T-LEVELS | Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education

T Level Technical Qualification in Healthcare Science

Employer set project (ESP)

Assisting with Healthcare Science

Provider guide

v1.1: Specimen assessment materials
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Marking the external assessment task

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

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

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General

The use of the short phrase ‘employer set project’ or ‘ESP’ is made in reference to the assessment overall.

The use of the word ‘brief’ is made in reference to the assessment scenario and any supporting information (such as, reports), including additional resources found via the hyperlinks provided.

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Instructions for tutors

Assessment conditions

Students must complete the employer set project (ESP) independently and under supervised conditions, as per the task specific instructions.

The maximum overall time allowed for the external assessment is 17 hours 45 minutes under supervised conditions. The individual timings for each task are detailed further in the document. The table below shows when providers may run each task, which assessment materials should be issued to students and at which stage of the assessment window each task should be completed by:

Task	Issuing of assessment materials	Week 1	Week 2
1	Issue all pages from the project brief, from the 'guidance for students' section up to and including task 1 only	NCFE fixed time and date	-
2	In addition to the above, issue all pages from the project brief (including the pro-forma for this task) up to and including task 2 only, as well as a copy of the student's work from task 1.	NCFE fixed time and date	-
3(a)(i), 3(a)(ii) and 3(b)	In addition to the above, issue all pages from task 3 (including the pro-forma for this task), as well as a copy of the student's work from task 2.	-	Monday to Friday (students must not start task 3(a) until all students in the cohort have completed task 2)
4(a) and 4(b)	In addition to the above, issue all pages from task 4 (including the pro-forma for this task), as well as a copy of the student's work from task 2.	-	
5	Issue all pages from the project brief (including the pro-forma for this task), up to and including task 5.	-	

NCFE sets the start date and the submission date of the assessment window for the external assessment tasks please see the key dates schedule for this information.

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

Tutors must retain students' materials and/or evidence produced by students within the supervised assessment.

At the end of each supervised session, the tutor must collect all evidence and any other materials, before students leave the room, to ensure that no student takes any external assessment material or assessment evidence out of the room.

Where permitted for each task, a copy of evidence produced by students in earlier tasks must be provided to students by either electronic or paper means. When appropriate, evidence provided to students must be destroyed and must not be included with or replace the original evidence generated and submitted by students during that respective task. Providing copies of previously generated evidence for a subsequent task is **not** an opportunity for

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students to amend or improve previously submitted evidence, and any additional notes that students wish to include must be made separately from copies of the previously submitted evidence.

Sufficient monitoring and checks should be made to ensure that students have not made materials available to themselves or anyone else electronically via the intranet or the internet.

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

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

Resources

Students must have access to the appropriate resources required to complete the ESP. These include the following:

- a computer with internet access so that hyperlinks in the brief can be accessed – tutors must ensure that all links are accessible and working prior to the start of the assessment, and where appropriate, provide students with electronic versions of articles provided by NCFE
- technical equipment as required, such as audio recording equipment

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

Accessibility and fairness

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

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

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Assessment and task specific instructions

Employer set project (ESP)

For each assessment window, there will be 2 versions of the ESP available for booking; these versions are contextualised against each occupational specialism within the pathway. The brief for each version will be set by employers in conjunction with NCFE and will be different for each assessment window. The briefs are designed to ensure a motivating starting point for students and will be based on, for example, a real-world problem.

The provider must book students onto the appropriate version of the ESP by the deadline for that specific assessment series. Please see the key dates schedule on the relevant qualification page of Qualhub for these dates.

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

Whilst it is recommended that a student is booked onto the version that is relevant to their intended occupational specialism, it is not a requirement that the student makes a decision based on this, or any other specific given criteria.

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Task 1: research/literature review

The first task of the ESP requires students to complete research that is focused on collating information and data from a range of literature sources provided, alongside the knowledge they have received during their learning throughout the qualification. The information students compile should be refined and focused on the details of the brief. Resources required include access to the internet for the purpose of accessing the literature sources/links provided. Privacy mode should be disabled, and policies applied to prevent deletion of browsing history. Upon completion of task 1, tutors must take screenshots/screen grabs of each students browsing history and compile this into an appropriately referenced word document as a standard piece of evidence.

Task 1 must be completed within a single scheduled assessment period over a maximum of one day, and under supervised conditions. A maximum of 5 hours is available for students to complete this task with a single 1 hour (maximum) break permitted to be taken no earlier than 2 hours from the start of the assessment. During this break, the tutor and students may leave the assessment room if materials can be stored or held securely; however, students must be supervised for the duration of the break and must not discuss any aspect of the assessment with other students. This break does not count towards the total assessment time for this task.

Tutors should also be conscious of their responsibility to ensure each student's browsing history is captured and not altered or amended in any way by the student. Tutors can research suitable programmes/browser extensions, consult with IT experts or where available, discuss suitable controls with the relevant departments that can either be placed on the network or accessed accurately through alternative means.

Task 2: quality improvement report

Task 2 requires students to create a quality improvement report that will detail an approach to resolving the problems outlined in the brief. Students should have access to the 'Quality improvement report' pro forma. Tutors must not schedule separate supervised sessions for task 2, which must be taken as a whole (3 hours) and must not be split, for example, into two 1 hour 30 minute sessions.

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to create a quality improvement report based on the detailed brief provided in the tasks. Students should be provided with either a hard copy (print out) or electronic copy of their research from task 1. Students are not allowed to make any amendments to their work from task 1 during completion of task 2, as this is not an opportunity for students to improve or make changes to evidence. All returned evidence should be kept separate from original evidence and destroyed/deleted when appropriate. Students must complete this task within 3 hours. As part of this task, students should plan and manage how they will spend their time, in order to produce what is outlined in the evidence requirements. Resources required include access to research materials and the internet for the purpose of accessing the literature sources/links from task 1. Privacy mode should be disabled, and policies applied to prevent deletion of browsing history. Upon completion of task 2, tutors must take screenshots/screen grabs of each students browsing history and compile this into an appropriately referenced word document as a standard piece of evidence.

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Task 3: peer discussion

The following task is based on a group discussion (task 3(a)). If there are instances within a cohort where there is a mix of students sitting different versions of the ESP, then students should be grouped together based on the version being taken. This is to ensure that all students are familiar with the topic being discussed and have the best opportunity to provide rich and detailed feedback to their peers**.**

Task 3(a)

Students must not start task 3(a) until all students in the cohort have completed task 2.

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to complete the preparation for peer discussion form based on evidence produced in task 2 and the student's knowledge and skills. Students should be provided with a hard copy (print out) or electronic copy of their report from task 2. Students are not allowed to make any amendments to their work from task 2 during completion of task 3(a), as this is not an opportunity for students to improve or make changes to evidence. All returned evidence should be kept separate from original evidence and destroyed when appropriate.

Tutors will assign students to peer discussion groups. Each group must be made up of between 3 and 5 students. Tutors may consider the room or space available and cohort sizes when determining the number of students within a group, within the specified range.

Task 3(a)(i): preparing for peer discussion

Students are required to review their peers' evidence from task 2 (by the students in their peer discussion group) and prepare to discuss them with the group. They should complete a preparation for peer discussion form for each of their peer's evidence from task 2 which they review. For example, in a group of 3 students:

- student 1 will review the task 2 evidence from students 2 and 3
- student 2 will review the task 2 evidence from students 1 and 3
- student 3 will review the task 2 evidence from students 1 and 2

Tutors must give students printed versions of the relevant evidence from task 2 for each student in their group, along with copies of the preparation for peer discussion pro-forma. Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to complete the preparation for peer discussion pro-formas (see pro-forma document). Students are not required to be seated in their peer discussion groups when completing this task. When they have completed their pro-formas, these should be handed in to the tutor.

Tutors should review the preparation for peer discussion pro-formas that each student has produced. This is to ensure that sufficient detail is provided to allow all students to have access to peer feedback during the discussion in task 3(a)(ii). Tutors can use oral guidance to highlight where improvements can be made to the preparation for peer discussion pro-formas, (for example, highlighting points where they have not completed the pro-forma sufficiently). Tutors should not amend the student's work or tell them what to add; they should only offer guidance, such as:

- you have not said why you think that aspect of their evidence (from task 2) worked well
- your question does not relate to how and why they designed their evidence (from task 2) the way they did
- how do you think that would improve their evidence (from task 2)?

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Students should then revise and redraft their work before tutors review it again.

A maximum time of 2 hours has been set for this part of task 3, that includes any further work required from students following the tutor review of students' preparation materials.

Tutors should manage completion of task 3(a)(i) as part of their planning for the delivery of the other parts of task 3.

Tutors should ensure the pro-forma for this task is made available to students.

Task 3(a)(ii): exchanging feedback during peer discussion

Students will take part in a group discussion to give and receive feedback on their evidence from task 2 within their group. Students should be provided with hard copies (print outs) of their evidence from task 2 for their group. Students are not allowed to make any amendments to their work from task 2 during the completion of task 3(a)(ii). Students should also be provided with copies of their completed pro-formas from task 3(a)(i).

Students will have 20 minutes of supervised preparation time at the beginning of this task. This time is for students to familiarise themselves with their group's work and their feedback on these to ensure discussion can proceed effectively.

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

During the discussion, each student will have a maximum of 5 minutes to lead a presentation of the details of their work, with a further 10–20 minutes (5 minutes per other group member) allocated to giving feedback to the lead student. Students must complete handwritten notes of the feedback they receive from each group member on the feedback noted on the peer discussion pro-forma. This must then be repeated for each student until each piece of evidence has been discussed, and all students have received feedback from the group on their report.

Task 3(b): using peer feedback to update your quality improvement report

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to reflect on the feedback received from peers and update their evidence (from task 2) accordingly. Students should reference the feedback received in their summary of changes. Students will complete this task within one hour of supervised assessment time.

Students should be provided with a hard copy (print out), or electronic copy of their evidence from task 2. Students can make any amendments to their work from task 2 during completion of task 3(a); however, this will now contribute towards evidence for task 3(b) as this is not an opportunity for students to improve or make changes to evidence from task 2. All returned evidence should be kept separate from original evidence and be appropriately referenced.

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Task 4: present an overview of your quality improvement report

Task 4(a): preparing to present your quality improvement report

Tutors must give students their evidence from task 2, including any summary of changes from task 3(b). Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions to prepare for a discussion with the tutor. It is recommended that students spend no longer than 2 hours to prepare for this task, which may also include practising the verbal delivery of their content. The discussion with the tutor will start with the delivery of their content. A pro-forma has been provided to support students with this task.

Students should be provided with a hard copy (print out) or electronic copy of their research from task 1, their original report from task 2 and their improved report from task 3(b). Students are not allowed to make any amendments to their work from task 1, 2 or 3(b) during completion of task 4(a) as this is not an opportunity for students to improve or make changes to evidence from this task. All returned evidence should be kept separate from original evidence and destroyed or deleted when appropriate.

Task 4(b): presenting and discussing your quality improvement report

Students are required to present an overview of the key elements of their evidence from task 2, including their justifications, and appropriate commentary from task 3(b). As part of this task, the tutor will assume the role of a supervisor in the relevant occupational area referenced in the brief and take part in a discussion where the student will present an overview of their report, before being questioned by the tutor to provide further rationale for the approach taken. The questions will be supplied by NCFE and tutors must select and use the most appropriate questions based on the students presented overview.

Students should be provided with a hard copy (print out) or electronic copy of their materials produced in task 4(a), to include additional materials from previous tasks permitted in task 4(a) (research from task 1, the original evidence from task 2 and their improved evidence from task 3(b)). Students are not allowed to make any amendments to their work from task 1, 2 or 3(b) during completion of task 4(b) as this is not an opportunity for students to improve or make changes to evidence from this task. All returned evidence should be kept separate from original evidence and destroyed or deleted when appropriate.

During this task, tutors should take notes of the students' responses to submit alongside the audio recording.

The discussion with the tutor will move on to a question-and-answer section that should take no longer than 15 minutes in total. Tutors should ask each student 4 questions, selecting 1 question from each of the 4 categories (see further details below). Tutors should identify in advance of the discussion which questions they are going to ask each student, to ensure that the full range of questions is used and to minimise predictability. When identifying questions, tutors can select those that they feel are most appropriate for the student based on their performance in task 3.

The role of the tutor in this assessment is to ask the student questions. The tutor must not offer suggestions. The tutor can repeat or rephrase questions but only after giving the student a chance to ask for clarification. When rephrasing a question, this must be done in a way that does not introduce new information for the student. The tutor may also clarify with the student if they are happy with their response, which should only be stated as a means to progress with the discussion, (for example, on to the next question). In addition to this, the tutor must make a judgement and provide commentary around how well the student has verbally communicated.

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Student name			
Student ref number		**Date of observation**	
Provider name			

Welcome/introduction

This task will:

- allow for a structured discussion where you will present your report and discuss the amendments made as a result of the feedback generated through peer discussion in task 3
- include 4 verbal questions, and I will be making notes of responses
- be audio recorded and submitted as evidence, alongside my notes, for this task

Question 1:

either

1(a) Can you describe any additional resources or specific information that would be useful for you to access to further develop your <insert title from evidence produced in task 2>?

or

1(b) Can you think of any additional areas of improvement that would be useful to consider and research further if you had unlimited sources of information?

or

1(c) Can you explain why you think that the information you reviewed in the research literature provided sufficient detail to prevent a similar incident from happening again in the future?

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Question 2:

either

2(a) Can you describe how you would communicate the recommendations made in your <insert title from evidence produced in task 2> with the clinical area?

or

2(b) Explain how you would encourage a clinical team to adopt the recommendations of your <insert title from evidence produced in task 2>

or

2(c) You become aware that another clinical area has seen a rise in adverse incidents related to mislabelling of samples; how would you approach sharing your recommendations and best practice?

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Question 3:

either

3(a) Can you tell me what strategies you would use to communicate with someone who was obstructive and unreceptive of the changes being proposed?

or

3(b) How would you make sure everyone in the clinical team understood the changes to process outlined in your <insert title from evidence produced in task 2>?

or

3(c) A team member fails to implement changes recommended in your <insert title from evidence produced in task 2> and tells their colleagues that the old method they have used for years is much better. How would you communicate with this person and the team to encourage them to adopt your new practices?

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Question 4:

either

4(a) In what ways did the feedback from your peers in task 3 lead you to think differently about the activity?

or

4(b) Reflecting on the feedback you received from your peers, explain your opinion on the value of feedback among team members in the workplace.

or

4(c) Reflecting on the feedback received from your peers, explain how receiving feedback could aid your personal and professional development.

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Any other tutor comments:	

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Task 5: reflective account

Students are required to work independently and under supervised conditions for this task.

Students must, as part of task 5, carry out a reflective evaluation of their work in relation to the brief. Tutors should encourage students to read the tasks in their entirety to ensure that students recognise this aspect of the task, which will allow students to be aware of the time they have.

Students should be provided with a hard copy (print out), or electronic copy of their evidence produced in tasks 1, 2, 3(a), 3(b), 4(a) and 4(b). For task 4(b) this should only be the students notes and presentation materials, not the recording of the presentation, or the corresponding tutor's notes. Students are not allowed to make any amendments to these copies as this is not an opportunity for students to improve or make changes to evidence from this task. All evidence copies should be kept separate from original evidence and destroyed or deleted upon completion of this task.

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Timings

The timings below have been devised to support student and provider planning and are reflective of the timings per student. Where group involvement is required (for example, task 3(a)(ii)) tutors should consider how group sizes will impact on the overall time of the activity when planning.

Task 1 = a maximum of 5 hours in total.

Students will have a maximum of 1 hour allocated for a single break, to be taken no earlier than 2 hours from the start of the assessment. This break does not count towards the total assessment time for this task.

Task 2 = a maximum of 3 hours in total.

Task 3 = a maximum of 5 hours 25 minutes, consisting of:

Task 3(a)(i) = a maximum of 2 hours in total. This includes any further changes required to students' work following the tutor review.

Task 3(a)(ii) = between 1 hour 5 minutes and 2 hours 25 minutes (based on group size*)

Students will have 20 minutes to prepare for discussions.

Students will each have 5 minutes to discuss their quality improvement report.

All other students within the group will have a combined total of between 10 and 20 minutes (5 minutes per other student) to feed back to the student who discussed their quality improvement report.

The process for this task, as well as the associated timings for a group of 3 students, is outlined in the bullets below:

- students 1, 2 and 3 prepare for the discussion (20 minutes)
- student 1 discusses their report (5 minutes)
- students 2 and 3 give feedback to student 1 (5 minutes each, to a total of 10 minutes)
- student 2 discusses their report (5 minutes)
- students 1 and 3 give feedback to student 2 (5 minutes each, to a total of 10 minutes)
- student 3 discusses their report (5 minutes)
- students 1 and 2 give feedback to student 3 (5 minutes each, to a total of 10 minutes)

The maximum time for task 3(a)(ii), for a group size of **3**, is **1 hour 5 minutes**.

The below table will outline how the different permitted group sizes will affect the overall delivery duration for task 3(a)(ii). This should be taken into consideration when planning the delivery of this task. To maximise manageability, the provider may choose the group size.

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Group size	Preparation time	Discussion time	Feedback time	Total time (maximum)
3	20 minutes	5 minutes per student x 3 students = 15 minutes	10 minutes x 3 = 30 minutes	1 hour 5 minutes
4	20 minutes	5 minutes per student x 4 students = 20 minutes	15 minutes x 4 = 1 hour	1 hour 40 minutes
5	20 minutes	5 minutes per student x 5 students = 25 minutes	20 minutes x 5 = 1 hour 40 minutes	2 hours 25 minutes

Task 3(b) = a maximum of 1 hour in total.

Task 4(a) = a maximum of 2 hours for preparation.

Task 4(b) = 20 minutes in total:

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

Task 5 = a maximum of 2 hours.

Total (maximum) = 17 hours 45 minutes.

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Instructions for completing and submitting the external assessment task

The external assessment tasks must be completed and uploaded as a whole and not in separate sections. The submission of students' assessment evidence must be done before the submission date specified by NCFE. Tutors are encouraged to ensure that students follow the filename conventions specified in the external assessment tasks for each individual document, and any other guidance on the submission of digital evidence specified by NCFE.

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

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Document information

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Owner: Head of Assessment Design

Change History Record

Version	Description of change	Approval	Date of Issue
v1.0	Additional sample materials		September 2022
v1.1	Sample added as a watermark	November 2023	17 November 2023

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