



Rewarding Learning

Occupational Studies

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Is this a GCSE qualification?

This is a Level 2 qualification aligned to GCSEs and therefore sits on the NQF at the same level as GCSEs and NVQs at Level 2. It allows learners to explore a range of vocational skills and research careers in the occupational areas they choose. The specifications allow learners to develop different skills and discover if particular careers suit them. The learners can achieve the whole range of levels of competence.

The Grade Boundaries in the new specification have changed to the arrangement shown below. A grading model, using Pass/Merit/Distinction, with notional equivalencies to GCSE, has been developed.

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|---------|---------------|----|---------------|
| Level 2 | Distinction * | A* | 180–200 marks |
| | Distinction | A | 160–179 marks |
| | Merit | B | 140–159 marks |
| | Pass | C | 120–139 marks |

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|---------|--------------|-----|---------------|
| Level 1 | Distinction | D | 100–119 marks |
| | Merit | E | 80– 99marks |
| | Pass | F/G | 40–79marks |
| | Unclassified | U | 0–39 marks |

2. Do I need special training or qualifications to deliver Occupational Studies?

The qualification is skills based and so each unit in the specification range of pathways requires the teacher to have the skills in that area at Level 3 at least. Industrial experience can give the teacher the skills required. If teachers are required by their centre to deliver a unit but they do not have the skills to deliver it, they should contact CCEA and discuss their specific circumstances with the Principal Moderator for that pathway.

As with any teaching, it is preferable to have a teaching qualification and be at least one level higher than the subject you are teaching. In this instance an NVQ, BTEC or HNC/D in the appropriate subject should be the minimum, and as the qualification is about learning how to function in the world of work, it is also necessary to have some industrial experience and have evidence of being occupationally competent. You should not be teaching Occupational Studies as a filler to your timetable when you know little or nothing about the industry that the subject relates to, or the industrial standards and practices that are expected. Please contact CCEA for advice and guidance to your suitability if you are in doubt.

3. What help will CCEA give me to deliver the qualification?

CCEA offers support to all teachers by way of their information and support materials on the CCEA website and the Occupational Studies microsite. In addition to this there are standardising meetings held at least one a year, usually in the Autumn term. If you want more help from a specialist moderator, you can request a visit to your school or college or help and advice through the APM team.

4. Do I have to teach all the recommended learning hours?

The recommended learning hours are just what they say. You may find that with a very capable group you may be able to deliver the unit in slightly fewer hours, but the time for exploration and practice of skills and for individuals to be able to be confident in the skills really requires the full time allowance. Even if you manage to finish the unit before the deadline for the Tac 1 to be completed, there should be extension practical tasks that can be completed or industrial visits that would be enjoyable for the learners.

5. What are the minimum delivery hours?

You should keep to the recommended hours as, even if you have very capable learners, the practical skills should be practised more than once. Extension material and visits should be incorporated as well as talks from industrial practitioners to enhance the careers aspect of the specifications.

6. Should the learners wear personal protective clothing for all practical subjects?

All learners must be provided with personal protection equipment (PPE) at the standards required by the industry relating to the occupational area. The course is designed to show the learner what working in that occupational area is like and this includes all personal protection equipment (PPE) and the Health and Safety requirements and standards.

7. What basic equipment/resources do I need to start teaching my unit in Occupational Studies?

You should look at the specifications and the practical skills that are required in the tasks for AO2. The occupational unit must be taught in conditions and with the equipment that would be normally found in that specific vocational area. It is in the best interest of all centres to ensure that the space is adequate and that they comply with Health and Safety legislation.

Resources for teaching the unit should be adequate for all learners to achieve the full range of the needs of the specification. Failure to be adequately resourced will lead to learners failing to achieve their full potential and lower levels in their outcomes. If you have any doubts about the size of the accommodation you have been allocated or the resources that are available, contact the APM for your pathway or the CCEA Subject Support Officer and discuss your concerns with them.

8. As I have a wide range of abilities in my class, how can I cope with differing abilities? Do I need to provide different worksheets for the students who have special needs?

As with any teaching in this situation you may have to adapt your normal teaching style but generally this course allows for peer support and teamwork, where a more able student can perhaps support or lead a team of other learners. In practical skills where tools or machinery are used then the more able may be able to take on extension tasks whilst you, as the teacher, can concentrate on supporting others. All of the learners must be given the same worksheets, but simpler questions and more supportive formats for the questions can be integrated with more stretching ones where more written work is required.

9. Does photographic evidence have to be provided in all subjects areas?

There must be photographic evidence of the final product in **all subjects**. For all pathways, before and after photographs are required to show the progression of the learning process and the skills being tested in the tasks. You must get permission to have photographs taken and even if the face is not visible, a signature and statement from the teacher stating that this is the learner performing a practical skill or taking part in a specific task should be available in the portfolio. Screen dumps are also acceptable as evidence that a student has completed a task on a computer. A teacher's signature is also required.

10. Do the photographs have to be in colour?

Black and white photographs are fine except where colour is necessary for grading e.g. where a product can be different due to colour in the overall final presentation e.g. Beauty, Catering etc. The photographic evidence can be stored on a DVD or memory stick rather than being printed out, but this must be put into individual folders for each student so that it is easy for the moderator to verify it. Prints in black and white are of course acceptable except when it is evidence for Photoshop or other digital imaging units where the colour is important as part of the evidence of the product.

11. What format is acceptable for the portfolio?

The portfolios will have to be sent into CCEA, so it should be available in paper format if it is required to be sent for moderation to CCEA. During the course, however, the work can be digitalised on a DVD or memory stick and preferably stored in a back-up system in the centre or in paper format. However, each portfolio should have the same standard format, which requires the following:

- The name of the unit should be first and a statement that the portfolio is the work of the student. This should be signed by the student and dated.
- Then there should be clear evidence of where the mark has come from. The allocation of marks for the unit must be broken down into sections (as in the standard document found at the start of the unit specifications supplied by CCEA). Ideally there should be comments/written feedback from the teacher to give information on the way student has performed each task in AO1/2/3.
- Next should be the sections AO1, AO2 and AO3 and with each section there should be the evidence of the work done by the student, the mark allocation for the worksheets and tasks and then the actual marks that the student was awarded for each of these.
- It is especially important that the teacher shows where the marks were awarded and that the addition is correct for each task and at the end of each section.
- Make sure that the AO3 marks are clear so that it is easy to see why these marks were awarded or why they were not awarded.

12. What do I have to do in preparation for moderation? If I am the only teacher doing Occupational Studies in this pathway, do I have to have my work internally standardized?

- First you should check that all of the specifications have been covered.
- Then check that each learner has a completed portfolio as above.
- Have an internal standardising meeting either with the rest of the team teaching units in your own pathway, or another pathway if that is possible. You may use a senior member of staff to look over the portfolios and your marking so that they can see how you have marked and check they agree with you.
- Complete an internal standardisation form at this meeting showing who was present and which portfolios you checked. Note down the mark you originally gave and then the mark after internal standardisation. If the marks are different, then you need to look again at all of the portfolios and remark or adjust accordingly.

13 (a) What evidence do I show that the portfolios have been internally standardised?

(b) How do I carry out the internal standardisation process?

(c) Does there have to be internal standardisation across all units of the pathway?

- Have an internal standardising meeting either with the rest of the team teaching units in your own pathway, or another pathway if that is possible. You may use a senior member of staff to look over the portfolios and your marking so that they can see how you have marked and check they agree with you.
- Complete an internal standardisation form at this meeting showing who was present and which portfolio you checked. Note down the mark you originally gave and then the mark after internal standardisation. If the marks are different then you need to look again at all of the portfolios and remark or adjust them accordingly.

14 What happens if some of the marks in a pathway are marked down because another teacher marked them too high?

The internal standardisation process should sort out this problem as you will soon know who is marking too leniently or too harshly. It is at this session that the marking across the pathway should be adjusted before the moderation process. However, if this is not done and the marks in any portfolios are found to be out of tolerance in any unit, then the whole pathway is affected and the marks may be adjusted up or down by CCEA.

15 How do I fill in a Tac 1 Form?

You fill in the form in pen and put in a whole number, not percentages or half marks or bands etc.

16. What do I put on the Tac 1 form for non-attendance?

First check that the exams officer for your unit has entered the learner in question. It sometimes happens they have been entered by mistake. Alternatively, the learner may have had erratic attendance, but if they have attended any classes and have some work that has been marked, even if it is very little or of poor content, you still enter the mark they have gained from their efforts. Do not simply give a mark because they missed a lot of the course or were absent for the last few weeks.

17 Do I still give a mark if a student only attends for a few weeks and hasn't completed the whole course?

If a learner has been entered and has marks for any work completed, you must record those marks on the Tac 1 form.

18 Do all portfolios need to be available for moderation?

Yes. You must have all portfolios completed and ready for moderation at the time when Tac 1 forms must be completed. There will be a random sample taken and the moderator may wish to sample more portfolios than the minimum requirement.

19 Are predicted grades allowed if students haven't finished the course yet?

Predicted grades are **not** acceptable in this process and all portfolios must be finished and ready for the moderation process by the date decided by CCEA.

20 For how long do I keep the portfolios after the learners have achieved the qualification?

Portfolios must be kept for one year in a safe location.

21 What do I do after moderation if I have teaching time left?

Extension material can be used and industrial visits and talks can be organised. Year 11 students may start the next unit that they may be taking the following year.

22 Is exemplar material available for my unit?

CCEA has exemplar material available and it is used in the standardising meetings that are held every year. Some exemplar portfolios are also available on the microsite.

23 What support/advice is available and whom do I contact if I need some help about the teaching unit? If I need help, can someone visit me in a supportive role and does it cost my school anything?

There is an APM for each pathway. They will be at the standardisation event and can also be contacted through CCEA.

You can contact the APM for the pathway and they may be able to either phone, visit you in your school or college or they may recommend another subject specific moderator who may contact you. There is usually no cost for this service. However, any cost will be at the discretion of CCEA.