

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are Essential Digital Skills Qualifications (EDSQs)?

EDSQs are based upon the Department for Education's (DfE) [National Standards for Essential Digital Skills](#). The DfE standards have been developed to ensure that EDSQs deliver the digital skills needed for life and work.

2. Who are EDSQs for?

The target groups for the qualifications are older adults who feel left behind by the digital revolution and adults who wish to improve their employability, for example those seeking employment. The qualifications cover the full range of skills statements in the national standards to provide these learners with a comprehensive learning experience and recognition of their wide-ranging achievements. It may also be relevant for those aged 16-18 to undertake the qualifications.

3. What are the entry requirements?

It is expected that learners will own or have continued access to at least one digital device.

The foundation skills required before beginning on these qualifications are:

- Turning on a device (including entering and updating any account information safely, such as a password);
- Using the available controls on a device (such as a mouse and keyboard for a computer, or touchscreen on a smartphone or tablet);
- Making use of accessibility tools (including assistive technology) to make devices easier to use (such as changing display settings to make content easier to read);
- Interacting with the home screen on a device;
- Connecting to the internet (including Wi-Fi) safely and securely, and opening a browser;
- Opening and accessing an application on a device.

The above skills could be demonstrated through relevant experience or a qualification, such as the [NOCN Entry Level Award in Digital Basics \(Entry 2\)](#). It is strongly recommended that learners have at least a Level 1 qualification in English or equivalent experience to enable interaction with the content and assessments for these qualifications.

The qualifications are available to learners aged 16 years or over.

4. How much teaching is required for EDSQs?

These are short courses of 45 guided learning hours.

5. Can EDSQs be delivered as a distance learning course?

Yes this is possible. You would need to carefully plan delivery so that remote learning is accessible for your learners. Learning for the Entry three qualification, at least initially, may be tricky to deliver remotely given the very low-level digital skills and knowledge learners are likely to hold.

6. What is the content of EDSQs?

Our EDSQs at entry 3 and level 1 are based upon the DfEs *National standards for essential digital skills*. Broadly they cover 5 Skills Areas:

- Using devices and handling information,
- Creating and editing,
- Communicating,
- Transacting, and
- Being safe and responsible online.

Our qualifications cover all the standards. [See the content.](#)

7. How are the EDSQs assessed?

The assessments for both the Entry Level 3 and Level 1 qualifications are set by NOCN and made available on the NOCN e-assessment platform. The controlled assessment comprises:

- Knowledge test (MCQ items),
- Scenario-based tasks,
- Observed tasks.

The knowledge items will test learner recall and application of knowledge. The scenario-based tasks will test learners' ability to use practical skills and apply their knowledge in an integrated way. Observation tasks will allow the learner to demonstrate skills where there is often little naturally occurring evidence. In addition, the observed tasks give learners an opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge to their chosen device.

The scenario-based tasks and observed tasks are marked by centres following the mark schemes in the NOCN Marker Platform. The knowledge items are marked automatically.

The notional pass mark for the assessment is 60%.

8. Are sample assessments available?

Yes. We have sample assessments which will help you to prepare your learners for their assessments. We also have a range of other guidance as well as full training when you decide to offer our EDSQs.

9. Are the qualifications funded?

Yes. The qualifications are funded under the Digital Entitlement, a new legal entitlement for digital qualifications

10. What happens to funding for other digital qualifications?

This is a complicated question. Functional Skills ICT qualifications will continue to be funded until 1 August 2022. For any other qualifications which fall under the SSA: ICT for Users, funding will be removed at Entry and Level 1 from 1 August 2021. Qualifications at level 2 and above will remain funded but this may change so NOCN recommends seeking guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) before you deliver a new course.

11. How can I prepare to deliver Essential Digital Skills Qualifications?

We'll provide training around essential digital skills qualifications including booking, delivery and marking of assessments.

For training around the content of EDSQs please see the Education and Training Foundation's [CPD programme](#). This is a free resource for all centres.

12. Why Choose NOCN?

Realistic Assessment: We have developed our assessments to be as close to real life as possible. The tasks we ask of learners reflect those likely to be encountered in life and work and so we feel that our assessments are unambiguous and will ensure that learners who achieve our qualifications can integrate into our increasingly digital society.

Speed: We've already mentioned that our assessments are online. This means we can turnaround result quickly. We've also developed an integrated screenshot tool on our assessment platform which makes capturing evidence easy for learners. In addition we want the marking process to be as easy as possible for centres so we've developed a new marking platform which makes allocating marks really quick and easy.

Resources: We have a range of resources and support to help your course planning and delivery. Including training, guidance and support. Our EDSQs can also be remotely invigilated if that's right for your model of delivery.

There are many other reasons to join NOCN. If you would like to find out more please contact: business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk