

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

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Summary of Changes from Previous Version

All changes from previous versions of this document are highlighted throughout.

Page Number	Overview of amendment
47 & 48	Information and guidance on the prohibition of external aids, including Artificial Intelligence tools, within NCFE external assessments.

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Introduction

Importance of these regulations

These regulations have been produced to enable all centres to administer assessments consistently and securely so that the integrity of the assessment process can be maintained. Failure to adhere to these regulations could adversely affect candidates, either at a local level within your centre or potentially, in the event of a breach of question paper security, at a national or international level.

These regulations are for assessments held between 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2024 and must be read in conjunction with the Qualification Specification and the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery document (QSID), Provider Guide or Tutor Guide, or Extended Assessment Tutor and Learner Information and Requirements document, for each individual qualification.

Qualifications covered by these regulations

These regulations must be used in timetabled written and on-screen assessments of all NCFE qualifications, including those which may be offered and/or delivered under the NCFE brand, including products in the CACHE portfolio and our T Level ¹ qualification suite). For Functional Skills controlled assessments, please refer to NCFE's Functional Skills - Regulations for the Conduct of Controlled Assessments – Functional Skills – which is available on our [website](#).

The external assessment type may consist solely of, or be a combination of:

- **On demand** (invigilated) – the centre schedules the assessment date and time when entering the learners.
- **Set date and time** (invigilated) – NCFE specifies the exact date and time that the external assessment must be administered in the centre
- **Assessment window** (supervised) – the centre arranges supervised periods of external assessment within a set window
- **Assessment window** (invigilated) – the centre arranges invigilated periods of external assessment within a set window
- **Controlled assessment** (CACHE Technical qualifications) – these follow the same principles as assessment window (supervised)
- **Independent self-study (extended assessments)** – completed independently by learners and submitted to NCFE for marking at set times during the year.

¹*T Level is a registered trademark of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. The T Level Technical Qualification is a qualification approved and managed by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

NCFE offers most external assessments either paper-based and/or online. Centres should refer to our Online Assessment User Guides and Technical Specifications, which can be on our [website](#), for details on delivering online assessments.

Using these regulations

These regulations must be followed by all centre staff involved in assessment administration. This includes, but is not limited to:

- heads of centre
- SLT members
- exams officers
- invigilators

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- Communication Professionals, Language Modifiers, practical assistants, prompters, readers and scribes.

Head of centre responsibilities

The 'head of centre' is the most senior operational officer in the organisation. This may be the head teacher of a school, the principal of a college, the Chief Executive Officer of an Academy Trust or the Managing Director of a company or training provider. **It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that all staff comply with the regulations in this booklet.** Failure to do so may constitute malpractice as defined in our Maladministration and Malpractice Policy.

Quality Assurance

NCFE reserves the right to carry out unannounced inspections and/or observation visits to confirm these regulations are being adhered to and that centres have policies and procedures in place for the delivery of NCFE external assessments.

The following policies are required for NCFE inspection purposes:

- Procedure for the emergency evacuation of the assessment room
- External assessment contingency plan to prepare for any disruption
- External assessment policy to cover all aspects of external assessment administration
- Policy covering the management of extended assessments, including risk management and staff responsibilities, as appropriate to your centre.

For online or on-demand assessments, NCFE reserves the right to request a timetable of scheduled assessments. This must be provided within 48 hours of the request and any changes to scheduling must be provided to NCFE.

To ensure visits can be carried out in a timely manner during scheduled external assessments:

- You **must ensure** that your centre is permanently staffed between 8:30am to 3:30pm, Monday to Friday, and must co-operate with any visit from an inspector, including giving access to your secure storage
- On arrival at the centre, the NCFE representative will introduce themselves and explain the reason for the visit
- The NCFE representative must be accompanied by a senior member of staff or a member of the exam office throughout the duration of the visit
- Storage facilities for the external assessment materials will be reviewed, along with the location of the assessment
- The NCFE representative may request to speak to any individual involved in the external assessment delivery at the centre
- The NCFE representative will discuss the findings of the observation with the Responsible Person and/or the Designated Person at the end of the visit
- A completed report will be made available to the centre following the visit

If an NCFE representative observes any malpractice or non-compliance with these regulations, they have the right to declare the external assessment void. In such cases, the NCFE representative will report the incident to our Quality Assurance team who will deal with the incident in accordance with our [Maladministration and Malpractice Policy](#).

If at any time during the external assessment there is a violation of these regulations, the Supervisor/Invigilator or Designated Person has the right to stop the external assessment immediately. This decision must only be made in exceptional circumstances where malpractice is irrefutable. Once stopped, no allowance can be given retrospectively if the decision is deemed invalid. If malpractice or maladministration occurs during an assessment, please inform NCFE immediately with a report of what occurred – please see our Notification of Malpractice form available on our [website](#).

If any of these regulations are breached by a learner, Supervisor, Invigilator or other person(s) involved in the conduct of the external assessment, then NCFE may declare the external assessment void.

In the event of a suspected or actual breach of these regulations by learners:

- The work completed by the learner(s) concerned and any unauthorised materials (if applicable) must be confiscated from the learner(s) and given to the Designated Person to return to NCFE
- All learners suspected of breaching these regulations should be instructed to leave the room immediately if appropriate to do so, causing the least amount of disruption to other learners
- At the end of the external assessment, the Invigilator must report all relevant facts on the external assessment documentation
- The Supervisor/Invigilator should also indicate on the learner answer sheet/booklet that they were removed from the external assessment
- The Supervisor/Invigilator should report the incident to the Designated Person as soon as possible.
- NCFE should be informed immediately of any irregularity
- The centre should conduct its own investigation into the incident and report the incident and their findings to our Quality Assurance team using the NCFE Notification of Malpractice document on our website

NCFE reserves the right to investigate each case of alleged or actual maladministration/malpractice committed by a learner, Supervisors, Invigilators or other person(s) involved in the conduct of the external assessment to establish all of the facts and circumstances surrounding the case. The investigation will be carried out in accordance with NCFE's Maladministration and Malpractice Policy.

Preparing for the assessment

1. Keeping question papers and other assessment materials secure

- 1.1 The following instructions apply to all confidential materials to ensure the integrity and security of the assessments. This includes question papers in any format.
- 1.2 **NCFE must be informed immediately if the security of the question papers or confidential supporting instructions is put at risk.** This includes any natural disaster, fire, theft, loss, damage, or other circumstance which places the existing accommodation or secure storage of assessment materials at risk.
- 1.3 Centres must be able to demonstrate the receipt, secure movement, and secure storage of question papers and confidential materials.
- 1.4 Centres must ensure that envelopes and boxes containing confidential materials are signed for. A log must be kept at the initial point of delivery of confidential materials, including the number of boxes received.
- 1.5 The head of centre must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place so that confidential assessment materials are only handed over to authorised members of staff. Care must always be taken to ensure the security of materials.
- 1.6 On receipt, the question paper packets, still in their despatch packaging, must be moved immediately to the secure room for checking and transfer to the centre's secure storage facility. It is for the head of centre to set out the appropriate terms of authorisation for members of centre staff.
- 1.7 **Only persons authorised by the head of centre and the exams officer must be allowed access to the centre's secure storage facility.**
- 1.8 Assessment materials must only be accessed in accordance with NCFE's specific instructions.
- 1.9 Modified question papers may arrive separately from the main despatch of question papers.

2. Checking and arranging question paper packets

- 2.1 When question paper packets are removed from the despatch packaging they must be checked carefully, and a log of the check kept. The question paper packets must be checked against NCFE's despatch note and the centre timetable or entries.

Checking must take place as soon as possible on the day the question papers are received. If this is not possible, e.g., due to a late delivery or the unavailability of authorised members of staff, the material, still in its despatch packaging, must be transferred immediately into the secure storage facility until it can be checked.

The checking must take place no later than the next working day and must be undertaken in the secure room.

Following the checking, question paper packets should be arranged in timetable order to reduce the possibility of opening a packet at the wrong time and must then be immediately locked in the secure storage facility.

2.2 NCFE must be informed immediately if there are any problems, e.g.

- a) it appears that the parcel(s) has been opened during transit and therefore there may have been a breach of security;
- b) there are any differences between the material received and the despatch/delivery note;
- c) the material has been significantly damaged in transit or upon opening;
- d) the material appears not to meet the centre's requirements;
- e) the material has been received in error.

3 Conditions for storing question papers and any other confidential material distributed to centres

- 3.1 **Question papers and pre-release materials issued by NCFE must always be stored at the centre's registered address in a secure room with a secure storage facility**, e.g., safe, security cabinet. The secure room must only be used for the purpose of administering secure assessment materials with access restricted to two to six key holders only. (The exams officer must be one of the key holders.) For electronic assessment materials, please see section 4.
- 3.2 NCFE must be informed no later than 6 weeks prior to a centre moving to a new address or relocating the secure storage facility. A centre inspection may take place as a result of this notification.
- 3.3 The centre's secure storage facility must have the capacity to hold up to 3 weeks of question papers and any other confidential material.
- 3.4 **The centre's secure storage facility must only contain current and 'live' confidential awarding body material. Past assessment question papers, internal school tests, and mock assessments must not be kept in the centre's secure storage facility.**
- 3.5 **Question papers must always be kept in their sealed packets.**
- 3.6 Assessment stationery, e.g., answer booklets and formula booklets, must be stored in the secure room. Although it is good practice to store this material in the secure storage facility, it is not mandatory.
- 3.7 Mock assessments and internal school tests may be stored in the secure room but must always be kept separately from 'live' NCFE material and be clearly identified.
- 3.8 If the volume of question papers is too great for the secure storage in one room, additional rooms must be used within the centre. These additional rooms must also meet the requirements for secure storage.

4 Arrangements for handling secure electronic materials

Centre authorisation

- 4.1 Electronic question paper materials **must** only be handled by members of staff authorised to do so by the head of centre.
- 4.2 The head of centre must ensure that authorised staff are familiar with the most recent instructions issued by NCFE.
- 4.3 At least two and no more than six members of centre staff should be authorised to handle secure electronic materials, one of whom must be the exams officer. Other members of centre staff may assist with printing and collation provided they are under supervision of an authorised staff member.

Secure account management

- 4.4 Email accounts used for secure material access must belong to named individuals or be a group email account accessed solely by individuals authorised by the head of centre to handle secure materials. Where group email accounts are in place, regular checks must be conducted to ensure all authorised individuals in the group still require access.
- 4.5 Files must only be accessed by the named individual(s) to whom they have been sent directly or made accessible to via the NCFE Portal. Emails or links to secure materials must never be forwarded or shared, prior to the start of the assessment or first scheduled session.
- 4.6 By accessing secure material, the individual is accepting personal responsibility for maintaining the security of the material.
- 4.7 Accounts used to access secure material must be audited regularly. Any unused or unneeded accounts must be closed promptly, for example when a member of staff has left the centre or changed roles.
- 4.8 Accounts must be reviewed by the head of centre ahead of each assessment series to ensure that users have appropriate levels of access and all inactive accounts have been removed.
- 4.9 Secure password management is critical. Passwords used to access secure material must be strong and changed regularly. Passwords must never be written down or shared.

Accessing and printing secure files

- 4.10 The integrity and security of the electronic question paper must be maintained during the downloading, printing and collating process.
- 4.11 The file must be accessed and downloaded only for the use of candidate who have been entered for the assessment.
- 4.12 The file must be stored locally only for the purposes of printing and must then be deleted immediately. The file must then be deleted from the deleted items folder.
- 4.13 Any emails or links associated with the secure file must also be immediately deleted and then deleted from the deleted items folder.

- 4.14 Do not create any unnecessary hard copies of the file, and securely destroy any unneeded hard copies once printing has been completed.
- 4.15 Secure files must be accessed and printed within a secure environment. Only authorised members of staff must be present in the room e.g., exams office staff and a reprographics assistant. A subject teacher must not be present in the room.
- 4.16 Once printed, question papers must be sealed within a non-transparent envelope marked clearly with the exam details on the outside of the envelope. The envelope must be stored securely ready for transfer to the assessment room at the appropriate time, in line with the requirements in section 3.

Reporting to NCFE

- 4.17 Report any concerns of a potential breach of security to NCFE immediately.

5 Removing question papers from secure storage

- 5.1 In order to avoid potential breaches of security, care must be taken to ensure that the correct question paper packets are opened. A member of centre staff, additional to the person removing the question paper packets from secure storage, e.g., an invigilator, must check the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry, if appropriate, immediately before a question paper packet is opened: this second pair of eyes check must now be recorded.

If it's subsequently identified following the second pair of eyes check that the wrong question paper packet has been opened, it must be resealed. The incident must be reported to NCFE immediately.

- 5.2 Unless there is a need to split question paper packets for different assessment rooms (see paragraph 5.3 and 14.9) or facilitate access arrangements (see paragraphs 5.4 to 5.6), they must be opened in the designated assessment room(s). Question paper packets should be taken to the designated assessment room(s) as close to the start of the assessment as possible. They must not be removed from the centre's secure storage facility and taken to the designated assessment room(s) any earlier than 60 minutes prior to NCFE's published starting time for the assessment.

The question papers must not be left unattended. Care must always be taken to ensure the security of the question papers.

- 5.3 Centres may open the packet(s) of question papers to make them up into more appropriately sized sets for the different rooms on one or more sites provided the following conditions are met:
 - a) As few packets as possible should be opened and this must be within 90 minutes of NCFE's published starting time for the assessment. Centres following this approach should note that prior approval is not required.
 - b) **The question paper packet must be opened in the secure room and not in the assessment room.** The question paper packet must be re-sealed and placed back into the centre's secure storage facility. Unless the question papers packets being removed from the centre's secure storage facility are required for an alternative site, they must not be taken to the different assessment room any earlier than 60 minutes prior to NCFE's published starting time for the assessment.

Where a question paper needs to be scanned or photocopied, the exams officer, or a member of staff authorised by the head of centre or exams officer, must take the question paper in a **sealed non-transparent envelope** to the printer/scanner. The question paper and the copy

must be returned to the secure room where they will be placed into the question paper packet, which **must** be re-sealed and placed back into the centre's secure storage facility.

- c) The question papers extracted from the packet must be taken to the assessment room(s)/site(s) in a **sealed non-transparent envelope**. An invigilator must always be present in the assessment room(s). **Question papers must not be left unattended.**

5.4 Where a candidate requires a computer reader (and approval for the arrangement has been granted) or a question paper on coloured/enlarged paper, centres are permitted to open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of NCFE's published starting time for the assessment. However, it is strongly recommended that a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper is ordered or accessed via NCFE's secure extranet site. Printing directly from a PDF of the question paper will ensure better print quality and reduce the possibility of human error when collating and stapling.

5.5 Where NCFE has granted approval for a Language Modifier, they may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the published starting time for the assessment to prepare.

5.6 Where the SENCo has granted the candidate a Communication Professional and/or a Live Speaker:

- a) the Communication Professional may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to NCFE's published starting time for the assessment to prepare;
- b) the Live Speaker may have access to the transcript of the Listening assessment 60 minutes prior to NCFE's published starting time for the assessment to prepare.

A reader and/or a scribe is not allowed access to the question paper prior to the starting time for the assessment to prepare.

5.7 Where confidential materials such as live assignments need to be opened in advance of the assessment and held for use over an extended period, strict precautions must be taken to safeguard them after they have been opened or downloaded from NCFE's secure extranet site:

- a) they must only be issued at the time of the assessment and must be collected at the end of the assessment session;
- b) they must not be removed from the centre and when not in use must be kept secure;
- c) each copy must be checked prior to the assessment to ensure that it is clean and free from pen or pencil annotations or amendments;
- d) live assessment material must not be used as practice material for any qualifications.

6 Starting times for assessments

6.1 All published starting times are UK times (either GMT or BST as appropriate) current on the assessment date. **Centres outside the UK must adjust their local starting times so that they begin at the same time as UK centres.**

Candidates must always be allowed the full amount of time as specified for the assessment in NCFE's published timetable.

Centres should refer to Section 21, Candidates who arrive late, for procedures relating to those candidates who arrive late for an assessment.

- 6.2 NCFE allows centres in the UK to start assessments up to 30 minutes earlier than, or later than, the published starting time for the session, without the need to complete any paperwork. Prior permission is not required.

Where this policy is followed, to avoid any possible breach of security, late arriving candidates or early departing candidates must be supervised as if NCFE's published starting time had been in place.

- 6.3 **Candidates who take an assessment earlier than NCFE's published starting time must be kept under centre supervision (which the centre must arrange) until one hour after the published starting time for that assessment.** Centres must ensure that question papers used by those candidates are kept in the centre's secure storage facility until one hour after the published starting time for that assessment.
- 6.4 **Candidates who take an assessment later than NCFE's published starting time must be kept under centre supervision (which the centre must arrange) from 30 minutes after the published starting time for that assessment until they begin it.**
- 6.5 **For assessments that last less than one hour, candidates must be supervised and question papers must be kept in the centre's secure storage facility until the published finishing time of the assessment.**

(For advice regarding assessments which last for less than an hour see Appendix 2.)

See also paragraphs 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5

7 Timetable clashes

- 7.1 Centres must not vary the timetable if a timetabled assessment clashes with any of the following:
- work experience
 - a school function or closure
 - a field trip
 - sporting events below international level
 - holidays and weddings
 - a candidate's personal arrangements.

Candidates must not be entered for the same subject at the same qualification level with more than one awarding body in the same series.

- 7.2 **In exceptional circumstances**, where the size of the cohort means that it is not possible for all candidates to sit the assessment(s) at the same time, the centre may split the cohort into two groups. One group of candidates will sit the assessment earlier than or later than NCFE's published starting time.

The security of the assessment(s) must always be maintained. Candidates must always be supervised in line with paragraph 7.5. There is no need to complete any paperwork and prior permission is not required.

- 7.3 If candidates are taking two or more assessments in a session and the total time is three hours or less, the centre may decide the order of the assessments within the timetabled session.

Candidates may also be given a supervised break of no more than twenty minutes between papers within a session. This must be conducted within the assessment room, under formal assessment conditions at all times*. This means that candidates cannot use this time to revise.

*For candidates with approved supervised rest breaks, the rest break may be conducted outside of the assessment room with the candidate being supervised at all times.

- 7.4 If candidates are taking two or more assessments timetabled for the same session and the total time is more than three hours including approved extra time allowances and/or supervised rest breaks, the centre may conduct one assessment in a later or earlier session within the same day. There is no need to complete any paperwork for this. Prior permission is not required. The centre may determine the assessment which is to be conducted in a later or earlier session within the same day. If the centre does this, the security of the assessment must still be maintained. Candidates must be supervised in line with the requirements in points a) to d) below and in paragraph 7.5:

- a) **candidates who take an assessment earlier than NCFE's published starting time must be kept under centre supervision (which the centre must arrange) until one hour after the published starting time for that assessment.** Question papers used by those candidates must be kept in the centre's secure storage facility until one hour after NCFE's published starting time for that assessment;
- b) **for assessments that last less than one hour, candidates must be supervised, and question papers must be kept in the centre's secure storage facility until NCFE's published finishing time for that assessment;**
- c) **candidates who take an assessment later than NCFE's published starting time must be kept under centre supervision from 30 minutes after the published starting time for that assessment until they begin it;**
- d) if some candidates take an assessment in a different session from other candidates, the centre must seal all copies of the question paper used in the earlier session in an envelope and return them to the centre's secure storage facility.

- 7.5 'Centre supervision' means that a member of centre staff, or an invigilator, will always be in the same room as the candidate(s). Candidates may revise using their own resources whilst under centre supervision between assessments but must not:

- a) be in possession of an electronic communication/storage device or have access to the internet;
- b) have contact with any candidate who has sat the assessment;
- c) be coached by a member of centre staff.

8 Overnight supervision arrangements

Overnight supervision arrangements should only be applied as a last resort and once all other options have been exhausted. The head of centre must be satisfied with any arrangement for overnight supervision of a candidate where necessary and must accept full responsibility for the security of the assessment throughout.

- 8.1 When candidates are entered for multiple assessments (three or more assessments) timetabled for the same day and the total duration for those papers is:
- more than six hours for Level 3 assessments (Applied General), including approved extra time allowances and/or supervised rest breaks; or
 - more than five and a half hours for Level 1/2 assessments, including approved extra time allowances and/or supervised rest breaks.

Candidates may, at the centre's discretion, be allowed to take an assessment, scheduled for the afternoon session, the following morning, including Saturdays. Candidates are not allowed to take assessments on an earlier day than that scheduled on the timetable.

- 8.2 Where a candidate takes an assessment the following morning, **the centre must appoint a member of centre staff or an invigilator to supervise the candidate at all times while they are on the premises sitting assessments.** The candidate must be under centre supervision from 30 minutes after NCFE's published starting time for the delayed assessment and the centre must ensure there is no contact with other candidates.

The supervision of a candidate on journeys to and from the centre and overnight may be undertaken by the candidate's parent/guardian/carer or centre staff. The centre must determine a method of supervision which ensures the candidate's wellbeing.

- 8.3 The overnight supervision arrangements must ensure that the candidate does not have advance warning of the content of the assessment deferred until the following morning. This means the candidate must not meet or communicate with anyone who may have knowledge of the content. This includes any form of electronic communication/storage device, e.g., telephone, e-mail, internet and social media. It also extends to television and radio, which could report key details of the day's assessments.
- 8.4 The centre must:
- inform the parties involved that any infringement of the conditions governing overnight supervision arrangements may lead to NCFE being unable to accept the script and/or the application of sanctions/penalties;**
 - be satisfied that the arrangements maintain the integrity and security of the assessment;
 - inform NCFE immediately of any known or suspected contravention of the arrangements for overnight supervision of a candidate.**

NCFE may use appropriate means to check that the conditions for overnight supervision have been adhered to and will take action if there is evidence of any contravention. This could lead to the disqualification of any candidates involved and could affect whether we would allow such concessions to be made in the future.

If some candidates are allowed to take an assessment on a later day than other candidates at the centre, all copies of the question paper used on the earlier day must be sealed in an envelope and returned to the centre's secure storage facility until all candidates at the centre have taken that assessment.

9 Resources for assessments

9.1 Candidates may use resources such as anthologies, bilingual translation dictionaries, and editions of set texts as set out in the instructions on the question paper.

9.2 Candidates must be given prior notice that they are responsible for bringing with them any materials needed for the assessment.

If candidates have any unauthorised material in an assessment (whether or not they intend to use it), this may be considered malpractice.

9.3 In assessments where resources are not shown on the question paper, or on NCFE's stationery list (including those where calculators are not allowed), centres must warn candidates that taking a resource into an assessment may be considered as malpractice in the same way as having any other unauthorised items.

9.4 For art assessments, appropriate art materials and design media and technology must be provided by the centre.

9.5 If any learner requires additional pages these should now be accessed using the supplementary answer booklet provided on NCFE's website. These are located, and can be downloaded from, individual qualification pages, and should be printed duplex. Please note that a centre portal log-in will be required to access this additional resource.

Learners must ensure their details are completed on the front page. At the end of the assessment the learner must insert the supplementary booklet into their question paper and hand in to the invigilator. The supplementary booklet is then returned alongside all other papers.

10 Using calculators

10.1 Candidates may use a calculator in an assessment unless this is prohibited by the qualification's specification.

The instructions on the question paper will say whether calculators are allowed or not. If the instructions do not include such a statement, calculators should be treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates.

Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet NCFE's regulations.

10.2 The instructions set out in this section apply to all assessments unless stated otherwise in a qualification specification.

10.3 Candidates must be told these regulations beforehand and be familiar with any *Information for Candidates* documents.

<p>Calculators must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of a size suitable for use on the desk • either battery or solar powered • free of lids, cases, and covers which have printed instructions or formulae. 	<p>Calculators must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ language translators ○ symbolic algebra manipulation ○ symbolic differentiation or integration ○ communication with other machines or the internet. • be borrowed from another candidate during an assessment for any reason • have retrievable information stored in them. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ databanks ○ dictionaries ○ mathematical formulae ○ text.
<p>The candidate is responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the calculator's power supply ○ the calculator's working condition ○ clearing anything stored in the calculator. 	

10.4 An invigilator may give a candidate a replacement calculator.

10.5 **Where access is permitted to a calculator for part of an assessment, it is acceptable for candidates to place their calculators on the floor under their desks in sight of the invigilator(s) for the non-calculator portion of the assessment.**

11 Accommodation

11.1 Centres must ensure appropriate accommodation exists to support the size of the cohorts they are teaching.

11.2 **Candidates must sit their assessment(s) at the centre's registered address** unless the centre is using an alternative site arrangement.

Alternative sites for the conduct of assessments

11.3 Where it is intended that an assessment for any candidate(s) will be conducted at an address other than the centre's registered address, e.g.

- a hospital which is a non-registered centre;
- the candidate's home;
- a local church hall;
- a local community hall;
- a local sports hall;
- another building owned by the centre which is situated at a different location from the centre's registered address;
- the centre operates as part of a consortium at Borough/County level or through a Multi-Academy Trust and can transport question papers and other assessment material in a secure manner to another local centre within 90 minutes of NCFE's published starting time for the assessment.

Other than for on-demand assessments (e.g., Functional Skills), the centre must notify NCFE no later than six weeks before the start of the assessment.

The address of the alternative assessment venue, the dates it is to be used and the maximum number of candidates likely to be involved must be given.

Question papers must:

- a) **be kept in the centre's secure storage facility at the centre's registered address, until 90 minutes before NCFE's published starting time for the assessment;**
- b) **be taken to the alternative assessment venue by a member of centre staff;**
- c) **be transported to the alternative assessment venue, securely packaged and always kept under secure conditions** within 90 minutes of NCFE's published starting time for the assessment.

The assessment room

The head of centre remains accountable for ensuring that the assessment will be conducted at the alternative site in accordance with this document.

For on-screen tests, centres must refer to Appendix 1.

- 11.4 Any room in which an assessment is held must provide candidates with appropriate conditions for taking the assessment. The centre must pay attention to conditions such as heating, lighting, ventilation, and noise, whether internal or external, intermittent or continuous.
- 11.5 Timed art assessments must be held under conditions that will give all candidates the chance to carry out their tasks and to display their true levels of attainment in the subject concerned.
- 11.6 Display material (such as maps, diagrams, wall charts and projected images) which might be helpful to candidates must not be visible in the assessment room. Care must be taken with assessments conducted in classrooms, laboratories or libraries.
- 11.7 **A reliable clock (analogue and/or digital) must be visible to each candidate in the assessment room** and must be big enough for all candidates to be able to read clearly.

The clock must show the actual time.

Countdown and 'count up' clocks are not permissible.

Centres must carry out regular checks in advance of the assessments to make sure all clocks used in the assessment room are in good working order and show the same time.

- 11.8 A board/flipchart/whiteboard should be visible to all candidates showing the:
- a) centre number, subject title and paper number; and
 - b) the actual starting and finishing times, and date, of each assessment.
- 11.9 **The seating arrangements must prevent candidates from overlooking (intentionally or otherwise) the work of others. The minimum distance in all directions from centre to centre of candidates' chairs must be 1.25 metres.**
- 11.10 Wherever possible, for timetabled assessments:

- a) all candidates should face in the same direction;
- b) each candidate should have a separate desk or table big enough to hold question papers, maps (as appropriate) and answer booklets. Candidates who are not working at individual desks must be far enough apart so that their work cannot be seen by, and contact cannot be made with other candidates;
- c) candidates who are working on a drawing board set on an easel or other non-horizontal surface must be arranged in an inward-facing circle or in some similar pattern.

11.11 Where centres are using screened booths for candidates awarded readers, scribes or word processors, the invigilator(s) must always be able to see the candidates. Additionally, candidates must not be able to overhear or distract one another.

11.12 Candidates should normally be seated in candidate number order.

11.13 The centre must create a seating plan that shows the exact position of each candidate in the assessment room. Any changes made to seating arrangements during the assessment must be noted on the seating plan. The seating plan must be available to NCFE upon request.

11.14 Candidates with access arrangements must be identified on the seating plans that are held as part of the centre records.

11.15 Another external assessment may be held in the assessment room at the same time, so long as it does not cause any disturbance.

11.16 **Internal school tests and mock assessments cannot take place in the same room when an external assessment is being conducted.** The room can only be used for conducting an NCFE assessment.

Formal assessment conditions must always be maintained for candidates taking external assessments.

A room becomes a 'designated assessment room' as soon as exams office staff begin to check and prepare it to ensure compliance with these regulations.

As soon as preparation for the assessment begins, no other activity can take place in that room. Candidates must not be allowed into the room at this stage. Once preparation of the room is complete, candidates can enter the room, under supervised conditions, to start their assessment.

The room remains a 'designated assessment room' until all candidates have left and all materials such as candidates' scripts, question papers, and resource materials have been removed from the room.

Adequate time must be allowed for the set up and clearing of the room before and after the scheduled assessment time. Throughout this period the room remains 'designated' and cannot be used for any other activity. Centres will need to determine what constitutes 'adequate time' to meet their individual needs. This will be influenced by factors such as the size of the room and the number and nature of the assessments being conducted.

At all other times the room may be used for alternative purposes. For example, coaching sessions, revision sessions, internal school tests, and mock assessments.

The Warning to Candidates poster and the unauthorised items poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each assessment room.

This may either be a hard copy A3 paper version of the poster, in either black and white or colour, or a projection of the poster onto a wall or screen for all candidates to see.

Any candidate suffering from, or suspected of suffering from, an infectious or contagious disease must take the assessment in a separate room in which all regulations for conducting assessments can be applied.

The candidate's script must be kept separate from other scripts.

The script must not be dispatched until advice has been sought from NCFE.

12 Invigilation arrangements

It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that invigilators are appropriately trained in their duties.

12.1 Invigilators are the people in assessment rooms responsible for conducting assessments in the presence of the candidates. CCTV cannot be used for the purposes of invigilation. **Invigilators have a key role in upholding the integrity of the external assessment/assessment process.** The role of the invigilator is to ensure that the assessment is conducted according to these regulations in order to:

- a) ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities;
- b) ensure the security of the assessment materials before, during and after the assessment;
- c) prevent possible candidate malpractice;
- d) prevent possible administrative failures.

12.2 Centres must make sure that invigilators know what is expected of them.

12.3 A training session on these current regulations must be held for any new invigilators and those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under assessment conditions. An annual update meeting must be held for the existing invigilation team so that they are aware of any changes.

Centres **must** ensure that the testing of invigilators' competence and their understanding of these regulations is rigorous. This **must** also extend to those facilitating an access arrangement.

A record of the content of the training given to invigilators and those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under assessment conditions must be available for inspection and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later.

12.4 When contracting supply staff to act as invigilators the head of centre must ensure that such persons are competent and fully trained, understanding what is and what is not permissible. An assurance from a recruitment agency, for example, would not on its own be sufficient.

12.5 An invigilator must be asked to declare whether he/she has invigilated previously and whether they have any current maladministration/malpractice sanctions applied to them. This will allow the head of

centre to be satisfied that the person is a competent invigilator of assessments. As good practice, centres should consider devising a standard template which each invigilator is required to complete.

12.6 The head of centre, a senior member of centre staff, such as an assistant headteacher, or the exams officer must:

- a) ensure that this document is available to invigilators in the main assessment hall/room(s) either as an electronic copy accessible via a laptop or tablet or a printed paper copy
- b) ensure that the assessment is conducted as follows:
 - at least one invigilator must be present for each group of 30 candidates or fewer for a single date and time/on demand external assessment (e.g. Business and Enterprise, Health and Fitness);
 - at least one invigilator must be present for each group of 20 candidates or fewer for an assessment window with centre-arranged invigilated timed sessions (e.g. Art, Graphic Design);
 - when one invigilator is present, he or she must be able to get help easily, without leaving the assessment room and without disturbing the candidates. **An invigilator is only allowed a mobile phone in the assessment room for this specific purpose.** The mobile phone must be kept on silent mode. This will also apply where the invigilator is additionally acting as a practical assistant, a reader, and/or a scribe;
 - invigilators may be changed during the assessment, as long as the number of invigilators present in the assessment room does not fall below the required number.
- c) ensure that all invigilators are suitably qualified and experienced adults who must not be current students at the centre. Although centres may decide who is suitably qualified and experienced, any relative, friend or peer of a candidate in the examination room must not be the sole invigilator.
- d) ensure that a teacher, a teaching assistant, a tutor or a senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being examined, or a Learning Support Assistant who has supported one or more candidates is not an invigilator during the assessment.
- e) keep signed records of the seating plan, the invigilation arrangements, and the centre's copies of the attendance registers for each assessment. NCFE may need to refer to these records. The centre must keep them until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later.

12.7 Invigilators must:

- a) be familiar with these regulations;
- b) give all their attention to conducting the assessment properly;
- c) always be able to see each candidate in the assessment room;
- d) be familiar with the Warning to Candidates, Information for Candidates and the Unauthorised Items posters, and any specific instructions relating to the subject(s) being examined;
- e) **inform the exams officer or head of centre if they have any concerns regarding the security of the question papers.** (In such cases, the head of centre must inform NCFE immediately).

- 12.8 Invigilators must not carry out any other non-assessment related tasks in the assessment room. This also extends to reading the question paper.
- 12.9 Timed art assessments will normally be invigilated by an Art and Design teacher. However, as the Art and Design teacher may be required to give technical assistance to an individual candidate, additional invigilators should be deployed at the head of centre's discretion to ensure the supervision of candidates is always maintained.

Additional arrangements for invigilating on-screen tests can be found in Appendix 1

13 Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements

Where the invigilator additionally acts as a practical assistant, a reader and/or a scribe, as per paragraphs 13.2 to 13.4, the centre must additionally use a 'roving' invigilator. The 'roving' invigilator will enter the room at regular intervals to observe the conducting of the assessment, ensuring all relevant rules are being adhered to and supporting the practical assistant/reader and/or scribe in maintaining the integrity of the assessment

Language Modifier

- 13.1 Wherever possible the candidate and the Language Modifier should be accommodated in another room.

A separate Language Modifier and invigilator must be available for each candidate. The invigilator must listen carefully and observe the conduct of the Language Modifier throughout the duration of the assessment. The invigilator must countersign the cover sheet ensuring that it accurately reflects the actions of the Language Modifier during the assessment.

Practical assistant

- 13.2 Candidates using a practical assistant may need to be accommodated in another room.

Where the candidate and practical assistant are accommodated in another room, on a one-to-one basis, the invigilator may additionally act as the practical assistant.

The practical assistant must be made aware, prior to the assessment, of the task(s) he/she will be performing as specifically approved by NCFE.

Where a group of candidates are accommodated in the same room, each with their own practical assistant, a separate invigilator will be required.

Computer reader/reader

- 13.3 The centre is responsible for ensuring that the candidate and reader cannot be overheard by or distract other candidates. (This will also apply if the candidate uses a computer reader.)

Where the candidate and reader are accommodated in another room, on a one-to-one basis, the invigilator may additionally act as the reader.

Where candidates only require occasional words or phrases to be read, three or four candidates may share one reader. The candidate will need to put up their hand or use a prompt card when he/she needs help with reading. If the group is accommodated in another room, a separate invigilator will be required.

Where a group of candidates are accommodated in the same room, each with their own reader, a separate invigilator will be required.

Scribe/speech recognition technology

13.4 The centre is responsible for ensuring that the candidate and scribe cannot be overheard by or distract other candidates. (This will also apply if the candidate uses speech recognition technology.)

Normally, the candidate and scribe will be accommodated in another room. Where the candidate and scribe are accommodated in another room, on a one-to-one basis, the invigilator may additionally act as the scribe.

Where a group of candidates are accommodated in the same room, each with their own scribe, a separate invigilator will be required.

Communication Professional

13.5 Candidates requiring the use of a Communication Professional may need to be accommodated in another room, in which case a separate invigilator will be required.

Where a group of candidates are accommodated in the same room, each with their own Communication Professional, a separate invigilator will be required.

General principles for invigilating candidates with access arrangements

13.6 Where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, i.e. a

- Communication Professional
- Language Modifier
- practical assistant
- prompter
- reader
- scribe

they are responsible to the exams officer and must be acceptable to the head of centre. The person appointed must not normally be the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support assistant or teaching assistant. Where the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support assistant or teaching assistant is used, a separate invigilator must always be present.

The person appointed must not be a relative, friend or peer of the candidate. A private tutor cannot facilitate an access arrangement.

The head of centre must ensure that the person appointed is a responsible adult, is appropriately trained and fully understands the rules of the access arrangement(s).

It is not acceptable for a centre to use a Year 12 or Year 13 candidate to facilitate an access arrangement.

Invigilators and those acting as a Communication Professional, a Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader, or a scribe must fully understand the respective role and what is and what is not permissible in the assessment room (see section 12).

Additionally, exams officers must ensure that those acting as a:

- Communication Professional;
- Language Modifier;
- practical assistant; or
- scribe

are provided with the appropriate cover sheet prior to the assessment commencing. This will enable the cover sheet to be completed during the assessment and accurately reflect the activities performed by the Communication Professional, Language Modifier, practical assistant or scribe, as appropriate.

The invigilator may act as a prompter, a practical assistant, a reader and/or a scribe where the candidate is accommodated separately on a one to one basis.

If the prompter is also acting as a Language Modifier, a separate invigilator will be required.

14 Access arrangements

14.1 The following arrangements may be provided to a candidate at the time of his/her assessments without prior approval:

- amplification equipment;
- Braille;
- closed circuit television (CCTV);
- coloured overlays;
- low vision aid/magnifier;
- optical character reader (OCR) scanners.

Bilingual translation dictionaries

14.2 A bilingual translation dictionary must:

- a) only be used in assessments by a candidate whose first language is not English, Irish or Welsh; and
- b) reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

14.3 A standard bilingual translation dictionary must be used by the candidate. This may be an electronic bilingual translation dictionary or more typically a hard copy paper bilingual translation dictionary.

Monolingual dictionaries (which define words and phrases), translators (including web-based translators), wordlists or glossaries must not be used.

14.4 The bilingual translation dictionary must not:

- a) contain/display pictures; or
- b) provide an explanation or clarification of words and phrases.

As an example, a Polish to English bilingual translation dictionary must simply be the word in Polish and the equivalent word in English.

14.5 Bilingual translation dictionaries to be used in the assessment must be:

- a) held in the centre under secure conditions; and
- b) thoroughly checked to ensure that no unauthorised information such as notes, or revision data, have been enclosed within or written on the pages of the dictionary.

A candidate using a bilingual translation dictionary which contains notes or revision data will lose their marks and their right to this arrangement.

14.6 Translation of either assessment material or the candidate's answers into or from the candidate's first language is not permitted.

14.7 The regulations for the use of bilingual translation dictionaries must be adhered to; failure to do so can lead to the disqualification of the candidate.

Bilingual translation dictionary and 25% extra time

14.8 For the use of a bilingual translation dictionary and 25% extra time, centres must refer to NCFE's Guidance for Applying for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour-blind

14.9 This arrangement will not be permitted where the ability to identify specific colours forms part of the assessment objectives.

No other information or explanation can be given to the candidate. If the candidate has been using a colour chart, he or she will be permitted to do so in written assessments or practical assessments.

Where coloured images are included in a question paper, but do not form part of the assessment objectives and are not specifically testing the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the paper, the centre may photocopy the question paper into black and white (up to 90 minutes before NCFE's published starting time for the assessment) where considered beneficial to the candidate.

Prompter

14.10 A prompter may be permitted by the SENCo where a candidate has little or no sense of time, or loses concentration easily, or is affected by an obsessive-compulsive disorder which leads them to keep revising a question rather than moving onto other questions.

14.11 A prompter is a responsible adult who may sit beside the candidate to keep them focused on the need to answer a question and then move on to answering the next question.

- 14.12 A prompter is not a practical assistant, a reader, or a scribe but the same person may act as such, provided permission has been given for any of these arrangements.
- 14.13 The prompter is responsible to the exams officer and additionally must be a person acceptable to the head of centre.
- 14.14 The prompter must not normally be the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support assistant or teaching assistant and must not be a relative, friend or peer of the candidate. A private tutor cannot act as a prompter for the candidate.
- 14.15 A prompter:
- a) may use the following prompts either vocally or written on a flash card such as:
'Jack - focus on the question'
 - b) may tap on the desk or on the candidate's arm, depending on what is normal practice, to remind the candidate that they must pay attention to the question or that it is time for the candidate to move on to the next question.
 - c) may use the candidate's name as an appropriate prompt during the assessment in order to bring the candidate's attention back to the question paper, e.g., 'Jack'
 - d) **must abide by the regulations since failure to do so could lead to the disqualification of the candidate**
 - e) must not advise the candidate about which questions to do, or about the order in which questions should be answered
 - f) must not give factual help or offer any suggestions or communicate in any way other than those listed above.

Read aloud and/or an assessment reading pen

- 14.16 The arrangement, as permitted by the SENCo, must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock assessments.

A permitted assessment reading pen, provided by the centre, must not have an in-built dictionary or thesaurus, or a data storage facility.

A candidate using an assessment reading pen may be accommodated within the main assessment hall. However, the candidate must use headphones plugged into the assessment reading pen.

Separate invigilation within the centre (alternative rooming arrangements, e.g., a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs)

- 14.17 A candidate may take their assessments under separate invigilation within the centre where they have an established difficulty - see NCFE's Guidance for Applying for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

Where candidates sit their assessments in a smaller environment away from the main assessment room, the regulations and guidance within this booklet must always be adhered to. This is particularly so in relation to accommodation and invigilation arrangements (see sections 11 and 12).

Braille transcript

14.18 Manual Brailers will require transcription into print. Braille scripts must be transcribed by the centre.

The Braille transcript must be:

- a) produced by a member of the centre's staff, which may include the candidate's subject teacher, who is fully competent in the Braille code for the subject concerned;
- b) an exact copy of the candidate's Braille script which is made after the assessment has taken place and without the participation of the candidate. The transcriber must not insert or omit any words, nor alter their order. Spellings and technical terms must not be corrected.

Word processors (computers, laptops, and tablets)

14.19 Centres can provide a word processor (e.g., computer, laptop, or tablet), with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled, to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless the qualification's specification says otherwise. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically, and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic Braille or a tablet.

14.20 Tablets are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged. Their purpose is to be 'free-standing'.

The battery capacity of a laptop or a tablet must be checked before the candidate's assessment(s) and the centre must ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the assessment.

The use of a fully charged laptop or tablet will allow centres to seat a candidate within the main assessment hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points.

14.21 Candidates must be reminded to ensure that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer: e.g., 12345/8001 – 6391/01.

If a candidate is using the software application Notepad or Wordpad these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In these instances, once the candidate has completed the assessment and printed off their typed script, they must handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate must be supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.

14.22 Each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6.

14.23 Invigilators must remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals. Alternatively, an IT technician can set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet. This will ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost.

To make marking easier for examiners, candidates should use a minimum font size of 12pt and double spacing.

14.24 A word processor:

- a) must be used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- b) must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. **An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate.** When needed, the centre must provide a memory stick, which is cleared of any previously stored data, to the candidate;
- c) must be in good working order at the time of the assessment;
- d) must be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated in another room, a separate invigilator will be required;
- e) must either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. This must be done after the assessment is over. **The candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is their own.** Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;
- f) must be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused
- g) must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- h) must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the assessment), e-mail, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets;
- i) must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- j) must not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the qualification's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking;
- k) must not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader
- l) must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- m) must not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

14.25 Centres should retain electronic copies of all electronically produced evidence, whether submitted electronically or by hard copy. The electronic copy of any evidence may be accepted by NCFE where the printed or previously sent copy has been lost or corrupted. However, the centre would need to demonstrate to NCFE that the file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to NCFE.

15 Contingency planning

- 15.1 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to assessments as part of their general emergency planning. This **must** also take into account the possibility of a cyber-attack. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents, and staff should disruption to assessments occur.
- 15.2 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled assessments, NCFE must be informed as soon as possible. We will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting assessments that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled assessments.

In the event that there is national disruption to a day of assessments in 2023/24, NCFE will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected assessments will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the assessments and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of assessments will always rest with NCFE. The centre must conduct the assessment on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by us.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled assessment(s) for reasons other than those covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of this contingency arrangement so that they take them into account when making their plans for the summer.

At the beginning of the assessment

16 Identifying candidates

16.1 Invigilators must establish the identity of all candidates sitting assessments.

The head of centre must make sure that appropriate arrangements are in place so that invigilators can carry out adequate checks on the identity of all candidates.

Senior members of centre staff, such as an assistant headteacher, who have been authorised by their head of centre may be present at the start of the assessment to assist with the identification of candidates.

When identifying candidates, the attendance register should be completed.

16.2 **A private/external candidate or a transferred candidate who is not known to the school or college must show photographic documentary evidence to prove that they are the same person who entered/registered for the assessment/assessment, e.g. a passport or photographic driving licence.**

16.3 Where it is impossible to identify a candidate due to the wearing of religious clothing, such as a veil, the candidate should be approached by a member of staff of the same gender and taken to a private room where they should be politely asked to remove the religious clothing for identification purposes. Centres must inform candidates in advance of this procedure and well before their first assessment.

Once identification has been established, the candidate should replace their religious clothing and proceed as normal to sit the assessment.

16.4 Invigilators must be informed of those candidates with access arrangements and must be made aware of the access arrangement(s) awarded.

17 The people present

17.1 Senior members of centre staff approved by the head of centre, who have not taught the subject being examined, may be present at the start of the assessment(s). This is to:

- a) identify and settle candidates and instil discipline;
- b) check that the candidates have been issued with the correct question papers for the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry if appropriate;
- c) check that the candidates have the necessary equipment and materials, i.e., calculators, preliminary material, anthologies or set texts where permitted;
- d) start the assessment.

Only those senior members of centre staff authorised by the head of centre to specifically perform the above tasks may be present in the assessment room.

Senior members of centre staff must not provide advice and guidance on the assessment. They must not comment on the question paper or give advice on which sections of the paper and which questions should be attempted.

- 17.2 The Notice to Centres – The people present in the assessment room (see Appendix 6) provides further guidance and clarity on the role of centre staff in the assessment room, other than exam officers and invigilators. This Notice must be brought to the attention of all members of centre staff so that they are clear about their role in the assessment room.
- 17.3 **Only candidates sitting the assessment must be present in the assessment room while an assessment is taking place.**
- 17.4 Centre staff who are called upon to enter the assessment room during the assessment because a candidate has identified a possible problem which the invigilator is unable to resolve, such as a suspected error on the question paper, do not need prior authorisation from the head of centre. **If they leave the assessment room, they may only take the question paper with them if they need to check a possible problem with NCFE.**

If NCFE has not issued an erratum, then the instruction to candidates must be to answer the question as printed. Centre staff must not provide advice to candidates without permission.

18 Question papers, stationery, materials and other equipment

- 18.1 **To avoid potential breaches of security, care must be taken to ensure the correct question paper packets are opened. A member of centre staff, additional to the person removing the question paper packets from secure storage, e.g., an invigilator, must check the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry, if appropriate, immediately before a question paper packet is opened. This second pair of eyes check must be recorded.**

Question papers must never be left unattended once they have been removed from the centre's secure storage facility.

- 18.2 Invigilators must take all reasonable steps to make sure that the following conditions are met:
- a) the correct assessment question papers have been placed face-up on candidates' desks. This includes modified papers and those on coloured paper;
 - b) the official assessment stationery for the unit/component, e.g., answer booklets and additional answer sheets, must be issued to candidates. **No other stationery, including paper for rough work, can be provided;**
 - c) in a subject where there is an objective test or a personalised question paper, and individual pre-printed answer sheets are provided for each candidate, each individual answer sheet or personalised question paper must be given to the candidate whose name appears on it. Centres must check that the sheets relate to the subject and the unit/component concerned;
 - d) in the assessment room candidates must not have access to items other than those stated in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list or the specification for that subject.

Candidates must not be in possession of the following items:

- **earphones/earbuds;**
- **iPods;**
- **mobile phones;**
- **MP3/4 players or similar devices;**

- **Watches.**

This means that:

- ideally, all unauthorised items are left outside of the assessment room;
 - any pencil cases taken into the assessment room must be see-through;
 - any unauthorised items that have been taken into the assessment room must be placed out of reach of the candidates (and not under their desks) before the assessment starts. This will normally be at the front of the assessment room or a similar arrangement that enables the invigilator to control access to the items.
- e) Following the invigilator's announcement (see Appendix 3) any mobile phones or other unauthorised items in the candidates' possession must be handed to the invigilator prior to the assessment starting. This also includes watches.
- f) **If candidates have access to unauthorised items in the assessment room this may be considered as malpractice.**
- g) Food and drink may be allowed in the assessment room at the discretion of the head of centre. To enable invigilators to check these items quickly and efficiently, the following requirements must be adhered to.
- Food brought into the assessment room by the candidate **must** be free of packaging and in a transparent container.
- h) Drink bottles **must** be transparent with all labels removed which would include transparent, reusable plastic bottles.

18.3 Timed Art assessments

For Timed Art assessments, candidates may take into the assessment room any preparatory supporting studies, work journals, notes or sketches which they have produced, and which are to be submitted for assessment along with the work done during the timed test. Candidates may also take into the assessment room the objects and materials which are required to set up a still-life group.

The invigilator must ensure that when candidates take preparatory supporting studies into the assessment room, these are their own studies.

Timed Art assessments must be taken under formal assessment conditions. Candidates are not permitted to listen to music.

19 Starting the assessment

19.1 **Candidates are under formal assessment conditions from the moment they enter the room in which they will be taking their assessment(s) until the point at which they are permitted to leave.**

Any malpractice, suspected or actual, from this point must be reported to NCFE.

Candidates must not talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once they have entered the assessment room.

Candidates must not open the question paper until the assessment begins.

19.2 Before candidates can start the assessment, the invigilator must always:

- a) make sure that candidates are seated according to the set seating arrangements, see section 11 of these regulations;
- b) tell the candidates that they must now follow the regulations of the assessment;
- c) ask candidates to check that they have been given the correct question paper for the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry, if appropriate;
- d) tell the candidates to read the instructions on the front of the question paper;
- e) check that candidates have all the materials they need for the assessment;
- f) tell the candidates about any erratum notices;
- g) instruct candidates on emergency procedures.

19.3 **Invigilators must also give candidates the following information before the assessment.**

Suggested optional wording for invigilators to use for this is provided in Appendix 3:

Candidates must:

- a) hand in their mobile phones and any unauthorised items if they have not already done so. This is the final chance to do so. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification;
- b) write clearly and in black ink;
- c) write their name, surname, centre number, candidate number and unit or component code or paper details on their answer booklet(s) and on any additional answer sheet(s) used;
- d) fill in any other details as necessary;
- e) do all work, including rough work, on assessment stationery unless otherwise stated;
- f) write answers in the designated sections of the answer booklet;
- g) neatly cross through any rough work but do not make it totally illegible as it will be forwarded to the examiner;
- h) do any rough work for multiple-choice papers in the question booklet.

As candidates complete the details on their answer booklet, invigilators should move around the assessment room ensuring that this is being done

Candidates must not use:

- a) correcting pens, fluid or tape;
- b) erasable pens;

- c) highlighter pens in answers (although they may be used to highlight questions, words or phrases within the question paper or question/answer booklet. Candidates may also use a highlighter pen to highlight extracts in any resource material provided);
- d) gel pens in answers;
- e) blotting paper.

19.4 The invigilator may read the question paper rubric (the instructions on the front of the question paper) to the candidates.

19.5 The invigilator must:

- a) announce clearly to the candidates when they may complete the details on their answer booklet;
- b) announce clearly to the candidates when they may begin to write their answers. **The assessment will formally start at this point;**
- c) specify the time allowed for the paper(s);
- d) remind candidates that they are not allowed to communicate in any way with, ask for help from or give help to another candidate while they are in the assessment room;
- e) remind candidates sitting timed Art assessments that the work produced during the timed test period must be their own, that they are not allowed to communicate in any way with, ask for help from or give help to another candidate while they are in the assessment room (**the Timed Art assessment must be carried out under formal assessment conditions**);
- f) only answer questions from candidates about the instructions on the front of the question paper.

19.6 The invigilator must not:

- a) direct candidates to particular questions or particular sections of the question paper;
- b) make any comment where a candidate believes that there is an error or omission on the question paper. The invigilator must, however, refer the matter immediately to the exams officer. The exams officer will then verify the error or omission with the relevant subject teacher before reporting the matter to NCFE;
- c) give any information to candidates about possible mistakes in the question paper, unless there is an erratum notice or permission has been given by NCFE;
- d) comment on the content of the question paper;
- e) read a word or words printed on the question paper to a candidate, other than the instructions on the front cover;
- f) re-phrase a question for a candidate;
- g) explain any subject-specific or technical terms to a candidate;
- h) offer any advice or comment on the work of a candidate;

- i) give any indication of the time elapsed or remaining unless the candidate has been awarded a prompter. This also extends to where a question paper consists of distinct sections (a five-minute warning to candidates may only be given at the end of the assessment).

The invigilator must not undertake any of the above as they constitute malpractice.

During the assessment

20 Supervising the candidates

- 20.1 **Invigilators must supervise the candidates throughout the whole time the assessment is in progress, always giving their complete attention to this duty.**

Place invigilators at the front, back and sides of the room if possible

- 20.2 **Invigilators must be vigilant and remain aware of incidents or emerging situations, looking out for malpractice** or candidates who, for example, may be feeling unwell or require a toilet break. These incidents must be recorded on an incident log.
- 20.3 Invigilators are required to move around the assessment room quietly and at frequent intervals.
- 20.4 During a practical assessment, candidates may need to move around and spoken instructions may be necessary. These must be limited to those which are essential to achieve the objectives of the assessment. However, all other regulations within this booklet apply.

21 Candidates who arrive late

- 21.1 A candidate who arrives after the start of the assessment may be allowed to enter the assessment room and sit the assessment. This is entirely at the discretion of the centre.
- 21.2 A candidate who arrives late and is permitted by the centre to sit the assessment, must be allowed the full time for the assessment.
- 21.3 A candidate will be considered very late if he/she arrives:
- more than one hour after NCFE's published starting time for an assessment which lasts one hour or more;
 - after NCFE's published finishing time for an assessment that lasts less than one hour.
- 21.4 Where a candidate arrives very late for an assessment, centres must:
- send the script to NCFE in the normal way;
 - provide the following information:
 - the reason the candidate arrived late, including any details of special arrangements made for the candidate to reach the centre;
 - the actual starting and finishing times of the assessment;
 - the time the candidate started the assessment;
 - the time the candidate finished the assessment.
 - warn the candidate that NCFE may not accept their script.

- 21.5 If a candidate arrives in the afternoon for a paper that had been re-arranged for a morning session, the candidate may be allowed to take the paper at the published time as long as he or she has not had any contact with candidates who sat the paper earlier.

NCFE must be informed of the situation and will decide whether to accept the script.

Centres should note that there is no requirement to complete any paperwork for those candidates who arrive within one hour of NCFE's published starting time for an assessment which lasts an hour or more.

22 Completing the attendance register

- 22.1 **Centres must pay close attention to the completion of the attendance register. Failure to do so will impact upon NCFE's ability to deliver an accurate set of results.**

- 22.2 **The attendance register is a key part of the process of identifying candidates present in the assessment room (see section 16).**

- 22.3 Centres may record candidate attendance data for assessments through their MIS and produce a centre generated attendance register. Centres must submit attendance data but there is not a requirement for centres to use the paper attendance registers produced by NCFE.

A centre generated attendance register must list:

- a) the centre number;
- b) paper details, including tier, and date/time of assessment;
- c) candidate numbers and candidate names;
- d) whether candidates were present or absent for the assessment.

- 22.4 The invigilator must:

- a) accurately complete the attendance register during the assessment, in line NCFE's instructions, clearly indicating those candidates who are either present, absent or transferred;
- b) write on the attendance register the details of candidates who took the assessment but are not shown on the register; (The exams officer must make formal entries to NCFE as soon as possible, if this has not already been done);
- c) cross through the numbers and names of candidates who have been officially withdrawn from a paper or a subject but who are still shown on the register.

- 22.5 The attendance register must have been completed before the end of the assessment. This will ensure that a check can be made as the scripts are collected.

Once candidates are seated and have started the assessment, complete the attendance register. This will allow for the identification of absent candidates who can be contacted as to their whereabouts.

- 22.6 The centre must:

- a) brief invigilators on arrangements for transferred candidates (where relevant);

- b) keep a copy of the attendance register until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later.

23 Leaving the assessment room

- 23.1 **For assessments that last one hour or more, candidates must stay under centre supervision until one hour after NCFE's published starting time for that assessment.**
- 23.2 **For assessments that last less than one hour, candidates must be supervised, and question papers must be kept in secure storage until the published finishing time of the assessment.** (See also Appendix 2: Advice regarding assessments which last for less than an hour)
- 23.3 **Candidates who are allowed to leave the assessment room temporarily must be accompanied by a member of centre staff.** This must not be the candidate's subject teacher or a subject expert for the assessment in question. Candidates may be allowed extra time at the discretion of the centre to compensate for their temporary absence.
- 23.4 Candidates who have finished the assessment and have been allowed to leave the assessment room early must hand in their script, question paper and any other material before they leave the assessment room. Those candidates must not be allowed back into the room.
- 23.5 **At the end of the assessment, candidates must hand in their script, question paper and any other material before they leave the assessment room.**
- 23.6 **Where assessments have been re-scheduled in a morning or afternoon session, or deferred to the following morning, for one or more candidates, the question papers must not be released to members of centre staff:**
 - a) **until NCFE's published finishing time for the paper concerned; or**
 - b) **until all candidates within the centre have completed the paper concerned.**
- 23.7 **Scripts, question papers and any other material must not be removed from the assessment room until all candidates have completed the assessment.**

In cases where an assessment has been moved from an afternoon session to a morning session due to a timetable variation, the invigilator must collect all question papers and pass all copies to the exams officer for return to the centre's secure storage facility.

- 23.8 **Upon completion of an on-demand assessment, question papers must not be released to centre personnel and/or to candidates at any time. (This applies to both written and on-screen assessments.)**

24 Malpractice

- 24.1 Where a candidate is being disruptive, the invigilator must warn the candidate that he/she may be removed from the assessment room. The candidate must also be warned that NCFE will be informed and may decide to penalise them, which could include disqualification.

The invigilator must record what has happened.

24.2 Wherever possible, the invigilator should remove and keep any unauthorised material that a candidate may have in the assessment. If necessary, the invigilator should summon assistance.

24.3 The head of centre must report to NCFE immediately all cases of suspected or actual malpractice in connection with the assessment.

The head of centre has the authority to remove a candidate from the assessment room but should only do so if the candidate would disrupt others by remaining in the room.

24.4 The head of centre has a duty to monitor and report potential malpractice by invigilators and centre staff to NCFE immediately.

24.5 Where candidates commit malpractice, NCFE may decide to penalise them, which could include disqualification.

Candidates should be warned of the possible penalties NCFE may apply as detailed in NCFE'S Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, found on our [website](#).

24.6 In cases of suspected malpractice, assessment scripts must be packed as normal.

25 Emergencies

25.1 When dealing with emergencies staff must be aware of the centre's policy and, where appropriate, any instructions from relevant local or national agencies.

25.2 Centres must have a written centre policy for dealing with an emergency evacuation of the assessment room, which will be subject to inspection by NCFE.

25.3 In an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb alert, the invigilator must take the following action:

- a) stop the candidates from writing;
- b) collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present) and evacuate the assessment room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority;
- c) advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the assessment room. Candidates must be advised to close their answer booklet;
- d) ensure the candidates leave the room in silence;
- e) ensure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the assessment room so that there is no discussion about the assessment;
- f) make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted;
- g) allow the candidates the remainder of the working time set for the assessment once it resumes;
- h) if there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the assessment;
- i) make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send to NCFE.

- 25.4 **As each incident will be different, advice must be sought from NCFE as soon as it is safe to do so. This is particularly so where the centre is concerned about the security of the assessment(s).**
- 25.5 **Where candidates are unable to return to the building to complete the assessment, NCFE must be contacted immediately for advice.** NCFE have procedures in place to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged where they are unable to complete the assessment due to circumstances beyond their control.

At the end of the assessment

26 Finishing the assessment

- 26.1 A five-minute warning to candidates before the end of the assessment is permitted. However, this is at the centre's discretion. Where candidates have different finishing times, the centre must consider the impact of giving a warning.
- 26.2 At the end of the assessment invigilators must:
- tell candidates to stop working and remind them that they are still under assessment conditions;
 - allow candidates who arrived late and were allowed the full working time to do their assessment, to continue after the normal finishing time. Tell them to stop working after the full working time allowed has passed;
 - instruct candidates taking written assessments to:
 - make sure they have put all the necessary information on their answer booklet and any additional answer sheets, e.g. candidate name, candidate number, centre number;
 - make sure their answers are correctly numbered;
 - make sure they have put any loose additional answer sheets inside the answer booklet. Paper clips or staples must not be used.
- 26.3 Candidates granted extra time and/or supervised rest breaks should be allowed to carry on uninterrupted for the necessary additional time. Invigilators must be aware in advance of the assessment which candidates have been granted extra time to complete their assessment and those with supervised rest breaks.

27 Collecting scripts

- 27.1 Invigilators must:
- collect all the scripts/objective test sheets, question papers and any other materials before candidates are allowed to leave the assessment room;**
 - check that there is a script/objective test sheet for every candidate marked as present on the attendance register;
 - check that the names on the scripts match the details on the attendance register;
 - put the scripts/objective test sheets in the order shown on the attendance register;
 - check that candidates have used their correct centre and candidate number;
 - give the scripts/objective test sheets to the person responsible for despatching them to NCFE.
- 27.2 When checking that the candidate and centre information matches the details on the attendance register, if a discrepancy is identified the centre may correct the discrepancy or add to the information recorded by the candidate on the front of their answer booklet and/or any supplementary sheets used. This should be restricted to the centre number, candidate number, candidate name or component/unit code. The correction should be counter-signed on the script. Centres must not alter any other details on the candidate's script.

- 27.3 Scripts are confidential between candidates and NCFE. They may not be read or photocopied before they are sent to us, unless we have stated otherwise.**
- 27.4 Centres must ensure that scripts are always kept in the secure room until as close to the collection time as possible. Script packages must not be left unattended at the collection area.**

After the assessment

28 Packing scripts

28.1 Centres must:

- a) check that they have enough large plastic envelopes to despatch all the scripts;
- b) use the plastic envelopes provided by NCFE regardless of the number of scripts that need to be dispatched;
- c) ensure that every script or objective test sheet from the assessment has been included. Scripts for each unit/component must be packed in a separate plastic envelope;
- d) ensure that all scripts/objective test sheets for a unit/component are collected together, including those for any candidates who have been accommodated separately;
- e) enclose the relevant attendance register(s) with the scripts or objective test sheets. Scripts and objective test sheets must be in the same order as candidates appear on the attendance register. The attendance register must still be completed and sent even when there are no scripts due to all candidates being absent or withdrawn;
- f) ensure cover sheets accompany scripts where appropriate, for example where a candidate has used a scribe. The cover sheet must be placed inside the script;
- g) use the pre-addressed labels provided by NCFE. Ensure the correct label is used for each unit/component and that the most up to date label is always used – do not use photocopied labels;
- h) always use only one label per package;
- i) always use the whole address label, stick it securely to the largest face of the package and ensure it is flat and crease free. The address label must be visible and legible;
- j) fasten envelopes securely, but do not use staples, string or tape.

28.2 Centres must not:

- a) include anything other than the assessment scripts and the attendance register(s);
- b) identify the centre in any way to the examiner (for example, through compliment slips or franking machines), to ensure the marking process is anonymous;
- c) combine packages, even where scripts for more than one assessment are going to the same address. If there are too many scripts from one assessment to fit into one envelope, NCFE will send extra address labels so that the scripts can be split into separate packages;
- d) overfill packages as they may split open during transit;
- e) write on labels or alter them in any way.

29 Sending scripts

29.1 Centres must:

- a) despatch scripts and accompanying attendance registers to the address provided on the same day of the assessment wherever possible;
- b) ensure that any scripts that cannot be despatched on the scheduled day of the assessment are despatched no later than the next working day;
- c) retain scripts in the centre's secure room if kept within the centre overnight.

29.2 Where there is a window for delivering an assessment, centres must make sure that all scripts are despatched by the end of that period.

29.3 Centres must:

- a) obtain proof of postage/despatch for each packet of scripts, which must be retained on the centre's files until the results are published, in case of loss or damage. (Proof of postage will provide evidence that the candidates' scripts have left the centre. This is taken to indicate that the scripts were written at the appointed time and that, should the scripts not be received by NCFE, then special consideration may be possible);
- b) return assessment papers to NCFE, within 2 working days, by Royal Mail Special Delivery or comparable service from other providers (we would not consider Royal Mail Recorded Delivery to be an acceptable method of delivery, as this does not guarantee a tracking facility throughout the entire delivery process).

29.4 Where the assessment is completed digitally, centres must ensure that:

- a) checks are in place to guarantee that any evidence completed by a learner is uploaded, for the correct learner and assessment, and that all uploaded evidence is both accessible and complete, in acceptable formats and naming conventions, as outlined in relevant supporting documentation on our website.
- b) all completed evidence has been uploaded to the NCFE portal **no later than 3 working days** after the assessment date or final date of the assessment window.

30 Unused stationery

30.1 The invigilator must:

- a) collect all unused stationery in the assessment room;
- b) check it for any loose sheets which candidates may have missed;
- c) return it to the exams officer.

30.2 The exams officer must:

- a) return unused stationery to the secure storage facility or secure room until needed for a future assessment. Surplus stationery must not be used for internal school tests or mock assessments;
- b) destroy confidentially any out-of-date stationery.

31 Releasing question papers and returning unused papers

31.1 Question papers **must not** be released to centre personnel until **after** NCFE's published finishing time for the assessment or, in the case of a timetable variation, until all candidates within the centre have completed the assessment*. Any unused papers can be destroyed or retained by the centre, pending completion of any delayed completion as a result of an Assessment Variation*.

*Does not apply to on-demand qualifications e.g., Functional Skills

Appendix 1

Instructions for conducting on-screen tests 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024

1. Introduction

Centres must be authorised by NCFE to offer on-screen tests. They must ensure that they meet the arrangements detailed in this booklet and have the expertise to access, administer and support the test/assessment.

2. Security

In addition to the instructions set out in Section 4 of this document, the following instructions apply to all confidential materials relating to the administration and delivery of on-screen tests.

- 2.1 Centres must have the relevant software installed to administer the tests and demonstrate that the appropriate security systems are in place to prevent unauthorised access to the test/assessment materials.
- 2.2 Electronic test/assessment materials must always be stored securely.
- 2.3 The test/assessment materials must only be accessed in accordance with NCFE's subject-specific instructions.
- 2.4 Candidate test password information must be stored securely and only given to candidates at the time of the assessment. Different passwords must be set up for each session, if more than one session is required. It is not sufficient to rely on candidates keeping their passwords secret.
- 2.5 **The invigilator must check the identity of each candidate and ensure that the correct ID and password are issued.** The candidate is responsible for inputting their ID and password and ensuring that the name of the test and their details are correct. If the information presented to the candidate is incorrect, they must notify the invigilator and cancel out of the assessment before starting. The invigilator must give the candidate the correct ID and password to access their assessment. If a candidate sits an assessment in another candidate's name (whether it is intentional or not), this may constitute malpractice.
- 2.6 Confidential material (including discarded printouts) must be kept secure throughout the assessment window (i.e., the range of dates within which the unit/component must be conducted).
- 2.7 Centres must maintain the confidentiality of candidate responses and candidate details.
- 2.8 Centres must have appropriate security systems and procedures in place to prevent candidates using computers/laptops in assessments having unauthorised external communication with other users of computers/laptops.
- 2.9 The use of external aids, particularly concerning spelling, punctuation and grammar (for example, dictionary, spelling and grammar checking software, or other cloud-based or Artificial Intelligence tools) is not permitted in any external online assessments. This is in line with [JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures](#).

For learners sitting online assessments, it is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that all external aids (unless by prior approval as a reasonable adjustment requirement) are disabled prior to the assessment taking place, and that your invigilators are aware to look out for these tools being used. If you are not able to remove external aids on computers which are to be used for an online assessment, you must notify NCFE immediately by email at customersupport@ncfe.org.uk.

3. Timetabling of tests

- 3.1 For assessments which are timetabled, test sessions must take place according to NCFE's timetable and will be restricted to the scheduled period.
- 3.2 Centres will need to plan and set up the sessions before the assessment date, taking into account that access to the tests will be restricted to the test window by the software.
- 3.3 Centres must inform candidates which session and room they should attend.
- 3.4 Requirements for the supervision of candidates will differ between tests. Centres must always refer to NCFE's subject-specific instructions.
- 3.5 Where a test is on-demand, once the candidate has completed their test, there is no reason for the candidate to remain within the assessment room.

4. Use of calculators

The instructions set out in section 10 of this document, apply to all on-screen tests unless stated otherwise in NCFE's subject-specific instructions.

5. Resources

- 5.1 Centres must ensure that sufficient workstations are available, including at least one replacement computer and printers where required. The equipment must be fit for purpose, meet NCFE's minimum technical specifications, and must be checked by a competent person before use.
- 5.2 Centres should consider using one workstation as a 'control centre'. This must be monitored by an invigilator or a member of the centre's IT support team.
- 5.3 If more than one test is being conducted at the same time, centres should consider using an additional 'control centre'.
- 5.4 There must be appropriate policies and procedures in place to:
 - a) protect the network and the security of the hardware and software which is used to deliver on-screen tests;
 - b) hold candidate responses.
- 5.5 The centre's management of the secure test environment in which on-screen tests operate must be robust.

Ensure stocks of toner, ink and paper are sufficient to meet the demands of the on-screen test where required.

5.6 You must display the following notices outside the assessment room:

- a) Unauthorised Items poster (A3 version);
- b) Warning to Candidates (A3 version).

5.7 Individual computers should show the time left for the test to run. If not, a clock must be visible to all candidates. The centre number, start and finish times must be displayed prominently.

Care should be taken to ensure that the clock displays on individual computers are accurate and synchronised for assessment purposes.

6. Accommodation

6.1 Centres must ensure an appropriate assessment environment.

6.2 Where computers are used for assessment purposes, the head of centre is responsible for ensuring that health and safety laws are followed. Particular attention must be given to:

- a) electrical safety;
- b) environment, heat, light and ventilation;
- c) user comfort and safety, such as the position of screens, wrist rests, footrests, chairs, adjustable tables, copyholders and computer screens on adjustable arms.

6.3 The arrangement of workstations and the position of the invigilator's desk must facilitate detection of any unauthorised activity by candidates, for example communication with others or use of unauthorised reference material.

6.4 The layout of the room for on-screen tests cannot be specifically defined since there will be several solutions to organising workstations within the space available. When planning the layout of the room, centres must consider the following limitations:

- a) the distance between the screens as defined in section 6.5 of this document;
- b) the division of the workspace to allow any permitted additional materials to be used;
- c) the use of booths, screens or partitions, whether temporary or permanent;
- d) impact on invigilation requirements;
- e) ratio of invigilators.

6.5 **Each workstation must be isolated by a minimum space of 1.25 metres measured from the nearest outer edge of one screen to the next, unless the monitors are positioned back-to-back or separated by dividers or protected by privacy screens.**

6.6 Under certain circumstances 1.25 metres may prove to be an insufficient distance to prevent candidates seeing, intentionally or otherwise, the work of others. **The principal objective is to ensure that no candidate's work can be overseen by others. Appropriate steps must be taken to ensure that this can be achieved.**

6.7 Candidates should normally be seated in candidate number order. However, candidates permitted extra time should be seated where they will not be disturbed by candidates who have completed the test.

6.8 Candidates must not be permitted to change seats unless asked to do so by the invigilator.

Centres will need to decide how to accommodate large numbers of candidates. The following alternatives should be considered:

- seating candidates sitting the same test at alternate computers;
- seating a candidate next to someone entered for a different tier;
- seating a candidate next to someone entered for a different subject or unit/component;
- seating the candidates before handing out their confidential log-in details.

If confidential log-in details are placed at workstations before the candidates are seated, centres must check to ensure that candidates are seated correctly.

7. Invigilation arrangements

For on-screen tests, particularly those involving a large number of candidates and where more than one test is being conducted, it is recommended that a specialist invigilator is appointed. The specialist invigilator should have proven IT skills and experience in conducting on-screen tests, and be assisted by at least one other invigilator.

- 7.1 There must be at least one invigilator for each group of 20 or fewer candidates taking on-screen tests, unless NCFE has given permission to do otherwise. This will, however, be dependent on the nature of the test and the layout of the room. Further invigilators should be employed at the exams officer's discretion to ensure that all candidates are always in view.
- 7.2 Technical help should be available throughout the test(s) in case of hardware/software problems and to assist with invigilation of the test.
- 7.3 **Candidates must not be in possession of the following items – earphones/earbuds, iPods, mobile phones, MP3/4 players or similar devices, and watches.**
- 7.4 **Unless permitted by NCFE's subject-specific instructions, there must be no access to:**
- a) data stored on the hard drive;
 - b) e-mail;
 - c) portable storage media, e.g. floppy disks, CDs, memory sticks;
 - d) pre-prepared templates;
 - e) the internet.
- 7.5 Centres must keep a signed record of the seating plan.
- 7.6 During a test, workstations may be networked and it may not be possible to avoid a group of candidates having to share access to a printer. Candidates must be closely supervised to ensure they only have access to their own work.

8. Emergencies

In dealing with emergencies staff must be aware of the centre's policy and, where appropriate, any instructions from relevant local or national agencies. Where the integrity of the assessment or the candidates' performance may have been affected, a report must be sent to NCFE. See also section 25 of these regulations.

8.1 Centres must ensure that candidates are closely supervised if an evacuation is necessary.

8.2 You should refer to any software specific instructions to safeguard:

- BS17.1a the security of assessment content and responses (for example by pausing the test for all candidates and locking the assessment room which has been evacuated without closing down the software);
- BS17.2.1 procedures for dealing with hardware, software and communication failures (which may affect individual workstations or the whole network) should normally allow the candidate(s) to continue the assessment session at a different workstation or at a later time, if necessary, without loss of working time. In extreme cases it may be preferable to provide a paper assessment.
- BS17.3 procedures for re-starting an assessment after an unplanned break (i.e., an emergency or a technical failure) should ensure that the invigilator:
 - a) controls the re-start;
 - b) re-sets the timing, where necessary;
 - c) ensures that candidates can re-access their previous responses where this is technically feasible and permitted by the assessment regulations.

9. Finishing the assessment

- 9.1 Centres must ensure that all candidates' work is saved and secure from unauthorised access.
- 9.2 All other assessment material, including copies of candidates' work, additional printouts and question papers must be collected by the invigilator and stored in a secure place.
- 9.3 Any common user areas accessible to candidates must be cleared of all work saved during the assessment immediately after each session.
- 9.4 Candidates' user areas must be removed at the end of the assessment window or after each session if feasible. Whichever strategy is adopted, centres must ensure that the user areas of those candidates who have already sat the assessment cannot be accessed by candidates who are scheduled to sit the assessment in a later session within the window. Where networked stations are used, particular care should be taken to prevent work being accessible via shared folders.
- 9.5 Invigilators should be aware that work may need to be printed off outside the time allowed for the test. Candidates must not be prevented from doing so but must always be supervised.
- 9.6 Scrap paper used by candidates must be collected and destroyed.
- 9.7 Where required, the invigilator should check that all on-screen assessments have been uploaded to NCFE.

Appendix 2

Advice regarding assessments which last for less than an hour

For assessments that last less than an hour there is a risk that the security will be compromised.

Paragraph 6.5 of the regulations states:

For assessments that last less than one hour, candidates must be supervised, and question papers must be kept in the centre's secure storage facility until the published finishing time of the assessment.

Some examples:

1. NCFE published starting time: 9.00am – 30-minute assessment

Centre start time	Centre finish time	Candidates must be kept under centre supervision until
8.30	9.00	9.30
8.45	9.15	9.30
9.00	9.30	9.30
9.15	9.45	9.30*

*Although earlier than the centre's finish time, a candidate could technically leave the assessment room at 9.30 am as this would be NCFE's published finishing time for the assessment.

2. NCFE starting time: 9.00am – 40-minute assessment

Centre start time	Centre finish time	Candidates must be kept under centre supervision until
8.30	9.10	9.40
8.45	9.25	9.40
9.00	9.40	9.40
9.15	9.55	9.40*

*Although earlier than the centre's finish time, a candidate could technically leave the assessment room at 9.40 am as this would be NCFE's published finishing time for the assessment.

3. NCFE published starting time: 1.30pm – 30-minute assessment

Centre start time	Centre finish time	Candidates must be kept under centre supervision until
1.00	1.30	2.00
1.15	1.45	2.00
1.30	2.00	2.00
1.45	2.15	2.00*

*Although earlier than the centre's finish time, a candidate could technically leave the assessment room at 2.00 pm as this would be NCFE's published finishing time for the assessment.

4. NCFE published starting time: 1.30pm – 40-minute assessment

Centre start time	Centre finish time	Candidates must be kept under centre supervision until
1.00	1.40	2.10
1.15	1.55	2.10
1.30	2.10	2.10
1.45	2.25	2.10*

*Although earlier than the centre's finish time, a candidate could technically leave the assessment room at 2.10 pm as this would be NCFE's published finishing time for the assessment.

Candidates who take an assessment later than NCFE's published starting time must be kept under centre supervision from 30 minutes after the published starting time for that assessment until they begin it.

Appendix 3

Suggested wording for invigilators' announcement at the beginning of written assessments

Centres may wish to laminate copies of this announcement or alternatively record it on a CD or tape. If using a CD or tape centres must consider alternative means of communication for candidates with a hearing impairment.

1.	You must now follow the regulations of the assessment.
2.	Only material listed on the question paper is allowed in the assessment room. You must not have on or near you any other material.
3.	Check your pockets now. Check for things such as notes, books, papers, earphones/earbuds, iPods, mobile phones and watches. If you have any unauthorised items in your possession, you must hand them in to an invigilator now. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
4.	If you have a watch, hand it to the invigilator now.
5.	(For assessments with books that are allowed, add: check that no notes or papers have accidentally been left inside any book you are allowed to have in the assessment room and that you have the correct edition of the allowed set text(s).)
6.	(For assessments where a calculator is allowed, add: make sure that the lid, case, or cover of your calculator does not have printed formulae or instructions and that you have cleared anything stored in the memory.)
7.	Check that you have been given the correct paper for the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier.
8.	Fill in all the details needed on the front of your answer book (or question paper) in black ink. Make sure you fill these details in on any additional answer sheets that you use. Do not open the question paper until you are instructed that the exam has begun.
Pause to allow time for candidates to fill in the details	
9.	Read the instructions on the front of the question paper. (You may read these out to the candidates, if required.)
10.	Check that you have all the materials you need for the assessment.
Pause to allow time for queries	
Tell the candidates about any erratum notices	
11.	Remember, you must write clearly and in black ink. You may use pencil for drawings and rough notes.

12.	You must write in the designated sections of the answer booklet.
13.	You must write all rough work in your answer book and neatly cross it through with a single line. (For multiple-choice papers, add: you must do any rough work in the question booklet.)
14.	You must not use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, blotting paper. You must not use highlighters or gel pens in your answers.
15.	You must not communicate in any way with, ask for help from or give help to another candidate while you are in this assessment room. You should put up your hand to attract the invigilator's attention.
16.	If the fire alarm sounds, please remain seated and wait for instructions from the invigilator.
	Tell the candidates when they may begin and how much time they have

Appendix 4

Supervised Sessions

Please note: For Assessment Windows (supervised sessions), we recommend that these sessions are supervised by an independent person where possible. If this is not possible, then the tutor/teacher may act as a supervisor and must ensure they make their responsibilities as a supervisor clear to learners.

Prior to the first supervised external assessment session, the supervisor should:

- ensure the learners have a list of all dates and times for the supervised and invigilated sessions;
- distribute papers to learners in sufficient time for the specified period of the supervised assessment (see individual Qualification Specification and the QSID for details);
- ensure that learners read the instructions in their external assessment paper.

For all sessions, supervisors must:

- ensure that there are no distractions during the external assessment;
- supervise the external assessment to ensure compliance with NCFE's regulations;
- ensure that the external assessment evidence is only completed during the assessment sessions.

During the supervised sessions:

- sessions must take place within the centre and can be completed in the normal classroom environment;
- supervisors can discuss the following with the learners:
 - the conditions in which the external assessment must be undertaken;
 - use of the tick list provided at the back of the learner's external assessment paper (if applicable);
 - acceptable file types that can be used (if appropriate) – see QSID. Learners should be instructed where to save their electronic work and be able to access the secure storage medium.
- supervisors must prevent copying from or colluding with another learner. If any incident occurs, it must be reported to NCFE immediately in accordance with NCFE's Maladministration and Malpractice Policy, which is available on our [website](#).

Following the supervised session, supervisors must:

- complete the external assessment documentation;
- securely package all external assessment material before taking them from the location between assessment sessions. This includes any electronic storage devices;
- ensure all external assessment materials are stored in the secure storage facility between assessment sittings.

Supervisors **must not**:

- give any feedback about a learner's individual work. Learners must independently decide how to approach the brief and associated tasks;
- assess, grade or internally quality assure learners' work;
- lead on any of the tasks;
- direct learners;
- provide templates or writing frames for learners to complete;
- take copies of learner work;
- label or reference completed work on behalf of the learner.

Instructions for the supervisor to read out before starting supervised sessions

The following should be read out at the beginning of each supervised session:

- I am now in the role of Supervisor for this assessment, not your tutor/teacher (if applicable).
- This external assessment consists of supervised (*and invigilated if applicable*) assessments. You have a list of dates and times when the supervised/invigilated sessions will take place. You must complete both the supervised and invigilated sessions if appropriate.
- You must work independently and decide how to approach the assessment task(s) yourself.
- Read the “instructions for learners” in the external assessment paper and make sure that you understand them. If you are unsure of any instructions, please attract the attention of an invigilator who will provide assistance.
- You must decide how to present your evidence yourself. This must be the most appropriate method which will fit the requirements of the assessment task(s).
- I cannot provide you with any feedback or help with any tasks (if applicable). Where appropriate, the timings for the assessment task(s) have been provided on the external assessment paper. Use these as a guide to how long you should spend on each task.
- All the work produced for the external assessment must be your own.
- All your evidence must be clearly labelled with our centre name, number, your name and your NCFE learner number. Each piece of evidence should have the task number written clearly.
 - If the Examiner is not able to identify which task a piece of evidence relates to, then they may not be able to mark that work.
- As this is an external assessment, you should not upload or share any work or evidence on any social media sites or discuss with anyone.
- If there’s any evidence which is allowed to be submitted electronically, you are responsible for saving this in an acceptable format. All other work completed on the computer must be printed out and attached to the external assessment. You must ensure that all files are submitted for your assessment.
 - If the Examiner is not able to access the evidence, then they will not be able to mark the work.

Appendix 5

Warning to candidates poster

1. You **must** be on time for all your assessments.
2. **Possession of a mobile phone, watch or other unauthorised material is not allowed** - even if you do not intend to use it. You will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification from the assessment/qualification.
3. You **must not** talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the assessment room.
4. You **must** follow the instructions of the invigilator.
5. You **must not** sit an assessment in the name of another candidate.
6. You **must not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the assessment.
7. If you are confused about anything, only speak to an invigilator.

The *Warning to candidates* must be displayed in a prominent place outside each assessment room. This may be a hard copy A3 paper version, or an image of the poster projected onto a wall or screen for all candidates to see.

Effective from 1 September 2023

Appendix 6

The people present in the assessment room

NCFE wish to provide further guidance and clarity on the role of centre staff in the assessment room, other than exam officers and invigilators.

Section 17 of these regulations provides clarity on who may be present in the assessment room.

The head of centre has a duty to maintain the integrity of the assessment and to ensure that fully trained invigilators are in place for assessments and on-screen tests.

Invigilators must have been trained to undertake their duties (see section 12 of these regulations)

Rules relating to centre staff other than exams officers and invigilators

Senior members of centre staff approved by the head of centre, who have not taught the subject being examined, may be present at the start of the assessment(s). When entering an assessment room, the senior member of centre staff must identify themselves and their purpose for being there to the senior invigilator and/or exams officer.

Senior members of centre staff have a very clear role. Principally:

- to assist with the identification of candidates;
- to deal with any disciplinary matters;
- to check that candidates have been issued with the correct question paper for the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry if appropriate;
- to check that candidates have the appropriate equipment and materials for the assessment;
- to commence the assessment.

Under no circumstances may members of centre staff:

- be present at the start of the assessment and then sit and read the assessment question paper before leaving the assessment room;
- enter the assessment room with the intention of accessing the assessment question paper;
- have access to the assessment question paper unless this is specifically requested by either the exams officer or an invigilator. For example, a possible printing error has been identified and, in the absence of an erratum notice, the exams officer needs this verified by the relevant subject teacher before reporting the issue to NCFE;
- give any indication of their opinion of a question paper to candidates, verbally or otherwise, having been asked to inspect the content;
- communicate with candidates. This constraint extends to coaching candidates, reminding candidates which section(s) of the question paper to answer or which questions they should answer;
- enter the assessment room and approach candidates, either to prompt them to make an attempt at the assessment or to provide support and encouragement;
- enter the assessment room and read candidates' scripts.

Support and encouragement may be offered at any point up until the time that candidates enter the assessment room. From that moment onwards they are under formal assessment conditions and the strict protocols must be adhered to.

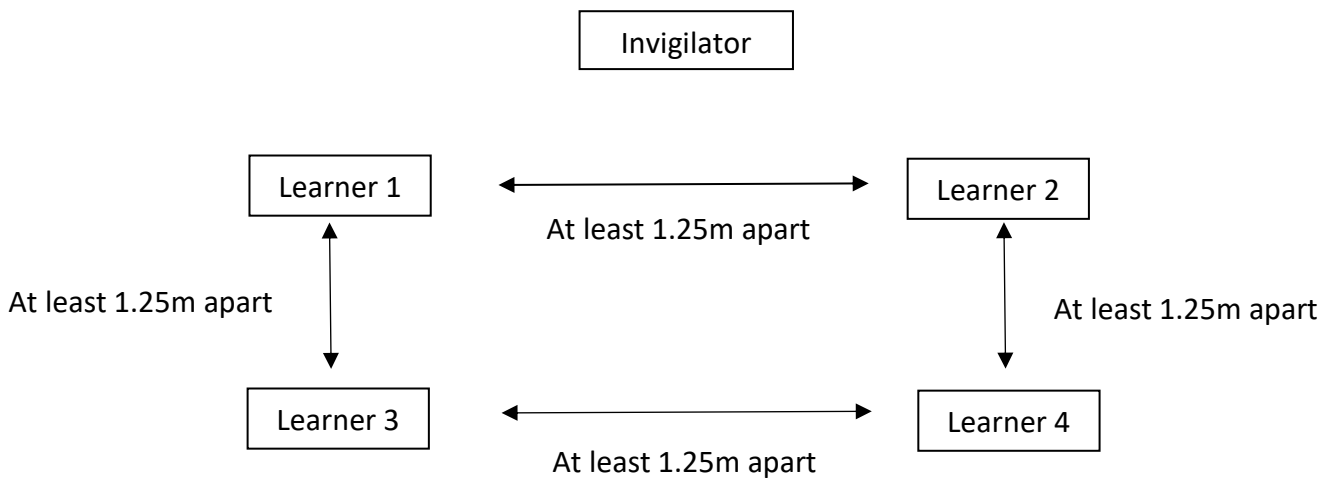
Appendix 7

Seating Plan

NCFE requires you to use a seating plan for each external assessment. This allows a centre to track which learners have attended an external assessment and helps when conducting investigations, should they occur.

This seating plan is an example of how you could plan a room and record it, with each learner facing the invigilator.

We would recommend seating learners in the order in which they appear on the external assessment documentation supplied with the external assessment papers.



Appendix 8

Unauthorised Items Poster

**NO MOBILE PHONES
WATCHES
MP3/4 PLAYERS**

**NO POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL/WEB
ENABLED SOURCES OF INFORMATION**



Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone, is a serious offence and could result in

DISQUALIFICATION

from your examination and your overall qualification.

This poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room.

Appendix 9

Storage, Access, and Distribution of Downloadable Assessment Materials, including pre-release

This Appendix should be read in conjunction with the main text of NCFE's Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments. This Appendix supplements information in addition to the criteria included in the main sections of the NCFE regulations document, particularly Section 4. It is intended for centres undertaking paper-based delivery of NCFE's qualifications with pre-release materials, either downloadable from the Portal or sent electronically directly to an individual centre. If there are differences between this Appendix and the equivalent section in NCFE's regulations, the instructions in this Appendix will take precedence.

- In reference to sections 4.3 and 4.5 of these regulations, when pertaining to pre-release materials, where it is a requirement in the design of the assessment, pre-release information can and should be shared with additional staff in order that activities and/or system requirements can be prepared in advance.
Please see individual assessment Guidance Documents or Qualification Specifications for specific details.

However, all centres should seek to ensure that shared access is restricted to authorised personnel and solely for the purpose of delivery of that particular assessment.

- In reference to section 4.12 of these regulations, for some assessments delivered across a window, and where the assessment objectives demand, assessment materials can be stored locally for the duration of the window, provided that appropriate security measures are taken to limit access to authorised personnel throughout each timetabled session.