Online Assessment Secure Client User Guide

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Please ensure you check for updates regularly.

Contents

Introduction

This manual is for users who are responsible for installing the learner software for NCFE Online Assessments. This software is called SecureClient.

The online administration site where users can schedule and administer learner assessments is called Surpass. Please see our Online Assessment User Guide – Administration and Online Assessment User Guide – Invigilation for further guidance.

These instructions are written for users familiar with installing software or managing IT infrastructure. If any assistance is needed please contact the NCFE Customer Support team using the details at the bottom of this page.

System requirements

There are minimum requirements for installing and running SecureClient on a device. If a device does not meet these requirements, you may not be able to run assessments without technical issues that may impact on your learners and we may not be able to support you. Please make sure the device meets the below minimum requirements. The detailed technical specification can be found on the Online Assessment page of the NCFE website. If any changes are made to the technical specification, we will notify customers on the Surpass homepage and will update the document on the NCFE website.

To install SecureClient:

Hardware
- Processor 1.80GHz or faster
- RAM 4GB as a minimum and 8 GB as the recommended (with 1GB of free memory whilst the application is running)
- 1GB of free space
- Single display

- Screen resolution of 1024x768

Software   - Windows 8 (32bit or 64bit), Windows 8.1 (32bit or 64bit), Windows 10 (32bit or 64bit)
                - Microsoft .NET Framework 3.5 and 4.5.2.
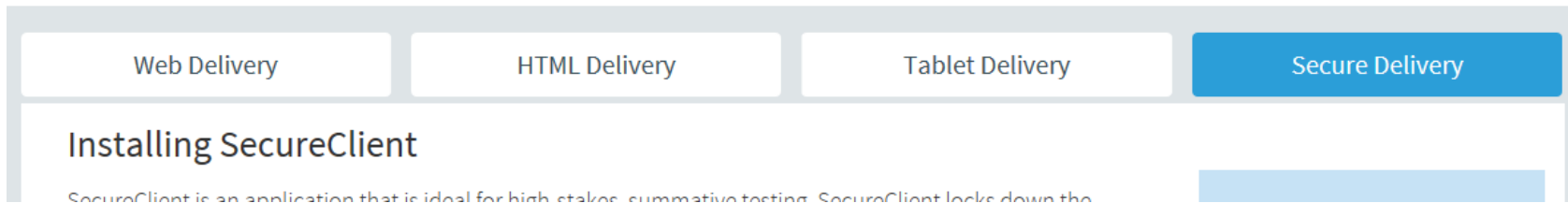
To run SecureClient:

- 1GB of free disk space (depending on the assessment you are running, you may need more disk space.)
- Assessments may contain media or attached files. In this case, you may also need external applications capable of opening files, for example text documents, spreadsheets, video, audio, or PDFs. Open office or other web based packages are not supported.
- Secure internet connection (preferably wired) to run SecureClient or download assessments in advance – this must not be done via a hotspot.
- Ensure the CPU isn't running at too high a capacity (generally above 50%) as this may clash with the demand of the assessment and cause the system to not work as expected.

Please note: NCFE is unable to support the installation or running of SecureClient on a Mac.

Installing SecureClient

This is the process to install SecureClient onto a single computer to run NCFE Online Assessments, this will install the software to a public directory so it's available to all users on the computer.

1. Click this link: https://ncfe.surpass.com/launchtest. When the page loads, click the 'Secure Delivery' tab.

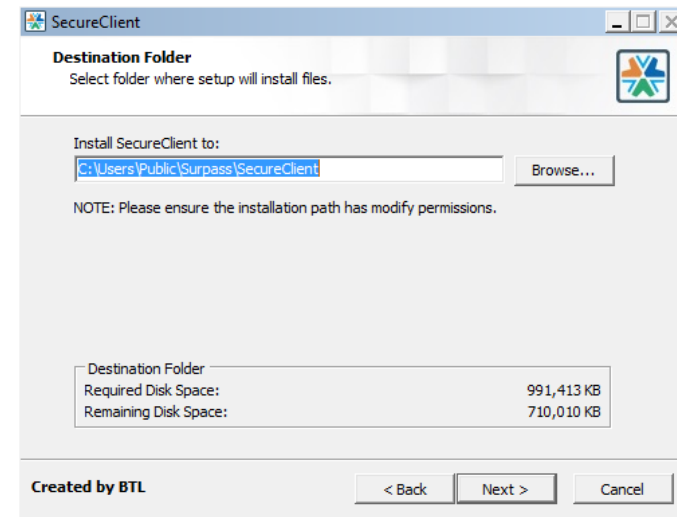2. Select 'Download SecureClient (MSI)'.

3. Select 'Run' when presented with the security warning.

4. After clicking 'Run', you'll be presented with this screen. Click 'next'.

5. You will then see this screen which shows the location of where the software will be installed. Do not change the destination. Click 'next'.

Please note: SecureClient will check for updates each time it's opened. You should open the software once you've installed it to let it do this for the first time.

Network Installation

If you need to install the software across multiple computers on the same network at the same time, you can do this using a batch file. To create a batch file follow these steps.

1. Create a new text document with filename secureclient, the document should contain this line of text:

   msiexec.exe /i C:\SecureClientInstaller.msi CMDLINE= /qn

   (C:\SecureClientInstaller.msi is the location that the SecureClient installer file is saved, C:\TEST is the directory SecureClient will be installed to.)

2. Save the file and rename the file extension from .txt to .bat to create the batch file.

3. The batch file can then be used to install the software to multiple computers on a network using Microsoft Group Policy or similar network management application.

Proxy Servers

It's important that SecureClient can communicate directly with the central servers that hold assessment and learner data, without interruption from a Proxy Server. If you use a Proxy Server you'll need to add exceptions to bypass it for the following addresses;

https://NCFE.surpass.com/
https://cms.surpass.com/
https://cmspublic.surpass.com/https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/InvigilateService.asmx
https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/AssessmentService.asmx

https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/Surpass.html
https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/MembershipService.asmx
https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/connectionTest.html
https://ncfe.surpass.co.uk/surpass/UpdateService.asmx

You should also remove any setting blocking HTTPS traffic on port 443.

If you need to add your proxy server details to the SecureClient installation this can be found here;

C:\Users\Public\Surpass Central - SecureClient NCFE\Surpass Central - SecureClient NCFE\configfiles

Open the file in notepad and enter the proxy details in the format below:

Antivirus

Antivirus or anti malware software can prevent the SecureClient recording learner responses or opening question material and in some cases cause the exam to freeze. "On access scan" for example is something that can be particularly problematic.

Please ensure that "On Access Scanning" is disabled for the SecureClient folder and all subfolders. To do this you should add

an exception to your Antivirus software, following the manufacturer's instruction, for the SecureClient folder and subfolders. We also recommend that you consider disabling any virus scanning whilst learner assessments are taking place.

If you require support with this we ask that you refer to the help files of your Antivirus software or contact the manufacturer.

Default Programs

Some assessments require the learner to open a document from the exam, these documents will open in Microsoft Office suite programs. This is currently required for Digital Functional Skills assessments but may also be required for other assessments in future.

To ensure the learner can properly open the document without interruption you should set the correct default program for the following file types.

File Type	Microsoft Office Program
.doc .docx	Microsoft Word
.xls .xlsx	Microsoft Excel
.ppt .pptx .pps .ppsx	Microsoft PowerPoint

Please note, Open Office or other web based Office packages are not supported.

You can set these defaults in the "Control Panel > Default Programs > Associate a file type or protocol with a program" menu in Microsoft Windows.

You should also check that the Trust Centre in each of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint is not set to block or restrict any of these file types

These file types may also open in other Office software programs, please note these are not supported by NCFE and not covered by the technical requirements for SecureClient.

External Aids

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.

SecureClient Diagnostic

Each time you open SecureClient it will perform a diagnostic check to compare the specification of the computer to the required specification for the software to run correctly. If the assessment discovers anything that doesn't meet the requirements you will see this message;
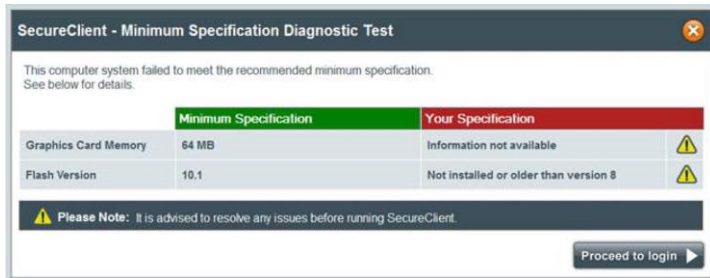
Any issues highlighted must be resolved before trying to run assessments, to avoid any impact on the learners' experience. If you wish to proceed to login without taking any action you can click "Proceed to login".

Assessments that have been run through SecureClient will record the specifications of the computer used to sit the assessment, to assist in any diagnostics that are required in the event of technical problems.

Practice Assessment

It's important that you run practice assessments once you've installed the software to ensure that everything is working correctly.

You can create a practice assessment via Surpass. Please refer to the Online Assessment User Guide – Administration for reference.

1. Log in to the learner assessment and confirm the learner details, this will result in the assessment being downloaded ready for the learner to sit.

2. Move through the questions and submit responses, you should answer at least some of the questions.

3. Press finish to end the assessment, this should result in the assessment showing as completed in the Invigilation screen of Surpass.

Please note, practice assessments will not be marked and a result will not be issued. Practice assessments are available for the support of the learner and to get them used to sitting assessments online.

Customer Support will be on hand to support with this process and if any problems arise they will help you to resolve the issue.

Troubleshooting

If you have issues with any of the above please check you're installing from the correct link as instructed in the 'installing SecureClient' link above.

There is additional troubleshooting on the same page as the download link: https://ncfe.surpass.com/launchtest.

If you're still having issues installing or running SecureClient after the above 2 checks, please contact the NCFE Customer Support team using the details at the bottom of this page.