Online Assessment Secure Client User Guide

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Contents

Introduction

This manual is for users who are responsible for installing the learner software for NCFE Online Assessments. This software is called SecureClient.

The online administration site where users can schedule and administer learner assessments is called Surpass. Please see our Online Assessment User Guide – Administration and Online Assessment User Guide – Invigilation for further guidance.

These instructions are written for users familiar with installing software or managing IT infrastructure. If any assistance is needed, please contact the NCFE Customer Support team.

System Requirements

There are minimum requirements for installing and running SecureClient on a device. If a device does not meet these requirements, you may not be able to run assessments without technical issues that may impact on your learners, and we may not be able to support you.

Please make sure the device meets the below minimum requirements. If any changes are made to the technical specification, we will notify customers on the Surpass homepage and will update the technical specification document and guides.

Operating system	Microsoft Windows 11 Microsoft Windows 10 (32 bit or 64 bit)
Microsoft .NET Framework	Microsoft .NET Framework 4.7.2
Processor speed	1.80 GHz
Graphics memory	64 MB
RAM	4GB
Disc space	1GB of free hard disk space
Screen resolution	Monitor capable of displaying 1024 x 768 resolution or higher. Please note, dual screens should not be used.

Internet speed	A centre connection of 2Mbps or greater for every 30 learner assessments being sat at the same time is recommended to ensure learners are not affected by connection issues during their assessments.
Offline assessments	1 GB data key (if using a data key for offline assessments) - should be of good quality and suitable for use with secure or sensitive files.
Microsoft Office	Microsoft Office 2010 package or later* *Needed for Digital Functional Skills

- Secure internet connection (preferably wired) to run SecureClient or download assessments in advance – this must not be done via a hotspot.
- Ensure the CPU isn't running at too high a capacity (generally above 50%) as this may clash with the demand of the assessment and cause the system to not work as expected.

Please note: NCFE is unable to support the installation or running of SecureClient on a Mac.
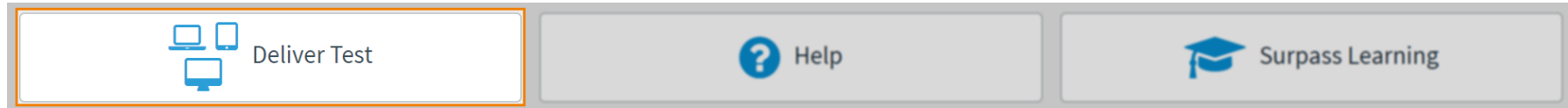
Installing SecureClient

This is the process to install SecureClient onto a single computer to run NCFE Online Assessments, this will install the software to a public directory so it's available to all users on the computer

1. Navigate to the Surpass home screen

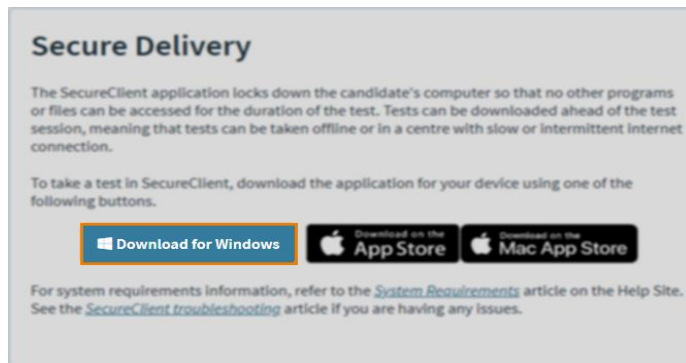2. Select Deliver Test to open the Launch Test screen

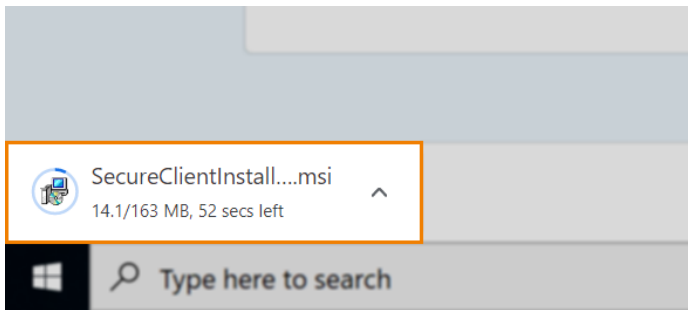3. Select Secure Delivery on the Launch Test screen

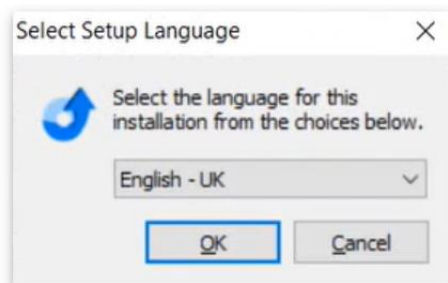4. Download and install SecureClient

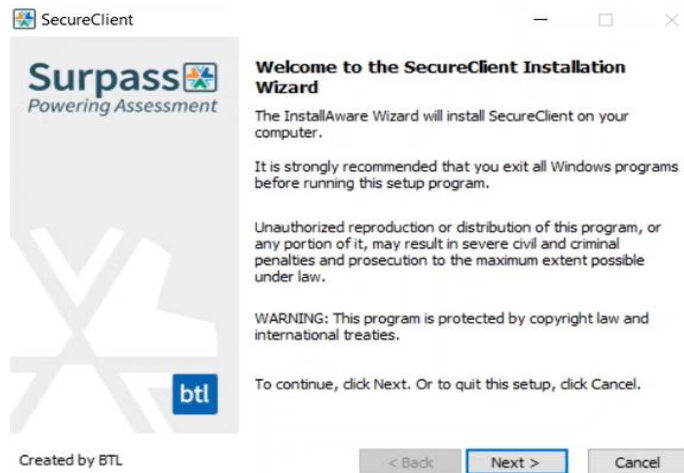Select **Download for Windows** to begin the installation process.

5. Open the SecureClient installer from your device.

6. Choose a language from the **Language** menu and press **OK** to continue

7. Start the installation **SecureClient Installation Wizard**.
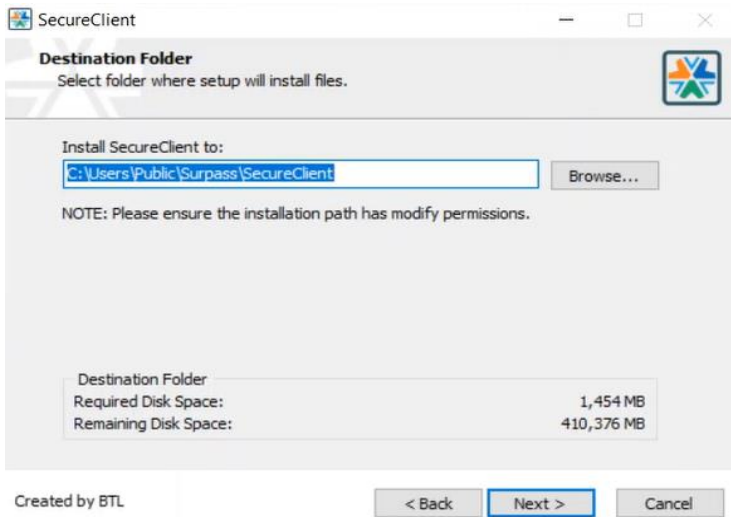

Select **Next** to continue.

8. Choose an installation path

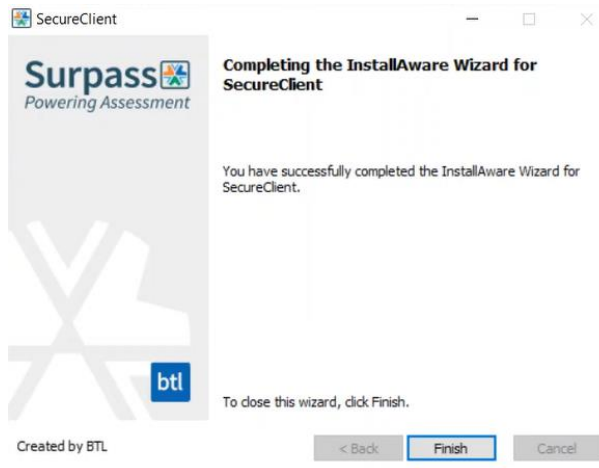**Note: the default installation path is the C: drive**

Select **Browse** to open your device's file explorer. Choose an installation path for SecureClient.

Select **Next** to install SecureClient on your device.

9. Complete installation

Select **Finish** to complete the SecureClient installation.

10. Open the SecureClient application

You can launch SecureClient from your desktop when the installation is complete.

Network Installation

If you need to install the software across multiple computers on the same network at the same time, you can do this using a batch file. To create a batch file, follow these steps.

1. Create a new text document with filename secureclient, the document should contain this line of text:

    msiexec.exe /i C:\SecureClientInstaller.msi CMDLINE= /qn

    (C:\SecureClientInstaller.msi is the location that the SecureClient installer file is saved, C:\TEST is the directory SecureClient will be installed to.)

2. Save the file and rename the file extension from .txt to .bat to create the batch file.

3. The batch file can then be used to install the software to multiple computers on a network using Microsoft Group Policy or similar network management application.

Proxy Servers and Whitelisting

It's important that SecureClient can communicate directly with the central servers that hold assessment and learner data, without interruption from a Proxy Server. If you use a Proxy Server, you'll need to add exceptions to bypass it for the following addresses;

Test centre system administrators must whitelist the following Surpass websites to ensure SecureClient is responsive throughout tests:

https://NCFE.surpass.com
https://cms.surpass.com
https://cmspublic.surpass.com
https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/AssessmentService.asmx
https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/Surpass.html

https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/MembershipService.asmx
https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/connectionTest.html
https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/InvigilateService.asmx
https://ncfe.surpass.com/launchtest/

You should also remove any setting blocking HTTPS traffic on port 443.

If you need to add your proxy server details to the SecureClient installation this can be found here;

C:\Users\Public\Surpass Central - SecureClient NCFE\Surpass Central - SecureClient NCFE\configfiles

Open the file in notepad and enter the proxy details in the format below:

Antivirus

Antivirus software may prevent SecureClient from opening or functioning correctly. Please ensure that "On Access Scanning" is disabled for the SecureClient folder and all subfolders. To do this you should add an exception to your Antivirus software, following the manufacturer's instruction, for the SecureClient folder and subfolders. We also recommend that you consider disabling any virus scanning whilst learner assessments are taking place.

The file path that needs excluding is: **Windows** – C:\Users\Public\Surpass

If you require support with this, we ask that you refer to the help files of your Antivirus software or contact the manufacturer.

Default Programs

Some assessments require the learner to open a document from the exam, these documents will open in Microsoft Office suite programs. This is primarily required for Digital assessments but may also be required for other assessments.

To ensure the learner can properly open the document without interruption you should set the correct default program for the following file types:

File Type	Microsoft Office Program
.doc .docx	Microsoft Word
.xls .xlsx	Microsoft Excel
.ppt .pptx .pps .ppsx	Microsoft PowerPoint
.png .jpeg .gif	Windows photo viewer or other relevant program
PDF	PDF reader & Viewer

Please note, Open Office or other web-based Office packages are not supported.

You can set these defaults in the "Control Panel > Default Programs > Associate a file type or protocol with a program" menu in Microsoft Windows.

You should also check that the Trust Centre in each of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint is not set to block or restrict any of these file types.

These file types may also open in other Office software programs, please note these are not supported by NCFE and not covered by the technical requirements for SecureClient.

External Aids

The use of external aids, particularly in relation to spelling, punctuation and grammar, for example, dictionary, spelling and grammar checking software, or other cloud-based or AI tools, is not permitted in any external online assessments. This is in line with JCQ **Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures**.

For learners sitting online assessments using a device at your centre, it's the responsibility of your centre to ensure that all external aids (unless by prior approval as a reasonable adjustment requirement) are disabled prior to the assessment taking place, and that your invigilators are aware to look out for these tools being used. If you're unable to remove external aids on computers which are to be used for an online assessment, you must notify NCFE immediately by email at **customersupport@ncfe.org.uk**.

We've created a short guide on how to disable external aids from students' Google Chrome, PCs and laptops. Please note that there are other similar AI tools available which are also prohibited, and these must also be disabled. **Access the step-by-step instructions**.

User Profiles

Consider using bespoke user profiles on devices being used for live assessments. Test centre system administrators should consider creating a bespoke user profile that can be shared across all devices on a server being used for live test sessions. This profile should only contain the latest version of SecureClient.

Upgrades

SecureClient is upgraded 3-4 times per year and will only update from a minimum of two versions behind. If you do not test regularly then you should either launch the SecureClient periodically to pull down any new updates or uninstall and install the latest version before the assessment. You do not need to be logged in with admin rights for the SecureClient to update but you would need to be for a new installation. SecureClient will automatically update once launched. During the upgrade Surpass will not be available for a period of time however we will inform you of the dates and time on the homepage of Surpass.

SecureClient Diagnostic

Each time you open SecureClient it will perform a diagnostic check to compare the specification of the computer to the required specification for the software to run correctly. If the assessment discovers anything that doesn't meet the requirements you will see this message;
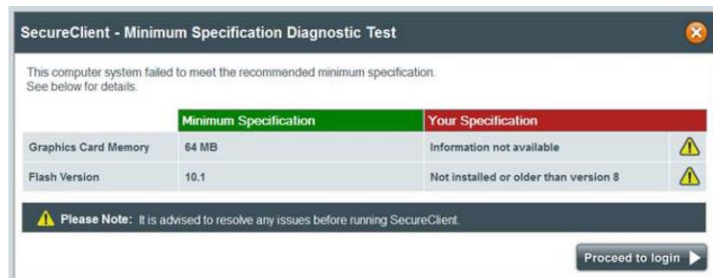
Any issues highlighted must be resolved before trying to run assessments, to avoid any impact on the learners' experience. If you wish to proceed to login without taking any action you can click "Proceed to login".

Assessments that have been run through SecureClient will record the specifications of the computer used to sit the assessment, to assist in any diagnostics that are required in the event of technical problems.

Practice Assessment

It's important that you run practice assessments once you've installed the software to ensure that everything is working correctly.

You can create a practice assessment via Surpass. Please refer to the Online Assessment User Guide – Administration for reference.

1. Log in to the learner assessment and confirm the learner details, this will result in the assessment being downloaded ready for the learner to sit.

2. Move through the questions and submit responses, you should answer at least some of the questions.

3. Press finish to end the assessment, this should result in the assessment showing as completed in the Invigilation screen of Surpass.

Please note, practice assessments will not be marked, and a result will not be issued. Practice assessments are available for the support of the learner and to get them used to sitting assessments online.

Customer Support will be on hand to support with this process and if any problems arise they will help you to resolve the issue.

Troubleshooting

If you have issues with any of the above, please check you're installing from the correct link as instructed in the 'installing SecureClient' link above.

There is additional troubleshooting here: https://help.surpass.com/secureclient/secureclient-troubleshooting/#9

If you're still having issues installing or running SecureClient after the above 2 checks, please contact the NCFE Customer Support team.