PART OF nocn GROUP

QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

NOCN Entry Level 1 Personal Progress Qualifications

NOCN Entry Level Award in Personal Progress (Entry 1)
Qualification No: 500/7522/6

NOCN Entry Level Certificate in Personal Progress (Entry 1)
Qualification No: 500/7523/8

NOCN Entry Level Diploma in Personal Progress (Entry 1)
Qualification No: 500/7524/X

Operational Start Date

1 September 2009

Version

6.2 – August 2022

To know more about NOCN:

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

Introduction

NOCN has been providing a qualification and accreditation service to providers across the UK for over 25 years and is justifiably proud of its reputation as, "…a provider of fully accessible, trusted and flexible qualification and accreditation services".

Over the years, NOCN has worked effectively with centres for the benefit of learners across the country, with a mutual interest in providing a continuously improving service. NOCN, whilst retaining all the advantages of being a national body, has always provided a personal, bespoke service to its customers and prides itself on its local presence and expertise within communities.

This document details the qualification specification and provides guidance to the training provider on assessment criteria and evidence requirements.

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1. About the qualifications

The suite of NOCN qualifications in Personal Progress has been designed to address the needs of learners working at Entry 1 or below and in particular those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The qualifications ensure that all learners are given the same opportunities to access appropriate and relevant education and improve their life chances. The qualifications are designed to meet the requirements of the Foundation Learning (FL) independent living / supported employment strand by providing a foundation for lifelong learning focussing on transferable social and life skills which are essential for living and working in the community. These qualifications follow the agreed Rules of Combination across all awarding bodies for qualifications at this level and with these titles.

A wide range of providers (including colleges, schools, voluntary organisations and social organisations) have been requesting qualifications of this nature, as most current national frameworks do not meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities at this level. However, there is a long history of local accreditation of learning by this target group which has demonstrated the beneficial motivational effects on the learners. There is, therefore, widespread support for qualifications that can be offered by a range of organisations, often working in partnership, to replace the confusing array of courses and curriculum frameworks currently operating at this level.

In devising these qualifications close attention has been paid to the ethos and principles of the government White Paper *Valuing People* (2001), which takes a holistic view of the lives and needs of people with disabilities and highlights the disparity of life experience of those with learning disabilities and those without. Within the qualification design, there is a focus on supporting the aims and principles of the cross government strategy on independent living. The intention of these qualifications is to develop the abilities that will contribute to increasing independence and self determination and in doing so will enhance the learner's life experience.

Additional guidance for providers on the use of the suite of Personal Progress qualifications, based on original guidance drafted in collaboration with QCDA during the development of the common units, is available on the NOCN website along with this Qualification Guide.

The Entry 1 Achievement Continuum

The achievement continuum describes the characteristics the learner should display at each of the 10 stages from encounter to application. Used during an initial assessment it should aid teachers, tutors and mentors to plan the learner's programme and prepare them for the assessment approaches and the transition to the next stage. It is an innovative new way of recognising and assessing learner-referenced achievement. A unit transcript is also used to record achievement against this 10-stage continuum which describes the degree of knowledge or skills the learner has attained at a given point in his or her learning.

The achievement continuum has been developed during the pilot and builds on work that had already been done by the University of Cambridge and Skill, the National Bureau for Learning

Difficulties and Disabilities, to develop an achievement continuum within pre-Entry. This continuum was first published in 2002 in a support pack entitled *Enhancing the Quality of Life*. It has been used since to provide a basis for the Pre-Entry Curriculum Framework for adult basic skills (PECF) and in the development of the P-scales. This 9-stage continuum has been adopted in the development of the Entry 1 units rather than create a new scale. Although the continuum itself might not be familiar to all providers working with learners at this level, most will know either the PECF milestones or the P-scales, each of which has links to the continuum. A tenth stage, Application, has been added to describe the current NQF Entry 1.

The achievement continuum is included on the NOCN website with this Qualification Guide as Appendix 1, together with an example of a transcript (Appendix 2).

Guided Learning Hours

The credit value assigned to a unit is based on an estimate of the notional learning time required to achieve the learning outcomes in the unit. The recommended **learning** hours for one unit credit is 10. Some learners will be able to achieve the learning outcomes in a shorter time perhaps as a result of prior learning, other learners may take longer.

The recommended **guided learning hours** for a unit are based on a percentage of the notional learning hours assigned to that unit and relate to the number of hours required for direct teaching time/time spent with a tutor or trainer.

The recommended guided learning hours for one credit at Entry Level is 100% of the notional learning time which is 10. The total recommended guided learning hours and Total Qualification Time for these qualifications are:

Qualification	Credits	GLH	TQT
Award	8	80	80
Certificate	14	140	140
Diploma	37	370	370

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) are a guide to the amount of teacher-supervised or directed study time a learner will need to complete the learning needed for a qualification. NOCN recognises that every learner is different and the actual time taken may vary beyond the maximum and minimum shown.

Training providers not reliant on public funding measured by glh may find them a useful guide to the recommended length of a programme of study. The learning hours can be divided in any way, for example, a 20 glh hour programme could be delivered in 2 hours a week for 10 weeks or 8 hours a day for 3 days, depending on the course and learners.

Total Qualification Time

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

TQT is split into two areas:

- 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.
- 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
        - or any other form of education or training, including assessment.

Examples of GLH activities include:

- Classroom-based learning supervised by a teacher
- Work-based learning supervised by a teacher
- Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a teach 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

Examples of OLH activities include:

- 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

The agreed Total Qualification Time has been used to identify the qualification's Credit Value.

Language Requirements

If you wish to offer this qualification in Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge) then please contact NOCN who will review demand and provide as appropriate.

2. Who the qualifications are for

This suite of qualifications is designed for learners working at Entry 1 or below and in particular those with learning difficulties and disabilities. For many learners in this group progress to independence is a difficult and lengthy process which is exacerbated by the lack of access to cohesive and focussed provision.

The qualifications have been designed to accommodate a wide range of learner need within the target group, from those at school who are coming to an age where they are beginning the first tentative steps towards independence, to those in an older age group who may have begun the journey to independence and faltered along the way. The *Independent Living Strategy* (Office for Disability Issues, 2008) recognises that for learners with disabilities this transition to adulthood and/or independence takes place over a longer period of time. There are others who may have never considered themselves able to be independent or who have not had the opportunity to explore the extent of their ability due to over-protective carers.

These qualifications offer the opportunity to build a personalised programme for an individual that addresses their specific needs and circumstances. It gives a focus for the learners and providers in planning and recognising this progress towards independence.

These qualifications can be delivered in a multi context environment by professional tutors and/or caring professionals. Generally the most appropriate setting for many of the units is in a real life setting which extracts the maximum value from the experience and reinforces the context in which the learning is usefully applied.

As unitised qualifications, they lend themselves to partnership delivery through different agencies that may be involved with the learner, as long as an overview of the whole programme for an individual is shared with all partners and, most importantly, with the learner. For example a social services department, a sheltered housing association and a local college could contribute to the progress towards independence for a learner, with each taking on different aspects of the programme according to their strengths.

For some learners the qualifications can be used as a continuous process. For other learners it may be that they need to develop or top up skills in specific areas depending on their circumstances.

Restrictions on Learner Entry

There are no restrictions on entry to the qualifications apart from an ability to benefit from the experience.

Age Range

The qualifications are available for learners from age 14 years.

Recommended Prior Learning

There are no specific requirements to begin these qualifications. However careful advice and guidance needs to be given to prospective learners to ensure they can benefit from the programme and that it meets their individual needs. Initial assessment of the level of the learner at entry is also important to ensure the most appropriate programme is devised.

Level Descriptors

Learners will need to be able to:

Level	Summary	Knowledge and Understanding	Application and Action	Autonomy and Accountability
Entry 1	Achievement at Entry 1 reflects the developing ability to make use of skill, knowledge and understanding to carry out simple limited and familiar activities and tasks with frequent directive prompts and guidance.	Purposeful participation in activities. An ability to benefit from the learning activity. Initial assessment to ascertain the starting point to be able to measure the distance travelled. Retention of skills may be an issue but should be begin to be observed in high proportion of assessment activities.	Tasks will have a single or small number of steps, and be self contained. Performance of a small number or single stages within a larger sequence in collaboration with tutor. Repetition of tasks advisable to increase retention of knowledge and skills.	Frequent directive prompts. Performance of tasks may involve imitation and repetition. Contexts should be familiar, 1:1 encounters.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of prior learning is an assessment method leading to the award of credit. The process involves considering if a learner can meet the specified assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills that they possess already as a consequence of which they do not need to undertake a course of learning.

Centres are encouraged to recognise the previous achievements and experiences, both formal, for example through accredited units or qualifications or informal, for example through continuous learning. This involves the recognition of achievement from a range of activities that will have been assessed through any valid method of assessment. When using the process of the recognition of prior learning, it is essential that the assessment requirements of a specific unit or, more exceptionally, a qualification have been met. The evidence of learning provided must be sufficient, reliable, authentic and valid. Evidence is not time-limited.

Progression Opportunities

The 10-stage achievement continuum used as an assessment and recording tool for each of the units is in itself an opportunity for recognising progression. For many learners engaged in this level of study the continuum will prove challenging but rewarding as the small steps of achievement that other systems do not allow for are recognised.

On reaching the 'application' stage of the continuum, other qualifications at E1, E2 and E3 become more realistic. By being able to mark the range of achievement within the continuum and across areas of study the planning of future learning is facilitated ensuring an appropriate programme with more likelihood of success in the future.

Learners with Particular Requirements

If you are a NOCN Recognised Centre and have learners with particular requirements, please see the NOCN Reasonable Adjustment 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. Achieving the qualifications

Rules of Combination

To achieve the NOCN Entry Level Personal Progress Qualifications the learner must successfully complete:

Qualification Title	Number of credits
NOCN Entry Level Award in Personal Progress (Entry 1)	8
NOCN Entry Level Certificate in Personal Progress (Entry 1)	14
NOCN Entry Level Diploma in Personal Progress (Entry 1)	37

Achievement Methodology

The qualifications require achievement of the units with no further requirement for additional/summative assessment. Achievement is therefore determined by successful completion of unit assessment.

The methodology is:

- Internally set - against the requirements detailed above for units (Centre)
- Internally assessed (Centre)
- Internally verified (Centre)
- Externally verified (NOCN).

A unit transcript must also be used to record achievement against the 10-stage achievement continuum which describes the degree of knowledge or skills the learner has attained against the learning outcomes.

An example of a completed transcript (Appendix 1) and transcript templates for each unit are available on the NOCN website.

4. The qualification units

The following units can be found on the NOCN website. Please note those units highlighted in red are additional units which are available for for delivery from 1st February 2021.

Ofqual Unit Reference	Unit Title	Mandatory or Optional	Credit Value	Level
D/618/6241	Being Healthy	Optional	2	E1
Y/502/4159	Dealing with problems	Optional	4	E1
F/502/4317	Developing communication skills	Optional	3	E1
F/502/4169	Developing Community Participation Skills: Getting Out and About	Optional	5	E1
Y/502/4324	Developing ICT skills	Optional	4	E1
A/502/4168	Developing Independent Living Skills: Being Healthy	Optional	2	E1
H/502/4164	Developing Independent Living Skills: Having Your Say	Optional	3	E1
K/502/4165	Developing Independent Living Skills: Keeping Safe	Optional	2	E1
M/502/4166	Developing Independent Living Skills: Looking After your Own Home	Optional	2	E1
A/502/4154	Developing learning skills: learning to learn	Optional	5	E1
F/502/4320	Developing reading skills	Optional	3	E1
Y/502/4422	Developing self awareness: all about me	Optional	3	E1
R/502/4449	Developing Skills for the Workplace: Following Instructions	Optional	2	E1
J/502/4450	Developing Skills for the Workplace: Getting Things Done	Optional	4	E1
L/502/4451	Developing Skills for the Workplace: Health and Safety	Optional	2	E1
R/502/4452	Developing Skills for the Workplace: Looking and Acting the Part	Optional	2	E1
R/502/4323	Developing writing skills	Optional	3	E1
D/502/4325	Early mathematics: developing number skills	Optional	2	E1

M/502/4331	Early mathematics: measure	Optional	2	E1
K/502/4327	Early mathematics: position	Optional	2	E1
T/502/4332	Early mathematics: sequencing and sorting	Optional	3	E1
T/502/4329	Early mathematics: shape	Optional	2	E1
R/502/4161	Encountering experiences: being a part of things	Optional	3	E1
H/618/6242	Engaging with Personal Care Routines	Optional	2	E1
T/502/4203	Engaging with the world around you: events	Optional	3	E1
F/502/4205	Engaging with the world around you: objects	Optional	3	E1
R/502/4175	Engaging with the world around you: people	Optional	3	E1
K/618/6243	Engaging with Therapies	Optional	2	E1
T/618/6245	Exploring Creative Activities	Optional	2	E1
M/618/6244	Exploring Household Cleaning and Equipment	Optional	3	E1
A/618/6246	Exploring Performing Arts	Optional	3	E1
L/502/4160	Getting on with other people	Optional	4	E1
K/502/4439	Rights and responsibilities : Everybody matters	Optional	3	E1
A/502/4171	Travel within the Community: Going Places	Optional	3	E1
D/600/0438	Understanding what money is used for	Optional	3	E1
F/502/4172	Using Local Health Services	Optional	2	E1

The assessment activities for the units are indicated in the Assessment Information Grid on the individual units.

An explanation of the kind of activity, assessment and evidence expected at Entry level is given in the NOCN Assessment Definitions document, which is available on the NOCN website within the Learning Providers' section under Recognised Centre Handbook https://www.nocn.org.uk/learning-providers/nocn-centre-handbook.

5. How the qualifications are assessed

The qualifications require achievement of the specified units with no further requirements for additional/summative assessment. Achievement is therefore determined by successful completion of unit assessment. The assessment process is as follows:

- Assessments are internally set at the Centre by assessors, against the requirements detailed in the assessment criteria of the unit
- The learners are assessed internally at the Centre, using the assessments set
- The resulting portfolios of assessed evidence are internally verified by an internal verifier at the Centre
- The portfolios of assessed evidence are externally verified by an external verifier appointed by the NOCN.

The nature of the qualifications is such that there is a varied and wide number of subject areas and unit titles to choose from. Individual learning programmes therefore are essential to ensure an appropriate and useful experience for learners.

5.1 Unit Assessment

Achievement of units is through internally set, internally marked, internally verified and externally verified tasks, as detailed above. Centres devise assessment activities to meet the specified assessment criteria detailed in each unit, guided by the Assessment Information Grid which accompanies each unit and the NOCN Assessment Definitions document which is available on the NOCN website in the Learning Providers' section under Recognised Centre Handbook https://www.nocn.org.uk/learning-providers/nocn-centre-handbook. The activity or activities set must enable the learners to meet the standards detailed in the assessment criteria. Centre devised assessments should be scrutinised by the internal verifier before use to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Centre devised assessments will be sampled by the external verifier to ensure reliability and validity of assessment.

5.2 Supplementary Guidance relating the Units to the Achievement Continuum

The assessment criteria do not give the precise standard at which they must be met. Instead they set out a range of standards (all within Entry 1) expressed in terms of stages on the achievement continuum which assessments of this group of Entry 1 units must make use of. Providers will be required to record judgements on the learner transcript and indicate the stage on the continuum at which the learner has achieved each of the learning outcomes.

5.3 How to use the Units within these Qualifications

This guidance provides advice on how to use the Entry 1 units to underpin a teaching and learning programme and to recognise a learner's achievements.

Step 1: Selecting a unit

The first stage in selecting a unit comes after an initial assessment or ongoing review has taken place. You can check which (if any) of the learner's needs match the broad areas covered by the Entry 1 common units. At this point, you can select one or more of the units.

Step 2: Building on the learner's programme

The learner's needs are likely to extend beyond the learning covered in the Entry 1 common units. It follows, then, that the learner's programme will be broader than the learning outcomes of the selected unit(s). You should identify activities which can be incorporated into this broad programme to provide the learner with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding described in the learning outcomes. One activity may well cover several learning outcomes, either from within a single unit or across several units, as well as other appropriate learning which is not included in the outcomes of the units.

You should remember that the units are not units of teaching or of learning and that you do not need to cover all the learning outcomes at once. Nor do you need to approach them in the order that they appear in the unit. Sometimes it may make sense to address learning outcomes from several units at the same time. For example, you may find it helpful to tackle some aspects of 'Developing Skills for the Workplace: getting things done' alongside aspects of 'Developing Communication Skills and getting on with other people'. Other aspects of each of these units might be best covered at a later stage in the learner's programme.

Step 3: Identifying a starting point and setting a target

The achievement continuum is the key tool that should be used to identify the learner's starting point in the area of learning that you are focusing on. You can also use the continuum in your target-setting, determining a stage along the continuum as a goal for the learner to work towards. This can be negotiated with the learner, as appropriate. It might be sensible for the learner to aim for different stages on the achievement continuum for different assessment criteria.

You can use the units to record the learner's achievements as they work their way towards achieving a longer-term target. For example, if a learner's identified starting point is at the "Interest" stage on the continuum and they are aiming over time to reach the "Active Involvement" stage, it might be appropriate to use a unit to recognise when the learner has reached an intermediate stage such as "Supported Participation".

For learners working at the first three stages on the continuum who are using the unit 'Encountering experiences' and the three units 'Engaging with the world around you', their progress along the continuum may be very slow indeed. In fact, the nature of their cognitive impairment may mean that they are not capable of progressing to another stage on the continuum. Targets for these learners may relate to broadening the number of contexts in which they are able to meet the assessment criteria for the above units. In other words, a learner may achieve the unit 'Encountering experiences' at the "Encounter" stage first in the context of music and movement and subsequently achieve the same unit again in the context of using leisure facilities.

It is important to remember that the achievement continuum describes common stages of achievement below Entry 2. Not all learners will progress evenly along the continuum. Some learners will appear to miss out stages altogether; others may seem to go 'backwards' at some point in their learning. Progress may sometimes be rapid; at other times it may be very slow. Invariably learners will be achieving at different stages of the continuum in different aspects of their learning. Learners who are not steadily moving up through the stages may still be making progress by consolidating or broadening what they have learned at a particular stage on the continuum.

Step 4: Gathering evidence of achievement

Once the learner is beginning to reach the stage(s) on the continuum for which they are aiming, then you should start to gather evidence of their achievement. The credit values (one credit is equal to a notional 10 hours of learning) for each unit give an indication of how long a learner might spend on each unit but these are typical or average lengths of time. Your learners may take more or less time in practice to move along the continuum.

You will probably be collecting evidence routinely as part of your on-going record-keeping and reporting of progress, perhaps as part of your work on RARPA (Recording and Reporting Progress and Achievement). It is appropriate that you use this routinely-kept evidence as evidence for the achievement of the unit and if this is the case, you do not need to collect or duplicate any additional evidence.

You do not need to provide the Awarding Organisation (in this case NOCN) with any records of progress along the learner's journey. The only evidence needed is that which indicates that each assessment criterion has been met at the stage(s) on the continuum for which the learner is claiming a certificate.

The guidance accompanying each unit gives you some ideas about the activities you might use to generate that evidence. Do remember that these are just suggestions and not requirements and that they relate to the full range of stages on the achievement continuum that the unit covers. Learners are certainly not expected to engage in all the activities suggested. They should only be involved in activities relating to the stage(s) of the continuum relevant to them.

The activities should be part of a coherent learning programme, structured around the learner's individualised targets. Activities should not be undertaken simply as a way of 'ticking off' the qualification requirements. The evidence generated may include tutor observations, photographs, video and audio-tapes.

Step 5: Completing the transcript

Once you have evidence for each assessment criterion, you should complete the unit transcript. This is the document in which you describe the manner in which the learner has met each assessment criterion and the stage(s) on the achievement continuum that they have reached. You should only complete the transcript if the learner has moved one or more stages along the continuum from their starting point in relation to the majority of the assessment criteria. Copies of the transcript for each unit are available as separate documents.

The certificate for an Entry 1 unit will always report achievement at Entry 1. Certificates will be awarded where there is sufficient evidence that each assessment criterion has been met at a standard within the range specified in the unit.

Providers are required to complete a transcript for each learner as part of their quality assurance processes. Providers will be advised to attach the unit transcript to the certificate as the transcript will set out precisely the standard that the learner has achieved in relation to each assessment criterion. The transcript will include a short description of the learner's achievements and the achievement continuum stage which best describes the standards reached by the learner in relation to each assessment criterion. A learner might achieve each assessment criterion at a different stage. See below for an example of a section of a transcript.

Details of Learner's Achievement

AC 1.1 Listen and respond to people
Assessor statement: Joe can listen to brief explanations or conversations where these are clearly directed at him. He finds it easier to listen to tutors and support workers than to his peers. He responds with single word replies or by nodding or shaking his head. **Active involvement**

Making progress within Entry 1

Clearly learners can broaden their skills, knowledge and understanding by accumulating units at Entry 1. However, learners will also be deepening or extending their learning, in other words progressing vertically within Entry 1. In order to demonstrate this progress, learners may use the same unit more than once. They should be doing this if the provider believes that the learner is likely to have moved at least one stage along the achievement continuum in relation to most of the assessment criteria. Alternatively there will be cases where a learner repeats a unit in a different context at the same stage on the continuum. This is particularly relevant to the three units entitled "Engaging with the world around you" and the unit entitled "Encountering experiences". Due to the profound and complex nature of their learning difficulties many learners operating at this level are unlikely to progress beyond the early stages of the achievement continuum. For these learners, progress takes the form of broadening the contexts in which they are able to encounter or engage with people, places or objects. In instances where learners repeat a unit providers will need to complete a new transcript to evidence that new learning has taken place. However, each unit will only be certificated **once**.

Accumulating units and gaining qualifications

Although learners may achieve individual units, they can also accumulate the credit they gain for each unit to build towards a qualification. Qualifications that include the 30 units listed above will have the same titles and the same rules of combination.

5.4 Constructing an Individual Programme of Learning

It is essential that care is taken when designing or constructing a programme of units for an individual that their needs and views are taken into account. This should be an opportunity to design the curriculum around them. In addition a realistic approach needs to be taken when determining the learning aims of the individual and the purpose of the learning. There are likely to be many influences on the decisions to be made around this including; parents, carers and other professionals, economic considerations and the learner's abilities. The importance of excellent advice and guidance and initial assessment cannot therefore be over emphasised. Likewise, ongoing assessment of progress and suitability of the programme for the learner is also important.

The nature of the qualifications allows learners flexibility to change direction if the original course proves inappropriate or circumstances change. By substituting an alternative unit or by using a different level the learner may still achieve the overall qualification, albeit by a different route.

The choice of units for a programme should be made carefully with an appreciation that not all units will be suitable for all learners and the rule that the learner should be able to benefit from the experience is the cornerstone. Therefore a unit that is too easy is not appropriate and neither is a unit that is too difficult.

5.5 Creating Assessment Opportunities

The initial and ongoing assessment should be used to ensure that the learner is being offered assessment at a level that extends them without making it impossible to achieve. A learner therefore is not expected to be assessed at the end of the programme at the same level that they were originally achieving unless this is as part of a programme of ensuring retention.

The units themselves are not a delivery schedule but an assessment schedule. The content of delivery should be tailored to suit the needs of the learners whilst addressing the underlying skills and knowledge represented in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. It is important to remember that the learning experience is not, and should not be, confined to the assessment criteria otherwise there is a tendency to provide a very rigid and ultimately unfulfilling experience.

Opportunities should be sought for integrating the assessment of criteria from other units into the delivery of a coherent activity. Observing the natural performance of evidence is also an excellent form of assessment as it is more likely to produce valid reliable results. Obviously this approach requires robust tracking and recording systems. The required unit transcript is a good tool in achieving this.

In any activity real or realistic encounters are more appropriate to ensure that the application of the skills and knowledge being learned are reinforced in the right context rather than in isolation. This is particularly true for these qualifications which are designed to develop independent living skills, and should wherever possible be delivered in the context of independent living. Whilst this may not always be possible or feasible from a practical or even a health and safety point of view, attempts should be made to ensure that any simulations are as realistic as possible.

Assessment methods should be used that are appropriate to the criteria being undertaken and in many instances this may be the observation or demonstration by the learner of a particular skill. Observation could be supplemented by witness statements, photographs or other visual recording methods. Knowledge based assessment could also arise from oral question and answer or in natural conversation. The evidencing of this may be by a tutor making notes of what was said or communicated and the circumstances in which this occurred.

The compilation of evidence should be cross referenced to the criteria of the units for ease of assessment and verification. The evidence and / or portfolio would normally be done by or in conjunction with the learner and, although the content may be made up of witness statements and collaborative evidence, the learner's own comments and input are valuable, not only to both to an assessor and verifier, but also to the learner themselves as a record of their activity and achievement.

Forms and guidance for gathering learner evidence against the individual assessment criteria are available for download in Word format on the NOCN website: http://www.nocn.org.uk/qualifications_and_units/additional_qualification_documents.

5.6 Standardisation

Centres will be required to provide samples of assessment tasks for regional and standardisation activity (see Section 7.2 on page 22).

6. Offering the qualifications

Recognised Centres

If you are already recognised to offer NOCN qualifications and would like more information contact: business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk.

If you are ready to add the qualification to your curriculum offer, please log in to the NOCN website, under Centres/Processes and Documents, and complete the 'Additional Qualification Approval Request Form,' which can then be returned to business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk for the attention of your Account and Sector Manager.

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.

7. How the qualifications are quality assured

7.1 General Information

All Centres wishing to deliver the qualifications, or units of the qualifications, will need to demonstrate the ability to manage and deliver the units and/or the qualification, including adherence to quality assurance and assessment regulations.

NOCN will provide guidance and give support in enabling you to use the qualifications.

The NOCN standard quality assurance arrangements and requirements include:

- Internal assessment of all assessment tasks and activities
- Internal verification
- External verification
- Standardisation

Details and guidance are provided by NOCN.

7.2 Standardisation

Standardisation is a process that promotes consistency in the understanding and application of standards, as it:

- establishes statements on the standard of evidence required to meet the assessment criteria for the units in NOCN qualifications
- makes recommendations on assessment practice
- produces advice and guidance for the assessment of units
- identifies good practice in assessment.

It is a requirement of the Centre Recognition Process that each Centre offering the units from the qualification must contribute assessment materials and learners' evidence for NOCN standardisation if requested.

NOCN will notify Centres of the required sample for standardisation purposes. Assessment materials, learners' evidence and tutor feedback will be collected by External Verifiers on behalf of NOCN.

Outcomes from standardisation will be available to Centres through NOCN.

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