



Qualification Specification:

OCN NI Entry Level 3 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT

- **Qualification no: 610/4240/7**



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Qualification Regulation Information

Qualification Number: 610/4240/7

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

Qualification Summary

OCN NI Entry Level 3 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT

Qualification Aim

The aim of the OCN NI Entry Level 3 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 Entry Level 3 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 Entry Level 3 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT enables progression to the OCN NI Level 1 Certificate in Essential Skills - Digital ICT.

Qualification Target Group

The qualification is targeted at learners with no or little prior experience of using digital devices, services, or the internet.

Entry Requirements

Learners should be at least 14 years of age. There are no specific entry requirements for the 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 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 Entry Level 3 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT

At this level learners should:

- be able to identify the main features of different devices
- know what an application is and the main types of application software
- be able to work independently to solve a simple technical problem
- be able to work safely and securely online and be able to set up security features

How the qualification is achieved:

In order to achieve the OCN NI Entry Level 3 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 combined pass mark has been set by CCEA Regulation at 70%.

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

Skills Standard	OCN NI Code	Skills Standard	Level
K/651/1676	CBG605	Using Devices and Handling Information	Entry 3
L/651/1677	CBG606	Creating and Editing	Entry 3
M/651/1678	CBG607	Communicating	Entry 3
A/651/1680	CBG608	Transacting	Entry 3
D/651/1681	CBG609	Being Safe and Responsible Online	Entry 3

Skills Standard Details

Title	Using Devices and Handling Information
Level	Entry Level 3
OCN NI Code	CBG605
Reference No	K/651/1676
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Know the main features and uses of different types of devices. 1.2. Know what an application is and the main types of application software. 1.3. Apply system settings. 1.4. Navigate online content to locate required information. 1.5. Carry out searches on the internet. 1.6. Use files to read and store information. 1.7. Use files and folders to organise and retrieve information. 1.8. Know when there is a problem with a device or software and know the difference between system and user errors. 1.9. Know how to apply a solution to solve a simple technical problem.

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		√
1.2		√
1.3	√ (practical task)	
1.4	√ (practical task)	
1.5	√ (practical task)	
1.6	√ (practical task)	
1.7	√ (practical task)	
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	Entry Level 3	
OCN NI Code	CBG606	
Reference No	L/651/1677	
Skills Standard 1 - purpose and aim(s): This skills standard will enable the learner to enter, edit and format information in different applications.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Be able to enter, edit and format information.	1.1. Use a suitable application to enter, edit and format text. 1.2. Use a suitable application to enter, edit and format graphics. 1.3. Combine different types of information for a given purpose. 1.4. Capture digital media and view in a suitable application.	
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)	
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

Title	Communicating	
Level	Entry Level 3	
OCN NI Code	CBG607	
Reference No	M/651/1678	
Skills Standard 1 - purpose and aim(s): This skills standard will enable the learner to edit contacts list and communicate effectively online.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Be able to communicate effectively online.	1.1. Create and edit details in a contacts list. 1.2. Compose and reply to online communications comprising text and other digital content to one individual and multiple recipients. 1.3. Initiate and participate in a video call. 1.4. Know what is meant by a digital footprint, its implications and know the range of digital activities that leave 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	√ (practical task)	
1.4		√
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
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Title	Transacting	
Level	Entry Level 3	
OCN NI Code	CBG608	
Reference No	A/651/1680	
Skills Standard 1 - purpose and aim(s): This skills standard will enable the learner to complete and submit an online transaction.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Understand online transaction processes.	1.1. Complete and submit an online form and comply with data validation. 1.2. Outline the process of verification checks when completing an online transaction.	
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)	
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

Title	Being Safe and Responsible Online	
Level	Entry Level 3	
OCN NI Code	CBG609	
Reference No	D/651/1681	
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 the need to stay safe and respect others when using the internet and communicating online. 1.2. Know simple methods to protect personal information and privacy online. 1.3. Understand how to set up and use security features to access devices and online services. 1.4. Understand the benefits of using security software to protect against online risks. 1.5. Know of and know how to minimise the effects of physical stresses that may result from using devices.	
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. Know the main features and uses of different types of device.	<p>Devices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop • Laptop • Mobile devices (handheld, wearable) • Smart devices <p>Connectivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wired • Wireless (Wi-Fi, Bluetooth) <p>Features of a device:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input (keyboard, touchscreen, mouse, mousepad, scanner, microphone, camera) • Output (monitor/screen, speaker, printer, camera) <p>Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating (phone or video call, email, social media). • Creating and editing (documents and presentations) • Media: images, text, video, audio, stream, livestream • Lifestyle: entertainment, games, health and fitness, social media • Online transactions: services, financial
1.2. Know what an application is and the main types of application software	<p>Applications for desktops, laptops and mobile devices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email clients • Web browsers • Mobile device applications (lifestyle, social media, news, entertainment) • security applications • Word processors • Presentation software
1.3. Apply system settings	<p>System settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display (brightness, resolution) • Sound • Wi-Fi (public, secure) • Accessibility (magnifier, screen reader, text-to-speech, voice control) for those with visual impairment • Time and language
1.4. Navigate online content to locate required information	<p>Online content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menus • Hyperlinks • Browser navigation controls (back and forward buttons, bookmarks) • Search criteria, key words
1.5. Carry out searches on the internet	Searching for specific and clearly defined content:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Images • Videos / video links
1.6. Use files to read and store information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating • Opening • Reading information • Editing • Saving
1.7. Use files and folders to organise and retrieve information	<p>File and folders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate and select • Rename file • Download <p>Storage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local (hard drive, removable media) • Remote
1.8. Know when there is a problem with a device or software and know the difference between system errors and user errors	<p>System errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Device crashing or freezing • Slow response • Not connected to internet <p>User errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using incorrect credentials (login details) • Incorrectly connecting hardware • Unable to hear sound
1.9. Know how to apply a solution to solve a simple technical problem	<p>Technical problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to open a file • Unable to hear sound • Unable to print, failed login • Device crashes/freezes • No internet connection <p>Solutions to correct system/user errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restart/reboot • Check file name/location • Check sound levels • Check paper supply / jam, connection • Check login details • Check internet connection

Skills Standard 2: Creating and Editing

Assessment Criteria	Areas to be Covered
1.1. Use a suitable application to enter, edit and format text.	<p>Know the purpose of, and be able to use, suitable applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word processing (poster, flyer, information sheet/leaflet, menu, invitation) • Presentation (slideshow to display information and images) <p>Enter and edit text including numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter • Edit • Select • Copy • Cut • Paste • Currency (£ and pence in whole numbers) • Date/time <p>Format text including numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Font style (bold, underline, italics) • Font size and colour. • Alignment (left, right, centre, justified) • Bullets and numbered lists
1.2. Use a suitable application to enter, edit and format graphics.	<p>Enter, edit and format graphics using suitable features within applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of graphics (image, diagram, photograph) • Software applications (word processing, presentation) <p>Format graphics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position • Size
1.3. Combine different types of information for a given purpose.	<p>Types of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text including numbers • Graphics (image, diagram, photographs) <p>Combine information for a given purpose in a range of work or real-life contexts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement/poster/flyer • Information sheet/leaflet • Menu • Invitation • Presentation (slide show, insert new slide, slide background, slide design, slide animation)
1.4. Capture digital media and view in a suitable application.	<p>Digital media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image • Video <p>Methods of capture images:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screenshot • Download • Camera on a device <p>Methods to capture video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Download • Camera on a device

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Skills Standard 3: Communicating

Assessment Criteria	Areas to be Covered
1.1. Create and edit details in a contacts list.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new contact • Edit existing contact
1.2. Compose and reply to online communications comprising text and other digital content to individual and multiple recipients.	<p>Email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New • To • Subject • Reply • Reply to all • Message • Greeting • Close • Send • Attachment(s) – document/ image / video
1.3. Initiate and participate in a video call.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate a video call • Join/accept a video call • Mute/unmute • Camera on/off • Raise hand • Messaging • Adding background / background effect
1.4. Know what is meant by a digital footprint, its implications and know the range of digital activities that leave a digital footprint.	<p>Range of activities leaving a digital footprint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media activity (profiles, uploaded photos, posts, messages, replies, blogs, online reviews) • Web searches and browsing history • Emails <p>Positive implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility of positive online activities and social media profile to a wider audience including employers • Personalised advertising <p>Negative implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces privacy • Reduces security of information/data • Compromises safety of individuals by personal information being available • Visibility of negative online activities and social media profile to a wider audience including employers

Skills Standard 4: Transacting	
Assessment Criteria	Areas to be Covered
1.1. Complete and submit an online form and comply with data validation.	<p>Purposes of online forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrations / applications • Requesting a service • Financial transactions • Booking appointments • Making an enquiry • Reporting a problem • Making an online purchase <p>Login Credentials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Address • Email address <p>Data validation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic computer checks • Ensures that data is entered correctly • Instructions for fields given <p>Methods of data validation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key fields cannot be left blank (presence check / required field) • Invalid data check when data does not comply with information required (numbers instead of letters, incorrect date format, date in past/future) • Double entry (entering username or password twice for confirmation)
1.2. Outline the process of verification checks when completing an online transaction.	<p>Verification checks carried out to ensure the user has entered their details accurately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typing in a one-time passcode (OTP) to confirm registration or to access a shared folder online • Entering and confirming email address when registering with a business or organisation • CAPTCHA

Skills Standard 5: Being Safe and Responsible Online	
Assessment Criteria	Areas to be Covered
1.1. Understand the need to stay safe and respect others when using the internet and communicating online.	<p>Online risks that may result in devices being hacked, or personal data being compromised or stolen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phishing • Pharming • Malware • Shoulder surfing • Unauthorised access • Links in unsolicited emails, messages, and pop-ups <p>Consequences of not staying safe against risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices may be hacked • Personal data: compromised / stolen/fraud / identify theft <p>Respecting others online to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate language when communicating • Consider opinions of others • Behaviour to avoid: trolling / offensive behaviour / harassing other online users
1.2. Know simple methods to protect personal information and privacy online.	<p>Methods to protect personal information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for padlock symbol next to website address (URL) • Look for 'https://' in website address (URL) • Be careful when sharing personal information: Only share personal data for a specific purpose / Minimising use of personal data across online platforms / Keep personal social media profiles private • Use of strong passwords that are hard to guess • Not sharing passwords <p>Methods to protect privacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep personal social media profiles private using privacy settings • Use pseudonyms • Use screenlock(s)
1.3. Know how to set up and use security features to access devices and online services.	<p>Security features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong passwords: Use a mix of upper case and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters / Avoid use of personal data such as own name or date of birth / Unique and not used to access multiple devices and online services • Biometrics (fingerprint, facial or voice recognition) • Pin codes • Pattern unlock • Screenlock(s) <p>Authentication methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time passcodes (OTP) • Multifactor authentication (username, password and one of biometrics, OTP or pin code)
1.4. Understand the benefits of using security software to protect against online risks.	<p>Benefits of using security software:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antivirus software can prevent, detect or remove viruses, malware and other threats • A firewall can prevent unauthorised access to or from private networks

<p>1.5. Know of and know how to minimise the effects of physical stresses that may result from using devices.</p>	<p>Physical stresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain from poorly positioned equipment• Pain from poor posture• Repetitive strain injury (RSI)• Eye strain• Headaches <p>Ways to minimise the effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure you are not too close or too far away from the device and peripherals (keyboard, mouse)• Make sure the screen is at a suitable height and distance• Use an adjustable chair• Use wrist supports for peripherals (keyboard, mouse)• Use suitable lighting• Take regular breaks
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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 combined pass mark met to achieve the qualification
- all work submitted will be subject to centre internal verification and 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 assurance 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 quality assurer
- 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 Organisations 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 the 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 Entry Level 3 Certificate in Essential Skills – Digital ICT
Qualification number: 610/4240/7

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

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

Phone: 028 9046 3990
Web: www.ocnni.org.uk

APPENDIX 1

Essential Skills Core Curriculum and Standards for ICT in Northern Ireland 2023

Entry level
1. Using devices and handling information
<p>1.1. Know the main features and uses of different types of devices (including desktop, laptop, mobile devices, smart devices).</p> <p>1.2. Know what an application is and the main types of application software (including email clients, web browsers, mobile device applications, security applications, word processors, presentation software).</p> <p>1.3. Apply system settings (including display, sound, Wi-Fi, time, language, accessibility).</p> <p>1.4. Navigate online content to locate required information.</p> <p>1.5. Carry out searches on the internet (including information, images, videos).</p> <p>1.6. Use files to read and store information (including creating a file, opening a file, reading information from a file, editing a file, saving a file).</p> <p>1.7. Use files and folders to organise and retrieve information (including local and remote storage).</p> <p>1.8. Know when there is a problem with a device or software and know the difference between system errors (including device crashing or freezing, slow response) and user errors (including using incorrect credentials, incorrectly connecting hardware).</p> <p>1.9. Know how to apply a solution to solve a simple technical problem (including restarting a device to address a system error, correcting a user error).</p>
2. Creating and editing
<p>2.1. Use a suitable application to enter, edit and format text (including bold, underline, italics, font sizes and colours, text alignment, bulleted lists, numbered lists).</p> <p>2.2. Use a suitable application to enter, edit and format graphics (including position, size).</p> <p>2.3. Combine different types of information (including text, graphics, images) for a given purpose.</p> <p>2.4. Capture digital media (including image, video) and view in a suitable application.</p>
3. Communicating
<p>3.1. Create and edit details in a contacts list.</p> <p>3.2. Compose and reply to online communications comprising text and other digital content to individual and multiple recipients.</p> <p>3.3. Initiate and participate in a video call.</p> <p>3.4. Know what is meant by a digital footprint, understand the implications of a digital footprint, and know the range of digital activities (including social media activity, web searches, emails), that leave a digital footprint.</p>
4. Transacting
<p>4.1. Complete and submit an online form and comply with data validation.</p> <p>4.2. Outline the process of verification checks when completing an online transaction.</p>

Entry level

5. Being safe and responsible online

- 5.1. Understand the need to stay safe and respect others when using the internet and communicating online.
- 5.2. Know simple methods to protect personal information and privacy online (including not sharing personal information, looking for HTTPS when logging in).
- 5.3. Know how to set up and use security features (including authentication methods) to access devices and online services.
- 5.4. Understand the benefits of using security software (including anti-virus, firewall) to protect against online risks.
- 5.5. Know of and know how to minimise the effects of physical stresses (including pain from poorly positioned equipment and/or bad posture, repetitive strain injury, eye strain) that may result from using devices.