

all you need to know.

Qualification Specification

NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English
at Entry Level 1 (600/1067/8)

NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English
at Entry Level 2 (600/1352/7)

NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English
at Entry Level 3 (600/1510/X)

Issue 3 December 2017

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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 these qualifications and should be used by everyone involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the NCFE Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3.

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 our website www.ncfe.org.uk.

If you advertise these qualifications using a different or shortened name you must ensure that learners are aware that their final certificate will state the regulated qualification title of NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry Level 1, 2 or 3.

About these qualifications

These are regulated qualifications. The regulated numbers for these qualification are 600/1067/8, 600/1352/7, 600/1510/X.

These qualifications focus on the development of effective communication skills. The qualifications encourage learners to demonstrate their skills in speaking, listening and communication, reading and writing in a range of contexts and for various purposes.

They are suitable for a wide range of individuals and are fundamental to the successful completion of various wider qualifications and frameworks, such as Foundation Learning.

These qualifications may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.

Things you need to know

Entry Level 1

- Qualification number (QN): 600/1067/8
 - Aim reference: 60010678
 - Total Qualification Time (TQT): 48
 - Guided learning hours (GLH): 45
 - Level: Entry Level 1
 - Assessment requirements: summative, task-based assessments (please see Section 2 (page 16) for more information) taken in a controlled environment, which are then internally assessed and moderated and externally moderated.
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Entry Level 2

- Qualification number (QN): 600/1352/7
 - Aim reference: 60013527
 - Total Qualification Time (TQT): 48
 - Guided learning hours (GLH): 45
 - Level: Entry Level 2
 - Assessment requirements: summative, task-based assessments (please see Section 2 (page 16) for more information) taken in a controlled environment, which are then internally assessed and moderated and externally moderated.
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Entry Level 3

- Qualification number (QN): 600/1510/X
 - Aim reference: 6001510X
 - Total Qualification Time (TQT): 48
 - Guided learning hours (GLH): 45
 - Level: Entry Level 3
 - Assessment requirements: summative, task-based assessments (please see Section 2 (page 16) for more information) taken in a controlled environment, which are then internally assessed and moderated and externally moderated.
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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.

Purpose and objectives of these qualifications

The purpose of this qualification is to provide learners with English skills to help them gain the most from life, learning and work.

The objectives of this qualification are to help learners to:

- gain skills in speaking, listening and communication, reading and writing
 - apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday life
 - engage competently and confidently with others
 - solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar situations
 - develop personally and professionally as positive citizens who can actively contribute to society.
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Entry guidance

These qualifications are designed for a wide range of learners who want to develop a basic level of practical and transferable skills in English.

There are no specific recommended prior learning requirements for these qualifications.

These qualifications are suitable for learners aged pre-16 and above, although it is recommended that learners should be aged at least 14.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that these qualifications are 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 these qualifications.

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

Achieving these qualifications

These qualifications consist of **3** mandatory components:

- component 1: speaking, listening and communication
- component 2: reading
- component 3: writing.

To be awarded the NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry Level 1, 2 or 3, learners are required to successfully complete all 3 mandatory components by achieving their task-based assessments. Component credits will not be awarded. Grades are not awarded, and the 3 components are weighted equally.

The qualification skills standards each learner must meet in order to successfully complete these qualifications are available from the gov.uk website www.gov.uk/government/collections/functional-skills-qualifications-requirements.

Learners who aren't successful can resubmit work within the registration period; however, a charge may apply.

Progression opportunities

Learners who achieve these qualifications could progress to:

- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 1
- NCFE Functional Skills qualifications in Mathematics at Entry Levels 1, 2 or 3
- NCFE Functional Skills qualifications in Information and Communication Technology at Entry Levels 1, 2 or 3.

As these qualifications develop transferable skills, which will be useful in work and life, learners could also progress on to a variety of NCFE qualifications in employability, money management, or vocational areas.

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 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.

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

All Assessors of NCFE qualifications should be appropriately qualified to make assessment decisions. Although it is not a specific requirement of these qualifications, it is considered by NCFE to be good practice for Assessors to hold, or be working towards, a recognised qualification in assessment. Where a recognised qualification is not held, Assessors should be able to demonstrate relevant and current experience of assessment.

In order to assess knowledge-based units, the Assessor should be occupationally knowledgeable, ie hold relevant knowledge to assess units designed to test knowledge and understanding of learners. This knowledge should be demonstrable through relevant qualifications/experience, and at an equivalent or higher level than the units under assessment.

In order to assess competence-based units, the Assessor should be occupationally competent, ie able to carry out the requirements of the units they're assessing. This competence should be demonstrable through relevant qualifications/experience, and at an equivalent or higher level than the units under assessment.

Internal Quality Assurance

All staff involved in the internal quality assurance of NCFE qualifications should be appropriately qualified to make quality assurance decisions. Although it is not a specific requirement of this qualification, it is considered by NCFE to be good practice for internal quality assurance staff to hold, or be working towards, a recognised qualification in internal quality assurance. Where a recognised qualification is not held, Internal Quality Assurers should be able to demonstrate relevant and current experience of internal quality assurance.

In order to carry out quality assurance of assessment decisions, internal quality assurance staff should be occupationally knowledgeable, ie hold relevant knowledge across units they will be quality assuring. This knowledge should be demonstrable through relevant qualifications/experience, and at an equivalent or higher level than the units under assessment.

Examples of relevant qualifications/experience

This section provides examples of relevant qualifications/experience to demonstrate occupational knowledge/competence for Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers.

The guidance in this section is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. Examples of relevant qualifications and occupational backgrounds are given as benchmarks. Other equivalent qualifications or backgrounds may also qualify prospective staff for delivery or assessment roles.

Centres must provide sufficient numbers of suitably experienced Assessors and Internal Moderators to ensure that qualifications are delivered effectively. NCFE can't be held responsible for any complications that arise in the delivery or assessment process as a result of internal recruitment decisions. Staff recruitment should be made at the discretion of centres, and centres should be aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that all staff involved in the delivery and assessment of NCFE qualifications are suitably qualified.

Examples of relevant qualifications

To deliver/assess these qualifications it is recommended that staff hold (or be working towards):

- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
- PGCE
- City & Guilds Certificate in Further Education Teaching (7407)
- City & Guilds Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) (7305)
- City & Guilds Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate (7307)
- City & Guilds Initial Certificate in Teaching Basic Skills (9281).

Staff should also be personally competent to teach/assess these qualifications, which may be demonstrated through:

- Functional Skills English Level 1
- GCSE or IGCSE in English Language and/or Literature to at least grade E
- Key Skills qualification in English to Level 1
- A level or AS level qualification in English Language and/or Literature to at least grade E.

Examples of work experience

Staff must be able to demonstrate current experience/knowledge of Functional Skills English criteria at the entry level that they are delivering to, and evidence of this should be continually updated in their CPD. This could be in the form of training, delivery, mentoring and quality assurance etc.

They should also have a detailed understanding of the qualification specification for each level in order to efficiently and consistently apply the assessment criteria.

Resource requirements

There are no specific resource requirements for these qualifications. Learners are permitted to use a dictionary during their assessment.

Support for centres

We have a dedicated Functional Skills page on our website www.ncfe.org.uk/functional-skills/. Centres will be able to access the following free materials and resources to assist with the delivery and assessment of Functional Skills qualifications:

- sample papers
- QSPs
- chief examiner reports.

Materials to support the delivery of these qualifications can be downloaded free from the qualifications page on our website www.ncfe.org.uk and consist of the following:

- Qualification Support Pack (QSP)
- Functional Skills Amplification - our Amplification Guides are perfect for centres that are upskilling their vocational staff and
- Assessors to support the delivery of Functional Skills, and also
- for subject specialists looking for practical examples of how to explain the application of Functional Skills
- Functional Skills Criteria for English - the qualification skills standards each learner must meet in order to successfully
- complete these qualifications
- Functional Skills summary sheets - this document provides an overview of the key areas of delivery for these qualifications
- NCFE Instructions and Guidance - Functional Skills Internal Controlled Assessments – this document is designed to assist
- centres in the delivery and assessment of the controlled
- assessment component(s) of these qualifications.

ForSkills

ForSkills offer a range of diagnostic assessments and learning resources for Functional Skills. Their initial assessment and diagnostic tool is available both offline and online to offer truly flexible and interactive testing, from Entry Level to Level 2 in all subjects. More information on ForSkills is available on our website www.ncfe.org.uk.

Qualification Support Packs

NCFE offers Qualification Support Packs (QSPs) for these qualifications.

QSPs are a resource that Tutors can use when planning and delivering an NCFE qualification. Within a QSP, Tutors will find a Scheme of Work, PowerPoint presentation and a wide range of tasks and worksheets to help learners consolidate their knowledge.

QSPs are not intended to provide full coverage of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, but the content is mapped to the qualification to ensure it is relevant and useful.

The QSPs for these qualifications can be downloaded from the qualifications page on our website www.ncfe.org.uk.

Centre Support Guide

This explains everything you need to know, from how to apply to become an NCFE-approved centre to registering your learners and claiming their certificates, and everything in between. Centres must seek approval to offer a qualification. Only learners from approved centres can be certificated.

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 our website here: www.ncfe.org.uk/media/828461/reasonable-adjustments-and-special-considerations-policy-2017.pdf

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 our website at www.ncfe.org.uk.

Training and support

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

Section 2

Assessment and moderation

Assessment and moderation

How the qualifications are assessed

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

Each candidate is required to undertake 3 summative, task-based assessments.

Centres are free to choose the date, time and location of the assessments, and there's no need to take them in any particular order.

Candidates will be issued with an individual result of 'achieved' or 'not yet achieved' for each of the individual components:

- reading
- writing
- speaking, listening and communication

If candidates do not achieve their component assessment they are able to resit the individual component.

All 3 components must be achieved in order to obtain a full certificate. Partial certification is not available for these qualifications. Grades are **not** awarded and the components are weighted equally.

Candidates can take their assessments at any time; however, as these are summative assessments, they should only be taken when the centre is confident that the candidate is able to achieve the component at the relevant level.

During the assessments candidates will be assessed against all of the skills standards and each of the coverage and range statements that comprise the skill standards at Entry Levels 1, 2 or 3. The skills standards are available to download from the NCFE website, www.ncfe.org.uk.

Controlled assessment

Controlled assessment is a form of internal assessment in which control levels are set for each stage of the assessment process:

- task setting
- task taking
- task marking.

The assessments are set by NCFE to create evidence which demonstrates achievement of all the skills standards and coverage and range statements associated with the relevant qualification component. The qualification skills standards each candidate must meet in order to successfully complete their qualification are available from the NCFE website www.ncfe.org.uk.

Task setting

NCFE provides templates in the Internal Assessment Pack which must be used during candidate assessments.

The templates supplied by NCFE must not be amended other than to change from landscape to portrait page layout to allow for the recording of multiple candidates, or to change the paper size from A4 to A3, where necessary.

NCFE will undertake a review of the assessment task(s) yearly and replace these as necessary.

Task taking

The controlled assessments for the NCFE Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry Level (Speaking, Listening and Communication, Reading and Writing) must be undertaken in controlled, supervised conditions.

Candidates must be formally supervised during their assessment. Preparatory work (where required by the task) may be completed with limited supervision.

Task marking

Candidates must be assessed using the mark scheme or marking criteria (as appropriate) supplied by NCFE and the Assessor's decision (along with justification) recorded here.

Each candidate will be given a single Pass (achieved) or Fail (not yet achieved) result for the individual components.

Answers to reading tasks may be verbal or written. If verbal answers are to be given these must be recorded on the relevant Assessor Observation Record, which is sent out on registration and available to download from the NCFE website, www.ncfe.org.uk.

For more information on the controlled assessment requirements for these qualifications, please see the relevant Entry Level English Assessment Pack.

Moderation

Moderation is the process by which we confirm that assessment decisions in centres are:

- made by competent and qualified Assessors
- the product of sound and fair assessment practice
- recorded accurately and appropriately.

We do this through:

- internal moderation – which you carry out
- external moderation – which we carry out through our External Moderators who, by supporting you, will make sure that assessments meet nationally agreed standards and that your quality assurance systems continue to meet our centre approval criteria.

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

If you'd like to know more about the responsibilities of Assessors and Internal and External Moderators please refer to our Centre Support Guide.

Section 3

Structure and content

Structure and content

These qualifications have 3 mandatory components:

- speaking, listening and communication
- reading
- writing

Each component is assessed through a separate task-based assessment. For more details please see Section 2 of this qualification specification.

To be awarded the NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry Level 1, 2 or 3, candidates are required to meet the requirements of the mandatory components and their associated skills standards by successfully achieving all mandatory assessments.

The qualification standards each learner must meet in order to successfully complete their qualification are available on our website www.ncfe.org.uk.

For further information or guidance about these qualifications please contact our Research and Product Development team on 0191 239 8000.

Section 4

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 moderation 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 our website:

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/centre-information/working-with-ncfe/policies-and-regulations/>

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Data protection

NCFE is registered under the Data Protection Act and is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards when handling personal information.

Contact us

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