NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Award in First Aid at Work
QN: 603/2387/5



Qualification Specification

Qualification summary

Qualification title	**NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Award in First Aid at Work**
Ofqual qualification number (QN)	603/2387/5
Guided learning hours (GLH)	18
Total qualification time (TQT)	22
Credit value	2
Minimum age	16 Please note that 16- to 18-year-olds may need to be supervised in the workplace once they have achieved the qualification.
Qualification purpose	This qualification is designed to provide the learner with the knowledge and skills to respond to first aid situations and administer first aid in the workplace. First Aid at Work certificates are valid for three years. In order to requalify after three years, learners must be assessed against all learning outcomes (LOs) and assessment criteria (AC) in the units. For First Aid at Work, this may allow delivery time to be adjusted based on current HSE guidance for requalification (two days). For requalification, it is considered appropriate to reduce the time by 6 hours, leaving a total of 12 hours. The date of certification is based on the achievement of the final unit; the certificate will be valid for three years from that date.
Grading	Achieved/not yet achieved
Assessment method	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.
Work/industry placement experience	This qualification requires learners to complete the following minimum contact hours: • First Aid at Work – 18 hours over 3 days • First Aid at Work Requalifying – 12 hours over 2 days. 'Contact hours' refers to time set aside for direct teaching and practical tasks. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) now allows for the qualifications/courses to be delivered using a blended approach (a combination of electronic distance-based and face-to-face classroom-based instruction). If this approach is taken, the centre must ensure: • where first aid training comprises blended learning, it is as effective as exclusively face-to-face learning • a minimum of two-thirds of the training time is spent on face-to-face learning • the general practical elements of the training course are delivered and assessed face-to-face.

Endorsement	This qualification is endorsed by CIMSPA (Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity). 
UCAS	Please refer to the UCAS website for further details of points allocation and the most up-to-date information.
Performance points	Please check the performance points data produced by the Department for Education (DfE) and available online.
Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 603/2387/5.
Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.

Contents

Qualification summary **2**

Section 1: introduction **5**

Aims and objectives 5
Support Handbook 5
Guidance for entry 5
Achieving this qualification 5
Progression 6
Progression to higher-level studies 6
Staffing requirements 6
Resource requirements 7
Realistic work environment (RWE) requirement/recommendation 7
Work/industry placement experience 8
How the qualification is assessed 8
Internal assessment 9

Section 2: unit content and assessment guidance **10**

Unit 01 Emergency first aid in the workplace (H/616/1289) 11
Unit 02 Recognition and management of illness and injury in the workplace (Y/616/1290) 12
NCFE Assessment strategy 14

Section 3: support **15**

Support materials 15
Useful websites 15
Other support materials 15
Reproduction of this document 15

Contact us **16**

Appendix A: units **17**

Mandatory units 17

Appendix B: glossary **18**

Additional information/glossary 18

Change history record **19**

Section 1: introduction

Centres must ensure they are using the most recent version of the Qualification Specification on the website.

Aims and objectives

This qualification aims to:

- to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to deal with a range of workplace first aid situations
- offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge
- provide opportunities to acquire a number of practical and technical skills.

Support Handbook

This Qualification Specification must be used alongside the mandatory Support Handbook, which can be found on the NCFE website. This contains additional supporting information to help with planning, delivery and assessment.

This Qualification Specification contains all the qualification-specific information you will need that is not covered in the Support Handbook.

Guidance for entry

This qualification is designed for learners aged 16 and over, who wish to be able to respond to first aid situations and administer first aid in the workplace.

Registration is at the discretion of the centre in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the NCFE Portal.

There are no specific prior skills/knowledge a learner must have for this qualification. However, there is an element of communication (discussing, presenting, reading and writing) involved and learners should have basic skills in communication pitched at Level 2.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all learners are capable of achieving the learning outcomes (LOs) and complying with the relevant literacy, numeracy, and health and safety requirements.

Learners registered on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level, or with the same/a similar title, as duplication of learning may affect funding eligibility.

Achieving this qualification

To be awarded this qualification learners are required to successfully achieve **two units and two credits** from the mandatory units.

Please refer to the list of units in appendix A for further information.

To achieve this qualification, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all LOs of the units as detailed in this Qualification Specification.

Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- further education:
  - health and wellbeing qualifications
  - emergency care qualifications.

Progression to higher-level studies

Level 3 qualifications can support progression to higher-level study, which requires knowledge and skills different from those gained at levels 1 and 2. Level 3 qualifications enable learners to:

- apply factual, procedural and theoretical subject knowledge
- use relevant knowledge and methods to address complex, non-routine problems
- interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas
- understand the nature of the area of study or work
- demonstrate an awareness of different perspectives and approaches
- identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills
- use appropriate research to inform actions
- review and evaluate the effectiveness of their own methods.

Staffing requirements

All tutors, assessors and internal verifiers must:

- hold a regulated Level 3 Award in First Aid at Work qualification (or equivalent[1]); or:
- have a current registration as a:
  - doctor with the General Medical Council (GMC[2])
  - nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC[2])
  - paramedic with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC[2]).

[1] If the trainer/assessor/IQA/EQA holds a non-regulated first aid qualification, Active IQ will undertake due diligence to ensure current occupational knowledge and competence.
[2] Registered healthcare professionals must act within their scope of practice and therefore have current expertise in first aid to teach/assess the subject.

All tutors and assessors must either:

- provide an acceptable log of teaching first aid within the last three years; or
- provide an acceptable record of competently teaching theoretical and practical first aid sessions under the supervision of a suitably qualified trainer/assessor.

Standards of first aid practice

Skills and knowledge must be taught and assessed in accordance with currently accepted first aid practice in the United Kingdom as laid down:

- by the Resuscitation Council (UK)
- in other publications, provided that they are supported by a responsible body of medical opinion.

Resource requirements

To assist in the delivery of this qualification, centres/learners should have access to the following mandatory resources:

Required resources	
Resuscitation manikins	Should be provided at a minimum ratio of one manikin per four learners.
Hygiene	Sufficient procedures must be in place to ensure hygiene during the use of resuscitation manikins and other training equipment.
Audio-visual equipment and training aids	Sufficient audio-visual equipment and training aids should be available to facilitate learning using varied teaching methods.
Learning materials	Learners should be provided with clear and accurate reference books/handouts covering the topics included in the qualification.
AED trainers	At least one AED trainer should be available per four learners. If there are not enough AED trainers available, learning hours/lesson plans should be adjusted accordingly to ensure learners are not disadvantaged.
Bandages and dressings	Sufficient clean bandages, dressings and other items commonly found in a first aid kit must be available to facilitate training and assessment.
Training venue	The training venue must meet acceptable health and safety standards and be conducive to learning, with sufficient size, floor surfaces, seating, writing surfaces, toilet facilities, ventilation, lighting, heating, access, exits, cleanliness and absence of distracting noise.
Tutors	Centres should have at least two tutors. They should retain portfolios of evidence to prove their competence in teaching first aid. All portfolios should be current and regularly reviewed, and contain up-to-date, chronological evidence to confirm competence. It is recommended that a single tutor teaches no more than 12 learners at the same time so that each individual receives an appropriate level of support.

Realistic work environment (RWE) requirement/recommendation

The assessment of competence-based criteria should ideally be conducted within the workplace. However, in instances where this is not feasible, learners can be assessed in a realistic work environment (RWE) designed to replicate real work settings.

It is essential for organisations utilising an RWE to ensure it accurately reflects current and authentic work environments. By doing so, employers can be confident that competence demonstrated by a learner in an RWE will be translated into successful performance in employment.

In establishing an RWE, the following factors should be considered.

The work situation being represented is relevant to the competence requirements being assessed:

- the work situation should closely resemble the relevant setting
- equipment and resources that replicate the work situation must be current and available for use to ensure that assessment requirements can be met
- time constraints, resource access and information availability should mirror real conditions.

The learner's work activities reflect those found in the work environment being represented, for example:

- interaction with colleagues and others should reflect expected communication approaches
- tasks performed must be completed to an acceptable timescale

- learners must be able to achieve a realistic volume of work as would be expected in the work situation being represented
- learners operate professionally with clear understanding of their work activities and responsibilities
- feedback from colleagues and others (for example customers, service users) is maintained and acted upon
- account must be taken of any legislation, regulations or standard procedures that would be followed in the workplace.

Work/industry placement experience

This qualification requires learners to complete the following minimum contact hours:

- First Aid at Work – 18 hours over 3 days
- First Aid at Work Requalifying – 12 hours over 2 days.

'Contact hours' refers to time set aside for direct teaching and practical tasks.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) now allows for the qualifications/courses to be delivered using a blended approach (a combination of electronic distance-based and face-to-face classroom-based instruction). If this approach is taken, the centre must ensure:

- where first aid training comprises blended learning, it is as effective as exclusively face-to-face learning
- a minimum of two-thirds of the training time is spent on face-to-face learning
- the general practical elements of the training course are delivered and assessed face-to-face.

How the qualification is assessed

Assessment is the process of measuring a learner's skill, knowledge and understanding against the standards set in a qualification.

This qualification is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

The assessment consists of **one** component:

- an internally assessed portfolio of evidence, which is assessed by centre staff and externally quality assured by NCFE (internal quality assurance must still be completed by the centre as usual).

Learners must be successful in this component to gain the Level 3 Award in First Aid at Work.

Learners who are not successful can resubmit work within the registration period; however, a charge may apply in cases where additional external quality assurance visits are required.

Unless otherwise stated in this specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English.

Internal assessment

Each learner must create a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks to demonstrate achievement of all the LOs associated with each unit. On completion of each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the assessor must countersign this.

If a centre needs to create their own internal assessment tasks, there are four essential elements in the production of successful centre-based assessment tasks; these are:

- ensuring the assessment tasks are meaningful with clear, assessable outcomes
- appropriate coverage of the content, LOs or assessment criteria (AC)
- having a valid and engaging context or scenario
- including sufficient opportunities for stretch and challenge for higher attainers.

Section 2: unit content and assessment guidance

This section provides details of the structure and content of this qualification, including grading, level, credit and guided learning hours (GLH).

The types of evidence listed are for guidance purposes only. Within learners' portfolios, other types of evidence are acceptable if all learning outcomes (LOs) are covered, and if the evidence generated can be internally and externally quality assured. For approval of methods of internal assessment other than portfolio building, please contact your external quality assurer (EQA).

Unit 01 Emergency first aid in the workplace (H/616/1289)

Assessment				
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence				
Mandatory	**Achieved/not yet achieved**	**Level 3**	**1 credit**	**6 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) **The learner will:**	Assessment criteria (AC) **The learner can:**
1. Understand the role and responsibilities of a first aider	1.1 Identify the role and responsibilities of a first aider
	1.2 Identify how to minimise the risk of infection to self and others
	1.3 Identify the need for consent to provide first aid
2. Be able to assess an emergency situation safely	2.1 Conduct a scene survey
	2.2 Conduct a primary survey of a casualty
	2.3 Summon appropriate assistance when necessary
3. Be able to provide first aid to an unresponsive casualty	3.1 Identify when to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
	3.2 Demonstrate adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation using a manikin
	3.3 Identify when to place a casualty into the recovery position
	3.4 Demonstrate how to place a casualty into the recovery position
	3.5 Demonstrate continual monitoring of breathing whilst the casualty is in the recovery position
	3.6 Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty who is experiencing a seizure
4. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty who is choking	4.1 Identify when a casualty is choking
	4.2 Demonstrate how to administer first aid to a casualty who is choking
5. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty with external bleeding	5.1 Identify whether external bleeding is life-threatening
	5.2 Demonstrate how to administer first aid to a casualty with external bleeding
6. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty who is suffering from shock	6.1 Recognise when a casualty is suffering from shock
	6.2 Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty who is suffering from shock
7. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty with minor injuries	7.1 Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty with: • small cuts • grazes • bruises • small splinters • nosebleeds.
	7.2 Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty with minor burns and scalds

Delivery and assessment guidance
AC3.2 CPR minimum demonstration time of 2 minutes at floor level, may additionally include use of rescue breath barrier devices. The demonstration must include appropriate compression and ventilation techniques and the correct use of an AED in accordance with current recognised resuscitation guidelines.

Unit 02 Recognition and management of illness and injury in the workplace (Y/616/1290)

Assessment				
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence				
Mandatory	**Achieved/not yet achieved**	**Level 3**	**1 credit**	**12 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) **The learner will:**	Assessment criteria (AC) **The learner can:**
1. Be able to conduct a secondary survey	1.1 Identify the information to be collected when gathering a casualty history
	1.2 Demonstrate how to conduct a head-to-toe survey
2. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty with suspected injuries to bones, muscles and joints	2.1 Recognise suspected: • fractures and dislocations • sprains and strains.
	2.2 Identify how to administer first aid for: • fractures and dislocations • sprains and strains.
	2.3 Demonstrate how to apply: • a support sling • an elevated sling.
3. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty with suspected head and spinal injuries	3.1 Recognise a suspected: • head injury • spinal injury.
	3.2 Identify how to administer first aid for a suspected head injury
	3.3 Demonstrate how to administer first aid for a suspected spinal injury
4. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty with suspected chest injuries	4.1 Identify how to administer first aid for suspected: • fractured ribs • penetrating chest injury.
5. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty with burns and scalds	5.1 Identify how to recognise the severity of burns and scalds
	5.2 Identify how to administer first aid for burns involving: • dry heat • wet heat • electricity • chemicals.
6. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty with an eye injury	6.1 Identify how to administer first aid for eye injuries involving: • dust • chemicals • embedded objects.
7. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty with suspected poisoning	7.1 Identify how poisonous substances can enter the body
	7.2 Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty with suspected sudden poisoning
8. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty with anaphylaxis	8.1 Recognise suspected anaphylaxis
	8.2 Identify how to administer first aid for a casualty with suspected anaphylaxis
	8.3 Demonstrate the use of a ‘training device’ adrenaline auto-injector

Learning outcomes (LOs) **The learner will:**	Assessment criteria (AC) **The learner can:**
9. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty with suspected major illness	9.1 Recognise suspected: • heart attack • stroke • epileptic seizure • asthma attack • diabetic hypoglycaemic emergency.
	9.2 Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty suffering from: • heart attack • stroke • epileptic seizure • asthma attack • diabetic hypoglycaemic emergency.

Delivery and assessment guidance
LO1 Head-to-toe survey must be conducted on a casualty with a continually monitored or protected airway (e.g. a conscious casualty or a casualty placed in the recovery position). **LO8** The use of a 'training device' adrenaline auto-injector: must be demonstrated using a training device and NOT a live auto-injector.

NCFE Assessment strategy

The key requirements of the assessment strategies or principles that relate to units in this qualification are summarised below.

The centre must ensure that individuals undertaking assessor or quality assurer roles within the centre conform to the assessment requirements for the unit they are assessing or quality assuring.

Knowledge LOs

- assessors will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make assessment decisions
- internal quality assurers (IQAs) will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions.

Competence/skills LOs

- assessors will need to be both occupationally competent and qualified to make assessment decisions
- IQAs will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions.

The centre with whom the learners are registered will be responsible for making all assessment decisions. Assessors must be **contracted** to work directly with the centre, contributing to all aspects of standardisation. The centre must ensure a process of training is followed, including during induction and quality assurance activities. Occupationally competent and qualified assessors from the centre must use direct observation to assess practical skills-based outcomes.

Section 3: support

Support materials

The following support materials are available to assist with the delivery of this qualification and are available on the NCFE website:

- learning resources
- Qualification Factsheet.

Useful websites

Centres may find the following website helpful for information, materials and resources to assist with the delivery of this qualification:

- First aid at work: The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 Approved Code of Practice and Guidance
- resuscitation guidelines: Resuscitation Council UK

These links are provided as sources of potentially useful information for delivery/learning of this subject area. NCFE does not explicitly endorse these websites or any learning resources available on these websites.

Other support materials

The resources and materials used in the delivery of this qualification must be age-appropriate and due consideration should be given to the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners in line with your institute's safeguarding policy when developing or selecting delivery materials.

Products to support the delivery of this qualification may be available. For more information about these resources and how to access them, please visit the NCFE website.

Reproduction of this document

Reproduction by approved centres is permissible for internal use under the following conditions:

- you may copy and paste any material from this document; however, we do not accept any liability for any incomplete or inaccurate copying and subsequent use of this information
- the use of PDF versions of our support materials on the website will ensure that correct and up-to-date information is provided to learners
- any photographs in this publication are either our exclusive property or used under licence from a third party:
  - they are protected under copyright law and cannot be reproduced, copied or manipulated in any form
  - this includes the use of any image or part of an image in individual or group projects and assessment materials
  - all images have a signed model release.

Contact us

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

Tel: 0191 239 8000*
Fax: 0191 239 8001
Email: customersupport@ncfe.org.uk
Website: www.ncfe.org.uk

NCFE © Copyright 2026. All rights reserved worldwide.

Version 2.0 November 2026
Information in this Qualification Specification is correct at the time of publishing but may be subject to change.

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

CACHE; Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education; and NNEB and ACTIVE IQ are registered trademarks owned by NCFE.

All the material in this publication is protected by copyright.

To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.

Appendix A: units

To simplify cross-referencing assessments and quality assurance, we have used a sequential numbering system in this document for each unit.

Mandatory units

Unit number	Regulated unit number	Unit title	Level	Credit	GLH
Unit 01	H/616/1289	Emergency first aid in the workplace	3	1	6
Unit 02	Y/616/1290	Recognition and management of illness and injury in the workplace	3	1	12

Appendix B: glossary

Additional information/glossary

Administer first aid	Provide appropriate help to a casualty, manage the situation and seek appropriate assistance when necessary.
Asthma attack	May include helping a casualty to use a spacer device and take their own inhaler.
Consent	Learners should be aware of the need for consent on a continual basis when providing first aid. Implied consent can be assumed when treating an unresponsive casualty.
Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)	Must include: 'correct placement of AED pads' and 'follows AED instructions'.
Diabetic emergency	Should focus on the condition of hypoglycaemia.
Head injury	Includes concussion, compression and skull fracture. The learner is not expected to differentiate between these conditions.
Head-to-toe survey	Must be conducted on a casualty with a continually monitored or protected airway (e.g. a conscious casualty or a casualty placed in the recovery position).
Others	May include: the casualty receiving first aid; work colleagues; other people within the workplace environment.
Recognise	To include signs and/or symptoms of the condition and/or, where appropriate, mechanism of injury.
Recovery position	A position that maintains a stable open draining airway.
Role and responsibilities	May include reference to: preventing cross infection; the need for recording incidents and actions; safe use of available equipment; assessing an incident; summoning assistance; prioritising treatment; dealing with post-incident stress.
Seizure	Relates to a generalised seizure. First aiders should be suspicious of cardiac arrest in any casualty presenting with seizure.
Shock	Hypovolaemic shock (resulting from blood loss).
When necessary	Learners should be able to evaluate a situation to determine when to summon further assistance and what type of assistance to request.
When to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation	Must include agonal gasps.

Change history record

Version	Publication date	Description of change
AIQ006183	March 2022	Document published
AIQ007196	May 2026	Updates made to assessment method; the mandatory units are assessed by an internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence. Updates made to unit learning outcomes and assessment criteria, reflecting nationally agreed changes.
v2.0	November 2026	Qualification title changed and template updated to new version.