

Short-listed entry for e-Assessment Administration



Using e-Assessment in a Business Context

Scottish Water (SW) employs 3,700 staff with over 50% of employees working in dispersed locations across Scotland. SW is a highly regulated business, required to demonstrate to regulators that everyone has acquired and maintained the knowledge and skills required for their role, regardless of location/work pattern. This must happen and outcomes captured and validated without disruption to day-to-day operations.

Since 2008, E assessment has been used to demonstrate the effectiveness of training and that staff had the required knowledge and skills relating to the:

- business critical Competition 08 project, when competition opened up the non-domestic water market under the intense scrutiny of regulators
- introduction of mobile technology based processes to schedule work for field customer response staff
- roll out of Project Risk initiatives

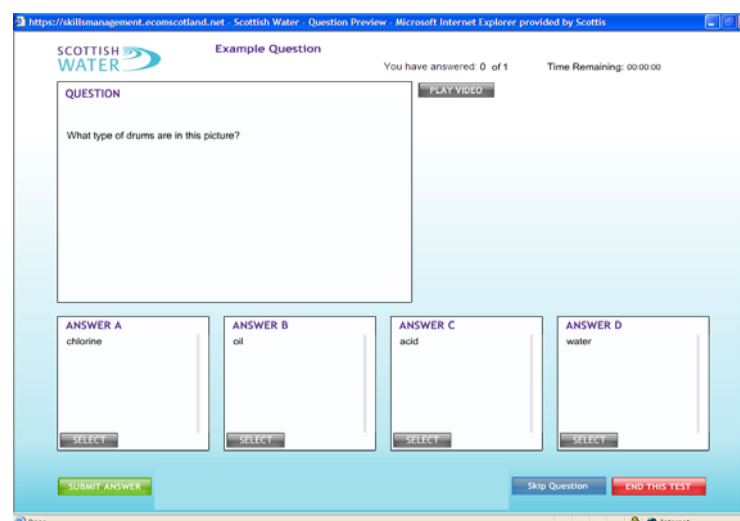


Figure 1: Questions include text, audio and video

Each project was administered by Human Resources and Development (HRD) with the ownership of all question design and implementation of further learning activities based on assessment outcomes belonging to Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and learners' line managers across SW. The success of the implementation has been due to SMEs concentrating on technical input to questions and matching them to outcomes. HRD provided expert guidance on question design, question reuse and test construction. Classes were set up using a direct link from the main HR system thereby avoiding the need to rekey data.

The administration for managers creating questions and selecting questions for tests uses excel spreadsheets – this overcomes having to roll out administration rights across SW and train SMEs in the system administration. It also recognises that some SMEs will also be learners for other tests, therefore by retaining administration access within HRD overall test security is not compromised. Managers are not office based and rely on mobile devices, so by using Excel, they can always send and receive information about tests.

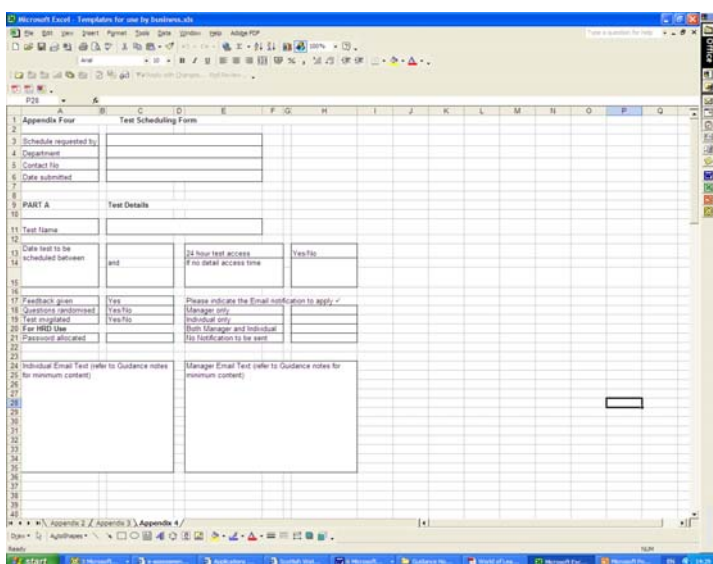


Figure 2: Excel template

Tests can be invigilated – if the manager wishes this to happen HRD use a password system without which, employees cannot access the test. From an administration perspective, this is an easy process, the password is emailed to the manager who is responsible for the delivery of the test to their team at a time which can be changed at the last minute, based on operational requirements without reference back to HRD.

The greatest benefit is that for minimum SME, line manager and HRD input, tests can be rolled out quickly to teams anywhere in Scotland. Unnecessary testing is eliminated through the ease with which candidates can be identified. Using a single screen, HRD can identify the test class using either the organisational reporting structure (i.e. test all who report to a named Manager), an organisational unit (i.e. Asset Management), a role in the organisation (ie AO104) or a competency framework (i.e. Water Treatment). Because the system feeds to the HR system, organisational changes are constantly updated so the right test automatically goes to the right person at the right time with the right reports feeding back to the right manager.

Retesting can be undertaken with minimum disruption to the business and individuals can discretely work in the quiet PC area retaking any assessment without their colleagues being aware what they are working on, this would not be possible with paper-based assessment.

Because administration has been streamlined and SME and line manager input focuses on areas where they add value, there has been much less resistance to organisation-wide assessment than would otherwise have been the case.