

What is an NVQ?

An NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) is a qualification which assesses someone's competence (that is the skills, knowledge and understanding they have) in a work situation. NVQs are based on national occupational standards. The standards describe the level and breadth of performance that is expected of anyone using Information Technology within their workplace. These NVQs are based on the national occupational standards developed by e-Skills UK, which is the government-approved Sector Skills Council for IT, Telecoms and Contact Centres.

These qualifications have been accepted by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) for inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Who are these NVQs for?

- Individuals who use IT skills in their day to day work.

The NVQ is a work-oriented qualification and is suitable for those who have current real work experience. It is open to candidates of any age, of either gender and there are no entry barriers on grounds of race, creed or previous academic attainment, learning or experience.

What is their purpose?

The key purposes of these qualifications are to:

- recognise individual learners' skills and knowledge across a range of IT and their application in the workplace
- recognise achievement of individuals' skills of specific IT components (units) at the required level relevant to their jobs. These components may be a higher or lower level than the full award
- recognise learners' prior achievements, learning or experience within the qualifications
- provide a competence base on which progression can be made
- provide a flexible framework where skills and knowledge can be recognised

These qualifications will also allow for the recognition of Vocationally Related Qualifications towards the overall achievement of the qualification.

What is the structure of these NVQs?

To achieve a full **OCR Level 1 NVQ for IT Users**, a candidate must complete a **minimum** total of **40** Unit Values (UVs). This route comprises of one mandatory unit and a combination of optional units.

Each Area of Competence can contribute to a qualification at one level only.

At least 50% of the unit value of the optional units must be achieved at Level 1. The rounded UV that must be achieved by completion of optional units is **15**.

Mandatory unit	Unit value
1A Make selective use of IT	15

Optional units

1B Operate a computer	10
1C IT maintenance for users	5
1D IT trouble-shooting for users	5
1E IT security for users	5
1F Artwork and imaging software	10
1G Internet and intranets	5
1H E-mail	5
1I Word processing software	10
1J Spreadsheet software	10
1K Database software	10
1L Website software	10
1M Presentation software	10
1N Specialist or bespoke software	10
1O Evaluate the impact of IT	5
1P Use IT systems	5
1Q Use IT to exchange information	5
1R Sector specific unit	10

To achieve a full **OCR Level 2 NVQ for IT Users**, a candidate must complete a **minimum** total of **100** Unit Values (UVs). This route comprises of one mandatory unit and a combination of optional units.

Each Area of Competence can contribute to a qualification at one level only.

At least 50% of the unit value of the **optional** units must be achieved at Level 2. The rounded UV that must be achieved by completion of optional units is **40**.

Mandatory unit	Unit value
2A Make selective use of IT	25

Optional units

2B Operate a computer	20
2C IT maintenance for users	15
2D IT trouble-shooting for users	15
2E IT security for users	15
2F Artwork and imaging software	20
2G Internet and intranets	15
2H E-mail	15
2I Word processing software	20
2J Spreadsheet software	20
2K Database software	20
2L Website software	20
2M Presentation software	20
2N Specialist or bespoke software	20
2O Evaluate the impact of IT	15
2P Use IT systems	15
2Q Use IT to exchange information	15
2R Sector specific unit	20

To achieve a full **OCR Level 3 NVQ for IT Users**, a candidate must complete a minimum total of **180** Unit Values (UVs). This route comprises one mandatory unit and a combination of optional units.

Each Area of Competence can contribute to a qualification at one level only.

At least 50% of the unit value of the optional units must be achieved at Level 3. The rounded UV that must be achieved by completion of optional units is **75**.

Mandatory unit	Unit value
3A Make selective use of IT	35

Optional units

3B Operate a computer	30
3C IT maintenance for users	25
3D IT trouble-shooting for users	25
3E IT security for users	25
3F Artwork and imaging software	35
3G Internet and intranets	25
3H E-mail	25
3I Word processing software	30
3J Spreadsheet software	35
3K Database software	35
3L Website software	35
3M Presentation software	30
3N Specialist or bespoke software	30
3O Evaluate the impact of IT	25
3P Use IT systems	25
3Q Use IT to exchange information	25
3R Sector specific unit	30

Recognition of other qualifications and programmes of learning

All units, with the exception of:

- Make selective use of IT, and
- Evaluate the impact of IT

may be achieved via a contributing qualification or unit, for example New CLAIIT.

The recognised contributing qualifications or units accepted by OCR are published in a list by e-skills UK. The list can be viewed on their website www.e-skills.com. Candidate achievement via a contributing qualification or unit does not necessarily demonstrate work-based application in the NVQ unit. Therefore, assessment of the mandatory unit of the NVQ **must include the application of the skills and knowledge learned and achieved in the VRQ units**.

Who is involved in the delivery of these NVQs?

Assessment centre

Any organisation, whether it is a place of employment, college or private training organisation can be approved to offer these qualifications, as long as it meets the criteria set out in the Administrative Guide to Verified Qualifications (L526). This includes being able to provide suitably occupationally competent assessors and internal verifiers.

Once approved, an assessment centre will register candidates for the NVQ and allocate each candidate an assessor(s).

Trainer

The trainer will develop a candidate's knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the NVQ that is being undertaken.

Trainers will:

- provide opportunities for learning
- provide ongoing mentoring to the candidate, including review and feedback on learning experiences and development of competence

- provide opportunities for a candidate to practice what they have learnt in a realistic, but safe and protected, working environment or, where this is not appropriate, in a simulated environment.

Please note that learning, and practising the learning, alone does not indicate competence in the workplace. The application of the learning will need to be assessed for competence to be decided.

Expert witness

Expert witnesses can be drawn from a wide range of people who can attest to performance in the workplace, including line managers and experienced colleagues from inside the candidate's organisation or from other organisations such as customers or clients.

The expert witness can, in particular, provide evidence relating to the candidate's competence:

- when using specialist or bespoke IT applications;
- in meeting customer requirements; and
- of working within organisational procedures

Assessor

Assessors will be appointed by approved centres to assess candidate performance and judge the validity of work place assessments.

Please note that:

- where expert witnesses make a significant contribution to the assessment process the assessor will be responsible for vetting the selection of expert witnesses including evidence of occupational competence and monitoring their contribution to the assessment process.
- the assessor should also maintain an up-to-date register of all accepted expert witnesses and the candidates to whom they refer. This register will be subject to review as part of the verification process by both the internal and external verifier.

The assessor will be responsible for making assessment judgements including for units where evidence relies extensively on expert witness testimony. The assessor will make use of appropriate expert witness testimony as part of the overall assessment of the candidate. In addition, the assessor must ensure that witness testimony clearly matches the level and breadth of performance described in the units, and this may be done, for example, by the assessor questioning the witness against the knowledge and skills specified in the units. **The assessor must have suitable and reliable experience and be trained and qualified as an NVQ assessor.**

The criteria for appointing assessors are set out in the section '**expert witness, assessor and internal verifier requirements**'. An assessor may be a candidate's line manager, a tutor at college, or someone specially appointed to this role. Assessments may also be carried out by a team of assessors.

The roles of trainer and assessor are inextricably linked and may be carried out by the same person, however, training activities must be clearly separated from assessment and only **assessed evidence of competence** should be presented as evidence towards the NVQ.

Internal verifier

Internal verifiers will be appointed by approved centres to ensure the quality and consistency of assessments within the centre.

Each assessor's work must be checked and confirmed by an **internal verifier**. The criteria for appointing internal verifiers are set out in the section '**expert witness, assessor and internal verifier requirements**'. The internal verifier checks and standardises assessment decisions made by the assessors in the centre.

The internal verifier will observe assessors carrying out assessments, review assessment decisions from the evidence provided and hold meetings with the assessment team to ensure consistency in the use of paperwork and interpretation of 'the qualifications' requirements.

External verifier

The external verifier checks the assessment and internal verification processes and decisions made in the centre, and authorises the claims for certificates. The external verifier is appointed by OCR.

How are these NVQs assessed?

Like all NVQs, these qualifications are competence-based. This means that they are linked to a person's ability to competently perform a range of tasks connected with their work.

These qualifications allow for flexibility and choice. Candidates and employers can identify the most appropriate units and levels of skills to meet their needs in the workplace and candidates can have a range of competences recognised at lower or higher levels than the base level chosen, where appropriate.

These qualifications also allow Vocationally Related Qualifications to be recognised towards the overall achievement of the qualification, building on individuals' previous achievements and learning.

To gain these NVQs, a candidate must achieve the level of competence described in the NVQ units of competence. The units of competence contain the national occupational standards for the NVQ for IT Users.

What are the important requirements for these NVQs?

Expert witness, assessor and internal verifier requirements

The following criteria have been developed by e-Skills UK and should be viewed as minimum requirements:

Expert witnesses should:

- have a minimum of 2 years supervisory, managerial or training experience in the units for which they are providing evidence;
- demonstrate a working knowledge of the National Occupational Standards units they are attesting to; and
- demonstrate clear evidence of appropriate continuous professional development.

In addition it would be desirable for the expert witness to hold or be working towards an appropriate unit of competence in the assessment of workplace performance (such as the Learning and Development Unit L20 'Support competence achieved in the workplace'). If this is not the case they should hold a post that involves responsibility for the quality of work performed by those for whom they are acting as an expert witness.

Assessors must:

- be suitably qualified for the assessor role they carry out. They must hold D32 and/or D33 or A1 and/or A2 depending on their role.
- have carried out continuous professional development to familiarise themselves with current standards for assessment
- have enough IT experience and occupational competence to enable them to make a valid judgement about the demonstration of competence in the area they will be assessing, normally through demonstrating that their own practice meets the national occupational standards.

New assessors should have a clear action plan for achieving Unit A1 within 18 months of beginning assessment.

Internal verifiers must:

- hold D34 or V1
- have enough IT experience and occupational competence to enable them to make a valid judgement about a demonstration of competence in the area they will be verifying.

New internal verifiers should have a clear action plan for achieving Unit V1 within 18 months of beginning internal verification.

Where do Key Skill units fit in?

The evidence produced for these NVQs may also prove the skills required for the Key Skills units.

Individual Key Skills units are available in the following six areas:

- Communication
- Application of Number
- Information Technology
- Personal Skills - Working with Others
- Personal Skills - Improving Own Learning and Performance
- Problem Solving.

For more information on offering the Key Skills units contact the OCR Information Bureau (Vocational) on (024) 76851509 or email cib@ocr.org.uk

What to do next?

Centres considering seeking approval to offer these qualifications (or any other qualification we offer) might be interested to know that OCR staff are available to help with any aspect of setting up an assessment centre. Many centres ask for help in the following areas:

- identifying potential candidates and marketing opportunities
- meeting OCR requirements
- identifying resourcing levels both in terms of staff and equipment
- the documents needed, both for the benefit of future candidates and to ensure a smooth-running operation
- help in filling in centre approval forms.

NVQ Start Up is a service for potential and new Centres, which can provide the infrastructure to support all aspects of NVQ provision.

Further information can be requested from the OCR Customer Contact Centre, OCR, Coventry Office, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JQ Telephone (024) 76851509 or email vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

- A Centre Handbook (L040) containing the standards and guidance on implementation of IT for Users NVQs will be available to purchase, from OCR Publications (0870 870 6622).
- The OCR fees booklet (A250), which includes charges for centre evaluation, candidate registration and certification, is available from the OCR Customer Contact Centre.
- The leaflet 'Becoming an NVQ Centre: Steps to Implementation' (N61) will be useful to organisations considering applying to OCR to become a centre.
- Full details of how to apply are given in 'Centre Guidance' (L526) which is included in the Centre Approval Pack, which is available from OCR Operations in Coventry.
- The NVQ Toolbox (P351). This is support material to assist an NVQ Centre in setting up systems and procedures and is available to purchase from OCR Publications (0870 870 6622).

Qualification information and materials are available on the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk.

What other related OCR qualifications are available?

The NVQs for IT Users will allow for progression to and from OCR's existing portfolio of IT qualifications and will complement other related NVQs and Vocationally Related Qualifications.

These qualifications could also be targeted at specific sectors such as: Care, Financial Services, Administration, Management, Call Handling etc. where appropriate to the candidates own work role.

OCR IT Provision/Progression

General Qualifications

- GCSE ICT
- ICT AVCE (subsidiary and double award)
- AS/A level ICT

Vocationally-related Qualifications

- OCR Entry Level Certificate in Using ICT
- OCR Level 1 Certificate for IT Users (New CLAiT)
- OCR Level 2 Certificate for IT Users (CLAiT PLUS)
- OCR Level 3 Certificate for IT Users (CLAiT ADVANCED)
- OCR Level 2 Certificate for IT Practitioners (Software Development) – iPRO
- OCR Level 2 Certificate for IT Practitioners (ICT Systems Support) – iPRO
- OCR Level 3 Certificate for IT Practitioners (Software Development) – iPRO
- OCR Level 3 Certificate for IT Practitioners (ICT Systems Support) – iPRO
- OCR Level 2 National Certificate in Information Technology

www.ocr.org.uk

OCR customer contact centre

Vocational qualifications

Telephone 024 76 851509

Facsimile 024 76 421944

Email vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

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