

T Level Technical Qualification in Education and Early Years

Employer-set project (ESP)

Core component (core project)

Tutor guidance

Please do not distribute this document to students; this is for provider and tutor use only. All tutors must be familiar with the information in this document. This document should be kept secure at all times.

This document should be read along with the **regulations for conduct of external assessment**. Assessment conditions and resources are defined in the **qualification specific instructions for delivery (QSID)**. These documents can be found on the NCFE website under policies & documents.

SAMPLE

Administering the external assessment

The maximum overall time allowed for the external assessment is **12 hours** under **supervised** conditions.

NCFE sets the start date and the submission date of the assessment window for the external assessment task. External assessment material should not be given to students until the first supervised assessment session.

The assessment window will consist of provider-arranged supervised sessions of external assessment. Sessions can be undertaken in a normal classroom environment, so long as each student has access to, or the option to use, a computer system. Providers can decide how to arrange supervised sessions and must submit students' completed assessment work by the published submission date.

When preparing to start a supervised session, time taken to print students' work is **not** included as part of the permitted hours for the external assessment task. In addition to this, time taken to collate and upload students' work is also **not** included as part of the permitted hours for the external assessment time.

At any time, NCFE may request the timetable that providers have set for the supervised sessions:

- the permitted time must **not** be increased, unless a reasonable adjustment has been agreed for a student in accordance with the reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy which can be found on the NCFE website.
- the permitted time must **not** be decreased, students must be given the opportunity to complete the full amount of time for the external assessment task, providers must take this into account when timetabling the session.

Marking the external assessment task

The external assessment tasks are set and marked by NCFE. This means that providers **must not** assess, internally quality assure **or** provide any feedback to the student about their performance in the external assessment task, with the exception of task 2a (i). However, tutors may be asked within a specific task to validate and generate supplementary evidence of student performance. The supervised external assessment tasks must be treated independently of the teaching of the outline content.

In order to achieve a grade for the core component, the student **must** attempt both of the external examinations **and** the employer-set project. The combined grades from these assessments will be aggregated to form the overall core component grade (A* to E and U). If students do not attempt one of the assessments or fail to reach the minimum standard across all assessments, they will receive a U grade until the student resits the relevant component(s).

Instructions for tutors

Assessment conditions

Students **must** complete the employer-set project independently and under supervised conditions, as per each task specific guidance further below.

Students and tutors are required to sign declarations of authenticity to confirm that the work is their/the student's own. The declaration forms can be found on the NCFE website. This is to ensure authenticity and to prevent potential malpractice and maladministration. Students must be made aware of the importance of this declaration and the impact this could have on their overall grade, if the evidence was found not to be the student's own work.

Tutors **must** retain students' research materials at the end of each supervised session, alongside all materials and/or evidence produced by students within the supervised assessment.

At the end of **each** supervised session, the tutor must collect **all** evidence and any other materials, including students' research materials, before students leave the room, to ensure that no student takes any external assessment material or assessment evidence out of the room. This also includes sufficient monitoring and checks to ensure that students have **not** made materials available to themselves or anyone else electronically via the intranet or internet.

External assessment materials should be securely stored between supervised sessions. Students **must not** have access to this area between the supervised sessions, including electronic files.

Work such as formative assessment and/or work done with sample assessment materials **must not** be used again as part of the external assessment task submission to NCFE.

Appendices should not be included and will not be marked unless specifically required from the task instructions.

The research activity may require students to find and select relevant information from a range of sources to use as references to support their knowledge and understanding or to justify their responses. Within the next section, Assessment and task specific instructions, details are provided for the relevant assessment windows and it is recommended that students submit their research materials to the tutor one week prior to the first supervised session so the following can be checked:

- all information should be contained within 4 pages, excluding references
- all information should be in an Arial font 12pt, within standard border sizes
- students **must** clearly show where sources have been used to support their own ideas and opinions
- students **must** clearly reference all sources used to support their own ideas and opinions
- any quotations from websites **must** be referenced.

When students have not met these conditions, students can be asked to amend their materials so that they do meet the conditions, before the delivery of task 1.

Plagiarism may result in the external assessment task being awarded a U grade. For further guidance, refer to the maladministration and malpractice policy located on the NCFE website.

Resources

Students must have access to the appropriate resources required to complete the employer-set project. These include the following:

- own tutor approved research materials
- technical equipment as required, such as audio recording equipment.

This list is **not** exhaustive, and you need to refer to the qualification specification for subject specific details.

Accessibility and fairness

To promote accessibility and fairness for all students and to ensure diversity and equality, we expect providers to be aware of and meet the requirements of relevant NCFE policies and government legislation. You must ensure that:

- all of your processes concerned with assessment are carried out in a fair and objective manner
- you continue to adhere to current equal opportunities legislation
- you continue to operate an effective diversity and equality policy, with which students are familiar and which applies to all students using our products and services.

Assessment and task specific instructions

Employer-set project brief

For each assessment window, there will be **3** versions of the employer-set project available for booking; each version is contextualised against the occupational specialisms relevant to the pathway. These **3** briefs will be set by employers in conjunction with NCFE and will be different for **each** assessment window. The briefs are designed to ensure a motivating starting point for students and will be based on, for example, a real-world problem.

Selection of brief

Students are required to discuss and agree with their tutor which of the following occupational-based briefs they would like to take forward for their employer-set project:

- Early Years Educator
- Assisting Teaching

The provider must book students onto the appropriate version of the employer-set project by the deadline for that specific assessment series as indicated below:

Assessment series	Student booking deadline
XXXXXX	XXXXXX
XXXXXX	XXXXXX
XXXXXX	XXXXXX
XXXXXX	XXXXXX

Bookings will be made on the NCFE portal, and guidance can be found in the portal handbook which can be accessed within the system.

The selection and registration of the student to the appropriate brief **must** be agreed ahead of the deadline outlined in the tutor guidance document. Whilst it is recommended that a student selects the brief that is relevant to their intended occupational specialism, it is not a requirement that the student makes a selection decision based on this, or any other specific given criteria.

Pre-assessment research

To support the completion of the tasks within the employer-set project, students are required to engage in research-based activity that is focussed around collating information and materials that they have received during their learning throughout the qualification, which can include any information pertinent to the contextualised version of the assessment students take (for example Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)). The information students collate should be refined and focussed around the details within the pre-release activity, ahead of the supervised scheduled assessment. The pre-release activity can be shared with students 3 weeks before the **first** supervised assessment session, which should **only** be scheduled to take place within the relevant assessment series window. It is recommended that tutors allow themselves one week to check and verify that the materials are produced in line with the requirements stated on page 4 of this document. This will also allow an opportunity for students to amend their materials if they do not meet these requirements.

Students **must** submit their research materials to their tutor before the cohort's first supervised session, at least one week before the first supervised assessment session. Students should **not** have access to the tasks until the research materials have been approved. The purpose of these checks is to ensure that the assessment maintains its validity and helps to prevent malpractice.

Task 1

Tasks 1a and 1b require students to create a plan that will detail an approach to meeting the needs outlined in the employer-set project brief, as well as a plan for an activity that will support the broader plan. The tasks have been split into 2 parts to ensure that both elements are accessible and act to guide students further with the evidence requirements for each. Tutors must schedule separate supervised sessions for task 1a and task 1b, both of which must be taken as a whole (3 hours per task) and must not be split, for example, into 2 1 hour and 30 minute sessions.

Task 1 = A **maximum** of 6 hours in total

Task 1a = 3 hours in total

Task 1b = 3 hours in total

Task 1a

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to create a support plan based on the detailed brief and pro-forma that is provided with the tasks. Students must complete this task within 3 hours. As part of this plan, students should plan and manage how they will spend their time in order to produce what is outlined in the evidence requirements.

Task 1b

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to create an activity plan based on the detailed brief provided in the tasks, as well as their early support/intervention plan from task 1a. Students should be provided with a hard copy (print out) of their support plan from task 1a. Students are not allowed to make any amendments to their work from task 1a during completion of task 1b. Students must complete this task within 3 hours. As part of this plan, students should plan and manage how they will spend their time in order to produce what is outlined in the evidence requirements.

Task 2a

Students must not start task 2a until the cohort has completed task 1.

Tutors will assign each student to a peer discussion group. Each group should be made up of 3 to 5 students. Tutors may consider the room or space available and cohort sizes when determining the number of students within a group.

Task 2a (i)

Tutors must give students the activity plans, from task 1b, for each of the students in their peer discussion group. Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions

to complete the preparation for peer discussion pro-forma provided. Students are not required to be sat in their peer discussion groups when completing this activity.

Tutors should review the preparation for peer discussion pro-forma that each student has produced. This is to ensure that sufficient detail is provided to enable fair access for all students during the peer discussion. Tutors can provide oral guidance to highlight where improvements can be made to the preparation for peer discussion pro-forma. Tutors are allowed to lead students, for example, by giving them specific feedback on each of the questions where the student has not sufficiently completed the pro-forma. Students can then revise and redraft their work before tutors review it again.

There is no time limit for completion of task 2a (i) as the time taken is dependent upon the number of students in each peer discussion group and the amount of feedback provided by the tutor. Tutors should manage completion of task 2a (i) as part of their planning for the delivery of task 2.

Task 2a (ii)

Students should be provided with a hard copy (print out) of their activity plan from task 1b.

Students are not allowed to make any amendments to their work from task 1b during completion of task 2a (ii).

Students will complete the preparation element of this task within 20 minutes of supervised assessment time.

Tutors must ensure, when supervising the assessment, that each student within the group provides feedback. Tutors can do this by prompting students, based on the content of their pro-forma.

During the discussion, each student will have a maximum of 5 minutes to lead a presentation on the details of their activity plan, with a further 20 minutes (approximately 4 minutes per other group member) allocated to giving feedback to the lead student. Students must complete hand-written notes of the feedback they receive from each group member on the feedback from peer discussion form. This activity must be repeated for each student.

Task 2b

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to reflect on the feedback received from peers and update their activity plan accordingly. Students should reference each piece of feedback received in their summary of changes. Students will complete this task within 1 hour of supervised assessment time.

Task 3a

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to prepare for a discussion with the tutor. It is recommended that students spend no longer than 2 hours to prepare for this task, which may also include practising the verbal delivery of their content. The discussion with the tutor will start with the delivery of the content and should consist of a balance of the support plan as well as the activity plan. A pro-forma has been provided to support

students with this task. The discussion with the tutor will move on to a question and answer section that should take no longer than 10 minutes in total. However, consideration should be given to timetabling as these may initially take slightly longer to start with.

Task 3b

Students are required to discuss the key elements of their approach, including the justifications for decisions made. As part of this task, the tutor will assume the role of a supervisor in the relevant occupational area (for example, key worker, teacher), and take part in a professional discussion where the students will describe their approach before being questioned by the tutor to provide further rationale for the approach taken.

During this task, tutors should make a judgement around the verbal communication skills of students using the form provided below.

The role of the tutor in this assessment is to ask questions of the student. The questions the tutor must ask are detailed in the pro forma below. The tutor **must not** offer suggested answers or lead the student. However, the tutor can ask prompt questions or reword the questions below to support clarity for students. This must only be done after giving the student a chance to ask for clarification. Prompts cannot introduce new information; they are a way to support the student to understand the question. The tutor may also clarify with the student if they are happy with their response, this can only be done as a means to progress with the discussion (for example, onto the next question). In addition to this, the tutor must make a judgement against the descriptors and provide commentary around how well the student has verbally communicated.

Student name		Student ref number		Date of observation	
Assessment series:			SAMPLE ASSESSMENT MATERIAL		
Welcome/Introduction <p>To include a high-level description of the layout of the assessment, for example, there are 3 questions, and I will be making notes of responses. The audio will be recorded and submitted as evidence, alongside my notes, for this task.</p>					
Question 1: <p>EYE: Can you tell me how your approach is informed by your knowledge of scaffolding?</p> <p>AT: Can you tell me how your approach is informed by your knowledge of how personal factors can affect engagement and development in reading and literacy?</p>					
Question 2: <p>a)</p> <p>EYE: Can you share some examples of how you would communicate with George, based on the information given in the brief?</p> <p>AT: Can you share some examples of how you would communicate with Ayesha, based on the information given in the brief?</p> <p>b)</p> <p>EYE: Can you tell me about the communication techniques you would use if George was being disruptive during story-time?</p> <p>AT: Can you tell me about the communication techniques you would use if Ayesha threw her pencil down in frustration when completing a writing task?</p>					
Question 3: <p>EYE: Can you tell me how well you feel your strategy addresses the frustration George experiences when trying to express himself to others?</p> <p>AT: Can you tell me how well you feel your strategy supports Ayesha's difficulties around 'knowing where to start'?</p>					

Tutor observation notes:			
Where applicable, please tick or cross against each communication skill (one per skill). If not evidenced or evidence is below Band 1, please type N/A in Band 1.			
	Moderately effective verbal communication skills demonstrated during discussion, with points made containing some inaccuracies.	Confident demonstration of communication skills during discussion, with points made that are mostly accurate.	Excellent level of communication skills demonstrated during discussion, with points made that are highly accurate.
Active listening			
Leads and moves discussion forward			
Asks and responds to questions for clarification			
Expresses informed opinions			
Recognises the role of audience			
Any other tutor comments:			

Task 4: reflection

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions for this task. Students must, as part of task 4, carry out reflective practice and/or review the outcome of their work in relation to the brief.

Timings

The timings below have been devised to support student and provider planning.

Tutors should encourage students to read all tasks in their entirety to ensure they take note of the time they have for each task.

Pre-release (research) activity – provided to students 1 week prior to the **first** supervised assessment.

Task 1 = A **maximum** of 6 hours in total

Task 1a = 3 hours in total

Task 1b = 3 hours in total

Task 2 = A **maximum** of 1 hour 25 minutes

Task 2a (i) = There is no time limit set for this task

Task 2a (ii) = Students will have 20 minutes to prepare for discussions.

Students will each have 5 minutes to discuss their activity plan.

All other students within the group will have a combined total of 20 minutes to feed back to the student who discussed their activity plan, this equates to approximately 4 minutes per group member.

Task 2b = A **maximum** of 1 hour in total

Task 3 = A **maximum** of 2 hours 20 minutes

Task 3a = A **maximum** of 2 hours for preparation

Task 3b = 20 minutes in total:

- 5 minutes for students to present information
- 15 minutes for tutors to ask questions and receive answers.

Task 4 = A **maximum** of 2 hours

Total = 12 hours

Instructions for completing and submitting the external assessment task

The external assessment tasks **must** be completed and uploaded as a whole and not in separate sections. The submission of students' assessment evidence must be done before the submission date specified for the assessment window. Tutors are encouraged to ensure that students follow the filename conventions specified in the external assessment tasks for each individual document. These files, per student, should be placed within a single folder before being zipped and submitted.

Students **must** respond to **each** task individually and follow the document structure when submitting their evidence as per the evidence requirements section within each task. They must **not** combine responses for separate tasks.

Guidance for students

The guidance for students is also available from page 4 of the employer-set project assessment.

Student instructions:

- read the project brief carefully before starting your work
- read the assessment objectives grid, as part of the marks for this assessment will be based on your ability to plan how you will meet the requirements of the brief, you may therefore keep brief planning notes as you work through the tasks for this assessment, these will not be submitted for marking but you can use them to help you complete the tasks. If you do make any notes, these should be handed into your tutor with all other work at the end of each supervised session
- you **must** work independently and make your own decisions as to how to approach the tasks within the employer-set project
- you are permitted to bring in and use your own research, carried out in response to the pre-release task to the supervised sessions but these **must** be checked for suitability by your tutor. Your research must:
 - be contained within 4 pages, excluding references
 - be in an Arial font 12pt, within standard border sizes
 - clearly show where sources have been used to support your own ideas and opinions
 - clearly reference all sources used to support your own ideas and opinions
 - reference any quotations from websites
- you **must** clearly name and date all of the work that you produce during each supervised session
- you **must** hand over all of your work to your tutor at the end of each supervised session
- you must not work on the assessment in between supervised sessions.

Student information:

- this employer-set project will assess your knowledge, understanding and skills from across the core content of the qualification
- in order to achieve a grade for the core component, you **must** attempt both of the external examinations **and** the employer-set project. The combined marks from these assessments will be aggregated to form the overall core component grade (A* to E and U). If you do not

attempt one of the assessments or fail to reach the minimum standard across all assessments, you will receive a U grade

- the maximum time you will have to complete all tasks for this employer-set project is 12 hours:
 - your tutor will explain how this time is broken down per task and will confirm with you if individual tasks need to be completed across multiple sessions
 - at the end of each supervised session, your tutor will collect all employer-set project assessment materials before you leave the room. You must not take any assessment material outside of the room (for example, via a physical memory device). You **must** not upload any work produced to any platform that will allow you to access materials outside of the supervised sessions (including email)
- you can fail to achieve marks if you don't fully meet the requirements of the task, or equally if you are not able to efficiently meet the requirements of the task.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism may result in the external assessment task being awarded a U grade. For further guidance, refer to the maladministration and malpractice policy located on the NCFE website.

Presentation of work:

- all of your work should be completed electronically using black font, Arial size 12pt unless otherwise specified
- any work not produced electronically must be agreed with your tutor, in which case the evidence you produce should be scanned and submitted as an electronic piece of evidence
- all your work should be clearly labelled with the relevant task number and your student details and be legible (for example front page and headers)
- electronic files should be given a clear file name for identification purposes, see tasks for any relevant naming conventions
- all pages of your work should be numbered in the format 'Page X of Y', where X is the page number and Y is the total number of pages
- you must complete and sign the external assessment cover sheet (EACS) and include it at the front of your assessment task evidence
- you must submit your evidence to the supervisor at the end of each session.

Document information

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Owner: Head of Assessment Solutions.

Change History Record

Version	Description of change	Approval	Date of Issue
v1.0	Published draft version		April 2020
v2.0	Published final version		01 September 2020
v3.0	T Level branding updated		December 2020
v3.1	Version, branding and formatting final updates.		February 2021
v4.0	Updated to include Supporting and Mentoring Students in Educational Settings (Occupational Specialism)		April 2021
v4.1	NCFE rebrand.		September 2021
v5.0	Annual review 2023: Name changed to Education and Early Years Removal of Mentoring OS	June 2023	19 June 2023
v5.1	Sample added as watermark	November 2023	15 November 2023
v6.0	Wording amended throughout Branding and document information updated	November 2024	24 April 2025