

8 October 2020

HBA D4. Hair statement regarding temporary flexibilities and adaptations to competency qualifications due to COVID19.

Purpose

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in restrictions to aesthetics education and training during 2020. Guidance has been provided by the Government on close contact services with variable opening dates for businesses. As a result, some barbering services were delayed and not permitted. It is also possible that the public health restrictions may continue either locally or nationally during the rest of the year. Learners, employers, and training providers wish to continue as soon as possible with their qualifications, clarity is urgently required to enable Awarding Organisations to plan effectively. In this paper we will set out the factors we are proposing to ensure a consistent approach hairdressing and barbering qualification delivery continues.

Aim

The aim is to provide consistent approach to support awarding organisations delivering qualifications in the hair industry. It is provided in relation to implementing temporary adaptations for the ERF in Hairdressing and Barbering qualifications in 20/21 due to COVID19.

The Impact of COVID 19

The Covid19 pandemic has had a dramatic on the sector and will continue to have when we are able to return to work, there will be new ways of working required. Maintaining professionalism, competency and standards within the sector is a key determiner to the industries retuning to a new normal and assuring public confidence.

Impact of Proposed Changes to Competency Levels

As detailed in our previous joint industry statement, supported by key industry organisations, it is important that any adaptations or flexibilities applied to qualifications, maintain the rigour and validity required and do not devalue the qualifications, leading to confusion over levels of competence.

This provides parity across the suite of the sector statements.

The following principles should continue to be applied when considering any adaptations, they:

1. must ensure that learners are competent and safe to practice meeting health, safety and legal requirements
2. must meet Covid safe risk assessment guidance as detailed in the current Government guidelines
3. must support the standards set by employers, standard setting authorities, and individual industries
4. will neither advantage or disadvantage learners historically, now or in the future
5. must maintain the validity, reliability, and integrity of standards and qualifications
6. must cover all the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and competencies
7. must consider learners' attendance and duration of learning completed, addressing any gaps in learning.

This statement is subject to review based on Government guidance.

All stakeholders have a duty of care to every learner and ultimately the client/customer. The achievement of an aesthetics qualification is confirmation of competence that a learner is 100% job ready to work in the sector, endorsed by the issued learner's certificate.

Wherever possible the full qualification must be completed as detailed in the qualification specification, flexibilities have been agreed if a service or treatment cannot be completed due to Government restrictions or the current [Government guidelines](#) preclude the full qualification being completed (due to social distancing or limited space restrictions).

Definitions

An adaptation is a permitted change of regulated qualifications in line with the extraordinary regulated framework (ERF) and extended extraordinary regulated framework (E-ERF)

A flexibility is the ability to change or something to be changed easily within the qualification according to the situation

The following treatments and services qualifications are included within the hair suite of qualifications:

- Hairdressing
- Barbering
- Hairstyling - bridal
- Styling and finishing hair (men's/women's)
- Shampooing, conditioning, and treating the scalp
- Plaiting and twisting hair
- Cutting men's hair
- Cutting hair
- Colouring hair

The below hair professional qualification is included in the hair statement regarding temporary flexibilities and adaptations to regulated qualifications due to COVID19 (HBAD2).

- Hairdressing
- Barbering

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2020-2021 Competency qualifications adaptations and flexibilities post 24 March 2020

The following THREE scenarios have been developed to consider Government restrictions and potential local lockdowns:

Scenario 1: Government guidelines state that close contact services are not permitted:

- No practical/assessment can be completed (reschedule as soon as possible)

Scenario 2: Government guidelines state that close contact services on the face are not permitted:

- No practical/ assessment can be completed for services on the face in the high-risk zone:
 - Barbering
 - Shaving
 - Detailing and outlining

It is highly recommended that providers concentrate on training and assessment on the face, when services are permitted to open, in case further restriction or local lockdowns are in place

Scenario 3: Government state that close contact services on the face are permitted in line with Government guidelines (mitigations)

Knowledge and Understanding:

The learner must demonstrate 100% achievement of the knowledge and understanding detailed within the qualification specification.

The recommended approach including the knowledge and understanding statements usually assessed by externally set mandatory testing (closed book) or knowledge assignments

Where it creates an unnecessary risk to invigilate Knowledge statements assessed by externally set mandatory question papers under formal assessment conditions ('closed book'); the knowledge should be evidenced and referenced via the following:

- Where possible knowledge should be inferred from Practical observations and evidenced or where applicable, cross referenced from another knowledge assessment already achieved under formal assessment conditions.
- Where knowledge cannot be inferred, oral /questions and answers and professional discussion should be used to generate evidence against the remaining criteria
- Assessment of knowledge, oral questions and answers and professional discussion sessions must be carried out by an assessor who is occupationally competent and in a way that authenticates the responses are the learners own
All evidence gathered should be traceable, auditable, and authenticated.

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Performance Criteria:

The learner must demonstrate 100% achievement of the Performance Criteria and range as detailed in the qualification specification.

The provider must confirm and agree the specific venue requirements that must be in place to include ensuring a realistic working environment:

- The real work environment must meet the following principles:
 - All practical skills observation assessments must be carried out under realistic commercial conditions, meeting the current close contact services Government guidelines
 - The range of services, professional products, tools, materials, and equipment must be current and available for use and adhere to current close contact services Government guidelines
 - All byelaws, legislation or local authority requirements including risk assessments that have been set down in relation to the type of work that is being carried out must be taken full account of
 - all relevant large items of equipment e.g. chair including relevant mitigations for close contact services (e.g. visor, guards and/or screen) and PPE must be provided as outlined in current Government guidelines
 - All products, tools and equipment must available, be in good working order and legally compliant.
 - The number of observations and number of clients is not fixed provided the full performance criteria and range is met. For example
 - Cut hair using basic techniques (SKACH3), learners/candidates are required to carry out the following cuts; one length - above shoulder, one length - below shoulder, uniform layer, short graduation with scissor over comb, long graduation, with a fringe. If a learner/candidate has been observed carrying out each of these cuts, has been assessed as being competent in each and has covered the remaining range areas, this could be covered in 5 observations
- There is no requirement to work on a set number of “clients”. The clients can be from the learner’s workplace, educational or household bubble.
- Additional discretionary time can be allowed for an learner to implement additional PPE, screens/guards and social distancing requirements following current Government and industry guidelines and FAQ’s.
- Where traditional, physical onsite practical skills observations are undertaken by the assessor:
 - Start times may be staggered for multiple practical skills observations
 - The number of learners, class sizes to completing practical skills observations may be reduced to reflect and meet social distancing guidelines as per Government guidelines
- Learners should be provided the opportunity to be observed virtually for any practical skills observation assessment following external quality assurance guidelines:
 - A vocationally competent employer or a vocationally competent senior member of staff must be present during the practical skills observation, for safety and to assist the assessor, on areas of clarification or where the assessor needs to see a close-up image
 - It is recommended virtual observations should be completed on a one to one basis, however custom and practice may support a smaller group size subject to risk management
 - 100% of the practical skills observation assessment must be observed by the assessor, should be live streamed, wherever possible and should be recorded with the relevant

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data authorities confirmed by all participants. However, where this is not possible, (remote geographical locations or insufficient live streaming access) allowances should be made to accept recorded practical skills observation evidence for assessment. Oral questions can be asked by the assessor to confirm any points of clarification, evidenced and retained. Protocols must be created and implemented to ensure all evidence gathered is traceable, auditable, and authenticated.

- Practical skills observation assessments can be adapted to meet current Government guidelines, limiting close proximity timescales associated with providing treatments or services to increased numbers of ‘clients or customers’, examples to consider:
 - evidence collection could be cross referenced from another unit already achieved to cover a range
 - clustering the performance of multiple treatments and services on individual ‘clients or customers’ to maximise the evidence opportunities
- Use of technology in a workplace, could be considered to evidence the observation of range performance evidence, remotely by the assessor (live streamed, recorded and retained), provided there is a vocationally competent person onsite
- Where reception and retail facilities create an unnecessary risk for the safe distancing of clients, learners/candidates and assessors due to Covid-19 restrictions simulation is acceptable for practical assessments assessment criteria

The use of artificial block head mannequins is not a permitted simulation for competency qualification assessments.

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