NCFE Level 3 Technical Occupational Entry in Digital Support (Diploma)
QN: 610/4005/8

Qualification Specification

Version 1.0 August 2025

Qualification summary

Qualification title	**NCFE Level 3 Technical Occupational Entry in Digital Support (Diploma)**
Ofqual qualification number (QN)	610/4005/8
Guided learning hours (GLH)	360
Total qualification time (TQT)	480
Minimum age	19
Qualification purpose	This qualification is designed to provide learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) relevant to developing competence in digital support. This qualification will provide employers with reliable evidence of a learner's attainment against occupational standard KSBs that form the minimum requirements for entry into occupation. This qualification has the following pathways: • digital application technician (DAT) • digital service technician (DST)
Grading	Not yet achieved/pass/merit/distinction
Assessment method	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.
Work/industry placement experience	Work/industry placement experience is not required.
Occupational standards	This qualification is mapped against the following occupational standard: ST0120: Digital Support Technician (Level 3) Version 1.1 A mapping document is available on the qualification's page on the NCFE website.
UCAS	Please refer to the UCAS website for further details of points allocation and the most up-to-date information.
Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 610/4005/8.
Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.

Contents

Section 1: introduction

Please note this is a draft version of the Qualification Specification and is likely to be subject to change before the final version is produced for the launch of the qualification.

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

Aims and objectives

This qualification aligns to knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) in the ST0120: Digital Support Technician (Level 3) Version 1.1 occupational standard.

This qualification aims to:

- focus on the study of the digital support technician in the digital sector
- enable entry to the associated occupation, providing entry competence (further learning may be required in the workplace to reach full occupational competence)
- offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge
- provide opportunities to acquire a number of practical and technical skills

The objective of this qualification is to:

- enable entry to the associated occupation, providing entry competence. (Further learning may be required in the workplace to reach full occupational competence.)

Support Handbook

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

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

Guidance for entry and registration

This qualification is designed as an occupational entry technical qualification for adults.

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

There are no specific prior skills/knowledge a learner must have for this qualification. However, learners may find it helpful if they have already achieved a level 2 information technology (IT) qualification.

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

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

Achieving this qualification

To be awarded this qualification, learners are required to successfully achieve a pass grade in all **7 units** from the graded mandatory units and **1 unit** from the graded pathway units.

Centres can register learners on one of the following pathways:

- digital application technician (DAT)
- digital service technician (DST)

Digital application technician (DAT) – this pathway will allow learners to gain an understanding of the knowledge and skills associated with the role of a digital application technician. The learner will understand the role of productivity software applications and how digital information systems are used to maintain software application support. The learner will also be able to use appropriate troubleshooting tools and techniques to investigate and resolve software application problems. The learner will go on to understand coaching and how to coach and guide stakeholders to develop software application skills.

Digital service technician (DST) – this pathway will allow learners to gain an understanding of the knowledge and skills associated with the role of a digital service technician. The learner will understand the components within a database management system and the approaches to configuring software applications. The learner will go on to understand how to maintain digital systems. They will be able to select and apply digital tools and techniques to provide support to end users and diagnose system problems. The learner will also understand digital channels and will be able to select appropriate digital channels to provide support to end users.

Please refer to the list of units in appendix A or the unit summaries in section 2 for further information.

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

Pathways within this qualification

When registering learners, centres should use the qualification number (610/4005/8) followed by the relevant pathway code:

- digital application technician (DAT)
- digital service technician (DST)

As the chosen pathway will appear on the certificate, it is important that tutors make clear to learners the specific option they will be registered against. Centres must carefully consider which option they want to register the learner onto. If learners are registered to the incorrect pathway, registration transfer fees or new registration fees will apply. Further information on fees can be found on the Fees and Pricing document on the NCFE website.

Progression including job roles

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- employment:
  - digital application technician

  - digital service technician
  - applications and online service executive
  - data administrator
  - database administrator
  - digital applications specialist
  - digital coach
  - digital service agent
  - digital support professional
  - digital systems operator
  - digital transformation associate
  - ICT support analyst
  - IT operations technician
- higher education

Progression to higher-level studies

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

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

Resource requirements

There are no mandatory resource requirements for this qualification, but centres must ensure learners have access to suitable resources to enable them to cover all the appropriate LOs.

Realistic work environment (RWE) requirement/recommendation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How the qualification is assessed

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

This qualification is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

The assessment consists of one component:

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

Learners must be successful in this component to gain the Level 3 Technical Occupational Entry in Digital Support (Diploma).

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

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

Internal assessment

We have created some sample tasks for the nine internally assessed units, which can be found within a separate document in the member's area of the NCFE website. These tasks are not mandatory. You can contextualise these tasks to suit the needs of your learners to help them build up their portfolio of evidence. The tasks have been designed to cover all LOs for nine units and provide opportunities for stretch and challenge. For further information about contextualising the tasks, please contact the Provider Development team.

Each learner must create a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks to demonstrate achievement of all the LOs associated with each unit. The assessment tasks should allow the learner to respond to a real-life situation that they may face when in employment. On completion of each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the assessor must countersign this.

There is compensation within the internally assessed units as the grading descriptors are now based on LOs rather than specific assessment criteria (AC). This allows for increased professional judgement on the part of the assessor in terms of the learner's overall level of performance against the LOs.

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

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

External quality assurance

Summatively assessed and internally quality assured grades for completed units must be submitted via the NCFE Portal, prior to an external quality assurance review taking place. Following the external quality assurance review, the unit grades will either be accepted and banked by your external quality assurer (EQA) or, if they disagree with the grades, they will be rejected. More detailed guidance on this process and what to do if your grades are rejected can be found in the Support Handbook and on the NCFE website.

Enquiries about results

All enquiries relating to learners' results must be submitted in line with our Enquiries and Appeals about Results and Assessment Decisions Policy, which is available on the NCFE website.

Not yet achieved grade

A result that does not achieve a pass grade will be graded as a not yet achieved grade. Learners may have the opportunity to resit. Learners may resubmit their assessment tasks if they have not successfully covered the criteria as many times as they require.

Grading information

Each unit of the qualification is graded using a structure of not yet achieved, pass, merit and distinction.

Grading internally assessed units

The grading descriptors for each unit have been included in the Qualification Specification. Grading descriptors have been written for each LO in a unit. Assessors must be confident that, as a minimum, all LOs have been evidenced and met by the learner. Assessors must make a judgement on the evidence produced by the learner to determine the grading decision for the unit.

If the learner has insufficient evidence to meet the pass criteria, a grade of not yet achieved must be awarded for the unit.

To achieve each unit the learner must:

- achieve all learning outcomes at a pass level to gain a pass grade
- achieve all learning outcomes at a pass level and at merit level to gain a merit grade
- achieve all learning outcomes at a pass, merit, and distinction level to gain a distinction grade

To achieve the qualification the learner must:

- pass all learning outcomes in all units
- pass all learning outcomes in all units

Centres must then submit each unit grade via the NCFE Portal. The grades submitted will be checked and confirmed through the external quality assurance process. This is known as 'banking' units. Once a learner's grade has been banked, they are permitted one opportunity to revise and redraft their work; more detail on this process can be found in the Support Handbook.

The internal assessment component is based on performance of open-ended tasks that are assessed holistically against the grading descriptors to achieve a grade. Each unit of the qualification is internally assessed and will be allocated a weighting based on the guided learning hours (GLH) and a score based on the holistic grade.

There is compensation within the internally assessed units as the grading descriptors are now based on LOs rather than specific AC. All of the assessment points need to be evidenced in the learner's portfolio, but the grade awarded is based on the standard of work for the LO as a whole. This allows for increased professional judgement on the part of the assessor in terms of the learner's overall level of performance against the LOs.

Awarding the final grade

The final qualification grade is calculated by combining the scores for each unit. The total will then be converted into a grade based on the following fixed thresholds:

Mandatory units				
Units	**Max**	**Pass (P)**	**Merit (M)**	**Distinction (D)**
Unit 01 Data systems	12.5%	1	3	5
Unit 02 Data backup and storage	12.5%	1	3	5
Unit 03 Data fundamentals	12.5%	1	3	5
Unit 04 Digital information systems	12.5%	1	3	5
Unit 05 Business operation	12.5%	1	3	5
Unit 06 Communication	12.5%	1	3	5
Unit 07 Professional development and working practices	12.5%	1	3	5
Pathway units				
Units	**Max**	**P**	**M**	**D**

Unit 08 Digital application technician (DAT)	12.5%	1	3	5
Unit 09 Digital service technician (DST)	12.5%	1	3	5

The table below shows how the accumulation of each unit grade is aggregated to form the overall qualification grade.

Total score	Grade
34-40	D
18-33	M
8-17	P
0-7	Not yet achieved

The final grade for the qualification is based on a structure of not yet achieved, pass, merit and distinction and will be issued to the centre by NCFE upon the centre claiming the learner's certificate on the NCFE Portal.

For further information on assessment, please refer to the User Guide to the External Quality Assurance Report, which can be found on the NCFE website.

NCFE does not anticipate any changes to our aggregation methods or any overall grade thresholds; however, there may be exceptional circumstances in which it is necessary to do so to secure the maintenance of standards over time. Therefore, overall grade thresholds published within this Qualification Specification may be subject to change.

Section 2: unit content and assessment guidance

This section provides details of the structure and content of this qualification.

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

The explanation of terms explains how the terms used in the unit content are applied to this qualification. This can be found in section 3.

Mandatory units

Unit 01 Data systems (A/651/1102)

Unit summary			
The learner will gain an understanding of the purpose and use of digital automation technologies. They will understand the principles of secure data handling and be able to apply common security controls to mitigate data loss. They will also understand digital transformation and the use of templates to support service desk performance.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.			
Mandatory	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**45 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand digital automation technologies	1.1 The purpose and use of digital office automation technologies to improve operational efficiency (for example integration of technology, reduce costs, improve collaboration)	Describe the purpose and use of digital office automation technologies to improve operational efficiency.	Explain how the data lifecycle can be practically applied in digital office automation, using specific examples that highlight the benefits of improved operational efficiency and cost savings.	Analyse how digital automation and effective data lifecycle management work together ensuring efficiency, data integrity and compliance.
	1.2 The steps within the data lifecycle and their use within digital office automation	Outline the steps within the data lifecycle and their use within digital office automation.		
2. Understand secure data handling and apply common security controls	2.1 The principles of secure data handling (for example, inventory of data, safeguarding of data)	Identify the principles of secure data handling.	Discuss how principles, processes, and procedures for handling data securely can be implemented using examples that clearly	Secure data handling and the application of common security controls, with solid justifications, backed by evidence of research that

	2.2 The importance of processes and procedures to support secure data handling and sharing (for example, encryption)	Outline the importance of processes and procedures to support secure data handling and sharing.	illustrate the consequences an organisation faces when failing to comply with regulations and legislation.	strengthens any recommendations made. This has been achieved by incorporating relevant examples, with real-world illustration. Evaluate the effectiveness and potential consequences of data protection strategies, encryption use and layered security controls in maintaining security and compliance.
	2.3 The use of encryption to support secure data transmission	Describe the use of encryption to support secure data transmission.		
	2.4 The potential consequences of non-compliance with legislation and regulations on secure data handling: • The Data Protection Act 2018 • organisational regulations • industry specific regulations	Summarise the potential consequences of non-compliance with legislation and regulations on secure data handling (as identified in AC2.4).		
	2.5 The use of access controls to secure data (for example, role-based access control (RBAC))	Outline the use of access control methods used when securing data access.	Explain how access controls such as RBAC and various types of security controls (technical, administrative, endpoint, DLP) help mitigate risk and protect data.	
	2.6 Common security controls used to mitigate risk and data loss: • technical security controls (for example, firewalls, antivirus protection)	Summarise common security controls (as identified in AC2.6) to mitigate risk and data loss.		

	• administrative security controls (access controls organisational policies) • end point security controls (for example, applied to mobile devices) • data loss prevention (DLP) strategy and methodologies			
	2.7 The application of information security principles to mitigate data loss: • CIA triad: ○ confidentiality ○ integrity ○ availability • IAAA: ○ identification ○ authentication ○ authorisation ○ accountability	Outline the application of information security principles (as identified in AC2.7) to mitigate data loss.	Discuss how the CIA and IAAA principles are applied to mitigate data loss and how common security controls are used to maintain system security.	
	2.8 Apply common security controls to maintain system security	Demonstrate the ability to apply common security controls required to maintain system security.		
3. Understand digital transformation and the	3.1 The purpose of digital transformation in	Describe the purpose of digital transformation in	Explain how digital transformation may enhance	Evaluate the impact of a digital transformation

use of templates to support service desk performance	improving service desk performance	improving service desk performance.	service desk performance and how the use of templates (such as email, automated SMS) support best working practices.	initiative and the strategic use of templates to improve efficiency, consistency and quality of service.
	3.2 The use of templates (for example, email, automated SMS) and how they contribute to best working practice within an organisation	Outline the use of templates and how they contribute to best working practice within an organisation.		

Unit 02 Data backup and storage (D/651/1103)

Unit summary
The learner will gain an understanding of the concept of digital architecture. They will understand the considerations, approaches and tools to use when backing up data. They will also understand the importance of securely backing up data and the impact this has on an organisation.
Assessment
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

Mandatory	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**36 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand digital architecture	1.1 The concept of digital architecture: • agility • responsiveness • adaptability	Describe the concept of digital architecture paying particular attention to its agility, responsiveness, and adaptability.	Discuss and examine the factors involved in digital architecture, specifically comparing physical and cloud-based solutions. Working examples are provided to help explain any recommended implementation decisions.	Evaluate the importance of digital architecture for an effective system that contributes to business continuity and data security.
	1.2 The differences between physical and cloud data storage	Outline the differences between physical and cloud data storage.		
	1.3 The function of operating systems (OS) and how they provide an interface for network, computer and mobile devices	Describe the function of operating systems (OS) and how they provide an interface for network, computer and mobile devices.	Explain the function of operating systems and how they provide interfaces for network, computer and mobile devices and the role of servers in supporting application and data infrastructure both on premises and cloud virtual.	
	1.4 The role of servers to support application and data infrastructure: • on premises	Summarise the role of servers to support application and data		

	• cloud/virtual	infrastructure (as identified in AC1.4).		
2. Understand data backups	2.1 The importance of backing up data securely and the benefits to an organisation	Describe the importance of backing up data securely and the benefits to an organisation.	Explain the importance of securely backing up data and the benefits this brings to an organisation, including key considerations when backing up data such as data types, size, location and encryption.	Evaluate the benefits and potential challenges of different back up strategies considering factors such as data types, backup approaches and tools used, including how effective data restoration possesses contribute to business continuity and data security.
	2.2 The considerations to make when backing up data: • types of data (for example, spreadsheets, databases, emails) • size • location • encryption	Outline the considerations to make when backing up data (as identified in AC2.2).		
	2.3 The differences between a range of backup approaches (for example, full, incremental, selective)	Describe the differences between a range of backup approaches (as identified in AC2.3).	Explain the differences between various backup approaches (full, incremental, selective) and how each is used. Include the tools and technologies used to schedule and manage backups and the process of restoring data from a backup.	
	2.4 The use of tools and technologies to schedule and manage backups	Describe the use of tools and technologies that can be used to manage and schedule backups.		
	2.5 How to restore data from a backup	Outline how to restore data from a backup.		

Unit 03 Data fundamentals (F/651/1104)

Unit summary
The learner will gain an understanding of the concepts and fundamentals of data. They will understand how to apply the CIA triad principles when transferring, deleting, storing, using and communicating data. They will also understand a range of different data types and explain how organisations use them.
Assessment
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

Mandatory	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**36 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand the concepts and fundamentals of data and apply information security principles	1.1 The application of the CIA triad principles when transferring, deleting, storing, using and communicating data (for example, when using a mobile device)	Summarise the application of the CIA triad principles when transferring, deleting, storing, using and communicating data.	Discuss the application of the CIA triad principles when transferring, deleting, storing, using and communicating data, including the steps taken to meet requirements.	Evaluate the effectiveness of applying CIA triad principles in real world scenarios, including how these principles ensure data handling during the transfer, deletion, storage, use and communication of data.
	1.2 Apply CIA triad principles when transferring, deleting, storing, using and communicating data to meet requirements	Demonstrate the ability to apply CIA triad principles when transferring, deleting, storing, using and communicating data to meet requirements.		
	1.3 The differences between a range of data types: • structured • unstructured • semi-structured	Outline the differences between a range of data types (as identified in AC1.3).	Compare the differences between data types, how organisations use various types of data, the differences between data	Evaluate the effectiveness of different data types, data stores and organisational practices in managing and using data, considering

	1.4 How organisations use various types of data	Describe how organisations use various types of data.	stores and the key considerations when searching, storing, integrating and organising data.	aspects such as access, ownership, location and size, including the impact of data formats and maintenance approaches on the accuracy and reliability of data analysis.
	1.5 The differences between data stores: • database • data warehouse • data lake	Outline the differences between data stores (as identified in AC1.5).		
	1.6 The considerations when searching, storing, integrating and organising data: • location (for example, on premises or cloud based) • access privileges • data ownership • status (for example, live or archived data) • size	Outline the considerations (as identified in AC1.6) when searching, storing, integrating and organising data.		
	1.7 The characteristics of organising data (for example, type of data, file structure)	Describe the characteristics of organising data.	Discuss the characteristics of organising data, the importance of data formats in analysis and the approaches to data entry and maintenance.	
	1.8 The importance of data formats in data analysis: • number • currency • date • time	Summarise the importance of data formats in data analysis (as identified in AC1.8).		

	• percentage • scientific			
	1.9 The approaches to data entry and maintenance	Identify the approaches to data entry and maintenance.		

Unit 04 Digital information systems (H/651/1105)

Unit summary			
The learner will gain an understanding of the function and features of information systems and how they are used within an organisation. They will a understand the role, characteristics and components of a service desk and how to diagnose stakeholder's digital problems. They will also understand and operate digital information systems and understand how they are used to support functions within an organisation.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.			
Mandatory	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**54 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand information systems	1.1 The function and features of information systems: • hardware • software • processing • data storage	Describe the function and features of information systems (as identified in AC1.1).	Explain the function and features of information systems, including hardware, software, processing and data storage and the types and role of information systems used within an organisation.	Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of various information systems, considering their hardware, software, processing and data storage components and their role within the organisation.
	1.2 The types and role of information systems used within an organisation	Outline the types and role of information systems used within an organisation.		
2. Understand the diagnosis of stakeholder's digital problems	2.1 The role and function of a service desk	Outline the role and function of a service desk.	Discuss the role and function of a service desk, the process for managing service desk requests and how requests are classified, triaged and escalated.	Evaluate the effectiveness of service desk operations, including classification, triage and escalation of requests, the use of troubleshooting tools and the application of procedures and legislation
	2.2 The process for managing service desk requests	Summarise the process for managing service desk requests.		
	2.3 How service desk requests are classified, triaged and escalated	Outline how service desk requests are classified, triaged and escalated.		

	2.4 The use of troubleshooting tools and techniques to diagnose stakeholder's digital problems (for example, log files, command line)	Describe the use of troubleshooting tools and techniques to diagnose stakeholder's digital problems.	Explain the use of troubleshooting tools and techniques to diagnose digital problems and how to apply them independently following procedures and legislation to accurately analyse data and provide recommendations.	to provide accurate recommendations and maintain a secure professional working environment.
	2.5 In line with procedures and legislation, use own initiative to apply appropriate trouble shooting tools and techniques to identify and analyse data accurately to provide recommendations	Demonstrate the ability in line with procedures and legislation, to use own initiative to apply appropriate trouble shooting tools and techniques to identify and analyse data accurately to provide recommendations.		
	2.6 Work independently to follow legislation and procedures to securely access, use and share data whilst maintaining a productive and professional working environment	Demonstrate the ability to work independently to follow legislation and procedures to securely access, use and share data whilst maintaining a productive and professional working environment.		
3. Understand service desk system	3.1 The function and characteristics of a service desk system: • difference between on premises and remote support • channels used to provide support (for	Describe the function and characteristics of a service desk system (in relation to the points in AC3.1).	Evaluate the function and characteristics of a service desk system, including support methods, components such as self-help facilities and request distribution and the role of dashboards and escalations.	Evaluate the effectiveness of service desk systems and their components, considering the role of accurate stakeholder information, common service desk requests and the process of managing

	example, control of device, telephone, online chat) • internal support or third-party support to multiple businesses			and responding to service desk requests to ensure quality support and meet service level agreements (SLAs).
	3.2 The components of a service desk: • concept of self-help facility (for example, FAQ's) • end user logging a service request • distribution of requests to appropriate contacts within support team • dashboard to monitor service level agreements (SLAs) • escalation of issues or problem which cannot be resolved by service desk	Outline the components of a service desk (in relation to the points in AC3.2).		
	3.3 The purpose of accessing and maintaining accurate stakeholder information (for example, internal	Outline the purpose of accessing and maintaining accurate stakeholder information.	Explain the purpose of accessing and maintaining accurate stakeholder information, common service desk requests and	

	staff, external customers, suppliers)		the process for managing service desk requests using digital channels to provide effective support.	
	3.4 Common service desk requests (for example, software bugs, password management, mobile device management)	Outline common service desk requests.		
	3.5 Follow the process for managing service desk requests and use a digital channel to provide support and an appropriate and effective response	Demonstrate the ability to follow the process for managing service desk requests and use a digital channel to provide support and an appropriate and effective response.		
4. Understand and operate digital information systems	4.1 The application of digital information systems to support functions within an organisation: • management • finance • human resources • bespoke organisational systems and databases	Outline the application of digital information systems (as identified in AC4.1) to support functions within an organisation.	Explain the application of digital information systems across various organisational functions, the purpose of monitoring and reporting proactively and how these systems can be used to identify performance improvements.	Evaluate the effectiveness of digital information systems in supporting organisational functions and improving productivity and performance while maintaining professional approach to monitoring and reporting.
	4.2 The purpose and value of monitoring and reporting productivity and performance	Describe the purpose and value of monitoring and reporting productivity and performance.		

	4.3 Operate digital information systems to identify productivity and performance improvements, maintaining a professional approach	Demonstrate the ability to operate digital information systems to identify productivity and performance improvements, maintaining a professional approach.		

Unit 05 Business operation (J/651/1106)

Unit summary			
The learner will gain an understanding of the purpose and use of service level agreements. They will understand the role of metrics in service desk delivery and the importance of monitoring and reporting against service level agreements to contribute to an organisational performance and customer service. They will also understand the importance of an organisation's digital presence and brand and how this is maintained. They will also go on to understand the use of current and emerging digital technologies and how these may impact a service desk.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.			
Mandatory	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**45 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand service level agreements and metrics within a service desk	1.1 The purpose and use of a service level agreement (SLA)	Outline the purpose and use of an SLA.	Discuss the purpose and use of a service level agreement (SLA), the role of metrics in service desk delivery and the importance of monitoring and reporting against SLAs to improve organisational performance and customer service.	Evaluate the effectiveness of SLAs and metrics in service desk delivery, including how monitoring and reporting contribute to improving organisational performance and customer service quality.
	1.2 The role of metrics in service desk delivery (for example, rate of completion, quality of service)	Identify the role of metrics in service desk delivery.		
	1.3 The importance of monitoring and reporting against SLAs to contribute to an organisational performance and customer service	Describe the importance of monitoring and reporting against SLAs to contribute to an organisational performance and customer service.		

2. Understand organisational digital presence and brand	2.1 The significance of an organisation's digital presence (for example, business critical systems and operations)	Identify the significance of an organisation's digital presence.	Explain the significance of on organisation's digital presence, including business critical systems and how contingency planning helps maintain and safeguard the organisation's brand.	Evaluate the impact of service support decisions, systems and contingency planning on and organisation's digital presence, considering how these elements protect and enhance the brand, online services and internal infrastructure.
	2.2 How an organisation's brand is maintained and safeguarded using contingency planning (for example, business continuity)	Describe how an organisation's brand is maintained and safeguarded using contingency planning.		
	2.3 How systems are used to maintain an organisation's digital presence: • online products and services • internal infrastructure and support systems	Identify (as identified in AC2.3) how systems are used to maintain an organisation's digital presence.	Explain how systems are used to maintain an organisation's digital presence, including online products, services and internal support systems and how service support decisions influence this presence.	
	2.4 How service support decisions may impact an organisation's digital presence	Describe how service support decisions may impact an organisation's digital presence.		
3. Understand current and emerging technologies within service desks	3.1 The use of current and emerging digital technologies and how these may impact a service desk: • data technologies (for example, trend analysis)	Identify the use of current and emerging digital technologies (as identified in AC3.1) and how these may impact a service desk.	Explain the use of current and emerging digital technologies, such as data technologies, AI, RPA and AR and how they impact service desk operations, including user support and training.	Evaluate the potential impact of current and emerging digital technologies on service desk effectiveness including how each technology (such as AI, RPA, AR) improves user support, problem

	• artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (for example, development of self-help for users) • robotic process automation (RPA) (for example, resolution of user problems) • augmented reality (AR) (for example, training the user)			resolution and training processes.

Unit 06 Communication (K/651/1107)

Unit summary			
The learner will gain an understanding and use communications channels to support service delivery. They will understand the importance of communicating with end users when responding to a service desk request. The learner will be able to take responsibility to deliver service desk support using a range of communication channels and apply appropriate terminology throughout the service. They will also understand and be able use collaborative tools and industry standard digital technologies to work as part of a team and share best practice.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.			
Mandatory	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**36 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand and use communication channels and deliver service desk support	1.1 The application of communication channels to support service delivery (for example, digital, telephone, face to face)	Identify the application of communication channels to support service delivery.	Compare various communication channels and identify the best suited for a particular situation.	Evaluate the effectiveness of various communication channels in delivering service desk support, considering how well terminology is applied and how communication impacts user experience and service quality.
	1.2 The importance of communicating with end users when responding to a service desk request (for example, maintaining self-motivation)	Summarise the importance of communicating with end users when responding to a service desk request.	Explain the importance of communicating effectively with end users during a service desk request and how to take responsibility for delivering support using appropriate channels and terminology.	
	1.3 Take responsibility to deliver service desk support using a range of communication channels and apply	Demonstrate the ability, to take responsibility to deliver service desk support using a range of communication channels and apply		

	appropriate terminology throughout the service desk request process	appropriate terminology throughout the service desk request process.		
2. Understand and use digital technologies and collaborative tools to work with others	2.1 The application of digital technologies and collaborative tools to work effectively as part of a service desk team and to support end users	Outline the application of digital technologies and collaborative tools to work effectively as part of a service desk team and to support end users.	Explain how digital technologies and collaborative tools are applied to work effectively within a service desk team and support end users, including how digital automation technologies support collaboration.	Evaluate the impact of digital automation technologies and collaborative tools in improving teamwork, adapting to different stakeholders and sharing information and best.
	2.2 How digital automation technologies can be used to collaborate with others	Outline how digital automation technologies can be used to collaborate with others.		
	2.3 How to adapt to different stakeholders and situations	Identify how to adapt to different stakeholders and situations.	Explain how to adapt to different stakeholders and situations and how collaborative tools and industry standard digital technologies are used to work effectively and share information within a team and stakeholders.	
	2.4 Apply collaborative tools and industry standard digital technologies to work effectively in order to share information and best practice: • as part of a team • with stakeholders	Demonstrate the ability to apply collaborative tools and industry standard digital technologies to work effectively as part of a team and with stakeholders, in order to share information and best practice.		

Unit 07 Professional development and working practices (L/651/1108)

Unit summary			
The learner will gain an understanding of using trusted sources to support service desk requests. They will also understand the steps used in continuous improvement and how emerging technologies contribute to this. They will also understand and apply approaches to risk assessing the impact of own actions on the service desk environment. They will then go on to understand a range of sources to support learning techniques and how to effectively prioritise and manage time.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.			
Mandatory	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**45 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand trusted sources to support service desk requests	1.1 The importance of using trusted sources to support service desk requests: • currency • relevance • authority • accuracy • purpose	Outline the importance of using trusted sources when resolving a service desk request (as identified in AC1.1).	Explain the importance of using trusted sources to support service desk requests, focusing on factors such as currency, relevance, authority, accuracy and purpose.	Evaluate the impact of using trusted sources, considering factors of currency, relevance, authority, accuracy and purpose in effectively addressing service desk requests.
2. Understand continuous improvement	2.1 The steps involved in performing continuous improvement (for example, ITIL service lifecycle): • benchmarking current capabilities • identifying and assessing	Outline the steps involved when performing continuous improvement (as identified in AC2.1).	Explain the steps involved in continuous improvement including benchmarking, current capabilities, identifying opportunities for improvement and how current and emerging technologies contribute to this process.	Evaluate the effectiveness of continuous improvement steps including the use of technologies like knowledge bases and AI in driving improvements within the service lifecycle.

	opportunities for improvement (for example, trend analysis, costs benefit analysis)			
	2.2 The use of current and emerging technologies to contribute to continuous improvement (for example, knowledge bases, AI)	Describe how the use of current and emerging technologies may contribute to continuous improvement.		
3. Understand current and emerging technologies	3.1 The impact of current and emerging digital technologies and possible impacts on service desk support: • climate change • sustainability • moving to net carbon zero	Outline the impact of current and emerging technologies (as identified in AC3.1) and how this may affect service desk support.	Discuss the impact of current and emerging digital technologies on service desk support, considering factors like climate change, sustainability and the move towards net carbon zero.	Evaluate the potential effects of current and emerging digital technologies on service desk support, with a focus on climate change, sustainability and achieving net carbon zero goals.
4. Understand and apply approaches to risk assessing the impact of own actions on the service desk environment	4.1 The approaches used to risk assess the impact of own actions on stakeholders within the service desk environment (for example, surveys, key performance indicators (KPIs))	Identify the approaches used to risk assess the impact of own actions on stakeholders within the service desk environment.	Explain the approaches used to risk assess the impact of actions on stakeholders in the service desk environment and the approach taken when applying these to service support decisions.	Analyse the approaches used to risk assess the impact of actions on stakeholders in the service desk environment and the approach taken when applying these to service support decisions.
	4.2 Apply approaches to risk assess the impact of service support	Demonstrate the ability to apply approaches to risk assess the impact of service		

	decisions on stakeholders	support decisions on stakeholders.		
5. Understand learning techniques and use sources of knowledge	5.1 How learning techniques (for example, evaluation and reflection) contribute to continuing professional development (CPD) of digital support occupations	Summarise how learning techniques contribute to CPD of digital support occupations.	Explain how learning techniques contribute to CPD in digital support occupations using a range of relevant sources of knowledge applicable to the field.	Evaluate the impact of learning technologies on professional development in digital support, including the value of various knowledge sources and reviewing personal skills to keep up to date with new technologies in the sector.
	5.2 A range of sources of knowledge and verified information applicable to digital support occupations (for example, professional networks, academic publications)	Identify a range of sources of knowledge and verified information applicable to digital support occupations.		
	5.3 How to review own development needs to keep up to date with new technologies appropriate to digital support occupations	Outline how to review own development needs to keep up to date with new technologies appropriate to digital support occupations.	Discuss how to review personal development needs to stay current with new technologies and the use of digital sources to enhance knowledge and skills in the digital support sector.	
	5.4 Use a range of digital sources to extend own knowledge and skills appropriate to the digital support sector	Demonstrate the ability to use a range of digital sources to extend own knowledge and skills appropriate to the digital support sector.		

6. Understand effective time management and prioritisation	6.1 How to effectively manage time and priorities (for example, prioritising and ranking tasks based on service level agreements (SLA))	Outline how to effectively manage time and priorities.	Describe how to effectively manage time and priorities in a digital support role.	Evaluate the impact of effective time management and prioritisation on a digital support role.

Pathway units

Unit 08 Digital application technician (M/651/1109/DAT)

Unit summary			
Learners will gain an understanding of the knowledge and skills associated with the role of a digital application technician. The learner will understand the role of productivity software applications and how digital information systems are used to maintain software application support. The learner will also be able to use appropriate troubleshooting tools and techniques to investigate and resolve software application problems. The learner will go on to understand coaching and how to coach and guide stakeholders to develop software applications skills.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.			
Optional	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**63 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand productivity software applications	1.1 The role of productivity software applications (for example, Office applications) and how they are used to create, update, edit, manage, and present data	Summarise the role of productivity software applications and how they are used to create, update, edit, manage, and present data.	Explain how productivity software applications can be used to create, update, edit, manage, and present data.	Evaluate how useful productivity software applications are in in presenting data.
	1.2 A range of sources of help within software applications (for example, user guides, tool tips, help functions)	Identify a range of sources of help within software applications.	Describe both internal and external sources of help to support the use of productivity software.	Analyse the extent of internal and external sources of help to support the use of productivity software.
	1.3 A range of external help to support the use of software applications (for example, online	Identify a range of external help to support the use of software applications.		

	blogs, tutorial videos, books)			
2. Understand how digital information systems provide software application support and use troubleshooting tools and techniques to investigate and resolve software application problems	2.1 How digital information systems (for example, a service desk) are used to provide and maintain software application support	Identify how digital information systems are used to provide and maintain software application support.	Explain how digital information systems are used to support software applications, the use of troubleshooting tools to resolve problems and the role of application administration in software installation, configuration and maintenance.	Evaluate the effectiveness of digital information systems in maintaining software application support, the impact of troubleshooting tools on productivity and service quality, and the importance of application administration in managing licensing, user permissions and security considerations.
	2.2 Use appropriate troubleshooting tools and techniques to investigate and resolve software application problems to maintain productivity and improve quality of service	Demonstrate the ability to use appropriate troubleshooting tools and techniques to investigate and resolve software application problems to maintain productivity and improve quality of service.		
	2.3 The role of application administration when installing, configuring and maintaining software: • software licensing (for example, concurrent and non-concurrent licenses) • user permissions • security considerations (for example, using approved software)	Outline the role of application administration when installing, configuring and maintaining software (as identified in AC2.3).		

3. Understand business approaches to incorporating new software applications and digital transformation	3.1 How policies contribute to the productive use of software applications	Outline how policies contribute to the productive use of software applications.	Explain how policies contribute to the productive use of software applications.	Evaluate the importance of policies to productive use of software applications.
	3.2 The impact on business operations when implementing new software applications (for example, incompatibility with existing systems, training requirements)	Outline the impact on business operations when implementing new software applications.	Explain the impact on business operations when implementing new software applications.	Evaluate the impact on business operations when implementing new software applications.
	3.3 The different requirements for administering specialist software applications within an organisation	Outline the different requirements for administering specialist software applications within an organisation.	Discuss the different requirements for administering specialist software applications.	Analyse the importance of the different requirements for administering specialist software applications within an organisation.
	3.4 The process of change management to support digital transformation activities	Outline the process of process of change management to support digital transformation activities.	Describe the process of change management to support digital transformation activities.	Evaluate the importance of change management to support digital transformation activities.
	3.5 The approaches to stakeholder training in software applications: • training sessions (for example, group based, one-to-one, online) • proving advice and guidance on application performance	Outline the approaches to stakeholder training in software applications as (as identified in AC3.5).	Explain the approaches to stakeholder training in software applications as (as identified in AC3.5).	Evaluate the importance of different approaches to stakeholder training in software applications.

	• signposting to sources of relevant learning			
	3.6 The importance of communication during digital transformation (for example, business optimising processes) and change management in relation to software applications	Outline the importance of communication during digital transformation and change management in relation to software applications.	Explain the importance of communication during digital transformation and change management in relation to software applications.	Evaluate the importance of communication during digital transformation and change management in relation to software applications.
4. Understand training and support and apply coaching techniques	4.1 The purpose of coaching and how coaching can help end users efficiently use digital applications	Outline the purpose of coaching and how coaching can help end users efficiently use digital applications.	Discuss the purpose of coaching, the situations where coaching is required, and how it can help end users and stakeholders efficiently use and develop software application skills.	Evaluate the effectiveness of coaching in different situations (such as staff straining, first line support requests) and its impact on developing end users' and stakeholders' software applications skills.
	4.2 Situations where coaching may be required (for example, staff training, first line support requests)	Identify situations where coaching may be required.		
	4.3 Coach and guide stakeholders to develop software applications skills	Demonstrate the ability to coach and guide stakeholders to develop software application skills.		
5. Understand monitoring software and recommend improvements	5.1 The application of monitoring software application usage (for example, log files)	Describe the application of monitoring software application usage.	Explain how the application of monitoring software to track usage, such as through log files can be used to monitor and identify trends or issues.	Justify the recommendation for improving software application use based on monitoring data, including how improvements will enhance performance and efficiency.
	5.2 Monitor the use of software applications and make	Demonstrate the use of software applications and		

	recommendations for improvement	make recommendations for improvement.		

Unit 09 Digital service technician (Y/651/1110/DST)

Unit summary			
Learners will gain an understanding of the knowledge and skills associated with the role of a digital service technician. The learner will understand the components within a database management system and the approaches to configuring software applications. The learner will go onto understand how to maintain digital systems. They will be able to select and apply digital tools and techniques to provide support to end users and diagnose system problems. The learner will also understand digital channels and will be able to select appropriate digital channels to provide support to end users.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured.			
Mandatory	**Graded P/M/D**	**Level 3**	**63 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)**	**Pass** The learner will be able to:	**Merit** The learner will be able to:	**Distinction** The learner will show evidence of:
1. Understand database management systems	1.1 The main components and use of a database management system: • software • data • procedures • query language	Outline the main components and use of a database management system (as identified in AC1.1).	Explain the main components and use of a database management system.	Analyse the importance of each component, using relevant terminology, in the effective use of a data base management system.
2. Understand system configurations and apply approaches to configure, update and maintain systems	2.1 The approaches to configuring software applications and the impact on providing local or remote technical support: • master image • base image • open system	Outline the approaches to configuring software applications and the impact on providing local or remote technical support (as identified in AC2.1).	Explain methods of configuring hardware and software applications, providing multiple solutions based on different requirements and the type of support offered.	Justify the selection of specific approaches for configuring software, hardware and providing technical support, including how these approaches support both local and remote maintenance of end user systems.

	2.2 The approaches to configuring hardware and the impact on local or remote technical support (for example, end user devices, peripherals)	Outline the approaches to configuring hardware and the impact on local or remote technical support.		
	2.3 The use of approaches to configure, update and maintain systems: • hardware • software • operating systems (OS)	Describe the use of approaches to configure, update and maintain systems (as identified in AC2.3).	Compare approaches used to configure, update and maintain hardware, software and OS to provide technical support and maintain end user systems locally and remotely.	
	2.4 The use of approaches to provide technical support: • local • remote	Explain the use of approaches to provide technical support (as identified in AC2.4).		
	2.5 Apply appropriate approaches to maintain end user systems: • local • remote	Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate approaches (as identified in AC2.3) to maintain end user systems.		
3. Understand updating and maintaining digital systems to meet security requirements	3.1 The importance of updating and maintaining digital systems to mitigate security threats and vulnerabilities:	Outline the importance of updating and maintaining digital systems to mitigate security threats and vulnerabilities (as identified in AC3.1).	Explain the importance of updating and maintaining digital systems, including operating systems and software applications to mitigate security threats and	Evaluate the importance of timely updates and maintenance for digital systems, including the risks and consequences of neglecting updates in terms

	• OS (for example, in line with patching policy) • software applications (for example, mobile application updates, anti-malware)		vulnerabilities and the implications of not updating and maintaining end user systems.	of system security and user protection.
	3.2 The implications of not updating and maintaining end user systems (for example, increased vulnerability to security issues)	Outline the implications of not updating and maintaining end user systems.		
4. Understand the approaches to minimising and communicating the impact of system change	4.1 Approaches to minimising the impact of required system changes: • impact assessment • risk assessment	Outline approaches to minimising the impact of required system changes (as identified in AC4.1).	Discuss ways in which the effects of a risk can be minimised when making a required system change and how effective strategies are used to communicate change.	Justify the use of specific strategies for assessing and communicating the impact of system changes, including their effectiveness in managing risk and ensuring smooth transitions.
	4.2 How effective strategies are used to communicate the impact of required system changes	Identify how effective strategies are used to communicate the impact of required system changes.		
5. Understand training and support for end users	5.1 The approaches to providing training and support to end users for the efficient use of digital systems:	Outline approaches to providing training and support to end users for the efficient use of digital systems (as identified in AC5.1).	Explain the importance of communication throughout the digital transformation process whilst comparing different methods of training and supporting end users.	Justify the selection of specific training approaches and communication strategies in the context of digital transformation including the impact on

	• training sessions (for example, group based, one-to-one, online) • relevant operating system configuration • providing advice and guidance on system performance • signposting to sources of relevant learning			system adoption and user efficiency.
	5.2 The importance of communication during digital transformation (for example, business optimising processes) and change management in relation to digital systems	Identify the importance of communication during digital transformation.		
6. Understand, select and apply digital tools and techniques to provide support to end users and find, record and rectify technical problems	6.1 The application of digital tools and techniques to undertake fault finding, recording and rectification (for example, remote access and control of end user systems, screen sharing, hardware performance monitoring tools)	Identify the application of digital tools and techniques to undertake fault finding, recording and rectification.	Compare a range of tools, techniques and resources and select the most appropriate when undertaking fault finding, recording and rectification of technical problems.	Justify the selection, effectiveness and application of specific tools, techniques and resources to support fault finding and problem resolution to resolve the issue.

	6.2 The application of tools and resources to enable end users to resolve digital system problems (for example, system storage checker, how to guides, knowledge bases, tutorial videos)	Outline the application of tools and resources to enable end users to resolve digital system problems.		
	6.3 Select and apply tools and resources to support end users to resolve digital system problems	Demonstrate the ability to select and apply tools and resources to support end users to resolve digital system problems.		
	6.4 Select and apply appropriate tools and techniques to undertake fault finding, recording and rectification to diagnose technical problems	Demonstrate the ability to select and apply appropriate tools and techniques to undertake fault finding, recording and rectification to diagnose technical problems.		
7. Understand and select appropriate digital channels to provide support to end users	7.1 The digital channels used to engage with end users to provide support for digital systems (for example, service request management software, email, social media, collaboration software)	Outline the range of digital channels that are used to engage with end users when providing support for digital systems.	Compare a range of digital channels, identifying any features or limitations that could impact upon the support offered to the end user.	Justify the selection of specific digital channels for providing end-user support, considering factors such as user needs, channel effectiveness and communication preferences.
	7.2 Select the appropriate digital channel and	Demonstrate the ability to select the appropriate digital		

	provide support to end users	channel and provide support to end users.		

NCFE assessment strategy

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

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

Knowledge learning objectives (LOs)

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

Skills LOs

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

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

Section 3: explanation of terms

This table explains how the terms used at **level 3** in the unit content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

Analyse	Break down the subject into separate parts and examine each part. Show how the main ideas are related and why they are important. Reference to current research or theory may support the analysis.
Apply	Explain how existing knowledge can be linked to new or different situations in practice.
Clarify	Explain the information in a clear, concise way.
Classify	Organise according to specific criteria.
Collate	Collect and present information arranged in sequential or logical order.
Compare	Examine the subjects in detail and consider the similarities and differences.
Critically compare	This is a development of 'compare' where the learner considers the positive aspects and limitations of the subject.
Consider	Think carefully and write about a problem, action or decision.
Create	Make or produce an artefact as required.
Demonstrate	Show an understanding by describing, explaining or illustrating using examples.
Describe	Write about the subject giving detailed information in a logical way.
Develop (a plan/idea)	Expand a plan or idea by adding more detail and/or depth of information.
Diagnose	Identify the cause based on valid evidence.
Differentiate	Identify the differences between two or more things.
Discuss	Write a detailed account giving a range of views or opinions.
Distinguish	Explain the difference between two or more items, resources, pieces of information.
Draw conclusions	Make a final decision or judgement based on reasons.
Estimate	Form an approximate opinion or judgement using previous knowledge or considering other information.

Evaluate	Examine strengths and weaknesses, arguments for and against and/or similarities and differences. Judge the evidence from the different perspectives and make a valid conclusion or reasoned judgement. Reference to current research or theory may support the evaluation.
Explain	Provide detailed information about the subject with reasons showing how or why. Responses could include examples to support these reasons.
Extrapolate	Use existing knowledge to predict possible outcomes that might be outside the norm.
Identify	Recognise and name the main points accurately. (Some description may also be necessary to gain higher marks when using compensatory marking).
Implement	Explain how to put an idea or plan into action.
Interpret	Explain the meaning of something.
Judge	Form an opinion or make a decision.
Justify	Give a satisfactory explanation for actions or decisions.
Perform	Carry out a task or process to meet the requirements of the question.
Plan	Think about and organise information in a logical way using an appropriate format.
Provide	Identify and give relevant and detailed information in relation to the subject.
Reflect	Learners should consider their actions, experiences or learning and the implications of this for their practice and/or professional development.
Review and revise	Look back over the subject and make corrections or changes.
Select	Make an informed choice for a specific purpose.
Show	Supply evidence to demonstrate accurate knowledge and understanding.
State	Give the main points clearly in sentences or paragraphs.
Summarise	Give the main ideas or facts in a concise way.
Test	Complete a series of checks utilising a set procedure.

Section 4: support

Support materials

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

- learning resources
- Qualification Factsheet
- Sample Assessment Materials

Other support materials

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

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

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

Appendix A: units

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

 Knowledge-only units are indicated by a star. If a unit is not marked with a star, it is a skills unit or contains a mix of knowledge and skills.

Mandatory units

	Unit number	Regulated unit number	Unit title	Level	GLH
	Unit 01	A/651/1102	Data systems	3	45
	Unit 02	D/651/1103	Data back up and storage	3	36
	Unit 03	F/651/1104	Data fundamentals	3	36
	Unit 04	H/651/1105	Digital information systems	3	54
	Unit 05	J/651/1106	Business operation	3	45
	Unit 06	K/651/1107	Communication	3	36
	Unit 07	L/651/1108	Professional development and working practice	3	45

Pathway units

Unit number	Regulated unit number	Unit title	Level	GLH
Unit 08	M/651/1109	Digital application technician (DAT)	3	63
Unit 09	Y/651/1110	Digital service technician (DST)	3	63

The units above may be available as stand-alone unit programmes. Please visit the NCFE website for further information.

Change history record

Version	Publication date	Description of change
v1.0	August 2025	First publication