

REMOTE ASSESSMENTS – FAQs

Since publishing its new guidance regarding remote assessment via video platform in March 2021, SASC has received a number of queries. Please see below for responses to FAQs.

CAN SASC OFFER FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR TOP-UP ASSESSMENTS FOLLOWING AN EON?

SASC discussed queries received regarding top-up assessments at the SASC Board meeting in March and concluded that it would be difficult to make any further recommendations, other than what already exists in the remote assessment statement issued earlier this month.

Different assessors will face different circumstances, depending on what tests were used originally for the EoN and what exactly is being requested by the student or organisation in question. EoNs do last for the duration of a degree course, so there should in theory be no automatic need to top up the initial assessment, unless the student specifically requests this. If a university or other organisation is requesting that **all** EoNs are ‘topped-up’ to provide (or not) a diagnostic decision, SASC recommends that a discussion takes place as to the need and student demand for this *in every case*, given pressure on assessor time. Students with an EoN covering a current degree course, who wish to reapply for the DSA if and when they start a further degree course, will need to obtain a top-up or new assessment.

Regarding any time frame for a need to repeat a test in a top-up assessment following an EoN, this will depend on the age of the student when assessed and the particular test. If the student, by the time they have a top-up assessment, has reached another age-band for a test, it could be worth repeating but this is a decision for the professional judgement of the assessor. If the student has performed well on a test, there might be no particular reason to repeat it. Where test scores fall into a borderline or below average range, there might be a reason to repeat the test.

WILL SASC BE ADDING FURTHER TESTS TO THE LIST OF THOSE APPROVED FOR REMOTE ASSESSMENT?

Yes. This is likely, as further tests are made available by publishers for this mode of assessment.

WRAML2

We will add the WRAML2 to the test list for remote assessment with a note that Pearson have taken WRAML2 over from Pro-Ed, and they have confirmed permissions re the use of the verbal working memory subtest (but not the symbolic working memory sub-test) via their No Objection letter. The publisher is very clear that none of the visual sub-tests can be done using a secondary camera, and the test is not available on Q Global.

WHAT TESTS CAN SPECIALIST ASSESSORS USE FOR PROCESSING SPEED, GIVEN THAT ONLY THE ORAL VERSION OF THE SDMT IS AVAILABLE FOR REMOTE ASSESSMENT USE?

USE OF THE SDMT IN DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS.

It seems reasonable, given the age and weak standardisation of this test, and availability only in oral form for remote administration, to omit this test (used remotely or F2F) as a range of other tests could be used to provide evidence of a processing difficulty. These could include: tests of reading and writing fluency and speed, RAN tests, other tests of perceptual speed, e.g. in the **WJIV Cog. Battery**, pair cancellation and letter and number-pattern matching; in the **Feifer Assessment of Reading** RAN and Visual Perception sub-tests; in the **Developmental Test of Visual Perception**, Visual-Motor Search and Visual-Motor speed sub-tests. To be clear, SASC is not directly advising assessors that they no longer need to use the SDMT but is suggesting that this issue is one for ongoing CPD and training combined with the exercise of professional judgement.

WHERE CAN I ACCESS DEVELOPMENT/ TRAINING SESSIONS FOR REMOTE ASSESSMENT?

SASC agrees that the COVID 19 pandemic has prompted a significant change to practice in this field. SASC has spent the past year moving cautiously towards the position it has taken: some assessment organisations and individual assessors would have liked a quicker transition. SASC does appreciate and understand the concerns assessors have about the proposed changes.

SASC is not a training provider, although one key webinar at our online annual conference in June 2021 will address remote assessment. Training may be offered by SpLD professional associations and training providers. Peer-to-peer mentoring could also form another valid route to such training.

I AM CONCERNED THAT THERE MAY BE PRESSURE TO OFFER REMOTE ASSESSMENTS WHEN I WOULD PREFER TO WORK FACE-TO-FACE. IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY OF SASC STATING THAT FACE TO FACE ASSESSMENT IS THE PREFERRED OPTION?

Given the mental health impact of excessive online work, some assessors have asked whether online full assessments will be allowed by SASC for the duration of the pandemic only.

At present, there is no clear 'end' in sight to the pandemic. The pandemic has altered working practices in most spheres and, as yet, it is difficult to foresee how permanent those changes may become. SASC is committed to monitoring closely the ongoing implications of remote assessment practices.

However, SASC has already signalled, in the Headline Messages (third bullet-point) of the remote assessment guidance, that, '**Assessment practices that most closely follow how the test was standardised are preferred.**' Because there are no existing tests generally used by

assessors that have been explicitly designed and standardised for remote use, it is therefore valid for any assessor who wishes to work face-to-face, to make this case in any situation where pressure is being brought to bear to conduct assessments remotely rather than face-to-face, if and when **both** are actually possible.

WHAT EXACTLY IS MEANT BY A BLENDED ASSESSMENT?

A blended assessment is where assessors carry out parts of an assessment remotely (e.g. gathering the background information and/or some tests by video platform) and the rest of the testing session is carried out face-to-face.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR GDPR DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION OF USING ONLINE DATA SCORING PLATFORMS?

There is further information about data scoring platforms and GDPR implications in another, older **Download** on the SASC website: [Guidance on the use of digital assessment scoring platforms: pros and cons](#). Assessors will need to add a clause to their data protection statement that includes an agreement that the client understands that their test response data may be collected and used for analysis / further test development by any publisher where scoring is carried out remotely. Assessors can contact test publishers for more information where required.

HOW CAN SOLE TRADERS BE HELPED WITH THE FINANCIAL COST OF BUYING DIGITAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS?

SASC is looking into how certain digital platforms can be shared across assessors and will report on this at the SASC conference. In the interim, Pearson, for example, can be contacted directly by assessors with these kinds of queries. A useful contact at Pearson is: Leigh Dunkley: Market Development Manager Clinical Assessment UK, Pearson Education Ltd. leigh.dunkley@pearson.com M: +44 (0) 7900 664852

HOW CAN ASSESSORS ENSURE THAT THE PERSON THEY ARE ASSESSING HAS SUFFICIENTLY STRONG WIFI AND A BIG ENOUGH SCREEN SIZE FOR REMOTE ASSESSMENT?

It will be important for assessors to send out prior agreement forms (such as those suggested in the remote assessment guidance) to avoid misunderstanding of the requirements for this mode of assessment. Assessors working face-to-face have also often worked in less than ideal circumstances, especially over the past year where physical distancing measures now have to be implemented.

WILL COMPETITIVE TENDERING FOR ASSESSMENT CONTRACTS E.G WITH UNIVERSITIES, FORCE DOWN RATES OF PAY FOR REMOTE ASSESSMENT?

Competitive tendering does affect what universities will pay for an assessment. Assessors working face-to-face **and** remotely will have to make a very strong case for the quality,

reliability and validity of their work, emphasising the importance of the student experience. Responsible managers will demand that robust and clearly defined quality assurance checklists, used to monitor regularly student experience and assessment quality, are built into any contractual arrangements with assessors and, in any competitive tendering process, are given as high a 'weighting' priority as cost.

CAN I USE A DOCUMENT CAMERA TO SHOW TEST STIMULUS MATERIAL?

It is important that assessors check publisher websites for permission to use document cameras to display test stimulus material. Some publishers regard this practice as a violation of copyright. This is more likely to be the case where publishers have made digital copies of stimulus material available and /or where there could be concerns that document cameras might alter the images transmitted in such a way as to compromise test standardisation.

For example, with the CTOPP-2, the publisher has noted using a document camera to display the stimulus cards is considered a copyright violation. You can purchase the digital version of the CTOPP-2 Picture Book for remote assessment. It would come to you as an activation code; the code cannot be shared, so each examiner would need their own code.