



This guide sets out the requirements for Total Qualification Time (TQT) and what activities are included within its calculation

What is Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is a term used within qualifications regulated by Ofqual as part of the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF). It aims to provide users of qualifications with an indication of the minimum length of time it would take the average learner to complete their qualification.

When calculating TQT, Awarding Organisations compare similar qualifications to ensure that, where possible and appropriate, similar values are used but we also consider the views of the users of our qualifications during the development process leading to the creation of a qualification.

Users of qualifications will see TQT expressed in two ways within qualification specifications:

Guided Learning (hours)

GL (hours) are made up of activities that are completed by the learner under the direct instruction or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor or tutor whether through physical presence or electronic means.

Where a qualification follows a unitised structure, each unit will be allocated a GL(hours) value but where a qualification does not follow a unitised structure, GL (hours) will be allocated to the qualification as a whole.

Total Qualification Time (TQT)

TQT is made up of the GL (hours) plus all other time taken in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training but not under the direct supervision of a lecturer, supervisor or tutor.

As the name suggests, whether the qualification follows a unitised structure or not, TQT is only calculated for the entire qualification and not at the unit level.

Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Qualification Sizes?

The size of a qualification is denoted by the terms Award, Certificate or Diploma and, where in the past this was related to the credit value of a qualification, it is now determined by the allocated TQT value.

The following boundaries exist for the allocation of a qualification size:

- ✓ Award has a TQT value of 120 hours or less
- ✓ Certificate has a TQT value of 121 – 369 hours
- ✓ Diploma has a TQT value of 370 or more hours

What Activities Count Towards Guided Learning (hours) and Total Qualification Time (TQT)?

The following table provides examples of what activities count towards both GL (hours) and TQT:

| Type of Activity | GL (hours) | TQT |
|--|------------|-----|
| Classroom based learning supervised by the lecturer, supervisor or tutor whether on a 1 to 1 or group basis | ✓ | ✓ |
| Invigilated or supervised examinations or final assessments | ✓ | ✓ |
| Research project where the learner carries out independent research and produces a report without supervision | x | ✓ |
| Classroom based induction to a qualification as required in the specification | ✓ | ✓ |
| Skills practice at place of learning or workplace where the learner is responsible for generating their own evidence of practice, eg. a statement confirming attendance from a suitable attendant adult, generally not the lecturer or tutor | x | ✓ |
| Skills practice carried out in simulated conditions where the learner is observed and assessed at the same time as the simulation is taking place | ✓ | ✓ |
| Face to face meetings with the lecturer, supervisor or tutor or other prearranged teaching session, eg. telephone/webcam contact, internet messaging, ie. conversation in real time | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work based practice observed by employer, tutor, or other witness more qualified than the learner | ✓ | ✓ |
| Portfolio assessment where the learner collates evidence of competence and understanding unsupervised by the lecturer, supervisor or tutor | x | ✓ |
| E-assessment where the learner has their knowledge and understanding assessed unsupervised where they can access online e-assessment at any time | x | ✓ |
| E-assessment where the learner is supervised by the lecturer, supervisor or tutor in real time | ✓ | ✓ |
| Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar | x | ✓ |

How Should Guided Learning (hours) and Total Qualification Time (TQT) be Recorded?

The method of recording GL (hours) and TQT is, in the main, dictated by the requirements of the funding or oversight body that the learning programme is being delivered for.

This will usually be in the form of an auditable record of activities that have been undertaken by the learner whether in written or electronic form.

As both GL (hours) and TQT are provided as an indication of the minimum length of time it would take the average learner to complete their qualification, it is expected that the actual record of activities will not exactly match the indicated hours provided within the qualification specification.

It is expected that, on request, a centre is able to provide evidence of the learning activities that have been undertaken by the learner to a value of at least 70% of the indicated values within the qualification specification.

Where the auditable evidence is under the 70% minimum threshold then reasons should be provided as to why this is the case. It is not that a learner will not, on occasions, complete the learning activities quicker than another individual but it should not be seen as the norm.

Reviewing Total Qualification Time (TQT)

As part of the review of qualifications to ensure their continued validity within the regulatory system we completed reviews of both the content and the GL (hours) and TQT values allocated at the time of the design of the qualification.

During this review process we consult with the users of our qualifications to ensure that our approach is evidence based and where changes are required, we will process them through the regulatory system and publish an updated qualification specification with communication sent to all individuals who subscribe to the SFEDI Awards newsletter.

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