



# **NCFE service message archive 24/25**

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## August 2024 – service message

Important reminder: The 2024-25 V Cert Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) brief for our Level 1/2 Technical Award qualifications will be released on **1 October 2024**.

Last year, we released our NEA assessment brief on 1 September to give you and your colleagues time to familiarise yourselves with the requirements and context of the brief ahead of delivering the live assessments to learners. Throughout the first NEA assessment, we received feedback from teachers, and we're using this to make some improvements to support the NEA process in 2024-25. We're working on:

- making changes to address concerns with the scalability and manageability of the assessments for centres by reducing the volume of evidence required (for example annotated photographs or videos)
- applying lessons learned to make improvements to tutor and provider guidance, reducing the complexity of instructions.

Due to our work on these changes, we've decided to reschedule the release date of the next NEA date, which will now be released on Tuesday 1 October 2024. We're confident that this still provides you with adequate time to familiarise yourself with the assessment brief and timetable your NEA delivery accordingly.

[Find out more about the support available.](#)

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## September 2024 – service message

### Key dates and timetables

- Remember that you must register your learners within 90 days of their start date to avoid [late registration fees](#). Please ensure to add your learners' correct end dates at the point of registration.
- [View our updated assessment timetable for 2024-25 and 2025-26](#) – we've made changes to previously published and/or consultation version dates for some V Cert assessments to avoid clashes with GCSE exams. View the timetable and what we've changed.
- We wanted to let you know that from summer 2025 onwards, we'll be bringing forward the completion date for EQA reviews to 30 June. [Read more](#).

### Qualification updates and withdrawals

- [View our latest horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.

### Exams officers update

- [View this month's update](#).

### Functional Skills

- View our latest [Functional Skills service messages](#).

### T Levels

- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

#### V Certs

- View our latest [V Cert service messages](#).

#### Supporting your delivery

- Sign up now for our [assessor](#) and [internal quality assurance](#) training events to meet virtually with other professionals and expand your knowledge and understanding.
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## October 2024 – service message

#### Key dates and timetables

- Remember that you must register your learners within 90 days of their start date to avoid [late registration fees](#). Please ensure you add your learners' correct end dates at the point of registration.
- We wanted to remind you that from summer 2025 onwards, we'll be bringing forward the completion date for EQA reviews to 30 June. Please contact your External Quality Assurer if you have any queries on this.

#### Qualification updates and withdrawals

- [View our latest Horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.
- Read the latest information about our assessment paper release for past papers, and publication of assessment materials. Please see [information further down this page](#).
- We're delighted to announce that a number of our new Level 2 qualifications have been approved for funding from 1 August 2025. [Find out more](#).

#### Exams officers' update

[View this month's update](#).

#### Functional Skills

- Our online assessment supplier, Surpass, provides a test centre network allowing learners to sit on-screen Functional Skills assessments in fully invigilated and assessment-ready testing centre facilities. Complete [this form](#) to register your centre's interest.
- [Sign up](#) for our October maths and English CPD events, including sessions to support learners for whom English is an additional language.

#### T Levels

- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

#### V Certs

- [Read our reminders](#) on how to download the non-exam assessment (NEA) brief and standardisation packs, and the purpose of these documents.

#### Supporting your delivery

- Sign up now for our [Assessor](#) and [Internal Quality Assurance](#) training events to meet virtually with other professionals and expand your knowledge and understanding.
- If any contact details have changed at your centre such as programme contact, head of centre, finance or exams contact, it's important to let us know. It's quick and easy to notify us by filling in this form: [Change of centre contact details form](#), and this will allow us to continue communicating important updates to the correct individuals.
- Our Professional Development Week will be making a return for its third instalment from 16-20 December! Keep your eyes peeled for more updates on the topics that will be covered and how they can enhance your CPD.

### Assessment paper release

Prior to any NCFE external assessment, we place strict controls on our assessment papers, before and after they're shared with you to ensure that security and integrity are always maintained. However, once learners have completed an external assessment, the risk of exposure or compromise is reduced, and we can make papers available for review. This can take two forms:

- allowing access to unused assessment papers within a centre following an assessment
- publishing assessment materials on our website.

From the 2024-25 session, we'll publish past papers and their mark schemes on our website. They'll be hosted on the relevant qualification page, clearly identified as being a past paper, and with the relevant assessment series or window stated. If an assessment required additional material, such as case studies or proformas, these will also be published.

Documents uploaded will be visible on the website, but, so you'll need to log in via the qualification page using your Portal login details to gain access. This is to ensure that you can be confident that they've not also been accessed by learners.

### On-demand assessments

On-demand assessments are live for an extended period, and learners can complete it at a date and time that suits them. They can't be shared online until after the paper has been officially retired and removed from live circulation.

Once a paper is retired, it'll be published on our website **no earlier than four weeks** following the confirmation that the paper is retired and will not be reintroduced. In the meantime, valid sample papers will remain available on our website, if you want to take a look at the assessment content, structure, and format.

Timetabled assessments are completed on a specific date, or between set dates, as stated by NCFE. All learners with a booking must complete the same assessment paper, and we create a unique assessment paper for each assessment series.

Published on website:

- assessment papers: **no earlier than 48 hours following the completion of the assessment/window closure**
- mark schemes and Chief Examiner reports: **on the day of results release.**

*\*Except in cases where a live assessment variation, approved for the centre, remains in place beyond 48 hours after the closure of the assessment, in which case access should be restricted within the centre until the assessment variation has concluded.*

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## November 2024 – service message

### Important updates

#### VTQ timely delivery of results

- We recently shared our arrangements to ensure the timely delivery of vocational technical qualifications (VTQ) results for learners in 2024-25. Take a look at our [webpage](#) to find out everything you need to know about our two term-time checkpoints this academic year, the qualifications in scope of these arrangements, information we need from you and when, and the consequences of failure to meet deadlines for information requests.

#### Key dates and timetables

- Remember that you must register your learners within 90 days of their start date to avoid [late registration fees](#). Please ensure you add your learners' correct planned end dates at the point of registration.
- We wanted to remind you that from summer 2025 onwards, we'll be bringing forward the completion date for EQA reviews to 30 June. Please contact your External Quality Assurer if you have any queries on this.

#### Qualification updates and withdrawals

- View our [latest Horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.
- We've updated our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments for 2024-25. View all the updates and [access the latest version of the regulations](#).

#### Exams officers' update

- [View this month's update](#).

#### Functional Skills

- Look at the [latest information on Functional Skills bookings over the festive break](#), including paper-based and online assessments.
- To support your planning, [view our schedule](#) for introducing new assessments into the live assessment paper bank for the remainder of the 2025 session, as during these periods our usual 6 working day turnaround will be paused.
- [Sign up](#) for our November maths, English and Digital Skills CPD events, including angles and coordinates, effective communication skills and being safe and responsible online.

#### T Levels

- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

#### V Certs

- View our [V Cert service messages](#).

#### Supporting your delivery

- Sign up now for our upcoming [Assessor](#) and [Internal Quality Assurance](#) training events to meet virtually with other professionals and expand your knowledge and understanding. If you have any questions on this training, please contact the team at [gaevents@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:gaevents@ncfe.org.uk).
- If any contact details have changed at your centre such as programme contact, head of centre, finance or exams contact, it's important to let us know. It's quick and easy to notify us by filling in this form: [change of centre contact details form](#), and this will allow us to continue communicating important updates to the correct individuals.
- Our Professional Development Week is back from 16-20 December to support teachers, assessors, senior leaders and support staff with their teaching and learning, improving confidence and enhancing learner engagement. [Find out more and sign up now](#).

#### Our impact

- Read our newly launched [Social Impact Report 2024](#), to explore how we're making a difference to learners, educators, institutions, the wider community and society, through our qualifications and investments.

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## December 2024 – service message

#### Christmas closing hours

- We'll be closing for the Christmas break from 5pm on **Monday 23 December 2024** until 8:30am on **Thursday 2 January 2025**. This means our customer support services (by email, phone and web chat) will be unavailable during this time – but you'll still be able to access our website and our Portal, as usual.

#### VTQ timely delivery of results

- Following our communication last month to confirm arrangements to ensure the timely delivery of vocational technical qualifications (VTQ) results for learners in 2024-25, we wanted to let you know that the first term-time checkpoint is now open. **If you deliver any of the qualifications in scope of this year's arrangements, your centre's action is required to ensure this checkpoint is completed by Friday 31 January.** [Visit our timely delivery of VTQ results webpage](#) for more information on the actions you need to take and where to find support.

#### Key dates and reminders

- Remember that you must register your learners within 90 days of their start date to avoid [late registration fees](#). Please ensure you add your learners' correct planned end dates at the point of registration.
- Take a look at our [useful document](#) which includes the key dates for the NEAs this academic year, along with details of the activities needed at specific times and where to find support.

- From summer 2025 onwards, we'll be bringing forward the completion date for EQA reviews to **30 June**. Please contact your External Quality Assurer if you have any queries on this.
- It's important we have the correct contact information for key colleagues within your centre. Let us know about any changes to contact details at your centre by filling out our [change of centre contact details form](#).

### **Qualification updates and withdrawals**

- View our [latest Horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.
- We've updated our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments for 2024-25. View all the updates and [access the latest version of the regulations](#).

### **Exams officers' update**

- [View this month's update](#)

### **Functional Skills**

- [Look at the latest information](#) on Functional Skills bookings over the festive break, including paper-based and online assessments.
- To support your planning, [view our schedule](#) for introducing new assessments into the live assessment paper bank for the remainder of the 2025 session, as during these periods our usual 6 working day turnaround will be paused.
- [Sign up](#) for our upcoming January maths, English and Digital Skills CPD events, including 'CPD maths: conquering confidence and confusion' and 'CPD English: magic of mindfulness and wonders of wellbeing'.

### **T Levels**

- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

### **V Certs**

- View our [V Cert service messages](#).

### **Supporting your delivery**

- Sign up now for our upcoming [Assessor](#) and [Internal Quality Assurance](#) training events to meet virtually with other professionals and expand your knowledge and understanding. If you have any questions on this training, please contact the team at [gaevents@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:gaevents@ncfe.org.uk).
- Our Professional Development Week is back from 16-20 December to support teachers, assessors, senior leaders and support staff with their teaching and learning, improving confidence and enhancing learner engagement. [Register for the sessions now](#).
- We've created a [top tips document](#) to help prevent malpractice within your centres and colleges. Please ensure you familiarise yourself with the different actions you can take.

### **Our impact**

- Read our newly launched [Social Impact Report 2024](#), to explore how we're making a difference to learners, educators, institutions, the wider community and society, through our qualifications and investments.



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## January 2025 – service message

### VTQ timely delivery of results

- Following our communications towards the end of last year to confirm arrangements to ensure the timely delivery of vocational technical qualifications (VTQ) results for learners in 2024-25, we wanted to remind you that the first term-time checkpoint is now open. **If you deliver any of the qualifications in scope of this year's arrangements, your centre's action is required to ensure this checkpoint is completed by Friday 31 January.** [Visit our timely delivery of VTQ results webpage](#) for more information on the actions you need to take and where to find support.
- From summer 2025 onwards, we're bringing forward the completion date for EQA reviews to **30 June**. Please contact your External Quality Assurer if you have any queries on this. Learners who do not require their result on results days in August don't require a review by this date. If you haven't yet booked your review, please contact your EQA as soon as possible to ensure availability.

### Key dates and reminders

- Remember that you must register your learners within 90 days of their start date to avoid [late registration fees](#). Please ensure you add your learners' correct planned end dates at the point of registration.
- It's important we have the correct contact information for key colleagues within your centre. Let us know about any changes to contact details at your centre by filling out our [change of centre contact details form](#).
- **Reminder about the use of artificial intelligence (AI) during online external assessments:** We'd like to remind you that the use of external aids, either spelling, punctuation and grammar, or other cloud-based or AI tools is closely controlled and monitored, and are explicitly **not permitted in any NCFE online external assessments** (including Functional Skills, and T Level online core exams). This approach is in line with JCQ's [Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures](#). As use and familiarity of large language model AI tools grows, the risk that learners use them in assessments will also grow. If learners are found to be using any external aids during their external online assessment, this will be investigated and will likely result in disqualification. Therefore, it is the responsibility of centres to ensure that learners are aware of what is prohibited during their assessments, and that the misuse will likely result in disqualification. This is especially important for **remotely invigilated assessments**, where learners are not under direct centre supervision. However, learners should be reminded that their screens are recorded during these assessments, as well as other camera recordings, so use of prohibited tools will be clearly identified, and result in disqualification. If you need any further information around the use of AI during external assessments, please visit [our webpage](#).

### Qualification updates and withdrawals

- View our latest [Horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.
- We've updated our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments for 2024-25. View all the updates and [access the latest version of the regulations](#).

#### Exams officers' update

- [View this month's update](#).

#### Functional Skills

- To support your planning, [view our schedule](#) for introducing new assessments into the live assessment paper bank for the remainder of the 2025 session, as during these periods our usual 6 working day turnaround will be paused.

#### T Levels

- Download our standardisation pack from the Portal and **remember to complete the mandatory standardisation and administration training by 28 February 2025**. This training is applicable to providers that have Occupational Specialism (OS) bookings in summer 2025, and not those who've just started delivery in September 2024. [Find out more](#).
- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

#### V Certs

- Take a look at our [useful document](#) which includes the key dates for the NEAs this academic year, along with details of the activities needed at specific times and where to find support.
- View our [V Cert service messages](#).

#### Supporting your delivery

- Sign up now for our upcoming [Assessor](#) and [Internal Quality Assurance](#) training events to meet virtually with other professionals and expand your knowledge and understanding. If you have any questions on this training, please contact the team at [gaevents@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:gaevents@ncfe.org.uk).
- Recap our third Professional Development Week, with sessions to support teachers, assessors, senior leaders and support staff with their teaching and learning, improving confidence and enhancing learner engagement. [Watch on demand now](#).
- We've created a [top tips document to help prevent malpractice](#) within your centres and colleges. Please ensure you familiarise yourself with the different actions you can take.

## February 2025 – service message

#### VTQ timely delivery of results

- Thank you to all of you who completed your first term-time checkpoint. The window for the second term-time checkpoint will open on Monday 10 March 2025 and the deadline will be Friday 2 May 2025. Visit our [timely delivery of](#)

[VTQ results webpage](#) next month for more information on the actions you need to take and where to find support.

- From summer 2025 onwards, we're bringing forward the completion date for EQA reviews to **30 June**. Please contact your External Quality Assurer if you have any queries on this. Learners who do not require their result on results days in August don't require a review by this date. If you haven't yet booked your review, please contact your EQA as soon as possible to ensure availability.

### Key dates and reminders

- Remember that you must register your learners within 90 days of their start date to avoid [late registration fees](#). Please ensure you add your learners' correct planned end dates at the point of registration.
- It's important we have the correct contact information for key colleagues within your centre. Let us know about any changes to contact details at your centre by filling out our [change of centre contact details form](#).

### Qualification updates and withdrawals

- View [our latest Horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.

### Exams officers' update

- View this month's [update](#).

### Functional Skills

- To support your planning, we want to update you on some changes we're making to new paper introductions for Functional Skills qualifications. [Read more](#).
- Apprenticeship assessment changes: what you need to know. Last week, the Government announced new flexibilities to apprenticeships. [Read more](#).

### T Levels

- Download our standardisation pack from the Portal and **remember to complete the mandatory standardisation and administration training by 28 February 2025**. This training is applicable to providers that have Occupational Specialism (OS) bookings in summer 2025, and not those who've just started delivery in September 2024. [Find out more](#).
- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

### V Certs

- View our [V Cert service messages](#).

### Supporting your delivery

- [Before you click that link, always think! Read our latest blog on protecting your centre against phishing scams.](#)
- Sign up now for our upcoming [Assessor](#) and [Internal Quality Assurance](#) training events to meet virtually with other professionals and expand your knowledge and understanding. If you have any questions on this training, please contact the team at [qaevents@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:qaevents@ncfe.org.uk).

# March 2025 – service message

## Second term-time checkpoint open now

The window for the second term-time checkpoint is now open and the deadline will be Friday 2 May 2025. Visit our [timely delivery of VTQ results webpage](#) for more information on the actions you need to take and where to find support.

## Key dates, assessments and results

### Updates to our post-results services

We've made changes to how you request post-results services, to make the process easier for you and your learners. We've made it easier to request:

- [enquiries about results](#), including a clerical check and review of marking
- [access to scripts](#)
- [Functional Skills feedback](#).

Following the release of external assessment results, **you can now submit your requests via the NCFE Portal**. Find out how to do this on our [assessment results and queries webpage](#).

### Updated assessment timetable for 2024-25

We've updated our assessment timetable for all CACHE and V Cert qualifications with assessments in 2024-25 and 2025-26. Click [here](#) to view the timetable and supporting documentation.

### Remote invigilation requirements: learner IDs

For any external assessment sat through our remote invigilation service, it's an essential part of the process for the learner to have a valid ID available and ready to display it clearly to the system when prompted. The ID is needed so when the recording of the assessment is reviewed, we can verify that the learner is the person named on the booked assessment.

We have clear guidance on which forms of ID are accepted by NCFE, and guidance on how to display the ID when prompted by the system, to allow the ID to be reviewed and the learner verified for their assessment. [Download the guidance document](#).

It's crucial that you ensure your learners are aware of the need for this **before** they sit their remotely invigilated assessment.

If we're unable to verify who the learner is, due to invalid ID or an unclear ID image, this will lead to delays in them receiving their results and may lead to their assessment being disqualified. Please contact our Customer Support team through Live Chat on our website or by email at [customersupport@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@ncfe.org.uk) if you have any queries.

### Important reminders

#### Queries about the process of applying for approval for additional NCFE qualifications?

We wanted to remind you that when applying for additional product approval, you can add multiple qualifications to the one application. Just add all the qualifications to your basket before submitting your application.

Before applying for approval, you can check if you're already approved to deliver the qualification to avoid the need for filling in the form. It's quick and easy to check this in our [Portal](#) under 'products', which is available on the welcome page before

proceeding. This screen allows you to search for a specific product or you can select all to show all products you're approved to deliver.

#### **Qualification updates and withdrawals**

- View [our latest Horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.

#### **Exams officers' update**

- [View this month's update.](#)

#### **Functional Skills**

- Read our update on the changes to Functional Skills requirements within apprenticeships plus take advantage of the series of upcoming events that will help to enhance your Functional Skills delivery. [Read more.](#)

#### **T Levels**

- We released results from the T Level autumn assessment series (2024) to students on Thursday 20 March. [Read more on our results webpage.](#)
- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

#### **V Certs**

- View our latest [V Cert service messages](#).

#### **Supporting your delivery**

- Sign up now for our upcoming [Assessor](#) and [Internal Quality Assurance](#) training events to meet virtually with other professionals and expand your knowledge and understanding. If you have any questions on this training, please contact the team at [gaevents@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:gaevents@ncfe.org.uk).
- **Preventing maladministration – we're here to support you:** We know that administrative processes can be complex, and mistakes happen. But with the right preparation and simple preventative measures, many of these issues can be avoided. Our goal is to support you in getting things right the first time, saving time and effort for your team while ensuring the best outcomes for learners. Read our latest [blog](#) from Glen McEwan, Provider Assurance Manager at NCFE.

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## **April 2025 – service message**

#### **Second term-time checkpoint open now**

The window for the second term-time checkpoint is now open and the deadline will be Friday 2 May 2025. Visit our [timely delivery of VTQ results webpage](#) for more information on the actions you need to take and where to find support.

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#### **Key dates, assessments and results**

#### **Updates to our post-results services**

We've made changes to how you request post-results services, to make the process easier for you and your learners. We've made it easier to request:

- [enquiries about results](#), including a clerical check and review of marking
- [access to scripts](#)
- [Functional Skills feedback](#).

Following the release of external assessment results, **you can now submit your requests via the NCFE Portal**. Find out how to do this on our [assessment results and queries webpage](#).

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### Qualification updates and withdrawals

- View [our latest Horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.

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### Exams officers' update

- [View this month's update](#).

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### Functional Skills

- Take advantage of the series of upcoming events that will help to enhance your Functional Skills delivery. [Read more](#).

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### T Levels

- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

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### V Certs

- View our latest [V Cert service messages](#).

### Non-exam assessment (NEA) submission deadline reminder: Wednesday 30 April

As the NEA submission deadline of **Wednesday 30 April** approaches, here's a quick reminder of the contact you'll receive from us:

- **3 and 7 days before the deadline:** the programme contact and exam contact we have on record will receive automated reminder emails.
- **Day after the deadline:** if marks aren't entered by the deadline, an email will be sent.

Please be advised that **any late submissions** may result in **delayed results for learners** and could lead to potential **maladministration issues**. It's essential that all learner marks are submitted on time to avoid issues that could affect learner outcomes.

### Instructions for submitting marks in the Portal:

- **Login to the Portal** and navigate to the **Portal menu**.

- Select '**Moderation**', then click on '**Submit Marks**'.
- Use the **search fields** to find the learners for whom you want to submit marks.
- Select the learners you wish to submit marks for.
- Once all learners are selected, click '**Next**'.
- For each learner, click on '**Add/Edit Marks**'.
- A list of tasks will appear. For each task:
  - 
  - Use the dropdown to select the appropriate number of marks. If the learner has attempted the task but has no awardable marks, select '0' marks.
  - If the learner did not attempt the task, select 'DNA' (Did Not Attempt).
  - Ensure no task is marked as N/A. All tasks should either have a numerical mark or be marked as DNA.
- **Agree to the Declaration** by clicking the checkbox.
- **Save** the changes.

**Important:** the marks will remain editable until the window closes on **Wednesday 30 April**. After this date, if you need to amend marks, you'll need to complete the [incorrect mark or grade submission form](#).

### Sampling plan list

Please remember that your sampling plan indicating list learners selected for remote moderation will be generated on **Thursday 1 May**, provided that **all** marks for the cohort are submitted by **Wednesday 30 April**. **You'll then have 3 working days to upload evidence for all learners in the sample list.** The timely submission of your learners' marks is critical to avoid delays in the moderation process.

**Your sampling plan list will only generate when all the marks for the cohort are submitted on the Portal.**

### How to view your sampling plan list:

- Log in to the Portal.
- Navigate to the 'Bookings' menu then select 'Upload learner submissions'.
- Search for your learners by entering the batch number.
- Filter by the correct assessment window to narrow down the list.
- On the left side of the black ribbon at the top of the screen, you'll see a dropdown box labelled 'All learners'.
- Click the dropdown arrow to expand the list.
- Look for 'Sampling Plan' in the expanded list. A number in brackets will show how many learners have been selected for remote moderation.
- For each learner on the sampling plan list, there will be a bold upload icon next to their details. This icon indicates that evidence is expected from them.

### How to upload evidence:

Once you've found your learners on the sample plan list, you'll then be able to upload evidence.

- Click on the upload icon next to the learner details.
- Click browse.
- Search for the learner files to be uploaded.
- You can only upload 15 files at a time.

For more information on how to upload evidence please see the 'Digital Learner Evidence' section of the [Portal user guide](#).

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### Supporting your delivery

- Our Professional Development Week is back! This week will feature a range of virtual training sessions, workshops, and 'in conversation with' events, designed to enhance professional skills and provide valuable insights into the field. Our previous Professional Development Weeks have been attended by hundreds of educators, exams colleagues and senior leaders. Taking place from Monday 30 June to Friday 4 July, we'll be sharing more details on the session soon –[sign up and register your interest](#) if you want to be the first to hear more!
- [Maximising educational impact with prompting theory and genAI tools](#), **Tuesday 1 July at 2 - 3:30pm**: Discover how to apply prompting theory to enhance real-world educational outcomes using cutting-edge generative AI tools such as Copilot (Microsoft), Gemini (Google), and ChatGPT. This interactive webinar will explore the practicalities and unique strengths of each tool, providing actionable strategies for supporting various educational tasks. Attendees will gain insights into effective AI integration to optimise teaching and learning.
- [Effective questioning in mathematics for vocational contexts](#), **Wednesday 2 July at 3 - 4:30pm**: Incorporating maths into vocational programmes can often pose challenges for teachers. This live online training session on effective questioning in mathematics is designed to empower vocational teachers to enhance student engagement and deepen understanding, fostering critical thinking skills essential for real-world problem-solving.

The session provides a focused, interactive opportunity to develop effective questioning strategies tailored to vocational teaching and learning in maths.

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## May 2025 – service message

### VTQ timely delivery of results

Thank you to everyone who completed your second term-time checkpoint. We appreciate your support to ensure students receive timely results this summer.

**Deadlines for making certificate claims and EQA reviews to take place**



If you're delivering qualifications which are not V Certs or T Levels and are otherwise [in scope for VTQ results release](#), your EQA review(s) should have either already taken place, or be booked to take place on or before Monday 30 June.

For qualifications which don't include an external assessment, the deadline to make certificate claims for these qualifications in the Portal is Friday 11 July.

For qualifications which do include an external assessment, you should make your certificate claims within two working days of receiving results.

More information about the timely delivery of results this summer can be found on our [website](#).

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## Key dates and assessments

### Assessment Timetable consultation – we need your thoughts

We'd like your feedback on our proposed [Assessment Timetable](#) for 2025-26 and 2026-27 before Friday 13 June. Following this, we'll review your comments and publish a narrative response to queries and feedback, before confirming a final version in July. To support you to understand some of the changes and additions to this version, as well as addressing some areas of previous feedback received, we've provided the following guidance for you to consider prior to reviewing and submitting feedback.

### Process and work to this point

- We've worked with other awarding organisations offering similarly structured assessments to ensure that assessment set date and time assessments avoid overlap as far as possible.
- We publish our Assessment Timetable is published **two years** in advance, whereas the GCSE and A Level timetable is published only **one year** in advance. Therefore, we're aware there may be some clashes between our assessments and GCSE and A Levels but will manage these where possible through existing regulation allowances and assessment variation requests if needed. Please note that where relevant, we've referenced summer 2025 date changes and final assessment opportunities throughout this consultation document.

### Changes and additions

- We've included our new Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) which will have their first delivery in 2025-26.
- We've amended dates for our Northern Ireland qualifications to allow for an earlier results release, in line with Northern Ireland summer term times.
- We've amended the external assessment date for our Level 1/2 Technical Award in Health and Social Care to 20 May 2026 to avoid a clash with GCSE English Language.

### Who can respond?

Your feedback is valuable to us, so we encourage all current, approved V Cert and CACHE centres to review the proposed Assessment Timetable and submit a response.

### How can I respond?

Please review the proposed [Assessment Timetable](#) for 2025-26 and 2026-27, and then complete [this form](#) with all feedback. The deadline for feedback is 13 June 2025.

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### Updated guidance from JCQ on AI use in assessments

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has published an updated version of its [AI Use in Assessment rules and guidance](#) document. This document is designed to help students and teachers complete NEAs, coursework and internal assessments successfully as AI tools continue to rapidly develop, as well as to consider the potential risks of AI misuse and how they can be mitigated during assessment delivery. JCQ has also published the following resources:

- [a bulletin to accompany the new document, with a summary for heads of centre, teachers and students](#)
- [a poster for students](#)
- [an information sheet for teachers](#)
- [a slide deck for senior leaders to present to teachers](#)
- [a slide deck for teachers to present to students.](#)

Please take some time to familiarise yourself with the updated rules and guidance and share with your colleagues and students.

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### A message from Ofqual

Please ensure to read the message from Ofqual's [Chief Regulator to school and college leaders](#), which contains important information about the summer exam season. It includes messages about maintaining security and integrity of exams and assessments, the importance of reviewing contingency plans, and Technical Awards and the terminal rule.

### CACHE qualifications: themed assessments

We've updated the CACHE Assessment Themed Document. The new version of this document has replaced the older documents on the [individual qualification pages on our website](#), under assessment materials and external assessment guidance.

We haven't changed any of the assessment theme titles, but we've removed old data for qualifications that are no longer live and updated the guidance for the Children's Care Learning and Development (Northern Ireland)/Extended Diploma External Assessment.

Ahead of booking and submitting learner work for these assessments, please take note of our top tips:

- Ensure that you're booking learners onto the correct theme, and that the work submitted is for the correct theme the learners are booked onto. This is essential to ensure that there are no delays in marking, which could lead to learners not receiving their results on time.

Remember that learners are unable to submit the same assessment theme twice, except for CCLDNI/EDEA, where the learners are entitled to another attempt at the same assessment theme.

- If you do submit learner work and it's identified that this has been submitted for the incorrect theme, we'll charge late assessment booking fees to amend the external assessment booking.

If you have any questions with regards to these assessments, or require support with making assessment themed bookings, please contact our Customer Support team via email at [customersupport@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@ncfe.org.uk) or through LiveChat on our [website](#).

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### Qualification updates and withdrawals

As a result of our strong partnership working with Active IQ we've focused on streamlining our product offer and have identified areas of overlap. Therefore, we've taken the decision to withdraw a small number of qualifications in sport and active leisure. Suitable alternatives are available from ourselves and Active IQ, please download the latest Horizons document to see the recommended alternative qualifications.

- View our [latest Horizons document](#), featuring qualification updates and maintenance information including qualification withdrawals, new qualifications, and qualification amendments.

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### T Levels

- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

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### V Certs

- View our latest [V Cert service messages](#).

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### Exams officers' update

- [View this](#) month's update.

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### Functional Skills

**Sign up to our upcoming events:** visit our [Functional Skills service messages webpage](#) for information on our events taking place in June.

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### Supporting your delivery: resources, training and events

**Professional Development Week:** our next one will take place from Monday 30 June – Friday 4 July, [find out more and sign up to the sessions now](#).

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**Education and Early Years student conference:** join our next student conference on Friday 6 June, 10am-12pm, which will focus on working with children and young

people. We'll bring together early years and education professionals who will share their wealth of specialist knowledge and expertise when working with these groups, giving your learners an insight into this sector. [Sign your learners up now](#).

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**Changes to your contact details:** if contact details at your centre have changed for head of centre, programme, finance or exams contacts, please update us by [completing this form](#).

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## June 2025 – service message

### Assessments and results

#### Deadline for making certificate claims

If you're delivering qualifications which are not V Certs or T Levels and are [in scope for VTQ results release](#), your EQA review(s) should have either already taken place, or be booked to take place on or before Monday 30 June.

**You'll need to make certificate claims for qualifications that don't include an external assessment by Friday 11 July.** If you're awaiting external assessment results after this date, once they're confirmed you should make these claims within two working days or receiving the result.

You can find information on how to do this in the [Portal User Guide](#). Find out more information about claiming certificates on our [timely delivery of results webpage](#). [You can also read our certification FAQs](#).

#### Transferring learners

If you need to transfer a registered learner to a different qualification, for example from a certificate or award to a diploma, please ensure you do so using the 'transfer' option in the manage learners screen in the Portal, rather than making a new registration. This will ensure that all existing results the learner has achieved are carried over to the new qualification.

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### Qualification updates and withdrawals

View this month's [Horizon update](#) for the latest qualification changes and withdrawals. Please ensure to read this document if you deliver any of our early years, childcare and dental nursing qualifications, as a number of these are being withdrawn. We've included links to suitable replacement qualifications where relevant.

#### Fees and pricing for 2025-26

As we approach the end of the academic year, we'd like to share some information with you about our fees and pricing for 2025-26. [Read more](#).

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### CACHE qualifications

#### CACHE assessments – key reminders

We wanted to share some key reminders with you about AI usage and referencing for CACHE assessments.

## **AI usage**

Within the recent academic year, we've seen an increase of suspected AI usage instances in the CACHE external assessments. This is predominantly within the following external assessments: HSC/CEA, HSC/EDEA, HSC1, HSED2, CCE1 and DCE2. When our examiners review external assessments, they're looking for the following as indicators of potential use of AI:

- americanised spelling
- phrasing or sentences that seem out of place
- instances of incorrect/inconsistent use of first-person and third person
- inconsistent use of language throughout the assessment
- the use of synonyms at a more advanced level than expected
- unexpected use of punctuation for the level of assessment.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

Instances of potential AI usage within an external assessment will go through a review process. If agreed by our chief examiner, this will be raised to our Provider Assurance team for investigation.

During this process, any assessment result will be placed on hold until the investigation is completed. Once the investigation is completed, dependent on the outcome of the investigation, it still may take a few further days for the results to be released.

It's increasingly important that you're being vigilant when it comes to your learners potentially using AI, as this can cause delays to the release of external assessment results, or lead to your learners being disqualified from the assessment.

## **Referencing**

To support with referencing queries, we've compiled some frequently asked questions.

## **CACHE themes**

Remember to check the assessment bookings for CACHE themed assessments, and ensure learners are booked onto the correct assessment theme.

Any incorrect theme bookings made will result in additional fees, as we'll need to make amendments to the assessment booking if this is after the external assessment booking cut-off date.

When submitting work for learners onto relevant themes, please cross check the theme of work you're submitting against the theme they are booked onto.

You'll be asked, via the NCFE Portal when making a booking and when submitting learner evidence, to confirm that the theme is correct.

Our updated CACHE themed document can be found on the relevant qualification pages under the assessment materials tab.

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## **Functional Skills**

- View our latest [Functional Skills communications](#).

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## **T Levels**

- View our latest [T Level communications](#).

- If you'd like to get approved for delivering T Levels, or additional T Levels, from September 2025, please remember that the deadline is Friday 27 June. [Read our FAQs](#) for more information.

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## V Certs

- View our latest [V Cert service messages](#).

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## Exams officers' update

- [View this](#) month's update.

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## NCFE and JCQ – continued alignment

We've been a full member of JCQ for many years, and over the last several sessions we've adopted many of the JCQ assessment policies and approaches, including those relating to appeals, special considerations, and maladministration and malpractice. From summer 2025, we'll be fully adopting the JCQ Post Results Services booklet. Our previous NCFE equivalent was very closely aligned to these policies and approaches.

Therefore, the new adoption will mean there will be very little noticeable difference to you. However, we believe this change will give you the confidence that the NCFE qualifications you deliver have services and standards on par with those offered for GCSEs and A Levels, and also will help alleviate the administrative burden of reviewing and maintaining two parallel documents.

From the 2025-26 session and beyond, we're working on further alignment still, to give clearer and more consistent guidance to you, including plans to adopt the General Regulations, the Instructions for Conducting Examinations booklet, and the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments booklet. We'll share more information with you over the coming months on the timelines and benefits.

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## Supporting your delivery: resources, training and events

**Professional Development Week:** learn about AI, maths and more during our next Professional Development Week, which will take place from Monday 30 June to Friday 4 July. [Find out more and sign up to the sessions now](#).

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