



Qualification Specification for:

OCN NI Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Numeracy

➤ **Qualification No: 601/8225/8**

Qualification Regulation Information

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All OCN NI Qualifications are published to Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications (<http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>). This database contains details of the available regulated qualifications, units 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 Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Numeracy

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

The specification also makes reference to:

- Department for Employment and Learning and Education and Training Inspectorate requirements for the delivery of the qualification in Northern Ireland.

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.

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Introduction

The Essential Skills for Living Strategy

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) launched the Essential Skills for Living Strategy and action plan in April 2002. The aim of this strategy was to improve adult literacy and numeracy (and later Information & Communication Technology (ICT)) in Northern Ireland.

DEL's vision for the strategy was:

“To provide opportunities for adults to update their essential skills to assist them in improving their overall quality of life, personal development and their employment opportunities and by so doing to promote greater economic development, social inclusion and cohesion”

A suite of Essential Skills qualifications was developed as part of this strategy. The suite of qualifications comprises qualifications from Entry level up to Level 2 in literacy/communication and numeracy/application of number, and qualifications at Level 1 and 2 in ICT.

The qualifications were designed to be suitable for learners in education, training, work and everyday life situations who would like to gain a nationally accredited qualification,

NB Essential Skills qualifications are part of post-16 learning pathways in Northern Ireland and are mandatory within Apprenticeships NI frameworks.

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
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 – Information and Communication Technology	601/8213/1
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 – Information and Communication Technology	601/8214/3

Qualification Summary: OCN NI Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Numeracy

The aim of this qualification is to improve the learners' ability to understand, use, calculate and manipulate mathematical information and interpret results.

These capabilities are applied to :

- number i.e. the development of an understanding of number, number rotation, number operations and the ability to make use of appropriate methods of calculation;
- measures, shape and space ie the development of the ability to: (a) recognise and use the properties of 2D and 3D shapes; (b) recognise locations and to use transformations in the study of shape; (c) estimate and measure quantities and appreciate and approximate the nature of measurement;
- handling data i.e. the development of the ability to collect, record, process, represent and interpret data and to understand, estimate and calculate probabilities.

Progression Opportunities

The OCN NI Entry Level Certificate in Essentials Skills – Adult Numeracy enables progression to the OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills – Application of Number, GCSE Mathematics and to other recognised qualifications at level 1 and above.

Qualification Target Group

The qualification is targeted at learners who:

- wish to develop further skills in numeracy
- wish to progress in education, training and/or employment
- wish to improve their personal development and life skills

Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification however centres must ensure that the level of the qualification is suitable for the learners. See 'Initial Assessment' below.

Initial Assessment

The centre should undertake an initial assessment of each learner before commencement of the course to ensure the learner is working towards the appropriate level of Essential Skills qualification. Centres are expected to develop their own approaches to initial assessment based on best practice. Tutors should be familiar with the DEL advice on initial assessment. See also guidance in 'Using the Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum in Northern Ireland' 2002

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 Verifier

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

Qualifications requirements for teaching Essential Skills

Centres must ensure that staff delivering and assessing the qualification are both qualified and competent. They should have a thorough understanding of the Adult Numeracy core curriculum and an awareness of the National Standards for Adult Numeracy.

DEL policy specifies minimum qualification requirements for Essential Skills teachers. As and where specified by DEL, centres must ensure that their teaching staff meet the requirements of the DEL Tutor Education Policy.

Developing Essential Skills programmes and activities

Essential Skills qualifications have been designed to enable centres to develop programmes and learning activities within a wide range of contexts suited to the needs of the learners. This might include: vocational education/training, employment, everyday living, social or leisure activities, volunteering. This is not an exhaustive list.

Whatever context is used to underpin the learning programme the developmental activities within the programme should be based on the Adult Numeracy core curriculum.

The Education and Training Inspectorate expect Essential Skills numeracy learning programmes to be based on the Adult Numeracy core curriculum. Staff should refer to 'Using the Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy core curriculum in Northern Ireland' 2002

Structure and Content

Sub-skills

The Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Numeracy has three skill components:

- Number
- Measure, Shape and Space
- Handling data

Learners must demonstrate competence in all 3 skills areas in order to be awarded an entry level qualification. An award cannot be made for achievement of only one or two of the skills areas.

Sub-levels

Entry Level Essential Skills has 3 sub levels, ie Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3. The Adult Numeracy core curriculum makes clear links between the sub-levels and the teaching and learning of the skills, knowledge and understanding required to meet the standards.

The standards for Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3 are detailed on the following pages.

Entry 1 Standards

Title	OCN NI Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Numeracy
Level	Entry 1
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	40
OCN NI Unit Code	
Unit Reference No	K/507/9652
Standard	Learners will be expected to
Understanding and using mathematical information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand information given by numbers and symbols in simple graphical, numerical and written material • Specify and describe a practical problem or task using numbers and measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use whole numbers to measure and make observations • use space and shape to help understanding • use information from lists and simple diagrams to help understanding • copy a given process or routine to increase understanding
Calculating and manipulating mathematical information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate results which make sense and use given methods and given checking procedures appropriate to the specified purpose 	<p>use whole numbers to count reliably up to 10 items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to read, write, order and compare numbers up to 10 including zero • to add single-digit numbers with totals to 10, and subtract single-digit numbers from numbers up to 10 • to interpret +, – and = in practical situations for solving problems <p>use common measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to recognise and select coins and notes • to relate familiar events to: – times of day (using o'clock times and parts of the day such as midday) – days of the week – seasons of the year • to describe size, eg large/small, and use direct comparisons for the size of least two items, eg larger/smaller • to describe length, width, height, eg long, short, wide, narrow, tall, and use direct comparisons for length, width, height of items, eg longer, too long, longest • to describe weight, eg heavy/light, and use direct comparisons for weight of items eg heavier/lighter • to describe capacity, eg full/empty, and use direct comparisons for capacity of items, eg holds more than, holds less than <p>use shape and space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to recognise and name common 2-D and 3-D shapes, eg a rectangle, square, circle, cube • to understand everyday positional vocabulary, eg between, inside or near to use data

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extract simple information from lists • to sort and classify objects using a single criterion • to construct simple representations or diagrams using knowledge of numbers, or measures, shape and space <p>use a calculator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to check calculations using whole numbers
<p>Interpreting results and communicating mathematical information</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and explain results that show their understanding of the intended purpose using appropriate numbers, measures, objects or pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use whole numbers to present results • use appropriate vocabulary for common measures to describe quantities • use objects or simple images to present results • reach a suitable outcome

Entry 2 Standards

Title	OCN NI Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Numeracy
Level	Entry 2
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	40
OCN NI Unit Code	
Unit Reference No	K/507/9652
Standard	Learners will be expected to
Understanding and using mathematical information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand information given by numbers, symbols, simple diagrams and charts in graphical, numerical and written material. • Specify and describe a practical problem or task using numbers, measures and simple shapes to record essential information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use whole numbers and simple fractions to measure and make observations • use space and shape to record simple information • use information from lists, tables, simple diagrams and block graphs to help understanding • collect simple numerical information to help understanding • follow a given process or routine
Calculating and manipulating mathematical information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate results to a given level of accuracy using given methods and given checking procedures appropriate to the specified purpose 	<p>use whole numbers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to count reliably up to 20 items • to read, write, order and compare numbers up to 100 • to add and subtract two-digit whole numbers • to recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 • to multiply using single-digit whole numbers • to approximate by rounding to the nearest 10 • to use and interpret +, −, x and = in practical situations for solving problems use fractions • to read, write and compare halves and quarters of quantities • to find halves and quarters of small numbers of items or shapes <p>use common measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make amounts of money up to £1 in different ways using 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p and 50p coins • to calculate the cost in pence of more than one item, eg two stamps at 26p, and the change from a transaction, eg change from £1 • to calculate the cost in whole £s of more than one item, eg two tickets at £6, and the change from a transaction, eg change from £20

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to read and record time in common date formats, and understand time displayed on analogue and 12-hour digital clocks in hours, half hours and quarter hours to estimate, measure and compare length using common standard and non-standard units, eg metre, centimetre, paces to estimate, measure and compare weight using common standard and non-standard units, eg kilogram • to estimate, measure and compare capacity using common standard and non-standard units, eg litre, cupful to read and compare positive temperatures in everyday situations such as weather charts to read simple scales to the nearest labelled division <p>use shape and space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognise and name 2-D and 3-D shapes, eg triangles, cylinders, pyramids to describe the properties of common 2-D and 3-D shapes, eg the number of sides, corners, faces to use positional vocabulary, eg giving simple instructions to extract information from lists, tables, simple diagrams and block graphs to make numerical comparisons from block graphs to sort and classify objects using two criteria to represent information so that it makes sense to others, eg in lists, tables, diagrams <p>use a calculator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to check calculations using whole numbers
Interpreting results and communicating mathematical information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present and explain results that meet the intended purpose using appropriate numbers, simple diagrams and symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use whole numbers and common fractions to present results use common measures and units of measure to define quantities use tables, simple charts and diagrams to present results follow a given routine to reach an appropriate outcome

Entry 3 Standards

Title	OCN NI Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills – Adult Numeracy
Level	Entry 3
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	40
OCN NI Unit Code	
Unit Reference No	K/507/9652
Standard	Learners will be expected to
Understanding and using mathematical information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand information given by numbers, symbols, diagrams and charts used for different purposes and in different ways in graphical, numerical and written material. • Specify and describe a practical problem or task using numbers, measures and diagrams to collect and record relevant information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use whole numbers, fractions and decimals to measure and make observations • use space and shape to record information • use numerical information from lists, tables, diagrams and simple charts to help understanding • make observations and record numerical information using a tally • use given materials and methods
Calculating and manipulating mathematical information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate results to a given level of accuracy using given methods, measures and checking procedures appropriate to the specified purpose 	<p>use whole numbers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to count, read, write, order and compare numbers up to 1000 • to add and subtract using three-digit numbers • to recall addition and subtraction facts to 20 • to multiply two digit whole numbers by single digit whole numbers • to divide two-digit whole numbers by single-digit whole numbers and interpret remainders • to recall multiplication facts, eg multiples of 2, 3, 4, 5, 10 • to approximate by rounding numbers less than 1000 to the nearest 10 or 100 • to estimate answers to calculations • to use and interpret +, −, x, ÷ and = in practical situations for solving problems use fractions • to read, write and understand common fractions, eg 3/4, 2/3, 1/10 • to recognise and use equivalent forms, eg 5/10 = 1/2 use decimals • to read, write and understand decimals up to two decimal places in practical contexts (such as common measures to

	<p>one decimal place, eg 1.5m, money in decimal notation, eg £2.37)</p> <p>use common measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to estimate, calculate and compare money by: – adding and subtracting sums using decimal notation – rounding sums to the nearest £1, 10p – making approximate calculations to read, measure and record time using: – am and pm and common date formats – digital clocks and analogue clocks to the nearest 5 minute intervals to read, estimate, measure and compare length, capacity, weight and temperature using standard and non-standard units, eg distance on road signs, simple scales to the nearest labelled or unlabelled division to choose and use appropriate units and measuring instruments <p>use shape and space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to sort 2-D and 3-D shapes, to solve practical problems using properties, eg lines of symmetry, side length, angles use data to extract numerical information from lists, tables, diagrams and simple charts to make numerical comparisons from bar charts and pictograms to organise and represent information in different ways so that it makes sense to others <p>use a calculator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to calculate using whole numbers and decimals to solve problems in context • to check calculations
<p>Interpreting results and communicating mathematical information</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present and explain results that meet the intended purpose using appropriate numbers, diagrams, charts and symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use whole numbers, common fractions and decimals to present results use common measures and units of measure to define quantities use tables, charts and diagrams to present results, eg for amounts and sizes use given methods to check results • use given methods to present results use appropriate methods and forms to describe outcomes

Scheme of Assessment

To achieve the qualification, learners must be assessed against the Entry Level Adult Numeracy standards for each of the 3 skills:

- Number
- Measure, Shape and Space
- Handling data

Assessment 100% Externally set task

One unseen, contextualised assessment task drawn from a bank of tasks.

Externally set, internally marked and externally moderated.

Each task can be taken only once but there are no restrictions upon the number of tasks a candidate can take.

Normally 60-90 minutes duration to complete all elements of the task.
Taken in the normal learning environment but under controlled conditions

Each Numeracy sub-skill is equally weighted. There are differentiated outcomes at Entry 1, 2 and 3. The pass threshold for each sub-skill, at each level is set at 80% of the available marks.

The overall outcome is calculated using the lowest outcome for each sub-skill.

Guidance: delivery and assessment

OCN NI expects that learners will only be entered for an assessment task on completion of their planned programme of learning. OCN NI would expect the following to be in place:

- Initial assessment and diagnosis of individual learning needs and support requirements
- An individual learning plan developed in consultation with the learner and regularly updated through formative assessment.
- Development and practice of skills through appropriate and relevant tasks mapped against the Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum
- Assessment to ensure learner readiness to engage with the externally set task at the appropriate level.

Assessment Materials

Central Assessment Bank

A central bank of external assessment materials is shared by all awarding organisations offering Entry Level Essential Skills. Each task is based around a topic relevant to adults and, where appropriate, some have a Northern Ireland context.

Approved Centres are provided with secure on-line access to OCN NI's bank of tasks.

Assessment tasks

The externally set tasks have been designed to provide a summative assessment of the achievement of adult learners and are based on activities which these learners may come across in their everyday lives.

The tasks are designed to confirm the tutor's judgement of the level of achievement at which a learner is working and should only be administered when the tutor is satisfied that the learner's work has reached the appropriate standard.

Each task covers:

- all 3 sub-levels at Entry level, i.e. Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3;
- all 3 Numeracy skills, i.e. Number; Measure, Shape and Space and Handling data
- a minimum of 70% of the core curriculum elements at the appropriate levels.

Differentiation in the tasks is by outcome.

Assessment task

The task materials are in the form of:

- a Student Answer Booklet at either Entry 1 or Entry 2 and 3
- a Tutor Guide and Tutor Script
- an Assessment Scheme in which the marks for each activity are recorded and an overall level is allocated

Guidelines for use are included in each booklet.

A sample task [Giant's Causeway] is available at all sub levels. This can be used for learner practice purposes but cannot form part of the qualification assessment.

Administering the task

The tasks are intended to be taken by a learner in his/her normal learning environment.

A task will normally take between 60-90 minutes to complete if taken in one sitting. However OCN NI would recommend that the tasks are taken in 3 separate sessions. The elements of each task should be taken consecutively with no further teaching taking place between activities.

Detailed guidelines for the use of the tasks are contained in the Tutor Guide and Tutor Script available with each task. However, the following points should be noted:

- It is the assessor's responsibility to ensure that an external task at the appropriate level is undertaken by 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 guidance document accompanying the task.
- The assessment task is marked by the tutor according to the mark scheme.
- The task must be fully achieved in order to meet the requirement for the achievement of the qualification.
- All work submitted will be subject to centre internal verification and to external verification by OCN NI.

Determining qualification level for award

The Assessment Scheme allows for the tutor to create a learner's achievement across the three skill areas and record the level the learner has demonstrated in each of the activities.

In order to achieve an overall level in Entry Level numeracy a learner must achieve that level in all three skill areas.

Where a learner achieves a range of levels in an assessment task then the overall level is based on the lowest level achieved across the three skills areas.

See the matrix below

Sub-skill outcomes			Overall Level to be awarded
1	1	1	1
1	1	2	1
1	1	3	1
1	2	2	1
1	2	3	1
2	2	2	2
2	2	3	2
3	3	1	1
3	3	2	2
3	3	3	3

Security of External Assessment

- External assessment task booklets must be retained in a secure location.
- External assessment task booklets must never be used for diagnostic assessment or teaching purposes. Nor should they be used as preparation for the externally set assessment. Failure of any Centre to adhere to this directive will result in the task being declared invalid and being withdrawn from the Task Bank.
- External assessment task booklets must be given to learners at the beginning of a designated and agreed assessment period.
- Completed external assessment booklets must be collected in at the end of the designated assessment period, marked and retained by the Centre.
- At no point should the completed external tasks be removed from the Centre, unless for external verification purposes.
- Completed tasks must not be returned to the learner.
- Tasks, other than those designated for retention purposes, must be securely destroyed once they are no longer required for verification.

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 be sent to centres within 20 working days of receipt of correctly completed results marksheets. 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

Internal Verification

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 verifier whose responsibility is to act as the internal quality monitor for the verification of the delivery and assessment of the qualification.

The Centre must agree a working model for internal verification with OCN NI prior to delivery of any programme.

Internal Verifiers must:

- have direct or related relevant experience in assessment and verification
- attend OCN NI's internal verifier training 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 records maintained for the external verifier
- sample assessments according to the centre's sampling strategy
- ensure tasks are appropriate to the level being assessed
- maintain up-to-date records supporting the verification of assessment and learner achievement

External Verification

As this qualification requires learners to submit an externally assessed component, external verification must take place before certificates can be issued to the centre. External verification visits and monitoring activities will be conducted annually to confirm continued compliance with the 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 Verifier 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 verification of assessment and assessment decisions. This will form the basis of the EV report and will inform OCN NI's annual assessment of centre compliance and risk.

The External Verifier 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 events:

- make qualified statements about the level of consistency in assessment across centres delivering a qualification
- make statements on the standard of evidence that is required to meet the assessment criteria for units in a qualification
- make recommendations on assessment practice
- produce advice and guidance for the assessment of units
- identify 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 event.

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

OCN NI Support for Essential Skills

OCN NI provides the following support for Essential Skills:

- Exemplar 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 verifiers
- Centre briefings/visits
- Support on becoming an accredited centre for Essential Skills
- Standardisation events

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.

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