



NCFE Regulations for the conduct of controlled assessment (Functional Skills)



Where Service Matters



Our Vision

Inspirational learning solutions with exceptional customer service.

About Us

NCFE is one of the UK's fastest growing national Awarding Organisations, designing and awarding qualifications that are nationally recognised to meet the needs of learners and employers.

We provide a wide range of regulator-accredited qualifications at different levels and in a variety of subject areas. We also offer Key Skills, Basic Skills and Entry Level qualifications.

Our aim is to give individuals the mix of skills, knowledge and understanding they need to bring them closer to fulfilling their personal goals. Our qualifications and awards are used by centres across the UK including schools, colleges, adult education centres and training providers.

We're a registered educational charity and a company limited by guarantee. Our charitable aim is 'to promote and advance the education and training of young persons and adults'.

NCFE is recognised as a Functional Skills Awarding Organisation by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) in England.

Customer Service - the NCFE way

We're passionate about providing exceptional customer service. Every single NCFE employee is focused on not just meeting, but exceeding your expectations. We believe our approach to customer service makes us easy to do business with, flexible and responsive.

We rely on your feedback to let us know whether we're providing the right kinds of products and service. We carry out a number of surveys and focus groups throughout the year, but you don't have to wait until then to tell us what you think. If you want to give us your thoughts you can email feedback@ncfe.org.uk, or just pick up the phone and tell us on 0191 239 8000!

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Section 1: Introduction

This document is designed to assist centres in the correct administration of the controlled assessment component(s) of NCFE Functional Skills qualifications.

These regulations do not in any way affect the responsibility of the centre for health, safety and safe working under current legislation and local government by-laws. They apply to the following qualifications where assessments and associated mark schemes are provided by NCFE:

- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at Entry Level 1
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at Entry Level 2
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at Entry Level 3
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in Mathematics at Entry Level 1
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in Mathematics at Entry Level 2
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in Mathematics at Entry Level 3
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry Level 1
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry Level 2
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry Level 3
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 1 (Speaking, Listening and Communication component)
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 2 (Speaking, Listening and Communication component).

Section 2: NCFE controlled assessments

Controlled assessment is a form of internal assessment in which control levels are set for each stage of the assessment process:

- task setting
- task taking
- task marking.

Within these control levels, the following parameters and requirements are set:

- assessment requirements
- evidence requirements
- contextualisation of tasks
- duration of assessment
- details of any preparation needed
- required resources (including pre-release materials and source documents)
- required level of supervision
- formal recording templates to be used (where relevant)
- any assessment location/venue requirements.

Details of the specific parameters and requirements for each qualification are provided within the relevant Qualification Specification and relevant assessment materials, which will be issued once candidates have been registered. Please see section 2 for information on when and how assessment materials are sent out.

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments are subject to the following controls:

Task setting: medium control

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments have a medium level of control for task setting, which means that tasks are set by NCFE following the requirements in the qualification and skills criteria.

Task taking: high control

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments have a high level of control and assessments must be undertaken in controlled, supervised conditions.

This means that candidates must be formally supervised at all times during their assessments. Preparatory work (where required by the task) may be completed with limited supervision. Details of supervision required will be given in the task instructions where relevant.

Centres must use the controlled assessment tasks set by NCFE, as well as the relevant assessment templates, when assessing candidates.

The scenarios provided may be amended to use alternative source materials relevant to candidates, for example where a menu is used, centres could replace the given menu with one from a local café or coffee shop. However, the parameters and requirements of the task(s) must not be altered by contextualisation.

If using a context and/or source materials other than those given by NCFE, the materials and any information contained within must be very familiar to the candidate and use appropriate language. The tasks must also be approved by NCFE before use with candidates. For more information please contact NCFE's Quality Assurance team.

Assessment documents are sent out electronically on registration of candidates with NCFE to a named centre contact. For more information please contact your Centre Support Assistant at NCFE.

Task marking: medium control

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments have a medium level of control for task marking, which means that centres mark the controlled assessment.

Assessments must be marked using the mark schemes provided by NCFE. Assessment decisions will be checked and confirmed by the centre's Internal Moderator, and NCFE's External Moderator.

The Assessor must record each assessment decision and the justification for the decision on the candidate front sheet which is included in the assessment pack.

Distribution of assessment materials

Assessment materials are sent out electronically (by email) on registration of candidates, to the named person designated by the centre as the centre contact for that qualification. This designated person will be responsible for the security and integrity of the assessment and associated materials.

Please note that each set of assessment materials will only be sent once – if the materials are to be used across multiple batches of candidates the centre is responsible for printing and copying the materials as and when required.

Every care will be taken to ensure that the assessment materials are correctly issued and safely received. NCFE will not be responsible for any loss that may occur after receipt at the centre. NCFE reserves the right to investigate any irregular circumstances regarding the security of assessment materials.

The first registration of candidates will trigger assessment materials to be sent to the centre electronically. After this date, assessment materials will be sent as soon as they become available for use according to the dates in this document. Centres are responsible for making sure that they use the assessments from the correct set.

Each pack of assessment materials contains a number of assessment task sets (and their associated mark scheme and source materials, where applicable) which centres must use during candidate assessments.

Centres are free to decide which task set is appropriate for their candidates and may contextualise these, where relevant, according to the guidance provided in the pack.

Please note: evidence gathered through activities other than the assessment tasks provided by NCFE will not be valid towards candidate achievement

Conducting the assessment

Assessment materials are sent out electronically when the first registration of candidates is made for the relevant qualification listed earlier; **however the assessments must only be completed at the end of the course** (when the candidate has completed their learning of the qualification).

To ensure the integrity of the Functional Skills assessments, all assessment tasks, mark schemes and other associated materials must be stored securely until the candidates are ready to complete their assessments.

Assessment materials will need to be printed by the centre for use with candidates during their assessment.

Candidates are able to sit their assessment over a period of time eg if their lesson takes place every Wednesday then their assessment could take place over 2 or 3 lessons, depending on the nature of the task(s). However centres must ensure that the duration specified on the assessment materials is adhered to and all other conditions are upheld.

If the assessment takes place over more than one session, candidates must hand in any work at the end of each session and this must be stored securely until the assessment continues and is completed.

Candidates must not have access to work in between specified assessment opportunities, and they are not permitted to work on assessment evidence (or undertake further preparation unless directed by the task) in between specified assessment opportunities.

Returning assessment packs and task replacement

Once all the candidates within a centre have successfully completed the assessments within the time period below, please destroy the assessment pack (including mark schemes and all other assessment materials) and use the next available set.

NCFE will create a bank of assessment packs which will be released on a 4 month basis during each academic year:

Set 1 for use between **1 September – 31 December**

Set 2 for use between **1 January – 30 April**

Set 3 for use between **1 May – 31 August**.

The assessment tasks and materials will remain part of the bank and may be re-issued at a later date to be used for candidate assessments. Therefore centres must not hold onto assessment materials once assessments are complete. Centres are responsible for ensuring that assessment materials are stored securely at all times. Each set should be securely destroyed after the time period above.

Centres are responsible for making sure that they use the assessments from the correct set.

NCFE will post information on the NCFE website and contact centres offering the Functional Skills qualifications regarding assessment materials and notifying if any task sets are retired.

Candidate resits

If a candidate is unsuccessful in their assessment they may resit at any time. NCFE does not stipulate a length of time in between attempts at the assessment, however we recommend that centres allow candidates sufficient time to prepare for their resit and improve skills in the subject area where necessary.

Candidates must not resit or rework an assessment they have already attempted. If a candidate needs to resit their assessment they must be assessed using an entirely new assessment task set. The person co-ordinating the assessments should select an alternative task set from the assessment pack provided for the candidate's resit.

Where a candidate has taken a resit, NCFE's External Moderator will ask to see the initial attempt at assessment and the subsequent resit(s). Centres are responsible for maintaining an appropriate archive of candidate evidence until such a point as the candidate has achieved their qualification and the External Moderator has signed off certificate claims. Centres may wish to maintain the archive of evidence for longer than this depending on their usual archiving policy.

Where a centre is suspected of allowing, or does allow, candidates to rework or resit an assessment already attempted by that candidate, NCFE may declare the assessment void.

Web: www.ncfe.org.uk

Email: prepforlifework@ncfe.org.uk

Tel: **0191 239 8000**

Section 3: Centre responsibilities

Malpractice and Misconduct

NCFE will investigate each case of alleged or actual irregularity committed by a candidate, Assessor or other person involved in the conduct of the assessment in order to establish all of the facts and circumstances surrounding the case. This investigation may be carried out in accordance with NCFE's Malpractice and Misconduct Policy, available from the NCFE website (www.ncfe.org.uk) or from NCFE's Centre Support team. Each case will be considered by NCFE on an individual basis in the light of all available information.

Failure to comply with these regulations may result in a centre's approved status being temporarily or permanently removed and/or candidates being withdrawn from the qualification.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Candidates who require reasonable adjustments or special consideration should discuss their needs with their Tutor, who should refer to our Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy for guidance on adjustments permitted for the Functional Skills qualifications. The policy is available from our website (www.ncfe.org.uk).

Applications for reasonable adjustments or special considerations should be completed using the application form available on the NCFE website.

For more information on the access and inclusion arrangements for Functional Skills, please visit the Ofqual website (www.ofqual.gov.uk).

Centre responsibilities

Centres are responsible for:

- providing a named person who is responsible for co-ordinating the assessment process
- providing suitable accommodation and equipment for the assessment in line with the controlled conditions as set out in the assessment pack

- informing candidates of the date, time and location of the assessment
- providing a suitably trained Assessor and additional supervisor(s) (where required) for each assessment and ensuring they are familiar with the content of these regulations and any other specific regulations for certain qualifications
- providing the Assessor and any supervisors with all resources and documents necessary for the conduct of the assessment, including assessment task sets, source materials, paper for notes or answers, and any other resources required to take the assessment
- maintaining the confidentiality of the assessments at all times
- ensuring that any centre personnel doesn't have the opportunity to read the assessment tasks or candidate evidence; unless they are acting as an authorised reader for candidates who require reasonable adjustments in line with NCFE's Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- ensuring that no assessment is tampered with
- making any application for reasonable adjustments for candidates within the timescales stipulated in NCFE's Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- making the Assessor and any supervisors aware of any reasonable adjustments arrangements agreed for any candidates
- taking all reasonable precautions to ensure that only genuine candidates sit the assessment
- securely destroying assessment materials once the assessments are over.

Selection and Number of Assessors

Candidates must be formally supervised during their Functional Skills controlled assessment by an appropriate person (the ‘Assessor’).

This may be the Tutor or another appropriately qualified member of staff, whose integrity may be relied on. They act for the centre and the centre is responsible for their conduct. NCFE does not accept responsibility for the payment of fees or expenses to Assessors.

Assessors and supervisors must be appointed by centres and briefed on the requirements for the conduct of controlled assessments.

If the Assessor is the candidates’ Tutor, mediation and support must not exceed the limits stated in the assessment guidance and materials sent out on registration of candidates.

When readers/writers are permitted and provided for candidates with reasonable adjustments requirements (for non reading and writing qualifications), an Assessor must also be present. Readers/writers must not also act as Assessors/supervisors.

There are no formal requirements on the number of Assessors/supervisors which must be present during an assessment, and due to the nature of the Functional Skills controlled assessments, we recommend that candidates are assessed in groups of no more than 20 at a time.

When there is only one Assessor they must be able to summon assistance easily, without leaving the room, in case of emergencies, eg if a candidate is taken ill. Under no circumstances must candidates be left unsupervised or unattended.

Section 4: Instructions for Assessors/supervisors

The Assessor and any supervisors required play a key role in the quality control of the Functional Skills controlled assessment process and are required to:

- arrive at the assessment location in good time

- ensure that the room is set up in accordance with the guidelines on the following pages of these regulations
- distribute assessment materials to candidates
- ensure that the appropriate information from section 5 of these regulations and the relevant information in the assessment pack are read out to candidates prior to the assessment
- ensure that candidates understand what is required of them during the task
- advise candidates to read all instructions carefully
- ensure that candidates know how to show their preferred answer, and how to alter their answer if they change their mind
- provide candidates with additional paper if required
- be alert and observe candidates at all times during the assessment. Assessors/ supervisors must not read or carry out any other activities
- ensure that the assessment is supervised continuously
- ensure that the length of time allowed for the assessment does not fall short of the authorised time specified on the assessment materials to the detriment of candidates
- ensure that the length of time allowed for the assessment does not exceed the authorised time specified on the assessment materials
- mark on the appropriate document (eg front sheet, observation record) where an assessment has taken place over a period of time rather than in one sitting
- take assessment materials and candidate answers/evidence from any candidates who leave the assessment location before the specified end of the controlled assessment
- collect in all reading matter, assessment materials (used and unused) and candidate answers/evidence at the end of the controlled assessment
- ensure that each candidate’s NCFE number is included on each page of their answers/evidence

- ensure candidates enter their personal information and controlled assessment reference number (as shown on the front cover of the assessment materials) into the front cover of the assessment materials
- check that the number of completed assessments agrees with the names and number of candidates attending the controlled assessment
- complete the appropriate documents and assessment templates.

Before the controlled assessment

NCFE sends out the controlled assessment materials electronically. Upon receipt of the controlled assessment materials, the person responsible for coordinating the controlled assessment process must ensure the materials are securely stored until the day of the controlled assessment. They may be stored electronically or copies printed off and stored securely. Assessors are permitted to read the guidance document supplied with assessment materials for information on resource requirements, duration etc.

All printed controlled assessment materials must be kept in a secure place which is only accessible to the person responsible for co-ordinating the controlled assessment process. This will require a safe, non-portable, lockable steel cabinet within a secure room. The room must also be secure from non-authorised entry, have restricted access and be locked when not occupied by the person responsible for coordinating the controlled assessment process.

If the Assessor notices any discrepancies or missing assessment materials, then please contact NCFE's Centre Support team immediately.

The controlled assessment materials must only be accessed by the Assessor when the candidates are assembled in the controlled assessment location (room).

The centre must be able to satisfy NCFE of the security of such arrangements if asked.

NCFE's Centre Support team must be informed immediately if the integrity or security of the controlled assessment materials is put at risk by theft, loss, damage, unauthorised disclosure, fire or any other circumstances.

The controlled assessment materials must be collected from their secure storage on the day of the controlled assessment by an Assessor or another person authorised by the centre. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure safe transit of the controlled assessment materials to the nominated location.

Stationery and any specified items must be made available to candidates, and candidates must have been informed what they will need, or are allowed, to bring, for example, HB pencil, pen or dictionary (see Section 5).

The controlled assessment location (room)

The controlled assessment must take place in a suitably quiet, undisturbed location, with adequate space, heating, lighting and ventilation. Only candidates due to sit their controlled assessment and the Assessor (and relevant Supervisors) responsible for coordinating the controlled assessment process should be allowed in the room immediately before, during or after the controlled assessment.

Candidates should not be allowed into the room until the Assessor is satisfied that the room is ready and can indicate where each candidate should sit. Seating arrangements must prevent candidates from seeing each other's work, intentionally or otherwise, other than when required by a task (eg completing work in a group).

Where the controlled assessment comprises practical activities or the use of equipment, eg computers, then an Assistant familiar with the equipment must be present in addition to the Assessor. Assistants should be available in case of equipment malfunction only, and should have no other involvement with the controlled assessment.

If a candidate needs to leave the room temporarily during the controlled assessment because he/she is unwell or needs to go to the toilet, then he/she must be accompanied by an Assessor/supervisor who must ensure that they do not speak to anyone else, consult any notes, make a telephone call or otherwise breach the security of the controlled assessment whilst they are out of the room.

Emergencies

If an emergency occurs during the controlled assessment, eg fire alarm, bomb warning, equipment malfunction etc:

- the controlled assessment room must be evacuated in accordance with the instructions of the appropriate authority
- candidates must leave question papers/booklets and candidate answer sheets/booklets on their desk in the room.

If the candidates have been closely supervised and the Assessor can assure that there has been no breach of controlled assessment security, ie candidates did not converse with each other or any other person, or consult any other books or notes during the enforced break in the controlled assessment, then the controlled assessment may be resumed and the full remainder of the allotted time may be given. Details of the emergency and the actions taken when the emergency arose must be recorded on the candidate front sheet.

If the Assessor believes that there has been a breach of assessment security, then the controlled assessment is void.

Details of the emergency and the actions taken when the emergency arose must be recorded on the candidate front sheet. The candidates affected must resit their controlled assessment at a later date.

At the end of the controlled assessment

When the allotted time has ended, candidates must be told to stop writing or working.

- In the case of paper-based assessments, candidates should be instructed to check that their name, centre number, candidate and assessment reference are on all relevant assessment materials, and that any extra sheets of paper used have their names on them and are securely fixed to their work/evidence. String or treasury tags should be used for this, not paper clips or staples.

- Where computers have been used and a printout is to be submitted, the Assessor should check that each page of the printout can be identified on a candidate-by-candidate basis. Only one copy should be printed and the files must be erased from the computer immediately.

The Assessor must collect all controlled assessment materials before candidates leave the room to ensure that no candidate accidentally takes their assessment materials or work/evidence with them.

The Assessor should check that candidates have entered all their details correctly on the relevant assessment materials.

Section 5: Conduct of the controlled assessment

Generic instructions:

These are included in each of the assessment packs, however the Assessor/supervisor may wish to read the following statements out and confirm candidate understanding.

- Read each task carefully and attempt to answer all tasks
- Please ensure that your answers are clear and legible
- Do not turn over your question paper/booklet until I/we instruct you to do so
- You must not have any notes, books, dictionaries or other information with you unless it is specifically allowed by the rules of the controlled assessment. If you have brought anything into the room you must give it to me/us before the assessment begins.
- Mobile phones and other means of communication are not allowed in the assessment. If you have brought these into the room they must be switched off and given to me. I'll give you them back at the end of the assessment.
- Bags, coats and any other belongings should be left at the front of the room.
- You must not work with anyone else unless the task asks for this. If you have any problems and need to speak to me/us, please raise your hand to attract my/our attention. Do not make a noise or distract other candidates.
- By starting the assessment you are agreeing that you have understood and accepted these rules.

Contact Us

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Equal Opportunities

NCFE fully supports the principle of equal opportunities and opposes all unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of ability, age, colour, culture, disability, domestic circumstances, employment status, gender, marital status, nationality, political orientation, racial origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and social background.

NCFE aims to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and that unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is eliminated both in its own employment practices, and in access to its qualifications.

A copy of NCFE's Diversity and Equality policy is available on request.

Data Protection

NCFE is registered under the Data Protection Act and committed to maintaining the highest possible standards when handling personal information.

NCFE is a registered charity (Registered Charity No. 1034808) and a company limited by guarantee (Company No. 2896700).

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