

Regulations for the Conduct of Controlled Assessments - EDSQ

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These regulations **must** be used for:

- **NCFE Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills (603/7119/5)**
- **NCFE Level 1 Essential Digital Skills (603/7118/3)**

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Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Importance of these regulations

These regulations have been produced to enable all centres to administer controlled assessments consistently and securely so that the integrity of the assessment process can be maintained. Failure to adhere to these regulations could adversely affect candidates, either at a local level within your centre or potentially, in the event of a security breach of an assessment paper, at a national or international level.

The regulations do not in any way affect the responsibility of the centre for health, safety and safe working under current legislation and local government bylaws.

1.2 NCFE controlled assessment

The NCFE controlled assessments are non-examined assessments (NEAs) set by NCFE, delivered by the centre. Internally assessed and internally quality assured by the centre, and externally quality assured by NCFE.

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

Task setting – medium control:

- NCFE's controlled assessment tasks are set by NCFE following the requirements in the qualification and skills criteria.

Task taking – high control:

- NCFE's controlled assessments must be undertaken in controlled, supervised conditions
- learners must be formally supervised at all times during their assessments. Details of supervision required will be given in the assessor instructions and task instructions where relevant
- centres must use the controlled assessment tasks set by NCFE, as well as the relevant assessment documents, when assessing learners
- if a resit is required, a different assessment must be attempted

Task marking – medium control:

- NCFE’s controlled assessments allow centres to 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 Quality Assurer (IQA) and NCFE’s External Quality Assurer (EQA). The assessor must record each assessment decision and the justification for the decision on the required documentation outlined in the assessor instructions.

1.3 Centre responsibilities

Head of Centre

The head of centre is the most senior operational officer in the organisation. This may be the head teacher at a school, the principal of a college, the chief executive officer of an academy trust or the managing director of a company or training provider. It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that all staff comply with the regulations in this booklet. Failure to do so may constitute malpractice as defined in our maladministration and malpractice policy.

Designated Person

The head of centre must allocate a member of staff to be the designated person to lead on the administration of the assessments, in line with these regulations, and to ensure there is an internal policy in place to support the administration of the assessments, which will be required for inspection purposes. The head of centre must not appoint themselves as the designated person. These roles are distinct and intended to be separate.

The designated person is responsible for the security and integrity of the assessment-materials. They will be responsible for deploying appropriate supervision and security measures and must ensure:

- access to the assessment material is controlled and limited to the relevant staff
- the centre uses live assessment material
- learners are booked onto the assessment via the NCFE Portal
- the assessment materials are downloaded from the NCFE Portal to a secure area within the centre
- witness observation records are shared with the person supervising the assessment
- that the person supervising the assessment understands the requirements and their role in completing the witness observation record.

Assessment Supervisor

The head of centre must ensure there is appropriate supervision arranged for the assessment in line with individual learner needs. The assessment will be delivered on a controlled basis under the supervision of an appropriately trained centre nominated supervisor, such as a tutor, assessor, or employer.

The supervisor is responsible for providing appropriate supervision of the assessment in line with the requirements of the assessment instructions, witness observation records and these regulations. The supervisor must:

- receive training on the required supervision of the assessment from the designated person
- prepare the learner for the assessment in line with the assessment instructions
- complete witness observation record where required
- ensure completed witness observation records are passed to the assessor
- ensure the safe storage of assessment material before, during and after the assessment.

Assessor

Centres must have a sufficient number of appropriately qualified/experienced assessors to assess the volume of learners they intend to register. (See qualification specification and support handbook in Qual Hub for more specific information on assessment requirements)

The assessor is responsible for marking the assessment within the onscreen Surpass system. The assessor must:

- become familiar with assessments and mark schemes before marking live assessments
- mark in line with mark scheme to ensure accurate attribution of appropriate marks
- attend internal standardisation sessions to provide consistent and standardised approach to awarding marks
- mark any witness observation records which form part of an assessment
- attribute marks for the assessment within the online Surpass system.

Who should read these regulations?

To ensure the regulations are correctly applied, they should be read and referred to by:

- head of centre
- designated person – the examinations officer or quality assurance co-ordinator responsible for the administration of the assessments appointed by the head of centre as outlined in section 1.3
- supervisor – the tutor, assessor, or employer responsible for the supervision of learners undertaking the assessments
- tutors/teachers/assessors delivering NCFE qualifications
- members of the senior leadership team.

Section 2 – Quality Assurance

2.1 Inspection/observation of the controlled assessments

NCFE reserves the right to carry out unannounced audit visits to confirm these regulations are being adhered to and that centres have policies and procedures in place for the delivery of NCFE controlled assessments.

The following policy is required for NCFE inspection purposes:

- policy covering the management of controlled assessments, including risk management and staff responsibilities, and controls to maintain the security and confidentiality of assessment, as appropriate to your centre.

To ensure visits can be carried out in a timely manner:

- on arrival at the centre, the NCFE representative will introduce themselves and explain the reason for the visit
- a senior member of staff, a member of the exams office or the designated person must accompany the NCFE representative throughout the duration of the visit
- storage facilities for the assessment materials will be reviewed, along with the location of the assessment and the processes in place for the printing, storing, transferring and destruction of controlled assessments
- the NCFE representative may request to speak to any individual involved in the assessment delivery at the centre
- the NCFE representative will discuss the findings of the observation with the responsible person and/or the designated person at the end of the visit
- a completed report will be made available to the centre following the visit.

If an NCFE representative observes any malpractice or non-compliance with these regulations, they have the right to declare assessments void. In such cases, the NCFE representative will report the issue to our quality assurance team who will deal with the concerns in accordance with our maladministration and malpractice policy.

2.2 Maladministration/malpractice

If at any time during an assessment there is a violation of these regulations, the supervisor has the right to stop the assessment immediately. This decision must only be made in exceptional circumstances where malpractice is irrefutable. Once stopped, no allowance can be given retrospectively if the decision is deemed invalid.

If malpractice or maladministration occurs during an assessment, please inform NCFE immediately with a report of what occurred – please see our notification of malpractice form available on our website www.qualhub.co.uk.

If any of these regulations are breached by a learner, assessor, or other person(s) involved in the conduct of the assessment, then NCFE may declare the assessment void.

In the event of a suspected or actual breach of these regulations by learners:

- the work completed by the learner(s) concerned and any unauthorised materials (if applicable) must be confiscated from the learner(s) and given to the designated person
- all learners suspected of breaching these regulations should be instructed to leave the room immediately, if appropriate to do so, causing the least amount of disruption to other learners
- the supervisor should report the incident to the designated person as soon as possible
- NCFE should be informed immediately of any irregularity via phone call or email
- the centre should conduct its own investigation into the incident and report the incident and their findings to our quality assurance team using the NCFE notification of malpractice document on our website.

NCFE reserves the right to investigate each case of alleged or actual maladministration/malpractice committed by a learner, assessor, or other person(s) involved in the conduct of the assessment in order to establish all the facts and circumstances surrounding the case. The investigation will be carried out in accordance with NCFE's maladministration and malpractice policy.

2.3 Ownership of assessment material

All assessment material remains the property of NCFE.

Section 3 – Preparing for the controlled assessments

3.1 Accessing the assessment materials

- controlled assessment materials are made available digitally in line with published time scales
- the controlled assessment material will be made available once you have booked learners via the controlled assessment booking area of the NCFE Portal. (The Portal user guide on QualHub outlines this procedure in more detail)
- to ensure that an even rotation of the available assessments is applied across learners and across the academic session, the assessments will be automatically selected for each learner by NCFE at the point of booking
- an assessment pack will be available for download on completion of the booking and will include additional guidance specific to the assessment topic chosen including the mark scheme and a witness observation record, if applicable, for the assessment
- assessment materials must be accessed securely from the bookings screen in the NCFE Portal
- in advance of the assessment date, the designated person must read the information provided in the assessment pack and ensure the supervisor is adequately trained and understands the requirements of the assessment so that they can prepare the learner for the assessment appropriately
- the assessment may require the supervisor to observe elements of the assessment and where this is the case, the witness observation record must be completed by the supervisor and sent to the assessor as soon as possible after the assessment, only if the supervisor is not the assessor. The witness observation record must also be made available at your external quality assurance review
- controlled assessment materials, or any part of, must not be emailed as they are live assessment materials, and the content must be kept secure and confidential by all staff members
- learners' work must be saved securely and must not be accessible to other learners
- learners must complete the assessment within 6 weeks of the booking date
- provisional results must be 'released' by the IQA from the moderate screen for both pass and fail provisional results. This will ensure all results are monitored by the EQA and will enable learners to progress with a re-sit if required
- learners must be given 2 weeks to receive further teaching and learning before re-sitting an assessment
- learners must not re-sit the same assessment.

3.2 Storing assessment materials

The designated person is responsible for:

- the security and integrity of the assessments and associated materials (for example, used/unused assessment materials, additional guidance, and witness observation records). This includes both electronically saved and printed

materials. Access to this storage must be restricted to authorised personnel only

- ensuring the centre uses assessments from the current bank of live assessments as accessed above
- ensuring assessment material is not accessed until the learner is ready to sit the assessment
- having a process in place whereby the assessor(s) can notify the designated person that they have learners ready to sit the assessment, then making the assessment materials available from a secure location
- managing the secure destruction of all unused assessment materials, both printed and electronic, once assessments have taken place
- assessment materials must be used for the learners booked onto that specific assessment paper
- the safe distribution of assessment materials to ensure access is only provided for learners with an active registration against that actual product
- ensuring that any unauthorised centre personnel do not have access to the assessment materials or completed learner work
- ensuring assessment material is not tampered with
- immediately informing NCFE 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 in accordance with NCFE's maladministration and malpractice policy.

Live assessments **must not** be used as sample materials. Further guidance on accessing the controlled assessments is available within the NCFE portal user guide at www.qualhub.co.uk.

3.3 Reasonable adjustments

NCFE seeks to provide equal access to assessment for all learners registered for its qualifications. NCFE recognises that reasonable adjustments may be required for assessments, and information is available in our reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy, and guidance on our website. This will be reviewed on external quality assurance visits at centres. The responsible person (for example, special educational needs coordinator) must ensure that all relevant staff are aware of any reasonable adjustments requirements as per the NCFE policy. In principle, if a learner has an adjustment as part of their normal way of working, a similar arrangement will normally be permitted for controlled assessment.

Please refer to the qualification specific instructions for delivery (QSID) document for qualification/component restrictions.

3.4 Status in Wales and Northern Ireland

NCFE qualifications have been regulated for use in England. Currently, NCFE provides qualifications to centres in England and qualification specifications and assessment materials are in English.

3.5 Planning the controlled assessment

Assessments must not take place until all teaching and learning of the qualification content has been delivered to learners.

If a supervisor notices any discrepancies or missing assessment materials, their first point of contact should be the centres designated person. If they are unable to resolve, then please contact NCFE immediately.

Centres must inform learners of:

- the date, time, and location of the assessment
- the conditions under which their assessment will be conducted
- the resources they are required to bring to the assessment and what will be supplied by the centre.

3.6 Selection and number of supervisors

- an appropriate person must formally supervise learners during their controlled assessment
- this may be a trained centre nominated supervisor, such as a tutor, assessor or an employer, whose integrity can be relied on. They act for the centre and the centre is responsible for their conduct
- supervisors must be appointed, briefed, and appropriately trained by centres on the requirements for the conduct of controlled assessments
- if the supervisor is the learner's tutor, mediation and support must not exceed the limits stated in these regulations
- when readers/writers are permitted and provided for learners with reasonable adjustments requirements (for non-reading and writing qualifications), a supervisor must also be present. Readers/writers must not also act as a supervisor or an assessor
- there are no formal requirements on the number of supervisors that must be present during an assessment. However, ratios must allow for appropriate supervision of the assessments
- when there is only one supervisor, they must be able to summon assistance easily without leaving the room, in case of emergencies (for example, if a learner is taken ill). Under no circumstances must learners be left unsupervised or unattended.

3.7 Accommodation

To ensure the assessment is administered correctly, the supervisor is responsible for ensuring:

- the allocated room is suitably quiet and undisturbed, with adequate space, heating, lighting, and ventilation
- only learners due to sit their controlled assessment and the supervisor are allowed in the room immediately before, during or after the controlled assessment
- learners are not allowed into the room until the supervisor is satisfied that the room is ready and can indicate where each learner should sit

- seating arrangements must prevent learners from seeing each other's work, intentionally or otherwise
- where the controlled assessment includes the use of equipment (for example, computers) then an assistant familiar with the equipment must be present in addition to the supervisor. Assistants should be available in case of equipment malfunction only and should have no other involvement with the controlled assessment
- In some assessments a mobile phone is required. This can be a personal device or a centre device as long as the learner is supervised throughout.
- if a learner needs to leave the assessment room temporarily because they are unwell or need to go to the toilet, the supervisor must ensure the learner is accompanied by a member of staff and does not:
 - speak to anyone else
 - consult any notes
 - have access to a personal mobile phone or any other personal electronic devices (for example, iPods, smart watches) or make any calls
 - breach the security of the assessment.The remaining learners must not be left unattended at any point.

Please refer to the qualification specific instructions for delivery (QSID) document for qualification specific details and additional instructions document.

Section 4 – Administering the controlled assessment

4.1 Identification of learners

It is essential that learners are identified prior to the assessment. This is to ensure authenticity and to prevent potential malpractice and maladministration. If a learner is previously known to the supervisor this will be accepted.

4.2 Transportation of assessment materials

The supervisor must collect any paper based controlled assessment materials from their secure storage immediately prior to scheduled assessment time.

4.3 Administering the controlled assessment

The supervisor is required to play a key role in the quality control of the controlled assessment process and is required to:

- arrive at the assessment location in good time
- ensure that the room is set up in accordance with these regulations
- ensure the learner has access to the required assessment material
- ensure that the appropriate information from the assessment pack is read out to learners prior to the assessment
- ensure that learners only have access to the appropriate resources that are allowed or required by the assessment
- ensure that learners understand what is required of them during the task
- advise learners to read all instructions carefully
- ensure that learners know how to show their preferred answer, and how to alter their answer if they change their mind
- provide learners with additional paper if required
- be alert and observe learners at all times during the assessment
- 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 learners
- ensure that the length of time allowed for the assessment does not exceed the authorised time specified on the assessment materials
- ensure learners who leave the assessment location before the specified end of the controlled assessment do not take assessment materials and learner answers/evidence with them
- ensure that learners' work is saved and submitted
- return all unused assessment materials to the designated person for secure destruction
- ensure witness observation records are completed in full and provided to the assessor to complete the learner's assessment.

Section 5 – End of the controlled assessments

At the end of the assessment, learners must be instructed to:

- stop working
- ensure work is safely saved in the online system.

If learners have used paper for notes or workings that do not need to be submitted as evidence, they must be securely destroyed.

All controlled assessment materials must be collected before learners leave the assessment room.

5.1 Labelling of work

All assessments must be clearly named, including any extra sheets of paper used.

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

5.2 Assessment and IQA following controlled assessment

- the assessor must mark all work in line with the mark scheme and qualification specification on mandatory documentation
- the IQA must internally quality assure assessors in line with the mark scheme and qualification specification on mandatory documentation
- the IQA must complete their IQA process by selecting 'release results' in Surpass for all results, pass and fail
- the final pass/fail result will not be confirmed until EQA sampling is complete, and results are issued. The pass/fail outcome displayed in the 'moderate' screen may not be the final outcome for the learner. All assessment papers are subject to NCFE quality assurance and awarding processes before the final pass mark has been set. Once the final pass mark is set, the release of results will no longer be embargoed, and final results will be released.

It is the centres responsibility to ensure that no personal data is uploaded to Surpass in line with GDPR. If, in the unlikely event, during assessment personal information is identified on Surpass, the centre should contact NCFE to have this removed. Please email eqa@ncfe.org.uk with the detail including centre name, assessment title and learner name.

5.3 Certificate claims and external quality assurance

The assessments will be externally quality assured by NCFE. If the EQA agrees the assessment decisions have been accurately applied, then certificates will be issued. If the assessments are not agreed, the centre will be given an action plan to carry out reassessment.

NCFE's enquiries and appeals about results and assessment decisions policy, available from the NCFE website, can be followed to pursue disagreement with the outcome of an external quality assurance visit.

5.4 Destruction of unused assessments

Any unused assessment material must be securely destroyed once assessments have taken place. The process for secure destruction must ensure confidentiality of the material is maintained and must be documented as part of the assessment tracking process and recorded within the controlled assessment tracking document. This document must be retained and be produced upon request as part of the audit process.

5.5 Retaining assessments

The below documents must be securely retained for a minimum of 3 years for all learners who have completed their assessment:

- assessor feedback to learners
- IQA feedback to assessors
- IQA related records (for example, meeting minutes)
- documents created relating to the achievement of learners' assessments including witness observation records.

Once completed, the controlled assessment must not be given back to learners. If a learner has failed the assessment, formative feedback should be given. Assessors should ensure that they are aware of areas the learner did not pass and the criteria covered by those areas, to inform the learner's resit.

5.6 Resits

Learners are **not** allowed another attempt at the same assessment version. If a resit is required, then the learner must sit a different assessment paper. Re-sits will be available for booking immediately after results are released. Re-sits should be taken no earlier than 2 weeks following the receipt of results, to allow for further teaching and learning to take place. There is no limit to the number of re-sits a learner takes but all attempts must be made available to the EQA if selected for sampling.

Section 6 – On-screen assessments

Centres must be authorised by NCFE to offer on-screen tests. They must ensure that they meet the arrangements detailed in this booklet and have the expertise to access, administer and support the test/assessment.

The following instructions apply to all confidential materials relating to the administration and delivery of on-screen assessments.

Centres must:

- have the relevant software installed to administer the tests and demonstrate that the appropriate security systems are in place to prevent unauthorised access to the test/assessment materials
- always store electronic test/assessment materials securely
- ensure that test/assessment materials are only accessed in accordance with NCFE's subject-specific instructions
- must store learner keycodes securely and only give this to learners at the time of the assessment
- check the identity of each learner and ensure that the correct key code is issued. The learner is responsible for inputting their keycode and ensuring that the name of the test and their details are correct. If the information presented to the learner is incorrect, they must notify the supervisor and cancel out of the assessment before starting. The supervisor must give the learner the correct keycode in order to access their assessment. If a learner sits an assessment in another learner's name (whether it is intentional or not), this may constitute malpractice
- have appropriate security systems and procedures in place to prevent learners using computers/laptops in assessments having unauthorised external communication with other users of computers/laptops.



Section 7 – Contacts

If you have any queries about the content of these regulations, please contact the External Quality Assurance team.

Email: ega@ncfe.org.uk
Telephone: 0191 239 8000*

NCFE
Q6
Quorum Park
Benton Lane
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE12 8BT

*To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded.