

**all you need
to know.**

Qualification Specification

NCFE Functional Skills qualification in
English at Level 1 (501/1660/5)

Issue 2 July 2015

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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 this qualification and should be used by everyone involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 1.

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 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 NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 1.

About this qualification

The NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 1 is listed on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications and is part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The qualification is ideal for learners wishing to develop practical, transferable skills in English in order to work confidently, effectively and independently in life. It is suitable for a wide range of individuals and is fundamental to the successful completion of various wider qualifications and frameworks, such as Foundation Learning and Apprenticeships.

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

Geographical coverage

This qualification has been regulated for use in England only.

Things you need to know

- Qualification number (QN): 501/1660/5
- Aim reference: 50116605
- Guided learning hours (GLH): 45
- NQF level: 1
- Assessment requirements: 3 mandatory, task-based assessments (please see Section 2 (page 15) for more information).

Aims and objectives of this qualification

This qualification aims to allow learners to work confidently, effectively and independently in life, by developing practical skills in English which can be transferred across situations and contexts.

The objectives of this qualification are to help learners to:

- 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.

Entry guidance

This qualification is designed for a wide range of learners who want to develop practical and transferable skills in English.

There are no specific recommended prior learning requirements for this qualification.

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.

Achieving this qualification

This qualification consists 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 Level 1, 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 this qualification are available from the gov.uk website www.gov.uk/government/collections/functional-skills-qualifications-requirements.

Learners who aren't successful can resit their assessment(s) within the registration period; however, a charge may apply.

Progression opportunities

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to:

- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in Mathematics at Level 1
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at Level 1
- NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 2

As this qualification develops transferable skills, which will be useful in work and life, candidates could also progress on to a variety of NCFE qualifications in employability, money management, or other vocational areas.

This qualification is also an integral part of the Apprenticeship and Diploma frameworks.

Qualification dates

Qualifications on the NQF have review dates, operational end dates and certification end dates.

The qualification review date is the date by which we'll have carried out a review of the qualification. This date is shown on the qualifications page on our website www.ncfe.org.uk.

We review qualifications up to 18 months before their review date, working with sector representatives to make any changes necessary to meet sector needs and to reflect recent developments. In most cases we'll then extend the qualification, and set a new review date. If we make the decision to withdraw a qualification, we'll set an operational end date.

If we extend the review date then this will be shown on the qualifications page on our website www.ncfe.org.uk and approved centres will be kept updated.

The operational end date will only show on the Register if we've made the decision to withdraw a qualification. After this date we can no longer accept candidate registrations.

The certification end date will only show on the Register once an operational end date has been set. After this date we can no longer process certification claims.

The external assessment for this qualification can only be taken up to the certification end date. No external assessments will be allowed after this date, so please ensure that your learners are entered in enough time.

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 this qualification, 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 isn't 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 assessment/internal quality assurance roles.

To deliver/assess the NCFE Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 1 it's 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 Functional Skills English at Level 1, which may be demonstrated through:

- Functional Skills English Level 2
- GCSE or IGCSE in English Language and/or Literature to at least grade C
- Key Skills qualification in English to Level 2
- A level or AS level qualification in English Language and/or English Literature to at least grade C.

Staff must be able to demonstrate current experience/knowledge of Functional Skills English criteria at Level 1 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 specifications in order to efficiently and consistently apply the assessment criteria

NCFE is not responsible for any complications that arise in the delivery, assessment or internal quality assurance process as a result of internal recruitment and training decisions. Decisions regarding staff recruitment and training should be made at the discretion of centres. Centres should be aware of their obligations under their agreement with NCFE to ensure that all staff involved in the delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance of NCFE qualifications are suitably qualified/experienced.

Resource requirements

There are no specific resource requirements for this qualification.

Learners are permitted to use a dictionary during their external 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.

Centres may also find these documents useful:

- www.ncfe.org.uk/resources/course-file-documents
- www.ncfe.org.uk/centre-information/assessment-and-moderation-pro-formas

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 a free Qualification Support Pack (QSP) for this qualification.

QSPs are a free 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 QSP for this qualification 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/31656/Reasonable-Adjustments-Special-Considerations-Policy.pdf.

Directory of Products and Services

This provides summary information about all NCFE qualifications and awards, including mandatory and optional units, learner registration and certification fees and assessment information.

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.

Learning resources

Materials to support the delivery of this qualification can be purchased from the following Partners:

Hallmark

- 01332 410067
 - info@hallmarkeducation.org.uk
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Section 2

Assessment and moderation

Assessment and moderation

How the qualification is 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 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:

- Speaking, Listening and Communication
- Reading
- Writing

If candidates do not achieve their component assessment they are able to re-sit the individual component.

All 3 components must be achieved in order to obtain a full certificate. Partial certification is not available for this qualification. 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 skills standards at Level 1. The skills standards are available to download from the gov.uk website www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual.

Internal assessment

Speaking, Listening and Communication are assessed via a summative, controlled assessment that is internally assessed and moderated and externally moderated.

NCFE sets the parameters of the assessment and supplies the mandatory assessment materials.

The NCFE Functional Skills English Level 1 Assessment Pack contains the externally set controlled assessments for the speaking, listening and communication component.

- These controlled assessments should be completed in line with the Regulations for the Conduct of Controlled Assessment, which can be found on our website www.ncfe.org.uk.
- These assessment packs will be issued upon registration of learners, and then topped up with new packs that go out automatically throughout the year.
- The controlled internal assessment packs will be sent to the centre's specified programme contact for Functional Skills by email, therefore it's very important that NCFE has the correct programme contact details for centres.
- NCFE sends out the assessment, mark schemes and any source materials that candidates will need to use during their assessment.
- The packs should be stored in a secure location, whether it is in electronic or printed form.
- NCFE also sends out details of the conditions in which these assessments must be sat.

As this component is assessed internally, NCFE should only be notified by the centre when the candidate has successfully completed their internal assessment, and they have achieved this component. Their result will then be banked until the Reading and Writing components have been achieved.

External assessment

The Reading and Writing components are assessed via 2 separate externally set and assessed task-based question papers.

Candidates will be issued with a result of 'achieved', 'not yet achieved' or 'within 10%' for each of the assessments.

The assessments are administered by centre staff under examination conditions and will both last for 1 hour. This includes candidate reading time.

If the candidate achieves their external assessment(s) before NCFE receives notification of successful internal assessment, the external assessment result(s) will be banked until a full certificate is claimed.

Paper-based assessment

To request a paper-based assessment, centres need to complete and return an External Assessment Entry Form D 15 working days before the date of assessment. The form is supplied at candidate registration and can be submitted online, via the NCFE Portal. You must state the date, time and precise location of the assessment on the form.

Results are issued 6 working days after the date of the assessment. The date the results are released will be affected if papers are returned late to NCFE.

Late entries will be accepted with less than 15 working days' notice, but an administration fee will be charged. For details of fees, please refer to NCFE's current Fees and Pricing document on our website www.ncfe.org.uk.

Online assessment

For centres using our online assessment service, assessments can be carried out without any notice and without notifying NCFE. For more information about how to get started with online assessment please go to our website www.ncfe.org.uk/forms/online-assessment.

For guidance on conducting external assessments, please refer to our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments, available from our website www.ncfe.org.uk or contact the Quality Assurance team on 0191 239 8000.

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

This qualification has 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 (page 15) of this qualification specification.

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

The qualification skills standards each learner must meet in order to successfully complete this qualification are available from the Ofqual website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/functional-skills-qualifications-requirements>.

For further information or guidance about the qualification please contact our 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.

Candidates 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:

www.ncfe.org.uk/media/31656/Reasonable-Adjustments-Special-Considerations-Policy.pdf.

Data protection

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

Feedback

Here at NCFE, we're continually looking to review and improve our portfolio of qualifications to make sure they are of a high standard and meeting the needs of both learners and employers.

In order to achieve this and to comply with the requirements of our regulator, Ofqual, we rely on the valuable feedback that you – our centres – provide us with.

For each NCFE qualification you deliver, we would be grateful if you could let us know the following:

- general feedback about the qualification and assessment
- whether the qualification is meeting its intended purpose
- the outcome for the learner – whether they have progressed to further education or into/within employment

You can provide us with this information by emailing qualificationfeedback@ncfe.org.uk, giving us a call on 0191 239 8000, responding to the next survey we send you, or completing this form www.ncfe.org.uk/qualifications/qualification-feedback/ - the link to this is on the right hand side of our main 'Qualifications' page. By doing this, you're playing an important role in helping us continue to develop and enhance our qualifications for the benefit of your learners.

Contact us

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Tel: 0191 239 8000*
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**** To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.***