



## Qualification Specification for:

**OCN NI Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills – Information and Communication Technology**

➤ **Qualification No: 601/8214/3**

## Qualification Regulation Information

---

Qualification Number: 601/8214/3  
Operational start date: 01 January 2016  
Operational end date: 31 August 2022  
Certification end date: 31 August 2024

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.

### OCN NI Contact Details

Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI)  
Sirius House  
10 Heron Road  
Belfast  
BT3 9LE

Phone: 028 90463990  
Fax: 028 90460573

Web: [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk)

## Foreword

---

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

### **OCN NI Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills – Information and Communication Technology**

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](http://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.

## Contents

---

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>FOREWORD.....</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| The Essential Skills for Living Strategy.....   | 5         |
| Essential Skills Qualifications at a Glance .....   | 5         |
| <b>QUALIFICATION SUMMARY: OCN NI LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE IN ESSENTIAL SKILLS – INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ...</b> | <b>6</b>  |
| Progression Opportunities .....   | 6         |
| Qualification Target Group .....  | 6         |
| Entry Requirements.....   | 6         |
| Delivery Languages.....   | 6         |
| <b>CENTRE REQUIREMENTS FOR DELIVERING THE QUALIFICATION.....</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval .....   | 7         |
| Centre Staffing .....   | 7         |
| Qualifications requirements for teaching Essential Skills .....   | 7         |
| Developing Essential Skills programmes and activities.....  | 7         |
| <b>STRUCTURE AND CONTENT .....</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT.....</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>ASSESSMENT MATERIALS.....</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| Action based activity/portfolio templates.....  | 14        |
| Retention of Evidence .....   | 14        |
| Certification .....   | 14        |
| Charges .....   | 14        |
| <b>QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CENTRE PERFORMANCE.....</b>   | <b>15</b> |
| Internal Verification.....  | 15        |
| External Verification .....   | 15        |
| Standardisation .....   | 16        |
| <b>OCN NI SUPPORT FOR ESSENTIAL SKILLS .....</b>  | <b>17</b> |
| Equality, Fairness and Inclusion .....  | 17        |

## 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 Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills – Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

---

The aim of this qualification is to improve the learners' ability to confidently and independently select and apply ICT skills to exchange information and develop solutions to solve problems requiring a range of information types.

### **Progression Opportunities**

The OCN NI Level 2 Certificate in Essentials Skills – ICT enables progression to employment, further learning opportunities within employment, or further study. Learners can progress from this qualification to other recognised qualifications at level 2 and above.

### **Qualification Target Group**

The qualification is targeted at learners who:

- wish to develop further skills in ICT
- 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. Centres are advised to undertake an initial assessment of learners' suitability for this Level 2 ICT qualification.

### **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 Essential Skills ICT Curriculum and the Essential Skills ICT standards.

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. The assessment scheme has been designed to integrate naturally into a range of learning contexts and centres are expected to develop programmes that provide a meaningful use of ICT skills for the learners.

Whatever context is used to underpin the learning **programme the developmental activities within the programme should be based on the Essential Skills ICT curriculum.**

Centres should ensure tutors have access to the following:

- Essential Skills ICT Curriculum
- National ICT Skills for Life Standards Level 2
- Essential Skills ICT standards at Level 2

The Education and Training Inspectorate expect Essential Skills ICT learning programmes to be based on the Essential Skills ICT curriculum.

## Structure and Content

The Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills ICT has three parts:

- Using ICT systems
- Finding and exchanging information
- Developing and presenting information

Learners must demonstrate that they meet the following standards.

| Title                       | OCN NI Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills – Information and Communication Technology   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Level                       | Two   |  |
| Guided Learning Hours (GLH) | 40  |  |
| OCN NI Unit Code            |   |  |
| Unit Reference No           | H/507/9634  |  |
| Standard                    | Evidence Requirements   | Portfolios will have to demonstrate that the learner can:  |
| ICT2.1. Use ICT systems     | <p>2.1.1 Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently to meet needs</p> <p>2.1.2 Follow safety and security practices and manage information storage efficiently</p> | <p>a. use correct procedures for start and shutdown of ICT systems and to open, use and close software as appropriate</p> <p>b. use input devices (eg keyboard, microphone, touch screen, mouse and output devices (eg screen, printer, headphones) and communication services (eg ISP, broadband, dial up network)</p> <p>c. select and use software applications (eg word processing, spreadsheet, graphics, browser, email) and system facilities (eg print queue, file management)</p> <p>d. recognise and use interface features (ie window, eg size, move, dialogue box, zoom, minimise, maximise, close, icon, option button, menu and submenu, scroll, toolbar and drag and drop)</p> <p>e. adjust system settings as appropriate according to user need (eg mouse, icon size, screen resolution, desktop contrast, volume, date and time, add words to spell check dictionary)</p> <p>f. manage file and folder structure (ie create, open, save, save as, print, move, close, delete, view rename, move and copy) to enable efficient storage and retrieval of information</p> <p>g. handle and store media (ie insert, remove, label and store safely)</p> <p>h. understand and follow recommended safe practices (ie arrange hardware and cables, adjust seating and lighting, avoid hazards and take breaks and minimise physical stress)</p> <p>i. understand and follow recommended procedures to protect information (ie passwords and backups) and confidentiality and be aware of the need for internet security</p> |



**Assessment guidance**

**2.1a-e** Evidence for these requirements will be implicit within the completed activities for ICT2.2 and ICT2.3

**2.1f** Screen dump annotated by learner

**2.1g-i** Evidence can be presented as comments by learner on their own work as appropriate, or the completion of discrete additional material set in learner's context

| Standard   | Evidence Requirements   | Portfolios will have to demonstrate that the learner can:   |
|--|---|---|
| ICT2.2. Find and exchange information  | 2.2.1 Select and use a variety of appropriate sources of information for a complex task<br>2.2.2 Access, search for, select and develop ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose<br>2.2.3 Access and use ICT to communicate and exchange information, including storage of messages and address lists | a. select and use appropriate sources of ICT information (eg CD, DVD, internet, database, text message) and other forms of information (eg newspaper, book, map, conversation, directory, broadcast) for a complex task<br>b. recognise copyright and other constraints on the use of information (eg speed of internet connection, time constraints for downloading large files)<br>c. access, navigate and search internet sources of information (ie connect, enter web addresses, browse, follow links, use forward and back, save and use bookmarks and use a search engine)<br>d. use appropriate search techniques (ie find tool including wildcards, index, multiple search criteria eg use of quotation marks, search within results, use of relational operators, eg =, >, <, >=, <=, <>, and logical operators, eg AND, NOT, OR) and design queries to locate relevant information<br>e. select and use information that matches requirements (ie copy and paste, save, capture images, download files and play streamed media, eg audio, video, games) and evaluate fitness for purpose (ie intention and authority of provider, currency of information, relevance and bias)<br>f. access, read and respond appropriately to email (ie open mailbox, read, reply, delete, create, eg to, cc, subject, content, send open and add attachments, use an address book and adapt style to suit audience eg g use appropriate language, respect confidentiality, use copy lists with discrimination)<br>g. manage efficient storage of email and attachments (eg use folders) and contact email addresses (eg maintain address book) |
| <b>Assessment guidance</b>   |   |   |
| <p><b>2.2a</b> A minimum of 2 appropriate sources of information should be used of which at least 1 must be ICT In addition the section of these must be for a complex task ie a task that involves a number of interrelated sub-tasks</p> |   |   |
| <p><b>2.2b</b> Evidence can be presented as comments by learner on their own work as appropriate or completion of discrete additional material set in learners context</p>   |   |   |
| <p><b>2.2c-e</b> Evidence for these requirements is implicit in <b>2.2 a</b></p>   |   |   |
| <p><b>2.2f-g</b> Screen dump and/or print out of email storage structure or learner comments with evidence to support</p>  |   |   |

| Standard                                | Evidence Requirements   | Portfolios will have to demonstrate that the learner can:  |
|---|---|--|
| ICT2.3. Develop and present information | <p>2.3.1 Enter, organise, develop, format and bring together information to suit content and purpose, in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text and tables</li> <li>• Images</li> <li>• Numbers</li> <li>• Records</li> </ul> <p>2.3.2 Evaluate and use different methods of organising and presenting information taking into account fitness for purpose and audience</p> | <p>a. enter, develop and organise text (ie document layout and organisation of information, eg headings and subheadings, lists, tables and use of white space) to suit purpose and present information effectively, applying editing techniques to achieve the required outcome (ie insert, delete, select, copy, cut, paste, drag and drop, find and replace, undo and redo)</p> <p>b. use appropriate page layout (ie margins, header/footer, portrait, landscape, columns page breaks and page numbering)</p> <p>c. format paragraphs (eg bullets, numbering, alignment, tabs, indents and line spacing)</p> <p>d. format text (ie font, eg Arial, style, eg bold, italic, underline, size, eg 10pt, borders, shading and colour)</p> <p>e. design, create and format tables (ie row and column quantity and size, horizontal and vertical text alignment, merge and split cells, borders and shading)</p> <p>f. insert, develop and organise images (eg clip-art, photo, scanned image) basic shapes (eg line, rectangle, ellipse) and text boxes</p> <p>g. format images (ie resize, crop, align and use borders and text wrapping)</p> <p>h. enter, develop and organise numerical information that is fit for purpose using worksheets, relative and absolute cell references (eg F2, \$D\$4) cell ranges,(eg A2:A6) formulas using multiple operators (+, -, *, /) functions (eg SUM, MIN, MAX, AVERAGE) and replication</p> <p>i. format worksheets and numerical information appropriately (ie row height, column width, gridlines, merge cells, cell borders, cell data type and format, eg text, currency, %, decimal places, date, time, wrap text)</p> <p>j. create and develop charts/graphs (eg pie, bar, single line) using suitable formats (ie chart title, axis titles and labels, legends, data labels and gridlines)</p> <p>k. enter and organise records (in eg a table, spreadsheet or database) using field names and headings, data types and primary key, sort on one or more fields in ascending or descending order, select records (eg using data filtering) and edit records (ie add, delete and amend)</p> <p>l. bring together information from different types of source</p> |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>m. bring together components of images and text (ie position, behind, in front and grouping)</li> <li>n. work accurately (ie spelling, calculations, meaning, layout and consistency), seek views of others, proof read and use software facilities where appropriate for a complex task</li> <li>o. produce information (eg text, tables, images, charts, combined) using accepted conventions (eg letter, memo, report, newsletter, poster, web page) as appropriate and fit for purpose and audience</li> <li>p. review effectiveness of creation and presentation of information</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Assessment guidance</b></p> <p><b>2.3a-o</b> In order to meet evidence requirements of 2.3 most of <b>a-o</b> is likely to be evident in the portfolio. However, evidence must be of a sufficient rigour, scope and complexity to meet the required standard at Level 2.</p> <p>It would be difficult to envisage achievement of the level of complexity for Level 2 to be met without using a database or spreadsheet</p> <p><b>1.3p</b> This could be included in the portfolio or as discrete supporting material</p> |  |  |
| <p>Where the evidence requirements states 'ie' the portfolio must include evidence covering all items listed. Where the evidence requirements states 'eg' the portfolio must include at least one example</p>  |  |  |
| <p>Evidence must show that the learner has met all the standards. The Learner Portfolio must contain tutor annotation indicating where assessment judgements have been made.</p>   |  |  |

## Scheme of Assessment

---

To achieve the qualification, learners must be assessed against the Level 2 ICT standards:

- Using ICT systems
- Finding and exchanging information
- Developing and presenting information

Assessment of the Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills ICT is by Learner Portfolio.

| <b>Assessment</b>  |
|--|
| <b>Learner portfolio</b>   |
| The learner portfolio must be based on approved action based activity templates. Proposed templates must be submitted to OCN NI for approval prior to use. |
| The portfolio is internally assessed and standardised and subject to external moderation.  |
| There must be 100% coverage of the standards.  |

## **Assessment Materials**

---

### **Action based activity/portfolio templates**

Centres must ensure that the portfolio templates used have received approval for use in assessing this qualification. Templates that have received prior approval may be used without seeking permission. Where a centre wishes to design a new template this must be submitted to OCN NI for approval, prior to its use. Centres must submit proposed templates to OCN NI at least 20 working days in advance of need.

### **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 maintain records 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.

## **OCN NI Level 2 Certificate in Essential Skills – Information and Communication Technology      601/8214/3**

---

Operational start date:      01 January 2016  
Operational end date:      31 August 2022  
Certification end date:      31 August 2024

Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI)  
Sirius House  
10 Heron Road  
Belfast  
BT3 9LE

Phone:      028 90463990  
Fax:      028 90460573

Web:      [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk)