

# Internal Synoptic Project Delivery Guidance for Centres

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## Introduction

This guidance provides support and information on how to administer the Synoptic Project for all NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Awards where NCFE provide the assessment tasks and grading descriptors. This document should be read in conjunction with the Regulations for the Conduct of Synoptic Project.

The points in the guidance will provide you with information on:

- how the administration of a synoptic project should look
- the difference between teaching and learning, and assessment
- the type of feedback that can be offered before, during and after an assessment
- the assessment cycle
- submitting evidence to the External Quality Assurer.

**Remember:** the internal synoptic project must evidence the learner's own knowledge, understanding and skills within their chosen subject. Evidence must be gathered through effective and reliable internal assessment and this guidance document is designed to support Teachers and deliverers of the NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Awards in doing so, to ensure the integrity of all internal assessments.

## The Synoptic Project

The Synoptic Project is a formal internal assessment that the learner will be graded on. The grade achieved will contribute 60% towards the overall qualification final grade. The Synoptic Projects have been designed to test learners' ability to respond to 'real life' situations. This will enable learners to demonstrate the connection and coherence between different elements of the qualification.

## What is synoptic assessment?

Synoptic assessment is an important part of a high-quality vocational qualification because it shows that learners have achieved a holistic understanding of the sector and that they can make effective connections between different aspects they have studied. The Department for Education (DfE) has consulted with Awarding Organisations and agreed the following definition for synoptic assessment:

***“A form of assessment which requires a candidate to demonstrate that s/he can identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from across the whole vocational area, which are relevant to a key task.”***

Synoptic assessment enables learners to show that they can transfer knowledge and skills developed in one context to resolve problems raised in another. To support the development of a synoptic approach, the qualification encourages learners to make links between elements of the course and to demonstrate how they have integrated and applied their knowledge and skills from the beginning.

As learners progress through the course, they use and build upon knowledge and skills developed across units. The Synoptic Project assessment will test the learners' ability to respond to a 'real-life' situation.

## Where do I access the synoptic assessment?

The Synoptic Project is released every December and can be accessed via the relevant qualification page on QualHub. You will need to email [externalqualityassurance@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:externalqualityassurance@ncfe.org.uk) to request the password and instructions to access the assessment.

## The assessment cycle

**Plan:** the administration of your Synoptic Project must be planned alongside your scheme of work and lesson planning, this should include planned assessment sessions for the hours available and a contingency plan in case of resubmission. We have sample Synoptic Projects available on our website to support your preparation, these are on the qualification specification pages.

**Deliver:** the Synoptic Project must not take place until the delivery of all content from Units 01 and 02 has taken place. NCFE set each subject-specific Synoptic Project and you are not permitted to design your own projects and tasks. The Synoptic Project must be administered in line with the requirements of the Regulations for the Conduct of the Synoptic Project.

**Complete:** learners are to complete the Synoptic Project within the allocated time and must do so outside of any teaching and learning. It should be administered using the Regulations for the Conduct of the Synoptic Project to ensure its integrity.

Each subject-specific synoptic project contains a carefully considered completion time outlined in the qualification specification, which you must adhere to. You are permitted to apply access arrangements and reasonable adjustments at your discretion to ensure the normal ways of working for learners are maintained. Arrangements will be subject to checks from External Quality Assurers on your visits.

**Assessment:** the Synoptic Project must be assessed holistically against the five integrated assessment objectives. Assessment of learner evidence should take place as soon as possible after the internal Synoptic Project has been completed in full. The evidence and grading tracker should be used to record grades for each learner. Assessment of learner evidence should be made against the relevant grade descriptors for the qualification which are found in the qualification specification on our website. Grades must be recorded accurately for the evidence submitted as part of the Synoptic Project. In order to calculate the correct grade for the in the assessment of the Synoptic Project you must use the relevant grading calculator which is available on the qualification page on our website. Work created by the learner during teaching and learning that was not completed as part of the assessment cannot be used as evidence.

**Feedback:** once you have assessed/marked all learner evidence that has been submitted, feedback must be offered to each learner on an individual basis. For further guidance on how and when to feedback please see pages 12-15. Feedback must include the grade being awarded for each Assessment Objective and where applicable for the overall synoptic project. Feedback needs to be accurately recorded for each individual learner and the learner must confirm receipt of this and that they agree with the feedback provided. If the learner disagrees, they should follow your centre's appeals process.

## Resources

Learners must have access to the appropriate resources required to complete the internal synoptic project. These include the following:

- research materials and internet resources
- audio and video recording and playback devices
- suitable environments for pre-production meetings, rehearsals and performances to take place
- technical equipment as required. For example, lighting, sound, staging, costumes and props.

This list is not exhaustive and you need to refer to the qualification for subject specific details.

## Health and safety

All learners must be informed and aware of any relevant health and safety considerations that need to be complied with to ensure they carry out their work in a safe manner.

Learners must be supervised at all times to ensure health and safety practices are observed. Where learners are seen to be working in an unsafe manner, at the discretion of the teacher, the learner may be removed from the assessment and the remaining time rescheduled.

## Observation

Where an observation of learner performance is required, NCFE have provided an observation report which is available on the NCFE website. This is to be completed at the time of observation taking place. The observation report must capture what the learner has done to meet the assessment objectives. This must be signed by both the Teacher and the learner directly after the observation has taken place alongside immediate feedback.

Learners must be made aware in advance of when they will be observed and an agreed time and date set and must be carried out in accordance with conditions of this assessment.

## Submitting evidence

Any evidence submitted for the Synoptic Project must be completed during scheduled assessment hours in accordance with the scheme of work, and must be authenticated and attributable to the learner a declaration of authentication is available on our website. In practice, this means that all of the Synoptic Projects can be completed in normal class time within scheduled assessment hours but must be kept separate from any teaching and learning hours.

Learners will be provided with examples of types of evidence they are to submit within the Synoptic Project brief. Learners are allowed to rework any evidence that they have produced for the Synoptic Project but only during the timed supervised sessions. This rework **must not** be as a result of tutor feedback, but that the learner alone has identified areas for improvement. Once the fully completed Synoptic Project has been submitted for assessment, no further amendments to the evidence can be made until after the External Quality Assurance (EQA) visit. Once the EQA process has been completed, learners will have the opportunity for a second and final re-submission.

## Authentication of learner work

Learners are required to sign declarations of authenticity which are available on the NCFE website, as is the Teacher/Assessor. This is to ensure authenticity and to prevent potential malpractice and maladministration. Learners must be made aware of the importance of this declaration and the impact this could have on their overall grade, if the evidence was found not to be the learners.

Any evidence created by the learner as part of this synoptic project must be securely stored at all times. Where evidence is completed across multiple timed sessions, all evidence must be collected in after each session, and stored securely to ensure learners and others do not have access to this.

## Accessibility and fairness

To promote accessibility and fairness for all learners and to ensure diversity and equality, we expect centres to be aware of and meet the requirements of relevant NCFE policies and government legislation.

You must ensure that:

- all of your processes concerned with assessment are carried out in a fair and objective manner
- you continue to adhere to current equal opportunities legislation
- you continue to operate an effective diversity and equality policy, with which learners are familiar and which applies to all learners using our products and services
- you continue to operate an effective appeals procedure, with which learners are familiar and which applies to all learners using our products and services.

You are not required to request a reasonable adjustment for the internal assessment, if you are implementing a learner's normal way of working. If you are in any doubt, please contact NCFE.

## Differentiating between teaching & learning and assessment

### Teaching & Learning – Your role as a Teacher

- teaching and learning occurs in experiences both inside or outside the classroom where learner skills, knowledge and understanding are developed
- support materials to aid learning can be provided
- instructions on completing tasks can be given to learners
- intervention by Teachers to ensure learning is appropriate
- informal assessment can be used to assess and track progress
- feedback and guidance on how to improve work can be given

The role of the Teacher is to deliver the course material in line with the qualification specification, through teaching and learning, to develop the learners understanding, knowledge and skills. Remember, work created by the learners as part of teaching and learning or for use as formative assessment by the Teacher, cannot be submitted as evidence for the Synoptic Project.

### Feedback during teaching and learning

Feedback is an important part of learning and we encourage feedback during teaching and learning that will identify areas for learner progression, including stretch and challenge.

- positive feedback always relates to the Assessment Objectives and grade descriptors within the qualification specification
- offering feedback on ways in which a learner could improve their work to achieve a Pass, Merit, or Distinction by referring to the Assessment Objectives and grade descriptors, encourages learners to continuously do this themselves
- feedback on how to improve knowledge, skills, understanding, behaviour, spelling, punctuation, grammar and how to approach a task are all positive feedback.

Feedback and guidance that gives them a specific list of actions they need to take in order to complete a brief is not positive and learners should be encouraged to identify how they can improve themselves. Use open questions in your feedback.



## Assessment - Your role as an Assessor

- assessment is carried out in a controlled environment under the supervision of an Assessor (usually the Teacher)
- you must ensure there is sufficient supervision of every learner to enable work to be authenticated
- no guidance on how to approach the assessment objectives and grade descriptors from the Assessor is allowed
- group work and how learners interact with each other is clearly defined
- steps to prevent plagiarism are taken
- templates and other scaffolding techniques may not be provided to learners
- teaching and learning materials can be taken into the assessment, but no work completed as part of teaching and learning can be submitted as evidence
- specific, detailed feedback on how to improve may not be provided to learners
- the assessment may take place under informal classroom settings

The role of an Assessor is to administer the Synoptic Project, assess the learner evidence produced for each assessment objective and to provide feedback to the learner regarding their achievement. It is always worth reminding your learners of your varying roles as a Teacher and an Assessor, so they know what to expect during both teaching and learning and assessment.

## Feedback during an assessment

Once the learner begins working on the Synoptic Project, the Assessor must not provide any specific feedback on the evidence produced by the learner before it is submitted for assessment, or confirm achievement of specific Assessment Objectives until the work has been assessed. Learners must demonstrate themselves that they can provide evidence for the assessment tasks independently, using their knowledge, skills and understanding gained through the teaching and learning of the qualification.

We understand it is important to continue giving general feedback and support during assessment, which could include:

- referring the learners to the Assessment Objectives and grade descriptors to keep them on track
- clarification of what the task requirements are
- general feedback on timekeeping, attendance and punctuality, attitudes and behaviours.

However it is not appropriate for Teachers to:

- coach learners in how to produce the evidence or what evidence to produce (unless the task specifically states what the evidence should be)
- give them a specific list of actions they need to take in order to meet the Assessment Objectives, or to achieve a particular grade.

You may wish to refer the learner to the Assessment Objectives and to the grade descriptors to keep them on track.

**Remember:** the Assessor must not provide feedback or guidance on how to improve the evidence to achieve higher grades at this point; this will happen when the learners are given feedback after their work has been assessed. Feedback should not coach the learner.

All work must be completed independently by the learner and must not be a product of Teacher guided feedback.

## Feedback after assessment

Giving feedback following assessment must include feedback on improvement and progression and not coaching to achieve a specific grade. Feedback should be clear and constructive on the Assessment Objectives the learner has achieved or not achieved.

Provide justification and explanation of the assessment decisions that have been made, make reference to the Assessment Objectives and where appropriate the grade descriptors. It is also good practice to give general feedback on timekeeping, attendance and punctuality, attitudes and behaviours.

**Remember:** Teachers must not give explicit instructions or step by step guidance on how to improve a grade.

### You should:

- focus on what the learner has done well and why
- encourage the learner to work out how to apply successful techniques elsewhere
- make all comments general so that the learner can apply them to new situations
- encourage self-regulation and criticism (e.g. 'you know the key features of making an evaluation, check whether these are included in your own work')
- reference learning points (e.g. 'your answer might be better if you included strategies we discussed earlier')
- limit your comments to 1 or 2 key areas
- always refer to the Assessment Objectives
- provide justification for your decision
- always record feedback given to individual learners.

### You must not:

- provide templates or model answers
- give feedback on specific elements
- give specific feedback on how to achieve a higher grade
- list negative points for correction.

Remember, if a learner has not yet achieved a specific Assessment Objective you must discuss with them any resubmission opportunities. Learners are permitted a second attempt at the synoptic project where they must work on the same brief. Learners are not permitted to attempt a different brief for their resubmission. The second submission should be submitted before 31 May of the completion year in order to guarantee EQA sign off and performance points for your learner.

## How to record feedback

It is impossible to record all verbal feedback given to learners during teaching and learning. It is however important to accurately record verbal and/or written feedback that has been given in relation to the results of an assessed piece of work and this must be documented. This feedback must be recorded within the grading tracker and will be reviewed by your Internal Quality Assurer and External Quality Assurer.

Feedback must be given on a one to one basis, unless requested otherwise by the learner. It is always best practice to have your learner sign that they have received and agree with any feedback that has been offered in relation to the assessment decision. You could always offer space for the learner to record their own comments.

**Please note:** learners must be informed that grades may change and are not fully confirmed until they have been both internally and externally quality assured.

## Grading and Assessment

### Guidance on grading of learner evidence

It is reasonable to establish a consistent approach to the way in which learners work is graded so that learners feel valued and have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and what the next steps are in their learning. The colour of the pen does not matter so long as it is in contrast to the learner's writing.

The Synoptic Project assesses a learner's knowledge from across 100% of the qualifications content.

The project is graded against each Assessment Objective (AO). For each AO there are subject specific grade descriptors for each grade and these demonstrate the level and standard of evidence to be submitted by the learner to achieve that grade and support the assessment decisions for that assessment objective. When making assessment decisions these must be recorded and reported to learners. The Assessor must ensure:

- they clearly identify and record the grade awarded per AO using the grade descriptors
- they indicate and record which AOs have been achieved and the evidence that has attributed to this
- they indicate which AOs have not been achieved where applicable
- they provide formal feedback to learners. \*\*

Once the work has been assessed, graded and internally quality assured, the grade should be submitted to NCFE via the portal. This will be classed as the first submission. The submitted grade for the unit of the qualification will trigger your first external quality assurance visit. It is recommended that you schedule your visit by 31 March of the completion year to ensure you get the date you require and have sufficient time to plan any re-submissions if required.

## External Quality Assurance

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

For further guidance on evidence submission and the internal and external quality assurance processes, please refer to the guidance on our website [www.ncfe.org.uk](http://www.ncfe.org.uk)

## Internal Submission attempts

Learners will only have **two** submission attempts;

### First submission

#### **Submission date for the first submission –by 31 March**

Learners should submit the project when all tasks have been completed. The Assessor will assess the project holistically, selecting the appropriate band for each Assessment Objective based on all evidence submitted.

Once the work has been assessed, graded and internally quality assured, the grade should be submitted to NCFE via the Portal. This will be classed as the first submission. The submitted grade will trigger the first external quality assurance visit, these visits will take place after the submission deadline of 31 March. It is recommended that centres plan this visit into timetables and confirm the date with the External Quality Assurer at the earliest opportunity.

Ahead of the visit, the External Quality Assurer will select a number of completed Synoptic Projects from which to sample assessment decisions and determine whether the descriptors have been applied consistently and in accordance with the qualification specification. If the External Quality Assurer agrees with the assessment decisions they will bank all of the submitted grades. If the External Quality Assurer determines that the grading is too harsh, too lenient or inconsistent from one learner to the next, they will reject the grades. In this situation, the centre would be required to assess, grade and internally quality assure all learner work again. The External Quality Assurer will then bank the resubmitted grades. Assessors can provide learners with feedback to support them with their second submission, should this be required.

## Second submission

### Submission date for the second submission – before 31 May

Learners will have **one** opportunity to resubmit the internal assessment after the first attempt and this will be classed as the **second** submission, for the same Synoptic Project assessment brief. The **second** submission should be used for learners who receive a 'Not Yet Achieved' for their first submission or wish to improve their grades.

Any grades submitted after 31 May will be rejected by the EQA, unless an extension has been previously agreed in line with the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy.

Work revised and resubmitted by learners will again need to be assessed, graded, internally quality assured and submitted to NCFE, ready for a second visit from the External Quality Assurer. Centres are strongly advised to arrange a date early for a second visit, with the External Quality Assurer, to ensure they receive the visit when they need it.

If a learner receives a 'Not Yet Achieved' for the **overall grade** on the **second** submission, the learner **will not achieve the internal assessment and therefore will not achieve the overall qualification.**

Only once the internal assessment grade has been banked and the external assessment completed, will a centre be able to claim certification of the qualification for learners.

Learners are only allowed to access one synoptic project in one session. For example, learners are not allowed two submissions in one session and another two submissions in the next session. They are only allowed 2 attempts at one Synoptic Project.

Centres should submit both attempts and have EQA visits completed by 31 July to ensure that certificates can be claimed by 23 August for performance points.