

Chief Examiner and Chief Moderator Report

**NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Food and
Cookery
QN: 603/7014/2**

Series: Summer 2025

EA paper number: P002848 , P002849

NEA paper number: P002850

EA assessment date: 19 May 2025

NEA assessment date: 30 April 2025

Introduction

This report contains information in relation to the examined assessment (EA) from the chief examiner and non-exam assessment (NEA) from the chief moderator, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment series.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally performed well, as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grade boundary information
- administering the examined assessment (EA) and non-exam assessment (NEA)
- evidence creation
- standard of learner work
- responses to the assessments

The qualification is linear, meaning both assessments must be taken in the same assessment series and cannot be combined across different assessment series. Learners are allowed one attempt at each assessment, and there are no resit opportunities.

Grade boundary information

This qualification consists of two assessments: the examined assessment (EA) and the non-exam assessment (NEA).

After both assessments are completed and marked or moderated, the marks are combined to give a final mark for each learner. Where the raw marks do not reflect the required weighting of the assessment, a scaling factor is applied. For further information on grading information and scaling factors, please see the Qualification Specification.

Qualification scaled mark boundaries in this series are:

	Overall	Notional boundaries*	
		EA	NEA
Scaling factor		1	1.25
Max	200	80	96
Level 2 Distinction*	170	62	84
Level 2 Distinction	143	53	72
Level 2 Merit	116	44	57
Level 2 Pass	89	36	42
Level 1 Distinction	69	28	32
Level 1 Merit	49	21	22
Level 1 Pass	30	14	13

* The grade boundaries given for each assessment are known as 'notional grade boundaries', as they are for illustrative purposes only. Grade boundaries are the lowest mark with which a grade is achieved.

Administering the examined assessment (EA) and non-exam assessment (NEA)

The EA is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment](#) document. The NEA is moderated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of NEA – Non-Exam Assessment](#) document.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery](#) (QSID) document.

Evidence creation

Examined assessment (EA)

Learners should use the space provided to answer questions. Where answers are typed or additional pages included, the learner's name, centre number, centre name and task number must be clearly visible. The additional paper must then be securely attached to the workbook.

Where assessments are completed online, centres must ensure they are familiar with the Surpass platform and have completed all testing and preparation before the assessment, to ensure learners are unaffected by technological issues.

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Most learners achieved to a good standard and the majority attempted all tasks. There are eight tasks in total and learners produced both written and photographic evidence across all tasks. Tasks 2 (b), 3 (c) and 4 (b) were the most challenging for learners based on the evaluative and analytical element of the task.

Task 1 (a): learners produced both tables and annotated recipes to explain the amendments they had made. Some used colour effectively to make clear the changes they had made and to further explain why they had made these changes. Higher marks were achieved when learners had gone on to fully explain, in written paragraphs, the amendments they had made

Task 2 (a) and 3 (b): the majority of learners produced a story board using photographs taken when preparing and cooking their amended / chosen dishes. Some produced photographs and annotation alongside. Where annotation explained what learners were doing and why, higher marks were achieved.

Task 4 (a): evidence required by the task was a photograph of the finished layered dessert and a copy of the recipe used. Many learners had provided the recipe via a link. Whilst this was accepted as a 'copy', it is preferable that the full recipe be included in the NEA task.

Task 2 (b), 3 (c) and 4 (b): all learners produced a written evaluation for this task. Many had photographic evidence of a finished product which they had annotated. Where this was done well, it allowed learners to evaluate the sensory qualities of the dish and form the basis of a thorough evaluation.

Standard of learner work

Examined assessment (EA)

Overall, it was pleasing to see that learners of all abilities were able to demonstrate an appropriate level of understanding of key concepts such as food safety, recipe planning and amendment, nutrition and food related ill-health conditions. The multiple choice / lower-level questions were broadly attempted by all whilst the two extended writing questions were left unanswered by a high proportion of learners for the second year in a row. Learners should be encouraged to answer all questions and not leave any unanswered even if they are unsure.

Most learners found the AO2 / AO3 questions more challenging, a number of learners did not read the question carefully and therefore did not explain or suggest in enough detail to be awarded full marks with a number of learners describing two different points.

Nutrition continues to be an area where there are clear gaps in learner knowledge; many learners could not recall the function of fibre and some learners could not recall the functions of fat and vitamin D. Learners were better at making food suggestions for different life stages however they found it challenging to justify their choices which meant they did not access the higher mark bands. Overall, learners still need more practice at answering the extending writing questions. Within these questions, learners should be able to recall knowledge and understanding of nutrition, apply their knowledge by explaining the consequences of excess / deficiencies then provide excellent justifications for improvements in order to access the higher mark bands.

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Overall, learners performed well across most tasks, and a range of achievement was seen. Practical tasks 2 (a), 3 (b) and 4 (a) were well done and scored the highest marks across the cohort. Where learners achieved well, they demonstrated sound knowledge and recall of nutrition, health and safety, preparation and cooking skills, recipe amendment and menu planning. They also paid attention to the requirements of the brief and produced evidence that satisfied all areas.

Learners who had not performed as well as expected had done so for a number of reasons. Many had not attempted all tasks or had started but not completed the task. This was due to several reasons referenced on feedback sheets including attendance issues, educated elsewhere or lack of engagement. Some learners had cooked but not produced the written evidence to accompany the practical element; they also did not perform as well.

Most learners had a resource pack. These varied in quality but had allowed learners to gather research that could be used in their NEA and also reference the websites used. Some learners had not produced a resource pack, and assessors should be aware that this is a requirement of the NEA.

The moderation process was delayed by missing evidence. All evidence should be uploaded in the given timeframe using the 'Evidence Upload Checklist' which will indicate if a learner has completed a task or not. It is also advisable to upload learner work as one whole document, rather than several separate documents as this also impacts the moderation process.

It was pleasing to see tutor comments on observation sheets. These were generally more detailed and backed up the work the learner had done. When done well, these help the moderator to see where marks have been awarded where learner work may be sparse. However, many feedback sheets were not signed, or the learner had not commented on them. The feedback sheet is an essential document for the learner, and they should be aware of the marks they have achieved and have the opportunity to respond.

Responses to the assessments

Examined assessment (EA)

Question 1

A multiple-choice question that the majority of learners attempted with just under half of all learners answered correctly. There were no common errors.

Question 2

A multiple-choice question that the majority of learners attempted and a high proportion of learners answered correctly.

Question 3

A multiple-choice question that the majority of learners attempted and a high proportion of learners answered correctly.

Question 4

Learners found this question challenging, the majority of learners were not able to answer this question correctly with a number of learners referring to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) or leaving the question blank.

Question 5

The quality and standard of answers were varied, learners broadly got the answer wrong. Whilst a number of learners were able to reference pesticides in their answer, they failed to specify that they were not artificial or chemical and therefore could not access marks. Another common error was that some learners did not read the question and named vegetables that could be grown organically instead.

Question 6

Learners found this question challenging, the quality and standard of responses were varied with some learners not attempting the question. Just under half of learners were able to provide a reason to access one mark. Very few were able to justify their answer in enough detail.

Question 7(a)

This question was generally well answered with learners being able to name two different types of bacteria or being able to name one type of bacteria and describing how the food could have been contaminated. A misconception by a few lower-level learners was to name cross-contamination and describe what it is rather than name specific bacteria.

Question 7(b)

Learners of all abilities found this question challenging as they did not read the question correctly and described storage, preparation and cooking conditions meaning they were awarded one of three marks available. Few learners were able to apply their knowledge and include factual information such as cooking / chilling temperatures and explain the use of a food probe.

Question 8

A multiple-choice question that the majority of learners attempted and a high proportion of learners answered correctly. No common errors or misconceptions.

Question 9

A multiple-choice question that the majority of learners attempted and a high proportion of learners answered correctly. No common errors or misconceptions.

Question 10

A multiple-choice question that the majority of learners attempted and a high proportion of learners answered correctly. No common errors or misconceptions.

Question 11

A well answered question with many learners answering correctly. A common misconception was that some learners named accompaniments / side dishes such as bread rather than a garnish. Learners do need to know the difference between an accompaniment and a garnish.

Question 12

A well answered question where the majority of learners could describe a benefit, but as this was an AO2 question many were not able to fully explain in order to access the full two marks. The most common answers discussed the nutritional benefit or sensory reasons in their responses.

Question 13 (a)

A well answered question with a high number of learners attempting the question. Many learners were able to state two areas of recipe amendment. Common answers related to food related health conditions or social factors.

Question 13 (b)

Whilst this question was attempted by a high number of learners, many did not correctly answer the question. A common error by learners was to reduce the quantity of ingredients. Learners should have then stated what ingredient they would have used to replace or bulk out to gain a mark. Again, this was an AO2 question that learners found challenging.

Question 14 (a)

Some learners found this question challenging and a common misconception was for some learners to repeat other food related health conditions. Out of those that did answer correctly, many referred to age or budget.

Question 14 (b)

This question required learners to suggest, and many learners found this question difficult and unable to access the full two marks. Several learners did not acknowledge that Charlotte was a wedding planner and thought of her as a chef and discussed the cooking of the food rather than menu planning meaning a high proportion of learners were not awarded marks.

Question 15 (a)

A high proportion of learners found this question challenging. For many they did not read the question correctly and referred to preparation or cooking skills within their response rather than identifying two other factors.

Question 15 (b)

This question required learners to explain, and a common misconception was for learners to describe two things or simply not go into enough detail to explain with reasoning. Most learners were able to pick up one mark out of the two.

Question 15 (c)

Learners found this question challenging as most learners did not fully understand the question. A common error was for learners to suggest that there was a problem with the recipe, for example, the recipe contained too much milk or too much baking powder. Instead of focusing on the ingredient list learners should have considered the process involved.

Question 16

A multiple-choice question that many learners found challenging, responses were varied, no common errors were noted.

Question 17

A multiple-choice question that many learners found challenging, responses were varied, no common errors were noted.

Question 18

A multiple-choice question that the majority of learners attempted and a high proportion of learners answered correctly.

Question 19

Most learners attempted this question with the majority answering correctly. A common error was for students to answer food miles.

Question 20

Very well answered question, with a high number of learners being able to state the meaning of red and amber on the traffic light system. A common misconception was for some learners to refer to red and amber as being a high risk of food poisoning.

Question 21 (a)

A very well answered question with most learners being awarded the full two marks. Answers were not too varied with the most common answers referring to strong bones and teeth.

Question 21 (b)

This question required learners to explain, and learners of all abilities found this question challenging as they were required to consider how the dish would be suitable for a child within their response.

Question 22 (a)

This question was well answered overall with most learners being able to correctly name the two sections of The Eatwell Guide. A common error was to include butter in the oils and spreads.

Question 22 (b)

There was varied responses for this question with many learners not being able to explain the function of fibre. This was an AO2 question, and many learners could not explain in enough detail to be awarded the full two marks.

Question 23 (a)

A well answered question with most learners referring to fat and sugar within their responses. There were no common errors or misconceptions and responses were not varied.

Question 23 (b)

The majority of learners were able to attempt this question however a number of learners did not consider the impact that their improvement would have on his health and therefore were not awarded the second mark. Recommendations lacked justification.

Question 24 (a)

The majority of learners were able to attempt this question with many being awarded one mark out of the two. Answers were varied with some considering cost and availability. As this was an AO2 question it required a detailed explanation and not two different answers.

Question 24 (b)

A well answered question with the majority of learners achieving at least one mark. As mentioned in previous AO2 / 3 questions many learners did not go into enough detail to access the full two marks.

Question 25 (a)

A well answered question, some learners correctly identified that the diet was high in fat / sugar but did not specify the impact Laura's diet would have on her weight which meant they were not awarded the full two marks. Out of those that were awarded full marks the most common responses referred to weight gain from the excess sugar / saturated fats.

Question 25 (b)

A number of learners did not consider the impact that their improvement would have on her diet and therefore were not awarded the second mark. As this question required an AO3 response learners found accessing the full two marks challenging. Responses were not too varied with many discussing reducing fat / sugar intake.

Question 26

An extended writing question – several learners did not attempt this question and those that did, did not always read the question fully. As anticipated, responses were very varied. A number of learners did not consider the nutritional requirements of the life stage at all or consider the impact of having limited mobility. In a number of cases improvements were suggested but they failed to apply knowledge and understanding of nutrients and the consequences of such a diet and therefore could not access the higher mark bands. The best responses linked the limited mobility and age to the need to reduce energy intake, discussed the importance of calcium as well as making justification for improvements to the diet.

Question 27

An extended writing question – several learners did not attempt this question and those that did, did not always read the question fully. As anticipated, responses were very varied. Out of those learners who did attempt the question, quite a number had gaps in misconceptions, for example pairing up vitamin D with iron rather than calcium. Recall of fat and vitamin D was much improved from last years extended writing question which focussed on the B group vitamins.

Some learners demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of nutrients by specifying the consequences of a lack of nutrients. Very few learners provided excellent analysis and evaluation in order to access the higher mark bands. Justifications need to be improved for the majority of learners.

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Task 1 (a)

This task was to amend a recipe, provide a new recipe for a chef, explain the amendments made and consider the cost, taste and nutritional value of the amended recipe.

Learners who achieved well considered all amendments and were able to demonstrate sound nutritional knowledge. They also made links to the impact of the changes for example to the dish, to the target group (teenagers) and to the cost.

Learners who did not achieve as well had produced generic changes and had omitted one or more areas for amendment. In many cases, amendments were made but the nutrition was not fully linked to the brief. Some learners had listed the nutrients in each ingredient rather than state how the amendment affected the nutrition as in beef has protein for growth and repair. They would have been more successful explaining that using 5% minced beef reduces the fat content which also reduces the risk of coronary heart disease.

Task 2 (a)

This task was to prepare and cook the amended recipe. Most learners produced a response for this task and achieved well. There was a minority who produced only photographs as evidence.

Learners who achieved well demonstrated a wide range of safe and hygienic working practices as well as a wide range of technical skills, preparation and cooking techniques. It was pleasing to see so many learners making their own pasta to elevate the skill levels of their dish, as well as making it to a very high standard. Other learners thought outside the box and made a Bolognese, a lasagne or a kofta based dish. These were relevant and justified changes that show our learners can challenge themselves, showing a different way of thinking whilst keeping to the brief.

The use of photographic evidence enhanced work and allowed learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the processes they were using. Annotation was done well when learners described what they were doing and why, in terms of processes and health and safety. Presentation of dishes was elevated by garnishes and precise making of the dish.

Learners who did not achieve as well demonstrated safe working practices and a range of skills. However, their technical skills were not as refined, and their presentation was lacking. Some learners had repeated the method of making in their annotation, rather than explain what they were doing. Instead of 'I am chopping the onion' they could say 'I am chopping the onion using the bridge and claw, so I do not cut myself. The onion is small and even, so they cook at the same rate, and I am using a green chopping board to prevent cross contamination'.

Task 2 (b)

This task was to evaluate the amended recipe made in Task 2 (a). Learners were expected to evaluate the preparation skills and techniques used, the health and safety demonstrated and

the finished dish. They were also to evaluate the impact the amendments made to the nutritional and sensory qualities of the dish.

Most learners attempted this task. They achieved well when they adopted a methodical approach and used evaluative comments and sensory words to describe the dish. Learners who suggested changes, both to the dish and their own working practices, achieved better than learners who just looked at the skills they used and the finish of the dish. To access higher mark bands, learners should be encouraged to analyse the requirements of the task and make sure that they have covered all areas. Suggesting improvements is vital to be able to achieve well in this task.

Learners who did not achieve as well had not evaluated fully. Many had descriptive comments or a repeat of the method they had used. Some only looked at the final dish, and some only the technical skills they used. It is worth noting that learners who use writing frames were often lacking depth within their evaluation. What went well (WWW) / Even better if (EBI) statements in a box steered some learners to single sentence responses rather than considering their product / skills in more depth. Learners who wrote freely often produced a more in-depth analysis / evaluation.

Task 3 (a)

This task was to menu and action plan a two-course meal. The meal was for an active female adult vegetarian and had to be cooked in 2 ½ hours. This task was not answered as well as previous tasks and many learners had not considered the skill levels in their menu and focussed more on vegetarian food than it being for an active adult female. Quality of action plans varied across the cohort.

Learners who achieved well considered both the menu and the action plan. They chose challenging menus that would fill the 2 ½ hour time frame but were also suitable for the target group. Skills such as pastry making, custards and making own jams were common. Justifications of choice of menu were concise, and they had reasoned judgements based around choice of menu, nutrition and suitability as well as sensory qualities of the dish. Action planning was dovetailed and, in many cases, learners had colour coded to make the plan easier to follow but it also had the benefit of demonstrating dovetailing of making. Plans were complete and had clear timings as well as consideration of health and safety throughout.

Learners who had not achieved as well had minimal justification for their choice of menu. Some had a simple statement of the dishes they were making. Many had attempted to justify but had focussed in on vegetarian or active and had not considered all areas. Nutrition was not always considered in any depth and quite often referenced energy rather than looking at other nutrients that would be required. Simple dishes were chosen which did not contain enough high skills to access higher marks nor fill the 2 ½ hours allotted time for example soup, vegetable chilli or chickpea curry. Action planning was not always complete, and many had gaps within the plan itself – either no timings or no health and safety. Learners should be encouraged to dovetail their action plans, rather than making two dishes separately.

Task 3 (b)

This Task was to follow the action plan from Task 3 (a) to prepare, cook and present the two-course menu in a 2 ½ hour period.

Learners who achieved well demonstrated a wide range of safe and hygienic working practices as well as a wide range of technical skills, preparation and cooking techniques. It was particularly pleasing to see high level skills being demonstrated to produce quality products. The range of dishes seen across the cohort was encouraging. Learners who made dishes from scratch performed better than those who used ready made products. As with Task 2 (a), the use of photographic evidence enhanced work and allowed learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the processes they were using. Annotation was done well when learners described what they were doing and why, in terms of processes and health and safety. Presentation of dishes was elevated by garnishes, use of plates and precise making of the dish.

Learners who did not achieve as well chose simple products to make and did not always make them to a higher level. It was pleasing to see that health and safety working practices were a high standard across the learners, but quite often this was not documented or explained which could have improved marks within the task. Many did not annotate their photographic evidence and in some cases only photographs were submitted, and the moderator had to rely on assessor comments on observation forms. Where annotation was present, it was a repeat of the method used and contained no explanation of the skills, techniques and health and safety being demonstrated.

Task 3 (c)

This Task was to evaluate the two-course menu made in Task 3 (b). Learners were to evaluate their choice of menu and action plan, skills and techniques used as well as evaluating the final dish.

This was not done as well as other tasks and some learners had difficulty evaluating and analysing.

Most learners attempted this task. They achieved well when they adopted a methodical approach and used evaluative comments and sensory words to describe the dish. Learners who suggested changes, to the menu and action plan, dish, and their own working practices, achieved better than learners who just looked at the skills they used and the finish of the dish. To access higher mark bands, learners should be encouraged to analyse the requirements of the task and make sure that they have covered all areas. Suggesting improvements is vital to be able to achieve well in this task and many learners managed to suggest improvements to their menu, dishes and working practices.

Learners who did not achieve well did not evaluate all the areas that were required by the task. Some learners did not attempt the task. Where evaluation had been done, it was brief and was often descriptive and a repeat of the method. Some learners had evaluated one dish only and had only looked at sensory qualities, ignoring the need for an evaluation of menu, action plan

and working practices. Judgements were not always reasoned and lacked coherence. In many cases, learners had not evaluated the action plan at all and should be encouraged to analyse the task in more detail to ensure they include the evidence required to improve their outcomes.

Task 4 (a)

This task was to choose, prepare, cook and present a celebration layered dessert for someone with a nut allergy. This was done as well as the other practical tasks in this NEA. Most learners attempted this task.

Learners who achieved well demonstrated a wide range of safe and hygienic working practices as well as a wide range of technical skills, preparation and cooking techniques. It was pleasing to see high level skills being demonstrated to produce quality products which were very well presented. Moderators saw sugar work, chocolate work, piping, jam making, custard making, own biscuits and jellies amongst other skills. The range of dishes seen across the cohort was encouraging. Learners who made dishes from scratch performed better than those who used ready made products.

Learners who did not achieve as expected produced simple dishes, often using ready made products. Their technical skills were not as refined and presentation was not as high quality, for example buttercream spread not piped, custard readymade and not made from eggs. Some learners did not attempt this task.

It is worth noting that the evidence required was a photograph of the final dish and a copy of the recipe used. Many learners had completed picture / story boards and annotated them. This was not a requirement of the task. Encourage learners to check exactly what evidence they need before completing unnecessary work.

Task 4 (b)

This task was to evaluate the celebration layered dessert for someone with a nut allergy made in Task 4 (a). This was not done as well as other tasks across the NEA. Most learners attempted this task.

As with previous evaluative tasks, learners achieved well when they adopted a methodical approach and used evaluative comments and sensory words to describe the dish. Learners were required to evaluate the nutrition of the final dish, the finish of the final dish and how well they prevented nut contamination. Learners that did this accessed the higher mark bands. Many referenced the sugar and fat content and linked to health impacts of these ingredients. Suggesting improvements is vital to be able to achieve well in this task and many learners managed to suggest improvements to both their choice of dish and finish.

Learners who did not do as well as expected missed elements of the evidence required or did not attempt the task. Nutritional analysis was vague and mentioned the dish being 'unhealthy' rather than explaining how it was 'unhealthy'. Limited suggestions for change to the dish or working practices were seen.