

Edexcel - Minimum Standards For NVQ E-Portfolios:

Of interest to:

- Suppliers of e- portfolio software packages for NVQs
- Centres offering Edexcel NVQs
- Users of e- portfolio software packages for Edexcel NVQs

Suppliers of e-portfolio software packages and users of these products need to ensure that the products meet a minimum set of standards, in order to be considered fit for purpose and in order to gain approval from Edexcel. To fulfil the requirements of candidates, centres and for Edexcel as the awarding body for Edexcel NVQs, these minimum standards are set out below.

System Access and Security

The product should be securely, readily and easily accessible for:

- candidates
- assessors
- internal verifiers (IVs)
- external verifiers (EVs)
- locations remote from the centre.

Portfolios and their contents must be maintained in a secure environment by the product supplier, access to which is limited through:

- a defined hierarchy of user access
- unique security passwords/IDs provided for each level of user
- read-only rights provided to those with limited access
- facility to differentiate between qualified and non-qualified assessors
- 'isolation' of completed units following final assessment
- facility to grant remote access to allocated EVs.

Usability and Accessibility

The package must be easy and intuitive to use for all users - candidates, assessors, IVs & EVs - and to be capable of :

- storing the full range of file types: - text, sound, scanned images, digital pictures, video, templates and standard software applications
- being customised for candidates with special access requirements
- providing links to other documents/areas, such as centre policies and procedures, Edexcel qualification documentation and the Sector Skills Council (SSC) and Qualification & Curriculum Authority (QCA) websites
- providing a full range of user support material, including FAQs and user guides
- being compatible with the centre's IT systems

In pursuit of usability and accessibility e-portfolio product providers must:

- provide in-centre technical support, where needed
- make available continuing telephone and e-mail support
- provide induction and training programmes for centre staff and their current candidates in the use of the e-portfolio product
- continue these programmes to accommodate new centre staff and new candidates until such time as the centre can assume the trainer role.

Ownership Of The Portfolio

It is the case for the different elements of the portfolio:

- that evidence is in the ownership of the candidate
- that assessment and IV is in the ownership of the centre
- that evidence should be locked following successful Internal Verification
- that evidence may be portable between centres and awarding bodies.

Candidate Progress

The portfolio record must permit:

- storage of initial diagnostic assessment/statement of new candidates
- monitoring of candidates' progress by the candidate and other relevant users
- viewing of assessor's, IV's and EV's comments, through controlled access
- protection of assessor's, IV's and EV's original comments from amendment.

Cross Referencing

To allow single pieces of evidence to be used for multiple assessment criteria, cross referencing of evidence should be possible, e.g. for holistic assessment:

- candidates' work to be easily cross-referenced across units within a qualification
- candidates' work to be easily cross-referenced across units between qualifications
- evidence to be added to the e-portfolio on one occasion only but to be simultaneously linked to different unit requirements.

Audit Trail

For regulatory, audit and assessment purposes the package must provide:

- a documented audit trail, including: assessment records, submission dates, IV records, EV comments etc
- controlled access to the audit trail.

Archiving And Retention

Portfolio evidence needs to be retained for the purposes of external verification and audit for a minimum of three years, the product should:

- meet the regulatory authority's requirements (QCA NVQ Code of Practice) for retention of evidence
- safeguard against removal or modification of archived documents.

System Failures

The product provider must provide for contingency to mitigate the risks associated with the loss of portfolio evidence through:

- easy to use back-up facilities in the event of system failure.
- guidance to centre network administrators on safe practice regarding back-ups
- facility to archive individual learner evidence on appropriate media e.g. CD
- (for centrally hosted services) full Disaster Recovery processes being in place at hosting data centre.

As part of the minimum set of standards describe above, the supplier of an e-portfolio software package must also offer induction and training programme for Edexcel EVs, centre staff and their current candidates in the use of the product. The requirements of the induction and training programme are outlined below:

Training for Edexcel External Verifiers

The supplier of the e-portfolio software package will need to ensure that EVs are familiarised with the product. Suppliers must provide:

- an information pack, including screen shots and explanatory notes about the supplier's product
- CD-based or web-based demonstration of the supplier's product
- agree to attend one or more Edexcel EV training day, to provide a face-to-face induction to the use of the supplier's product
- contact details for EVs to seek advice and guidance on the use of the e-portfolio software package directly from the supplier.

For further information contact NVO@Edexcel.org.uk