Tutor Guidance

NCFE Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills
QN: 610/7905/4

NCFE Level 1 Essential Digital Skills
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Document security

This document should not be distributed to students – it is for centre and tutor use only. All tutors must be familiar with the information in this document along with the information in the Qualification Specifications.

This document should always be kept secure. This document should be read along with the Regulations for the Conduct of Digital Skills Assessments. Assessment conditions and resources are defined in the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery (QSID). These documents can be found on the NCFE website here.

1. Qualification and assessment overview

1.1 About Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills

The Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills qualification aims to provide reliable evidence of a learner's understanding and competency in the essential digital skills needed for everyday life. It will enable learners to engage confidently, safely and effectively with digital services, devices and online environments, supporting participation in modern society, further learning and employment. The qualification develops both knowledge and practical skills, enabling learners to apply digital skills in a range of real-life contexts and everyday activities.

The Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills qualification will enable learners to use digital devices, communicate and transact online, create and edit digital content, handle information effectively and stay safe and responsible in digital environments. At this level, essential digital skills will:

- enable learners to gain confidence and independence in using digital devices, software and online services safely and effectively
- enable learners to develop an understanding of digital safety, privacy, security and responsible online behaviour
- enable learners to find, manage, store and evaluate digital information using a range of devices and applications
- enable learners to create, edit and share digital content, including documents, images, sound and video
- enable learners to communicate and collaborate using digital technologies and online communication tools
- enable learners to use online services and complete digital transactions securely and confidently
- provide a foundation for progression to Level 1 Essential Digital Skills
- provide a basis for further study, employment and everyday life.

1.2 About Level 1 Essential Digital Skills

The Level 1 Essential Digital Skills qualification aims to provide reliable evidence of a learner's understanding and competency in the essential digital skills needed for life and work. It will enable learners to engage confidently, safely and effectively with digital services and products in everyday

life and employment. The qualification develops both knowledge and practical skills, enabling learners to apply digital skills in a range of personal, educational and workplace contexts, while supporting progression to further study and employment.

The Level 1 Essential Digital Skills qualification will enable learners to use digital technologies safely and responsibly, create and manage digital content, communicate effectively online, solve common technical problems and use online services securely. At this level, essential digital skills will:

- enable learners to gain confidence and independence in using a range of digital devices, applications and online services for life and work
- enable learners to develop an understanding of digital security, privacy, online identity and responsible digital behaviour, including the use of multi-factor authentication and protection against digital threats
- enable learners to find, evaluate, organise, store and transfer digital information effectively across devices and online platforms
- enable learners to create, edit and enhance digital documents and media, and process numerical data using digital applications and tools
- enable learners to communicate and collaborate using a range of digital communication methods appropriate to different audiences and contexts
- enable learners to identify and resolve common technical problems and use online resources to develop their digital skills independently
- enable learners to access, compare and use online services and transactions safely and securely, including evaluating online purchasing options and identifying potential scams
- provide a basis for further study, work and life.

1.3 Content coverage

The skills for both entry level 3 and level 1 are organised into the following five areas:

1	Being safe and responsible online and on digital devices
2	Using digital devices and handling information
3	Creating and editing
4	Digital communication
5	Transacting digitally

2. Instructions for tutors

2.1 Before the assessment

Centres must complete an online approval form in order to be set up to use our online assessment platform, Surpass. They must ensure that they meet the arrangements detailed below and have the expertise to access, administer and support the assessment. They should also be able to deal with technical issues that may arise during the assessment. The following instructions apply to all confidential materials relating to the administration and delivery of onscreen assessments.

Centres must:

- have access to Surpass to administer and SecureClient to deliver the assessments, further guidance can be found on the NCFE Online Assessment webpage
- demonstrate that the appropriate security systems are in place to prevent unauthorised access to the assessment materials
- meet the technical requirements within the technical specifications located within this page NCFE Online Assessment webpage
- always store electronic assessment materials securely
- ensure that assessment materials are only accessed in accordance with NCFE's Regulations for the Conduct of Digital Skills Assessments
- store learner keycodes securely and only give these to learners at the time of the assessment
- check the identity of each learner and ensure that the correct keycode is issued – the learner is responsible for inputting their keycode and ensuring that the name of the assessment and their details are correct. Further things to consider include that:
    - if the information presented to the learner is incorrect, they must notify the invigilator and close the assessment before starting
    - the invigilator must give the learner the correct keycode in order to access their assessment
    - if a learner sits an assessment in another learner's name (whether it is intentional or not), this may constitute malpractice
- have appropriate security systems and procedures in place to prevent learners using computers/laptops in assessments having unauthorised external communication with other users of computers/laptops

The onscreen platform, Surpass, has a demonstration tool available to show learners the functionality of the platform, allowing them to practise zipping folders and uploading files. It is highly recommended that learners use this demonstration tool to familiarise themselves with Surpass.

2.2 Taking the assessment

When more than one learner is taking the assessment in the same room, assessments should be scheduled to start at the same time as this will limit disruption.

The invigilator must ensure that the learners are sitting the correct assessment.

Learners must not have access to any materials including books and must not be able to access unauthorised software while undertaking the assessment. The room in which the assessment is being taken should have display materials removed or covered as specified in the NCFE's Regulations for the Conduct of Digital Skills Assessments.

Accessing unauthorised materials during the assessment may constitute malpractice and the learner could be subject to sanctions and penalties in accordance with NCFE's Malpractice and Maladministration guidelines.

Opportunities to upload evidence of completed assessment tasks are indicated to learners during their assessment using green upload buttons and bold text boxes.



There is a 15-minute optional break; this will occur at the end of Section 1. There are no requirements for the learner to take the 15-minute break, and they can move straight onto Section 2 at any time.

Breaks must be supervised at all times in accordance with our Regulations for the Conduct of Digital Skills Assessments here

2.3 At the end of the assessment

All learners' evidence must be uploaded onto Surpass when prompted throughout the assessment. There is no opportunity to upload evidence after the assessment has ended.

Following the external assessment, the invigilator is responsible for making sure any materials saved by the learner are deleted completely from the computer used.

3. Entry level 3 assessment and task specific instructions

There are two sections to the external assessment, worth a total of 40 marks. The total assessment time will not exceed 1 hour 25 minutes. Assessments must not take place until all teaching and learning of the qualification content has been delivered to learners. Learners sitting the online assessments must be able to manage zip files, further guidance can be found on the qualification pages.

3.1 External assessment Section 1: knowledge (12 marks)

This assessment will be available on demand and will be onscreen (through SecureClient). It will be externally set and externally marked and is comprised of 12 multiple-choice questions (MCQs) worth one mark each.

Time allowed: 20 minutes.

3.2 External assessment Section 2: skills (28 marks)

This assessment will be available on demand and will be onscreen (through SecureClient). It will be externally set and externally marked and is comprised of three practical tasks, each worth between 6 and 13 marks. Time allowed: 1 hour 5 minutes.

3.3 Marking the external assessment task

All external assessment tasks are set and marked by NCFE. The invigilated external assessment tasks must be treated independently of the teaching of the outline content. No work produced during the teaching should be used as evidence for the assessment.

If learners do not attempt one of the sections, or they fail to reach the minimum standard across all sections, they will receive a fail. The student will then have to resit both sections of the assessment.

4. Level 1 assessment and task specific instructions

There are two sections to the external assessment, worth a total of 60 marks. The total assessment time will not exceed 2 hours 25 minutes. Assessments must not take place until all teaching and learning of the qualification content has been delivered to learners. Learners sitting the online assessments must be able to manage zip files.

4.1 External assessment Section 1: knowledge (18 marks)

This assessment will be available on demand and will be onscreen (through SecureClient). It will be externally set and externally marked and comprised of 18 multiple-choice questions (MCQs) worth one mark each.

Time allowed: 25 minutes.

4.2 External assessment Section 2: skills (42 marks)

This assessment will be available on demand and will be onscreen (through SecureClient). It will be externally set and externally marked and comprised of four tasks, each worth between 8 and 14 marks.

Time allowed: 2 hours

4.3 Marking the external assessment task

All external assessment tasks are set and marked by NCFE. The invigilated external assessment tasks must be treated independently of the teaching of the outline content. No work produced during the teaching should be used as evidence for the assessment.

If learners do not attempt one of the sections, or they fail to reach the minimum standard across all sections, they will receive a fail. The learner will then have to resit both sections of the assessment.

5. Resources

A full list of resources can be found in the Qualification Specification for each qualification. Learners are not allowed to bring personal portable storage devices into the assessment (for example, memory sticks, portable hard drives or CDs).

6. Pre-release information

Assessment-specific pre-release documents can be accessed on the qualification pages under 'Assessment materials' and must be saved on your centre's local network when sitting onscreen as early in the academic session as possible. However, as a minimum they must be downloaded before the learners sit the external assessment. It is best practice to use the set-up of the pre-release materials as a teaching opportunity for your learners in which you provide support and guidance.

- **Important:** throughout the academic session, additional pre-release materials will be added to the bank as we introduce new papers. It is vital that you check the qualification pages regularly for any new pre-release materials.

We may also remove some pre-release materials from this page if the papers they are associated with are no longer live assessments. You can either remove these from your devices or leave them as they may be brought back at some stage.

7. Time allowance

Learners may not need the full allocation of time; however, it should be noted that each section has a fixed duration. Centres cannot carry forward any time from Section 1 to Section 2. The permitted time must not be increased, unless a reasonable adjustment has been agreed for a learner in accordance with the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy, which can be found on the NCFE website.

Learners are not allowed extra time to compensate for machines or networks that run slowly. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that appropriate hardware and software is available to learners. If unforeseen technical difficulties occur, the centre may pause the assessment and contact NCFE for additional technical support.

8. Accessibility and fairness

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

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

  NCFE seeks to provide equal access to assessment for all learners registered for its qualifications. NCFE recognises that reasonable adjustments may be required for assessments, and information is available in our Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Special Considerations Policy on our website.

  The responsible person (for example, special educational needs co-ordinator) must ensure that all relevant staff are aware of any reasonable adjustments requirements as per the JCQ (Joint

Council for Qualifications) policy. In principle, if a learner has an adjustment as part of their normal way of working, a similar arrangement will normally be permitted for external assessment. Please refer to the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery (QSID) document here under 'External assessment regulations' for qualification/component restrictions.

9. Qualification level pass grade descriptors

9.1 Entry level 3 qualification level pass grade descriptors

Candidates show some knowledge, understanding and capability regarding digital tasks in the workplace and everyday life and their interconnection. A threshold candidate (a candidate demonstrating the minimum competence required to pass the qualification) would generally be expected to demonstrate the following.

Being safe and responsible online and on digital devices	The candidate demonstrates an understanding of safe and responsible use of digital devices and online services. The candidate can identify common risks to personal information and digital security. The candidate can apply appropriate methods to protect personal information, data and privacy. The candidate understands how to report illegal, inappropriate or harmful online content to appropriate organisations or service providers. The candidate demonstrates awareness of digital wellbeing and can identify common physical effects of prolonged use of digital devices. The candidate can recognise practical actions that can be taken to minimise these risks and promote safer use of digital technology.
Using digital devices and handling information	The candidate demonstrates the ability to use digital devices and software effectively for everyday tasks. The candidate can locate, install and use suitable applications and can adjust system settings, including connectivity, display, language and accessibility features.

	The candidate can search for information online using appropriate search terms, search engines and navigation tools. The candidate can manage digital information by creating, saving, organising and retrieving files and folders using recognised naming and storage conventions. The candidate can recognise user errors and technical issues and apply solutions to resolve problems.
Creating and editing	The candidate demonstrates the ability to select and use suitable applications to create and edit digital content. The candidate can enter, amend and format text, numerical information and graphics using appropriate software. The candidate can apply formatting techniques to improve the presentation of information. The candidate can capture, save and store images, audio and video files using digital devices.
Digital communication	The candidate demonstrates knowledge of different forms of digital communication and their purpose. The candidate understands the concept of a digital footprint and how online activities contribute to it. The candidate can create, edit, send and receive digital communications using appropriate tools. The candidate can communicate with individuals and groups using email, messaging applications or video calling tools.
Transacting digitally	The candidate demonstrates knowledge of online services and digital transactions. The candidate can comply with common verification processes such as passwords, PINs and security checks. The candidate can complete and submit online forms using appropriate data entry techniques.

	The candidate can identify and use secure online payment methods when conducting digital transactions.

9.2 Level 1 qualification level pass grade descriptors

Candidates show some knowledge, understanding and capability regarding digital tasks in the workplace and everyday life and their interconnection. A threshold candidate (a candidate demonstrating the minimum competence required to pass the qualification) would generally be expected to demonstrate the following.

Being safe and responsible online and on digital devices	The candidate demonstrates the ability to apply measures to protect devices, personal information and data from common online risks. The candidate can use and configure authentication methods, recognise common data threats and back up information using appropriate methods. The candidate demonstrates awareness of responsible online behaviour, including respecting copyright, following data protection legislation and recognising inappropriate online content. The candidate can identify physical and psychological risks associated with the use of digital devices and apply measures to reduce these risks.
Using digital devices and handling information	The candidate demonstrates the ability to search for, locate and retrieve information using digital devices and online services. The candidate can refine searches and make judgements about the reliability and relevance of information sources. The candidate can organise, store and transfer files using appropriate folder structures and storage methods. The candidate can resolve common technical problems using help facilities, tutorials and support resources and can make use of online learning materials to develop their digital skills.

Creating and editing	The candidate demonstrates the ability to create, edit and format digital content using suitable applications. The candidate can apply formatting and layout conventions to text, tables, images and charts for a specific purpose and audience. The candidate can edit and enhance digital media using appropriate tools and terminology. The candidate can enter, organise and process numerical data, use formulae and produce charts that present information clearly and accurately.
Digital communication	The candidate demonstrates the ability to communicate and share information appropriately using a range of digital communication methods. The candidate can select suitable communication tools for different audiences and contexts, including work-related, social and public settings. The candidate can use email, messaging services, social media and collaboration tools appropriately.
Transacting digitally	The candidate demonstrates the ability to use online transactional services safely and effectively. The candidate can upload and download files and manage account settings using online services. The candidate can compare products and services using a range of online sources and apply criteria to identify suitable options. The candidate demonstrates awareness of common online risks and can take steps to identify secure websites and avoid fraudulent or misleading services.