Qualification specification

NCFE Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills
QN: 603/7119/5

Contents

Section 1
About this qualification

Summary of changes

This document summarises the changes to this qualification specification.

Version	Publication date	Summary of amendments
v1.1	November 2021	The minimum age for the qualification is now 14. The qualification specification has been amended to account for this.
v1.2	January 2022	Addition of 'User guide/steps in Surpass' section to pages 11–12.
v1.3	June 2022	Further information added to the how the qualification is assessed 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 entry guidance 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 support handbook section about how to access support handbooks.

Introduction

This qualification specification contains details of all the units and assessments required to complete this qualification.

To ensure that you are using the most up-to-date version of this qualification specification, please check the version number and date in the page footer 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 full regulated qualification title.

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- 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

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.

Qualification summary	
Qualification title	NCFE Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills
Qualification number (QN)	603/7119/5
Aim reference	60371195
Total qualification time (TQT)	48* *The completion of all mandatory content (to include controlled assessment) is completed under supervised conditions therefore GLH and TQT are identical
Guided learning hours (GLH)	48
Minimum age	14
Qualification purpose	The purpose of this qualification is to allow learners to demonstrate understanding of, and competency in, the essential digital skills they need for life. It will enable learners to engage with digital services and products in everyday life.
Aims and objectives	This qualification aims to: • focus on the study of digital skills • offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge and skills • provide opportunities to acquire a number of essential digital skills The objective of this qualification is to: • build digital skills for everyday life
Grading	Pass/Fail
Assessment method	Externally set, internally marked and externally quality assured: Section A (knowledge) – **controlled:** externally set, internally assessed and externally quality assured question paper Section B (skills) – **controlled:** externally set, internally marked, externally quality assured
Resit opportunity	On demand – no limit to the number of resits available
Progression	Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to: • Level 1 Essential Digital Skills

Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 603/7119/5.
Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.

Entry guidance

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 14 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 learning outcomes and comply with the relevant literacy, numeracy and health and safety aspects of this qualification.

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

Digital foundation skills

This framework is intended to be used by everyone in the UK involved in supporting people to improve their essential digital skills. It would be beneficial for all learners to have an understanding of the following foundation skills which underpin all essential digital skills:

Digital foundation skills
I can: • turn on a device • use the available controls on my device • make use of accessibility tools on my device to make it easier to use • interact with the home screen on my device • understand that the internet allows me to access information and content and that I can connect to it through Wi-Fi • connect my device to a safe and secure Wi-Fi network • connect to the internet and open a browser to find and use websites

Further examples of the digital foundation skills can be found at the gov.uk website:

• www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework/essential-digital-skills-framework#introduction

Achieving this qualification

To be awarded this qualification, learners are required to successfully pass the assessment requirements. This qualification has a compensatory structure of assessment.

Content sections

To make cross-referencing assessment and quality assurance easier, we have used a sequential numbering system in this document for each section of content.

Section number	Section title	Level	GLH
01	Being safe and responsible online and on digital devices	EL3	10
02	Using digital devices and handling information	EL3	14.5
03	Creating and editing	EL3	13
04	Digital communication	EL3	4
05	Transacting digitally	EL3	4.5

How the qualification is assessed

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

This qualification is externally set, internally marked and externally quality assured.

The assessment consists of 2 components – there are 41 marks available in total.

Section A: AO1 (knowledge) – 13 marks:

Externally set, internally assessed question paper, completed under controlled assessment conditions:

Section title	% weighting of section (approx.)	Marks
Being safe and responsible online and on digital devices	46.2%	6
Using digital devices and handling information	23.1%	3
Creating and editing	7.7%	1
Digital communication	15.4%	2
Transacting digitally	7.7%	1

Section B: AO2 (skills) – 28 marks:

Externally set and internally assessed, completed under controlled assessment conditions:

Section title	% weighting of section (approx.)	Marks
Being safe and responsible online and on digital devices	0.0%	0
Using digital devices and handling information	17.9%	5
Creating and editing	39.3%	11
Digital communication	21.4%	6
Transacting digitally	21.4%	6

Learners will be entitled to unlimited resits; however, they will not be permitted to resit the same assessment. If a learner has attempted all live papers, they will not be able to resit until a new version is available. Resitting learners will be required to sit both sections of the assessment (section A and section B). If a learner does not achieve their assessment, they should have a period of teaching and learning before resitting. Charges may apply to resits.

All the evidence generated by the learner will be assessed against the standards expected of an entry level 3 learner for each learning outcome.

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 sections

The 85 minutes that learners are given for the completion of the assessments are allocated as follows:

- section A: 20 minutes of supervised controlled assessment; this must be done under controlled conditions, supervised by the tutor – there will be specific questions that learners must complete within this time
- section B: 65 minutes of supervised controlled assessment; this must be done under controlled conditions, supervised by the tutor – there will be specific tasks that learners must complete within this time

For further information, centres should refer to the regulations for the conduct of controlled assessment and qualification specific instructions for delivery (QSID) documents available on the policies & documents page on the NCFE website.

Controlled assessment

We have created some sample tasks for the assessment which can be accessed from the qualifications page on the NCFE website.

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.

Any work submitted for controlled 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. All controlled assessment tasks are to be completed, and evidence uploaded to NCFE's assessment platform.

User guide/steps in Surpass

Invigilate (administration)

The 'Invigilation' screen is used to view the status of the learners' assessment and locate the unique keycode for a learner to sit their essential digital skills qualification. You can see the keycode on this screen and the designated person at the centre can print off an invigilation pack by ticking the rows with the relevant learners and choosing 'Print Invigilation Pack' from the bottom right of the screen.

Marking (assessing)

When a learner has completed their assessment, it will appear in the 'Mark' screen to mark the assessment.

Moderating (IQA)

The 'Moderate' screen is used by the IQA to quality assure the assessment decisions and marks applied by the assessor. You will need to click 'release' for all learners (pass and fail) regardless of whether they have been selected for IQA sampling or not.

Release result to EQA

From the 'Moderate' screen, you will need to select the learner or learners that you want to confirm as complete and ready for results to be released. This needs to be done as soon as IQA is complete so NCFE can take assessments to awarding.

Please note that while assessment papers are embargoed, the result (pass/fail) which is displayed in the moderate screen is not the final result. Results should not be shared with your learners until our awarding process is complete and results are issued in line with EQA reviews. Learners should not be booked for a resit until results are released. This includes any 'fail' result.

Accessing the assessment materials

The controlled assessment material will be made available once you have booked learners via the controlled assessment booking area of the NCFE Portal. (The Portal user guide on QualHub outlines this procedure in more detail)
Learners must complete the assessment within 6 weeks of the booking date provisional results must be 'released' by the IQA from the moderate screen for both pass and fail provisional results. This will ensure all results are monitored by the EQA and will enable learners to progress with a re-sit if required.

Supervision of learners and your role as an assessor

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

Feedback to learners

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

Section 2
Content and amplification

Content and amplification

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

The content contains information which must be covered by the tutor and is open to assessment.

The amplification is an extract from national standards for essential digital skills (reference: DfE-00082-2019).

The explanation of terms explains how the terms used in the content are applied to this qualification. This document can be found in section 3.

For further information or guidance about this qualification, please contact our customer support team.

01 Being safe and responsible online and on digital devices

Section summary	In this section, learners will understand being safe and responsible online and on digital devices. Learners will gain knowledge in digital threats and security, reporting concerns and digital wellbeing.
Guided learning hours	10
Level	Entry Level 3

Learning outcomes
LO1: Protecting privacy and data
LO2: Being responsible online
LO3: Digital wellbeing

Information in this section must be covered by the tutor during the delivery of the content.

LO1: Protecting privacy and data

1.1   Digital threats and implications

Learners will understand the threats to digital security, including:

- viruses/malware
- using unsecure Wi-Fi
- phishing emails
- accessing suspicious hyperlinks

Learners will understand the potential implications of sharing personal information, including:

- identity theft
- fraud
- unauthorised access
- compromised digital device

1.2   Digital security

Learners will understand methods to protect personal information and privacy, including:

- website security:
  - o   hypertext transfer protocol secure (HTTPS)
- privacy settings
- passwords
- facial/fingerprint recognition
- anti-virus and firewalls
- securing mobile devices

Learners will be able to use methods to protect personal information, data and privacy, including:

- privacy settings
- passwords
- facial/fingerprint recognition
- anti-virus and firewalls

1.3   Storing personal information and data

Learners will understand why personal information may be stored online and on devices, including:

- marketing
- personalised online experience
- legal:
    - freedom of information
    - data protection

LO2: Being responsible online

2.1   Reporting concerns with online content

Learners will understand how to report illegal, inappropriate or harmful content to the appropriate organisation, including:

- online protection charities
- police
- platform/website owners

LO3: Digital wellbeing

3.1   Physical stresses

Learners will understand the potential physical stresses when using digital devices, including:

- bad posture
- eye strain
- headaches
- repetitive strain injury (RSI)

Learners will understand how to minimise the potential physical stresses, including:

- adjustable furniture:
  - desk
  - chair
  - footrest
  - back support
- position of hardware
- correct hardware
- screen breaks
- screen filters

Amplification

Extract from national standards for essential digital skills (reference: DfE-00082-2019):

Protecting privacy and data	**Personal information** stored by devices and online activity refers to the collection and use of personal information and data by organisations (often used to personalise online experiences and target advertisements). Methods of protecting personal information and privacy may include: • guarding your date of birth and telephone number online • using a pseudonym on social media sites • looking for HTTPS when entering login credentials or other personal data • being aware that the security of your digital devices can be compromised, hacked and/or hijacked Know and understand implications of sharing personal information. Know when personal information may be stored by devices.
Being responsible online	**Concerns with online content** could include illegal, inappropriate or harmful content.
Digital wellbeing	**Physical stresses** include pain from poorly positioned equipment and/or bad posture, and repetitive strain injury caused by repeated movements over a long period of time, such as eye strain and headaches. Know and understand the terminology and concepts relating to potential physical stresses of using devices. Know that the effects can be minimised by using an adjustable chair which supports good posture, and not being too close or too far away from the screen/device and peripherals (for example, keyboard and mouse).

02 Using digital devices and handling information

Section summary	In this section, learners will understand digital devices. Learners will gain knowledge of hardware and software, and be able to use digital devices to handle and search for information.
Guided learning hours	14.5
Level	Entry Level 3

Learning outcomes
LO1: Using digital devices
LO2: Find and evaluate information
LO3: Manage and store information
LO4: Identifying and solving technical problems

Information in this section must be covered by the tutor during the delivery of the content.

LO1: Using digital devices

1.1   Hardware, software, operating systems and applications

Learners will understand the main features of digital devices and their uses, including:

- computers (desktop/laptop)
- mobile/smart devices
- wearable technology

Learners will understand the terminology used for digital devices and their role, including:

- hardware
- software:
    - o   applications
    - o   operating systems
- storage requirements

1.2   Locate and install an application

Learners will understand how to locate applications, including:

- internet
- app stores

Learners will be able to install applications on digital devices, including:

- computers (desktop/laptop)
- mobile/smart devices

1.3   Applying system settings

Learners will understand system settings terminology for digital devices, including:

- display
- sound
- connecting to Wi-Fi
- time
- language
- accessibility:
  - magnifier
  - screen reader
  - voice control

Learners will be able to select and adjust system settings, including:

- display
- sound
- connecting to Wi-Fi
- time
- language
- accessibility

LO2: Find and evaluate information

2.1   Searching for information and content

Learners will understand the terminology and processes used when searching for information and content online, including:

- hyperlink navigation
- Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)
- web browsers
- search engines
- keywords/search terms
- search filters

Learners will be able to search for information and content using digital devices.

2.2   Navigate online content

Learners will be able to use online navigation tools to review required information, including:

- menus
- hyperlinks
- browser navigation controls:
  - back and forward buttons
  - bookmarks

LO3: Manage and store information

3.1   Working with files and folders

Learners will understand the terminology and processes used when working with files and folders, including:

- naming conventions
- file types:
    - .doc
    - .pdf
    - .jpeg
    - .mpeg
    - .wav
- file size
- folders
- storage:
    - local
    - remote

Learners will be able to use files and folders to manage and store information on digital devices, including:

- opening
- saving
- storing
- organising
- retrieving
- back-up/syncing

LO4: Identifying and solving technical problems

4.1   Recognising and solving technical problems

Learners will understand common technical problems and user errors, including:

- user errors:
    - incorrect credentials
    - incorrect hardware connections
    - opening files in unsuitable application
    - saving files using inappropriate characters
- technical problems:
    - error messages
    - system/application freeze
    - connectivity issues
    - communication issues

Learners will be able to apply solutions to solve problems and errors, including:

- application restart
- device reboot
- network reconnection

Amplification

Extract from national standards for essential digital skills (reference: DFE-00082-2019):

Using digital devices	**Devices** will include computers (desktop/laptop), mobile devices, smart devices, and wearable technology.
	Hardware means main physical elements that make up computers (desktop/laptop), mobile devices, smart devices, and wearable technology. It does not include an understanding of computer architecture.
	Software means the various kinds of programs providing functionality on devices.
	Operating systems include those typically used for computers (desktop/laptop) and mobile devices.
	Applications include applications for computers (desktop/laptop) and mobile devices.
	System settings include display, sound, connecting to Wi-Fi, time, language settings and accessibility settings. Accessibility settings include use of a magnifier, use of screen readers and use of voice controls.
Find and evaluate information	**Searching** refers to searching online for a specific and clearly defined piece of information or content.
Managing and storing information	Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to: • files and file types • file size • applications typically associated with file types • folders • digital storage (memory, hard drives) • local and remote storage
Identifying and solving technical problems	**Recognise when a technical problem has been encountered** includes recognising when there is a problem with a device or software and knowing that some problems are caused by user errors. User errors may include: • using incorrect credentials • incorrectly connecting hardware • attempting to open a file with an unsuitable application • attempting to save a file using a filename with inappropriate characters

	Solving simple problems refers to solving issues (such as system or application freeze, or internet connection issues) with a simple solution, such as an application restart, device reboot or network reconnection. Be aware of typical technical problems (for example, onscreen error messages arising from application or peripheral hardware malfunctions, or online connectivity and communication issues).

03 Creating and editing

Section summary	In this section, learners will understand entering, editing and formatting information. Learners will gain knowledge in different file types and how to use suitable applications with different digital media.
Guided learning hours	13
Level	Entry Level 3

Learning outcomes
LO1: Creating and editing documents
LO2: Creating digital media

Information in this section must be covered by the tutor during the delivery of the content.

LO1: Creating and editing documents

1.1   Enter, edit and format information

Learners will understand the terminology and processes used when editing and formatting text, numbers and graphics, including:

- editing:
  - entering or amending
  - selecting
  - copying and pasting
  - cutting and pasting
- formatting:
  - bold
  - underline
  - italics
  - font
  - sizes
  - colours
  - text/image alignment
  - bulleted and numbered
- formatting graphics:
  - positioning
  - sizing
  - borders

Learners will be able to select and use suitable applications for editing and formatting.

LO2: Creating digital media

2.1   Capture and save images, sound and video

Learners will understand different media file types, including:

- images – JPEG
- sound – WAV
- video – MPEG

Learners will be able to capture and save media files using digital devices, including:

- grab images/screenshot
- record sound
- record video

Amplification

Extract from national standards for essential digital skills (reference: DFE-00082-2019):

Creating and editing documents	**Editing text** includes entering or amending, selecting, copying, cutting and pasting text. **Formatting text** includes bold, underline, italics, font sizes and colours, text alignment, bulleted and numbered lists. **Formatting graphics** includes positioning, sizing and borders. Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to documents (including types, such as word processed, presentations and associated applications), with understanding of the purpose of different applications and typical uses of different document types.
Creating digital media	**Capture and save** means using a device to grab an image, record video or record sound, and storing the result on the device. Know and understand terminology relating to digital devices and digital media, including common file types (for example, JPEG, MPEG and WAV).

04 Digital communication

Section summary	In this section, learners will understand digital communication. Learners will gain knowledge of digital footprints and different types of digital communications.
Guided learning hours	4
Level	Entry Level 3

Learning outcomes
LO1: Manage online activities
LO2: Communication and sharing

Information in this section must be covered by the tutor during the delivery of the content.

LO1: Manage online activities

1.1   Understanding a 'digital footprint'

Learners will understand digital footprints, including:

- definition of a digital footprint
- activities that contribute to a digital footprint:
  - search history
  - websites
  - social media
  - emails
  - uploaded/downloaded media
  - blogs/vlogs
- implications of a digital footprint
- management of a digital footprint

1.2   Public and private digital communication

Learners will understand public and private digital communication, including:

- public types:
  - blogs/vlogs
  - social media
  - forums
- private types:
  - email
  - private messenger
  - text message
- benefits of public and private communication
- characteristics of public and private communication
- management of public and private communication

LO2: Communication and sharing

2.1   Communicating digital content

Learners will understand the terminology of online communication, including:

- emailing
- texting
- messaging apps
- video calls
- contacts and groups

Learners will be able to use online communication with individual and multiple recipients, including:

- creating
- editing
- sending:
  o   sharing
- receiving

Amplification

Extract from national standards for essential digital skills (reference: DFE-00082-2019):

| Manage online activities | Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to private and public communication (including the characteristics and benefits of each) and the actions which contribute to an individual's digital footprint.

Know that a digital footprint is data left by online activity, including search history and websites/social media platforms visited, emails, uploaded photos and information sent to online services, blogs and social media activity. |
|---|---|
| Communicating and sharing | **Sending digital content** includes sharing access to online content.

Video call refers to a simple one-to-one communication via live video. It does not include a video conference involving groups of people, nor does it require scheduling meetings or inviting participants.

Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to emailing, texting and using other messaging apps, contacts and groups, and video calls. |

05 Transacting digitally

Section summary	In this section, learners will understand transacting and using online services. Learners will gain knowledge of verification checks and be able to use online forms.
Guided learning hours	4.5
Level	Entry Level 3

Learning outcomes
LO1: Using online services and verifications
LO2: Buying securely online

Information in this section must be covered by the tutor during the delivery of the content.

LO1: Using online services and verifications

1.1   Verification checks

Learners will understand the terminology and processes used for verification, including:

- password
- pin code
- security question
- facial/fingerprint recognition
- CAPTCHA

Learners will be able to comply with verification checks.

1.2   Complete and submit a form as part of an online transaction

Learners will understand the terminology and processes used to complete an online form, including:

- optional/mandatory fields
- text input field
- drop down
- data entry and validation
- confirmation of submission

Learners will be able to complete, validate and submit an online form.

LO2: Buying securely online

2.1   Online purchasing and payments

Learners will understand online payment methods, including:

- credit/debit card
- third-party
- mobile payment
- digital wallet

Learners will be able to select and use online payment methods securely.

Amplification

Extract from national standards for essential digital skills (reference: DFE-00082-2019):

Using online services	**Online form** typically comprises a simple single page form used to enter information (such as name and/or contact details) to register for or to request a service (for example, make an appointment or collection of household rubbish). Know and understand terminology and concepts relating to online forms and data validation, verification checks, and entering data (including numerical data, for example, in an online form or calculator).
Buying securely online	**Online payment** methods may include: credit/debit cards, third-party online and/or mobile payment services, and third-party online and/or mobile digital wallet services.

Section 3
Explanation of terms

Explanation of terms

This table explains how the terms used at entry level in the content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

Contribute to	Give ideas or opinions about the subject.
Demonstrate	Show an understanding of the subject.
Describe	Provide some details about the subject or item.
Explain	Provide some details about the subject with simple reasons showing how or why.
Give (an example of…)	Provide a relevant example to support the subject.
Identify	List or name some of the main points.
Indicate	Point out or show.
Label	Give the correct name to identify the subject.
List	Make a list of words, sentences or comments.
Name	Give the correct words which identify the subject.
Order	Arrange in a logical way.
Plan	Think about, organise and give information in a logical way. This could be presented as written information, a diagram or an illustration.
Respond to	Reply or answer in words.
Show	Give some information that includes knowledge about the subject.
State	Give some of the main points in brief, clear sentences.

Section 4

Additional information

Additional information

Resource requirements

Centres must ensure learners have access to suitable resources to enable them to cover all of the appropriate learning outcomes, including:

- digital devices (including audio and video functionality):
  o computers (desktop/laptop)
  o mobile/smart devices
- internet access (including access to social media platforms and email access)
- word processing software
- presentation software

Support for centres

Qualification factsheet

This document outlines the key information of this qualification for the centre, learner and employer.

Useful websites

Centres may find the following websites helpful for information, materials and resources to assist with the delivery of this qualification:

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework/essential-digital-skills-framework#digital-foundation-skills
- /assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/796596/National_standards_for_essential_digital_skills.pdf

These links are provided as sources of potentially useful information for delivery/learning of this subject area. NCFE/CACHE do not explicitly endorse any learning resources available on these websites. For official NCFE/CACHE endorsed learning resources, please see the additional and teaching materials sections on the qualifications page on the NCFE website.

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.

Skills Forward

Products to support the delivery of this qualification are offered by Skills Forward.

Skills Forward has developed a new essential digital skills diagnostic assessment based on the new national standards for essential digital skills.

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