

Regulations for the Conduct of Apprenticeship Assessments

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Section 1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

These regulations cover the delivery of NCFE Apprenticeship Assessments which are subject to internal and external Quality Assurance.

NCFE, as the Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation, must comply with the requirements set out in the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan published by Skills England when designing and delivering Apprenticeship Assessments, while also adhering to DfE, and Ofqual statutory guidance.

Our regulations assist us and our centres by outlining the framework for delivery and invigilation of NCFE Apprenticeship Assessments. This is important in situations which could result in a detrimental effect on the apprentice and/or could potentially compromise the integrity of our standards, systems and/or processes.

Practices and procedures involved in NCFE Apprenticeship Assessment align to Ofqual, Skills England and Department for Education external regulatory guidance, and both NCFE and JCQ wider policies. This policy therefore defines the key responsibilities of individuals and outlines the official processes, procedures, and requirements that govern the entire NCFE Apprenticeship Assessment process.

The policy also forms part of a suite of policies for NCFE's products and services, all of which are designed to:

- protect apprentices who are registered with us;
- minimise the risk of an Adverse Effect occurring;
- help support us and all other Centres involved in risk management and risk minimisation;
- help ensure we and all Centres comply with all relevant legislation and guidance;
- help improve and refine our products and services.

For our Centres, this policy supports compliance with the NCFE Agreement. It does not replace any of the requirements contained within that Agreement. Non-adherence to our policies may constitute maladministration, malpractice and/or a breach of the Agreement. Please ensure all policies are read and implemented carefully.

1.2. Scope

This document applies to all colleagues and Centres, outlining the framework for delivery, assessment and invigilation of NCFE Apprenticeship Assessments.

1.3. Responsibilities/duties

Centres must make sure that apprentices and staff who are involved in delivery, management, assessment and/or quality assurance are familiar with the contents of this policy. Staff can include site, sub-site or contractual staff.

1.4. Definitions

Word/Acronym	Definition
AAO	Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation
AS	Assessment Service
EQA	External Quality Assurance
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
ID	Identification
DfE	Department for Education
KT	Knowledge Test
MCQ	Multiple choice question
OfS	Office for Students
QA	Quality Assurance
ULN	Unique Learner number
NCFE Representative	If a centre is approved to deliver centre assessments, they will be classed as a NCFE representative.
Proficient	NCFEs internal assessment management system used to record and administer apprenticeship assessment activities, including the processing of cancellations, resits and/or retakes

1.5. Location

This policy can be located on the [NCFE website](#)

Section 2. Governance Of Apprenticeship Assessment

2.1. Overview of Apprenticeship Assessment

Apprenticeship Assessment is designed to verify that an apprentice has the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their job according to the standards set out in the assessment plan before being awarded their apprenticeship certificate. Employers are responsible for verifying the apprentice's behaviours.

Apprenticeship Assessment is the process of evaluating an apprentice's skills, knowledge, and competencies to determine whether they meet the required standards for their occupation. Assessments may take place during the on-programme and may only start once a minimum amount of on-programme learning has been reached.

The Centre holds overall responsibility for the apprentice's training throughout the entire apprenticeship period, independent of NCFE. In some cases, centres may also deliver and assess certain parts of the Apprenticeship Assessment. For detailed information on the requirements and preparation for Apprenticeship Assessment, please consult the NCFE Apprenticeship Assessment Operational Handbook and standard specific specification and guidance document. Further guidance can be found in [Skills England Requirements and Guidance](#) and [DfE apprenticeship funding rules](#).

NCFE offers 2 models for Apprenticeship Assessment:

Centre Assessed- Relevant assessments assessed by an appropriately qualified centre, with a requirement for internal quality assurance and External Quality Assurance sampling to ensure consistency and reliability of assessment decisions.

NCFE Assessed- All assessments to be undertaken by NCFE where the centre does not wish to adopt a centre assessed approach or does not have the required competence or resource available.

Centres can select the most appropriate model at standard level.

2.2. Observation of the Apprenticeship Assessment process

NCFE reserves the right to observe any stage of the Apprenticeship Assessment process.

Where centre assessed is selected the centre will be subject to External Quality Assurance visits to ensure quality of assessments, IQA decisions, sampling of apprentice's assessments and records. When a centre registers learners, an EQA will be allocated and will complete 2 free remote visits each year per quality assurance group per academic session additional visits can be requested but will be subject to an additional fee.

During External Quality Assurance (EQA) reviews, External Quality Assurers sample centre assessment decisions for apprentices, either before or after results are issued. The purpose of the review is to verify that assessment criteria are fully understood and applied accurately, consistently, and fairly across all assessors, ensuring assessment decisions remain valid and fit for purpose. EQAs also evaluate internal quality assurance arrangements to confirm that Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) are interpreting standards correctly, applying grading decisions consistently, and

maintaining accurate records. The EQA will refer to the specific standard Specification and guidance document to ensure the evidence generated by the apprentice is admissible.

In addition, EQAs review the centres delivery, assessment, and internal quality assurance policies, processes, and procedures to ensure ongoing compliance with approval requirements and the Centre Agreement. This enables EQAs to determine whether the centre continues to meet the required standards and can retain approval to deliver qualifications and apprenticeship products.

To support EQA visits NCFE will conduct monthly sampling of apprentice results once they have been uploaded too Proficient. Centres will only receive feedback during the month where an assessment is identified as medium or high risk. For low-risk assessments, feedback will be provided during scheduled EQA visits.

This approach has been adopted to support the roll-on, roll-off delivery model used by centres, helping to avoid delays to apprentice achievement and reducing the need for additional EQA visits, which can increase costs.

Where the EQA identifies any misinterpretation of the assessment criteria, feedback will be provided and an additional review will be planned to ensure feedback has been taken on board, assessors marking is correct, and the assessment criteria is being consistently applied.

EQAs will also review previous action plans to establish if previous action points can be closed or if there are any outstanding actions. Where any actions are outstanding, this is highlighted in the current report. The EQA will work with the centre to help them to understand the actions required and how these can be resolved, referring the centre to any guidance documents or support tools. The EQA will continue to work the centre between reviews to address any actions, where necessary.

2.3. Ownership of NCFE material

All NCFE assessment material remains the property of NCFE. This includes all question papers, answer sheets/booklets, marking records, standardisation videos and digital evidence including online meeting chats.

Protecting the confidentiality of NCFE materials is crucial to preserving the integrity of NCFE products, ensuring assessments are fair, valid, and reliable, and in safeguarding our business interests, intellectual property, and competitiveness.

Recording or copying any elements of NCFE Apprenticeship Assessments either digitally or in written format, by anyone other than NCFE representatives is strictly forbidden unless approved by NCFE through the Apprenticeship Assessment process. This includes recording or copying any questions that may be asked during an assessment, either verbally or in written format. If a centre is approved to deliver centre assessments, they will be classed as a NCFE representative.

All NCFE other materials, including but not limited to documents, data, reports, presentations, and proprietary information, are strictly confidential. Employees and authorised personnel must not share, disclose, or distribute these materials to any unauthorised individuals or external parties unless approved through the Assessment process. They must only be reviewed by the appropriate personnel and remain strictly within the scope of that process.

2.4. Malpractice and/or maladministration

NCFE consider malpractice as any act, default or practice which is a breach of the regulations or which:

- gives rise to prejudice to apprentices, and/or
- compromises public confidence in qualifications, and/or
- compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate, and/or
- damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre.

Malpractice includes maladministration and instances of non-compliance with the regulations, and includes activities such as:

- Failure to adhere to the regulations regarding the conduct of controlled assessments, apprenticeship evidence, examinations and non-examination assessments
- Failures of compliance with NCFE regulations in the conduct of examinations/assessments and/or the handling of examination question papers, apprentice assessment submissions, marking records, cumulative assessment records, results and certification
- Failures to comply with all regulation from governmental authorities regarding the delivery and certification of Apprenticeship assessments
- This list is not exhaustive.

The following are types of malpractice:

- breach of security
- deception
- improper assistance to apprentices
- failure to co-operate with an investigation
- maladministration
- apprentice malpractice
- staff malpractice

If at any time during an assessment there is a violation of these Regulations, the Assessor or Designated Person has the right to void an assessment immediately. This decision must only be made in exceptional circumstances where malpractice is irrefutable. Once voided no allowance can be given retrospectively if the decision is deemed invalid.

If any of these regulations that cover the service, conduct and delivery of the complete apprenticeship assessment journey are breached by an apprentice, centre, or other person(s) involved in the conduct and delivery of apprenticeships assessment overall, then NCFE may declare assessments void.

In the event of a suspected or actual breach of these Regulations by anyone involved in apprenticeship:

- Any progress in apprenticeship assessment must be paused and work completed by the apprentice(s) concerned and any unauthorised materials (if

applicable) must be confiscated from the apprentice and given to the Designated Person.

- NCFE should be informed immediately of any irregularity and investigation*
- the centre should conduct its own investigation into all incidents and report the incident and their findings to NCFE

Please see NCFE's guidance on [Preventing Maladministration](#), which includes forms for reporting any centre staff, learner/apprentice and/or Third-party malpractice notifications you want to raise to NCFE.

NCFE reserves the right to investigate each case of alleged or actual maladministration/malpractice committed by an apprentice, centre staff or other person(s) involved in the conduct of the assessment to establish all of the facts and circumstances surrounding the case. The investigation will be carried out in accordance with JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures

Some incidents of malpractice can have a significant impact upon apprentices and their qualifications, and we are obliged to notify the qualifications regulators of certain malpractice incidents.

2.5 Sanctions

Sanctions are enforcement measures that may be implemented in instances of non-compliance with Centre contractual and/or approval agreements, or with NCFE's mandatory policies, procedures, or instructions, including this policy. Sanctions may also be applied where actions or behaviours present a risk to, or compromise the integrity of, NCFE's Apprenticeship Assessment function. Such sanctions may be imposed on the Centre, Centre staff, and/or apprentices.

The purpose of applying sanctions, and where required informing other relevant bodies of those sanctions, is to:

- minimise the risk to the integrity of all aspects of our Apprenticeship Assessments, specifically in relation to the awarding of results and certificates;
- ensure the integrity and veracity of certificates we claim on your behalf;
- allow us, and potentially other Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations and Awarding Organisations where relevant, time to investigate potential maladministration and / or malpractice whilst maintaining the integrity of the qualification(s) involved;
- maintain public confidence in the delivery and award of Apprenticeship Assessments;
- comply with law and regulation
- deter others from doing likewise; and
- protect our business.

NCFE may impose a range of sanctions on centres, centre staff, or apprentices in response to non-compliance, maladministration, or malpractice. Sanctions are applied on a case-by-case basis, considering the severity of the issue, the potential impact on apprentices/apprentices, and the risk to qualification integrity.

Possible sanctions may include:

- withdrawal of centre or Apprenticeship Assessment Centre assessed approval
- suspension of delivery or certification rights

- financial penalties for non-compliance
- increased external quality assurance monitoring
- mandatory improvement or action plans
- referral to the relevant qualification regulator
- termination of centre agreement

NCFE reserves the right to change a Centre's assessment status from Centre Assessed to NCFE Assessed where concerns regarding compliance, assessment practice, quality assurance arrangements, or the integrity of Apprenticeship Assessments are identified, found and/or remain unresolved. This may be applied as a sanction in accordance with NCFE policy to protect the integrity of its awarding function, maintain confidence in qualification outcomes, and mitigate any associated risks.

For further information and guidance, please refer to the NCFE Sanctions Policy [here](#).

2.6 Conflict of Interest in Apprenticeship Assessment

Employers, Centres and AAOs play a critical role in ensuring that all apprentices are judged fairly and robustly against the same criteria, thus allowing a decision to be made on whether an apprentice completing their apprenticeship programme has achieved occupational competence.

Effective management and mitigation of any perceived or actual conflicts of interest is integral to the ability of an Employer, Centre and AO to deliver a robust, fair and high-quality Apprenticeship Assessment.

In essence, a conflict of interest arises when an individual, or the employer/centre/AAO as a whole (including individuals or organisations contracted to deliver and/or assess Apprenticeship Assessment) has competing interests which could compromise, or appear to compromise, the outcome of an Apprenticeship Assessment.

NCFE expect Centres to have their own Conflict of Interest policies in place during the Apprenticeship Assessment period. However, for those centres involved with the delivery of NCFE's products, in line with NCFE's Approval process and you must tell us about any potential conflicts of interest*

Any potential conflict of interest not declared and found within the Apprenticeship Assessment duration may be investigated in accordance with JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures.

****Please record any potential conflict of interest where centres adopt the Centre assessed model on Proficient.***

2.7 Appeals process

Assessments that NCFE deliver

For assessments NCFE delivers, there are multiple stages of appeal, all of which are detailed in this policy in accordance with the relevant processes. The appeals process for Assessment results will differ depending on whether the assessment was NCFE or centre assessed and is laid out in section 6.8

For all other areas of appeal stages, please see NCFE Apprenticeship Assessment enquiries and appeals policy for further guidance.

Assessments that centres deliver

Centres must apply their own appeals policies and procedures. Where possible, NCFE recommends that Centres align their timescales with those outlined in NCFE's Enquiries and Appeals Policy to promote a consistent approach and provide a standardised experience for apprentices.

Centres must ensure that their Appeals Policy is implemented and readily available to apprentices. Any appeals received, along with the outcomes and actions taken, may be reviewed and discussed during Centre EQA or annual monitoring visits to ensure compliance with approved processes and identify any areas for improvement.

Section 3.

Preparing for Apprenticeships Assessments with NCFE

3.1. Preparing the Apprentices

Prior to any Apprenticeships Assessments activity, Centres must;

- Fully understand NCFE Apprenticeship standard and assessment plan approach, policies and guidance for the apprenticeship
- Review the Skills England assessment plan with the apprentice to make sure they understand what their Apprenticeship assessment will involve from the beginning
- Consider and plan around factors that might affect the apprentice's Apprenticeship Assessment, for example annual leave and work commitments, to prevent any disadvantage or undue delay during the assessment period.
- Confirm with both the apprentice and employer the respective responsibilities of the Apprenticeship assessment organisation within the apprenticeship assessment process, and the centres responsibilities where the Centre Assessed Model has been selected.
- Clearly define what may be considered malpractice at any stage of the Apprentice Assessment process and provide appropriate guidance.
- Verify that all apprentice and provider information entered into NCFE systems is accurate, up-to-date, and consistent with any related data in other systems connected to the apprenticeship assessment.
- Ensure apprentices are supported in practical terms through Apprenticeship Assessment.

These include clarifying and supporting:

- the conditions under which their entire Apprenticeship Assessment will be conducted;
- the dates, times and locations of the assessments;
- the conditions under which their assessment method(s) will be conducted;
- the resources they are required to bring to Apprenticeship Assessment methods and what will be supplied by the Centre;
- the availability of all resources needed to complete Apprenticeship Assessment overall.

3.2. Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires anyone delivering assessments to make Reasonable Adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

As per [DfE](#) and NCFE regulations, the centre/awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a large font exam paper, which would be a Reasonable Adjustment for a vision impaired candidate.

Centres must consider learning support on an individual, case-by-case basis.

To be eligible, the apprentice must need a reasonable adjustment to support them with their learning difficulty or disability. The apprentice must have an existing, or been previously issued with, one of:

- an education, health and care plan
- a statement of special educational needs
- a learning difficulty assessment

If they do not have one of these, centres must do a thorough, evidence-based assessment which finds that the apprentice both:

- has a learning difficulty or disability, falling within the relevant statutory definition including section 15ZA of the Education Act 1996 where applicable
- cannot complete the apprenticeship without additional support, because of their learning difficulty or disability and requires additional support or an adjustment to enable them to access or undertake the assessment without being disadvantaged because of their learning difficulty or disability

This could include learning difficulties or disabilities which the apprentice self-declares, or which have not previously been identified.

In all cases, the centre and the employer must reasonably expect that the apprentice can successfully achieve all the other requirements before the end of the apprenticeship.

All apprentices given Reasonable Adjustments must have sufficient supporting evidence as laid out in the NCFE and DfE Apprenticeship guidelines before requests are made.

A Reasonable Adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available reasonable adjustments. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'. The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

NCFE expect centres to have their own Reasonable Adjustment policies in place during the Apprenticeship Assessment period. However, NCFE follow JCQ and DfE guidelines for all Reasonable Adjustments, including the evidence needed for application and the outcomes that a request may bring. For guidance, please see our Apprenticeship Assessment reasonable adjustments policy available on NCFE website and additional guidance in the support materials section on Proficient. in Proficient materials section.

Section 4. Preparing for methods of assessment

Note: NCFE guidance may specify requirements for certain assessment methods across different standards. These requirements can include stipulations such as providing a portfolio of evidence, supplying the apprentice with specialist equipment, or having additional personnel (such as panel members) present.

Failure to adequately prepare for the assessment may result in the assessment being cancelled or voided.

Please ensure you fully understand the requirements and specifications of each assessment method the apprentice will undertake, and make sure the assessment is properly prepared to allow it to proceed smoothly.

4.1 Booking of assessment

For any assessment delivered by NCFE, assessment bookings, including any re-sits/re-takes, must be arranged via the Assessment Bookings Team. Note, they are not made directly through any other allocated NCFE personal.

For any assessment delivered by an approved centre under the centre assessment model, assessment bookings, including any re-sits/re-takes, can be booked on Proficient, with at least 5 days prior to the assessment taking place.

Further guidance and can be found in the Operations handbook located in the support materials section on Proficient.

4.2 Areas/ Accommodation of Assessment

It is understood that not all environments used for apprenticeship assessments, such as workplace observations, can be fully controlled like formal exam settings, however, our Centres are expected to adequately prepare apprentices to ensure the assessment conditions are controlled as effectively as possible, minimising any potential malpractice concerns and disruptions.

To ensure Assessments are administered correctly, the Centre is responsible for ensuring the apprentice has access to an assessment environment that is:

- suitable for the standard being assessed;
- free from any display/teaching and learning material that are being directly assessed (such as diagrams, wall charts etc.) which may provide the apprentice with an advantage;
- suitable in terms of specialist facilities/resources (including computers and printers if applicable), where relevant;

- stocked with appropriate stationery and any specified items required by apprentices;
- suitably quiet, undisturbed, with adequate space, heating, lighting and ventilation.
- properly equipped with the necessary tools, personnel, and equipment as specified by the assessment method.

For all other assessments that can be conducted in controlled environments such as knowledge tests, we expect our Centres to support and prepare the apprentice and the accommodation accordingly. This includes any methods other than observation that may take place on Employer/ provider nominated premises.

For Centre assessed methods, NCFE reserves the right to carry out unannounced inspections and/or observation visits to confirm these regulations are being adhered to and that centres have appropriate policies and procedures in place for the delivery of NCFE external assessments. The following policies are required for NCFE inspection purposes:

- Procedure for the emergency evacuation of the assessment room
- External assessment contingency plan to prepare for any disruption
- External assessment policy to cover all aspects of external assessment administration
- Policy covering the management of extended assessments, including risk management and staff responsibilities, as appropriate to your centre.

4.3 Use of electronic devices

The below guidance is applicable to all assessments including those conducted by Remote Invigilation.

4.3.1. Use of computers/electronic devices

Centres should confirm if the use of computers/any electronic device(s) are allowed or specifically required in an assessment method of assessment. This information will be in the NCFE guidance for each standard. Where the assessment needs to be conducted on a laptop/computer (such as a Knowledge Test or a method conducted over a Teams meeting), the centre needs to:

- ensure that appropriate software is installed on computers to allow assessments to be conducted securely, at least 24 hours prior to assessment;
- ensure suitably trained Technical Assistants who have no other involvement with the Apprenticeship Assessment are readily available in case of equipment malfunction only, and;
- ensure any device used to complete the assessment provided by the centre is:
 - free from any material/additional facilities that would give the apprentice an unfair advantage, for example retrievable information etc;
 - not borrowed from or loaned to another apprentice during the assessment period.
 - does not have any AI (or any other external application not approved by NCFE) running during assessment.

Internet-enabled devices (including mobile phones, tablets, and smartwatches) are not permitted during assessments unless authorised by NCFE within the assessment method or used for Reasonable Adjustments.

4.3.2 Use of internet/intranet

Access to the internet or any other form of digital resource during live assessment and/or coursework is strictly prohibited, unless otherwise stated in individual standards and/or approved by NCFE for the purposes of the assessment method. Internet access should therefore be disabled during the period of live assessment unless approved by the requirements within the method of assessment.

Some NCFE assessments may allow access to the internet for some or all parts of the assessment (see NCFE assessment guidance for confirmation of which external assessments allow internet access).

To maintain assessment integrity, where use of the internet is permitted, the following must be adhered to:

- the internet strength should be checked for stability before commencing assessment;
- the completed evidence/assessment must be the apprentice's own work;
- NCFE material must not be used for any other purpose than the assessment, for example uploaded onto any social networking sites/put into the public domain

4.3.3 The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of external aids, particularly concerning spelling, punctuation and grammar (for example, dictionary, spelling and grammar checking software, or other cloud-based systems) or Artificial Intelligence is not permitted in any external online assessments. This is in line with JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures.

For apprentices sitting online assessments, it is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that all external aids (unless by prior approval as a reasonable adjustment requirement) are disabled prior to the assessment taking place, and that your invigilators are aware to look out for these tools being used.

Apprentices must be aware of the expectations and risks of AI use and understand that where the use of computers/laptop... etc and internet access is allowed, this does not mean that online AI tools can or should be used.

Apprentices must submit work which is the product of their independent work and thinking which means they cannot generate, copy, or paraphrase AI generated content, or use AI to analyse or evaluate their work.

NCFE materials must not be altered by AI, nor copied and pasted into any program, whether AI-based or otherwise, for the purpose of restructuring or rewording.

NCFE personnel are trained to identify and report potential cases of AI misuse. Investigations may involve reviewing additional examples of apprentice work to detect possible AI misuse. Such misuse could be considered plagiarism, falsification of authenticity declarations, or malpractice, all of which may lead to disqualification and/or sanctions being applied.

Please see [NCFE user guides for the use of AI](#) in online assessments.

4.3.4 Recording of assessment

Recording or copying any elements of assessments, either digitally or in written format, by anyone other than NCFE representatives is strictly forbidden unless approved by NCFE. This includes recording or copying any questions that may be asked during an assessment, either verbally or in written format.

The use of AI to record any aspect of NCFE assessment is strictly forbidden either digitally or in written format. This includes any visual, transcript or sound recordings.

Please refer to section 2.3 of this policy

Section 5 – Administering Assessments

Please also refer to section 7 – Assessment Violations

5.1 Invigilation/Assessment of Assessments

Invigilation is the process of supervising apprentices during exams or assessments to ensure fairness, prevent malpractice, and uphold the integrity of the process. All apprenticeship assessments must be invigilated either by a nominated invigilator or by the assessor.

While the roles of assessor and invigilator are distinct, an assessor is also required to act as an invigilator when overseeing apprenticeship assessments. Every apprenticeship assessment must therefore be invigilated, either by a nominated invigilator or by the assessor themselves. This is a critical control to ensure the security of NCFE assessments and validity of the results. All centres must ensure that they have sufficient, trained invigilators/assessors who can conduct apprenticeship assessments under the required conditions, allowing assessments to take place without apprentice or centre malpractice or maladministration occurring.

Please note:

The term ‘invigilator’ refers to both Centre and NCFE-appointed invigilators or assessors who are responsible for ensuring the assessment conditions are valid and properly maintained.

The term ‘room’ includes any designated physical area chosen by the employer, apprentice, centre, or NCFE for the assessment. This also covers virtual ‘digital space’ meeting rooms where assessments take place online.

‘Invigilation records can include assessment marking records, formal NCFE invigilation logs, or any other authorised documentation used to capture NCFE assessment details and outcomes.

These conditions mainly apply to single apprentice, face-to-face or online assessments, which are the standard during the Apprenticeship Assessment period. However, some assessments (e.g., knowledge tests) may involve invigilating groups of apprentices.

While it's acknowledged that not all environments used for apprenticeship assessments, such as workplace observations, can be invigilated in the same way as formal exam settings, our Centres are still expected to adapt their invigilation practices to the setting, ensuring that all key requirements below are met as fully as possible.

5.2 Role and responsibility of the invigilator

NCFE and the Centre are responsible for the recruitment and training of invigilators and ensuring that they are equipped to carry out their duties appropriately.

Invigilators must be:

- appointed by NCFE or the Centre and act on their behalf;
- suitably trained and familiar with the content of these regulations. Details of this training must be retained on file for inspection by NCFE
- provided with all resources and documents necessary for the conduct of the assessments;
- aware of and manage responsibilities related to Reasonable Adjustments.

Invigilators must not:

- be a friend or relative of the apprentice;
- be an apprentice themselves on the same apprenticeship standard;
- have been involved in the on-programme learning of the apprentice unless approved to invigilate by NCFE or the Centre.

5.3 Handling and storage of NCFE materials

Every care is taken to ensure that all NCFE materials are stored securely online and securely delivered and safely received. Once a centre has signed to accept delivery of NCFE materials, or have received/downloaded assessment materials electronically, security of the assessment materials is then the responsibility of the centre.

At the point of delivery, assessment materials must be securely stored. It is the responsibility of the centre to set out the appropriate terms of authorisation for members of centre staff to ensure that:

- the security and integrity of the materials (e.g. used/unused test papers, partially or fully completed apprentice work, and all NCFE and Centre assessment documentation) is maintained at all times
- Centres are able to demonstrate the receipt, secure movement and secure storage of assessment materials
- any assessment amendments/additions/withdrawals have been addressed with NCFE
- NCFE are informed of any errors with, or damage to, NCFE materials upon receipt
- only authorised personnel have access to the NCFE materials and/or completed apprentice work.

Where applicable, NCFE material and online platforms must remain closed and/or sealed, stored securely and must not be opened before the scheduled date and time of assessment.

5.4 Arrival and identification

5.4.1 Arrival

- Apprentices (and any other applicable personnel) must arrive in the assessment room or area (whether physical or virtual) in advance of the assessment to allow the invigilator or assessor time to provide necessary instructions, verify the apprentice's identity, and confirm that all assessment conditions and requirements are properly in place. Additionally, certain NCFE assessment regulation outside of this policy may specify minimum arrival times before the assessment begins.
- All personal belongings not related to the assessment must be securely stored and kept out of the apprentices' reach.
- All approved or required assessment support materials and additional personnel, whether mandatory, optional, or provided as part of a Reasonable Adjustment, must be available for the invigilator to review before the assessment begins.
- Apprentices are considered to be under formal assessment conditions from the moment they enter the assessment room or digital space until they are officially allowed to leave.

5.4.2 Identification

It is essential and mandatory that apprentices are identified prior to the assessment. Apprentices and invigilators/assessors are required to sign declarations to confirm the authenticity of the work. This is to prevent potential malpractice and maladministration. Apprentices must be made aware of the importance of this declaration and the impact this could have on their overall achievement.

- Apprentices must present valid physical ID for invigilator verification
- If ID is unavailable, a known staff member or employer may assist with identification
- If religious garments prevent visual ID, the apprentice may choose a preferred person to accompany them to a private room for respectful identification.
Centres must inform apprentices of this process in advance.
- Apprentice name must match the name registered with NCFE

Failure to comply may delay assessments or result release. For ID updates on shared platforms, centres must contact NCFE support promptly.

If ID is insufficient, unavailable, or mismatched, assessments may proceed but results must be withheld until verified ID is provided and recorded.

Unsatisfactory ID may be referred to the NCFE Maladministration/Malpractice team. Use of another name during assessment, intentional or not, will be investigated under NCFE policy

5.5 Late arrival

For NCFE assessments, if an apprentice has not arrived within 15 minutes of the assessment start time, the assessment will be cancelled and recorded as *Did Not Attend*.

For Centre Assessments, we expect you to follow your own late arrival process.

5.6 Duration of assessment

The duration of assessment is set out by NCFE. When a knowledge test examination, or the assessing period has started, then this is classed as an **attempt**.

The assessment may be stopped at any point by either the Assessor or the Apprentice. If the Assessor decides to end the assessment, they should ensure the Apprentice agrees and is comfortable with this decision before proceeding.

The duration of an assessment should not be increased unless by means of a Reasonable Adjustment.

Only apprentices with pre-authorised Reasonable Adjustments should be granted extra time. Those apprentices with Reasonable Adjustments should be allowed to carry on for the necessary additional time unless they do not wish to make use of any remaining extra time. Invigilators must be aware in advance which apprentices have been granted extra time to complete their assessment.

Approved Reasonable Adjustments must be evidenced on the apprentice's records and/or must be recorded on the invigilator's records of that assessment. The permitted Reasonable Adjustment time must not be decreased by anyone other than the apprentice. Apprentices must be given the opportunity to complete the full amount of time for the assessment.

5.7 Apprentices finishing and/or leaving the assessment earlier than the assessment end time

If an apprentice asks to leave an assessment before the scheduled end time, whether because they have completed it or choose not to continue, the following procedures apply. This also includes apprentices with Extra Time Reasonable Adjustments who may decide not to use the full additional time:

- Apprentices who have finished/withdrawn from the assessment and have been allowed to leave the assessment room early must hand in all assessment materials, including assessment paper, answer paper and any associated notes, before they leave the assessment room (if applicable to that method);
- Apprentices who wish to leave an online engagement must only do so when approved by the invigilator and must end the online meeting on their devices when leaving
- Apprentices who have willingly finished the assessment should not be allowed back into the room or the assessment itself.

5.8 Ending an Assessment

Once the assessment is concluded and where the method allows:

- Apprentices must be made aware that the assessment is officially over.
- Apprentices must hand in all assessment materials (if applicable), including assessment paper, answer paper and any associated notes and/or additional materials that are part of the assessment, before they leave the assessment room
- Apprentices must destroy any support notes taken during assessment before leaving the assessment room unless they form part of the assessment itself

- Any supporting member who is approved to be present during an assessment, whether through method procedure or reasonable adjustments, must destroy any notes taken during the assessment before leaving the assessment room, unless those notes are part of the assessment itself
- Computers/laptops should be logged out of any assessment platforms
- Apprentices must only leave the assessment when approved by the invigilator
- Apprentices must end the online meeting on their devices when leaving
- Apprentices should not be allowed back into the room or the assessment itself

Section 6 - Post Assessment processes

6.1 Labelling of work, if required

All assessment recordings/marketing records, invigilation records used by the apprentice must be clearly labelled where applicable:

- Centre name;
- Apprentice name;
- Apprentice ULN;
- Standard;
- Date of assessment.

Labelling can be completed after the assessment, under supervision, to ensure the apprentice is not changing/adding to their answers.

If an assessor is unable to identify the evidence or apprentice details that relates to each task or recording, then the assessment may not be marked. This relates to all recording for all methods, including knowledge test papers and answer sheets.

6.2 Return of NCFE Materials where applicable.

- All physical assessment materials should be returned to NCFE using the return envelope provided (if applicable)
- Assessment materials must be sent by special delivery/secure courier within one working day of the assessment taking place
- NCFE will investigate why the NCFE material has not been returned on time and late returns will be marked at their discretion
- The centre is responsible for NCFE material until it has been delivered to NCFE and is signed for

NCFE are not responsible for any loss of NCFE materials that occurs after receipt at the centre.

Any missing materials may be investigated under the Maladministration and Malpractice policy. If a missing assessment paper needs to be withdrawn from circulation, the centre may be subject to charge of production of a replacement paper.

6.3 Invigilation and marking records

All records should be accurately completed and stored by the centre unless requested to be returned to NCFE.

All NCFE records and assessment materials must be documented in the correct areas to ensure they are ready for marking and auditing. All relevant procedures concerning system logging, storage, marking, quality assurance, feedback and grade release must be followed to enable the timely completion and release of results in accordance with internal and external policies, processes, and service level agreements.

Centres delivering the assessment must use NCFE's marking records to document both the assessment activity and the outcome.

For observations, the introduction to the observation and any subsequent question-and-answer (Q&A) discussions must be recorded using Microsoft Teams, a comparable platform, or a digital voice recorder (DVR) to provide a reliable record of the evidence gathered. The observation activity itself must not be recorded due to safeguarding and GDPR considerations. Instead, completed observation write-ups must be retained as assessment evidence and made available for Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and External Quality Assurance (EQA) review.

For all other assessment methods, the assessment activity must be audio or video recorded using Microsoft Teams, a comparable platform, or a digital voice recorder (DVR), and retained as assessment evidence to support IQA and EQA review.

6.4. Results release process

NCFE is committed to ensuring that all assessments are marked accurately, consistently, and in full accordance with approved marking criteria and quality assurance procedures. Correct marking is essential to uphold the validity, reliability, and credibility of the qualifications we deliver. Examiners, assessors, and moderators must apply marking standards objectively, ensuring that every apprentice is assessed solely on their demonstrated competence against defined criteria. All marks and outcomes must be carefully verified, recorded, and securely stored to prevent error or unauthorised amendment.

The process for releasing results must be transparent, controlled, and fully documented. All records related to marking, moderation, verification, and results release, including examiner reports, mark entry data, and any subsequent adjustments, constitute part of the official assessment record and must be retained in accordance with NCFE's policies.

The accuracy of released results is paramount; any identified discrepancies must be promptly investigated, corrected, and formally reported. These measures safeguard the integrity of NCFE and ensure that all apprentices receive fair and reliable outcomes. All results, along with their recording, must be checked and validated by the appropriate release officers (or their designated representatives) before being confirmed as accurate to apprentices.

All NCFE assessed results releases can be appealed. Please see section 6.7 further information.

Any incorrect results release either centre or NCFE assessed may be investigated under the Maladministration and Malpractice policy. Please see section 2.4 for further information.

For assessments that centres deliver, they must use the Proficient feedback form and follow NCFE's feedback approach, further information and guidance can be found in the Centres guide to delivery of Apprenticeship Assessment which can be found in the Support materials section on Proficient.

6.5 Failing an assessment

Where an apprentice attempts and fails an assessment, either centre or NCFE assessed, NCFE expect the apprentice to be provided feedback which:

- is sufficiently detailed to allow the apprentice to interpret the outcome of the assessment
- design additional training for the apprentice on the reasons for failure
- notifies the apprentice their options for re-attempting an assessment, including details of timescales
- gives the Apprentice and Employer clear understanding of the relevant Enquiries and Appeals procedure.

The Centre is responsible for:

- agreeing any next steps with the employer and the apprentice including further learning if required
- reviewing any Cancellation, Re-sit and Re-take Policies to understand the permitted attempts, timescales and charges
- ensuring Assessment re-sits can/will be completed within any agreed timescales
- any charges associated with re-sits or re-takes
- completing the Resit/Retake process once the apprentice is ready to re-sit/re-take the assessment component which they failed.

6.6 Resits and retakes

Apprentices who attempt and do not pass an assessment method or wish to obtain a higher grade were possible (unless stipulated in the assessment plan) will be given the chance to either re-sit or re-take it. A resit does not involve additional learning, while a re-take requires further study. The apprentice's employer must agree on the amount of re-sit or re-takes the apprentice can undertake.

Apprentices should have a supportive plan in place to help them prepare for their resit or retake. The timing for when a resit or retake can be taken may vary depending on the specific standard and what is considered a reasonable amount of additional learning by everyone involved in the apprentice's training.

6.7 Special considerations

There may be times when an apprentice is disadvantaged in some way at the time of an assessment for reasons outside of their control. This could include temporary illness, injury, or adverse circumstances which have impacted the apprentice's ability to demonstrate their usual level of attainment at the time of the assessment.

A special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment that, when appropriate, can help reduce the impact on the apprentice, the centre, and NCFE. These are primarily applied in cases of extenuating circumstances that:

- a. Impact the ability to take the assessment – for example, illness on the day or an unexpected work commitment.
- b. Affect the assessment process or the ability to grade it accurately – for instance, a medical emergency, a fire alarm, or any disruption or breach occurring during the assessment.

As the Apprenticeship Assessment period is not restricted to a fixed timeframe, assessments that cannot take place due to extenuating circumstances are typically voided and rescheduled for a later date.

However, if an assessment has commenced but is interrupted by an extenuating circumstance, this may disadvantage the apprentice and compromise the integrity of NCFE assessments. The submission and outcome of any special consideration request will depend on the nature, severity, and timing of the disruption. For instance, a short disruption such as a fire alarm causing a 20-minute pause during a timed multiple-choice exam requires a different response than a disruption occurring immediately prior to or during a key stage of the assessment.

While NCFE expects centres to maintain their own Special Consideration policies throughout the Apprenticeship Assessment period, any extenuating circumstance during an assessment that:

- impacted the apprentice's ability to demonstrate their usual level of attainment, or
- may lead to actions impacting NCFE policies (e.g., cancellations, fees, or the timing of results release)

All Special Considerations must be raised with NCFE as a special consideration request.

6.8 Appeals - enquiries about assessment

There may be times when an apprentice disagrees with the assessment decisions or outcomes made or is dissatisfied with how the assessment was conducted.

We expect the centre to follow their own appeals policy and NCFE Centre Agreements for appeals against Centre assessed outcomes.

For NCFE assessments, NCFE addresses these concerns through a process called an Enquiry About Assessment (EAA), which is part of the appeals process.

EAs specifically relate to matters concerning the assessment process itself, as well as the official results and feedback provided after the grade has been issued. This process includes two types of enquiries:

- review of marking: To challenge NCFE's decisions or conduct within the assessment itself.
- clerical check: To challenge the official outcome or feedback, especially if there's a mismatch between the official records of feedback and grades.

EAs can only be raised once the grade is released and only apply to those instances where the apprentice or centre feels that the grade does not reflect apprentice performance, and/or the grade is recorded incorrectly in any official NCFE system.

An NCFE EAA cannot be submitted until after the official grade has been released and must be requested within 10 days of the grade release. Official results are not

considered final until the appeals process has been fully completed and should not be treated as final beforehand.

An NCFE EAA final outcome can be appealed by a Stage 1 – appeal process.

Please see NCFE Apprenticeship Assessment enquiries and appeals policy for further guidance.

All other concerns about NCFE service should be directed through the complaints procedure found on the NCFE website.

Section 7 - Assessment violations

Please also refer to 2.4 Malpractice and/or Maladministration.

Any assessment violation within the Apprenticeship Assessment journey and/or within assessments themselves could compromise the integrity, reputation and/or validity of the assessment process, certificates, results, NCFE, the Centre or the wider education sector, and may be investigated under the malpractice process. Before Apprenticeship Assessment commences Centres must make staff and apprentices aware of what constitutes an assessment violation.

Assessments include all methods of assessment offered by NCFE, and all the ways of delivering those assessments such as online/face to face/ remote invigilation.

An assessment violation is when a person within assessment and/or Apprenticeship Assessment journey fails to comply with the instructions of an invigilator, assessor, or with any printed instructions/regulations for conduct within Apprenticeship Assessment. This includes instructions that may be given via 3rd party platforms when completing assessments online and the stipulations laid out within this regulation of conduct.

Any person trained to assess or invigilate NCFE assessments must be made aware of what is seen as assessment violation during their training.

Any disruption to an assessment must be recorded on invigilation/marketing records.

7.1. Managing disruption timing during Assessments

If a disruption occurs during an assessment, the assessment timer should be paused immediately. Once the disruption is resolved, the paused time should be added back to the assessment time without increasing the total overall duration of the assessment.

7.2 Toilet break or illness

If an apprentice needs to leave the assessment room temporarily because they're unwell or need to go to the toilet (for example), the invigilator must ensure the apprentice is supervised and does not:

- speak to anyone else regarding the assessment;
- consult any notes;
- have access to a mobile phone or any other electronic devices, especially internet enabled, such as, tablets, Smart watches etc. or make any calls; or
- breach the security of the assessment.

If any of the above is not followed and/or the invigilator feels that they cannot ensure the integrity of the assessment can be maintained during the break, or assessment was compromised during the break, they must stop and end the assessment.

7.3. Emergencies during Assessments

If an emergency occurs during an assessment, for example fire alarm, bomb warning etc., the invigilator must ensure:

- the apprentice's safety is always considered
- the assessment room is evacuated in accordance with the centre's agreed emergency procedures;
- all assessment materials are left on desks and/or computers left switched on (if applicable);
- apprentices are not allowed to converse about the assessment with one another or anyone else;
- apprentices are unable to consult books, notes, mobile phones or the internet.

Once the emergency is resolved, the invigilator should use their discretion to determine if the security or validity of the assessment has been compromised and if the assessment can continue.

7.4 Other unplanned disturbances

If an assessment is disturbed for any reason other than those detailed above, the invigilator should use their discretion to determine if the security or validity of the assessment has been compromised and if the assessment can continue.

7.5. Continuing the assessment after a disturbance

If the above conditions have been adhered to and the security and/or validity of the assessment has not been compromised, the assessment can be resumed when it is safe to do so, and the full remainder of allocated time applied. The invigilator must record any disturbances on invigilator/assessment records.

If the invigilator believes at any time that there has been a breach of the assessment security, then they must void the assessment immediately and record this on invigilator/assessment records.

If the assessment cannot be resumed, or the full duration cannot be honoured, then the invigilator must record all details on the invigilator/assessment records.

All instances of apprentices leaving the room temporarily must be entered on the invigilator/assessment records.

7.6. Ending an assessment due to unsafe practice

If any example of unsafe practice is observed or identified at any stage during the assessment, the assessment will be stopped immediately. Dependant on the nature of the unsafe practice, the assessor may need to ask questions about the practice to have clarification of what was witnessed. If unsafe practice is confirmed, and has been conducted by the apprentice, the assessment will end, and the assessment result will be recorded as a Fail.

All instances of stopping assessments due to unsafe practice must be entered on the invigilator/assessment records.

Dependent on the nature of the unsafe practice, it may also be necessary for NCFE to notify relevant industry regulators of the unsafe practice witnessed if they deem fit.

7.7 Technical failure during assessment

All technical requirements, such as access to digital resources, testing software, communication platforms, internet access or specialist equipment should be completed before the start of an assessment as per section 4.3

If any technical failure occurs during assessments, the invigilator must support wherever they can, however, dependent on the nature of the technology failure, the invigilator will stop the assessment if they feel the assessment cannot continue. A stopped assessment may be counted as a failed attempt depending on the nature of the disruption.

Any technical disruption within NCFE assessments, caused by a technical failure outside of NCFE's control, may lead to the assessment being failed and recorded as an attempt.

Any failures of technology during assessment must be recorded by the invigilator.

7.8. Fees and/or sanctions for technology failures

Dependent on the nature of technology failure, the result of the assessment may be affected, and re-scheduling of assessment may be subject to fees.

Continued examples of technology failure outside of NCFE's control may lead to centre sanctions, such as online examinations being replaced with paper based or face-to-face meetings.

7.9 Cancelling assessment/apprentice doesn't attend

To cancel an assessment, contact the Apprenticeship Assessment Bookings Team. If an assessment is not cancelled prior to the assessment or the apprentice does not attend the assessment, this will be recorded as a No-Show. This may affect the result of the assessment and be subject to fees or charges.

7.10. Withdrawal from NCFE assessments

- If an apprentice attends the assessment, this counts as an attempt and the entry cannot be withdrawn.
- If the assessment is cancelled this entry can be withdrawn and will not count as an attempt.
- If the assessment has not been cancelled, and/or the apprentice does not attend, this will count as an attempt.

For further information on assessment cancellation timescales please refer to the Apprenticeship Assessment Fees and Charges Policy available on NCFE website

Section 8 - Quality Assurance – internal (IQA) and external (EQA)

NCFE and our Centres are responsible for ensuring that all assessments are carried out fairly so that every apprentice has an equal opportunity to succeed. By implementing quality assurance measures, we continuously improve the overall quality of our assessments and enhance the effectiveness of our decision-making processes. Therefore, we expect all parties involved in delivering and assessing to have a robust

IQA strategy to ensure the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of our service is standardised and valid. There may be exceptional circumstances in which NCFE needs to follow up with a learner after an assessment has been completed.

This may occur where clarification or verification is required, for example due to technical difficulties or matters identified during quality assurance review activities. This approach helps NCFE maintain high standards of quality and integrity throughout the assessment process.

All grades, including the final outcome, are subject to quality assurance regardless of Centre, assessor, apprentice or standard, and, until certification, may be subject to change.

For centre assessed models, please refer to your NCFE centre agreement and section 2.2 of this policy.

Section 9 – End of Apprenticeship Assessments.

9.1 Gateway to completion

The Gateway to Completion is the validation process through which the apprentice, employer, and centre collectively confirm that the apprentice has met all required criteria. This includes successfully demonstrating the necessary knowledge, skills, behaviours, and achieving any qualifications and requirements set out within the standard and assessment plan needed to proceed to final certification.

Before final certification can take place, the Gateway to Completion declaration must be fully completed, evidenced, and validated.

All Gateway to Completion information requested by NCFE must be submitted. Only NCFE has the authority to audit and determine the outcome of a successful Gateway to Completion submission.

For both centre-assessed and NCFE-assessed approaches, the Gateway to Completion can only be validated once all processes that could affect the apprentice's overall grade have been concluded. These include:

- Centre and NCFE appeals timescales
- complaints
- quality assurance activities
- enquiries and appeals
- malpractice investigations involving the apprentice

By submitting a Gateway to Completion review request, the centre confirms that the final certificated grade is valid and that no centre appeal, malpractice investigation or any other process that may alter the final grade outcome is ongoing.

9.2 Certification

Once the Gateway to Completion has been accepted, NCFE will claim the overall Apprenticeship certificate from the Department for Education (DfE) on behalf of the apprentice no later than 10 working days after acceptance. The DfE will normally print and dispatch the certificate within twenty days of our submission.

Centres must ensure that apprentice and centre information on Proficient is consistent with the data held on the DfE platforms throughout the entire duration of the apprenticeship. The DfE cross-checks data NCFE submit against centre ILR, AS, and DAS submissions. If any discrepancies are identified, NCFE will be unable to proceed with certification. Failure to maintain this alignment may cause delays in the certificate claim process.

If NCFE identifies discrepancies when processing certificate claims that are not due to NCFE error, we may be unable to correct them. In such cases, the DfE, centre, and/or employer may need to resolve the issues before certification can proceed.

Any potential data irregularities identified by NCFE, or any data breaches reported by the DfE during certificate delivery (for example, to an incorrect apprentice or address), will be investigated by NCFE. Concerns that are not the result of NCFE error may be investigated under our Data Breach and Maladministration processes.

Once certification is completed, this signifies the final achievement for the apprentice and the end of the Apprenticeship Assessment. However, NCFE reserves the right to investigate any Apprenticeship Assessment concerns involving the apprentice or centre retrospectively and if the validity of certificates is found to be compromised, NCFE reserves the right to revoke the certificates and to inform the relevant regulatory bodies of any actions taken.

Section 10 - Compliance

10.1. Authenticity of evidence

Also refer to section 2.4

Assessment work

All work produced by the apprentice must be authentic. By submitting evidence for assessment, the centre is confirming authenticity of the apprentice's work. Any information drawn from the internet or other sources should be cited and referenced accordingly (if applicable to the method). If plagiarism is suspected or confirmed, an investigation will be conducted, and the assessment result may be suspended or void. Lack of intent does not absolve responsibility for plagiarism.

To further validate authenticity of work, apprentices may be asked further questions on the content.

Other submissions

All administrative evidence, documentation, data, and any other materials submitted to NCFE by the centre, apprentice, or employer must be genuine, accurate, and relevant to all parties involved in supporting the apprentice during the apprenticeship assessment process. Furthermore, all submissions must comply with NCFE's policies, legal and regulatory requirements, data protection standards, and confidentiality obligations. It is the responsibility of all parties to ensure that information is submitted timely, securely, and in accordance with the agreed guidelines to maintain the integrity of the assessment process

10.2. Breach of conditions or regulations

Also refer to sections 2.4 and 2.5

NCFE reserves the right to investigate any suspected, alleged, or confirmed cases of malpractice or maladministration committed by an apprentice, centre, centre staff, invigilators, or any other individuals involved in the delivery or conduct of the Apprenticeship Assessment. The purpose of such investigations is to establish all relevant facts and circumstances surrounding the case.

Investigations may be initiated by NCFE Apprenticeship Assessment as a result of referrals from internal NCFE departments—such as those responsible for EQA or oversight of other NCFE qualifications delivered by the centre—or from external parties who raise concerns through a complaint or whistleblowing process.

All investigations will be conducted in line with the NCFE Maladministration and Malpractice Policy.

Section 11- Initial Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy, and no concerns were raised.

Section 12 - References to associated documents

Available on [NCFE website](#)

- Apprenticeship Assessment Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy
- Apprenticeship Assessment Cancellation, Resit and Retake policy
- Apprenticeship Assessment Enquiries and Appeals Policy
- Apprenticeship Assessments Fees and Charges policy
- [DfE funding rules](#)

Section 13 - Implementation and dissemination

This policy is made available for access via the NCFE Website.

Section 14 - Monitoring arrangements

We will review this policy annually, as a minimum, and where otherwise necessary, and may revise it in response to the findings of any review.

Section 15 - Data protection and retention

15.1. Mandatory disclosure

It is imperative that the integrity of our assessments is maintained. We are aware that centre organisations often work with more than one AAO, and that therefore more than one AAO may be at risk when things go wrong.

Our regulators have outlined some specific conditions that we must meet to protect the integrity across the sector. This includes the requirement that where certain things are identified (such as malpractice), or certain actions taken (such as when sanctions are applied) the regulators and other relevant AAOs who may be affected must be informed.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter, we may be required to declare to our regulators that we are no longer compliant due to an act or omission by Centres which has put us in breach. In this event, we may have regulatory action directed against us, such as monetary penalties. In accordance with the Contract, where appropriate, we reserve the right to direct such financial penalties against Centres, should they be as a result of the act or omission.

15.2. Confidentiality

NCFE will not keep personal data for longer than we need it. Once the retention period is over, and it is no longer justifiable to hold personal data any longer, data will be securely destroyed or anonymised.

We may need to access confidential information. We will ensure that this information is securely maintained and used solely for the purposes necessary, in compliance with applicable data protection laws. We will not normally disclose the information to third parties unless required to do so, for example to our regulators and/or the Police or other relevant and/or Statutory Bodies.

All assessment recordings made by NCFE remain the property of NCFE and are treated as assessment materials to preserve the integrity of our assessments. Since Apprenticeship Assessments are live assessment materials, NCFE cannot share any recorded assessments or parts thereof with anyone outside of NCFE. We are committed to delivering robust assessments to every apprentice, and releasing live assessments would compromise their integrity. Sharing recorded assessments or related materials outside the assessment process would violate our regulatory requirements.

15.3 Termination for convenience

Our actions under this Policy and any sanctions imposed will be proportionate. Where possible, we will always try to work with Centres in resolving issues. However, nothing within this policy precludes us from invoking our right under the Contract to terminate our relationship with Centres.

15.4 Data retention

Any recordings are retained according to regulatory data retention policies and will be securely destroyed once the retention period has ended.

NCFE will not keep personal data for longer than we need it. Once the retention period is over, and it is no longer justifiable to hold personal data any longer, data will be securely destroyed or anonymised.

16. Contact information

If you have any queries relating to enquiries and appeals, please contact NCFE's EPA Quality and Compliance team in writing:

Email: epaqualityassurance@ncfe.org.uk

Post: NCFE EPA Quality and Compliance team, Q6 Quorum Park, Benton Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8BT

