

Essential Skills Wales

Level 1-3 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number

Level 1-3 Essential Skills Wales in Communication

Level 1-3 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology

Scheme codes 04491, 04492, 04493

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PLEASE NOTE:

Vertical black lines indicate a change to previous versions of the centre handbook. Change can be found on pages 16-20, 24, 25 and 28.

1 Introduction

This Centre Handbook must be read in association with the Essential Wales standards and guidance publication that can be downloaded from the DCELLS [website](#).

This Centre Handbook provides information for centre staff involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the following qualifications which have been accredited onto the National Qualifications Framework (NQF):

OCR Level 1 – Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number

OCR Level 1 – Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Communication

OCR Level 1 – Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology

It is important that centre staff involved in the delivery of the above qualifications understand the requirements laid down in this handbook. Centres should therefore ensure that staff has access to this publication. A copy of this handbook is available to download from our website www.ocr.org.uk

1.1 The OCR Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications

The OCR Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications provides candidates with high quality, nationally recognised qualifications. These qualifications are available to centres in Wales only.

Essential Skills Wales (ESW) is the new suite of skills qualifications that replaces the Key Skills and Basic Skills qualifications in Wales. The ESW standards have been developed by converging and drawing on best practice from the standards for Adult Literacy, Adult Numeracy and the standards for Key Skills Communication, Application of Number and ICT.

OCR Essential Skills Wales qualifications are available from level 1 through to level 3 in the following skill areas:

- Application of Number
- Communication
- Information and Communication Technology.

These qualifications are applicable to all programmes, ages, abilities and contexts and support the effectiveness of learning and performance both in education and at work. They are therefore appropriate for a variety of candidates at all levels.

1.2 Administration arrangements for these qualification(s)

Detailed information on the administration of these qualifications is available in the OCR *Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications* (code A850) and *Making a claim for certification using Interchange -- a guide for centre assessors*. These can be downloaded from the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk.

1.3 If centre staff have queries

This Centre Handbook, the OCR Admin Guide and the DCELLS Essential Skills Wales standards and guidance publication contain all the information needed to deliver and administer these qualification(s).

If centre staff have any queries about these qualifications that are not answered in these publications, they should refer to section 9 Further support and information for details of who to contact. Support is also available on the OCR Essential Skills web page.

1.4 Documentation updates

The information provided in this handbook was correct at the time of production. Occasionally OCR may update this information. Please refer to the qualification web pages at www.ocr.org.uk for details regarding updates to these qualifications. The latest version of this handbook is available to download from the OCR website.

2 General information

2.1 Qualification profile

Titles	OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number
OCR code	04491
Level	This qualification has been accredited on to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3
QAN	500/7967/0 (Level 1); 500/7968/2 (Level 2); 500/7969/4 (Level 3)
This qualification is suitable for	Essential Skills Wales are applicable to all programmes, ages, abilities and contexts. They are required for success in all aspects of education, training, work and life in general. They are therefore appropriate for a variety of candidates at all levels, from students and junior staff through to middle and senior managers.
Entry requirements	There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification.
Qualification structure	This is a single unit qualification and all components are mandatory.
Assessment	The qualification is assessed via a portfolio of evidence that is internally assessed by centre staff and externally moderated by OCR. Only work that meets all the assessment requirements should be sent to OCR for moderation. The qualification is assessed as Pass/Fail.
Funding	This qualification has been accredited on to the NQF and is listed on the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (www.daqw.org.uk), the authoritative source of all qualifications eligible for public funding in Wales. When seeking public funding, centres will need to provide the Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN) shown above.
Last entry date*	31/08/2015
Last certification date*	31/08/2016

*OCR will inform centres of changes to these dates. Please refer to our website www.ocr.org.uk for current dates. All centre records must be updated accordingly.

Titles	OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Communication OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Communication OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Communication
OCR code	04492
Level	This qualification has been accredited on to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3
QAN	500/7962/1 (Level 1); 500/7963/3 (Level 2); 500/7970/0 (Level 3)
This qualification is suitable for	Essential Skills Wales are applicable to all programmes, ages, abilities and contexts. They are required for success in all aspects of education, training, work and life in general. They are therefore appropriate for a variety of candidates at all levels, from students and junior staff through to middle and senior managers.
Entry requirements	There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification.
Qualification structure	This is a single unit qualification and all components are mandatory.
Assessment	The qualification is assessed via a portfolio of evidence that is internally assessed by centre staff and externally moderated by OCR. Only work that meets all the assessment requirements should be sent to OCR for moderation The qualification is assessed as Pass/Fail.
Funding	This qualification has been accredited on to the NQF and is listed on the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (www.dagw.org.uk), the authoritative source of all qualifications eligible for public funding in Wales. When seeking public funding, centres will need to provide the Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN) shown above.
Last entry date*	31/08/2015
Last certification date*	31/08/2016

*OCR will inform centres of changes to these dates. Please refer to our website www.ocr.org.uk for current dates. All centre records must be updated accordingly.

Titles	OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology
OCR code	04493
Level	This qualification has been accredited on to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3
QAN	500/7964/5 (Level 1); 500/7965/7 (Level 2); 500/7966/9 (Level 3)
This qualification is suitable for	Essential Skills Wales are applicable to all programmes, ages, abilities and contexts. They are required for success in all aspects of education, training, work and life in general. They are therefore appropriate for a variety of candidates at all levels, from students and junior staff through to middle and senior managers.
Entry requirements	There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification.
Qualification structure	This is a single unit qualification and all components are mandatory.
Assessment	The qualification is assessed via a portfolio of evidence that is internally assessed by centre staff and externally moderated by OCR. Only work that meets all the assessment requirements should be sent to OCR for moderation. The qualification is assessed as Pass/Fail.
Funding	This qualification has been accredited on to the NQF and is listed on the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (www.daqw.org.uk), the authoritative source of all qualifications eligible for public funding in Wales. When seeking public funding, centres will need to provide the Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN) shown above.
Last entry date*	31/08/2015
Last certification date*	31/08/2016

*OCR will inform centres of changes to these dates. Please refer to our website www.ocr.org.uk for current dates. All centre records must be updated accordingly.

2.2 Target market

Essential Skills Wales qualifications are applicable to all programmes, ages, abilities and contexts. They are required for success in all aspects of education, training and life in general. They are therefore appropriate for a variety of candidates at all levels.

2.3 Qualification aims

Essential Skills Wales qualifications support the effectiveness of learning and performance both in education and at work by encouraging the individual to:

- think about their intentions and purposes
- plan a course of action
- implement the plan
- reflect on their progress towards completing the plan
- review the plan to suit changing circumstances or to overcome problems
- revise a new plan when the original one has not been fulfilled.

The aims of the Essential Skills Wales standards are as follows:

The aim of the **Application of Number** standards is to encourage candidates to develop and demonstrate their skills in using number to tackle a task, activity or problem by collecting and interpreting information involving numbers, carrying out calculations, interpreting results and presenting findings. The standards are essentially concerned with developing and recognising candidates' ability to select and apply numerical, graphical and related mathematical skills in ways that are appropriate to their particular context. However, they can also be used to help individuals make connections with less familiar contexts and develop their ability to progress to higher levels of competence.

The aim of the **Communication** standards is to encourage candidates to develop and demonstrate their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills for different purposes. The standards are essentially concerned with developing and recognising candidates' ability to select and apply communication skills in ways that are appropriate to their particular context. However, they can also be used to help individuals make connections with less familiar contexts and develop their ability to progress to higher levels of competence. The techniques of Communication are essential, but so too are the skills of application, such as making decisions about the relevance and quality of information and taking account of purpose and audience. The standards are designed to recognise candidates' progression in terms both of underpinning techniques and of the skills of application.

The aim of the **Information and Communication Technology** standards is to encourage candidates to develop and demonstrate their skills in using ICT to carry out a task or activity by finding, exploring, exchanging, developing and presenting information (text, images and numbers). The standards are essentially concerned with developing and recognising candidates' ability to select and apply ICT skills in ways that are appropriate to their particular context. However, they can also be used to help individuals make connections with less familiar contexts and develop their ability to progress to higher levels of competence.

2.4 Statement of level

OCR Essential Skills Wales qualifications assess skills at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Each skill level incorporates and builds on the previous levels.

Details of all the levels are provided in the progression grids in the DCELLS Essential Skills Wales standards and guidance publication. The grids show how the level of demand increases through the levels and the inter-relationship and differentiation between the levels. There are two grids, one relates to the evidence and the other grid relates to the skills that are required to achieve the Essential Skills Wales qualifications at each level.

2.5 Entry requirements

There are no minimum entry requirements for this qualification. Candidates can enter at any level of the qualification.

These qualifications are available to anyone who is capable of reaching the required standards. The Essential Skills Wales standards have been developed free from any barriers that restrict access or progression thereby promoting equal opportunities.

All centre staff involved in the assessment or delivery of these qualifications should understand the requirements of the qualification and match them to the needs and capabilities of individual learners before entering them as candidates for one of these qualifications.

2.6 Progression opportunities

These qualifications demonstrate the fundamental skills required in all contexts from education and employment to life in general. A candidate achieving an Essential Skills Wales qualification has the following progression routes available:

- undertake higher level qualifications part-time or full-time in further or higher education
- undertake qualifications in the workplace

These qualifications also contribute to the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification and apprenticeship frameworks.

2.7 Supporting candidates

Centres should ensure that candidates are informed of the title and level of the qualification they have been entered for and that Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) is the awarding body for their chosen qualification.

Centre staff should provide guidance to candidates on the assessment process and help candidates prepare for assessment. Full details on how the units are assessed are in sections 3 of this Centre Handbook and in the DCELLS Essential Skills Wales standards and guidance publication.

2.8 Wider issues

These qualifications provide potential for centres to develop candidates' understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues and heighten candidates' awareness of environmental issues, health and safety considerations and European developments.

Spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues

Centre staff delivering a course that supports these qualifications would have opportunities to address spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues.

Within the Essential Skills Wales Communication qualification, candidates will have the opportunity to consider spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues whilst taking part in group discussions and/or giving talks/presentations.

Environmental issues, health and safety considerations and European developments

Centre staff delivering a course that supports these qualifications may have opportunities to address environmental issues, health and safety considerations and European developments depending on the method of delivery/choice of teaching materials.

Health and safety issues and their application are an integral part of Essential Skills Wales ICT. In this qualification, candidates will need to understand the legislative requirements as they apply to the ICT sector and be able to apply this knowledge whilst working with ICT equipment and data. In particular candidates would be expected to be able to understand the key legislative and best practice aspects of computer use, safety of data and safe working on the Internet.

Opportunities for European Developments could be incorporated as part of research opportunities for Essential Skills Wales Communication in order to participate in group discussions and/or to give a talk/presentation.

2.9 Guided learning hours (glh)

Each of these qualifications are allocated a number of guided learning hours (glh) which indicates the approximate number of hours for teacher supervised or directed study time and assessment.

The time it will take a candidate to complete one of these qualifications will depend on a number of things, for instance, mode of study (ie whether full-time or part-time) and level of knowledge or experience on entry onto the programme of study. As a general guide the units in these qualifications are likely to require the following numbers of guided learning hours (glh).

Level	Title	Unit No	GLH
Level 1	Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number	L/600/8728	60
Level 2	Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number	R/600/8729	60
Level 3	Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number	D/600/8734	60
Level 1	Essential Skills Wales in Communication	T/600/8724	60
Level 2	Essential Skills Wales in Communication	J/600/8730	60
Level 3	Essential Skills Wales in Communication	T/600/8741	60
Level 1	Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology	F/600/8709	60
Level 2	Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology	R/600/8732	60
Level 3	Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology	F/600/8743	60

2.10 Funding

These qualifications are accredited at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 on the National Qualifications Framework and are listed on the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (www.daqw.org.uk), the authoritative source of all qualifications eligible for public funding in Wales. Should you require any further information on funding please contact DCELLS on npfs@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

2.11 Mode of delivery

OCR does not specify the mode of study or specify a time limit for the achievement of these qualifications other than the expiry dates for entry and certification laid down by the regulatory authorities detailed in the qualification profiles.

Centres are free to deliver these qualifications using any mode of delivery that meets the needs of their candidates. Whatever mode of delivery is used, centres must ensure that learners have appropriate access to the resources identified below.

Centres should consider the candidates' complete learning experience when designing learning programmes. This is particularly important in relation to candidates studying part-time alongside real work commitments where candidates may bring with them a wealth of experience that should be utilised to maximum effect by tutors and assessors.

2.12 Resources

OCR advises that teaching and development of subject content and associated skills be referenced to real vocational situations, through the utilisation of appropriate work-based contact, vocationally experienced delivery personnel, and real life case studies.

Candidates should be encouraged to read around the subject and have an appropriate knowledge of the application of the appropriate legislation (eg Health and Safety).

Centres should ensure that appropriate physical resources are available in line with guidance provided in this handbook.

Centres will need to provide appropriate assessment facilities for candidates that complies with the regulations laid down by OCR (the *Administrative Guide to Vocational Qualifications* – code A850).

Centres will need to meet the above requirements when they seek centre approval from OCR.

2.13 Delivery in Wales only

The specification for these qualifications has been approved by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) for use by centres in Wales only.

2.14 Access arrangements and special consideration

These are competence based qualifications. Access issues have been addressed in the standards and barriers will only be in place if the achievement is not possible without undermining the competence standard. Disability groups have been consulted and included in the development of the Essential Skills Wales standards.

Adjustments to standard assessment arrangements are made on the basis of the individual needs of candidates.

It is important, therefore, that centres identify as early as possible whether candidates have disabilities or particular difficulties that will put them at a disadvantage in the assessment situation and select an appropriate qualification or adjustment that will allow them to demonstrate attainment.

The responsibility for providing adjustments to assessment is one which is shared between OCR and the centre. Centre staff should consult the Joint Council of Qualifications' (JCQ) booklet *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* www.jcq.org.uk

This document should also be referred to for those candidates who may require a post examination adjustment, special consideration (to reflect temporary illness, indisposition or injury), at the time of the examination/assessment.

For further guidance on access arrangements and special consideration please refer to OCR's *Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications (A850)* on the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk

2.15 Results enquiries and appeals

Please refer to the *Administrative Guide to Vocational Qualifications* (code A850) which can be downloaded from the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk

2.16 Centre malpractice guidance

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre* to report (in writing) all cases of suspected malpractice involving centre staff or candidates, to the OCR Standards Division. When asked to do so by OCR, Heads of Centres are required to investigate instances of malpractice promptly, and report the outcomes to the OCR Standards Division.

Further information is contained in the JCQ publication: *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments* which is available from www.jcq.org.uk together with OCR's *Malpractice Procedures – A Guide for Centres*.

* The Head of Centre is defined as the most senior officer in the organisation, directly responsible for the delivery of OCR qualifications, eg the Principal of a College, the Head Teacher of a school, the Managing Director of a Private Training Provider or the Group Training Manager of a major company.

3 Assessment and moderation

3.1 Assessment: How it works

The candidates' portfolio of evidence is assessed and standardised by centre staff and then externally moderated by the OCR moderator. Assessment and moderation can take place at any time. External moderation ensures that a centre's internal assessment of candidate evidence is reliable, fair and consistent with the required standards.

The standards and evidence requirements for these qualifications are provided in the *Essential Skills Wales standards and guidance* publication which can be downloaded from the DCELLS website.

In order for candidates to be able to effectively progress towards meeting the requirements of the standards, teachers/tutors must make sure that the supporting knowledge, understanding and skills requirements are fully addressed.

These qualifications are designed around the principle that candidates will build a portfolio of evidence relating to progression towards meeting the qualification standards. Evidence requirements specified in the standards reflect the demands of the learning outcomes of the qualification. In compiling the Essential Skills Wales portfolio, candidates must generate evidence which must be assessed against the Essential Skills Wales standards and evidence requirements.

The evidence can be:

- Embedded in academic or vocational work
- Generated from activities outside the candidate's main curriculum.

All portfolio evidence must:

- Be fully completed
- Be assessed by the centre and meet the evidence requirements and be in line with the current regulatory authorities' guidance
- Be included in the centre's internal standardisation process to ensure the assessment decisions are consistently accurate.

Assessors must assess the portfolio evidence against the relevant evidence requirements. Where a candidate's work has been initially assessed against other specific NVQ, AVCE, GCSE, AS or A Level specifications, it must be assessed separately for Essential Skills Wales and appropriate feedback should be provided to the candidate. Assessors must provide a clear record of this assessment and feedback using standard assessment recording documents.

OCR has produced recording documents for each Essential Skills Wales qualification to support assessors and candidates record assessment and track evidence. The recording documents can be downloaded from the OCR website.

Assessment of these qualifications will be conducted in accordance with the appropriate codes of practice approved and published by the regulatory authorities.

Internal moderation

Internal moderation is the process that checks assessment decisions are consistently accurate within a centre and must be completed before portfolio achievements can be claimed. Internal moderators must have a full understanding of the national standards and OCR's systems and documentation, although they do not have to hold an internal moderator qualification.

Where internal moderators also act as assessors, the centre must have at least two internal moderators and they must not internally moderate any evidence that they have assessed.

Choosing an assessment sample

It is not normally necessary to check every single assessment decision, so the internal moderator should select a sample. Sampling should take place well before the moderation visit so that assessors and candidates have sufficient time to resolve any problems.

The minimum requirement when choosing the sample is to include:

- All assessors in the internal moderator's team (each assessor must be sampled once in a
- 12-month period)
- All Essential Skills Wales qualifications assessed by each assessor
- Welsh medium and dual language (English and Welsh) portfolios, where applicable.

In choosing the sample, you should consider other factors that influence assessment. For example:

- The experience of the assessors
- The number of portfolios assessed by each assessor
- The language used to present the portfolio evidence, ie English, Welsh medium, dual language (English and Welsh)
- The number of different candidate cohorts allocated to each assessor
- The number of different assignment briefs/tasks used by the assessor
- The centre's experience in delivering the different Essential Skills Wales qualifications
- Any problems that may have already been identified, eg in interpreting the Essential Skills Wales standards.

Recording assessment decisions

The feedback to the assessor and any actions must be recorded. OCR has created an *Essential Skills Wales internal moderation sampling record* and an *Essential Skills Wales internal moderator's report* on assessment decisions to help internal moderators record their internal moderation sample and monitor assessment practice. These can be downloaded from the OCR website. Since centres must use standard tracking and assessment recording documents for accredited centre status, we recommend that these documents are used.

Where action for the assessor is identified, the internal moderator is responsible for checking that the actions have been completed before the moderation visit. Confirmation that the actions have been completed must be recorded and dated. All centres should keep records of assessment decisions and outcomes of internal moderation for at least two years after certification has been claimed. Centres should also keep a representative sample of candidates' work to ensure that assessment decisions remain consistent over time (this can be a photocopy).

3.2 Scheduling moderation visits

Once you have made your qualification entries (see *OCR Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications*) we will allocate an OCR moderator to your centre. The OCR moderator will contact you to provisionally agree a mutually convenient date for their visit. Approved centres are entitled to one free visit per academic year. Centres may request additional moderation visits. Any additional visits will be charged at the standard visit fee, as described in the OCR Fees List.

If candidates require their Essential Skills Wales results in time for submission of the results for Welsh Baccalaureate, it is recommended that ACS centres plan and request the moderation visit before the end of May and non-ACS centres plan and request the moderation visit no later than mid May.

Preparing for the moderation visit (non-ACS centres)

You must ensure that the following are available for the OCR moderator:

- **A quiet base room** – This should include facilities for:
 - Accessing Interchange
 - Moderating electronic portfolios (if applicable)
 - Replaying audio and/or video recordings (if applicable).
- **The moderation sample**
- **All centre assessment and internal moderation records** – This should be separately available. Copies of assignments/activities/tasks set by the centre.
- **Evidence that shows how Key Skills information is disseminated** – Up-to-date information provided by OCR and the regulatory authorities should be distributed to all centre staff involved in the assessment and internal moderation.

Centres should use e-claim system to enter candidates and make certificate claims by accessing OCR Interchange.

The moderation visit (non-ACS centres)

The OCR moderator will not need to see any candidates during the visit and centre staff does not need to be present until the OCR moderator is ready to discuss the outcomes (see below).

The OCR moderator will assess the portfolio evidence in the sample and judge whether the evidence meets the agreed Essential Skills Wales standards.

If it is deemed to be unacceptable, this could be for one or more of the following reasons:

- Work does not meet the required standard in line with the current DCELLS guidance.
- Important aspects of the evidence requirements are being misinterpreted.
- Assessment in the sample is inconsistent.
- Some evidence is missing or has not been cross-referenced to the evidence requirements, so cannot be found by the OCR moderator.

If portfolio evidence has been withdrawn, candidates may be resubmitted for moderation when the OCR moderator's actions have been carried out. This moderation will take place at a separate visit.

Outcomes

At the end of each moderation visit, the OCR moderator will discuss the outcomes of their moderation with centre staff and agree any action required by the centre. The outcome will apply to all candidates entered for moderation on that occasion for that Essential Skills Wales qualification by the centre – not just the candidates sampled. A centre report will be completed and signed by the OCR moderator and the centre representative and a copy left with the centre. This report is designed to be supportive and will include comments on the accuracy of the centre's assessment, advice to the centre and action to be taken by the centre.

Successful outcomes

Where the outcome of the moderation for each Essential Skills Wales qualification is successful, the OCR moderator will review and sign off the claim(s) on the OCR Interchange.

If this visit is the second consecutive successful visit, the OCR moderator will also confirm the centre's eligibility for accredited centre status on the front of the centre report.

Unsuccessful outcomes

Where the outcome of the moderation process for any Essential Skills Wales qualification is not successful or where the centre has withdrawn portfolios, the OCR moderator will provide action points, review the claim(s) and withdraw candidate's portfolios by using OCR Interchange. This will ensure that any affected Essential Skills Wales qualifications are not claimed.

If a centre wishes to make an enquiry about results following a moderation visit, it must retain all those portfolios sampled at the moderation visit.

Accredited centre status (ACS)

Accredited centre status (ACS) enables centres which have demonstrated consistently accurate assessment standards to claim Essential Skills Wales portfolio achievements directly. Key Skills ACS is not transferrable to Essential Skills Wales qualifications.

Achieving accredited centre status

To be eligible for ACS, your centre's two most recent moderation visits must have been successful (ie no portfolios should have been withdrawn by the centre or rejected by the OCR moderator). At the second visit, the OCR moderator confirms that your centre is eligible for ACS and records this on the centre report. OCR will then send you two copies of the ACS offer letter which outlines OCR's conditions of ACS.

You should nominate an **ACS officer**, who will be responsible for managing the internal moderation of OCR's Essential Skills Wales qualifications effectively. The ACS officer will therefore normally hold a senior position, eg Senior Manager, Essential Skills Wales Co-ordinator or Head of Centre. Whilst the ACS officer is responsible for managing the internal moderation process, this does not mean that they are expected to authorise each individual portfolio achievement claim.

The ACS officer should sign and return one copy of the offer letter to OCR. We will then email the ACS officer to confirm your centre's ACS status.

Making portfolio achievement claims (ACS centres)

ACS centres must use OCR Interchange to make Essential Skills Wales achievement claims.

Please refer to OCR's step-by-step guide for centres to make online claims which is available to download from the OCR website.

Moderation visit (ACS centres)

Once centres have been awarded accredited centre status, they must have a visit **within six months**. If this visit is successful, the ACS status will be confirmed until the date of the next visit.

This visit must then take place within 12 months or ACS approval will lapse.

Centres with accredited centre status must ensure that the following are available:

- **A sample of candidates' portfolios** for which portfolio claims have been made since the last visit. Every three months, the OCR moderator will contact the ACS officer to let them know which portfolios must be retained. Once the OCR moderator has confirmed which portfolios are to be retained, the centre can return the remaining portfolios to candidates. For the three-month period immediately prior to the visit, the centre must retain **all** portfolios for which claims have been made in this three-month period. During the ACS visit, the OCR moderator will reassess the sample and judge whether the evidence meets the Essential Skills Wales standards. Following the ACS visit, the centre can return all portfolios to candidates.
- **Internal moderation process** and records of the centre's internal moderation activities.
- **Evidence of the centre's progress in completing the action points identified at the last visit.**

Outcomes of the visit and feedback

On the basis of the visit, the OCR moderator will confirm whether the centre can continue to have accredited centre status. The OCR moderator will complete a written report which will give feedback on both the assessment decisions and the internal moderation process and activities within the centre. The OCR moderator will discuss the outcomes with the centre's ACS officer and agree any action required by the centre. The action points must be completed by the date of the next visit. The centre report will be signed by the OCR moderator and the centre's ACS officer.

Suspending ACS

The OCR moderator will suspend ACS for one or more of the following reasons:

- Work does not meet the required standard in line with the current DCELLS guidance.
- Important aspects of the evidence requirements are being misinterpreted.
- Assessment in the sample is inconsistent.
- Some evidence is missing or has not been cross-referenced to the evidence requirements and cannot be found by the OCR moderator.
- Action points identified at the previous visit have not been addressed.

Please note that, if ACS is suspended, it will be suspended for all Essential Skills Wales qualifications and centres will not be permitted to make portfolio achievement claims directly.

Reinstating ACS

Once the centre is confident that all the action points within the centre report have been addressed, they should arrange a free ACS 'reinstatement visit'. At this visit, the OCR moderator will check that action points have been addressed. If this is successful, the OCR moderator will confirm that ACS is reinstated. If the OCR moderator does not confirm reinstatement, they will provide further action points for the centre.

The reinstatement visit is free of charge; however, if the OCR moderator does not confirm reinstatement, the centre will be charged for subsequent visit(s).

4 Certification

These are single unit qualifications. Candidates who achieve the qualification will receive a certificate giving the applicable qualification title:

OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number

OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number

OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number

OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Communication

OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Communication

OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Communication

OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology

OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology

OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology

4.1 Claiming certificates

Certificates will be issued directly to the centre for successful candidates. Certificates must be claimed via OCR Interchange using the new OCR electronic claims system.

For further information regarding making claims, please refer to *Administrative Guide to Vocational Qualifications* (code A850) and *Making a claim for certification using Interchange -- a guide for centre assessors* which can be downloaded from the OCR website.

If candidates require their Essential Skills Wales results in time for submission of the results for Welsh Baccalaureate, it is recommended that ACS centres plan and request the moderation visit before the end of May and non-ACS centres plan and request the moderation visit no later than mid May. Replacement certificates

If a replacement certificate is required a request must be made to the OCR Operations Division on 024 76 470033, or in writing to the Coventry office, and an application form with further instructions will be sent. A charge will be made for a replacement certificate.

5 Qualification structure and units

5.1 Qualification structure

Essential Skills Wales qualifications in Application of Number, Communication and Information and Communication Technology are single unit qualifications. They are available at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 and are assessed via a portfolio of candidate evidence.

5.2 Unit content and format

The standards and evidence requirements for these qualifications are provided in the Essential Skills Wales standards and guidance publication which can be downloaded from the DCELLS website. An overview of the unit content for each qualification is provided below.

OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7967/0)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 1** candidates are required to handle simple numerical and graphical information and apply techniques in the context of short activities. Calculations will usually involve only one or two steps. Much of the numerical content will be concerned with whole numbers and the use of decimals in everyday contexts (for example in using money or taking measurements), and the use of common units of measurement. At this level, candidates must cover all three of N1.1, N1.2 and N1.3, but are not required to combine them in a single task or activity. Evidence for each of these components may be presented separately.

OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7968/2)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 2** candidates are required to demonstrate and evidence their use of number skills in the context of at least one activity that covers all three of N2.1, N2.2 and N2.3. Such an activity will give them more scope to make decisions on how to identify and find the information they need, what calculations to use, and how best to present their findings. Calculations will involve two or more steps and a more demanding range of techniques and understanding. Candidates must know how to work with numbers of any size, including addition and subtraction of fractions, calculations involving area and volume, ratio, unit conversions, percentages and scaling, as well as the use of formulae and graphs.

OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7969/4)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 3** there is an increase in the complexity of activities and techniques needed to tackle the problem or task, and in the independence required of the candidate. Candidates are required to be responsible for planning and carrying through their use of number in the context of one or more activities that cover all three of N3.1, N3.2 and N3.3, including handling data from a relatively large data set. Compared with Level 2, calculations will involve several steps and rearranging formulae. Candidates must justify their approaches and methods, in addition to presenting, justifying and evaluating their findings. As at Level 2, at least one piece of work must show evidence of the whole process described above.

OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Communication

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7962/1)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 1** candidates are required to use speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in the context of straightforward subject matter, materials and tasks. They must take part in formal discussions on everyday subjects, identify the main points and ideas in reading material, and produce short documents that are written in uncomplicated language and include compound sentences.

OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Communication

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7963/3)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 2** candidates are required to give a short talk/presentation and to contribute to discussions by using more varied vocabulary and helping to move things forward. Candidates should be able to select relevant reading material from different sources and be able to use more advanced reading skills, both in order to follow lines of reasoning in lengthier documents and to summarise information to use in their short talk/presentation and/or their writing. They must show that they can adapt the structure and style of their writing to different types of document, and show that they are capable of using complex sentences that are correctly spelled and punctuated.

OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Communication

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7970/0)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 3** there is an increase in the complexity of materials and subject matter. Candidates are likely to be required to balance a number of points simultaneously, while evaluating the relative importance of each. In discussions, candidates need to be sensitive

to the contributions of others, develop points and ideas, and actively encourage others to participate. In making presentations, candidates should demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and be able to engage their audience's attention.

OCR Level 1 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7964/5)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 1** candidates are required to use ICT systems to find, develop and present simple numerical, textual and graphical information in the context of short, straightforward tasks, using basic techniques. Candidates should know how to use technology safely, care for equipment, and avoid losing data. They should also know how to send and receive e-mail, and to whom they should turn if things go wrong.

OCR Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7965/7)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 2** candidates are required to use ICT systems independently to carry out a largely straightforward task, to make effective searches, to derive new information, and present it taking account of purpose and audience. They must combine information, such as text with images or numbers, in a consistent way. Activities require a greater range of techniques, and more steps, than at Level 1. Candidates should be able to enter formulae when using appropriate software to generate simple calculations such as totals. They must observe copyright and confidentiality laws and manage health, safety and security risks. They should be able to recognise errors and their causes and be aware of ways of minimising the risk of viruses. They should know how to send and receive e-mails with attachments.

OCR Level 3 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/7966/9)

To achieve this qualification a candidate must achieve the one mandatory unit. At **Level 3** there is an increase in the complexity of activities and techniques required, such as the ability to create structures and procedures for developing text, images and numbers. Candidates are required to plan and carry through at least two activities, one of which must cover ICT3.1, ICT3.2 and ICT3.3. They must be able to manage their work independently, including the technology and software they are using. This includes observing laws of copyright and rules of confidentiality, safe working and avoiding loss of information, identifying errors, and minimising risks from viruses. Candidates need to be aware of the wider implications of using ICT.

5.3 Amplification of evidence requirements

The evidence requirements for each qualification is included in the 'Amplification of evidence requirements' section of the *DCELLS Essential Skills Wales* standards and guidance publication.

The 'Amplification of evidence requirements' section must be read in association with the 'Progression' and 'Mandatory definitions' sections. These sections provide mandatory detail about each component part of the standards. Links to the DCELLS ESW standards are provided below:

[Essential Skills Wales Application of Number standards](#)

[Essential Skills Wales Communication standards](#)

[Essential Skills Wales ICT standards](#)

The 'Amplification of evidence requirements' table is divided into columns, these provide the following information to support the standards:

Column 1 - '**You must provide evidence that you can**' states the evidence that candidates must include in their portfolio for assessment.

Column 2 - '**Evidence requirements**' gives more detail of the evidence that is required in the portfolio or assessment tasks.

Column 3 - '**In order to show that you are competent you need to know how to**' lists the skills the candidates must have in order to show they are competent at the appropriate level.

Column 4 - '**Guidance**' provides explanations, advice and support for candidates and for teachers/tutors/trainers.

5.4 Essential Skills Wales mandatory definitions

Mandatory definitions of the terms used in the Essential Skills Wales Application of Number, Communication and Information and Technology standards are included in the *Essential Skills Wales* standards and guidance document.

The mandatory definitions are an integral part of the standards and amplification of evidence. They should be checked at all times and must be used in learning and teaching and in preparing as well as assessing evidence.

6 Administration arrangements

This section provides an overview of the administration arrangements operating for these qualifications. For further information please refer to the OCR Admin Guide: Vocational Qualifications (A850) and *Making a claim for certification using Interchange -- a guide for centre assessors* which are available to download from the OCR website.

6.1 Guidance on submission of portfolio evidence

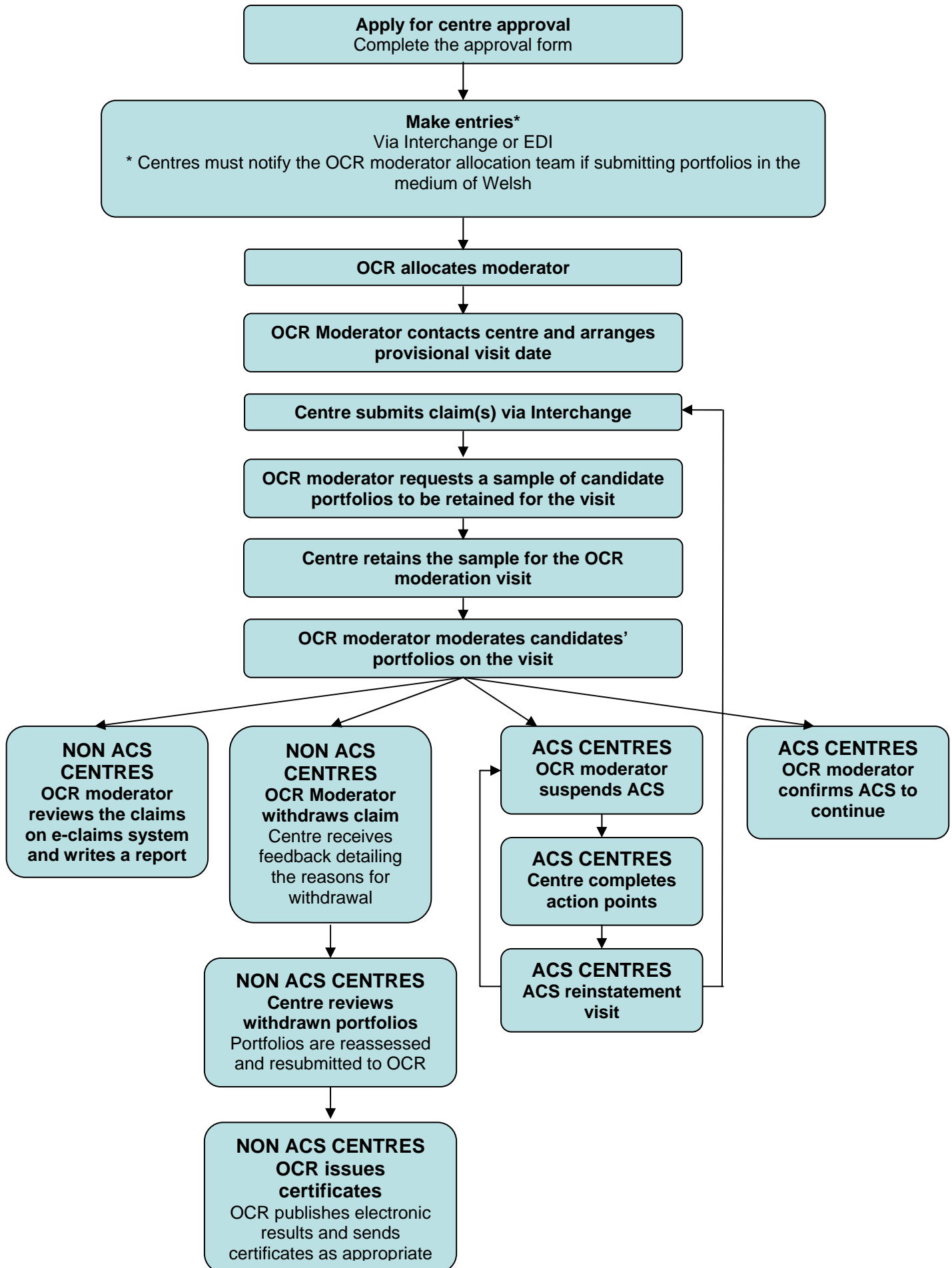
Candidates' portfolios can be presented for moderation to OCR in electronic format.

For further information on submitting evidence electronically, please refer to the Guidance for submission of electronic portfolio which can be downloaded from the OCR website.

6.2 Overview of full process

The following flow chart provides a brief summary of the administration process for these qualifications. For more detailed information on the administration of the qualification please refer to the OCR Admin Guide: Vocational Qualifications (A850) and *Making a claim for certification using Interchange -- a guide for centre assessors*.

Administration flowchart for visiting moderation



7 Supporting Documentation

7.1 OCR recording documents

OCR recording documents have been produced for each Essential Skills Wales qualification. These have been designed to support centres and candidates in recording assessment and tracking evidence. The recording documents should be used in conjunction with the Essential Skills Wales 'Amplification of evidence requirements' and 'Mandatory definitions' documents.

The recording documents include Unit Summary sheets and a Candidate Activity Planning Sheet. The Unit Summary sheet has been designed to:

- summarise and record evidence by component
- make provision for evidence references to be recorded to enable tracking
- signify that all components of the Essential Skills Wales qualifications have been evidenced.

It is mandatory for centres to use these OCR recording documents.

7.2 Documents related to Essential Skills Wales

The following documents are available to download from the OCR website:

DCELLS Essential Skills Wales Standards and Guidance

OCR Essential Skills Wales Portfolio Recording documents

OCR Essential Skills Wales Changes documents

OCR Guidance for submission of electronic portfolio

8 Guidance For Candidates

8.1 What are the Essential Skills Wales qualifications?

The Essential Skills Wales qualifications in Application of Number, Communication and ICT aim to support the effectiveness of learning and performance both in education and at work by encouraging learners to:

- think about their intentions and purposes
- plan a course of action
- implement the plan
- reflect on their progress towards completing the plan
- review the plan to suit changing circumstances or to overcome problems
- revise a new plan when the original one has not been fulfilled.

8.2 What do I have to do to achieve these qualifications?

Essential Skills qualifications are single unit qualifications. To achieve an Essential Skills Wales qualification you must complete a portfolio that meets the evidence requirements for the skill area and level you are studying for.

8.3 How do I know that these qualifications are right for me?

Essential Skills Wales are designed for learners wishing to gain an appropriate qualification that will support the effectiveness of their learning and performance both in education, work and life in general. They are applicable to all programmes, ages, abilities and contexts and are therefore appropriate for a variety of learners at all levels.

This qualification may be used towards the Welsh Baccalaureate and apprenticeship frameworks.

8.4 How are these qualifications assessed?

The Essential Skills Wales qualifications are assessed by a portfolio of evidence that is assessed by centre staff. The portfolio must meet all of the evidence requirements to achieve a pass.

OCR wishes you every success in your achievement of these qualifications.

9 Further Support and Information

9.1 OCR advisory visit

Centres can request an advisory visit during which they will be provided with advice and guidance on assessment and evidence requirements as well as administration processes for these qualifications.

Please contact OCR Operations team to request a visit.

9.2 Enquiries

For enquiries relating to any of OCR's vocational qualifications, please contact the OCR Customer Contact Centre on:

Telephone: 024 76 851509
Fax: 024 76 851633
Email: vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

Alternatively, you could visit OCR's website at www.ocr.org.uk for further information on OCR qualifications.

9.3 Results enquiries

For information regarding result enquiries please refer to the OCR website at www.ocr.org.uk.

9.4 Customer feedback

We welcome feedback from customers on all aspects of our provision. Comments relating to this documentation should be sent to:

The Essential Skills Wales Qualification Manager
Qualifications Division
OCR
Coventry Office
Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JQ

9.5 OCR Training Events

Information on OCR's training events for centres can be found on the OCR website by going to to www.ocr.org.uk or [OCR Eventbooker](#) or by contacting:

OCR Training
Customer Support Division
Progress House
Westwood Way
Coventry CV4 8JQ

Telephone: 02476 496 398
Fax: 02476 496 399
Email: training@ocr.org.uk

9.6 Publications

The OCR Publications Service offers support to OCR customers, centres, parents and candidates. It offers a wide range of up-to-date materials for sale which relate to our key qualifications. These materials include specifications, past papers, mark schemes and a range of support materials.

The OCR Publications Catalogue holds the full list of materials currently available to order. To obtain a copy of this and to order publications, please go to <http://publications.ocr.org.uk> or call our dedicated order line on 0870 770 6622.

Orders can also be emailed to publications@ocr.org.uk or posted to the address on the order form printed in the OCR Publications Catalogue.

OCR Support Materials prepare extra resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These support materials can be ordered from OCR Publications and more information about the materials can be obtained from support.materials@ocr.org.uk.