

Regulations for the Conduct of Controlled Assessments – EDSQ

Note: this document applies only to the following qualifications which are available for bookings until 20 October 2026:

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



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Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Importance of these regulations

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

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

1.2 NCFE controlled assessment

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

Controlled assessment is a form of internal assessment in which control levels are set for each stage of the assessment process:

- task setting
- task taking
- task marking

Task setting – medium control:

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

Task taking – high control:

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

Task marking – medium control:

- NCFE's controlled assessments allow centres to mark the controlled assessment
- Assessments must be marked using the mark schemes provided by NCFE. Assessment decisions will be checked and confirmed by the centre's Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) and NCFE's External Quality Assurer (EQA). The assessor must record each assessment decision and the justification for the decision on the required documentation outlined in the assessor instructions.

1.3 Centre responsibilities

Head of centre

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

Designated person

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

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

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

Assessment supervisor

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

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

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

Assessor

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

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

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

Who should read these regulations?

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

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

Section 2 – Quality assurance

2.1 Inspection/observation of the controlled assessments

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

The following policy is required for NCFE inspection purposes:

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

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

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

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

2.2 Maladministration/malpractice

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

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

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

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

- the work completed by the learners concerned and any unauthorised materials (if applicable) must be confiscated from the learners and given to the designated person
- all learners suspected of breaching these regulations should be instructed to leave the room immediately, if appropriate to do so, causing the least amount of disruption to other learners



- the supervisor should report the incident to the designated person as soon as possible
- NCFE should be informed immediately of any irregularity via phone call or email
- the centre should conduct its own investigation into the incident and report the incident and their findings to our quality assurance team using the NCFE notification of malpractice document on our website.

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

2.3 Ownership of assessment material

All assessment material remains the property of NCFE.

Section 3 – Preparing for the controlled assessments

3.1 Accessing the assessment materials

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

3.2 Storing assessment materials

The designated person is responsible for:

- the security and integrity of the assessments and associated materials (for example, used/unused assessment materials, additional guidance, and witness observation records). This includes both electronically saved and printed materials. Access to this storage must be restricted to authorised personnel only
- ensuring the centre uses assessments from the current bank of live assessments as accessed above
- ensuring assessment material is not accessed until the learner is ready to sit the assessment
- having a process in place whereby the assessors can notify the designated person that they have learners ready to sit the assessment, then making the assessment materials available from a secure location
- managing the secure destruction of all unused assessment materials, both printed and electronic, once assessments have taken place
- assessment materials must be used for the learners booked onto that specific assessment paper
- the safe distribution of assessment materials to ensure access is only provided for learners with an active registration against that actual product

- ensuring that any unauthorised centre personnel do not have access to the assessment materials or completed learner work
- ensuring assessment material is not tampered with
- immediately informing NCFE if the integrity or security of the controlled assessment materials is put at risk by theft, loss, damage, unauthorised disclosure, fire, or any other circumstances in accordance with NCFE's maladministration and malpractice policy.

Live assessments **must not** be used as sample materials. Further guidance on accessing the controlled assessments is available within the [NCFE Portal User Guide](#).

3.3 Reasonable adjustments

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

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

3.4 Status in Wales and Northern Ireland

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

3.5 Planning the controlled assessment

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

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

Centres must inform learners of:

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

3.6 Selection and number of supervisors

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

3.7 Accommodation

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

- the allocated room is suitably quiet and undisturbed, with adequate space, heating, lighting, and ventilation
- only learners due to sit their controlled assessment and the supervisor are allowed in the room immediately before, during or after the controlled assessment
- learners are not allowed into the room until the supervisor is satisfied that the room is ready and can indicate where each learner should sit
- seating arrangements must prevent learners from seeing each other's work, intentionally or otherwise
- where the controlled assessment includes the use of equipment (for example, computers) then an assistant familiar with the equipment must be present in addition to the supervisor. Assistants should be available in case of equipment malfunction only and should have no other involvement with the controlled assessment
- in some assessments a mobile phone is required. This can be a personal device or a centre device as long as the learner is supervised throughout
- if a learner needs to leave the assessment room temporarily because they are unwell or need to go to the toilet, the supervisor must ensure the learner is accompanied by a member of staff and does not:



- speak to anyone else
- consult any notes
- have access to a personal mobile phone or any other personal electronic devices (for example, iPods, smart watches) or make any calls
- breach the security of the assessment.

The remaining learners must not be left unattended at any point.

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