

# **Regulations for the Conduct of Controlled Assessments: Functional Skills**

**To be used for**

- **NCFE Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3**
- **NCFE Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3**

**Printed copies of this document are not subject to version control. Please ensure you check for updates regularly.**

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## Section 1: overview of regulations

This document is designed to assist centres in the correct administration of the controlled assessment components of NCFE Functional Skills qualifications.

The regulations do not in any way affect the responsibility of the centre for health, safety and safe working under current legislation and local government by-laws. These regulations will ensure the integrity and security of the assessment are maintained at all times. Failure to comply with these regulations will be addressed via the JCQ suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures.

### 1.1 Designated person

The head of centre is responsible to NCFE for making sure all controlled assessments are conducted in line with these regulations.

The head of centre must delegate a member of staff to be the designated person, to lead on the administration of the assessments in line with these regulations and to ensure there is an internal policy in place to support the administration of the assessments, which will be required for inspection purposes. Please refer to section 2.1.

The head of centre must not appoint themselves as the designated person. These roles are distinct and intended to be separate.

### 1.2 NCFE controlled assessments

The NCFE controlled assessments are set by NCFE and delivered by the centre internally. Controlled assessment is a form of internal assessment, in which control levels are set for each stage of the assessment process:

- task setting
- task taking
- task marking

#### **Task setting: medium control**

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessment tasks are set by NCFE following the requirements in the qualification and skills criteria.

#### **Task taking: high control**

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments must be undertaken in controlled, supervised conditions.

Learners must be formally supervised at all times during their assessments. Preparatory work (where required by the task) may be completed with limited supervision. Details of supervision required will be given in the task instructions where relevant.

Centres must use the controlled assessment tasks set by NCFE, as well as the relevant assessment templates, when assessing learners.

If a resit is required, a different assessment must be attempted.

If allowed, the scenarios provided may be amended to use alternative source materials relevant to learners, for example where a menu is used, centres could replace the given menu with one from a local café or coffee shop. However, the parameters and requirements of the tasks must not be altered by contextualisation.

If using a context and/or source materials other than those given by NCFE, the materials and any information contained within must be familiar to the learner and use appropriate language. The tasks must be approved by NCFE before use with learners using our request for contextualisation of Functional Skills controlled assessments form on the NCFE website.

### **Task marking: medium control**

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments allow centres to mark the controlled assessment.

Assessments must be marked using the mark schemes provided by NCFE. Assessment decisions will be checked and confirmed by the centre's internal quality assurer (IQA) and NCFE's external quality assurer (EQA)

The assessor must record each assessment decision and the justification for the decision on the assessment front sheet.

## **1.3 Who should read these regulations?**

To ensure the regulations are correctly applied, they should be read and referred to by:

- the head of centre, chief officer of an institution or chief executive of a company
- members of the Senior Leadership team
- the examinations officer or quality assurance co-ordinator appointed by the head of centre (designated person – see section 1.1)
- the curriculum manager/course tutor responsible for learners undertaking the assessments
- tutors/teachers/assessors delivering NCFE qualifications

## Section 2: quality assurance

### 2.1 Inspection/observation of the controlled assessments

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

The following policy is required for NCFE inspection purposes:

- policy covering the management of controlled assessments, including risk management and staff responsibilities, and controls to maintain the security and confidentiality of assessment, as appropriate to your centre

**To ensure visits can be carried out in a timely manner:**

- on arrival at the centre, the NCFE representative will introduce themselves and explain the reason for the visit
- a senior member of staff, a member of the exams office or the designated person must accompany the NCFE representative throughout the duration of the visit
- storage facilities for the assessment materials will be reviewed, along with the location of the assessment and the processes in place for the printing, storing, transferring and destruction of controlled assessments
- the NCFE representative may request to speak to any individual involved in the assessment delivery at the centre
- the NCFE representative will discuss the findings of the observation with 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 assessments void. In such cases, the NCFE representative will report the issue to our Quality Assurance team who will deal with the concerns in accordance with the JCQ suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures.

### 2.2 Maladministration/malpractice

If at any time during an assessment there is a violation of these regulations, the assessor or designated person has the right to stop the 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 malpractice forms available on our website.

If any of these regulations are breached by a learner, assessor, or other persons involved in the conduct of the assessment, then NCFE may declare the assessment void.

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

- the work completed by the learners concerned and any unauthorised materials (if applicable) must be confiscated from the learners and given to the designated person
- 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
- the assessor should report the incident to the designated person as soon as possible
- NCFE should be informed immediately of any irregularity via phone call or email
- the centre should conduct its own investigation into the incident and report their findings via the learner malpractice form on our website

NCFE reserves the right to investigate each case of alleged or actual maladministration/malpractice committed by a learner, assessor, or other persons involved in the conduct of the assessment, to establish all of the facts and circumstances surrounding the case. The investigation will be carried out in accordance with the JCQ suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures.

### **2.3 Ownership of assessment material**

All assessment material remains the property of NCFE.

## Section 3: preparing for the controlled assessments

### 3.1 Accessing the assessment materials

A list of assessment topics is available on our website to support awareness of the topics available.

Controlled assessment materials are available digitally and we will publish the live date on the front page of each assessment.

Once learners are ready to sit a controlled assessment, a declaration in the Portal must be made up to 6 weeks beforehand to inform NCFE for monitoring purposes. The controlled assessment material will be made available in the Portal from the point of booking and can be accessed in the 'view controlled assessments' screen. It will be available for 6 weeks from the point of booking.

Controlled assessment materials, or any part of, must not be emailed as they are live assessment materials and the content must be kept secure and confidential by all staff members.

To ensure there is reliable tracking of the use of the controlled assessments per assessor and learner, centres must use either the NCFE Assessment Tracking Document, or if preferred, can use their own version of this tracker, on the condition it provides the EQA with access to the same information as requested in the NCFE Assessment Tracking Document.

Centres must ensure that across their learners and across the academic session, there is an even rotation across the available assessments as this will be verified via the external quality assurance process.

The NCFE Assessment Tracking Document or the centre's own version of this tracker will be requested in advance of external quality assurance reviews and you may be required to submit it to NCFE for monitoring purposes.

### 3.2 Storing assessment materials

The designated person is responsible for:

- the security and integrity of the assessments and associated materials (such as used/unused assessment materials, partially or fully completed learner work, assessment tracking documents and the assessment documentation) at all times:
  - this includes both electronically saved and printed materials
  - access to this storage must be restricted to authorised personnel only
- ensuring the centre uses assessments from the current bank of live assessments as accessed above, and that the centre's internal policy is followed in terms of choosing assessment topics and enforcing a rotation across assessments available throughout the academic session
- ensuring material is not downloaded and/or printed more than 6 weeks prior to the scheduled assessment dates and then, once printed, that material is placed in the secure storage.
- having a process in place whereby the assessors can notify the designated person that they have learners ready to sit the assessment; the designated person should then make the assessment materials available from a secure location
- ensuring that when materials are requested by assessors, they are printed and stored in packets/envelopes that can be securely sealed until the day of the assessment
- completing the Assessment Tracking Document to ensure assessments assigned to learners are

- accurately recorded; this will inform resits, as a learner cannot resit the same paper
- submitting, or supporting the assessor to submit, any requests for contextualised materials
  - managing the secure destruction of all unused assessment materials, both printed and electronic, once assessments have taken place
  - ensuring that any unauthorised centre personnel do not have access to the assessment materials or completed learner work
  - ensuring assessment material is not tampered with
  - immediately informing NCFE's Assessment Delivery team if the integrity or security of the controlled assessment materials is put at risk by theft, loss, damage, unauthorised disclosure, fire, or any other circumstances.

Live assessments **must not** be used as sample materials. Further guidance on accessing the controlled assessments is available on our website.

### 3.3 Reasonable adjustments

NCFE seeks to provide equal access to assessment for all learners registered for its qualifications. NCFE recognises that reasonable adjustments may be required for assessments, and information is available in our Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Guidance on our website. This will be monitored during external quality assurance reviews.

The responsible person, for example the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) must ensure that all relevant staff are aware of any reasonable adjustments requirements as per the NCFE policy. In principle, if a learner has an adjustment as part of their normal way of working, a similar arrangement will normally be permitted for controlled assessment.

**Please refer to the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery (QSID) document for qualification/component restrictions.**

### 3.4 Status in Wales and Northern Ireland

NCFE qualifications have been regulated for use in England, Wales and/or Northern Ireland. Currently, NCFE provides qualifications to centres in England and Qualification Specifications and assessment materials are in English. These materials can also be made available in Wales and Northern Ireland. NCFE can provide qualifications and assessment materials in Welsh and/or Irish (Gaelic) where requested and appropriate.

### 3.5 Planning the controlled assessment

Assessments must not take place until all teaching and learning of the qualification content has been delivered to learners.

If an assessor notices any discrepancies or missing assessment materials, their first point of contact should be the centre's designated person. If they are unable to resolve, then please email [ega@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:ega@ncfe.org.uk) immediately.

Centres must inform learners of the following:

- date, time and location of the assessment
- conditions under which their Functional Skills assessment will be conducted



- resources they are required to bring to the assessment and what will be supplied by the centre

### 3.6 Selection and number of assessors

An appropriate person (the assessor) must formally supervise learners during their Functional Skills controlled assessment. This may be the tutor or another appropriately qualified member of staff, whose integrity can be relied on. They act for the centre and the centre is responsible for their conduct.

Assessors must be appointed, briefed and appropriately trained by centres on the requirements for the conduct of controlled assessments. If the assessor is the learners' tutor, mediation and support must not exceed the limits stated in these regulations.

When readers/writers are permitted and provided for learners with reasonable adjustment requirements, an assessor must also be present. Readers/writers must not also act as assessors.

There are no formal requirements on the number of assessors that must be present during an assessment. However, ratios must allow for appropriate supervision of the assessments.

When there is only one assessor, they must be able to summon assistance easily without leaving the room, in case of emergencies, such as if a learner is taken ill. Under no circumstances must learners be left unsupervised or unattended.

### 3.7 Accommodation

To ensure the assessment is administered correctly, an assessor or other responsible person is responsible for ensuring:

- the allocated room is suitably quiet and undisturbed, with adequate space, heating, lighting and ventilation
- only learners due to sit their controlled assessment and the assessor responsible for co-ordinating the controlled assessment process are allowed in the room immediately before, during or after the controlled assessment
- learners are not allowed into the room until the assessor is satisfied that the room is ready and can indicate where each learner should sit
- seating arrangements must prevent learners from seeing each other's work, intentionally or otherwise
- where the controlled assessment includes the use of equipment such as computers, then an assistant familiar with the equipment must be present in addition to the assessor
  - assistants should be available in case of equipment malfunction only and should have no other involvement with the controlled assessment
- if a learner needs to leave the assessment room temporarily because they are unwell or need to go to the toilet, the assessor must ensure the learner is accompanied by a member of staff and does not:
  - speak to anyone else
  - consult any notes
  - have access to a mobile phone or any other electronic devices, for example iPods or smart watches, or make any calls
  - breach the security of the controlled assessment

The remaining learners must not be left unattended at any point.

## 3.8 Use of computers and electronic devices during assessment

### 3.8.1 Use of computers/electronic devices

Computers may be used during the controlled assessments where a reasonable adjustment has been identified to support the learner's usual way of working.

The designated person needs to ensure:

- suitably trained technical assistants are provided who are readily available in case of equipment malfunction only and have no other involvement with the assessment
- the device is free from any material/additional facilities that would give the learner an unfair advantage
- where appropriate to the assessment, any:
  - aid in relation to spelling, punctuation and grammar is disabled
  - access to calculation devices/tools is restricted to the appropriate sections of the paper

**Please refer to the QSID document for qualification-specific details.**

### 3.8.2 Use of calculators in assessment

Learners may use a calculator unless it is prohibited as part of the assessment. Assessment papers will clearly state if a calculator is **not** allowed.

**Functional Skills in mathematics:** learners are expected to have a calculator for question paper section B at all levels. The minimum requirements for the calculator are detailed below:

- 4 operations
- entry level 1 and entry level 2: minimum of 2 decimal places on the display
- entry level 3: minimum of 3 decimal places on the display (some basic calculators only provide 2 decimal places)

**Learners must be informed of the below regulations for calculators before the assessment sitting:**

<p><b>Calculators must not:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ language translation</li> <li>○ symbolic algebra manipulation</li> <li>○ symbolic differentiation or integration</li> <li>○ communication with other machines or the internet</li> </ul> </li> <li>• be borrowed from another learner during an examination for any reason*</li> <li>• be a calculator based on a mobile phone</li> <li>• have retrievable information stored in them; this includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ databanks</li> <li>○ dictionaries</li> <li>○ mathematical formulae</li> <li>○ text</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Calculators must be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of a size suitable for use on the desk</li> <li>• either battery or solar powered</li> <li>• free of lids, cases and covers that include printed instructions or formulas</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>The learner is responsible for the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the calculator's power supply</li> <li>• the calculator's working condition</li> <li>• clearing anything stored in the calculator</li> </ul>
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**\*Note:** an assessor may give a learner a replacement calculator of the same capability.

Where calculators are only allowed for a section of a paper, it is acceptable for learners to put their calculator on the floor, under the desk, in full sight of the assessor for the prohibited section.

## **Section 4: administering the controlled assessment**

### **4.1 Identification of learners**

It is essential that learners are identified prior to the assessment. This is to ensure authenticity and to prevent potential malpractice and maladministration. If a learner is previously known to the assessor, this will be accepted.

### **4.2 Transportation of assessment materials**

The assessor must collect controlled assessment materials from their secure storage immediately prior to scheduled assessment time.

### **4.3 Administering the controlled assessment**

The assessor is required to play a key role in the quality control of the Functional Skills controlled assessment process and is required to:

- arrive at the assessment location in good time
- ensure that the room is set up in accordance with these regulations
- distribute the assessment material to learners
- ensure that the appropriate information from the assessment pack is read out to learners prior to the assessment
- ensure that learners only have access to the appropriate resources as allowed or required by the assessment
- ensure that learners understand what is required of them during the task
- advise learners to read all instructions carefully
- ensure that learners know how to show their preferred answer, and how to alter their answer if they change their mind
- provide learners with additional paper if required
- be alert and observe learners at all times during the assessment
- ensure that the assessment is supervised continuously
- ensure that the length of time allowed for the assessment does not fall short of the authorised time specified on the assessment materials to the detriment of learners
- ensure that the length of time allowed for the assessment does not exceed the authorised time specified on the assessment materials
- take assessment materials and learner answers/evidence from any learners who leave the assessment location before the specified end of the controlled assessment
- collect in all reading matter, assessment materials (used and unused) and learner answers/evidence at the end of the controlled assessment
- ensure that learners enter their personal information onto the front cover of the assessment materials
- check that the number of completed assessments agrees with the names and number of learners attending the controlled assessment
- complete the appropriate documents and assessment templates
- return all assessment materials to the designated person for secure storage once marked, or for destruction if unused

## 4.4 Split papers/sections

English writing assessments and maths assessments consist of two papers/sections that can be sat in a single sitting or across a maximum of two sittings. If the centre chooses to do this over two sittings, they must adhere to each paper/section instruction, including:

- the access to or restriction of resources
- stated duration per paper/section

In single sittings, learners must not be given access to more than one paper at a time to ensure unauthorised access to resources can be managed, for example calculators in a non-calculator section of a paper. See section 3.9.3 for detail on the use of calculators. All papers must be collected in from all learners before progressing to the next paper.

Learners must sit the sections from the same overarching paper; therefore, these sittings cannot be split across the academic session.

In any case where assessment tasks are split, details must be recorded in the Assessment Tracking Document. The designated person must be notified and must ensure that the assessments are printed and stored securely within sealed packets/envelopes.

**Please refer to the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery (QSID) document for individual qualification resource and administration instructions.**

**In controlled assessments, the tutor and the assessor is often the same person. It is vitally important to ensure your learners are aware of this and the difference in roles. Assessors must:**

- read out appendix A to learners prior to the controlled assessment
- remain alert and be able to observe all learners at all times
- immediately report any issues that may occur during the assessment to the designated person

**Assessors must not:**

- leave the assessment room without another assessor/supervisor being present
- read or carry out any other activity unless stated within the regulations
- comment or offer advice or feedback to the learner about their work

## Section 5: end of the controlled assessment

At the end of the assessment, learners must be instructed to:

- stop writing/working
- check their personal details are completed and correct
- label their work (see section 5.1)
- hand all evidence to the assessor

If learners have used paper for notes or workings that does not need to be submitted as evidence, they must be securely destroyed.

All controlled assessment materials must be collected before learners leave the assessment room.

### 5.1 Labelling of work

All assessments must be clearly named, including any extra sheets of paper used.

Where computers have been used and a printout is to be submitted, the assessor should check that each page of the printout can be identified on a learner-by-learner basis. Only one copy should be printed, and the files must be erased from the computer immediately.

### 5.2 Assessment and internal quality assurance following the controlled assessment

The assessor must mark all work in line with the Mark Scheme and Qualification Specification on mandatory documentation. Only learner mark sheets specific to the assessment paper must be used. All Mark Schemes and mark sheets must be downloaded from the assessment pack within 6 weeks of the booking.

The IQA must internally quality assure assessors in line with the Mark Scheme and Qualification Specification on mandatory documentation.

### 5.3 Certificate claims and external quality assurance

The assessments will be externally quality assured by NCFE. If the EQA agrees the assessment decisions have been accurately applied, then certificate claims will be signed off. If the assessments are not agreed, certificate claims will not be signed off and the centre will be given an action plan to carry out reassessment.

NCFE's Enquiries about Results and Assessment Decisions Policy, available from the NCFE website, can be followed to pursue disagreement with the outcome of an external quality assurance review.

### 5.4 Destruction of unused assessments

Any unused assessment materials must be securely destroyed once assessments have taken place. The process for secure destruction must ensure confidentiality of the materials is maintained and must be documented as part of the assessment tracking process and recorded within the Assessment

Tracking Document. This document must be retained and be produced upon request as part of the quality assurance process.

## 5.5 Retaining assessments

Centres will need to securely retain all completed and marked assessment materials, until an EQA has sampled learners and certificates are received, checked and issued to learners.

Following this activity, the below documents must be securely retained for a minimum of 3 years for all learners who have completed their assessment:

- IQA feedback to assessors
- Internal quality assurance related records, for example, meeting minutes
- tracking documents of assessments sat
- documents created relating to the achievement of learners' assessments

Once completed, the controlled assessment must not be given back to learners. If a learner has failed the assessment, formative feedback should be given. Assessors should ensure that they are aware of areas the learner did not pass and the criteria covered by those areas, to inform the learner's resit.

## 5.6 Resits

Learners are not allowed another attempt at the same assessment. If a resit is required, then the learner must sit a different assessment paper. There is no limit to the number of resits a learner takes, but all attempts must be made available to the EQA if selected for sampling. **Please allow a minimum of 2 weeks further teaching before booking learners for a resit.**

## Section 6: contacts

If you have any queries about the content of these regulations, please contact the External Quality Assurance team.

Email: [ega@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:ega@ncfe.org.uk)

Telephone\*: 0191 239 8000

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## Version control

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Only approved versions of this document should be documented in the below table:

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision authors</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
V1.7	Sept 23	EQA team	Review following changes to SLC
V1.8	Dec 23	EQA team	Typo correction, updates to JCQ Malpractice guidance documents, removal of NCFE arranging translation of assessments into Welsh or Irish (Gaelic).



## **Appendix A: instructions for the assessor to read out before starting controlled assessments**

The assessor should read the following statements out and confirm learner understanding:

- read each task carefully and attempt to answer all tasks
- please ensure that your answers are clear and legible
- do not turn over your question paper/booklet until I/we instruct you to do so
- you must not have any notes, books, dictionaries, or other information with you unless it is specifically allowed as stated on the paper
- if you have brought anything into the room that is prohibited or is unrelated to the assessment, you must hand it in before the assessment begins
- mobile phones and other means of communication are not allowed in the assessment. If you have brought these into the room, they must be switched off and passed to me/us. I/we will keep them in secure storage and give you them back at the end of the assessment
- bags, coats and any other belongings should be left in a designated part of the room
- you must not work with anyone else unless. If you have any problems and need to speak to me/us, please raise your hand to attract my/our attention. Do not make a noise or distract other learners
- by starting the controlled assessment, you are agreeing that you have understood and accepted these rules