



HM Government

T-LEVELS

Chief Examiner Report

**T Level Technical Qualification
in Healthcare Science
QN: 603/7083/X**

**Autumn 2025 – employer set project
(ESP) Optical Care Services**

Introduction

Autumn 2025 – employer set project (ESP) Optical Care Services

Assessment dates: **03 November 2025 to 14 November 2025**

Paper number: **P003004**

This report contains information in relation to the externally assessed component provided by the chief examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of student work within this assessment.

The report is written for providers, with the aim of highlighting how students have performed generally, as well as any areas where further development or guidance may be required to support preparation for future opportunities.

Key points:

- grade boundaries
- standard of student work
- evidence creation
- responses to the external assessment tasks
- administering the external assessment.

It is important to note that students should not sit this external assessment until they have received the relevant teaching of the qualification in relation to this component.

Grade boundaries

Raw mark grade boundaries for the series are:

	Overall
Max	96
A*	84
A	73
B	62
C	51
D	41
E	31

Grade boundaries are the lowest mark with which a grade is achieved.

For further detail on how raw marks are converted to uniform mark scale (UMS), and the aggregation of the core component, please refer to the Qualification Specification.

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment](#) document. Students may require additional pre-release material to complete the tasks. These must be provided to students in line with our regulations.

Students must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery](#) (QSID) document.

Standard of student work

This is only the second cohort for this assessment and the cohort size was very small, therefore it was more challenging to make broad statements on performance.

Although the scenario was different, the five tasks and their mark schemes were unchanged from previous sessions, so the marking team (also unchanged) for this ESP consider it to be of equal challenge to previous sessions.

The mean mark for this cohort was 53, which is an improvement from the previous session.

Evidence creation

During this session, there were very few instances of missing evidence and where queries were raised, providers replied promptly, without delaying the marking.

As most of the evidence was typed, there were no issues in reading the submitted work. Providers also managed to make the pro-formas accessible, as most of these were typed this time; a notable improvement from the previous session.

Fortunately, providers uploaded the slides from the presentations, as it was not always possible to read the screen in the recordings. The presentation slides can be uploaded in various formats, but PDF is preferred. However, the system does accept PowerPoint.

There are further task-specific comments in the next section.

Responses to the external assessment tasks

Task 1: research/ literature review

This task carried 20 marks, as well as up to four marks for the use of English

We saw a wide variety of answers, with some being quite short and others extending over many pages, including diagrams and reference lists.

Whilst we saw some students achieve high marks for this task, there remain areas where students are not accessing all of the available marks.

- Many students did not follow referencing, with a lack of proper in-text referencing and a poorly constructed reference list at the end.
- Some only used two or three sources, whilst others used eight or more. This is reflected in the wording of the mark scheme around the use of literature.
- Many wasted time repeating the assessment brief, which is not necessary. Similarly, graphs and tables were added by some, but we saw that not every student commented on what the table told them. It was added as a way to break up the text and not referred to or explained.

In some cases, the structure was poor. Grouping into themes gave better structure and demonstrated their ability to access and comprehend the list of sources.

To gain more marks, students need to explain why the situation has happened, rather than a lot of background information. Summarising a source is acceptable, but needs to be related back to the scenario to show relevance and understanding. Providers should ensure that students are taught referencing skills. Also, students should provide an explanation for the use of diagrams, tables or graphs.

Task 1: AO4 – English

There were up to four marks available for the use of English. We saw most students obtaining three or four marks for this task.

Task 2: quality improvement report

This task carried up to 20 marks, as well as four marks for the use of English, two marks for mathematics and three marks for digital skills.

We saw students completing all of the parts of the pro-forma.

Those that achieved higher marks demonstrated the ability to relate information to the case and give details into the causes and considerations for improvement. For example, when discussing staff training, high performing students were able to discuss what training topics needed to be covered, and why. They also considered how training could be delivered, including timescales and how to ensure that the learning achieved its aims.

The sections later in the pro-forma were generally answered very briefly and only with generic answers, rather than referring to the case.

Task 2: AO4 – English, mathematics and digital skills

Up to four marks were available for English, with most students receiving three to four marks for this task.

Up to two marks were available for mathematics. However, we saw many students failing to achieve any marks for mathematics in this task. Despite some students including mathematics in task 1, very few carried this through into task 2. The table of data provided gives the potential to do some simple data analysis for marks.

Up to three marks were available for the use of digital skills. We saw a spread of marks from one to three marks for this. Some students demonstrated digital skills, such as including diagrams, or creating tables. Those who scored only one mark did not demonstrate any digital skills beyond typing into the pro-forma.

Task 3 (b): peer discussion

This task carried up to nine marks.

This session saw only the second time the pro-forma has been used, with most providers using it. The pro-forma was completed to a higher standard than the previous session and included more items of feedback being considered.

What separated those in band 3 from band 1 is the amount of detail in the last column, especially if they reflected on why to make the change (or not). Where there was reflection, the mark was much higher; rather than those who simply accepted the feedback.

Task 4 (b): presentation

This task carried up to 16 marks, as well as two marks for the use of digital skills.

The quality of recordings has continued to improve, although it was sometimes difficult to see the slides, or hear the student due to the microphone being closer to the tutor.

Whilst we have seen improvements in the quality of slides and information presented, the greatest difference in student performance was seen when it came to the Q&A part. Those who scored lower marks gave more basic answers and were brief with their responses. This could be due to nerves, but marks can only be awarded for what is recorded. Some students gave detailed answers, linking back to the case study, tasks 1 and 2 and considered what else they might need.

I would like to thank the tutors who also uploaded their notes on the questions asked of the students. These comments were good to read. All tutors used the questions given in the provider guide.

Task 4 (b): digital skills

Up to two marks were available for the use of digital skills, with most students receiving both marks for this task, with slides being uploaded as evidence.

Task 5: reflection

This task carried up to 16 marks.

This task continues to challenge many students, which is reflected in the weaker performance seen. This was similar to previous sessions. There were two distinctive types of submission for this task. The first group were very descriptive and wrote a task-by-task account of what they did, who did not score a high number of marks, as they were too descriptive and lacked the elements of reflection.

The other group followed a reflective framework (usually Gibbs) and scored higher marks. They structured their task using the headings of the reflective cycle and they were able to reflect on their strengths, weaknesses and ideas for future development. Reflection is not an easy skill to master, but it is apparent that some students were more familiar with the concept. Being able to recall a cycle, such as Gibbs would be a useful start for this task.

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