.</p> <p>D1: Candidates must complete a log of the tasks they complete and any checks made. There is no requirement for an adaptation for this criterion. It is only the documentation required within the technical role to be completed. It can still be completed in the usual way, regardless of whether the hardware was physically installed/ upgraded or a narration provided.</p> <p>P5: Candidates prepare a test plan to complete when testing the system for functionality once the installation/upgrade of hardware component had been carried out.</p> <p>The following adaptation could be used if candidates are unable to physically test the computer systems due to current restrictions in place.</p> |

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| | | LO4: Be able to document an installation or upgrade | P6: Produce updated documentation for the modifications | <p>Assessors could give the candidate two test results for two of the tests in the plan. Assessors should give results for different tests to each candidate, or give different types of results.</p> <p>Using different tests or results will help to mitigate the risks of malpractice.</p> <p>Candidates can then analyse these results and establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the faults are • solutions to rectify the faults • how to re-test for functionality. <p>The evidence could be written, or a verbal recording.</p> <p>P6: candidates could present the following types of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • installation records • updated manuals (e.g. technical, user) • product registration (e.g. method, recording) |
| Unit 5: Install computer software | LO2: Be able to prepare for software installation LO3: Be able to install and configure software LO4: Be able to test and document software installation | P3: Prepare for software installation P4 install an item of software P5 configure new software to specified requirements | LO2 requires candidates to prepare for software installation. LO3 requires students to be able to install and configure software LO4 requires students to be able to test and document software installations. | P3: No adaptation is possible. Candidates show use of skills, knowledge and understanding when preparing a computer system for software installation/upgrade. P4/P5: Candidates are required to install an item of software. This can be an application, operating system, system, or driver software. Only one example of an installation is required. After installation. the software must also be configured to meet specific requirements. If candidates cannot physically install and configure the software, then candidates will not be able to achieve this unit as no adaptation is possible. |

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| | | P6: test and document a new software installation | It may be difficult for some centres to provide facilities to all students to complete the LO's tasks. | <p>P6: As part of the preparation process for P3, candidates should have prepared a partially completed test plan. , where they will have The test plan will include identified the tests they would carry out they would carry outand the expected results from the tests.</p> <p>If candidates are unable to install the software, then they will not be able to test the system.</p> <p>Assessors may provide a candidate with possible results from testing. The assessor should include at least one fault for a candidate to consider.</p> <p>The test results given by the Assessor should be different for each candidate. This helps to mitigate the risk of malpractice.</p> <p>A candidate may then explain how they would solve the testing fault and include a re-test on the test plan.</p> <p>Finally, candidates would need to confirm that the system meets the user requirements/business need.</p> <p>Candidates should include the following things in their documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work records (e.g. preparation tasks, installation date, by whom, hardware detail, problems encountered, test plan, test data) • user/customer communications and requirements • licensing requirements. <p>Some information may already be documented during the preparatory stage for P3.</p> |

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| Unit 6: Setting up an IT network | LO4 Be able to set up a simple local area network | <p>P6 set up and test a simple local area network</p> <p>M3 configure advanced security settings on a local area network</p> <p>D2 implement a test plan to test advanced security settings on a local area network</p> | For LO4 candidates are required to set up and test a simple LAN, configure advanced security settings which they must test for functionality. | <p>Installing a network goes beyond installing hardware and software. There are several things to be considered and completed as part of the configuration process.</p> <p>Candidates could provide evidence of practical application by using appropriate virtual network platforms, for example CISCO.</p> <p>The use of a virtual network platform is the only adaptation allowed for this unit.</p> <p>Whilst candidates can identify the advanced security settings, they will not be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • configure the network • carry out testing of the advanced security settings implemented. |
| Unit 14: Computer systems | LO3: Be able to connect computer hardware | <p>P4: specify suitable components to meet user requirements</p> <p>P5: connect hardware safely to a computer system, testing for functionality</p> | <p>LO3 requires students to be able to connect computer hardware</p> <p>LO4 requires students to be able to configure computer systems</p> <p>Both LOs requires use of computer devices for each student.</p> <p>If centres are offering this unit then with current guidelines on social distancing/bubble groups, it may be difficult for some centres to provide facilities to all students to complete the LO's tasks.</p> | <p>P4: Candidates can meet the criterion by specifying the components to be installed to meet a specified user requirement.</p> <p>P5: No adaptations are possible. Candidates must demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding when connecting hardware safely.</p> <p>Candidates can prepare a test plan detailing the tests they would carry out when installing the hardware and include the expected results.</p> |

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| | LO4: Be able to configure computer systems | <p>P6: configure software for a given user requirement</p> <p>D2: check a computer system for security risks using a range of software utilities.</p> | | <p>P6: No adaptions are possible for this criterion. Candidates must prove their knowledge, skills and understanding when configuring the software that they have installed.</p> <p>D2: No adaptations are possible for this criterion. Candidates need access to a computer system to enable them to confirm their knowledge, skills and understanding when checking for security risks, using a range of software utilities.</p> |
| Unit 17: Customising software | <p>LO2: Be able to customise application software</p> <p>LO3: Be able to create templates in application software</p> <p>LO4: Be able to create macros and shortcuts in application software</p> | <p>P2 customise application software to meet user requirements</p> <p>P3 test customised software to ensure it meets user requirements</p> <p>P4 create templates to meet user requirements in different application packages</p> <p>P5 record and test a macro to meet a given requirement</p> <p>M2 create macros across a range of application software to meet given requirements</p> <p>M2 create macros across a range of application software to meet given requirements</p> | <p>LO2 requires students to be able to customise application software</p> <p>LO3 requires students to be able to create templates in application software</p> <p>LO4 requires students to be able to create macros and shortcuts in application software</p> <p>The LO2, LO3 and LO4 requires the use of computer devices with software applications that students plan to work on.</p> <p>If centres are offering this unit then with current guidelines on social distancing/bubble groups, it may be difficult for some centres to provide facilities to all students to complete the LO's tasks.</p> | <p>Candidates must have access to appropriate software to complete these LOs. The software must allow the candidate to make customisations. The customisations will be based on client requirements.</p> <p>Adaptation is not available for this unit. This is because candidates must carry out physical customisation of software. They must also create templates, macros and shortcuts.</p> <p>There are no robust alternatives which allow the same level of assessment of dexterity.</p> |

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| Unit 8: IT fault diagnosis and remedy | | | Candidates are required to use diagnostic tools such as diagnostic software, voltmeters as well as downloads from manufacturers websites. | No adaptations available. The unit requires use of software and hardware diagnostic tools to diagnose faults. This then links to implementing potential solutions. |
| Unit 18: IT security | | | For LO4, candidates are required to devise and implement a security plan and test the system for security. | No adaptations available. The unit requires candidates to implement a security plan and test the network to ensure that it is secure. Implementing and testing the plan can be quite complex. A practical demonstration is essential to show appropriate level of knowledge, skills and understanding. |

If a unit requires candidates to use software to create, develop and customise products then centres must provide candidates with readily accessible software. Software can be open-source, freeware or bespoke. The software must contain features which allow candidates to fulfil the assessment criteria.

We would suggest that centres select units which provide more choice with respect to the selection of software. Adaptations based on the use of software cannot be implemented by narratives alone. The completed solutions can be provided as evidence along with any planning documentation linked to the design of the product. Candidates could provide video demonstrations of their products with appropriate voice-overs. The videos should provide explanations for completed task/product and the functionality incorporated.

Support

OCR's team of expert Subject Advisors has created videos, webinars, and other resources to guide you through these changes and help you prepare your students for their exams in summer 2021.

These resources can be found on [the qualification page on our website](#).

Contact us

If you would like to contact us, you can do so at:

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