

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR ACW USERS

Essential Skills Qualifications / ESW / Key Skills

Some key points regarding the Essential Skills Qualifications (ESQ) and Essential Skill Wales (ESW) requirements of SASW frameworks:-

Please note that these are the minimum requirements:

- Essential Skills Qualifications are available from 1st September 2015. Any apprentices registering on a SASW Apprenticeship **on or after 1st Jan 2016** must undertake the required mandatory ESQ in Communication Skills and Application of Number Skills (at the level specified in their framework). Please note that some frameworks may also require Essential Digital Literacy Skills to be achieved.
- An apprentice who has already achieved an ESW at the appropriate level prior to the start of their Apprenticeship can still use this qualification regardless of the start date of their Apprenticeship.
- Apprentices registered on a SASW Apprenticeship **between 1st Sept 2010 and 30th August 2015** must undertake the required mandatory ESW in Communication and Application of Number (at the level specified in their framework) – there is however a period of transition where ESW qualifications are available for registration up to 31st December 2015. Please note that some frameworks may also require ESW in Information and Communication Technology to be achieved.
- Apprentices registered on a SASW Apprenticeship **prior to 1st Jan 2016** may use ESQ (in Communication Skills, Application of Number Skills, and Digital Literacy Skills - at the level specified in their framework), as valid evidence towards their apprenticeship claim.
- Also, learners who have **previously achieved** a Key Skill qualification in **either** Wales or England **at any time** prior to commencing their Apprenticeship are exempt from having to undertake the equivalent ESQ or ESW qualification.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Some Certification Bodies may have additional requirements relating to their acceptance of Key Skills qualifications. Therefore, training providers are advised to refer to the actual framework document for further clarification **and/or** speak directly to the relevant Certification Body to confirm the acceptance, or otherwise, of existing Key Skills qualifications achieved by any of their learners.

NB: The relaxation regarding the acceptance of all Key Skills qualifications was confirmed by the Welsh Government June 2014.

The following are **NOT** acceptable as exemptions for ESQ or ESW:-

- GCSEs
- AS/A Levels
- Functional Skills
- Any other nation specific qualifications for English/Maths or ICT
- Baccalaureate certificates – **unless** it specifically identifies achievement of ESQ or ESW qualifications as part of the Baccalaureate and that this can be evidenced

Use of the Universal Apprenticeship Certification Claim Form

- Any Apprentice starting on, or after, 23rd June 2013, will require the Universal Apprenticeship Certificate Claim Form (V1 June 2013) to be completed by the person making the certificate claim (claimant). This form has to be signed and dated by the claimant but not the Apprentice.
- Any Apprentice that has a start date before 23rd June 2013 does not require the Universal Apprenticeship Certificate Claim Form (V1 June 2013) to be completed. Prior to ACW, it would seem that very few CBS required a declaration form to be completed at the point of making a certification claim. However, where legacy declaration forms do exist then these can still be accepted for Apprentices starting before 23rd June 2013.

Completion Dates

- If a Universal Apprenticeship Certificate Claim Form has been used and submitted then the Completion Date on ACW should be input as **EITHER**: -
 - the date of signing on the form**OR**
 - the date of the submission being made on ACW (**as long as this submission date is after the date that the Certificate Claim form was signed**).
- If a Universal Apprenticeship Certificate Claim Form has not been used, as it was not required because the Apprentice start date is prior to 23/6/13, then the Completion Date on ACW should be input as the date of the submission being made on ACW.
- As a general rule, the Completion Date input to ACW should always be **on or after** the latest date on any certificates/documentation uploaded as achievement evidence. This is because a claim **cannot** be made on ACW until the claimant has received all the evidence that is required to support the claim for an Apprenticeship Completion Certificate.

ERR Declaration Forms

With the launch of ACW, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) requested the introduction of a Universal ERR Declaration Form. This is now available and it caters for both SASW and earlier Blueprint frameworks. However, please note this new Universal ERR Declaration form **only** replaces legacy ERR forms and where a framework requires that ERR achievement is to be achieved by a certificated outcome, then the actual certificate evidence will continue to be required and must be uploaded to ACW.

However, in order to give a sufficient period of transition from the use of legacy ERR forms to the mandatory use of the Universal ERR Declaration Form, legacy ERR forms will be acceptable up to **31st Dec 2013**.

From 1st Jan 2014, only the Universal ERR Declaration Form should be accepted. A copy of this will be available for download from the ACW website. However, individual CBs may also wish to make a copy available on their own websites. Where an ERR workbook is in place, the current declaration/sign off sheet should either be replaced with the new universal one or a note added to the workbook which directs workbook users to a location where the universal ERR form can be downloaded for use.

Evidence of ERR completion is still required for certification claims made on ACW so where an ERR declaration form has been completed this should be uploaded to the Evidence Tab in ACW, for each learner.