Qualification Specification:

OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills -Digital ICT
- **Qualification No: 610/4241/9**

Contents

Qualification Regulation Information

Qualification Number: **610/4241/9**

Operational start date: 01 September 2025
Operational end date: 31 August 2030
Certification end date: 31 August 2031

All OCN NI Qualifications are published to Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications (**http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/**). This database contains details ofthe available regulated qualifications, skills standard and structures.

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Foreword

This document explains OCN NI's requirements for the delivery and assessment of the following qualification:

OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT

This specification sets out:

- Centre requirements for delivering and assessing the qualification
- The structure and content of the qualification
- Assessment requirements for the qualification
- OCN NI's quality assurance arrangements for the qualification

OCN NI will notify centres in writing of any major changes to this specification. We will also publish changes on our website at **www.ocnni.org.uk**

This specification is provided online, so the version available on our website is the most up to date publication. It is important to note that copies of the specification that have been downloaded and printed may be different from this authoritative online version.

Introduction

Background

The Department of Economy currently funds the delivery and assessment of the suite of Essential Skills qualifications developed in response to the Essential Skills for Living Strategy 2002. This suite of qualifications consists of Essential Skills Entry Levels 1-3 in Literacy and Numeracy and Level 1 and Level 2 in Communication, Application of Number and ICT.

Essential Skills Level 1 and Level 2 in Communication and Application of Number were refreshed and assessments updated in 2016.

The OCN NI suite of Essential Skills – Digital ICT qualifications are based upon the refreshed Essential Skills Core Curriculum and Standards for ICT in Northern Ireland 2023. A copy of these standards are provided in Appendix 1.

Essential Skills Qualifications at a Glance

Title and Level	Qualification Number
Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Literacy (Entry 1-3)	601/8226/X
Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Numeracy (Entry 1-3)	601/8225/8
Entry Level 3 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT	610/4240/7
Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Application of Number	601/8943/5
Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Communication	601/8941/1
Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT	610/4241/9
Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills – Application of Number	601/8944/7
Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills – Communication	601/8942/3
Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT	610/4979/7

Qualification Summary

OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT

Qualification Aim

The aim of the OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT qualification is to provide learners with an opportunity to:

- create evidence relevant to real life and the workplace
- assess skills, knowledge, and application in relation to various contexts
- progress to further education, learning and development of skills or for progression to employment.

Qualification Objectives

The objective of the OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT qualification includes the following five skills areas:

- using devices and handling information
- creating and editing
- communicating
- transacting
- being safe and responsible online

Grading

The qualification is pass/fail and is made up of both a portfolio of evidence and an underpinning knowledge assessment task. Combined pass mark is 70%.

Progression Opportunities

The OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT enables progression to the Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills - Digital ICT.

Qualification Target Group

This qualification is targeted at learners with some experience of using digital devices, services and the internet but need to develop knowledge and skills further to be able to apply to everyday life and the workplace.

Entry Requirements

Learners should be at least 14 years of age.

There are no specific entry requirements for the qualification, however if may be beneficial for the learner to have completed a Digital ICT qualification at Entry Level 3.

Delivery Languages

This qualification is available in English only.

Centre Requirements for Delivering the Qualification

Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval

Existing OCN NI Recognised centres must apply for and be granted approval to deliver. the qualification prior to the commencement of delivery. New centres must apply and be granted OCN NI Recognised Centre status and qualification approval prior to delivery of the qualification.

Centre Staffing

Centres are required to have the following roles in place as a minimum, although a member of staff may hold more than one role*:

- Centre contact
- Essential Skills Co-ordinator
- Tutor
- Assessor
- Internal Quality Assurer

*Note: A person cannot be an internal quality assurer for their own assessments.

Qualification Requirements for Teaching Essential Skills

Centres must ensure that staff delivering and assessing the qualification are both qualified and experienced to teach Essential Skills ICT in Northern Ireland and meet the current criteria outlined in the Department for the Economy circular ES01/12.

Structure and Content

OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT

At this level learners should:

- be confident in applying digital skills independently to meet their needs, to exchange information and to solve problems in a range of familiar situations
- be able to carry out searches for files, save information using cloud storage
- be able to work with a level of autonomy and have the skills to decide which tools to use

How the qualification is achieved:

In order to achieve the OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT learners must complete the following components:

- an OCN NI portfolio of evidence which will be externally set by OCN NI and internally assessed and marked by the centre against the OCN NI mark scheme provided. The portfolio of evidence will consist of scenario-based tasks which will test learners' ability to use practical skills and apply their knowledge in an integrated way.
- an underpinning knowledge assessment task via Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) which will be externally set and marked by OCN NI. This task will test the learners' recall and application of knowledge.

This qualification is assessed holistically. Assessment is compensatory so a weakness in one area can be compensated by strong performance in other areas.

The overall pass mark for both components has been set by CCEA Regulation at 70%.

Total Qualification Time (TQT) for this qualification: **60 Hours**
Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for the qualification: **45 Hours**

Skills Standard	OCN NI Code	Skills Standard	Level
L/651/1711	CBG610	Using Devices and Handling Information	One
M/651/1712	CBG611	Creating and Editing	One
R/651/1713	CBG612	Communicating	One
T/651/1714	CBG613	Transacting	One
Y/651/1715	CBG614	Being Safe and Responsible Online	One

Skills Standard Details

Title	Using Devices and Handling Information
Level	One
OCN NI Code	CBG610
Reference No	L/651/1711

Skills Standard 1 - _purpose and aim(s):_ This skills standard will enable the learner to be able to use devices and handle information appropriately.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Be able to use devices and handle information.	1.1. Carry out searches on the internet. 1.2. Take account of currency, reliability and copyright when selecting information from the internet. 1.3. Understand that search results may include sponsored results or advertisements and be able to recognise these. 1.4. Carry out searches for files. 1.5. Create and use a hierarchical folder structure to organise files and use an appropriate file naming convention. 1.6. Save a file on cloud storage using one device and open it on another device. 1.7. Know and be able to appropriately use terminology describing data storage requirements. 1.8. Know and understand limitations on file sizes when using some online services, and the benefits of using file compression to make effective use of storage capacity and to reduce data transfer times. 1.9. Use online resources to identify solutions to common technical problems and understand how they may be applied.

Assessment Guidance and Mapping Criteria

Assessment must be consistent with the levels set out in the skills standards and with the associated coverage and range specified within the Essential Skills subject criteria.

The table below provides guidance on the coverage of knowledge and practical tasks related to assessment criteria coverage and indicates whether an assessment criteria has been covered in the portfolio of evidence or in the underpinning knowledge assessment task (multiple choice questions):

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT TASK (MCQs)
1.1.	√ (practical task)	
1.2.		√
1.3.		√
1.4.	√ (practical task)	
1.5.	√ (practical task)	
1.6.	√ (practical task)	
1.7.		√
1.8.		√
1.9.		√

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests
Multiple choice questions	An assessment where there are a number of questions and the learner is asked to select the best possible answer (or answers) to each question from a list of choices	Electronic based tests

Title	Creating and Editing
Level	One
OCN NI Code	CBG611
Reference No	M/651/1712

Skills Standard 1 - *purpose and aim(s):* This skills standard will enable the learner to enter, edit, format, layout and save information and numerical data in different applications.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Be able to create and edit information.	1.1. Use suitable applications to enter, edit, format, layout and save information for a range of purposes and audiences. 1.2. Use appropriate layout conventions for information and audiences. 1.3. Edit an image using an appropriate tool. 1.4. Process numeric data using simple formulae using relative cell references. 1.5. Process numeric data by values in a column. 1.6. Format numeric data. 1.7. Chart a single series of numeric data using an appropriate type of chart and apply suitable titles and labels.

Assessment Guidance and Mapping Criteria

Assessment must be consistent with the levels set out in the skills standards and with the associated coverage and range specified within the Essential Skills subject criteria.

The table below provides guidance on the coverage of knowledge and practical task related to assessment criteria coverage and indicates whether an assessment criteria has been covered in the portfolio of evidence or in the underpinning knowledge assessment task (multiple choice questions):

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT TASK (MCQs)
1.1.	√ (practical task)	
1.2.	√ (practical task)	
1.3.	√ (practical task)	
1.4.	√ (practical task)	
1.5.	√ (practical task)	
1.6.	√ (practical task)	
1.7.	√ (practical task)	

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests
Multiple choice examinations	An assessment where there are a number of questions and the learner is asked to select the best possible answer (or answers) to each question from a list of choices	Paper and/or electronic based tests

Title	Communicating
Level	One
OCN NI Code	CBG612
Reference No	R/651/1713

Skills Standard 1 - _purpose and aim(s):_ This skills standard will enable the learner to communicate effectively online with different audiences and contexts.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Be able to communicate online.	1.1. Use email for a range of contexts and audiences. 1.2. Use online messages for a range of contexts and audiences. 1.3. Know what steps can be taken to limit a digital footprint.

Assessment Guidance and Mapping Criteria

Assessment must be consistent with the levels set out in the skills standards and with the associated coverage and range specified within the Essential Skills subject criteria.

The table below provides guidance on the coverage of knowledge and practical task related to assessment criteria coverage and indicates whether an assessment criteria has been covered in the portfolio of evidence or in the underpinning knowledge assessment task (multiple choice questions):

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT TASK (MCQs)
1.1.	√ (practical task)	
1.2.	√ (practical task)	
1.3.		√

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests
Multiple choice questions	An assessment where there are a number of questions and the learner is asked to select the best possible answer (or answers) to each question from a list of choices	Electronic based tests

Title	Transacting
Level	One
OCN NI Code	CBG613
Reference No	T/651/1714

Skills Standard 1 - *purpose and aim(s):* This skills standard will enable the learner to complete and submit online transactions.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Be able to complete online transaction processes.	1.1. Manage account settings for an online service. 1.2. Complete online forms and upload documents or images. 1.3. Carry out checks to reduce the risks involved in transactions online.

Assessment Guidance and Mapping Criteria

Assessment must be consistent with the levels set out in the skills standards and with the associated coverage and range specified within the Essential Skills subject criteria.

The table below provides guidance on the coverage of knowledge and practical task related to assessment criteria coverage and indicates whether an assessment criteria has been covered in the portfolio of evidence or in the underpinning knowledge assessment task (multiple choice questions):

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT TASK (MCQs)
1.1.	√ (practical task)	
1.2.	√ (practical task)	
1.3.	√ (practical task)	

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests
Multiple choice examinations	An assessment where there are a number of questions and the learner is asked to select the best possible answer (or answers) to each question from a list of choices	Paper and/or electronic based tests

Title	Being Safe and Responsible Online
Level	One
OCN NI Code	CBG614
Reference No	Y/651/1715

Skills Standard 1 - *purpose and aim(s):* This skills standard will enable the learner to understand how to be safe and responsible online.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Know how to be safe and responsible online.	1.1. Understand key rights under data protection laws and the circumstances where an individual can request that personal data be rectified or deleted. 1.2. Understand the importance of protecting personal information and privacy online and methods to do so. 1.3. Know how to backup files to the cloud. 1.4. Know how to avoid exposure to malware. 1.5. Know of and know how to minimise the effects of health risks that may result from using devices and the internet.

Assessment Guidance and Mapping Criteria

Assessment must be consistent with the levels set out in the skills standards and with the associated coverage and range specified within the Essential Skills subject criteria.

The table below provides guidance on the coverage of knowledge and practical task related to assessment criteria coverage and indicates whether an assessment criteria has been covered in the portfolio of evidence or in the underpinning knowledge assessment task (multiple choice questions):

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE	UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT TASK (MCQs)
1.1		√
1.2		√
1.3		√
1.4		√
1.5		√

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests
Multiple choice questions	An assessment where there are a number of questions and the learner is asked to select the best possible answer (or answers) to each question from a list of choices	Electronic based tests

Further Assessment Guidance

Information on Essential Skills | CCEA

Skills Standard 1: USING DEVICES AND HANDLING INFORMATION	
Assessment Criteria	**Areas to be Covered**
1.1. Carry out searches on the internet.	Types of search: • Search engines • Search within a website Appropriate techniques: • Keywords • Exact phrases • Search filters • Refining the search Finding relevant information.
1.2. Take account of currency, reliability and copyright when selecting information from the internet.	Currency: • Check date of information Reliability: • Check that a website uses https • Avoid poor quality websites • Check more than one source/website • Consider source for bias or false information Copyright: • Acknowledge/reference source • Obtain license for copyrighted information • Seek permission from owner
1.3. Understand that search results include sponsored results or advertisements and be able to recognise these.	Sponsored results appear at the top of internet search engine results list. Advertisements are identified and may appear above, below or adjacent search results.
1.4. Carry out search for files.	Search methods: • Complete file names • Partial file names • File content • File type
1.5. Create and use a hierarchical folder structure to organise files and use an appropriate file naming convention.	Hierarchical folder structure: • Parent folders and subfolders • Organised categories Appropriate file and folder naming conventions: • Describes content • Indicates use • Includes date and/or time and/or version number
1.6. Save a file on cloud storage using one device and open it on another device.	Devices: • Desktop • Laptop • Mobile devices
1.7. Know and be able to appropriately use terminology describing data storage requirements.	• Byte • Kilobyte (KB) • Megabyte (MB) • Gigabyte (GB) • Terabyte (TB) • Petabyte (PB)

1.8.	Know and understand limitations on file sizes when using some online services, and the benefits of using file compression to make effective use of storage capacity and to reduce data transfer times.	Online services that may have file size limitations: • Email - attachment • Web page / app – upload Benefits of using file compression: • To make effective use of storage capacity • To reduce data transfer times • To overcome limitation on file size for online services File types: • TIFF • MP4 • PDF • PSD
1.9.	Use online resources to identify solutions to common technical problems and know how to apply the solution.	Common technical problems: • Issues connecting to Wi-Fi • Unable to log in to the device, network or online account • Software issues • Issues printing a document Online resources: • Online tutorials • Online forums • FAQs • Help facilities Comon solutions: • Change Wi-Fi settings • Change system or software setting • Reinstall an application • Check printer settings and connectivity

Skills Standard 2: Creating and Editing

Assessment Criteria	Areas to be Covered
1.1. Use suitable applications to enter, edit, format, layout and save information for a range of purposes and audiences.	Applications and purposes: • Word processing – poster/flyer/advertisement, information sheet/leaflet, menu, invitation, form, tables and charts • Spreadsheet – to include numerical data / text and charts or • Presentation – slide show to display information and images Audiences: • Work • Everyday life Enter and edit information including text, tables, graphics and charts: • Enter • Edit • Insert • Select, copy, cut, paste • Whole numbers (integers) • Decimal places (0,1 or 2) • Currency • Date/time Format information including text, tables, graphics and charts: • Borders (page & image) • Line spacing (single & double) • Font (size, colour, bold, underline, italics, highlight) • Alignment (left, right, centre, justified) • Text wrap • Page layout (portrait & landscape) • Graphics and charts (position, size, maintain proportions) • Tables (create, position, add rows, delete rows, adjust column width, merge cells, shade cells, cell and table borders)
1.2. Use appropriate layout conventions for information and audiences.	Layout conventions for formal and informal communication: • Presentations • Poster/flyer/advertisement • Information sheet/leaflet • Menu • Invitation • Form Audiences: • Work • Everyday life
1.3. Edit an image using an appropriate tool.	Editing tools in desktop or touchscreen device applications: Edit an image: • Alter the appearance of an image by adjusting the contrast or colour balance • Crop • Resize Use image enhancement techniques: • Add a text caption • Change position
1.4. Process numeric data using simple formulae using relative cell references.	Process numeric data within spreadsheet software using simple formulae with one or two mathematical operators: • Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division • Functions (SUM, MIN, MAX, AVERAGE) • Replicate formulae

1.5.	Process numeric data by values in a column.	Sort numeric data using one criterion maintaining data integrity Filtering numeric data using one criterion
1.6.	Format numeric data.	Format data using: • Font sizes and styles • Alignment (left, right, centre) • Format cell values (number, currency, date, percentage) • Merging and splitting cells • Row height and column width • Row/column labels • Borders/shading • Orientation.
1.7.	Chart a single series of numeric data using an appropriate type of chart and apply suitable titles and labels.	Create charts: • Bar/column charts • Pie charts • Line graphs Chart formatting: • Chart title • Axis labels • Category labels • Chart legend • Data labels Data • Contiguous • Non-contiguous Chart location • Existing worksheet • New worksheet

Skills Standard 3: Communicating

Assessment Criteria	Areas to be Covered
1.1. Use email for a range of contexts and audiences.	Context and audiences for the use of email messages: • Work scenarios (colleagues, customers, external contacts, the general public) • Real-life scenarios (friends and family, day-to-day/personal tasks) Using email: • To • cc and Bcc • Subject • Message • Greeting and close • Attachment(s) • Automated signature
1.2. Use online messages for a range of contexts and audiences.	Context and audience for the use of online messages: • Work scenarios (colleagues, customers, external contacts, the general public, • users of a social media platform) • Real-life scenarios (friends and family, day-to-day/personal tasks, users of a social media platform) Type of online messages: • Instant message • Text message • Social media messaging Using online messaging: • New message • Reply • Forward • Attachment(s)
1.3. Know what steps can be taken to limit a digital footprint.	Managing digital identity: • Privacy tools/settings • Location/GPS settings • Managing cookies • Website tracking • Avoid oversharing information • Private browsing • Unsubscribe from mailing lists • Delete unwanted social media accounts and old posts

Skills Standard 4: Transacting

Assessment Criteria	Areas to be Covered
1.1. Manage account settings for an online service.	Online services: • Making a purchase • Financial transactions • Utilities • Government services • Media services Account settings: • Personal details (name, telephone number, address, date of birth, email address) • Login credentials: Username Password • Marketing and communication preferences: Agreeing to personalised marketing or offers Saving payment details Preferred method of contact (email, post, telephone, text)
1.2. Complete online forms and upload documents or images.	How to upload a document or image file: • Locating a specific file • Uploading file Understand file size limitations: • Limitations in place different between forms • Upload rejected if file size limit exceeded • Reducing file size to ensure limits are not exceeded
1.3. Carry out checks to reduce the risks involved in transactions online.	Indicators of website security: • Padlock symbol next to website address (URL) • 'https://' in website address (URL) Indicators of a website appearing professional: • Legitimate domain name (correct name and spelling) • Valid business address with valid contact details • Good standard of grammar and spelling • Statements made on the website can be verified • Reviews on the website are positive and match those on third-party review websites

Skills Standard 5: Being Safe and Responsible Online

Assessment Criteria	Areas to be Covered
1.1. Understand key rights under data protection laws and the circumstances where you can request that personal data be rectified or deleted.	Key rights for personal data: • Processed lawfully • Collected for a specific purpose • Only required data is collected • Must be accurate and kept up to date • Kept only as long as is necessary • Must be protected • Access to see data held about you • Right to be forgotten • Right to withdraw consent Circumstances where you can request that personal data be rectified or deleted: • When it is inaccurate • When it is incomplete
1.2. Understand the importance of protecting personal information and privacy online and know methods to do so.	Importance of protecting personal information and privacy online: • To avoid personal data being stolen • To avoid personal data being compromised Methods to protect personal information and privacy: • Create and use strong passwords • Use multiple email addresses (separates life and work, hides identity) • Use access privileges when installing applications on a device • Use settings on a mobile device to restrict or grant access to: Location (GPS) Camera Private browsing (browsing history is not saved, cookies are deleted at the end of a browsing session). Block unsolicited or unwanted communications: • Block callers • Remove tag(s) in social media posts • Leave a group chat
1.3. Know how to backup files to the cloud.	Automatic backup Manual backup
1.4. Know how to avoid exposure to malware.	Malware: • Worms • Trojans • Ransomware Install, keep up to date, and run regularly: • Antivirus software • Antimalware software Set antivirus and antimalware to 'on access' scan Avoid suspicious links (unsolicited emails, pop ups) Only download from trustworthy sources
1.5. Know of and know how to minimise the effects of health risks that may result from using devices and the internet.	Health risks resulting from using devices and the internet: • Pain caused by poor posture • Pain caused by poorly positioned equipment • Repetitive strain injury (RSI) • Headaches and eyestrain • Weight gain • Decline in physical fitness

	• Poor emotional wellbeing • Addiction to online activity • Poor sleep patterns • Fatigue Ways to minimise health risks: • Use an adjustable chair • Ensure you are not too close or too far away from the device • Make sure the screen is at a suitable height • Use wrist supports for peripherals (keyboard, mouse) • Use suitable lighting • Take regular breaks • Exercise and eat healthily • Report cyber-bullying • Limit screen time • Healthy sleep pattern • Avoid screen time close to bedtime • Meet friends and colleagues

Assessment

OCN NI will provide the centre with:

- a portfolio template and mark scheme
- an underpinning knowledge assessment task

The tasks are intended to be taken by a learner in a normal learning environment and there is no time limit.

The following points should be noted:

- it is the assessor's responsibility to ensure the qualification is at the appropriate level for the learner
- the assessment task is undertaken within the learner's normal learning environment, which must be supervised
- the task is taken unseen by the learner - these assessments are confidential materials
- if a task is taken across more than one session the tutor must ensure that all materials associated with the assessment task are brought in at the end of each session and stored in a secure place until required again
- the learner completes the work unaided except for any assistance allowed for in the tutor guide
- the portfolio task is marked by the assessor according to the mark scheme
- both tasks must be completed and the overall pass mark met to achieve the qualification
- all work submitted will be subject to centre internal verification to external verification by OCN NI

Retention of Evidence

OCN NI has published guidance for centres on the retention of evidence. Details are provided in the OCN NI Centre Handbook and can be accessed via the OCN NI website.

Certification

Certificates will ONLY be issued when learners have successfully met pass criteria.

Certificates will be sent to centres within 20 working days after verification of results. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that certificates received from OCN NI are held securely and distributed to learners promptly and securely.

Charges

OCN NI publishes all up to date qualification fees in its Fees and Invoicing Policy document. Further information can be found on the OCN NI website.

Quality Assurance of Centre Performance

Certification and Reporting

Where a learner's performance is sufficient to meet the level requirements, an Essential Skills qualification pass certificate is awarded. No grades are issued for these qualifications.

Internal Quality Assurance

The delivery and assessment of the qualification must be scrutinised through the centre's internal quality assurance processes as part of the Recognised Centre agreement with OCN NI. The centre must appoint an experienced and trained centre internal quality assurer whose responsibility is to act as the internal quality monitor for the verification of the delivery and assessment of the qualification. The Centre must have a working model for internal quality assurance with OCN NI prior to delivery of any programme.

Internal Quality Assurers must:

- have direct or related relevant experience in assessment and verification
- attend OCN NI's internal quality assurer training or have a recognised IQA qualification in order to be approved by OCN NI
- support tutors and assessors through Centre standardisation meetings held within the Centre at appropriate points in the year and maintain records for the external verifier
- sample assessments according to the centre's sampling strategy
- maintain up-to-date records supporting the verification of assessment and learner achievement

External Quality Assurance

External Quality Assurance visits and monitoring activities will be conducted regularly to confirm continued compliance with the CCEA Regulation General Conditions of Recognition, review the centre's risk rating for the qualification and to assure OCN NI of the maintenance of the integrity of the qualification.

The External Quality Assurer will review the delivery and assessment of the qualification. This will include the review of a sample of assessment evidence and evidence of the internal Quality Assurance of assessment and assessment decisions. This will form the basis of the EQA report and will inform OCN NI's annual assessment of centre compliance and risk. The External Quality Assurer is appointed by OCN NI.

Standardisation

As a process, standardisation is designed to ensure consistency and promote good practice in understanding and application of standards. Standardisation may include:

- making qualified statements about the level of consistency in assessment across centres delivering a qualification
- making statements on the standard of evidence that is required to meet the assessment criteria for skills standard in a qualification
- making recommendations on assessment practice
- producing advice and guidance for the assessment of skills standard
- identifying good practice in assessment and internal verification

Centres offering Essential Skills qualifications are required to attend standardisation events if requested. Centres will be requested to contribute assessment materials and learner evidence for the standardisation activity.

Awarding Bodies offering Essential Skills in Northern Ireland work closely with CCEA Regulation to ensure the consistency of standards and practice.

OCN NI Support for Essential Skills

OCN NI provides the following support for Essential Skills:

- sample assessment and support materials
- a section on the OCN NI website dedicated to Essential Skills
- advice on the conduct and administration of Essential Skills
- professional development events for assessors and internal quality assurers
- centre briefings/visits
- support on becoming an accredited centre for Essential Skills
- standardisation activities

For further information about Essential Skills support contact OCN NI on
028 9046 3990.

Equality, Fairness and Inclusion

OCN NI has considered the requirements of equalities legislation in developing the specification for this qualification.

For further information and guidance relating to access to fair assessment and the OCN NI Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policies, centres should refer to the OCN NI website.

OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT
Qualification number: 610/4241/9

Operational start date: 01 September 2025
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Essential Skills Core Curriculum and Standards for ICT in Northern Ireland 2023

Level 1
1. Using devices and handling information
1.1. Carry out searches on the internet (including use of keywords, exact phrases, search filters).
1.2. Take account of currency, reliability and copyright when selecting information from the internet.
1.3. Understand that search results may include sponsored results or advertisements and be able to recognise these.
1.4. Carry out searches for files (including on file names, partial file names, file content).
1.5. Create and use a hierarchical folder structure to organise files and use an appropriate file naming convention.
1.6. Save a file on cloud storage using one device and open it on another device.
1.7. Know and be able to appropriately use terminology (including bytes, kilobytes, megabytes, gigabytes, terabytes) describing data storage requirements.
1.8. Know and understand limitations on file sizes when using some online services, and the benefits of using file compression to make effective use of storage capacity and to reduce data transfer times.
1.9. Use online resources to identify solutions to common technical problems (including when to reinstall an application, change Wi-Fi settings, change a system or software setting) and know how to apply the solution.
2. Creating and editing
2.1. Use suitable applications (including word-processing, spreadsheet or presentation software), to enter, edit, format, layout and save information (including text, tables, graphics, charts) for a range of purposes and audiences.
2.2. Use appropriate layout conventions for information (including formal and informal communication, presentation, advertisement) and audiences (including familiar, unfamiliar audience).
2.3 Edit (including caption, crop, resize, change contrast, change colour balance) an image using an appropriate tool.
2.4. Process numeric data using simple formulae (including sum, subtraction, multiplication, division, maximum, minimum, average) using relative cell references
2.5. Process (including sort, filter) numeric data by values in a column.
2.6. Format numeric data (including font sizes, font styles, alignment, cell formatting, merging cells, splitting cells, row height, column width).
2.7. Chart a single series of numeric data using an appropriate type of chart and apply suitable titles and labels (including chart title, axis titles, data legends and data labels).
3. Communicating
3.1. Use email for a range of contexts and audiences.
3.2. Use online messages (including instant message, text message, social media) for a range of contexts and audiences.
3.3. Know what steps can be taken to limit a digital footprint (including use of privacy tools to manage cookies and website tracking, private browsing, restricting GPS information).

Level 1
4. Transacting
4.1. Manage account settings for an online service (including personal details, login credentials, marketing and communication preferences).
4.2. Complete online forms and upload documents or images.
4.3. Carry out checks to reduce the risks involved in transactions online (including checking for the padlock next to the URL in the browser, checking if the website appears professional with a legitimate domain name, checking reviews).
5. Being safe and responsible online
5.1. Understand key rights under data protection laws (including right to see what personal data organisations hold about you, right to withdraw consent) and the circumstances where you can request that personal data be rectified or deleted.
5.2. Understand the importance of protecting personal information and privacy online and know methods to do so (including private browsing, social media settings, settings on a mobile device to restrict or grant GPS location information, using a secondary email address).
5.3. Know how to backup files to the cloud.
5.4. Know how to avoid exposure to malware (including worms, trojans and ransomware).
5.5. Know of and know how to minimise the effects of health risks (including weight gain, decline in physical fitness, poor sleep patterns) that may result from using devices and the internet.