

# Qualification specification

**NCFE Level 1 Award in Photography**  
**QN: 601/3390/9**

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## Summary of changes

This section summarises the changes to this qualification specification since the last version (Issue 3.2 May 2021).

Issue	Publication Date	Summary of amendments
1.0	September 2014	First publication
3.0	August 2018	Amendments made to Units 01 and 02. Qualification Specification placed in new template.
3.1	January 2020	Information regarding the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners added to <a href="#">Section 1</a> .
3.2	May 2021	Level 1 Award in Photography removed from <a href="#">Progression opportunities</a> as it has been withdrawn. NCFE contact information updated.
3.3	August 2021	Reference to sample tasks removed on page 23 as no longer available.
3.4	March 2022	Level 2 Certificate in Creative Craft (Art and Design) and Level 2 Certificate in Photography added to progression opportunities section.  Level 2 Extended Certificate in Photography and Level 2 Diploma in Photography have been removed as these qualifications have been withdrawn.
3.5	June 2022	Further information added to <a href="#">how the qualification is assessed</a> section to confirm that unless otherwise stated in this specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English.  Information added to the <a href="#">entry guidance</a> section to advise that registration is at the discretion of the centre, in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the Portal.  Information added to the <a href="#">support handbook</a> section about how to access support handbooks.
3.6	May 2025	Amended formatting in Unit 02.

# Section 1

## Qualification overview

## Qualification overview

### Introduction

We want to make your experience of working with NCFE as pleasant and easy as possible. This qualification specification contains everything you need to know about this qualification and should be used by everyone involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the Level 1 Award in Photography.

All information contained in this specification is correct at the time of publishing.

To ensure that you're using the most up-to-date version of this qualification specification, please check the issue date in the page headers against that of the qualification specification on the NCFE website.

If you advertise this qualification using a different or shortened name, you must ensure that learners are aware that their final certificate will state the regulated qualification title of Level 1 Award in Photography.

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### Things you need to know

Qualification number (QN)	601/3390/9
Aim reference	60133909
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	60
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	60
Credit value	6
Level	1
Assessment requirements	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence

### Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Total Qualification Time is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.

Total Qualification Time comprises:

- the Guided Learning Hours for the qualification
- an estimate of the number of hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but not under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, Tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

**Credit**

The credit value is equal to the Total Qualification Time divided by ten, rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Support handbook**

This qualification specification must be used alongside the mandatory support handbook which can be found on the NCFE website. This contains additional supporting information to help with planning, delivery and assessment.

This qualification specification contains all the qualification-specific information you will need that is not covered in the support handbook.

**About this qualification**

This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 601/3390/9. This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding please visit the NCFE website.

This qualification is suitable for use within a Study Programme.

**Qualification purpose**

This qualification is aimed at those individuals who wish to develop an understanding of basic photographic processes. The qualification will also allow learners to understand how to manipulate images.

This qualification will:

- focus on the study of photography
- offer breadth and depth of study
- provide opportunities to acquire a number of practical and technical skills in photography

**Qualification objectives**

The objectives of this qualification are to:

- support learners to progress into employment in creative industries including photography, art and design, craft, animation and moving image production.
  - support learners to progress onto further qualifications at Level 2 in creative subjects including photography, art and design, craft, animation and moving image production.
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## Achieving this qualification

To be awarded the Level 1 Award in Photography, learners are required to successfully complete two mandatory units.

Unit No	Unit Title	Credits
Unit 01	Use a camera to capture creative images	3
Unit 02	Digital image manipulation	3

The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit are provided in Section 2

To achieve the Level 1 Award in Photography, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes and assessment criteria as detailed in this qualification specification. Grades are not awarded.

Learners who aren't successful can resubmit work within the registration period; however, a charge may apply. A Credit Certificate can be requested for learners who don't achieve their full qualification but who have achieved at least one whole unit.

## Essential skills

While completing this qualification learners may develop the knowledge, understanding and essential skills employers look for in employees. These range from familiar 'key skills' such as team working, independent learning and problem solving, to more tricky-to-measure skills such as:

- an appreciation for appropriate behavior
- appropriate interpersonal skills
- communicating with professional colleagues/peers.

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## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Centres may recognise prior learning at their discretion if they are satisfied that the evidence provided meets the requirements of a qualification. Where RPL is to be used extensively (for a whole unit or more), advice must be given by a qualified RPL Advisor.

## Credit transfer

Where a learner has already achieved a unit with credit, NCFE will recognise that prior learning and will allow the credit to be transferred onto a new qualification, provided that the units have the same Ofqual reference number.

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## Direct Claim Status

Direct Claim Status will be transferred for this qualification.

For more information about Direct Claim Status, please contact our Customer Support team on 0191 239 8000.

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## Entry guidance

This qualification is designed for individuals who wish to develop an understanding of basic photographic processes. There are no specific recommended prior learning requirements for this qualification. However, learners may find it helpful if they've already achieved an Entry Level 3 qualification.

Registration is at the discretion of the centre, in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the Portal. This qualification is suitable for learners aged pre-16 and above. Centres are responsible for ensuring that this qualification is appropriate for the age and ability of learners. They need to make sure that learners can fulfil the requirements of the assessment criteria and comply with the relevant literacy, numeracy, and health and safety aspects of this qualification.

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

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## Progression opportunities

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to:

- Level 2 Certificate in Art and Design
- Level 2 Certificate in Creative Craft (Art and Design)
- Level 2 Certificate in Photography

It may also be useful to learners studying qualifications in the Arts, Media and Publishing sector.

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## Qualification dates

Regulated qualifications have operational end dates and certification end dates.

We review qualifications regularly, working with sector representatives, vocational experts and stakeholders to make any changes necessary to meet sector needs and to reflect recent developments.

If a decision is made to withdraw a qualification, we will set an operational end date and provide reasonable notice to our centres. We will also take all reasonable steps to protect the interest of learners.

An operational end date will only show on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications [register.ofqual.gov.uk](https://register.ofqual.gov.uk) and on our website if a decision has been made to withdraw a qualification. After this date, we can no longer accept learner registrations. However, certification is allowed until the certification end date so that learners have time to complete any programmes of study. The certification end date will only show on the Ofqual Register once an operational end date has been set. After this date, we can no longer process certification claims.

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## Staffing requirements

Centres delivering any of NCFE's qualifications must:

- have a sufficient number of appropriately qualified/experienced Assessors to assess the volume of learners they intend to register
- have a sufficient number of appropriately qualified/experienced Internal Quality Assurers to internally quality assure the anticipated number of Assessors and learners
- ensure that all staff involved in assessment and internal quality assurance are provided with appropriate training and undertake meaningful and relevant continuing professional development
- implement effective internal quality assurance systems and processes to ensure all assessment decisions are reliable, valid, authentic, sufficient and current. This should include standardisation to ensure consistency of assessment
- provide all staff involved in the assessment process with sufficient time and resources to carry out their roles effectively.

## Assessors and Internal Quality Assurance

Staff involved in the Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance of this qualification must be able to demonstrate that they have (or are working towards) the relevant occupational knowledge and/or occupational competence, at the same level or higher as the units being assessed and internally quality assured. This may be gained through experience and/or qualifications.

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## Resource requirements

To assist in the delivery of this qualification centres should provide learners with access to appropriate equipment for digital/film photography to meet the requirements of this specification.

## Support for centres

There are a number of documents available on the NCFE website that centres might find useful.

## Customer Support team

Our award-winning Customer Support Team will support you with approvals, registrations, external quality assurance, external assessment, results and certification. To contact your Customer Support Assistant, call 0191 239 8000 or email [customersupport@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@ncfe.org.uk).

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## **Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy**

This policy is aimed at customers – including learners – who use our products and services and who submit requests for reasonable adjustments and special considerations. The policy can be found on the NCFE website.

## **Subject maps**

Our suite of subject maps showcase the qualifications we have available within each specialist sector and how they connect to each other. They demonstrate how you can plot routes for your learners at different levels, from entry level right through to higher education or the workforce, with supporting qualifications along the way.

## **Fees and Pricing**

The current Fees and Pricing Guide is available on the NCFE website.

## **Training and support**

We can provide training sessions for Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers. Bespoke subject-specific training is also available. For further information, please contact our Quality Assurance team on 0191 239 8000.

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## **Learning resources**

We offer a wide range of learning resources and materials to support the delivery of our qualifications. Please check the qualifications page on the NCFE website for more information and to see what is available for this qualification.

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

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# Section 2

## Unit content and assessment guidance

## Unit content and assessment guidance

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

The unit overview includes:

- unit title and number
- unit summary
- credit value
- guided learning hours
- level
- an indication of whether unit is mandatory or optional.

Following the unit summary there's detailed information for each unit containing:

- learning outcomes
- delivery and assessment information (including types of evidence for internal assessment / assessment guidance)

The regulated number is indicated in brackets for each unit (eg M/100/7116).

The types of evidence listed above are for guidance purposes only. Within learners' portfolios, other types of evidence are acceptable if all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are covered and if the evidence generated can be internally and externally moderated. For approval of methods of internal assessment other than portfolio building, please contact the Quality Assurance team at NCFE.

For further information or guidance about this qualification please contact our Product Development team on 0191 239 8000.

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**Unit 01 Use a camera to capture creative images (J/505/9151)**

<b>Unit summary</b>	In this unit learners will show that they can use the camera to create images. They will evidence the basic principles of composition and visual awareness to capture a chosen subject using the camera and its accessories. Learners will explore visual results by using different lenses, camera positions and controls producing a series of images which they have processed and reviewed. They will evidence knowledge of health and safety procedures and legal and ethical considerations. This forms the basic underpinning of photographic practice.
<b>Guided learning hours</b>	30
<b>Credit value</b>	3
<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Mandatory/optional</b>	Mandatory

The learner will:

1. Know how to use the camera to create images

The learner can:

- 1.1 Identify the use of **camera controls**
- 1.2 Identify a range of **recording media** used in film or digital cameras
- 1.3 Outline basic **visual language** and composition
- 1.4 Outline how to use cameras and lenses safely

The learner will:

2. Be able to use the camera to create images

The learner can:

- 2.1 Select **appropriate lenses and camera positions** for a range of subjects
- 2.2 Select **subjects** for creative capture
- 2.3 Use equipment and **accessories** to capture images
- 2.4 Produce a range of **exploratory photographs** using simple **processing procedures**
- 2.5 Review quality of final images
- 2.6 Outline **legal** and ethical considerations
- 2.7 Follow **health and safety** procedures

**Key word(s)**

- 1.1 Camera controls: shutter speed, aperture, focus, zoom, ISO setting, menu settings
- 1.2 Recording media: film, compact flash (CF), SD, SDHC, SDXC, xD, memory stick, hard drive
- 1.3 Visual language: composition, monochrome, mood, rule of thirds, tone, colour, viewpoint, framing, leading lines



- 2.1 Appropriate lenses and camera positions: using interchangeable lenses, wide angle standard, telephoto, zoom. Learners should also understand the importance of the choice of camera position
- 2.2 Subjects: portraits, landscape, buildings, events, painting with light, street photography, contemporary
- 2.3 Accessories: tripod, flashgun, filters, cable release
- 2.4.i Exploratory photographs: a selection of images should be made to enable the learner to practice their photographic skills and apply their understanding of how to use a camera
- 2.4.ii Use simple processing procedures to save and view images
- 2.6 Legal environment: copyright, privacy, permissions, location, release, creative commons
- 2.7 Health and safety: the concept of hazard and risk, correct posture and seating for computer use, visual display unit breaks, risks in the studio and on location

AC	Delivery and Assessment guidance
1.1-1.4, 2.1-2.7	<p>In this unit the emphasis should be on learning and using basic photographic techniques.</p> <p>At this level the work will be mainly tutor led and the learners should be given continuing guidance and support. They should be encouraged to develop their own ideas and understand the importance of working to targets.</p> <p>For this unit the aim should be to show that the learner has confidence and familiarity with the equipment being used in order to be able to develop the visual skills such as composition which will be required in the subsequent unit.</p> <p>Digital images should show an understanding of the effects on image quality of high ISO settings.</p> <p>Learner portfolios should contain all exploratory and experimental work to show evidence of process.</p> <p>The work should be carefully cross-referenced to any relevant learning outcomes as one piece of evidence may be equally valid to show that the learner has covered a range of different learning outcomes.</p> <p>Underpinning knowledge and understanding can be evidenced through practical work and written notes.</p> <p>Any material gathered from outside sources, eg the internet, must have the source fully credited and identified by the learner.</p> <p>Evidence for health and safety can be provided by questionnaires, simple risk assessments, a generic statement about who is responsible for health and safety and how to report any hazards.</p> <p>The portfolio should contain at least 3 images taken at the start of the course when their skills are being developed.</p>

The learner could produce a journal/workbook containing evidence of exploratory work showing the effects of adjusting camera controls, eg shutter speed, aperture and focusing. They could also produce evidence showing awareness of composition and visual language. If film is being used there should be evidence of the use of different camera controls e.g. film speeds and types.

Digital work should include evidence of understanding of camera menus, different file types and pixel size and resolution.

Knowledge for the range of each unit can be evidenced with practical work, notes, annotated images or screenshots.

### **Types of Evidence**

Evidence **MUST** include:

- A series of experimental images
- Critique and evaluation of images
- A final portfolio of a number of images showing evidence of the process to the final stages

Evidence **COULD** include:

- A workbook/journal and annotated notes
- Risk assessments
- Learner reports
- Screenshots

**Unit 02 Digital image manipulation (L/505/9152)**


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<b>Unit summary</b>	In this unit learners will be able to identify and choose captured images for manipulation. They will be able to describe the hardware and software requirements for image manipulation and understand the associated manipulation techniques. This will enable the learners to modify, manipulate and save images having consideration for image quality. They will process and prepare the manipulated images for viewing and be able to evaluate the final images.
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<b>Guided learning hours</b>	30
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<b>Credit value</b>	3
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<b>Level</b>	1
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<b>Mandatory/optional</b>	Mandatory
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The learner will:

1. Know how to produce manipulated images

The learner can:

- 1.1 Identify **sources** of images for manipulation
  - 1.2 Identify **hardware** and **software** for image manipulation
  - 1.3 Describe the **controls, tools and techniques** for image manipulation
  - 1.4 Outline **legal and ethical** considerations
- 

The learner will:

2. Be able to produce manipulated images

The learner can:

- 2.1 Manipulate, modify and save images
- 2.2 Use **processing procedures** to produce images for viewing
- 2.3 Review **image quality** of finished images
- 2.4 Follow **health and safety** procedures including viewing screen health

**Key word(s)**

- 1.1 Sources: memory card, film, creative commons license, public domain
- 1.2 Hardware: computer requirements, memory, storage, monitor
- 1.2 Software: processing software, RAW converters, pixel based image processing, non-destructive processing software, asset management, catalogue

**Unit 02 Digital image manipulation (L/505/9152) (cont'd)**

- 1.3 Controls, tools & techniques: brightness, contrast, levels, curves, burn, dodge, replace colour, compositing, HDR
- 1.4 Legal and ethical: copyright, creative common, license, private, public domain, misrepresentation, truth, fantasy, intent, interpretation, permissions, release
- 2.2 Use processing procedures to save and view images
- 2.3 Image quality: brightness, contrast, shadows, highlights, tone, size, pixilation, colour balance, sharpness
- 2.4 Health and safety: hazard, risk, risk assessment, responsibilities, visual display unit regulations, regular breaks, RSI

AC	Assessment guidance
1.1–1.4, 2.1–2.4	<p>This unit will introduce the basic skills of image processing and manipulation. The aim of this unit should be to enable the learners to produce good quality images before exploring processes which make major alterations to the basic image such as colour changes, tonal changes or making additions to the image.</p> <p>The learner should produce a workbook/journal containing evidence showing how each learning outcome has been met. A series of exploratory photographs should be produced to show evidence of process. These ideally should be proof prints but also could be screenshots or image files saved at an intermediate stage. Knowledge and understanding can be evidenced through practical work and through written notes or researched statements. All research material gathered from outside sources, e.g. the internet, must have the source fully credited and identified by the learner.</p> <p>Evidence for health and safety can be provided by questionnaires, simple risk assessments, and a generic statement about who is responsible for health and safety and how to report any hazards. Answers could be in the form, "I have not come across this, but if I did, I would ..." A basic understanding of the hazards and risks associated with the use of visual display units should be part of the evidence.</p> <p>The learner should produce evidence showing that the final images have been reviewed and evaluated and show the relationship between the original intent and the final results.</p> <p><b>Types of Evidence</b></p> <p>Evidence <b>MUST</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A series of experimental images</li> <li>• Critique and evaluation of images</li> <li>• A final portfolio of a number of images showing evidence of the process to the final stages</li> </ul> <p>Evidence <b>COULD</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A workbook/journal and annotated notes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Risk assessments</li><li>• Learner reports</li><li>• Screenshots</li></ul>
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# Section 3

## Assessment and quality assurance

## **Assessment and quality assurance**

### **How the qualification is assessed**

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

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

The Level 1 Award in Photography is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

### **Internal assessment**

Each learner must create a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks, which demonstrates achievement of all the learning outcomes associated with each unit. The assessment tasks should allow the learner to respond to a real life situation that they may face when in employment. On completion of each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the Assessor must countersign this. Examples of suitable evidence for the portfolio for each unit are provided in Section 2.

Internally assessed work should be completed by the learner in accordance with the qualification specification. A representative number of assessment hours should be timetabled into the scheme of work. Internal assessment hours must be administered outside of scheduled teaching and learning hours and should be supervised and assessed by the Tutor. Assessment activities can be integrated throughout, although separate from the teaching of the unit, and do not have to take place directly at the end of the unit.

Any work submitted for internal assessment must be completed during scheduled assessment hours in accordance with the scheme of work, and must be authenticated and attributable to the learner. The Tutor must be satisfied that the work produced is the learner's own and the learner must declare that the work is their own.

In practice, this means that all of the portfolio of evidence will be completed in normal class time within scheduled assessment hours and kept separate from any teaching and learning hours.

### **Supervision of learners and your role as an Assessor**

Guidance on how to administer the internal assessment and the support you provide to learners can be found on the NCFE website.

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### **Feedback to learners**

Guidance on providing feedback during teaching and learning and each stage of the assessment can be found on the NCFE website.

## **Presenting evidence**

### **Written**

Written evidence may be presented in word-processed or handwritten form. Audio-visual content (videos, pictures, drawings, audio) may also be used.

Tables, graphs and spreadsheets may be produced using appropriate ICT.

Any copied material must be suitably acknowledged, and quotations must be clearly marked and a reference provided wherever possible to ensure that learner work can be authenticated.

### **Recorded**

Where audio-visual evidence of multiple learners is used, centres must ensure that each learner being assessed is clearly visible and can be identified by the Quality Assurer.

The recorded evidence should allow the learner to demonstrate the learning outcomes clearly but should only show work relevant to what is being assessed. For example, if a performance/participation is done as part of a group, the Quality Assurer will need to be able to see how each learner being assessed has contributed and met the learning outcomes.

To help our Quality Assurers to identify clearly when a particular learner is performing/participating, we'd recommend including the following information:

- the exact start and finish times so that the Quality Assurer can go straight to that spot on the tape/recording
- a running order list and a description of each learner
- information about where the performance/recorded evidence took place
- what type of audience they were performing to (if applicable).

Centres must also ensure that the camera and microphone are set up in a suitable place to ensure good-quality audio. This will allow the Quality Assurer to hear both the learner(s) and the Assessor (if applicable).



## **Quality Assurance**

### **Internal quality assurance**

Internal quality assurance is the process of ensuring that everyone who assesses a particular unit in a centre is assessing to the same standards. It's the responsibility of Internal Quality Assurers to ensure that Assessors' decisions are sampled and monitored to ensure consistency and fairness. Internal Quality Assurers are also responsible for supporting Assessors by offering advice and guidance.

The Internal Quality Assurer will follow the centre's own sampling strategy in selecting the sample to be internally quality assured. See the guidance on sampling on the NCFE website.

The Internal Quality Assurer provides the vital link between the Assessors and the External Quality Assurer and acts as the centre's quality assurance agent.

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### **External quality assurance**

External quality assurance of internal assessments is carried out at least once a year to ensure that assessment and grading decisions are in line with required standards. External quality assurance is carried out by External Quality Assurers who are appointed, trained and monitored by NCFE. External Quality Assurers are responsible for monitoring and sampling learners' evidence to ensure that internal assessment decisions are valid, reliable, fair and consistent with national standards. Centres are notified of their External Quality Assurer's contact details on registration of learners with NCFE.

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# Section 4

## Explanation of terms

### Explanation of terms

This table explains how the terms used at Level 1 are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification)

<b>Define</b>	Give the meaning of a word or phrase.
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Show an understanding of the subject.
<b>Describe</b>	Provide details about the subject or item.
<b>Explain</b>	Provide details about the subject with reasons showing how or why.
<b>Give (examples of...)</b>	Provide relevant examples to support the subject.
<b>Identify</b>	List or name the main points.
<b>Indicate</b>	Point out or show using words, illustrations or diagrams.
<b>Locate</b>	Find or identify.
<b>List</b>	Make a list of words, sentences or comments.
<b>Outline</b>	Identify or describe the main points.
<b>Plan</b>	Think about, organise and present information in a logical way. This could be presented as written information, a diagram or an illustration.
<b>Show</b>	Give information that includes clear knowledge about the subject.
<b>State</b>	Give the main points in brief, clear sentences.
<b>Use</b>	Take an item, resource or piece of information and link to the question or task.

# Section 5

## General information

## **General information**

### **Equal opportunities**

NCFE fully supports the principle of equal opportunities and opposes all unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of ability, age, colour, culture, disability, domestic circumstances, employment status, gender, marital status, nationality, political orientation, racial origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and social background. NCFE aims to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and that unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is eliminated both in its own employment practices and in access to its qualifications. A copy of NCFE's Equal Opportunities policy is available on request.

### **Diversity, access and inclusion**

Our qualifications and associated assessments are designed to be accessible, inclusive and non-discriminatory. NCFE regularly evaluates and monitors the 6 diversity strands (gender, age, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation) throughout the development process as well as throughout the delivery, external quality assurance and external assessment processes of live qualifications. This ensures that positive attitudes and good relations are promoted, discriminatory language is not used and our assessment procedures are fully inclusive.

Learners who require reasonable adjustments or special consideration should discuss their requirements with their Tutor, who should refer to our Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy for guidance.

For more information on the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy, please see the NCFE website.

## **Contact us**

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