Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the TLM ITQ?

2. Is the TLM ITQ only about office software?

3. How is the TLM ITQ related to national and international qualifications standards?

4. Which Awarding Organisations offer the ITQ?

5. What is different about TLM?

6. Are TLM's certificates secure?

7. Does the ITQ attract headline points for school league tables in England?

8. How is current course work assessed?

9. How will this change for schools with the modifications for 2015?

10. How much work is involved in the Level 2 ITQ certificate?

11. What facilities are there for students to manage their work and develop their own e-portfolios?

12. I have to certificate lots of individuals, won't this cause me a lot of detailed administration?

13. Do I need to keep portfolios of paper based evidence?

14. What is the significance of the term INGOTs?

15. Do you have qualifications and certificates in fields outside IT?

16. How do you support qualifications internationally?

17. Fees

18. How do we become a TLM centre with accredited assessors?

1. What is the TLM ITQ?

ITQ is the UK national vocational qualification for IT Users. It was developed by e-skills, e-skill's Awarding Body Forum and employers. TLM's ITQ is tailored to specific markets such as schools, high attainers, prisons, learners with special needs, and NEETs groups. e-skills is the Sector Skills Council for IT and Business.

2. Is the TLM ITQ only about Office Software?

No! The ITQ can cover any user application from web technologies to smart phones. It is simply a matter of combining the most appropriate units. Up to 25% of a standard ITQ certificate can be credit from a different occupational sector e.g. construction, architecture, computing, science, enterprise etc. We can therefore construct ITQs to particular contextual "flavours [1]" even within the same centre.

3. How is the TLM ITQ related to national and international qualifications

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frameworks and standards?

The TLM ITQ is made up from units in the RQF (UK Regulated Qualifications Framework) which is referenced to the EQF (European Qualifications Framework). The EQF is a meta framework for referencing international qualifications systems across Europe. The ITQ is a direct translation of the UK National Occupational Standards to form the UK National IT User qualification, referenced to the EQF. It will provide credit in the European ECVET system as well as credit in the UK QCF system.

4. Which awarding organisations offer the ITQ?

About 10 Awarding Organistions including TLM offer the ITQ. Each has its own methods of delivery and support systems.

5. What is different about TLM?

TLM was set up to reduce the cost of qualifications through a combination of technological and pedagogical innovation. Typically the cost of delivering the TLM ITQ as a GCSE equivalent in the schools sector is 50% of that of a single comparable GCSE and in most cases an even greater saving on other provider's ITQ and vocational qualifications costs. TLM provides optional VLE facilities for evidence management, progress tracking and reporting that can replace expensive software, all at no additional cost. Our systems are built on Open Source Software and hosted in the cloud so there are no license fees to pay and everything can be managed through any standards compliant web browser from any computer including smart phones and tablets from any supplier. TLM has won 3 transfer of innovation awards from the EU Lifelong learning programme to support this work.

6. Are TLM certificates secure?

TLM enables certificates to be printed on demand because every certificate can be authenticated directly against its secure entry in the TLM database at no additional charge. This means authenticity can be easily and immediately verified by scanning a certificate's QR code or entering its unique code on the TLM web site. Ease of verification makes checking more likely and deters certificate fraud. At the same time it provides much faster certification and convenience to end-users. More convenient, more secure and lower cost.

7. Does the ITQ attract headline points for school league tables in England?

For 2013 and 2014 the TLM ITQ is based on 100% coursework assessment and it is a pass/fail qualification that provides the points of a grade B GCSE. This will continue up to 2015. For 2015 the government required all qualifications that count in the headline points system to be modified to include an externally set and marked test that is graded. This work is now complete and we have taken the opportunity to provide an innovative assessment model that has very low administrative overhead and combines a motivating coursework element as well as a short grading test that will be available on demand (though may require 6 weeks notice). Read 8 and 9 below for further details.

8. How is current coursework assessed?

Each unit in the ITQ has a set of learning outcomes specifying what a learner will be able to do after completing their learning. Each learning outcome is underpinned by assessment criteria. TLM's method is to accredit local assessors who ensure that the candidate provides credible evidence against the criteria from their day to day work. **This does NOT require screenshots, annotations and the usual masses of paperwork associated with coursework**. Competence based assessment is about proving competence at the appropriate level directly in the work place. Is the learner competent in real situations? TLM provides a comprehensive on-line management system to support this but centres are free to use their own systems if they prefer. The main issue is proof of competence and the evidence can come from any subject and will normally be the digital files, web

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pages or similar naturally arising from their work. This also means freeing up of valuable time-table resources as student's evidence can come from cross-curricular work and not necessarily just IT classes.

9. How will this change for schools with the modifications for 2015?

The new qualifications will have exactly the same coursework requirement as the current TLM ITQ. This maintains compatibility with the mainstream ITQ used in the adult education sector. There will be an additional test of general knowledge and understanding associated with IT User Skills that will provide grading. All learners will have to demonstrate competence against the coursework criteria before taking the test. It is unlikely that those that do so will not gain sufficient marks in the test for an overall pass at grade C. The later questions in the test will be very demanding and thus provide sufficient challenge for A* candidates and enable clear identification of those likely to cope with academic A levels. The priority is to keep the qualification accessible to a wide range of attainment while ensuring the most able are fully stretched and future progression routes are informed.

10. How much work is involved for the level 2 TLM ITQ certificate?

The standard level 2 certificate requires 16 credits which translate to 120 guided learning hours, about the same size as a GCSE. However, evidence for this can be optionally gathered from other subject areas in schools or general activities in the work place. The Level 1 ITQ (equivalent to D-G grades in GCSE) provides a progression route and is suitable for KS3 in schools and for workers needing supervision in the work place. Entry Level certificates are available for learners with special needs, younger children or adults that require confidence to get started with formal qualifications. For schools, the lower level certificates provide a fall back position for any candidate that does not meet the Level 2 requirements and the Level 1 certificate is on the list of qualifications for the 2015 league tables but without any grading test. We have the flexibility to support learning with a progressive range of nationally accredited certificates starting in primary schools and finishing at university entrance. These can cover digital literacy, IT and computing, and therefore support all the requirements of the new programmes of study in one qualification. **Centres can decide how much or how little of this suits their needs but certificating an entire school population is unlikely to cost as much as a single cohort of GCSE entries for a single subject**.

11. What facilities are there for students to manage their work and develop their own e-portfolios?

TLM offers a full cloud based system for managing evidence. There is a comprehensive system for learners to pass evidence to assessors and to receive feedback and link the evidence directly to assessment criteria seamlessly through to certification. In addition we have TLM Tracker for tracking and reporting progress if any school wants to use it. These tools are optional at no additional charge, all we require is convincing evidence that the criteria have been met, we are simply trying to minimise the admin overhead to increase the time teachers have to support learning more effectively.

12. I have to certificate lots of individuals, won't this cause me a lot of detailed administration?

TLM's online Markbook has been designed to facilitate the speedy processing of batch certification. Once learnt, the on-line systems should provide significant time savings in assessment practice that should be a normal part of any teacher's work. TLM is not a software sales company, we are providing free tools to support good learning practice as simple value added. No-one is forced to use any particular tools. Our aim is to eradicate as much of the bureaucratic overhead as possible while supporting good assessment for learning practice that leads to accredited qualifications. This will save teachers time, schools and centres money and improve the quality of learning.

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13. Do I need to keep portfolios of paper based evidence?

No, the TLM philosophy is to enable the complete elimination of paper. We will accept paper based evidence initially to help centres make the transition from old to new systems easily and we will be supportive of different degrees of readiness for change. We want to help those that are daunted by the prospect of system change to make the transition as painlessly as possible. There is no need for any paper from the outset if that is the preferred route, but in most cases the starting point can be existing evidence gathering systems whether paper or IT based.

14. What is the significance of the INGOTs?

INGOT is an acronym meaning International Grades - Open Technologies. TLM works internationally with its ITQ operating in several countries. All systems are built on Open Source software and we actively promote the use of open standards. Open standards are vitally important for the future. They are fundamentally responsible for the success of the internet, fair competition in technological business and reduced costs to everyone.

15. Do you have certificates and qualifications for fields outside IT?

TLM has support for certification of all subjects in the English National Curriculum including learners with the most profound learning disabilities through to the highest levels of attainment. These are "lighter touch" since they are not part of the national regulatory system and this makes them very inexpensive to operate both in terms of teacher time and certification costs. In addition to these certificates we have an increasing range of subjects largely led by demand. If you are paying a lot for current qualifications and want to reduce those costs we might be able to help so get in touch for an informal chat in the first instance.

16. How do you support qualifications internationally?

We have several international projects. So far around 1 million Euros of investment has come from the EU lifelong learning programme mainly related to transfer of innovation. Some further examples include:

- A memorandum of understanding with the largest teacher training university in Malaysia.
- A project for certificating IT user skills with a partner in South America.
- Our Bulgarian partner implementing the ITQ in Bulgarian schools.
- An Egyptian partner providing Healthcare qualifications based on the TLM pedagogical model.
- A project managed in New England in the USA.

17. Fees

Our current fees structure can be found at http://www.theingots.org/community/fees [2]

18. How do we become a TLM centre with accredited assessors?

You need to contact TLM to arrange training. Each Centre has to have a Principal Assessor who is also an assessor trainer and can confer assessor status to suitably experienced colleagues. This again saves costs and time because the centre can become largely self-sufficient in managing its assessors. The TLM model is based on economies of scale so the larger the centre the less expensive per capita certification will be.

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Source URL: https://theingots.org/community/faq

Links
[1] https://theingots.org/community/itq-flavours-sow
[2] http://www.theingots.org/community/fees

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