Points

1. The modified version of TLM's Certificate in Open Systems and Enterprise has been accredited by Ofqual. Changes have been made to meet the requirements of the DfE for the qualification to count in the headline point scores in school league tables... Read more

2. The principles of the assessment model are targeted on solving issues like inclusion and differentiation in a single tier system... Read more

3. Significant improvements in costs and efficiency can be gained compared to alternatives... Read more

4. Less bureacratic overhead for teacher... Read more

5. Ebacc and raising standards... Read more

1. The new version of the qualification has been accredited by Ofqual and continues our commitment to innovation in order to reduce the burden associated with administering assessment while at the same time supporting the inclusion of average ability learners and challenging the most able. The certificate will provide points equivalent to a full GCSE at each of the grades A*-C and will give more weight to academic competence for the highest attainers and more weight to practical competence for average and below average attainers. This is achieved by a simple but unique combination of flexible teacher assessed coursework and an externally set and marked test of knowledge and understanding.

2. The assessment model has some unique design features and consists of two components. The first component requires the learner to provide evidence of competence against the National Occupational Standards written in the form of assessment criteria. The second component is an externally set and marked test of knowledge and understanding. There is in one mandatory unit and a choice from optional units that cover all IT user activities. Learners must achieve a total of 16 credits from these units through their coursework. This is exactly the same requirement as for the ITQ, the National Vocational Qualification for IT Users used in adult education. Candidates providing evidence of competence from their day to day work will get the ITQ, a nationally recognised qualification referenced to the European Qualifications Framework, irrespective of whether or not they take, complete or gain sufficient marks in the test. In order to qualify to take the test the learner must satisfactorily complete the first component for which they receive 30 marks. Note that his component is a vocational competence based element and it is not graded, it simply provides a baseline for judging practical competence at QCF level 2 directly in contexts relevant to the learner.

Learners that complete this coursework element should gain sufficient marks in the second component to achieve a grade in the A*-C range. If they do not they still have the ITQ certificate but their performance will not provide headline league table points. We do not expect this to be common, but it provides a fall back position for the few individuals that might be affected. It makes it less likely that learners will be entered for a test that they are going to simply fail. For learners not providing sufficient evidence at level 2, they can be awarded an Entry Level or Level 1 certificate based on weaker performance and there are unit certificates along the way. In this way, it is very unlikely that a learner will achieve no recognition after a two year programme of study. The flexibility means that is is quite feasible to use evidence of IT competence from support of lessons across the curriculum in turn supporting higher performance in these other subjects eg adding value to the Ebacc. Teaching could be be in mixed attaining groups or in ability sets or linked to other subjects to provide practical contexts. It is entirely up to the Centre to decide the delivery methods. The flexibility in this model means that in most cases an initial switch to the qualification can be made using existing courses and teaching methods with only minor modifications. Once fully aware of the options for flexibility, the Centre is then free to tailor their provision more specifically to

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individual needs as appropriate.

Once the coursework element is completed, the candidate carries forward 30 marks from their coursework. They are now eligible to take a test of their knowledge and understanding associated with IT User skills. These are linked to the assessment criteria for the mandatory unit and a published content syllabus that under-pins all units. The test is worth 70 marks and questions are graded, starting easier and becoming significantly more difficult towards the end. A candidate gaining 20 marks and therefore 50% overall will be awarded a grade C. A candidate achieving 30 marks on the test and therefore 60%, a grade B. 70% for a grade A and 80% for a grade A*. This means that the coursework has greater weighting for weaker candidates and the test a greater weighting for more academic candidates. This means we have a simple system that is inclusive but can stretch the brightest and inform learners, teachers and parents of which candidates are likely to be successful in Academic study at level 3 and which should either take other lines of study or take a level 3 vocation route in IT.

3. There are some very significant features of TLM's systems that are designed to save school resources, both financially and in terms of teacher time. Firstly, schools that are providing the qualification for a substantial number of learners, eg a majority in a cohort or more are best to use our subscription model which enables the Centre to use all the IT User qualifications from Entry 1 to Level 3 across the whole school for as many candidates that are capable of benefiting. The only additional cost is the test fee of £5 per candidate if taken on-line and £8 per candidate if taken by paper. There is no additional cost for providing the ITQ at the same time as the new points scoring version of the qualification or for Entry level (eg for SEN learners), level 1 or unit certificates along the way. There are no costs for making amendments eg on change of pupil name or for replacement certificates should a learner lose one, other than 30p for a certificate template. The exact costs will depend on the size of school and other factors but we are aiming to provide a substantial saving compared to GCSE IT and in some cases a lot more than a 50% saving compared to other GCSE alternatives. As far as possible we think you should be spending money on learning resources, not exam fees.

4. In terms of teacher deployment, the coursework system is designed to collect evidence from the learners' use of IT to support day to day learning activities. This is the principle behind assessment of competence in the work place. The requirement for administration beyond standard good practice should be minimal and the system lends itself to greater learner autonomy and self-evaluation even though the degree to which a school adopts any particular approach is up to them. All we require is convincing evidence that the candidate meets the criteria. We are providing flexibility for schools to fit the assessment methods to the way they work. This means that there is rarely a major disruption in moving from an existing qualification to the TLM certificate. From this point there is flexibility to streamline assessment methods to reduce administrative overhead and eliminate paper from the process completely. Even the certificate is available directly on-line. If a school wants to teach in a very presctiptive way to pre-defined structures entirely in setted groups in specialist IT lessons, there is nothing to prevent it. If a school wants to teach in mixed attainment groups, use differentiation by outcome and shift the onus to learners to provide evidence in projects of their choosing with peer and self-assessment verified by the teacher, the systems and on-line systems support this. In this way a manageable strategy can be implemented to transition between very different approaches without expecting everything to be changed from day 1.

5. Using IT to support learning is likely to be a key motivator for Ebacc subjects where there is no coursework, no requirement for "stepping stone" rewards and simply a terminal exam at the end of 2 years. TLM's certificate provides headline points in its own right but it is also designed to be able to add value to learning that will then improve attainment in other subjects.

While cross-curriculum IT has a very patchy record of success, TLM's cloud based evidence management and progress tracking system provides the necessary support to make it work. Furthermore, coursework credit can be gained simply by showing competence in using these systems as they require IT user competence. The vocational learning space is firmly focused on competence in the work place. The IT User skills we are assessing are the same skills needed in the work place but in the school context they are the skills needed by learners to support their work across the curriculum. It therefore makes sense to take evidence of competence directly from work

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they do to support their learning rather than to derive it from contrived tests and tasks that have no specific purpose other than to test. The cloud based systems are designed to make the management of this as efficient and effective as possible.

As a spin off, we can complement or replace existing VLE/eportfolio systems with the potential to save more money but we are not software vendors so all the tools we provide are optional, based on open source software and free for you to use. We are providing the flexibility for transition at a pace that individual schools can manage and at no additional cost. If learners undestand the evidence management system this can be largely delegated to them and reduces the demands on the teacher. Getting learners to be more self-sufficient is good for the learner and for the teacher.

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