Qualification awaiting accreditation

CAMBRIDGE OCR

Specification

Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificate in

Digital Systems and Data

Code J002

Version 0.1 | November 2026

ocr.org.uk/foundation-certificates

Are you using the latest version of this specification?

The latest version of our specifications will always be on our website and may differ from printed versions. We will inform you about changes to specifications.

This qualification is in draft form and has not yet been accredited by Ofqual, the regulator. It is published to enable you to have an early sight of our proposed approach to this qualification. Further changes may be required, and no assurance can be given at this time that the proposed qualification will be made available in its current form, or that it will be accredited in time for first teaching in September 2027.

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Specification updates

Key changes have been listed below:

Section	Change	Version	Date
All	Draft specification	Version 0.1	November 2026

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1 Qualification at a glance

1.1 Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data overview

Qualification detail	Qualification information
Qualification number	TBC
First entry date	01 September 2027
Guided learning hours (GLH)	300
Total qualification time (TQT)	375
Certification entry code	J002
Approved age range	16–18, 18+, 19+
Offered in	England only
Performance table information	This qualification is designed to meet the Department for Education's requirements for qualifications in the Foundation Certificate category of the 16-19 performance tables.
Eligibility for funding	This qualification meets funding approval criteria.
This qualification is suitable for students who:	• are age 16 to 19 and on a full-time study programme • want to develop applied knowledge and skills in digital systems and data • want to progress onto other related study at Level 3
Entry requirements	There is no requirement for students to achieve any specific qualifications before taking this qualification.
Qualification requirements	Students must complete all units.
Registering students and making entries	You must: • register each student at the start of the course. You will need to do this before you can make unit entries. • make exam and non-exam assessment (NEA) unit entries for the relevant assessment series.

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Qualification detail	Qualification information
	• make qualification certification entries in the final series at the end of the course.
Assessment method/model	Unit R200 is assessed by an exam and marked by us. You will assess the NEA units R201, R202 and R203, and we will moderate them. We provide set assignments which must be used to assess the NEA units. The dates for which the set assignments are live are shown on the front cover.
Exam series each year	• January • June
Exam resits	Students can resit the exam unit. There are no limits on resit opportunities.
NEA submission	There are two moderation windows each year to submit NEA: • Moderation window 1 (February series) • Moderation window 2 (June series) All moderation window dates are on our key dates page.
Resubmission of students' NEA work	Students can improve their work and submit it to you again for assessment. They must have your agreement and you must be sure it is in the student's best interests. We use the term 'resubmission' when referring to student work that has previously been submitted to us for moderation. For information about resubmission see section 5.4.5 and for feedback see section 5.3.
Grading	Foundation Certifications are graded Pass, Merit and Distinction. Students who do not reach the minimum standard of Pass will be Unclassified.

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1.2 Qualification size

The size of the qualification is described in terms of guided learning hours (GLH) and total qualification time (TQT).

GLH indicates the approximate time (in hours) you will spend supervising or directing study and assessment activities. We have worked with people who are experienced in delivering related qualifications to determine the content that needs to be taught and how long it will take to deliver.

TQT includes two parts:

- GLH
- an estimate of the number of hours a student will spend on unsupervised learning or assessment activities (including homework) to successfully complete their qualification.

This qualification is 300 GLH and 375 TQT.

1.3 Availability and language

This qualification is available in England only. It is **not** available in Wales or Northern Ireland.

The qualification and its assessment materials are available in English only. We will only assess answers written in English.

1.4 Qualification structure

Key to units for these qualifications:

Key term	**Definition**
Exam	We set and mark the exam for this unit.
Non-exam assessment (NEA)	We set the assignment for these units. You assess the assignment and we moderate the assessment.
Mandatory	Students must complete these units.
Optional	Students must complete some of these units.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	The approximate time (in hours) you will spend supervising or directing study and assessment activities.

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Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data

For this qualification, students must complete four units:

- One mandatory exam unit
- Three mandatory non-exam assessment (NEA) units

Unit number	Unit title	Unit reference number (URN)	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Assessment method	Mandatory or optional
R200	Digital systems, data and security	H/652/4580	75	Exam	Mandatory
R201	Investigating digital information and data	J/652/4581	75	Non-exam assessment	Mandatory
R202	Developing programming solutions	K/652/4582	75	Non-exam assessment	Mandatory
R203	Installing digital systems	L/652/4583	75	Non-exam assessment	Mandatory

1.5 Assessment availability

There are two assessment opportunities available each year for the exam: one in January and one in June.

All students must take the exam at a set time on the same day in a series.

Non-exam assessment (NEA) assignments can be taken by students at any time during the live period shown on the front cover.

There are two moderation windows each year to submit NEA: moderation window 1 (February series) and moderation window 2 (June series).

All dates relating to moderation are on our key dates page.

(More information is in Section 6.1)

Qualification certification is available in each series.

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1.6 Purpose statement

Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data

Qualification number: TBC

Overview

Who this qualification is for

The Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data is for students aged 16-19 years old. It will develop knowledge, understanding and skills that will help prepare you for further study at Level 3 and are relevant to the digital sector.

You might be interested in this qualification if you want a qualification that builds applied or practical skills, to take alongside other qualifications, such as GCSE or Level 1/2 English and Maths. You will have the opportunity to apply what you learn to practical, real-life contexts, such as:

- Evaluating digital information and sources, and using data cleansing, analysis and visualisation techniques to answer questions, communicate findings and make evidence-based recommendations.
- Developing, testing and refining programming solutions to meet defined requirements.
- Planning, configuring and securing digital systems, including hardware and software components, to meet user and organisational needs.

The qualification will also help you develop independence and confidence in using skills that are relevant to the sector. You will develop the following transferable skills that can be used in further education and other life and work situations.

- Planning structured activities such as cleaning datasets, developing code, configuring systems and delivering digital systems by identifying steps, sequencing tasks, estimating resources and managing time.
- Interpreting data, systems and digital scenarios by organising information into types, identifying patterns and anomalies, deconstructing problems, and understanding how components interact.
- Problem solving by evaluating information, data, systems behaviour and ai-enabled outputs, questioning accuracy, weighing pros and cons, applying logical reasoning and reaching justified conclusions.
- Communicating findings, risks and recommendations clearly using written, visual and digital formats, adapting explanations and terminology to suit purpose and audience.
- Investigating suitable digital sources, interrogating datasets, reviewing logs and dashboards, and designing and carrying out tests to confirm accuracy, function or security.

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- Evidence-based decision-making when selecting tools, configurations and solutions, assessing likely impact, and justifying recommended actions or improvements.
- Self-managing own performance by working through multi-stage tasks, monitoring progress, checking accuracy, responding to feedback and refining outcomes through testing and review.
- Recording information accurately by capturing, storing and organising digital content such as datasets, code, configurations, findings and documentation.
- Evaluating processes, evidence and outcomes by reviewing effectiveness, appraising accuracy and reliability, and making recommendations for improvement.
- Observing, showing situational awareness by monitoring system outputs, data quality, error messages, logs and alerts to identify issues or abnormal behaviour.

This qualification will complement other post-16 learning that you're completing. If you are a full-time student, it will help you build and demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills you need to progress to a Level 3 qualification in a related area.

What you will study when you take this qualification

Through a combination of theoretical study and hands-on experience, you will develop the necessary knowledge and skills that can support progression to similar qualifications at Level 3.

In the exam unit, you will study key knowledge and understanding relevant to digital systems and data. In the non-exam assessment (NEA) units, you will demonstrate knowledge and skills you learn by completing practical assignments. More information about the knowledge and skills you will develop is below.

All units in the qualification are mandatory. You must take **all** of these units:

- R200: Digital systems, data and security

  This unit is assessed by an exam.

  In this unit you will learn about the hardware, software, networks, data, cyber security and emerging technologies that underpin the digital world, including the responsible use of digital information and AI. Topics include:

  - Topic A Digital systems and infrastructure.
  - Topic B Data types, sources and use.
  - Topic C Cyber security and secure digital systems.
  - Topic D Digital information and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

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- R201: Investigating digital information and data

  This unit is assessed by an assignment.

  In this unit you will learn how to evaluate digital information and sources, and use data cleansing, analysis and visualisation techniques to answer questions, communicate findings and make evidence-based recommendations. Topics include:

  - Topic A Select and review information.
  - Topic B Prepare and process data.
  - Topic C Visualise and interpret data.
  - Topic D Communicate findings and recommendations.

- R202: Developing programming solutions

  This unit is assessed by an assignment.

  In this unit you will learn how to design, create, test and refine programming solutions using programming languages, logical thinking, coding techniques and supporting documentation to meet defined requirements. Topics include:

  - Topic A Plan programming solutions.
  - Topic B Create programming solutions.
  - Topic C Test programming solutions.

- R203: Installing digital systems

  This unit is assessed by an assignment.

  In this unit you will learn how to plan, install, maintain and improve digital systems, including the selection and configuration of hardware and software components, secure working practices and system verification activities. Topics include:

  - Topic A Plan the delivery of digital systems.
  - Topic B Connect and configure digital systems.
  - Topic C Improve and maintain digital systems.

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The types of courses you may progress to

Both the subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills, and broader transferable skills developed through these units, will help you progress to further study in related areas such as:

- Computing
- Cyber Security
- Data Analytics
- Digital Technologies

Why you should take the Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data

You should take this qualification if you want a small Level 2 qualification that builds basic applied knowledge and skills in digital systems and data. This qualification is a Foundation Certificate that is 300 GLH. It could be taken alongside GCSE retakes and other Level 2 qualifications on a 16-19 Level 2 study programme, helping you to build a wider range of knowledge and skills that will support you as you progress. As 60% of the qualification is NEA, it gives you the opportunity to approach learning and assessment in a different, more hands-on way.

More information

More information about this qualification is in these documents:

- Sample assessment material (SAM) question papers:
  - Unit R200: Digital systems, data and security
- Guides to our SAM question papers:
  - Unit R200: Digital systems, data and security
- SAM set assignment:
  - Unit R201: Investigating digital information and data
  - Unit R202: Developing programming solutions
  - Unit R203: Installing digital systems
- Student guide to NEA assignments: Digital systems and data

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2 Why choose Cambridge OCR?

Choose Cambridge OCR and you've got the reassurance that you're working with one of the UK's leading exam boards.

We work with teachers, subject experts, employers and universities to create qualifications that support the needs of all students and help them prepare for their future. We offer A Levels, GCSEs, vocational qualifications, and other academic options to schools, colleges, workplaces, and other organisations.

We are part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, Europe's largest assessment agency and a department of the University of Cambridge. We play a leading role in developing and delivering assessments worldwide, operating in over 150 countries.

We listen. The decisions we make when we develop our specifications are based on teacher and student feedback. To tell us more about your experiences of teaching our qualifications, join our teacher panel and help shape the future of our qualifications.



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All of our Foundation Certificate qualifications are regulated by Ofqual, the Regulator for qualifications offered in England.

The qualification number for our Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data is: TBC

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2.1 Teacher support

We have a range of support services to help you at every stage of teaching, from preparation to delivery:

Teach Cambridge – our personalised and secure website provides you with access to:

- **extensive resources to download or watch.** Plan and structure your teaching with curriculum planners, schemes of work and teacher guides, and prepare for assessment with examiners' reports, exemplars and NEA guidance.
- **self-paced online training.** Find courses to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications under Assessment – NEA/Coursework – Online courses.
- **professional development.** Access a comprehensive programme of assessor-led courses and Q&A sessions with our experts, plus free teacher network events.

ExamBuilder – our free question-building platform helps you to build your own tests using exam questions from past papers.

Access to scripts – a free service to download copies of your students' completed question papers.

Active Results - our free online results analysis service to help you review exam performance.

On-hand subject teams – our experienced advisors will help answer any question you might have. They provide you with key information, including:

- specification and NEA advice
- updates on resource developments and training opportunities
- information on our subject networks giving an opportunity to share ideas and expertise.

Further help and support

Visit your subject pages to find out more about the assessment and support available, including:

- Understanding the assessment: examined and moderated
- Exploring our exams: a guide to our sample assessment material (SAM).

Not a registered or approved centre of ours? Discover the benefits of becoming one on our website and request trial access to Teach Cambridge.

Have more questions about teaching our qualifications? Explore our Online Support Centre or contact our Customer Support team.

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2.2 People and planet

We have clear commitments to champion sustainability, diversity, trust and respect for our people and planet.



Helping young people develop an ethical view of the world.

We are committed to supporting a curriculum that helps young people develop an ethical view of the world. This enables them to take social responsibility, understand environmental issues and prepare them for the green jobs of the future.



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are part of everything we do.

Our EDIB principles are that we:

- are respectful and considerate
- celebrate differences and promote positive attitudes to belonging
- include perspectives that reflect the diverse cultural and lifestyle backgrounds of our society
- challenge prejudicial views and unconscious biases
- promote a safe and supportive approach to learning
- are accessible and fair, creating positive experiences for all
- provide opportunities for everyone to perform at their best
- are contemporary, relevant and equip everyone to live and thrive in a global, diverse world
- create a shared sense of identity in a modern mixed society with one humanity.

To learn more, including our work on accessibility in our assessment materials, visit our people and planet page.

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2.3 Aims and learning outcomes

We believe in developing specifications that help you bring the subject to life and inspire your students to achieve more.

We've created a teacher-friendly specification based on extensive research and engagement with teachers. It's designed to be straightforward and accessible so that you can tailor the delivery of the course to suit your needs. We aim to encourage students to become responsible for their own learning, confident in discussing ideas, innovative and engaged.

Our Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data will encourage students to:

- develop key knowledge, understanding and skills, relevant to the subject
- think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically
- develop valuable communication skills that are important in all aspects of further study and life
- develop transferable learning and skills, such as planning, data interpretation, problem solving, investigating, evidence-based decision-making, self-managing, recording, evaluating and observing, that are important for progression to further study and can be applied to real-life contexts and work situations
- develop independence and confidence in applying the knowledge and skills that are vital for progression to further study and relevant to the digital sector and more widely.

2.4 What are the key features of this specification?

The key features of this qualification for you and your students are:

- a simple and intuitive assessment model, that has:
  - an exam unit, which focuses on subject knowledge and understanding
  - applied and practical non-exam assessment units (NEA)
- a specification developed with teachers specifically for teachers. The specification lays out the subject content, assessment criteria, teacher guidance and delivery requirements clearly
- a flexible support package made based on teachers' needs. The support package will help teachers to easily understand the qualification and how it is assessed
- a team of subject advisors who directly support teachers
- a specification designed to:
  - support progression to Level 3 study
  - develop wider transferable skills, knowledge and understanding. More detail about the transferable skills these qualifications may develop is in Section 4.3.

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3 Units

3.1 Guidance on unit content

This section describes what must be taught so that students can access all available marks and meet assessment criteria.

3.1.1 Exam unit (R200)

The exam unit contains a number of topics.

For each topic, we list the **teaching content** that must be taught and give information on the **breadth and depth** of teaching needed.

Teaching content

Questions can be asked about anything in the teaching content or breadth and depth columns.

Breadth and depth

The breadth and depth column:

- clarifies the breadth and depth of teaching needed
- indicates the range of knowledge and understanding that can be assessed in the exam
- confirms any aspects that you do not need to teach as 'does not include' statements.

Teaching must cover **both** the **teaching content** and **breadth and depth** columns.

Knowledge and understanding

This is what we mean by knowledge and understanding:

Knowledge	Understanding
• Be able to identify or recognise an item, for example on a diagram. • Use direct recall to answer a question, for example the definition of a term.	• To assess and evidence the perceived meaning of something in greater depth than straight identification or recall. • Understanding will be expressed and presented using terms such as: how; why; when; reasons for; advantages and disadvantages of; benefits and limitations of; purpose of; suitability of; recommendations for improvement; appropriateness of something to/in different contexts.

Students will need to **understand** the content, unless the breadth and depth column identifies it as knowledge only.

Any item(s) that should be taught as **knowledge** only will start with the word 'know' in the breadth and depth column.

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All other content must be taught as understanding.

3.1.2 NEA units (R201 to R203)

The NEA units contain a number of topics.

For each topic, we list **teaching content** that must be taught and give **exemplification**. The exemplification shows the teaching expected to equip students to successfully complete their assignments.

3.1.3 Command words

Appendix A gives information about the command words that will be used in the exam and the NEA assessment criteria.

3.1.4 Performance objectives (POs)

Each Foundation Certificate qualification has four performance objectives.

PO1	Show knowledge and understanding
PO2	Apply knowledge and understanding
PO3	Analyse and evaluate knowledge, understanding and performance
PO4	Demonstrate and apply skills and processes relevant to the subject

PO1 is assessed in the exam unit only.

PO4 is assessed in the NEA units only.

The weightings of the performance objectives across the units in the qualification are:

Performance Objective	**Exam unit (range)**	**NEA units**	**Overall weighting**
PO1	35-50%	n/a	14-20%
PO2	30-45%	25-50%	27-48%
PO3	10-20%	15-30%	13-26%
PO4	n/a	20-50%	12-30%

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3.2 Exam unit

3.2.1 Unit R200: Digital Systems, data and security

Unit aim

Digital technologies are used in almost every aspect of modern life. Individuals and organisations rely on digital systems, networks, security, and data to communicate, collaborate, store, manage and share information. Understanding how these technologies work, how data is used and how information is protected is an important skill for further study and employment in the digital sector.

In this unit you will learn about the hardware, software and networks that underpin digital systems. You will explore different types of data and data sources, how cyber security helps protect systems and information, and how digital information can be evaluated and used responsibly. You will also develop an understanding of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging digital technologies, including their opportunities, limitations and impact on the digital world.

Topic A: Digital systems and infrastructure	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
1 Hardware components 1.1 Internal 1.1.1 Processor/central processing unit (CPU) 1.1.2 Motherboard 1.1.3 Network interface cards (NIC) • Wired • Wireless 1.1.4 Graphics card 1.1.5 Sound card 1.1.6 Power supply unit (PSU) 1.2 Storage 1.2.1 Internal • Primary hard disk drive (HDD) • Network drive • Random access memory (RAM) • Read only memory (ROM) 1.2.2 External	To include: • Know examples of hardware components • Know examples of peripherals including: ○ Input devices - Keyboard - Mouse - Microphone - Touchscreen - Scanner - Webcam ○ Output devices - Display device - Speakers - Printers • Know the purpose and characteristics of hardware components • The advantages and disadvantages of different hardware components

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Topic A: Digital systems and infrastructure	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
• Network-attached storage (NAS) device • Portable external hard disk drive (HDD) • Portable flash drives • Portable solid-state drive (SSD) • Portable wireless drives 1.2.3 Volatile 1.2.4 Non-volatile 1.3 Peripherals 1.3.1 Input devices 1.3.2 Output devices	• How hardware components interact to enable system functionality • The suitability of hardware components for different user and organisational requirements
2 Software components 2.1 Operating system 2.2 Application software 2.2.1 Word processing 2.2.2 Spreadsheet software 2.2.3 Database software 2.2.4 Presentation software 2.2.5 Web browser 2.3 Collaboration software 2.3.1 Document storage/sharing 2.3.2 Email software 2.3.3. Video conferencing software 2.4 Utility software 2.4.1 Anti-malware 2.4.2 Software firewalls 2.4.3 User/file/print management	To include: • Know the purpose and use of software components • The advantages and disadvantages of different software components • Know examples of tasks completed by software components • How operating systems control the interaction between hardware and software to enable digital system functionality • The interaction between operating systems, utility software and application software • The suitability of software components for different user and organisational requirements
3 User interface components 3.1 Graphical user interface (GUI) elements 3.1.1 Form controls 3.1.2 Icons	To include: • The purpose of GUI elements, accessibility features and digital content

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Topic A: Digital systems and infrastructure	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
3.1.3 Menus 3.1.4 Pointers 3.2 User interaction methods 3.2.1 Gestures 3.2.2 Touch input 3.2.3 Voice input 3.3 Accessibility features 3.3.1 Screen readers 3.3.2 Text size and display settings 3.3.3 Alternative input methods 3.4 Digital content 3.4.1 Text 3.4.2 Images 3.4.3 Audio 3.4.4 Animation 3.4.5 Graphs/charts 3.4.6 Video	• Know examples of GUI elements, user interaction methods, accessibility features and digital content • How users interact with digital systems through different interaction methods • The advantages and disadvantages of different interaction methods and accessibility features • The suitability of interface components for different user needs • The impact of user interface design on usability and accessibility
4 Network types and connectivity methods 4.1 Network types 4.1.1 Geographical scope • Personal area network (PAN) • Local area network (LAN) • Wide area network (WAN) 4.1.2 Architecture • Wireless local area network (WLAN) • Client server • Peer to peer 4.2 Network connection methods 4.2.1 Wired/ethernet 4.2.2 Wireless/Wi-Fi 4.2.3 Bluetooth 4.2.4 Near field communication (NFC)	To include: • Know the characteristics of network types • The features and characteristics of network connection methods • How network connection methods enable communication between devices • The advantages and disadvantages of different network types and network connection methods • Factors affecting the selection of network types and network connection methods for different requirements

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Topic A: Digital systems and infrastructure	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
5 Network components 5.1 Connected devices 5.1.1 PCs 5.1.2 Mobile devices 5.1.3 Printers 5.1.4 Servers 5.2 Infrastructure components 5.2.1 Switch 5.2 2 Router 5.2.3 Wireless access point (WAP) 5.2 4 Network cables and connectors 5.2.5 Uninterrupted power supply (UPS) 5.2.6 Firewall 5.2.7 Racks and cabinets	To include: • Know the purpose and characteristics of connected devices and infrastructure components • How network components support communication and data transfer • The interaction between network components within a digital network • The advantages and disadvantages of network infrastructure components
6 Network protocols 6.1 Internet protocol (IP) 6.2 Transmission control protocol (TCP) 6.3 Dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) 6.4 Hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) 6.5 Hypertext transfer protocol secure (HTTPS) 6.6 Simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) 6.7 Post office protocol (POP) 6.8 File transfer protocol (FTP) 6.9 SSH file transfer (SFTP) 6.10 Secure shell (SSH)	To include: • The purpose of each network protocol • How network protocols enable communication between devices, connected systems and software • The advantages and disadvantages of different protocols • The suitability of protocols for different network services and scenarios
7 Sustainable digital practices 7.1 Device lifespan, maintenance and replacement cycles 7.2 Device usage 7.3 Disposal and recycling 7.4 Energy consumption	To include: • Know the factors affecting the energy consumption and resource efficiency of digital systems • Know the approaches used to improve digital sustainability

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Topic A: Digital systems and infrastructure	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
7.5 Storage, processing and network use 7.6 Approaches to improving digital sustainability	• The environmental impact of device usage, storage, processing and networking • The advantages and disadvantages of sustainable digital practices • The impact of device lifespan, maintenance, disposal and recycling on sustainability

Topic B: Data types, sources and use	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
1 Data types 1.1 Alphanumeric 1.2 Boolean 1.3 Date/Time 1.4 Numeric 1.4.1 Currency 1.4.2 Decimal 1.4.3 Integer 1.4.4 Percentages 1.5 Text	To include: • Know the characteristics of each data type • The suitability of different data types for different purposes
2 Data categories 2.1 Qualitative 2.2 Quantitative 2.3 Structured 2.4 Semi-structured 2.5 Unstructured	To include: • Know the definition and characteristics of each data category • The differences between qualitative and quantitative data • The difference between structured, semi-structured and unstructured data • The advantages and disadvantages of different data categories • The suitability of different data categories for different purposes

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Topic B: Data types, sources and use	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
3 Sources of digital data 3.1 Types 3.1.1 Primary 3.1.2 Secondary 3.2 Selection factors 3.2.1 Accessibility 3.2.2 Cost 3.2.3 Relevance 3.2.4 Reliability 3.2.5 Time	To include: • Know the difference between primary and secondary sources • The advantages and disadvantages of using primary and secondary sources • Know examples of sources of digital data including: ○ Databases ○ Government statistics ○ Interviews ○ Online data repositories ○ Spreadsheets ○ Survey/questionnaire ○ System-generated reports ○ Websites • How the selection factors affect the choice of appropriate sources of digital data
4 Responsible and sustainable data use 4.1 Appropriate data use 4.2 Efficient data storage 4.3 Data lifecycle management 4.4 Storage minimisation 4.5 Secure data handling 4.6 Responsible data handling 4.7 Sustainable digital system	To include: • Know the principles of efficient, responsible, secure and sustainable data use • Know how data is stored, managed, retained and disposed of • The risks associated with poor data use

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Topic C: Cyber security and secure digital systems	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
1 Confidentiality, integrity and availability 1.1 Confidentiality 1.2 Integrity 1.3 Availability	To include: • Know the meaning of confidentiality, integrity and availability in relation to protecting data, systems and services • The importance of confidentiality, integrity and availability in protecting data and systems • The consequences of failing to maintain confidentiality, integrity and availability
2 Cyber security threats and attacks 2.1 Denial of Service (DoS) attack 2.2 Hacking 2.2.1 Black Hat 2.2.2 Grey Hat 2.2.3 White Hat 2.3 Malware 2.3.1 Adware 2.3.2 Botnet 2.3.3 Ransomware 2.3.4 Spyware 2.3.5 Trojan Horse 2.3.6 Virus 2.3.7 Worm 2.4 Social Engineering 2.4.1 Baiting 2.4.2 Phishing 2.4.3 Pretexting 2.4.4 Quid Pro Quo 2.4.5 Scareware 2.4.6 Shoulder Surfing	To include: • Know the difference between a cyber security threat and an attack • Know examples of different cyber security threats and attacks • The characteristics of different cyber security threats and attacks • How different cyber security threats and attacks impact data, systems and services
3 Causes and indicators of security weaknesses 3.1 Causes of security weaknesses	To include: • Know the causes and indicators of security weaknesses

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Topic C: Cyber security and secure digital systems	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
3.1.1 Insecure access 3.1.2 Weak authentication methods 3.1.3 Unpatched software 3.1.4 Misconfigured system or network settings 3.2 Indicators of security weaknesses 3.2.1 Slow response times 3.2.2 Failed updates 3.2.3 Unexpected system behaviour 3.2.4 Connectivity interruptions 3.2.5 Unusual account activity 3.2.6 Security alerts	• How to identify potential security weaknesses within digital systems
4 Risks arising from security weaknesses 4.1 Impacts on confidentiality 4.1.1 Unauthorised access 4.1.2 Disclosure of sensitive information 4.2 Impacts on integrity 4.2.1 Unauthorised modification 4.2.2 Corruption of data 4.3 Impacts on availability 4.3.1 Loss of access to systems 4.3.2 Reduced system performance 4.3.3 Service disruption	To include: • The risks arising from security weaknesses • How security weaknesses affect confidentiality, integrity and availability
5 Monitoring, reporting and escalation 5.1 Monitoring information 5.1.1 Log files • Monitoring dashboards • System alerts 5.1.2 Automated security scanning tools • Automated security tools • Security scans • Vulnerability reports	To include: • Know the purpose and use of monitoring information, log files and automated security scanning tools • How monitoring information can be used to identify potential security concerns • How to review log files, monitoring dashboards, system alerts and other security-related information to identify

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Topic C: Cyber security and secure digital systems	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
5.2 Incident reporting 5.2.1 Security records 5.2.2 Incident reports 5.3 Escalation procedures 5.3.1 Escalation routes 5.3.2 Escalation records	signs of unexpected or anomalous activity • How to mitigate against potential security concerns • The role of workplace policies and procedures in supporting incident management • How security concerns are reported and escalated using workplace procedures • Know who security concerns are reported and escalated to including: ○ Individuals within the organisation - Data Protection Office - IT helpdesk - Cyber security team ○ External organisations - Police - National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) - Cyber insurance provider - Information Commissioner • Know methods used to report and escalate security concerns including: ○ Email ○ Verbal ○ Internal messaging ○ Incident reporting system ○ Automated reporting
6 Workplace policies and procedures 6.1 Acceptable use policy (AUP) 6.2 Access control and authentication requirements 6.3 Data protection requirements 6.4 Privacy and confidentiality requirements	To include: • Know the purpose of workplace policies and procedures • Know the type of content workplace policies and procedures include

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Topic C: Cyber security and secure digital systems	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
	• How workplace policies and procedures support secure system use, incident management and compliance with privacy, confidentiality and data protection requirements • Actions individuals and organisations take to comply with workplace policies and procedures • The consequences of failing to comply with workplace policies and procedures

Topic D: Digital information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
1 Evaluating digital information 1.1 Reliability of information 1.1.1 Consistency of information across sources 1.1.2 Dependability of information over time 1.2 Accuracy of information 1.2.1 Correctness of facts and data 1.2.2 Presence of errors or inaccuracies 1.3 Authority of information 1.3.1 Source credibility 1.3.2 Author expertise and reputation 1.4 Purpose of information 1.4.1 Informative content 1.4.2 Persuasive content 1.4.3 Commercial or promotional content	To include: • Know factors affecting the reliability, accuracy, authority and purpose of digital information • The consequences of relying on inaccurate or unreliable information • The advantages and disadvantages of different approaches used to evaluate information
2 Bias in digital information 2.1 Types of bias 2.1.1 Confirmation bias 2.1.2 Reporting bias	To include: • Know the characteristics and causes of different types of bias

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Topic D: Digital information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
2.1.3 Commercial bias 2.2 Sources of bias 2.2.1 Author perspective 2.2.2 Organisational influence 2.2.3 Commercial interests 2.3 Effects of bias on interpretation 2.3.1 Misleading conclusions 2.3.2 Distorted understanding of information 2.3.3 Inaccurate or inappropriate recommendations	• Know methods used to identify bias within digital information • How bias can influence interpretation and decision making • The impact of biased information on individuals and organisations
3 Automated and AI-enabled systems and digital information 3.1 Emerging digital technologies 3.1.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI) 3.1.2 Augmented, virtual and mixed reality 3.1.4 Internet of Everything (IoE) 3.2 Automated and AI-enabled content generation 3.2.1 Text 3.2.2 Image 3.2.3 Video 3.2.4 Summaries 3.2.5 Recommendations 3.3 Limitations of generated content 3.3.1 Inaccurate information 3.3.2 Misleading information 3.3.3 Fabricated information (hallucinated outputs) 3.4 Verification of generated information 3.4.1 Cross-checking 3.4.2 Reliability of source 3.4.3 Identification of inaccuracies	To include: • Know the role and applications of emerging digital technologies in shaping digital systems and services • Know examples of automated and AI-enabled system use including: ○ Generating text, summaries and recommendations from data and information ○ Programming code suggestions ○ Automated configuration and AI-generated configuration advice ○ Automated security scanning and vulnerability detection ○ Security settings recommendations • The advantages and disadvantages of automated and AI-enabled systems • The potential for AI-enabled systems to generate inaccurate, misleading or fabricated outputs • The need to review, validate and verify AI-generated outputs before use

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Topic D: Digital information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)	
Teaching content	**Breadth and depth**
	• The impact of emerging digital technologies on individuals, organisations and society • Ethical considerations associated with the use of AI-enabled systems
4 Digital content ownership and procedures 4.1 Use of digital and AI generated content 4.1.1 Intellectual property rights (IPR) 4.1.2 Ownership 4.1.3 Attribution 4.1.4 Appropriate use 4.2 Workplace procedures 4.2.1 Acknowledgement of sources 4.2.2 Recording of sources	To include: • Know the purpose and importance of intellectual property rights, ownership and attribution • The appropriate use of digital and AI-generated content • Know workplace procedures for acknowledging and recording sources

Assessment guidance

This unit is assessed by an exam. The exam is 1 hour and 15 minutes. The exam has 60 marks in total.

- All questions are compulsory.
- Question types may include:
  - Forced choice/controlled response questions, including multiple choice questions
  - Short answer, closed response questions
  - Completion tasks
  - Constructed response with points-based mark scheme – up to 6 marks
  - Extended response with levels of response mark scheme – 6 or 9 marks

This will be conducted under examination conditions. For more details refer to our administration pages.

The guide to our sample assessment material for this unit gives more information about the layout and expectations of the exam.

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The exam assesses the following performance objectives:

- PO1 – Show knowledge and understanding
- PO2 – Apply knowledge and understanding
- PO3 – Analyse and evaluate knowledge, understanding and performance.

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3.3 NEA units

3.3.1 Unit R201: Investigating digital information and data

Unit aim

Digital technologies produce large amounts of data and information. We can use this to answer questions, spot patterns and trends, and make informed decisions. Collecting, organising, analysing and presenting information are useful skills in many jobs, both within and outside the digital sector. It is also important to judge how reliable information is and use evidence to support your conclusions.

In this unit, you will investigate a topic using different sources of information and sets of data. You will learn how to prepare data for analysis, identify patterns and trends, and check the quality of information. You will use digital tools to analyse your data and present your findings clearly. Finally, you will use evidence from your investigation to make recommendations that meet the aim of your task.

Topic A: Select and review information	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Information requirements 1.1 Defined purpose 1.2 Information needs 1.3 Information scope	To include: • How to identify information requirements relevant to a defined purpose and scope
2 Information types 2.1 Qualitative 2.2 Quantitative	To include • The difference between qualitative and quantitative information • How to use qualitative and quantitative information
3 Digital information sources 3.1 Sources 3.1.1 Websites 3.1.2 Online articles 3.1.3 Reports and publications 3.1.4 Organisational records 3.1.5 Datasets and databases 3.2 Source suitability considerations 3.2.1 Relevance to the defined purpose 3.2.2 Currency of information 3.2.3 Accuracy and reliability	To include: • How to identify digital information sources relevant to a defined purpose • How to select appropriate sources • How to select appropriate information from sources • How to assess source suitability using relevance, currency, accuracy, credibility and completeness criteria

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Topic A: Select and review information	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
3.2.4 Authority/credibility of the source 3.2.5 Coverage and completeness	
4 Techniques to review information 4.1 Confirmation of key points 4.2 Use of supporting evidence 4.3 Cross-referencing of information 4.4 Checking information consistency	To include: • How to check information across multiple sources to confirm key points • How to use supporting evidence from gathered information to justify findings and recommendations • How to cross-reference information across sources and identify any inconsistencies • How to select information that directly supports evidence-based recommendations • How to demonstrate that findings, recommendations and justifications are supported by evidence
5 Referencing methods 5.1 Purpose of referencing 5.1.1 Acknowledgement of information sources 5.1.2 Avoidance of plagiarism 5.1.3 Support for information credibility 5.2 Transparency and traceability 5.2.1 Identification of source origin 5.2.2 Location of original sources 5.3 Types of referencing 5.3.1 Hyperlinks 5.3.2 In-text citations 5.3.3 Footnotes or endnotes 5.3.4 Bibliographies/reference lists	To include: • The role of referencing practices in ensuring transparency and traceability of sources • How to acknowledge and reference sources used • How referencing supports the acknowledgement of information sources and academic integrity • How to apply a suitable range of referencing methods, including hyperlinks, in-text citations, footnotes/endnotes and bibliographies/reference lists • How to cite images at the point of use • How to include source dates, including the document creation date or the date a web source was accessed

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Topic B: Prepare and process data	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Database and spreadsheet structures 1.1 Data types 1.1.1 Boolean 1.1.2 Date 1.1.3 Time 1.1.4 Text 1.1.5 Numeric • Integer • Currency • Percentage • Decimal 1.2 Database structure 1.2.1 Tables 1.2.2 Records 1.2.3 Fields 1.2.4 Relationships 1.3 Spreadsheet structure 1.3.1 Worksheets 1.3.2 Columns 1.3.3 Rows 1.3.4 Cells 1.4 Cell formatting tools 1.5 Data validation tools 1.5.1 Lookup 1.5.2 Range check 1.5.3 Text length 1.5.4 Limited choice • Drop down lists • Radio buttons 1.5.5 Tick list 1.6 Data Verification tools 1.6.1 Manual checking	To include: • How to use database and spreadsheet structures to organise and retrieve structured data • How to use tools to support data accuracy by confirming that ○ The value of a data item is within an acceptable range ○ The format of the data matches what was expected ○ The type of data is correct ○ No duplication has occurred ○ Completeness • How to format and prepare digital datasets using software tools Examples of **cell formatting tools** may include: • Alignment • Border • Font • Shading • Text Wrap

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Topic B: Prepare and process data	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
2 Data quality issues 2.1 Issues 2.1.1 Missing values 2.1.2 Duplicate records 2.1.3 Inconsistent formatting 2.1.4 Incorrect data types 2.2 Data cleansing techniques 2.2.1 Removing duplicates 2.2.2 Removing irrelevant data 2.2.3 Converting data type 2.2.4 Clear formatting 2.2.5 Fixing structural errors 2.2.6 Fixing missing data	To include: • How to identify data quality issues within a dataset • How to explain the effect of data quality issues on the accuracy and interpretation of data in relation to a defined purpose • How to identify appropriate methods to resolve data quality issues • How to use techniques to cleanse and prepare digital datasets using appropriate software tools
3 Techniques to manipulate data 3.1 Queries 3.2 Searches 3.3 Filters 3.4 Sort 3.5 Calculations 3.6 Formulae 3.7 Functions 3.8 Conditional formatting 3.9 Pivot tables 3.10 AI-enabled features	To include: • How to select appropriate techniques to manipulate data in databases and spreadsheets • How spreadsheet and data presentation tools, and automated and AI-enabled features, support the manipulation of data

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Topic C: Visualise and interpret data	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Data visualisation formats 1.1 Graphical formats 1.1.1 Diagrams 1.1.2 Charts 1.1.3 Graphs 1.1.4 Images 1.2 Tabular formats 1.2.1 Tables 1.2.2 Cross-tabulations 1.2.3 Text 1.3 Data visualisation tools 1.3.1 Spreadsheet tools 1.3.2 Data presentation tools 1.3.3 Automated features 1.3.4 AI-enabled features 1.4 Visualisation purposes 1.4.1 Interpretation of data 1.4.2 Communication of findings 1.4.3 Infographics	To include: • The purpose of graphical and tabular formats, including their use within infographics, in supporting interpretation and communication of findings • The purpose of spreadsheet, database and data visualisation tools, and automated and AI-enabled features in supporting interpretation and visualisation of data • How to create tables and charts to visualise data
2 Data formatting techniques 2.1 Number formatting 2.2 Table formatting 2.3 Consistent headings 2.4 Colours 2.5 Fonts 2.6 Labels	To include: • How to select appropriate data formatting techniques to support accurate and effective visualisation of outcomes
3 Interpret data 3.1 Patterns in data 3.2 Trends 3.3 Anomalies 3.4 Relationships between variables 3.5 Comparisons	To include: • How to use spreadsheet, data presentation tools, automated and AI-enabled features to enable the accurate interpretation of data

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Topic C: Visualise and interpret data	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
3.6 Findings	• How to identify patterns, trends, anomalies, relationships, comparisons and findings in data

Topic D: Communicate findings and recommendations	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Developing recommendations 1.1 Findings 1.2 Supporting evidence 1.3 Evidence-based conclusions 1.4 Recommendations	To include: • How to select information that directly supports an evidence-based recommendation • How to use supporting evidence to produce evidence-based conclusions • How to develop recommendations from evidence-based conclusions
2 Communicating findings and recommendations 2.1 Written communication considerations 2.1.1 Audience 2.1.2 Purpose 2.1.3 Clarity 2.2 Visual communication considerations 2.2.1 Layout 2.2.2 Readability 2.2.3 Visual hierarchy 2.3 Infographics 2.3.1 Combination of formats 2.3.2 Graphical elements 2.3.3 Tabular elements 2.3.4 Text elements 2.3.5 Data summarisation 2.3.6 Key information 2.3.7 Integration of data formats	To include: • How search, formatting and checking functions within digital applications support drafting, reviewing and organising information • How to use clear written and visual communication when communicating findings and recommendations • How to create infographics that support the interpretation and communication of findings and recommendations • How to communicate findings and recommendations clearly for an intended audience and purpose

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Assessment criteria

The table below gives the assessment criteria for the tasks in the set assignment for this unit. The assessment criteria indicate what is required in these tasks.

This qualification has a compensatory approach. This means that the unit grade awarded is based on the **total** number of achieved criteria for the unit (see Section 4.4). Students do **not** have to achieve **all** criteria for a specific grade to achieve that unit grade (e.g. achieve all pass criteria to achieve a pass grade).

Section 4.4 provides full information on how to assess the NEA units and apply the assessment criteria. Students' work must show that all aspects of a criterion have been met in sufficient detail for it to be **successfully achieved** (see Section 5.4.1). If a student's work does not fully meet a criterion, you must not award that criterion.

The command words used in the assessment criteria are defined in Appendix A.

<table>
<tr><th>Pass</th><th>Merit</th><th>Distinction</th></tr>
<tr><td>P1: List information sources relevant to the investigation purpose.</td><td rowspan="3">M1: Compare information from multiple relevant sources.</td><td rowspan="3">D1: Assess the suitability of the selected information and data in supporting the investigation. (S)</td></tr>
<tr><td>P2: Choose information from at least three relevant sources that help support the investigation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>P3: Use referencing methods to acknowledge information sources used.</td></tr>
<tr><td>P4: Use appropriate tools to improve the accuracy and consistency of the dataset structure.</td><td>M2: Use appropriate tools to reduce data quality issues within the dataset.</td><td>D2: Use appropriate techniques to prepare the dataset for interpretation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>P5: Use appropriate techniques to manipulate the dataset.</td><td>M3: Use a range of appropriate data manipulation techniques to investigate relationships, patterns and trends within the dataset.</td><td rowspan="2">D3: Justify the choice of techniques used to manipulate and visualise the dataset.</td></tr>
<tr><td>P6: Create visualisations of the manipulated dataset.</td><td>M4: Use a range of appropriate data formatting techniques to support</td></tr>
</table>

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Pass	Merit	Distinction
	accurate and effective data visualisations.	
P7: List the findings from the dataset.	**M5: Summarise** the recommendations of your investigation.	**D4: Discuss** how far the recommendations are supported by evidence from the investigation.
P8: List findings from other sources.		
P9: Create a draft infographic of the investigation findings.	**M6: Summarise** how the draft infographic can be improved.	**D5: Create** an improved infographic that effectively communicates findings and recommendations for the intended audience and purpose.

Assessment guidance

This assessment guidance gives you information relating to the assessment criteria. There might not be additional assessment guidance for each assessment criterion. It is included only where it is needed.

Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
P1	• P1 relates to Topics A1 and A3. • Students **must** provide specific sources relevant to the scenario. • Students **could** use sources from the list in Topic A3. • Students **could** make use of source suitability considerations in Topic A3 when selecting information sources.
P2	• P2 relates to Topics A2 and A3. • Students **must** select information that is relevant to the investigation.
P3	• P3 relates to Topic A5. • Students **must** acknowledge and reference **all** sources used. • Students **could** make use of referencing methods identified in Topic A5.
P4	• P4 relates to Topics B1 and C2. • Students **must** import the dataset provided.

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
	• Students **could** use data types, structures and cell formatting tools from Topic B1. • Evidence for P4 will be the prepared and cleansed dataset.
M1	• M1 relates to Topic A4. • Students **must** use the information from the sources they chose in P2. • Students **must** compare the similarities, differences and any inconsistencies in the information from the different sources.
M2	• M2 relates to Topics B1 and B2. • Students **could** use data validation and verification tools from Topic B1. • Evidence for M2 will be the prepared and cleansed dataset.
D1	• D1 relates to Topics A1, A3, A4 and unit R200 Topics B3, B4, D1, D2, D3, D4. • Students need to draw on knowledge and understanding from across the course of study in order to achieve D1. (**S**) • Students **must** refer to their selected information and the supplied dataset.
D2	• D2 relates to Topics B1 and B2 • Students **could** use the data cleansing techniques from Topic B2. • Evidence for D2 will be the prepared and cleansed dataset.
P5	• Students **could** make use of the techniques to manipulate data from Topic B3.
P6	• Students **could** make use of the graphical and/or tabular formats from Topic C1.
M3	• Students **could** make use of the techniques to manipulate data from Topic B3. • The evidence for M3 will be the spreadsheet and/or database files.
M4	• Students **must** use visualisation tools appropriate to the data being presented. • Students **could** make use of techniques to format data from Topic C2. • The evidence for M4 will be the spreadsheet and/or database files.

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
D3	**There is no assessment guidance for this criterion.**
P7	• P7 relates to Topic C3. • Students **must** list any patterns, trends, anomalies, relationships or comparisons in the dataset manipulated and visualised in **Task 2**.
P8	• Students **must** list the findings from the relevant sources in **Task 1**. • P8 does **not** include findings from the dataset.
P9	• Students **must** communicate information in an appropriate format for the intended audience and purpose. • Students **could** make use of the infographics from Topic D2. • Evidence for **P9** will be the draft infographic.
M5	• Students **must** summarise recommendations based on the dataset **and** other sources.
M6	• Students **must** consider how the written and visual communication considerations from Topic D2 can be used to enhance the infographic. • Evidence for **M6** could be a written summary and/or an annotated draft infographic.
D4	• Students **must** make reasoned judgements on how well their recommendations are supported by the evidence they have collected.
D5	• Students **must** select graphical, tabular and text-based elements appropriate to the intended audience and purpose. • The evidence for **D5** will be the improved infographic.

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Synoptic assessment

Some of the knowledge, understanding and skills required when completing this unit will draw on the learning developed in unit R200 Digital systems, data and security.

The following table details where these synoptic links can be found:

Unit R201: Investigating digital information and data		**Unit R200: Digital systems, data and security**	
Topic		**Topic**	
A	Select and review information	B	Data types, sources and use
		D	Digital Information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
B	Prepare and process data	B	Data types, sources and use
C	Visualise and interpret data	B	Data types, sources and use
		D	Digital Information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
D	Communicate findings and recommendations	B	Data types, sources and use
		D	Digital Information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

More information about synoptic assessment in these qualifications can be found in Section 4.2 Synoptic assessment.

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3.3.2 Unit R202: Developing programming solutions

Unit aim

Programming solutions are used in many digital systems, products and services. Being able to plan, create, test and improve a program is an important skill. It can support further study and careers in the digital sector. You will learn how algorithms, program code and testing are used to create digital solutions. These solutions help people solve problems and meet users' needs.

In this unit, you will learn how to plan and design a programming solution for a given brief. You will use a suitable programming language to create the solution. You will use clear logic and coding techniques to make sure it works correctly. You will also test and improve the solution so that it behaves as expected. Finally, you will use suitable documents to explain your decisions and results.

Topic A: Plan programming solutions	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Stages of programming solution development 1.1 Problem definition 1.2 Requirements analysis 1.3 Planning and design 1.4 Implementation/development 1.5 Testing 1.6 Refinement and debugging 1.7 Maintenance	To include: • How each stage contributes to meeting the intended purpose of the programming solution • How to apply each stage when developing a programming solution for an intended purpose • How each stage can contribute to developing a programming solution for an intended purpose
2 Algorithm structure and process 2.1 Algorithm structured logic 2.1.1 Sequence 2.1.2 Selection 2.1.3 Iteration 2.2 Algorithm process 2.2.1 Inputs 2.2.2 Processing steps (instructions) 2.2.3 Storage 2.2.4 Outputs	To include: • The role of algorithms as ordered instructions that determine solution behaviour • The relationship between algorithms, program code and solution outputs • How inputs, processing, storage and outputs are used within algorithms and program code • The role of structured logic and algorithms in the design of programming solution

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Topic A: Plan programming solutions	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
	• How to plan ordered instructions to develop a programming solution • How to design a logical programming solution using algorithms, and program code
3 Features of user interfaces and outputs 3.1 User interfaces 3.1.1 Form controls 3.1.2 Navigation 3.1.3 User help 3.1.4 Error messages 3.2 Outputs 3.2.1 Content 3.2.2 Layout 3.2.3 Formatting 3.2.4 Visual elements	To include: • How programming solution requirements influence the design of user interfaces • How programming solution requirements influence the design of outputs Examples of **form controls** may include: • Text boxes • Check boxes • Radio buttons • Drop-down lists • List boxes • Toggle switches • Buttons • Sliders • Date pickers • Search fields
4 Programming solution planning and design 4.1 Requirements specification 4.1.1 Purpose of programming solution 4.1.2 Functional requirements 4.1.3 Input requirements 4.1.4 Output requirements 4.2 User interface and output design tools 4.2.1 Navigation diagrams 4.2.2 Sketches	To include: • How to use information within scenarios to create requirements specifications • How to design user interfaces and outputs • How to use algorithm representation methods to design logical programming solutions

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Topic A: Plan programming solutions	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
4.2.3 Wireframes 4.3 Algorithm representation methods 4.3.1 Natural language 4.3.2 Flowchart 4.3.3 Pseudocode 4.3.4 Structure diagram	• How to evaluate planned solutions against requirements

Topic B: Create programming solutions	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Programming constructs 1.1 Program code 1.1.1 Arithmetic operators 1.1.2 Boolean and logical operators 1.1.3 Data input 1.1.4 Data storage 1.1.5 Data output 1.2 Control structures 1.2.1 Boolean logic 1.2.2 Sequence 1.2.3 Selection • IF..THEN • IF..THEN..ELSE 1.2.4 Iteration • Count-controlled • Condition-controlled • Post condition 1.3 Data structures 1.3.1 Variables 1.3.2 Constants 1.3.3 Arrays 1.3.4 Tables 1.4 Program structure	To include: • How to use programming constructs, data structures and control structures to create programming solutions • How to use written and externally sourced code within programming solutions and the need to comply with licensing requirements • How to write, integrate and refine code when creating programming solutions • How to apply a logical, step-by-step approach to developing and refining code • How to explain the functionality of code used within a programming solution • How to record and justify development decisions made during the creation and refinement of a programming solution

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Topic B: Create programming solutions	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1.4.1 Procedures 1.4.2 Functions 1.4.3 Code libraries and reusable code 1.5 Code readability 1.5.1 Consistent naming conventions 1.5.2 Consistent indentation 1.5.3 Appropriate comments	
2 Programming solution elements 2.1 User interface 2.1.1 Navigation 2.1.2 Data inputs 2.1.3 Error handling 2.1.4 Error messages 2.2 Outputs 2.2.1 Text 2.2.2 Numbers 2.2.3 Images 2.2.4 Sound	To include: • How to create user interfaces • How to create outputs which communicate digital solution processing outcomes to users • How to apply error handling to user interfaces • How to create error messages to help users Examples of **error handling** may include: • Presence check • Range check • Text length • Limited choice
3 Software development tools and AI-enabled tools 3.1 Development tools 3.1.1 Code editors 3.1.2 Integrated development environments (IDEs) 3.2 Automated and AI-enabled tools 3.2.1 Code suggestions 3.2.2 Review and validation of generated code	To include: • How to use appropriate software tools to write, run and test the code

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Topic C: Test programming solutions	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Testing approaches 1.1 Testing during development 1.1.1 Technical testing 1.1.2 Usability testing 1.2 Testing after development 1.2.1 Technical testing 1.2.2 Usability testing 1.3 Test plan 1.3.1 Test description 1.3.2 Test data • Normal • Extreme • Erroneous 1.3.3 Expected result 1.3.4 Actual result 1.3.5 Retest 1.4 Elements of programming solutions to test	To include: • The importance of different testing approaches • How to use different testing approaches effectively • How to test a programming solution to confirm that inputs, processing and outputs produce the expected results • How to carry out a test plan to confirm that a programming solution produces the expected outcomes • How to document test results, including expected results, actual results and retesting outcomes Examples of **elements of programming solutions to test** may include: • Input • Processing and calculations • Storage • Output • Navigation • Error handling
2 Types of errors in programming solutions 2.1 Logic 2.2 Syntax 2.3 Incorrect conditions	To include: • The effect of logic errors, syntax errors and incorrect conditions on program behaviour • How to detect and document different types of errors during testing • How to identify and correct errors in code

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Assessment criteria

The table below gives the assessment criteria for the tasks in the set assignment for this unit. The assessment criteria indicate what is required in these tasks.

This qualification has a compensatory approach. This means that the unit grade awarded is based on the **total** number of achieved criteria for the unit (see Section 4.4). Students do **not** have to achieve **all** criteria for a specific grade to achieve that unit grade (e.g. achieve all pass criteria to achieve a pass grade).

Section 4.4 provides full information on how to assess the NEA units and apply the assessment criteria. Students' work must show that all aspects of a criterion have been met in sufficient detail for it to be **successfully achieved** (see Section 5.4.1). If a student's work does not fully meet a criterion, you must not award that criterion.

The command words used in the assessment criteria are defined in Appendix A.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
P1: Create a requirements specification for the programming solution.		**D1: Justify** your planning and design decisions in relation to the scenario.
P2: Create user interface designs for the programming solution. **(S)**		
P3: Create designs for the output(s) from the programming solution.	**M1: Create** algorithm designs for the programming solution.	
	M2: Create a test plan for the programming solution.	
P4: Create the user interface for the programming solution.		**D2: Create** appropriate error handling **and** error message(s) for the user interface in the programming solution.
P5: Use selection and iteration within the programming solution.	**M3: Use** appropriate control structures within the programming solution.	**D3: Use** appropriate code libraries or reusable code in the programming solution.
	M4: Use appropriate data structures within the programming solution.	

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Pass	Merit	Distinction
P6: Use appropriate naming conventions in the programming solution.	**M5: Use** source code indentation **and** comments to make the programming solution maintainable.	
P7: Create output(s) that communicate processing outcomes to the user.		
		D4: Justify the programming constructs used in the programming solution.
P8: Complete the planned testing of the programming solution.	**M6: Complete** retesting on errors corrected.	**D5: Evaluate** the effectiveness of the testing approaches used to test the programming solution.
P9: Use the results of testing to identify and correct errors in the programming solution.		

Assessment guidance

This assessment guidance gives you information relating to the assessment criteria. There might not be additional assessment guidance for each assessment criterion. It is included only where it is needed.

Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
P1	• P1 relates to Topic A4. • Students **must** include the purpose, functional requirements, input requirements and output requirements of the programming solution. • The requirements specification **must** be sufficiently detailed for another programmer to understand the requirements of the programming solution.
P2	• P2 relates to Topics A3, A4 and unit R200 Topic A3. • Students **must** include sufficient detail to show how users will interact with the programming solution. • Students need to draw on knowledge and understanding from across the course of study in order to achieve P2 (**S**).

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
	• Students **could** use the tools listed in Topic A4.
P3	• P3 relates to Topics A3 and A4. • Students **must** include sufficient detail to show how the outputs will be communicated to the end users with the programming solution. • Students **could** use the tools listed in Topic A4.
M1	• M1 relates to Topics A2 and A4. • Students **must** design algorithms to show how the programming solution will operate and **must** incorporate structured logic. • Students **must** include sufficient detail for the sequence of processing to be interpreted by another programmer. • Students **must** use sequencing, selection and iteration when planning their algorithms. • Students **could** use the algorithm representation methods listed in Topic A4.
M2	• M2 relates to Topic C1. • Students **must** include the elements of programming solutions to test from Topic C1 which will be tested in their test plan. • We recommend that students use the test plan template provided to plan their tests. However, if students use a different template which is appropriate for the task, they **must not** be penalised for doing so. • Teacher provided templates **must not** include examples or instructions.
D1	• D1 relates to Topics A2 and A3. • Students **must** consider their interface designs, output designs and planned algorithms to achieve this criterion.
Task 2	• In **Task 2**, ideally students will create the programming solution designed in **Task 1**. However, if students deviate from their designs, they must not be penalised when assessing **Task 2**. • The programming solution must contain program code that demonstrates the use of programming constructs, control structures and data structures identified in Topic B1. • Evidence of program code can be screenshots.

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
	• To confirm assessment decisions made for some of the criteria for this task, the Cambridge OCR moderator will need to be able to see the final programming solution. Therefore, students must provide video/screen recordings of the programming solution being demonstrated.
P4	• P4 relates to Topic B2. • The video/screen recording of the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
P5	• P5 relates to Topic B1. • Students **must** use both selection **and** iteration within their programming solution. • The program code from the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
P6	• P6 relates to Topic B1. • Students **must** use a consistent and understandable naming convention for variables, constants and any data structures/program structures used. • For the naming conventions to be understandable, someone who hasn't seen the code before **must** be able to interpret it. • The program code from the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
P7	• P7 relates to Topic B2. • The video/screen recording of the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
M3	• M3 relates to Topic B1. • Students **could** make use of programming constructs identified in Topic B1. • The program code from the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
M4	• M4 relates to Topic B1. • Students **must** use appropriate data structures for the data being stored or processed. • Students **could** make use of the data structures identified in Topic B1.

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
	• The program code from the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
M5	• M5 relates to Topic B1. • Students can use the code readability features available within a software development environment. • For the code to be maintainable, someone who hasn't seen it before must be able to be interpret it. • The program code from the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
D2	• D2 relates to Topics B1 and B2. • Students **must** implement error handling and error message(s) to manage invalid or unexpected user input and prevent unintended behaviour in the programming solution. • The video/screen recording of the programming solution and program code from the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
D3	• D1 relates to Topics B1 and B3. • Students **must** integrate code they have written themselves with code libraries and/or reusable code to create the programming solution. • Where code libraries and reusable code are used this **must** be clearly identified and source acknowledged. • Students **must** comply with any applicable licensing requirements relating to externally sourced code. • The program code from the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
D4	• D4 relates to Topic B1. • Students will make reasoned judgements on how well the selected programming constructs contribute to the programming solution.
Task 3	• We recommend that students use the test plan template provided. However, if students use a different template which is appropriate for the task, they must not be penalised for doing so. • Teacher provided templates **must** not include examples or instructions.

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
P8	• P8 relates to Topic C1 and C2. • Ideally students will use the approach planned in **Task 1**. However, if students deviate from the proposed testing, they should not be penalised. • Students **must** complete sufficient testing to assess the functionality of the programming solution. • Students **must** record the outcomes of testing in their test plan.
P9	• P9 relates to Topic C2. • Students **must** provide evidence of corrections being made. • The video/screen recording or screenshots of the programming solution will be sufficient evidence for this assessment criterion.
M6	• M6 relates to C1 and builds on P9. • Students **must** record the outcomes of retesting in their test plan.
D5	• D5 relates to C1. • Students will make reasoned judgements on how effective their approaches to testing were.

Synoptic assessment

Some of the knowledge, understanding and skills required when completing this unit will draw on the learning developed in unit R200 Digital systems, data and security.

The following table details where these synoptic links can be found:

Unit R202: Developing programming solutions		**Unit R200: Digital systems, data and security**	
Topic		**Topic**	
A	Plan programming solutions	A	Digital systems and infrastructure
		B	Data types, sources and use
B	Create programming solutions	A	Digital systems and infrastructure
		B	Data types, sources and use
		D	Digital Information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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Unit R202: Developing programming solutions		**Unit R200: Digital systems, data and security**	
Topic		**Topic**	
C	Test programming solutions	D	Digital Information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

More information about synoptic assessment in these qualifications can be found in Section 4.2 Synoptic assessment.

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3.3.3 Unit R203: Installing digital systems

Unit aim

Digital systems must be planned, configured, secured and maintained to ensure they operate reliably and meet user requirements. The ability to build, configure and support digital systems is an important skill for further study and employment in the digital sector. Understanding how configuration, security, maintenance and support activities contribute to the operation of digital systems helps organisations provide reliable and secure digital services.

In this unit you will learn how to plan the delivery of a functional digital system and identify suitable hardware and software requirements. You will build and configure digital systems, applying secure configuration practices and verification activities to ensure components function as intended. You will verify, maintain and improve digital systems, record system activities and communicate information about configuration, maintenance and security-related concerns using appropriate documentation. You will have a sound understanding of the Plan → Install → Improve and maintain lifecycle approach.

Topic A: Plan the delivery of digital systems	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Requirements and compatibility 1.1 User requirements 1.1.1 Purpose 1.1.2 Intended users 1.2 Technical requirements 1.2.1 Hardware requirements 1.2.2 Software requirements 1.2.3 Component compatibility 1.2.4 Viability	To include: • The role of component compatibility and system requirements in configuring a functional digital system Examples of **component compatibility** may include: • Driver availability • Minimum and recommended specifications • Operating system and software version support • Physical connections and ports Examples of **viability** may include: • Availability of resources • Cost • Licensing constraints • Time

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Topic A: Plan the delivery of digital systems	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
2 Delivery plan 2.1 Installation tasks 2.1.1 Activities 2.1.2 Activities sequence/workflow 2.1.3 Dependencies 2.1.4 Timescales 2.2 Resources 2.2.1 Tools 2.2.2 Hardware 2.2.3 Software	To include: • How planning tasks, sequencing activities and allocating resources support the delivery of digital systems • How to plan and sequence the tasks and resources needed to deliver digital systems Examples of **tools** may include: • Anti-static wrist straps • Cable ties • Network cable testers • Screwdrivers • Tweezers Examples of **hardware** may include: • Devices • Peripherals • Communication devices • Connectivity media Examples of **software** may include: • Operating systems • Drivers • Application and utility software

Topic B: Connect and configure digital systems	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Health, safety and secure equipment handling 1.1 Health and safety requirements 1.1.1 Electrical safety 1.1.2 Ergonomic workstation setup	To include: • How health, safety and secure handling requirements support the safe set up, configuration and maintenance of digital systems and equipment

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Topic B: Connect and configure digital systems	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1.1.3 Safe use of equipment 1.1.4 Cable management 1.1.5 Workspace hazards 1.1.6 Environmental conditions 1.2 Secure handling of digital systems and equipment 1.2.1 Protection from damage 1.2.2 Secure storage 1.2.3 Data protection 1.2.4 Maintenance and lifecycle security 1.2.5 Controlled access to equipment 1.2.6 Safe transportation of equipment	• How secure storage can be used to prevent theft, damage and unauthorised use • How to protect personal and confidential information • How to apply maintenance and security practices throughout the system lifecycle including: ○ updates ○ secure disposal ○ ongoing protection of systems
2 Connect and configure digital systems 2.1 System setup 2.1.1 Connect hardware components 2.1.2 Install software components 2.2 Component configuration 2.2.1 Hardware settings 2.2.2 Operating system settings 2.2.3 Application and utility software settings 2.3 Component dependencies 2.3.1 Hardware and software interaction 2.3.2 Component interoperability 2.3.3 Order of installation and configuration	To include: • How to configure hardware and software components to create a functional digital system • How dependencies between components affect system operation, including why one component may depend on another and how this determines the order of installation and configuration • The role of digital tools, automation features and automated AI-enabled systems in generating configuration and supporting system setup, and the need to check such outputs for suitability for the intended system
3 Secure configuration of digital systems 3.1 Authentication measures 3.1.1 Username and password 3.1.2 Multi-factor authentication (MFA) 3.1.3 Biometrics 3.2 Access permissions	To include: • How authentication, access permissions, configuration settings and protective controls help secure digital systems • How communication protocols, IP addressing conventions, secure

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Topic B: Connect and configure digital systems	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
3.2.1 User accounts 3.2.2 Access rights 3.2.3 Levels of privilege 3.3 Security controls 3.3.1 Anti-malware software 3.3.2 Encryption 3.3.3 Firewalls 3.3.4 Secure storage and backups 3.4 Secure configuration settings 3.4.1 Security settings 3.4.2 Secure configuration baselines • Secure default settings • Consistent device settings • Consistent user permissions 3.5 Secure configuration practices 3.5.1 Communication protocols 3.5.2 IP addressing conventions 3.5.3 Patch management	configuration baselines and patch management support secure and reliable operation • How to apply secure configuration practices, including: ○ authentication requirements ○ access controls ○ permissions ○ security settings ○ update procedures
4 Verifying digital systems 4.1 System checks 4.1.1 Connectivity checks 4.1.2 Configuration checks 4.1.3 Functionality checks 4.2 Verification activities 4.2.1 Hardware operation 4.2.2 Software operation 4.2.3 Network operation 4.3 Common faults 4.3.1 Hardware 4.3.2 Software 4.3.3 Network 4.3.4 Configuration 4.3.5 Security-related	To include: • How faults can arise during configuration and operation, and why checking, diagnosis and corrective action are needed • How to verify system operation by checking that components function together as intended

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Topic B: Connect and configure digital systems	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
4.3.6 Performance issues	

Topic C: Improve and maintain digital systems	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
1 Improve digital systems 1.1 Security improvements 1.1.1 Authentication • Strong passwords • Multi-factor authentication (MFA) • Default passwords and accounts 1.1.2 Permission changes/access control • User permissions • Least privilege 1.1.3 Security configuration • Security settings • Software updates and patching 1.1.4 Network security • Firewalls • Secure Wi-Fi 1.2 Troubleshooting and further improvements 1.2.1 Identify common faults 1.2.2 Recognise fault causes and symptoms 1.2.3 Apply corrective actions 1.2.4 Review system performance and reliability 1.2.5 Identify further improvements to digital systems	To include: • How to apply or recommend actions that improve security, troubleshoot faults and protect digital systems

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Topic C: Improve and maintain digital systems	
Teaching content	**Exemplification**
2 Maintain digital systems 2.1 Routine maintenance 2.1.1 Software updates 2.1.2 Firmware updates 2.1.3 Data backups and recovery 2.1.4 Storage management 2.1.5 Anti-malware scanning 2.2 System checks 2.2.1 Performance checks 2.2.2 System reliability checks 2.2.3 Available storage capacity 2.2.4 Update status 2.2.5 Backup status	To include: • How to perform routine maintenance and system checks to support continued operation including: ○ Applying updates ○ Carrying out checks ○ Troubleshooting faults
3 Record and communicate digital system activities 3.1 Records 3.1.1 Security records 3.1.2 Configuration records 3.1.3 Maintenance records 3.2 Communication 3.2.1 Technical audiences 3.2.2 Non-technical audiences 3.3 Reporting 3.3.1 Incident reports 3.3.2 Fault reports 3.3.3 Maintenance reports 3.3.4 Recommended actions	To include: • How to record and organise security-related information clearly and accurately using appropriate digital tools • How to communicate security concerns, risks and recommended actions clearly, adapting the information for different audiences • How to record and communicate configuration and maintenance activity clearly to others

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Assessment criteria

The table below gives the assessment criteria for the tasks in the set assignment for this unit. The assessment criteria indicate what is required in these tasks.

This qualification has a compensatory approach. This means that the unit grade awarded is based on the **total** number of achieved criteria for the unit (see Section 4.4). Students do **not** have to achieve **all** criteria for a specific grade to achieve that unit grade (e.g. achieve all pass criteria to achieve a pass grade).

Section 4.4 provides full information on how to assess the NEA units and apply the assessment criteria. Students' work must show that all aspects of a criterion have been met in sufficient detail for it to be **successfully achieved** (see Section 5.4.1). If a student's work does not fully meet a criterion, you must not award that criterion.

The command words used in the assessment criteria are defined in Appendix A.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
P1: Summarise the resources required to deliver the digital system. (**S**)	**M1: Explain** the component compatibility requirements for the digital system. (**S**)	**D1: Justify** the planned delivery approach for meeting the requirements of the digital system.
P2: Create a delivery plan for the digital system.	**M2: Plan** the sequence of activities required to support the efficient delivery of the digital system.	
P3: Create a functional digital system by safely connecting and configuring hardware components.		
P4: Create a functional digital system by installing and configuring software components.		
P5: Apply authentication measures and access permissions within the digital system.	**M3: Apply** security controls to support the protection of the digital system.	**D2: Evaluate** the effectiveness of the secure configurations in protecting the digital system.

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Pass	Merit	Distinction
P6: Test the digital system to verify the components function together as intended.		**D3: Complete** corrective actions required following the verification of the digital system.
P7: Summarise faults in the configured digital system.		
P8: Complete routine maintenance **and** system checks to support continued operation of the digital system.	**M4: Record** configuration, maintenance activities and security configurations clearly using appropriate digital tools.	
		D4: Evaluate the effectiveness of the configured digital system in meeting user requirements.
P9: List security weaknesses and limitations of the configured digital system in relation to the **new requirements**.	**M5: Summarise** how the **new requirements** will impact the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the data in the digital system. (**S**)	
	M6: Summarise actions that can be taken to improve the digital system's security to meet the **new requirements**.	**D5: Justify** the suitability of the actions for meeting the **new requirements** of the digital system for the given audience. **(S)**

Assessment guidance

This assessment guidance gives you information relating to the assessment criteria. There might not be additional assessment guidance for each assessment criterion. It is included only where it is needed.

Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
P1	• P1 relates to Topics A1, A2 and unit R200 Topics A1, A2, A4, A5 and A6. • Students **must** summarise the specific tools, hardware and software resources required to deliver the digital system in the scenario.

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
	• Students need to draw on knowledge and understanding from across the course of study in order to achieve P1. (**S**)
P2	• Students **must** include the tasks, activities and timescales required to support delivery of the digital system.
M1	• Ideally students **must** explain the component compatibility requirements of the resources from P1. If students use different resources which are appropriate to the digital system in the scenario, they **must** not be penalised. • Students need to draw on knowledge and understanding from across the course of study in order to achieve M1. (**S**) • Students **could** include the component compatibility requirements from Topic A1 and unit R200 Topics A1, A2, A4, A5 and A6.
M2	• Having created a delivery plan for the digital system (P2), students **must** sequence the order of activities required to support the efficient delivery of the digital system. Where students **do not** provide sufficient evidence to achieve P2, it is still possible to achieve M2. • Students **must** consider dependencies between activities and the availability of resources.
D1	• Students **must** support judgements using evidence from their resource summary, compatibility requirements and delivery plan.
Task 2	• Students **must** provide clear evidence which demonstrates the connection, installation, configuration and maintenance of the digital system. • This can be in the form of images and/or videos supported by written notes. • Evidence that is generic will **not** be deemed appropriate. • An individual Teacher Observation Record (TOR) form must be provided for each student as evidence they have applied health, safety and secure equipment handling requirements (Task 2, Topic B1) when connecting and configuring hardware components. TOR forms **must** be suitably detailed for each student, to help the Cambridge OCR moderator determine if the assessment criterion has been met. You **must** follow the guidance provided in the 'guidance notes' section of the form so that the evidence captured

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
	and submitted is appropriate. Students **must** also read and sign the TOR form.
P3	• Students **must** be able to apply health, safety and secure equipment handling requirements when connecting and configuring hardware components to achieve this criterion. Staff **must** intervene if safe working practices are not being followed and where this happens this criterion cannot be achieved. • Students **must** consider the content in Topic B1 when connecting and configuring hardware components.
P4	• Students **must** ensure the configured software components support the requirements identified in the scenario. • Students **could** consider the configurations in Topic B2.
P5	• Students **must** ensure authentication measures and access permissions are appropriate for the **intended users** of the digital system identified in the scenario. • Students **could** consider the configurations in Topic B3.
P6	• Students **could** consider the system checks and verification activities in B4.
P7	• Students **must** summarise faults they have identified through verification activities. • Students **could** consider the common faults in Topic B4.
P8	• Students **could** consider the routine maintenance and checks in Topic C2.
M3	• Students **must** ensure configuration settings are appropriate to the intended **use** of the digital system. • Students **could** consider the configurations in Topic B3.
M4	• The records **must** clearly and accurately communicate configuration, maintenance activities and security configurations to others. • Students **could** consider the content in Topic C3.
D2	• Students **must** support judgements using evidence from secure configuration activities.

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Assessment criteria	Assessment guidance
	• Students **must** consider the content in Topic B3 when reaching conclusions.
D3	• Having verified the digital system (P6) and summarised faults (P7) students **must** complete corrective actions for D3. Where students do not provide sufficient evidence to achieve P6 and/or P7, it is still possible to achieve D3.
D4	• Students **must** support judgements using evidence from configuration, verification and maintenance activities. • Students **must** consider the content in Topic B2, B4 and C2 when reaching conclusions.
Task 3	• Students **must** provide evidence which clearly relates to the **new requirements** given in the scenario. • Evidence that is generic and does not relate to the configured digital system or the **new requirements** is not appropriate.
P9	• Students **must** identify security weaknesses and/or limitations of the configured digital system in relation to the **new requirements**.
M5	• M5 relates to Topic C1 and unit R200 Topic C1. • Students need to draw on knowledge and understanding from across the course of study in order to achieve M5. (**S**)
M6	• M6 relates to Topics B3 and C1.
D5	• M5 relates to Topic B3, C1, C3 and unit R200 Topic C. • Students need to draw on knowledge and understanding from across the course of study in order to achieve D5. (**S**) • Students **must** communicate their justification of the suitability of the actions for meeting the new requirements of the digital system, appropriate to the audience given in Task 3. • Students **must** use language, terminology and supporting information appropriate to the intended audience.

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Synoptic assessment

Some of the knowledge, understanding and skills required when completing this unit will draw on the learning developed in unit R200 Digital systems, data and security.

The following table details where these synoptic links can be found:

Unit R203: Installing digital systems		**Unit R200: Digital systems, data and security**	
Topic		**Topic**	
A	Plan the delivery of digital systems	A	Digital systems and infrastructure
B	Connect and configure digital systems	A	Digital systems and infrastructure
		C	Cyber security and secure digital systems
		D	Digital Information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
C	Improve and maintain digital systems	C	Cyber security and secure digital systems
		D	Digital Information and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

More information about synoptic assessment in these qualifications can be found in Section 4.2 Synoptic assessment.

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4 Assessment and grading

4.1 Overview of the assessment

Qualification detail	Qualification information
Certification entry code	J002
Qualification title	Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data
Guided learning hours (GLH)	300*
Reference	610/3942/1
Total units	Has four units: • Mandatory units R200, R201, R202, R203

*the guided learning hours includes assessment time for each unit

Unit R200: Digital systems, data and security

75 GLH

1 hour 15 minutes written exam

60 marks (60 UMS)

Set and marked by us

The exam has two parts and all questions are compulsory. There will be short, medium and extended response questions.

Section A: 15 marks.

Section B: 45 marks.

Unit R201: Investigating digital information and data

75 GLH

Our set assignment

Centre-assessed and moderated by us

This set assignment has 3 practical tasks.

It should take 10 GLH to complete.

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Unit R202: Developing programming solutions

75 GLH

Our set assignment

Centre-assessed and moderated by us

This set assignment has 3 practical tasks.

It should take 10 GLH to complete.

Unit R203: Installing digital systems

75 GLH

Our set assignment

Centre-assessed and moderated by us

This set assignment has 3 practical tasks.

It should take 10 GLH to complete.

The set assignments for NEA units are on our secure website, Teach Cambridge. The dates for which each assignment is live are given on the front cover. It is important you use the correct NEA set assignment for your students.

4.2 Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment is a built-in feature of this qualification. It means that students need to use an appropriate selection of their knowledge, understanding and skills developed in an integrated way and apply them to a key task or tasks.

This helps students to build a holistic understanding of the subject and the connections between different elements of learning, so they can go on to apply what they learn from the qualification to new and different situations and contexts.

The exam unit allows students to gain underpinning knowledge and understanding relevant to digital systems and data. The NEA units draw on and strengthen this learning by assessing it in an applied or practical way.

Students must apply their learning in ways which show they are able to draw together different areas of knowledge, understanding and skills from across the full course of study and construct and develop an extended line of reasoning. The assessments for unit R201, unit R202 and unit R203 contain specific synoptic assessment criteria. These are identified by an (S).

It is important to be aware of the synoptic links between the units so that teaching, learning and assessment can be planned accordingly. Section 3.3 shows the synoptic links for each unit.

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4.3 Transferable skills

This qualification gives students the opportunity to gain broad, transferable skills and experiences that they can apply in future study, employment and life.

These skills include:

- communication
- evaluation
- evidence-based decision-making
- Interpretation
- investigating
- observation
- planning
- problem solving
- recording information accurately
- self-managing own performance
- time management.

4.4 Grading and awarding grades

Calculating the exam unit grades

We mark the exam. It is marked according to a mark scheme, and the mark achieved will determine the unit grade awarded (pass, merit or distinction). We determine grade boundaries for the exam in each assessment series.

If a student doesn't achieve the mark required for a pass grade, we issue an unclassified result for that unit. The marks achieved in the exam will contribute towards the student's overall qualification grade, even if a pass is not achieved in the unit assessment.

Calculating the NEA unit grades

You will mark the NEA units and we will moderate them.

Each unit has specified pass, merit and distinction assessment criteria. The assessment criteria for each unit are provided with the unit content in Section 3.3 of this specification. You must judge whether students have met the criteria or not.

A unit grade can be awarded at pass, merit or distinction:

- The unit grade awarded is based on the **total** number of achieved criteria for the unit.
- The total number of achieved criteria for each unit can come from achievement of **any combination** of the pass, merit or distinction criteria.
- This is **not** a 'hurdles-based' approach, so students do **not** have to achieve **all** criteria for a specific grade to achieve that grade (e.g. all pass criteria to achieve a pass for the unit).

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The number of assessment criteria needed to achieve each grade has been built into each assignment. These are referred to as design thresholds. The table below shows the marks ranges for each grade outcome for the NEA assessments in these qualifications. The lowest mark in each grade range is the design threshold.

Grade	No. of Assessment Criteria achieved for the Unit	Description
Unclassified (U)	0-7	• The student did not achieve enough criteria to achieve a pass for the unit. We will issue an unclassified result for the unit. • The number of criteria achieved will be converted to a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) mark* and will contribute to the qualification grade outcome.
Pass (P)	8-11	• The student achieved enough total criteria to achieve a pass for the unit. • The number of criteria achieved will be converted to a UMS mark and will contribute to the qualification grade outcome.
Merit (M)	12-15	• The student achieved enough total criteria to achieve a merit for the unit. • The number of criteria achieved will be converted to a UMS mark and will contribute to the qualification grade outcome.
Distinction (D)	16-20	• The student achieved enough total criteria to achieve a distinction for the unit. • The number of criteria achieved will be converted to a UMS mark and will contribute to the qualification grade outcome.

* More information about UMS is in the section Calculating the qualification grades.

The number of assessment criteria achieved for an NEA unit will be classed as the raw mark. You will mark students' work and identify the number of criteria (raw marks) achieved for each NEA unit. Our moderators will moderate samples of work from your centre. This moderation process may result in the number of assessment criteria (raw marks) achieved being changed. The final raw mark achieved after moderation has taken place will be converted into a mark on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) and will contribute towards the student's overall qualification grade. (More information about UMS is in the section Calculating the qualification grades below)

To make sure we can keep outcomes fair and comparable over time, we will review the performance of the qualifications through their lifetime. The review process might lead to changes in these design thresholds if any unexpected outcomes or significant changes are identified.

If a student doesn't achieve enough criteria to achieve a unit pass, we will issue an unclassified result for that unit. The number of criteria achieved will be converted into a mark on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) and will contribute towards the student's overall qualification grade, even if a pass is not achieved in the unit assessment.

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Calculating the qualification grades

The overall qualification grades are:

- Distinction (D)
- Merit (M)
- Pass (P)

When we work out students' overall grades, we need to be able to compare performance on the same unit in different assessments over time and between different units. We use a uniform mark scale (UMS) to do this.

A student's uniform mark for each exam unit is calculated from the student's raw mark on that unit. A student's uniform mark for each NEA unit is calculated from the number of criteria the student achieves for that unit. The raw mark or number of criteria achieved is converted to the equivalent mark on the uniform mark scale. Marks between grade boundaries are converted on a pro rata basis.

When unit results are issued, the student's unit grade and uniform mark are given. The uniform mark is shown out of the maximum uniform mark for the unit (for example, 48/60).

On results day we will publish a marks calculator, for the specific series, on our website to help you convert raw marks/number of achieved criteria into uniform marks.

The student's uniform marks for each unit will be aggregated to give a total uniform mark for the qualification. The student's overall grade will be determined by the total uniform mark.

The tables below show:

- the maximum raw marks or number of criteria, and uniform marks for each unit in the qualification
- the uniform mark boundaries for each of the assessments in each qualification
- the minimum total mark for each overall grade in the qualification.

Unit	Maximum raw mark/number of criteria	Maximum uniform mark (UMS)	Distinction (UMS)	Merit (UMS)	Pass (UMS)
R200	60	60	48	36	24
R201	20	30	24	18	12
R202	20	30	24	18	12
R203	20	30	24	18	12
Qualification Totals	120	150	120	90	60

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5 Non-exam assessment (NEA) units

This section gives guidance on completing the NEA units. In the NEA units, students build a portfolio of evidence to meet the assessment criteria for the unit.

Assessment for these qualifications **must** adhere to JCQ's Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (Vocational and Technical Qualifications).

Do **not** use JCQ's Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (GCE and GCSE Specifications) – these are only relevant to GCE and GCSE specifications.

The NEA units are centre-assessed and externally moderated by us.

You **must** read and understand all the rules and guidance in this section **before** your students start the set assignments.

If you have any questions, please contact us for help and support.

5.1 Preparing for NEA unit delivery and assessment

5.1.1 Centre and teacher/assessor responsibilities

We assume the teacher is the assessor for the NEA units.

Before you start to offer this qualification, you must be confident your centre can fulfil all the responsibilities described below. It is the responsibility of the head of centre[1] to make sure our requirements are met. The head of centre must ensure that:

- there are enough trained or qualified people to teach and assess the expected number of students you have in your cohorts.
- teaching staff have the relevant level of subject knowledge and skills to deliver and assess this qualification.
- teaching staff will fully cover the knowledge, understanding and skills requirements in teaching and learning activities.
- all necessary resources are available for teaching staff and students during teaching and assessment activities. This gives students every opportunity to meet the requirements of the qualification and reach the highest grade possible.
- there is a system of internal standardisation in place so that all assessment decisions for centre-assessed assignments are consistent, fair, valid and reliable (see Section 5.4.3).
- there is enough time for effective teaching and learning, assessment and internal standardisation.

[1] This is the most senior officer in the organisation, directly responsible for the delivery of Cambridge OCR qualifications, For example, the headteacher or principal of a school/college. The head of centre accepts full responsibility for the correct administration and conduct of Cambridge OCR exams.

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- robust processes are in place to make sure that students' work is individual and confirmed as authentic (see Section 5.2.2).
- our set assignments are used for students' summative assessments. You must make sure that students use the assignment that is live for the period during which they are taking their summative assessment.
- our set assignments are **not** used for practice. This includes both assignments that are currently live or live assignments that have expired. Sample assessment material for each of the NEA units is available on Teach Cambridge and our website. This sample assessment material can be used for practice purposes.
- students understand what they need to do to achieve the criteria.
- students understand what it means when we say work must be authentic and individual and they (and you) follow our requirements to make sure their work is their own.
- students know they must not reference another individual's personal details in any evidence produced for summative assessment, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). It is the student's responsibility to make sure evidence that includes another individual's personal details is anonymised.
- outcomes submitted to us are correct and are accurately recorded and adhere to the published deadlines.
- assessment of set assignments adheres to the JCQ's Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (Vocational and Technical Qualifications) and the JCQ AI use in assessments: Protecting the integrity of qualifications.
- a declaration is made at the point you're submitting any work to us for assessment that confirms:
    - all assessment is conducted according to the specified regulations.
    - students' work is authentic.
    - marks have been transcribed accurately.

Section 5.2.2 has more information about candidate and teacher authentication.

(Failing to meet the assessment requirements might be considered as malpractice.)

- centre records and students' work are kept according to these requirements:
    - students' work **must** be kept secure until **after** the unit has been awarded and any review of results or appeals processed. We cannot consider any review if the work has not been kept.
    - internal standardisation and assessment records must be kept securely for a minimum of three years after the date we've issued a certificate for a qualification.
- all cases of suspected malpractice involving teachers or students are reported (see Section 7.3.1).

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5.1.2 Health and safety

In unit R203, when students are provided with hardware, connectivity or other physical components to install, connect and configure, all relevant health and safety policies and procedures **must** be followed. A risk assessment **must** be completed by the centre before students undertake the assignment.

Teachers **must** intervene if there is a health and safety risk and reflect this in the assessment if the student required additional support to work safely and independently.

5.2 Requirements and guidance for delivering and marking the set assignments

The assignments are:

- set by us.
- taken under supervised conditions (unless we specify otherwise in the assessment guidance).
- assessed by the teacher.
- moderated by us.

You can find the set assignments on our secure website, Teach Cambridge.

The set assignments give an approximate time that it will take to complete all the tasks. These timings are for guidance only, but should be used by you, the teacher, to give students an indication of how long to spend on each task. You can decide how the time should be allocated between each task or part task. Students can complete the tasks and produce the evidence across several sessions. Students' evidence (either hard copy or digital) must be kept securely by the teacher and access to assessment responses must be controlled. Students aren't permitted to access their work in between the assessment sessions.

We will publish a new set assignment for each NEA unit every year. The live assignment for each NEA unit will be published **for teachers** on Teach Cambridge in September each year. They will be available from this date to support teacher preparation and planning.

You **must not** share these assignments with your students before the live assessment sessions you have scheduled. We expect you will need to complete several weeks of teaching and preparation before students begin the assessment.

When planning, you must consider the full assessment period during which students will complete the assignment(s). Students must not have access to the assignment(s) before or after this period, unless they are completing a reattempt in line with the reattempt arrangements.

Students are allowed to resubmit work based on the same live assignment. Section 5.4.5 provides more information about resubmissions.

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You **must**:

- only download set assignments from our secure website, Teach Cambridge, and use a set assignment that is live for assessment for all summative assessment of students.
- have registered students for the subject and made unit entries before submitting NEA work for moderation.
- **not** share the set assignments with anyone from outside of your centre. These must only be shared with appropriate centre staff and students taking the assessments.

  (More information about maintaining the integrity of assessment materials is in the JCQ document General regulations for approved centres.
- make sure students know that they **must not** share assessment material or their own work with others, including posting or sharing on social media.

(More information is in the JCQ guidance information for candidates Using social media and examinations/assessments.)

The rest of this section is about how to manage the delivery and marking of the set assignments so that assessment is valid and reliable. Please note that failing to meet these requirements might be considered as malpractice.

Here is a summary of what you need to do.

You **must**:

- be familiar with the requirements set out in the JCQ document Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (Vocational and Technical Qualifications).
- have covered the knowledge, understanding and skills with your students and be sure they are ready for assessment **before** you start the summative assessment. This may include students practising applying their learning and receiving feedback from teachers in preparing to take the assessment.
- use the correct live set assignment for summative assessment of the students. The dates for which set assignments are live for summative assessment are shown on the front cover. These assignments are available on Teach Cambridge.
- give students the Student guide before they start the assessment.
- make sure all students have read the JCQ document Information for candidates – non-examination assessments and the notice to candidates section of the authentication form before beginning their work.
- familiarise yourself with the assessment guidance relating to the tasks. The assessment guidance for each unit is in Section 3 after the assessment criteria grids and with the student tasks in the assignments.
- make sure students are clear about the tasks they must complete and the assessment criteria they are attempting to meet.
- give students a reasonable amount of time to complete the assignments and be fair and consistent to all students. The estimated time we think each assignment should take is stated

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in the set assignments. In that time students can work on the tasks under the specified conditions until the date that you collect the work for centre assessment.

- tell students the resources they can use in the assignment before they start the assessment tasks.
- only give students templates provided by us. Where a template is needed for a task, we have provided it in the assignment. The Assessment Guidance will tell students if they **must** use the template(s) we provide. Where this is **not** stated as a mandatory requirement ('must use'), we recommend that students use the template(s) we provide, but they will not be penalised if they choose not to.

  You must **not** give students any other templates to use when completing their live assignments. Students may create their own templates to record their evidence. If they use templates accessed from other sources, they **must** make sure that:

  - the source is referenced.
  - the template is not pre-populated with responses for which the students may gain marks.
- monitor students' progress to make sure work is capable of being assessed against the assessment criteria, on track for being completed in good time and is the student's own work:
  - NEA work must be completed in the centre under teacher supervision. Supervision is not invigilation. A supervised classroom does not require exam conditions in that classroom. We do not require the internet to be disabled in the supervised classroom. NEA assessments would typically be completed in normal curriculum time:
    - work **must** be completed in the supervised sessions with enough supervision and use of professional judgement to make sure that it can be authenticated as the student's own work. This means that any source (such as the internet) that may be used by the student when they complete their work must be used appropriately to support the students' **own** work. Students must not claim work sourced through the internet (or any other source) as their own (see Section 5.2.4). The supervising teacher should be the teacher who will authenticate the students' work, but we accept that this may not always be possible, for example, when cover is required. Where this is the case, teachers should take steps to ensure they can confidently authenticate candidates' work. (See Section 5.2.2 for more information on ways to authenticate work.) You must be familiar with the requirements of the JCQ document AI use in assessments: Protecting the integrity of qualifications before assessment starts.
    - there may be exceptions to the requirement for supervised conditions if there is work to complete to support the assignment tasks (e.g. research). The assignment and assessment guidance will specify if there are exceptions.
    - Where students are allowed to complete work outside of supervised conditions (e.g. research that may be allowed between supervised sessions) you **must** make sure that they only bring notes relating to the work they are allowed to complete unsupervised into the supervised sessions (e.g. notes relating to the research they have done) and to

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make sure any work they have done is independent. They must not use unsupervised time as an opportunity to:

- create drafts of work for their tasks
- gather information to use in other aspects of their tasks.

  - if you provide any material to prepare students for the set assignment, you must adhere to the rules on using referencing and on acceptable levels of guidance to students. This is in Section 5.2.4 and 5.3.
  - students must produce their work independently (see Sections 5.2.3 and 5.3).
  - you must make sure students know to keep their work and passwords secure and know that they must not share completed work with other students, use any aspect of another student's work or share their passwords.

- complete the **teacher observation record** that is with the assignments for tasks that state it is needed. This must be submitted with the students' evidence. You **must** follow the guidance given with the form when completing it. Electronic signatures may be used on the forms.
- use the assessment criteria to assess students' work.
- before submitting a final outcome to us, mark students' completed work and allow them to repeat any part of the assignment, reworking their original evidence. We call this a reattempt. Students must have completed the whole assignment before you mark their work. Any feedback you give to students on the marked work, must:
  - be factual: telling the student what you have observed, not what to do to improve their work.
  - be recorded.
  - be available to the moderator.

(See Section 5.3 on Feedback and Section 5.4.5 on resubmitting work.)

You **must not:**

- create your own assignments for students to use for practice or live assessment.
- change any part of the set assignments (scenarios or tasks).
- mark students' work in stages, providing feedback at each stage. This would be iterative assessment which is not allowed.
- accept multiple reattempts of work where small changes have been made in response to feedback. Marking and feedback must not be an iterative process.
- allow teachers or students to add, amend or remove any work **after** submission for moderation.
- give detailed advice and suggestions to individuals or the whole class on how work may be improved to meet the assessment criteria. This includes giving access to student work as an exemplar.

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- allow students access to their assignment work between teacher supervised sessions. There may be exceptions where students are allowed to complete work independently (e.g. research). Any exceptions will be stated in the assignments.
- practise the live set assignment tasks with the students. We provide sample assignments for you to use for practice purposes.

5.2.1 Scope of assessment modification

The set assignments for each unit are designed to meet the unit content and marking criteria. To make sure that the assessments remain fair and reliable, no modification is allowed.

5.2.2 Ways to authenticate work

All NEA work must be completed under teacher supervision (unless the assessment guidance for a specific task or sub-task advises otherwise). In addition, you must complete enough checks to be confident that the work you mark is the student's own and was produced independently.

You should discuss work in progress with students, including asking them questions such as what they are planning/doing and why. This will make sure that work is being completed in a planned and timely way and will give you opportunities to check the authenticity of the work. This is not an opportunity to offer additional guidance to students.

You **must**:

- have read and understood the JCQ documents Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (Vocational and Technical Qualifications) and AI use in assessments: Protecting the integrity of qualifications.
- make sure students and other teachers understand what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of malpractice (e.g. collusion and copying).
- not accept plagiarised work as evidence.

Use your regular ongoing conversations with students as an opportunity to support authentication of their work. You know your students well and can use verbal conversation or questioning as a useful assurance moment, enabling students talk to you about the approaches they've taken to produce their work.

- make sure students and teachers fill in candidate and teacher authentication declarations (see Section 5.3.5).

5.2.3 Group work

Group work is not allowed for the NEA assignments in these qualifications.

5.2.4 Plagiarism (including AI misuse)

Students must use their own words when they produce final written pieces of work to show they have genuinely applied their knowledge and understanding. When students use their own words, ideas and opinions, it reduces the possibility of their work being identified as plagiarised. Plagiarism is:

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- the submission of someone else's work as your own
- failure to acknowledge a source correctly, including any use of written material, the internet or Artificial Intelligence (AI).

You might find the following JCQ documents helpful:

- Plagiarism in assessments
- AI use in assessments: Protecting the integrity of qualifications

Due to increasing advancements in AI technology, we strongly recommend that you are familiar with the likely outputs from AI tools. This could include using AI tools to produce responses to some of the assignment tasks, so that you can identify typical formats and wording that these may produce. This may help you identify any cases of potential plagiarism from students using AI tools to generate written responses.

Plagiarism (including AI misuse) makes up a large percentage of cases of suspected malpractice reported to us by our moderators. You must **not** accept plagiarised work as evidence.

Plagiarism (including AI misuse) often happens innocently when students do not know that they must reference or acknowledge their sources or aren't sure how to do this. It's important to make sure your students understand:

- the meaning of plagiarism (including AI misuse) and what penalties may be applied.
- that they can refer to research, quotations or evidence produced by somebody else, but they must list and reference their sources and clearly mark quotations.
- quoting someone else's work, even when it's properly sourced and referenced, doesn't evidence understanding. The student must 'do' something with that information to show they understand it. For example, if a student has to analyse data from an experiment, quoting data doesn't show that they understand what it means. The student must interpret the data and, by relating it to their assignment, say what they think it means. The work must clearly show how the student is using the material they have referenced to inform their thoughts, ideas or conclusions.

We have a Guide to referencing on our website. We have also produced a poster about referencing and plagiarism which may be useful to share with your students.

You must teach your students:

- to always reference or acknowledge material copied from the internet or other sources. This applies to infographics (graphical information providing data or knowledge) as well
- how to reference and explain why it's important to do it:
    - use quote marks to show the beginning and end of the copied work.
    - for website text, to list the URL address and the date they accessed the website.
    - show the name of any AI source used and the date the content was generated for computer-generated content (such as an AI Chatbot).

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- retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference, assessment and authentication purposes (see JCQ guidance: AI and Assessments, A quick guide for students for requirements)
- for other publications, to list:
  - the name of the author.
  - the name of the resource/book/printed article.
  - the year in which it was published.
  - the page number.
- to always identify information they have copied from teaching handouts and presentations for the unit, using quote marks and stating the text is from class handouts.

Identifying copied/plagiarised work

Inconsistencies throughout a student's work are often indicators of plagiarism. For example:

- different tones of voice, sentence structure and formality across pieces of work.
- use of American expressions, spellings and contexts (such as American laws and guidelines).
- dated expressions and references to past events as being current.
- sections of text in a document where the font or format is inconsistent with other sections.

What to do if you think a student has plagiarised

If you identify plagiarism during ongoing monitoring of students' work, you can address this in your centre (for example, by instructing the student(s) involved to re-do the affected tasks).

If you identify plagiarised work during assessment or internal standardisation, you **must**:

- consider the plagiarism when judging the number of assessment criteria achieved. You must not award assessment criteria where the work is plagiarised.
- record that there is plagiarism in the work on the unit recording sheet (URS) or your recording document, and that you have adjusted the number of assessment criteria achieved to take account of the plagiarism. You will also need to include this information on the Moderation Service if the student's work is requested as part of the moderation sample. This helps our moderators to understand why such criteria may look to be achieved but have not been awarded.
- report the student(s) for plagiarism in line with the JCQ document Suspected malpractice policies and procedures.
- fill in the **JCQ form M1**.

In line with the policy and procedures of JCQ on suspected malpractice, the sanctions applied for plagiarism (including AI misuse) could result in a warning, loss of marks or loss of aggregation or certification opportunity.

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5.3 Feedback

Feedback to students on work in progress towards summative assessment

You can discuss work in progress towards summative assessment with students to make sure it's being done in a planned and timely way. It also provides an opportunity to check the authenticity of the work. You must intervene if there's a health and safety risk (and reflect this in your assessment if the student's ability to operate safely and independently is part of the criteria).

Generic guidance to the whole class is also allowed. This could include reminding students to check they have provided evidence to cover all key aspects of the task. Individual students can be prompted to double check for gaps in evidence providing that specific gaps are not pointed out to them.

You can give general feedback and support if one or more students are struggling to get started on an aspect of the assignment or following a break between sessions working on the assignment.

For example, if a student is seeking more guidance that suggests they are not able to apply knowledge, skills and understanding to complete their evidence, you can remind them that they had a lesson which covered the topic. The student would then need to review their own notes to find this information and apply it as needed.

If a student needs additional help to get started on an initial task that is critical to accessing the rest of the assessment, you can provide this help if you feel it is necessary, but you must not award the student with any assessment criteria directly associated with the part(s) of the task for which they received help. This **must** be recorded on the student's work and recording document (see Section 5.4.1). You will also need to include this information on the Moderation Service if the student's work is requested as part of the moderation sample. This helps our moderators to understand why such criterion may look to be achieved but have not been awarded. More information about how to record additional help given in these circumstances is in Section 5.4.1.

With the exception of the specific feedback allowed to help students start a critical task, mentioned above, feedback must not provide specific advice and guidance that would be construed as coaching. This would compromise the student's ability to independently perform the task(s) they are doing and constitutes malpractice. Our moderators use a number of measures to assure themselves the work is the student's own.

Assessing completed work

When students have completed their work on an assignment, you must assess it and give feedback to them on the completed work they submitted to you for assessment. (Section 5.4.1 has more information about how to assess NEA work.) Assessment should not be an iterative process. This means you must not assess work and give feedback on it in stages. You must only assess the work when the assignment is complete.

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Feedback **must:**

- be supportive, encouraging and positive.
- tell the student what has been noticed, not what you think (for example, if you have observed the student completing a task, you can describe what happened, what was produced and what was demonstrated).

Feedback **can**:

- identify what task and part of the task could be improved, but not say how to improve it. You could show the student work from a **different** unit that demonstrates higher achievement, but you must not detail to the student how they could achieve that in their work. If you are using another student's work from a different unit as an example, you must anonymise this work and make sure that the potential to plagiarise from this work is minimised. You could remind students that they had a lesson on a specific topic and that they could review their notes, but you must not tell them how they could apply the teaching to improve their work.
- comment on what has been achieved, for example 'the evidence meets the P2 and M2 criteria'.
- identify that the student hasn't met a command word or assessment criteria requirement. For example, 'This is a description, not an evaluation'.
- use text from the specification, assignment or assessment criteria in general guidance to clarify what is needed in the work. For example, 'You explained how the prototype contributes to the function of the product (M1)'.

Feedback **must not**:

- point out specific gaps. For example, you must not prompt the student to include specific detail in their work, such as 'You need to measure all components using a steel rule'.
- be so detailed that it leads students to the answer. For example, you must not give:
    - model answers.
    - step-by-step guidance on what to do to complete or improve work.
    - headings or prompts that include examples which give all or part of what students have to write about or produce.
- talk the student through how to achieve or complete the task.
- give detail on where to find information/evidence.

In other words, feedback must help the student to take the initiative in making changes. It must not direct or tell the student what to do to complete or improve their work in a way that means they do not need to think how to apply their learning. Students need to recall or apply their learning. You must not do the work for them.

Students can reattempt their work on an assignment after you have marked it and provided feedback. This must happen before the work is submitted to us for moderation. Neither you nor

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the student can add, amend or remove any work after the final mark has been submitted for moderation.

Sections 5.4.4 and 5.4.5 give more guidance for students who wish to reattempt or resubmit their work following feedback.

Please see additional guidance for students who wish to resubmit their work following Cambridge OCR moderation.

What improper assistance might look like

When we see anything that suggests the teacher has led students to the answer, we become concerned because it suggests students have not worked independently to produce their assignment work. The following are examples of what might indicate improper assistance by the teacher:

- prompts that instruct students to include specific detail in their work, such as, 'You need to include the aims of the activity. Who is it aimed at? What is the purpose of the activity? How will it benefit the specific group/individual?'
- headings or templates that include examples which give all or part of what students have to write about or produce, such as sources of support.

Our moderators will report suspected malpractice when they cannot see differences in content between students' work in the sample they are moderating. An exception is when students have only used and referenced technical facts and definitions. If our moderator is in any doubt, they will report suspected malpractice. The decision to investigate or not is made by us, not the moderators.

5.3.1 Reporting suspected malpractice

It is the responsibility of the head of centre to report all cases of suspected malpractice involving teachers or students.

A JCQ Report of Suspected Malpractice form (JCQ/M1 for student suspected malpractice or JCQ/M2 for staff suspected malpractice) is available to download from the JCQ website. The form must be completed as soon as possible and emailed to us at compliance@ocr.org.uk.

When we ask centres to gather evidence to assist in any malpractice investigation, heads of centres must act promptly and report the outcomes to us.

The JCQ document Suspected malpractice policies and procedures has more information about reporting and investigating suspected malpractice, and the possible sanctions and penalties which could be imposed. You can also find out more on our website.

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5.3.2 Generating evidence

The set assignments will tell the students what they need to do to meet the assessment criteria for the NEA units. It is your responsibility to make sure that the methods of generating evidence for the assignments are:

- valid
- safe and manageable
- suitable to the needs of the student.

Valid

The evidence presented must be valid. For example, it would not be appropriate to present an organisation's equal opportunities policy as evidence towards a student's understanding of how the equal opportunities policy operates in an organisation. It would be more appropriate for the student to incorporate the policy in a report describing the different approaches to equal opportunities.

Safe and manageable

You must make sure that methods of generating evidence and approaches taken:

- are safe and manageable
- do not put unnecessary demands on the student.
- are appropriate and in line with ethical standards and your centre's safeguarding responsibilities.

Suitable to the needs of the student

We are committed to ensuring that achievement of these qualifications is free from unnecessary barriers.

You must follow this commitment through when modifying tasks and/or considering assessment and evidence generation. If you are modifying tasks and are not sure what is acceptable, contact us.

Observation and questioning

The primary evidence for assessment is the work submitted by the student, however the following assessment methods might be suitable for you to use for some aspects of these qualifications, where identified:

- **observation** of a student doing something
- **questioning** of the student or witness.

Observation

You and the student should plan observations together, but it is your responsibility to record the observation properly (for example observing a student undertaking a practical task). More information is in the teacher observation records section.

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Questioning

Questioning the student is normally an ongoing part of the formative assessment process and may, in some circumstances, provide evidence to support achievement of the criteria.

Questioning is often used to:

- test a student's understanding of work which has been completed outside of the classroom (where this may be permitted)
- check if a student understands the work they have completed
- collect information on the type and purpose of the processes a student has gone through.

If questioning is used as evidence towards achievement of specific topics, it is important that you record enough information about what they asked and how the student replied, to allow the assessment decision to be moderated.

5.3.3 Teacher observation records

You **must** complete the teacher observation record in the set assignment for:

Unit R203 for each student as evidence of the practical activities completed when the practical activities completed when connecting, configuring and maintaining the digital system (Task 2 Topics B and C). The teacher observation record must describe how the student applied health, safety and secure equipment handling requirements when connecting and configuring hardware components and provide sufficient detail to support assessment of the practical activities completed. For this task, students must also provide evidence such as videos and/or photos showing them applying the recommended protective actions and security improvements.

Teacher observation **cannot** be used as evidence of achievement for a whole unit. Most evidence **must** be produced directly by the student. Teacher observation **must only** be used where specified as an evidence requirement.

Teacher observation records must be individual to each student and suitably detailed, to help moderators to determine if the assessment criteria have been met. You must follow the guidance provided in the 'guidance notes' section of the form so that the evidence captured and submitted is appropriate. Both you and the student must sign and date the form to show that you both agree its contents. Electronic signatures are acceptable. The signed form must form part of the student's evidence and be submitted with work requested for moderation.

Where the guidance has not been followed, the reliability of the form as evidence may be called into question. If doubt about the validity of the teacher observation record exists, it cannot be used as assessment evidence and marks based on it cannot be awarded. Our moderators will be instructed to adjust centre marks accordingly.

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5.3.4 Presentation of the final piece of work

Students must produce their evidence in the format specified in the tasks where specific formats are given. Written work, including tables and graphs, can be digital (e.g. word processed) or handwritten. If a student's work is requested as part of the moderation sample, a digital version will need to be uploaded to our Submit for Assessment service. You should consider this before students produce their work for assessment.

More information about how to submit work to Submit for Assessment is on our administration pages. This also includes information relating to the operating systems, browsers and devices that are supported by Submit for Assessment, as well as the file formats and sizes that are acceptable.

Any sourced material must be suitably acknowledged. Quotations must be clearly marked and a reference provided.

You will provide information to us relating to the criteria achieved by students on our Cambridge OCR Moderation Service. This is accessed through My Cambridge. More information is available on our administration pages.

5.3.5 Candidate and teacher authentication

Both students and teachers must declare that the work is the student's own:

Each student must sign an authentication form **before** submitting their work to you. By signing the form, they declare the work is their own and any assistance given and/or sources used have been acknowledged. It is your responsibility to make sure every student does this.

Teachers must also sign the authentication form for each student to declare the work submitted is the students' own.

You must retain authentication forms in your centre until all reviews of results, malpractice investigations and appeals have been resolved.

The authentication form is on Teach Cambridge and the OCR website.

5.4 Assessing NEA units

All NEA units are assessed by teachers and externally moderated by our moderators. Assessment of the set assignments must adhere to JCQ's Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (Vocational and Technical Qualifications).

The centre is responsible for appointing someone to act as the internal assessor. This would usually be the teacher who has delivered the programme but could be another person from the centre.

The assessment criteria must be used to assess the student's work. These specify the levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that the student needs to demonstrate.

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5.4.1 Applying the assessment criteria

When students have completed the assignment, they must submit their work to you to be assessed.

You must assess the tasks using the assessment criteria and any additional assessment guidance provided. Each criterion states what the student needs to do to achieve that criterion (e.g. Simulate the electronic circuit to demonstrate its correct operation). The command word and assessment guidance provide additional detail about breadth and depth where it is needed.

You must judge whether each assessment criterion has been **successfully achieved** based on the evidence that a student has produced. For the criterion to be achieved, the evidence must show that all aspects have been met in sufficient detail.

When making a judgement about whether a criterion has been **successfully achieved**, you must consider:

- the requirements of the specific NEA task that the student is completing
- the criterion wording, including the command word used and its definition
- any assessment guidance for the criterion
- the unit content that is being assessed.

You must annotate the work to show where evidence meets each criterion (see Section 5.4.2). You can then award the criterion. Assessment should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions.

The number of criteria needed for each unit grade (pass, merit or distinction) is provided in Section 4.4

The total number of criteria achieved is the 'raw mark'.

You must be convinced, from the evidence presented, that students have worked independently to the required standard. If you have given additional, more specific support or guidance to an individual student to get them started on a task, this **must** also be recorded on the student's work and/or your recording sheet. You will also need to include this information on the Moderation Service if the student's work is requested as part of the moderation sample. This ensures the information is available for our moderator to see. You may give this support because the student could not start a task or part of a task that was **critical to them accessing the rest of the task or assignment** (see Section 5.3). In this situation, the student should **not** be awarded the assessment criteria for the work for which they received help, and the number of criteria achieved must be adjusted appropriately. Recording this on the student's work/recording document (and the Moderation Service where this work is requested in the sample) will help our moderator to understand why the assessment criteria have not been awarded.

There should be clear evidence that work has been attempted and some work produced. If a student does not submit any work for an NEA unit, the student should be identified as being absent from that unit.

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If a student completes any work at all for an NEA unit, you must assess the work using the assessment criteria and award the appropriate number of criteria. This might be zero.

Your centre must internally standardise the assessment decisions for the cohort **before** you give feedback to students (see Section 5.4.3). When you are confident the internal assessment standardisation and appeals process is complete, you can submit work for moderation at the relevant time. You **must not** add, amend or remove any work after it has been submitted to us for final moderation. Work **must** be kept securely until the end of the review of results process.

5.4.2 Annotating students' work

Each piece of NEA work must show how you are satisfied the assessment criteria have been met.

Comments on students' work and your recording document provide a means of communication about assessment decisions made, between teachers during internal standardisation, and with our moderators if the work is part of the moderation sample. (Comments or annotations must not be used as a method of communication with our moderator for any other reason.)

5.4.3 Internal standardisation

It is important that all teachers are assessing work to common standards. For each unit, centres must make sure that internal standardisation of outcomes across teachers and teaching groups takes place using an appropriate procedure.

This can be done in a number of ways. In the first year, reference material and our training meetings will provide a basis for your centre's own standardisation. In following years, this, and/or your own centre's archive material, can be used. We advise you to hold preliminary meetings of staff involved to compare standards through cross-marking a small sample of work. After you have completed most of the assessment, a further meeting at which work is exchanged and discussed will help you make final adjustments.

If you are the only teacher in your centre assessing these qualifications, we still advise you to make sure your assessment decisions are internally standardised by someone else in your centre. Alternatively, this could be a teacher that may be delivering in another local centre or as part of your Multi Academy Trust (MAT) if relevant. Ideally this person will have experience of these types of qualifications, for example someone who:

- is delivering a similar qualification in another subject.
- has relevant subject knowledge.

You must keep evidence of internal standardisation in the centre for our moderators to see.

We have a guide to how internal standardisation can be approached on our website.

5.4.4 Reattempting work to improve the grade before submitting marks to us

As described in Section 5.2, before submitting a final outcome to us for external moderation, you can allow students to repeat any element of the assignment and rework their original evidence. We refer to this as a reattempt. A reattempt allows the student to reflect on **internal** feedback,

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and to improve their work. A reattempt is **not** an iterative process where students make small modifications through ongoing feedback to eventually achieve the desired outcome.

Any feedback **must** be noted by you and a record of this kept in centre. We have provided a set assignment feedback form for this purpose, which can be found on Teach Cambridge. We recommend that you use the set assignment feedback form we provide or create your own recording form.

To summarise, a reattempt is a process that is internal to the centre. This allows students to rework their evidence:

- after it has been marked by you as a complete assignment.
- before it is submitted to us as the final work.

A reattempt **must** be done before submission for external moderation. When a student submits the work to you as final for external moderation, they **must not** complete any further work on any aspect of it.

5.4.5 Resubmitting moderated work to us to improve the grade

We use the term 'resubmission' when referring to student work that has previously been submitted to us for moderation. Following moderation, if you and the student feel they have not performed at their best during the assessment, the student can, with your agreement, improve their work and resubmit it to you again for assessment and to us for external moderation. You must be sure it is in the student's best interests to resubmit the work for assessment.

Students can resubmit work using the same assignment. Information about how to resubmit is on our administration pages. The live assessment dates will be shown on the front cover of the assignment.

All work for a resubmission must be completed under the required teacher supervised conditions and marked against the assessment criteria and assessment guidance. You must not over direct students on how to adapt/improve work to meet the requirements of the new assignment. You must adhere to all requirements relating to giving and recording feedback from Section 5.3.

To summarise, a resubmission is the reworking and submitting of assignment evidence and marks to us, following previous external moderation by us.

5.4.6 Informing students of their marks

When you have marked students' work, you must inform students of the marks (number of criteria) achieved. Marks must be submitted **at least 10 working days** before your virtual visit so, **before** you submit marks to us, you must provide enough time for:

- students to appeal the marks.
- you to complete a review and make changes if needed.
- you to inform students of the outcome of the review.

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5.5 The moderation of NEA units

There are two moderation windows each year to submit NEA assessment. The purpose of external moderation is to make sure that the standard of assessment is the same for all centres and that internal standardisation has taken place.

Our administration pages give full details about the moderation process including step-by-step instructions. This includes key dates and deadlines.

5.5.1 Submitting visit requests

Centres can have two virtual moderation visits each academic year, one in each moderation window. Centres must request their preferred visit dates via the Cambridge OCR Moderation Service, which is accessed via My Cambridge.

5.5.2 Submitting total marks

When you have assessed the work, given students their marks and the opportunity to review them (see **Informing students of their marks** in Section 5.4.6), you must submit the total number of criteria achieved for each student using the Cambridge OCR Moderation Service. This is the 'raw mark'.

The marks must be submitted **at least 10 working days** before your virtual moderation visit.

You must have made NEA unit entries and submitted a visit request before you can submit marks.

5.5.3 Sample requests

Once you have submitted your total marks, we will tell you which work will be sampled as part of the moderation process. You will receive a sample request notification from the Cambridge OCR Moderation Service. The earliest you will receive this is 15 working days before a visit. Samples will include work from across the range of students' attainment.

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5.5.4 Submitting the sample and criteria level marks

You must submit the sample work **and** the assessment criteria awarded, **at least three working days** before your virtual visit. Failure to submit or late submission of samples will be classed as maladministration and may result in a malpractice investigation.

For **students requested in the sample**, you **must**:

- submit full details of each individual criterion achieved on the Moderation Service – this includes providing any additional information related to criteria that look to be achieved but you have not awarded for specific reasons (e.g. because plagiarism was detected or because additional support was given to the student to get them started on a task).
- upload student work for the sample to our Submit for Assessment service.

For **all students in the cohort**, you must upload your recording documents showing the criteria level marks for the whole cohort to Submit for Assessment. This could be the Cambridge OCR unit recording sheets (URS) if you have used them or your own centre-devised recording documents.

Recording documents

You can use the Cambridge OCR unit recording sheets or centre-devised documents.

We have provided a unit recording sheet for each NEA unit which you may use to help capture this information as you are assessing students' work. We have also provided a spreadsheet recording document for each size of unit, which you may prefer to use for your student cohort.

These can be downloaded from Teach Cambridge.

If you use your own recording documents, they must include the same information captured on the Cambridge OCR unit recording sheets for each student:

- the qualification and unit name
- the candidate name(s) and number(s)
- the assignment taken (e.g. Set A) and scenario title
- the date
- the assessment criteria for the unit and whether each criterion has been achieved or not
- any additional information related to criterion that may look to be achieved but you have not awarded for specific reasons (e.g. because plagiarism was detected or because additional support was given to the student to get them started on a task).

Students' work must be securely kept until after the unit has been awarded and any review of results and appeals windows are closed.

We need sample work to help us monitor standards. We might ask some centres to release work for this purpose. We will let you know as early as possible if we need this from you. We always appreciate your co-operation.

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5.5.5 Moderation outcomes

During the moderation visit, the moderator will review the submitted samples of work and provide verbal feedback.

In addition to the provisional verbal feedback provided on the day of the visit, a written feedback report will be added to the Moderation Service approximately ten days after your visit following completion of our internal quality assurance checks.

If there are any issues identified with the marking of any criteria, this will be highlighted during your visit.

If there are several issues identified, there will be an opportunity for you to revisit your marking of these criteria before final results are issued – but not to improve student work.

Outcomes of moderation remain provisional until confirmed on the results day for the window.

On results day, for each student, you will be sent the unit grades and the raw marks (number of criteria achieved). The raw marks will be converted to UMS. (More information about raw marks and UMS is in Section 4.4)

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6 Administration

This section gives an overview of the key administrative processes. See section 5.5 for an overview of the moderation process. More information about the processes and deadlines involved at each stage is available from the administration pages.

6.1 Requirements for registering students and making entries

Your centre must be registered with us as an approved centre before you enrol students and can make entries. Centre approval should be in place well in advance of making your first entries. Details on how to register with us are on our administration pages. Once you're approved, you can offer any of our general qualifications, Cambridge Nationals, Foundation Certificates or V Levels **without** having to seek approval for individual qualifications.

6.1.1 Registering your students

At the start of the course, you need to register your students.

Registration entry code	Registration title
J002	Cambridge OCR L2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data

Full information about how to register students is on our administration pages.

6.1.2 Making unit entries

When students are ready for assessment, you must make exam and NEA assessment unit entries for the relevant assessment series. You need to know the unit entry codes. Students submitting work must be entered for the appropriate unit entry code from the table below.

You need to register your students before you can make unit entries.

Unit entry code	Component code	Assessment method	Unit titles	Availability
R200	01	Written paper	Digital systems, data and security	January and June series
R201	01	Moderated	Investigating digital information and data	February and June window
R202	01	Moderated	Developing programming solutions	February and June window

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Unit entry code	Component code	Assessment method	Unit titles	Availability
R203	01	Moderated	Installing digital systems	February and June window

- First assessment for exam unit R200 is January 2028.
- First assessment for NEA units R201-R203 is February 2028 window.

Full information about how to make entries for units is on our administration pages.

6.1.3 Making certification entries

You must enter students for qualification certification separately from registration and unit entries. You should make a **certification entry** in the final series, at the end of the student's course. If a certification entry is **not** made, no overall grade can be awarded. This is the qualification that students should be entered for:

Certification entry code	Qualification title
J002	Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Digital Systems and Data

6.2 Unit and qualification resits

Students can resit the assessment for each unit and the best result will be used to calculate the certification result.

Resit opportunities must be fair to all students and **not** give some students an unfair advantage over other students. For example, the student must not have direct guidance and support from the teacher in producing further evidence for NEA units. When resitting an NEA unit, students must submit new, amended or enhanced work, as detailed in the JCQ Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (Vocational and Technical Qualifications).

When you arrange resit opportunities, you must make sure that you do not adversely affect other assessments being taken.

Arranging a resit opportunity is at the centre's discretion. Summative assessment series must not be used as a diagnostic tool and resits should only be planned if the student has taken full advantage of the first assessment opportunity and any formative assessment process.

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6.3 Access arrangements and special consideration

There can be adjustments to standard assessment arrangements based on the individual needs of students. It is important that you identify as early as possible if students have disabilities or particular difficulties that will put them at a disadvantage in the assessment situation and that you choose a qualification or adjustment that allows them to demonstrate attainment.

If a student requires access arrangements that need approval from us, you must use Access arrangements (online) to gain approval. You must select the appropriate qualification type(s) when you apply. Approval for GCSE or GCE applications alone does not extend to other qualification types. You can select more than one qualification type when you make an application. For guidance or support please contact our Special Requirements Team.

The responsibility for providing adjustments to assessment is shared between your centre and us. Please read the JCQ document Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

If you have students who need a post-exam adjustment to reflect temporary illness, indisposition or injury when they took the assessment, please read the JCQ document A guide to the special consideration process**.**

If you think any aspect of these qualifications unfairly restricts access and progression, please email support@ocr.org.uk or call our Customer Support Centre on **01223 553998**.

6.4 Post-results services

A number of post-results services are available:

- **Reviews of results** – if you are not happy with the outcome of a student's results, you may request a review of marking or moderation.
- **Missing and incomplete results** – if an individual subject result for a student is missing, or the student has been omitted entirely from the results supplied you should use this service.
- **Access to scripts** – this free service is for exams officers to download copies of your students' completed question papers.
- **Late certification** – following the release of unit results, if you have not previously made a certification entry, you can make a late request, which is known as a **late certification**. This is a free service.

Please refer to the JCQ Post-Results Services booklet and our administration pages for more guidance about post-results services.

For each NEA unit, a review of moderation can only be requested for the cohort. It cannot be requested for individual students.

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6.5 Collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system

Regulators have published guidance on collecting evidence of student performance as part of long-term contingency arrangements to improve the resilience of the qualifications system. You should review and consider this guidance when delivering this qualification to students at your centre.

For more detailed information on collecting evidence of student performance please visit our administration pages.

6.6 Prior knowledge and experience

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process for recognising learning that never received formal recognition through a qualification or certification. It includes knowledge and skills gained in school, college or outside of formal learning situations. These may include:

- domestic/family life
- education
- training
- work activities
- voluntary activities.

In most cases RPL will not be appropriate for directly evidencing the requirements of the NEA assignments for the Cambridge OCR Foundation Certificate qualifications. However, if you feel that your student could use RPL to support their evidence, you must follow the guidance provided in our RPL policy.

6.7 Equality Act information relating to Cambridge OCR Level 2 Foundation Certificates

The Cambridge OCR Foundation Certificates require assessment of a broad range of skills and, as such, prepare students for further study and higher-level courses.

These have been reviewed to check if any of the competences required present a potential barrier to disabled students. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to make sure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject.

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7 Appendix A: Command words

7.1 Exams

The table below shows the command words that will be used in exam questions. This shows what we mean by the command word and how students should approach the question and understand its demand. Remember that the rest of the wording in the question is also important.

Command word	Definition
Analyse	Break information into parts and consider relationships, patterns or characteristics to interpret meaning or suggest impacts using a logical chain of meaning.
Calculate	Work out a numerical answer using appropriate methods.
Choose	Select an answer from appropriate options.
Compare	Provide details about the similarities and differences between two or more items, situations or actions.
Complete	Finish a task by adding to given information.
Create	Produce a visual solution to a problem.
Describe	Give an account that includes the relevant characteristics, qualities or events.
Draw	Produce a diagram/sketch/graph with sufficient detail to show the answer.
Evaluate	Make and support a judgement or recommendation using evidence and reasoning, having analysed any information given and the wider context.
Explain	Give reasons for and/or causes of something. Make something clear by giving information.
Identify	Select, recognise or name an answer.
Interpret	Use given information to translate meaning, patterns or relationships.
Label	Add information to given source material.
List	Provide a series of terms or points without elaboration.
Mark	Indicate specific feature or location on given source material.

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Command word	Definition
Measure	Establish a value using a suitable measuring instrument and/or technique.
Outline	Give a short account or summary of the main points.
Plot	Indicate specific feature or location on given source material.
Recommend	Put forward a supported judgment.
Select	Pick an answer from the options given.
State	Give factors or features. Give short, factual answers.

7.2 NEA

The table below shows the command words that may be used in NEA assignments to tell learners what they are expected to do.

Command word	Definition
Adapt	Change to make suitable for a new use or purpose.
Analyse	Break information into parts and consider relationships, patterns or characteristics to interpret meaning or suggest impacts using a logical chain of meaning.
Assess	Consider factors that apply and which are the most important or relevant.
Calculate	Work out a numerical answer using appropriate methods.
Choose	Provide an answer from appropriate options.
Complete	Finish a task by adding to given information.
Compare	Provide details about the similarities and differences between two or more items, situations or actions.
Create	Produce an output or artefact in response to a task or problem.
Describe	Give an account that includes all the relevant characteristics, qualities or events.

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Command word	Definition
Draw	Produce a diagram/sketch/graph with sufficient detail to show the answer.
Evaluate	Make a judgement about value, importance or effectiveness, using evidence to support your answer.
Examine(d)	To look at or scrutinise in detail.
Explain	Give reasons for and/or causes of something; make something clear by giving information.
Interpret	Use given information to translate meaning, patterns or relationships.
Justify	Make and support a judgement or offer an opinion using evidence and reasoning.
Measure	Establish a value using a suitable measuring instrument and/or technique.
Outline	Give a short account or summary of the main points.
Plan	Consider, set out and communicate what is to be done.
Plot	Indicate specific feature or locations on given source material.
Recommend	Put forward a supported judgment.
Research	Do a detailed study in order to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding.
Set up	Prepare a system or set of equipment for operation.
Suggest	Give possible solutions or ideas for consideration.
Summarise	To sum up or give a short account in your own words.
Use	Apply the information provided or apply prior learning of knowledge, understanding and/or skills. Put acquired skills and methods into action for a given purpose.

We might also use other command words but these will be:

- commonly used words whose meaning will be made clear from the context in which they are used (e.g. create, improve, plan)
- subject specific words drawn from the unit content.

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