

# **Functional Skills Writing Guide- Adapting NCFE Devised Internal Assessment Activities**

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## Assessment Adaptations

### Introduction

This document will help centres to devise or contextualise assessment tasks, where permitted. This guidance document is designed to support assessors to ensure the integrity of all internal assessments.

Centre devised writing of tasks is permitted for the below assessment components. Centres must write their own assessment content within the framework provided by NCFE.

#### Centre devised writing is permitted for the following assessment components:

- Speaking, Listening and Communicating Entry Level 1
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating Entry Level 2
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating Entry Level 3
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating Level 1
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating Level 2

Contextualisation is the process of changing the context of an internal controlled assessment, to make the assessment more accessible for learners.

#### Contextualisation is permitted for the following assessments:

- Writing Entry Level 1 (Writing question paper only)
- Writing Entry Level 2 (Writing question paper only)
- Writing Entry Level 3 (Writing question paper only)
- Mathematics Entry Level 1
- Mathematics Entry Level 2
- Mathematics Entry Level 3

Centres are also permitted to contextualise the NCFE devised activities for Speaking, Listening and Communicating.

Functional Skills assessments that are not listed above are not permitted to be contextualised, including the Writing spelling tests at Entry Level.

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### Approval

Centre devised or contextualised assessments must be approved by NCFE **prior to delivery**. Centre devised or contextualised assessments should be uploaded via the QualHub submission form.

Once received, all of the required materials will be reviewed by NCFE.

Centres **must** notify their External Quality Assurer of their intention to deliver centre devised or contextualised materials, prior to the External Quality Assurer's first visit.

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### Continuous Review

Once an assessment has been approved by NCFE, and the centre has received notification of that outcome, the assessment can be delivered.

All materials will be **reviewed by NCFE** six months after the assessments are delivered for the first time. The outcome of the review may mean that the assessment/s require revisions or retirement.

## Writing Requirements

All Speaking, Listening and Communicating assessments will be provided with an activity specification and activity template.

Centres **are** not permitted to change the structure of the assessment, but are able to use the template to devise their own assessment content.

## Speaking, Listening and Communicating

At each level, NCFE permits for the Functional Skills English Speaking, Listening and Communicating assessment to be centre devised, whereby centres are authorised to write their own scenario using a context suitable for their learners.

### Setting the Scenario

All Speaking, Listening and Communicating assessments must present a scenario which is realistic and familiar to the learner that will reliably assess the intended knowledge or skill.

Centre devised scenarios must:

- set a challenge or problem for learners to address
- allow opportunity for differentiation between learner evidence
- be accessible for the age of the learners
- be free from obvious bias (gender, race, ethnicity etc.)
- be no more than 150 words.

### Example Scenario - Level 2 Speaking, Listening and Communicating

#### Scenario

Most people nowadays are keen to live a healthy life style, which includes eating a healthy, balanced diet. Many food producers advertise their products as being healthy or being aware of what people want. However, this is often for commercial purposes, with the reality being that many people still have an unhealthy diet.

Why does this scenario work?

- It states an authentic, current problem relevant and accessible to the age range of learners
- It is free from bias and allows for accessibility for all learners
- The scenario outlines a broad problem which allows for a number of different approaches and which provides a unifying theme from which to build a number of different assessment tasks
- The level of language is appropriate for the age range of learners.

### Setting the Topic

Once a scenario is selected, centres must determine a range of four or five functional topics depending on the level. Learners will select and agree with the Assessor which of the topics they will use to complete their assessment.

Centre devised topics must:

- be related to the scenario
- be comparable in demand
- not cause offence to any learner or group of learners
- be realistic and appropriate for the subject level
- be accessible for the age of the learners.

### **Setting the Title and Aim for Group Discussions**

The group discussion title must relate to the scenario and an aim must be provided to the group, to ensure that a consensus can be reached.

In addition to the above topic points, centre devised titles and aims must allow learners to ask and respond to questions in line with the subject content statements for the particular level.

### **Providing Stimulus Material**

Centres may choose to provide stimulus material, or direct learners to where useful information can be located, as appropriate to the level of assessment.

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### **Activity Templates**

Centres can obtain an editable version of the Speaking, Listening and Communicating Activity Templates via the qualification page on QualHub.

These templates will indicate where assessors are required to write their own content.

### Demonstrating Fitness for Purpose

All centre devised or contextualised assessments must be fit for purpose, appropriate for assessment and consistent with the relevant specifications.

**To be fit for purpose, every Speaking, Listening and Communicating assessment must provide the learner with the opportunity to meet the subject content statements at the appropriate level.**

Centres should use a subject content coverage grid when centre devising or contextualising. Subject content coverage grids can be found via the qualification page on QualHub. An **example** of a completed Level 2 grid is below.

Subject Content Statement		Opportunity to meet the Subject Content Statement			
		Presentation	Question and Answer		Discussion
P	A				
This should include extended narratives and information (information may be on technical, concrete or abstract topics), discussions, detailed explanations and presentations, all of varying lengths.					
L2.2.1	Identify relevant information from extended explanations or presentations		✓	✓	
L2.2.2	Follow narratives and lines of argument		✓	✓	
L2.2.3	Respond effectively to detailed or extended questions and feedback	✓		✓	
L2.2.4	Make requests and ask detailed and pertinent questions to obtain specific information in a range of contexts		✓	✓	
L2.2.5	Communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly and effectively, providing further detail and development if required	✓	✓	✓	
L2.2.6	Express opinions and arguments and support them with relevant and persuasive evidence	✓	✓	✓	
L2.2.7	Use language that is effective, accurate and appropriate to context and situation	✓	✓	✓	
L2.2.8	Make relevant and constructive contributions to move discussion forward		✓	✓	
L2.2.9	Adapt contributions to discussions to suit audience, purpose and medium	✓	✓	✓	
L2.2.10	Interject and redirect discussion using appropriate language and register			✓	

*During the question and answer Task, learners will take the role of either the Presenter (P) or the Audience (A).*

## Contextualisation Requirements

Where contextualisation is permitted, centres are authorised only to change the contexts presented by a task, not the purpose of the assessment.

When contextualising tasks centres must ensure that:

- **the structure, approach and outcome of the tasks are not changed**
- new materials are a **direct comparison** in terms of level, language and complexity
- new materials are **like-for-like** in terms of the number and style of documents
- there are no changes to the specified conditions under which the assessment must be completed, including assessment durations and required resources.

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## Context Selection

Contexts must contain no bias, and not result in any adverse outcomes for learners who share a particular characteristic.

All contexts must:

- not cause offence to any learner or group of learners
- not rely on the general knowledge of the learner and will ensure that only subject knowledge is being assessed
- be realistic and appropriate for the subject level
- be accessible for the age range of the learners.

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## Language

NCFE assessments are written using accessible language appropriate for the level of demand of the qualification.

All language must:

- use active sentences when possible
- use familiar everyday language appropriate to the level. For Mathematics assessments, the language and vocabulary used should be appropriate for the qualifications one level below that being assessed.
- avoid using double negatives
- not use sentences with more than one clause at Entry level
- avoid colloquialisms
- ensure careful consideration of words which have dual or different meanings in subject specific or everyday language
- not change the intended purpose of the task.

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## Images and Diagrams

Images and diagrams included in assessments must be necessary for the task, and not included for decorative purposes. Where images are used, they must support learners' understanding of the contexts or assessment tasks.

When contextualising, images must:

- be suited to the task
- not be of poor quality
- not cause any offence to any learner or group of learners
- not represent any political, religious or other beliefs
- not be open to misinterpretation or risk causing confusion or distraction.

Images are recommended to be in black and white. If colour is used the centre should consider whether the image or diagram is accessible to learners

NCFE will not provide images to centres, when requested for contextualisation purposes.

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### **Live Internal Assessments**

When contextualising assessments, centres must ensure they adapt live materials.

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### **Exemplars**

Contextualised exemplars will be provided in due course alongside the live materials.