



PART OF **nocn** GROUP

QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

Suite of Entry Level Functional Skills Qualifications in English.

NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 1

Qualification No: 603/5270/X

NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 2

Qualification No: 603/5268/1

NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 3

Qualification No: 603/5272/3

Operational Start Date: 25th October 2019

Version: 1.7 March 2026

To know more about NOCN:

- Visit the NOCN website: www.nocn.org.uk
- Call the Customer Service Team: **0300 999 1177**

Introduction

NOCN is a market-leading awarding organisation that has been providing qualifications for a wide range of Centres, including FE colleges and training providers, for 30 years both in the UK and internationally.

We work with Centres to deliver a high quality and flexible service for learners to underpin our passionate belief in the power of education and its impact on communities and individuals.

We offer all the advantages of being with a national awarding organisation with a diverse portfolio of qualifications, alongside providing a personalised, bespoke, service to our Centres and learners.

As an accredited Leader in Diversity we are proud of our reputation as a provider of fully accessible, trusted and flexible qualifications.

About NOCN Group

NOCN is part of NOCN Group, a progressive educational charity whose core aims are to help learners reach their potential and organisations thrive. The group includes business units specialising in regulated UK and international qualifications, end point assessment, endorsed programmes and assured short courses, Smart job cards, assessment services, consultancy, and research.

NOCN Group shares a joint purpose to offer learners, training providers, employers, and FE Colleges a fully integrated range of learning and skills development products and services.

Information about all our courses and qualifications is available from our website:

www.nocn.org.uk/

Qualifications at a Glance

Title	Size
NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English (Entry Level 1 – Entry Level 3)	GLH – 55 TQT - 55
Purpose	Target Audience
The purpose of these qualifications is to provide learners with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding needed to operate confidently, effectively and independently in everyday life and in the workplace. They also support learners in their progression into employment and further study.	These qualifications are for individuals of all ages who wish to gain essential skills in English. They are particularly beneficial for individuals who may have missed out on acquiring these skills during their formal education or for those who wish to enhance their existing skills for further education, employment, or personal development.
Content Overview	Entry Requirements
The NOCN Functional Skills Qualifications in English at Entry Level 1, 2 and 3 provide learners with a range of knowledge and skills in English including: • Reading. • Writing. • Speaking, Listening and Communicating.	There are no formal entry requirements for learners undertaking these qualifications.
Assessment	Additional Resources
The assessments for NOCN Functional Skills Qualifications in English at Entry Levels 1 - 3 are set by NOCN and internally assessed by the centre. Assessments are made available on NOCN's vLearn platform.	Supporting resources are available for this qualification on NOCN's vLearn platform. Initial Assessment and Diagnostic Assessment materials are available on NOCN Pocketskills App for learners at NOCN Centres.

Summary of changes:

This section summarises the changes to the qualification specifications since the last version (version 1.3 May 2022).

Version	Publication Date	Summary of Amendments
V1.4	May 2024	Qualification specification reviewed and formatting updated.
V1.5	January 2025	IQA Sampling requirements on page 11.
V1.6	August 2025	Clarification of registration timeline on page 9.
V1.7	March 2026	Tutor/Assessor Requires amended

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1. Overview of Qualification

The qualifications are based on the Department for Education's Functional Skills Subject Content which were derived from the National Standards for Functional Skills Qualifications.

Functional Skills provide a foundation for progression into and within employment or further education and develop skills for everyday life.

There are three skills areas in the Subject Content, common to Entry Level 1, 2 and 3:

- Reading.
- Writing.
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating.

The assessments for the qualifications provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of practical skills as well as underpinning knowledge and understanding.

The NOCN Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry Level 1, 2 and 3 aim to equip learners with the skills and confidence to apply and adapt their English knowledge and skills to situations in their life and work in a range of contexts and for various purposes.

These qualifications require learners to successfully achieve summative assessment tasks that are externally set for Reading, Writing, and Speaking, Listening and Communicating. Learners can take these assessments when they have undergone a relevant teaching and learning programme that covers the skills criteria in their entirety at the appropriate level and have developed the appropriate skills ready for assessment.

Learners need to achieve a pass at the same level in each of the three components to achieve a full Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 or Entry Level 3. Some exemptions may apply, please see the Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations guide.

1.1 Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for learners undertaking these qualifications. However, it is recommended that learners have a reasonable level of English or equivalent.

Learners must be able to demonstrate the requirements of these qualifications and have access to required assessment opportunities and relevant resources. Please refer to specific assessment requirements on individual components for more information.

Centres should undertake initial assessment activities with learners to ensure they take an appropriate qualification, and they can achieve the level they will be studying before enrolling them onto a programme of learning. Initial Assessment and Diagnostic Assessment materials are available on NOCN [Pocketskills App](#) for learners at NOCN Centres.

These qualifications are for individuals of all ages who wish to gain essential skills in English and are particularly beneficial for individuals who may have missed out on acquiring these skills during their formal education or for those who wish to enhance their existing skills for further education, employment, or personal development.

1.2 Progression Routes

Achievement of these qualifications demonstrates a sound grasp of English skills at the appropriate level and the ability to use these skills successfully in the workplace and other real life situations. It also allows learners to:

- Progress onto higher level qualifications. For example, the achievement of the NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 3 enables progression to the NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Level 1.
- Further study for vocational, vocationally related, or general qualifications.

2. Qualification Details

2.1. Qualification Structure

NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 1.

The NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Level 1 is a qualification with a Total Qualification Time (TQT) of 55 hours, including 55 Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Component	Level	GLH
Functional Skills English	Entry Level 1	55

NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 2

The NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 2 is a qualification with a Total Qualification Time (TQT) of 55 hours, including 55 Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Component	Level	GLH
Functional Skills English	Entry Level 2	55

NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 3

The NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 3 is a qualification with a Total Qualification Time (TQT) of 55 hours, including 55 Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Component	Level	GLH
Functional Skills English	Entry Level 3	55

2.2. Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Through consultation with users, TQT has been agreed by considering the total number of learning hours required for the average learner to achieve these qualifications.

TQT is split into two areas:

Area	Example of activities
1. Guided Learning Hours (GLH): • Learning activity under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training. • Includes the activity of being assessed if the assessment takes place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.	• Classroom-based learning supervised by a teacher. • Work-based learning supervised by a teacher. • Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a teacher in real time. • E-learning supervised by a teacher in real time. • All forms of assessment which take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of an appropriate provider of training. • Exam time.
2. Other Learning Hours (OLH): • An estimate of the number of hours a learner will spend, as directed by (but not under the immediate guidance or supervision of) a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, including: ○ Preparatory work. ○ Self-study. ○ Any other form of education or training, including assessment.	• Independent and unsupervised research / learning. • Unsupervised compilation of a portfolio of work experience. • Unsupervised e-learning. • Unsupervised e-assessment. • Unsupervised coursework. • Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar. • Unsupervised work-based learning.

2.3. Qualification Delivery

Centres are free to use any method of delivery for these qualifications. For example, they could be delivered full time, part time, remotely or using a combination of methods.

2.4. Assessment and Evidence

Learners must achieve the pass mark for the assessments to be awarded the qualification.

The qualifications are awarded to learners who successfully achieve a pass in the summative assessment for each of the three components of Reading, Writing and Speaking, Listening and Communicating, at the same level.

Where a learner has not yet met the subject content to be awarded a pass, a result of fail will be issued along with a formal statement of results.

Assessment

Achievement of the qualifications is through successful completion of three individual components.

The assessments for Reading and Writing are set by NOCN but may be adapted by centres in line with NOCN instructions and guidance. They are assessed and quality assured by centres and externally quality assured by NOCN. The assessment must take place under controlled conditions.

The assessments for Speaking, Listening and Communicating can be accessed from the vLearn website with a secure login. They are set by NOCN, assessed by centres and externally quality assured by NOCN.

NOCN assessments may be adapted by the centre to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged whilst adhering to Ofqual conditions and DfE requirements. Centres wishing to make use of the adaptations will be given bespoke guidance and training through their submission process, to ensure reliability and validity of the assessment.

Adapted assessments should be made available to NOCN at least 15 working days before the planned use of the assessment with learners to allow the assessment to be standardised in the same way as for other NOCN devised assessments. If adapted assessments are not of the required standard, feedback would be provided together with areas for improvement prior to resubmission.

Learners may, as an approved reasonable adjustment, use word processing software in the writing and / or reading assessment. This must be pre-approved by NOCN. If technology is utilised the spell and grammar functions must be deactivated. No dictionaries are permitted for the writing assessment.

Learners are permitted to use dictionaries for the Reading element only.

NOCN will retain completed assessments for NOCN standardisation and question analysis activity.

Centres must register learners following induction in line with the timescales of the NOCN Registration and Certification Policy and Procedure. NOCN do not require prior notice to assessments taking place, although these must only take place after learner registration. Please ensure that any reasonable adjustments have been approved by NOCN before completing the assessment.

The assessments are to be taken on the booked date and time. Please refer to Centre Handbook for details.

Control of Assessments

The assessments are designed to be a robust test of learners' skills and knowledge and must be taken under controlled conditions.

Sample assessments are available for centres and learners on vLearn. We highly recommend that learners are given the chance to go through both of these assessments.

Learners undertaking the assessments for the Entry Level Functional Skills English qualifications are able to take these assessments over multiple assessment sittings, however the overall time allowed for each component should not be exceeded. A record should be kept of the day and times that the learner has engaged with each assessment. If you require more support, after reading the Centre Handbook, please contact Assurance@nocn.org.uk or Examinations@nocn.org.uk.

Assessment Times and Marks

The timings we have set reflect the subject content requirement ensuring that the coverage and content are efficiently met and managed. The timings ensure that the assessment is fit for purpose, can be delivered efficiently, and allows each learner the opportunity to generate sufficient evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

NOCN advise that all tasks/questions must be completed. Each assessment has detailed guidelines which outline how the assessments must be administered.

Qualification level	Component	Duration of assessment	Marks
Entry Level 1	Reading	45 minutes	14
Entry Level 1	Writing	45 minutes	30
Entry Level 1	Speaking, Listening and Communicating	15 minutes	Tutor Assessed
Entry Level 2	Reading	45 minutes	16
Entry Level 2	Writing	45 minutes	35
Entry Level 2	Speaking, Listening and Communicating	15 minutes	Tutor Assessed
Entry Level 3	Reading	45 minutes	20
Entry Level 3	Writing	1 hour	38
Entry Level 3	Speaking, Listening and Communicating	15 minutes	Tutor Assessed

(Marks shown are for the full assessment.)

Marking of Assessments

All assessments are marked by centres using the NOCN assessment mark sheet and guidance, and externally quality assured. Centres are required to notify the Quality Assurance Team at NOCN, and the EQA of new markers to quality assure their suitability to undertake this role.

All assessments must be marked by the Functional Skills English Teachers/ Tutors/ Assessors at all Entry Levels. Centres must mark Entry Level English assessments as per the designated mark scheme and guidance provided. The mark scheme specifies the performance evidence that is necessary to achieve the full range of marks. The assessment papers indicate how many marks are available for each question. Learners must complete the assessment in the allocated time. Mark schemes clearly indicate how marks are allocated for each subject content area.

Entry Level English assessment marking must adhere to NOCN guidance and will be monitored in line with the NOCN Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure. Centres are to ensure that the internal quality assurance process is adhered to, and that suitable evidence is made available for external quality assurance visits. A minimum of 10% of all assessments must be sampled by the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) and a written record made. For Speaking, Listening and Communicating 10% of assessments must be observed by an IQA (the sample must include observation of live assessments) and a written record made of the observation. Centres are to adhere to the guidance set out in NOCN Quality Assurance Manual for Internal Quality Assurance and standardisation. These processes are in place to manage the risk of authenticity and accuracy of the centre procedures and evaluation.

Centres must complete the Learner Tracking Sheet to track and monitor assessments undertaken including re-sits. The Learner Tracking Sheet can be downloaded from vLearn and used for internal quality assurance and must be provided for external quality assurance visits.

Grading

The qualifications are graded at Pass/Fail.

2.5. Learners with Particular Requirements

If you are a NOCN Recognised Centre and have learners with particular requirements, please see the **NOCN Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedure** found on the NOCN website at www.nocn.org.uk

This policy gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the assessment criteria.

The NOCN Centre Approval process requires the Centre to hold policy statements on Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Disability Discrimination, which will be reviewed by NOCN.

Please refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further details.

3. Centre Information

3.1. Required Resources for Delivering the Qualification

As part of the requirement to deliver these qualifications there is an expectation that staff undertaking roles as part of the delivery and assessment of these qualifications have a demonstrable level of expertise.

NOCN expects that Tutors and Assessors are able to demonstrate the following competencies:

3.1.1 Tutor / Assessor Requirements

As a minimum, Tutors/Assessors must:

- Be technically competent within the subject area.
- Keep up to date with industry best practice for the duration of their role.
- The minimum expectation is that the level of competence of the Tutor should be at the same level as the training that is to be delivered.
- It is recommended that Tutors hold or be working towards a recognised education and training qualification.

3.1.2 Internal Quality Assurer Requirements

- NOCN expects that an Internal Quality Assurer is able to demonstrate the following competencies:
- Have an understanding of the subject area.
- Have experience in carrying out internal quality assurance activities or, as a minimum, be part of a team that has experience of carrying out internal quality assurance activities.

3.1.3 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- Centres are expected to support their staff, ensuring that their subject knowledge remains current and that their members of staff are up to date with regards to best practice in delivery, assessment and quality assurance.

3.1.4 External Quality Assurance

- Once recognised as a Centre, NOCN will allocate an External Quality Assurer. The External Quality Assurer will have ongoing responsibility for monitoring the Centre's compliance with the requirements of recognised Centre approval status.

The External Quality Assurer will make regular visits to all Centres. During these visits they will:

- Monitor the Centre's compliance with the Centre approval criteria by reviewing course documentation, meeting managers, tutors, internal quality assurers, learners, and administrative staff.
- Review the standard of the Centre's assessment and internal quality assurance practices and decisions to determine whether all assessment requirements are met to support safe and valid claims for certification.

- Complete the “Recommendation for Award of Credit” form.

Refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further information on the External Quality Assurance process. This can be found on the NOCN website at www.nocn.org.uk

3.2. Offering the Qualification

Existing Centres

If you are already recognised to offer NOCN qualifications and would like more information about offering this qualification, please contact: business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk, alternatively use Horizon to add this qualification to your Centre.

New Centres

If you are interested in offering this qualification, but are not yet a NOCN Approved Centre and would like more information about becoming a NOCN Centre and offering this qualification please see **Become a Registered Centre** on our website <https://www.nocn.org.uk/customers/nocn-centres/> and click Become a Centre.

4. Component Information

The qualifications at Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3 each consists of three component parts. These are based on the [Department for Education's Subject Content](#).

The qualifications are awarded to learners who successfully achieve a pass in the summative assessment for each of:

- Reading.
- Writing.
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating.

at the same level.

Where a learner has not yet met the subject content to be awarded a pass, a result of fail will be issued.

<https://www.nocn.org.uk/products/qualifications/603-5270-x-nocn-functional-skills-qualification-in-english-at-entry-1/>

<https://www.nocn.org.uk/products/qualifications/603-5268-1-nocn-functional-skills-qualification-in-english-at-entry-2/>

<https://www.nocn.org.uk/products/qualifications/603-5272-3-nocn-functional-skills-qualification-in-english-at-entry-3/>

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