



## Digital Functional Skills

Entry Level 3

Specification

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This is version 1.0 of the TLM handbook for Digital Functional Skills qualifications eligible from 2023 onwards and first published in September 2023.

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Digital Functional Skills is the qualification framework based on the Department for Education's requirement to equip all United Kingdom Citizens with the digital skills required to function in this technological age.

The assessment model for the qualifications presented in this publication was designed by TLM in consultation with colleges and employer/training providers. It was designed to meet the government's standards for the support and delivery of Digital Functional Skills.

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## Section 1 - Introduction

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### What is the purpose of this qualification?

The Learning Machine offers Digital Functional Skills qualifications from Entry to Level 1.

The Learning Machine has a suite of two qualifications available.

These can be taken as separate qualifications with progression available from Entry to Level 1. The benefits for students of this progression are that the qualifications' approaches are similar – Centre delivery can therefore be run contiguously or concurrently, and learners will be able to tailor their learning to reflect the skills that need to be developed. This covers the Digital Functional Skills DfE content Framework:

The general purpose of Digital Functional Skills is to enable adults to develop the digital skills they need for life, work, or further study as set out in the [DfE National Standards for Essential Digital Skills](#) and [Digital Functional Skills qualifications: subject content](#). They are appropriate qualifications for young people and adults with no or low digital skills wishing to confirm they have digital skills needed for employment or further study.

The delivery of this qualification should encourage learners to develop their practical digital capabilities through motivational and confidence building learning experiences that will act as a springboard to further learning and raised aspirations.

The qualification also provides an opportunity for learners to utilise information technology to support progression in a range of vocational sectors.

### What does this qualification cover?

All the content of the qualification relates directly to the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to support adults to begin to access information technology having had no or little prior experience of using digital devices or the internet. The qualification is six credits in size built up from five teaching units:

- Unit 1 Using Devices and Handling Information
- Unit 2 Creating and Editing
- Unit 3 Communicating
- Unit 4 Transacting
- Unit 5 Being Safe and Responsible On-line

The Entry Level 3 qualification may be studied alongside other qualifications and activities.

### Who could take this qualification?

This qualification is aimed at individuals who wish to gain IT skills for life and skills for work, perhaps building their IT skills in their early years of employment/training or undergoing induction.

### What are the qualification outcomes?

The primary outcome of this qualification is to gain young people's and adults' information technology skills, applied typically in an early employment/training role.



## What higher level learning will this qualification lead to?

The qualification is a 'stand-alone' qualification, but learners may progress onto other The Learning Machine information technology qualifications.

## Why choose the Award sized qualification?

The Learning Machine Entry Level Digital Functional Skills (Entry 3) provides a thorough strengthening in the use of information technology required typically, in early employment/training roles where information technology is used. By studying the Award, learners will gain knowledge and skills in preparation for further and more confident use of information technology as part of their employment/training.

The Learning Machine also offers a range of other information technology qualifications for those learners who need to study qualifications with differing breadth than that provided by the Award.

More details can be found here:

[Digital Functional Skills – Welcome to the Ingot Family of Awards provided by TLM](#)

## Section 2 Qualification overview

### Introduction

This qualification specification contains everything you need to know about this qualification and should be used by everyone involved in the planning, delivery, and assessment of The Learning Machine Entry Level Digital Functional Skills (Entry 3).

All information contained in this specification is correct at the time of publishing.

To ensure that you are using the most up-to-date version of this qualification specification please check the issue date in the page headers against that of the qualification specification on our website [www.tlm.org.uk/digital-functional-skills/](http://www.tlm.org.uk/digital-functional-skills/)

If you advertise this qualification using a different or shortened name you must ensure that learners are aware that their final certificate will state, the regulated qualification title of 'Learning Machine Entry Level 3 Digital Functional Skills'.

Things you need to know:

Qualification number (QN)	
Aim reference	
Total qualification time	65 hours
Guided learning hours	55 hours
Level	Entry Level 3
Assessment requirement	Externally assessed on-screen practical assessment (Assessment A) and externally assessed online examination (Assessment B).

### Total Qualification Time

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.

TQT comprises:

- the Guided Learning Hours for the qualification, and
- an estimate of the number of hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study, or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but not under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, Tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

### About this qualification

This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is **610/3218/9**.

This qualification is Entry Level 3 Digital Functional Skills. This qualification has been developed for young people and adults - to strengthen their IT skills for life and skills for work, perhaps gaining IT skills in their early years of employment/training or undergoing induction, where IT plays a part.

This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.

This qualification is suitable for use within a Study Programme.

## Aims and objectives of this qualification

This qualification aims to:

- provide learners with strengthened basic digital skills.

Digital Functional Skills qualifications should fulfil the following purposes:

- to provide reliable evidence of a Learner's achievements against content that is relevant to the workplace and real life,
- to provide assessment of a Learner's knowledge and skills as well as their ability to apply these in different contexts, and
- to provide a foundation for progression into employment or further education and develop skills for everyday life.

## Achieving this qualification

To be awarded The Learning Machine Entry Level Digital Functional Skills (Entry 3), learners are required to successfully complete the five mandatory teaching units.

This qualification consists of five mandatory teaching units:

- Unit 1            Using Devices and Handling Information
- Unit 2            Creating and Editing
- Unit 3            Communicating
- Unit 4            Transacting
- Unit 5            Being Safe and Responsible On-line

The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit are provided in Section 3.

To achieve The Learning Machine Entry Level Digital Functional Skills (Entry 3), learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the five units to a specified level as detailed in this qualification specification.

## Qualification guidance

The Entry Level 3 Award is an appropriate size for learners to gain IT skills for life and skills for work, perhaps building their IT skills in their early years of employment/training or undergoing induction, where IT plays a part. The qualification is designed to meet the requirements of the Digital Functional Skills DfE content frameworks and is designed for adults with low to no, experience of using digital devices and the internet who wish to gain their information technology skills. It can complement Apprenticeship provision.

There are no specific recommended prior learning requirements for this qualification.



Entry is at the discretion of the Centre.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that this qualification is appropriate for the age and ability of learners. They need to make sure that learners can fulfil the requirements of the assessment criteria and comply with the relevant literacy, numeracy and health and safety aspects of this qualification.

Learners registered on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level with the same or a similar title, as duplication of learning may affect funding eligibility.

## Progression opportunities

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to:

- The Learning Machine Level 1 Digital Functional Skills

It may also be useful to learners studying qualifications in a range of vocational sectors.

## Qualification dates

Regulated qualifications have operational end dates and certification end dates.

We review qualifications regularly, working with sector representatives, vocational experts, and stakeholders to make any changes necessary to meet sector needs and to reflect recent developments.

If a decision is made to withdraw a qualification, we will set an operational end date and provide reasonable notice to our Centres. We will also take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of learners.

An operational end date will only show on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications register.ofqual.gov.uk and on our website if a decision has been made to withdraw a qualification. After this date we can no longer accept learner registrations. However, certification is allowed until the certification end date so that learners have time to complete any programmes of study. The certification end date will only show on the Ofqual Register once an operational end date has been set. After this date we can no longer process certification claims.

## Centre requirements

Procedures for Centre approval. Full details can be found at:

<https://tlm.org.uk/policies/arrangements-with-third-parties/terms-and-conditions-of-services>

- The procedure for recognising the Centre is as follows:
  - The Principal Assessor, on behalf of the Centre, confirms compliance with the contractual conditions by signing an agreement on the certification web site and provides details of the Centre's internal quality assurance procedures to the satisfaction of the Awarding Organisation.
  - The continued compliance with the requirements of the Awarding Organisation is verified through a personal Centre engagement process where any deficiencies are noted on the Centre's account together with any actions needed to fully meet the requirements.
- TLM is not a member of JCQ, though we recognise the guidance they give to schools and colleges regarding the appropriate management of public examinations. This is reinforced through spot checks.

- Full details of JCQ policies for candidates and for Centre exam secretaries can be found at <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office>

## Security controls during assessments

It is important that the assessments for this qualification are delivered appropriately.

Learners should not be able to access other computer programmes and/or the internet inappropriately while taking the tests. This will be monitored through in-built computer measures alongside the security arrangements – which for example, forbid taking smart phones into the online examination room.

Guidance will be provided to Learners and invigilation staff setting out the requirement for appropriate use of computer programmes and/or the internet, and such tools are to be used solely as the assessment tasks direct.

We will require that internet search-histories are routinely sampled as part of the Centre controls – and Learners will be made aware of such oversight.

## Section 3 - Unit content and assessment guidance

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This section provides details of the structure and content of this qualification.

The unit summary provides an overview of each unit including:

- unit title
- unit overview
- guided learning hours
- level
- an indication of whether a unit is mandatory or optional.

Following the unit summary there is detailed information for each unit containing:

- unit title and number
- learning outcomes (the learner will) and assessment criteria (the learner can)
- assessment guidance (types of evidence for internal assessment).
- Indicative outputs (evidence that learners have met the requirements)

The regulators' unit number is indicated in brackets for each unit (e.g., yyyyyy).

## Unit 1 - Using devices and handling information

Unit summary	This unit will enable learners to develop the knowledge and skill involved in using a range of digital devices and handling information.
Guided learning hours – <i>recommended nominal teaching time for content in this Unit</i>	21
Level	Entry Level 3
Mandatory/optional	Mandatory

Skills Statement	Learning Outcome	Assessment criteria	Range statement/ amplification
<b>Using devices and handling information</b>			
	The Learner can:  <i>As a minimum, students must be able to demonstrate all specific assessment content denoted by '(including...)'</i>	The Learner will:	<i>The examples provided (denoted by 'such as') are illustrative only and are not exhaustive.</i>
<b>1.1.</b>	Know the main <b>features</b> and <b>uses</b> of different types of devices (including desktop, laptop, mobile devices, smart devices).	Understand the main features and uses of a range of devices, including the differences between hardware and software.	<b>Features</b> of a device refers to examples such as the interface required (keyboard or touchscreen) or how a device functions (hand-held, wearable, or wireless connectivity).  <b>Uses</b> of a device refers to examples such as for making a phone or video call or sending emails while away from a desk.

1.2.	Know what an <b>application</b> is and the main types of application software (including email clients, web browsers, mobile device applications, security applications, word processors, presentation software).	Understand the role of applications used for computers and mobile devices.	<b>Applications</b> refers to those for desktop, laptop, and mobile devices.
1.3.	<b>Apply system settings</b> (including display, sound, Wi-Fi, time, language, accessibility).	Select and adjust a range of system settings.	<b>Applying system settings</b> refers to examples such as changing screen brightness, changing speaker volume, or connecting to a Wi-Fi network at work or home.
1.4.	<b>Navigate online content</b> to locate required information.	Use navigation controls to locate required information	<b>Navigating online content</b> refers to using menus, hyperlinks, and browser navigation controls such as back and forward buttons or bookmarks.
1.5.	Carry out <b>searches on the internet</b> (including information, images, videos).	Use a search engine to search for and identify information	<b>Internet searches</b> refers to a specific and clearly defined piece of information or content that might be required in a work or real-life context.
1.6.	<b>Use files</b> to read and store information.	Create a file to store information.  Open files and access information from them.  Edit information and save files.	<b>Use files</b> to read and store information includes creating a file, opening a file, reading information from a file, editing a file, and saving a file.

<p><b>1.7.</b></p>	<p><b>Use files and folders</b> to organise and retrieve information (including local and remote storage).</p>	<p>Design and create a folder to organise information. Retrieve information from specified location across devices.</p> <p>Understand and use terminology and concepts relating to the storage of information.</p>	<p><b>Use files and folders</b> includes opening, reading, and saving information from/to a file using appropriate naming conventions; working with files and folders to store, organising and retrieving information using local and remote storage.</p>
<p><b>1.8.</b></p>	<p>Know when there is a <b>problem</b> with a device or software and know the difference between system errors (including device crashing or freezing, slow response) and user errors (including using incorrect credentials, incorrectly connecting hardware).</p>	<p>Show awareness of common technical problems.</p>	<p>Common technical <b>problems</b> include:</p> <p>User errors - forgotten password, using incorrect credentials, incorrectly connecting hardware, attempting to save a file using a filename with inappropriate characters, using incorrect software, caps lock.</p> <p>Device/software issues - system or application freeze, internet connection issues, printer out of paper.</p>
<p><b>1.9.</b></p>	<p>Apply a <b>solution</b> to solve a simple technical problem (including restarting a device to address a system error, correcting a user error).</p>	<p>Identify appropriate actions for common technical problems.</p>	<p>Appropriate <b>solutions</b> include application re-start, device re-boot, network re-connection, disabling an app, uninstalling, and reinstalling software, resetting</p>

			password, checking hardware connections, checking hardware turned on, checking printer paper.
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## Unit 2 - Creating and editing

Unit summary	This unit will enable learners to develop the knowledge and skill involved in creating and editing documents and processing numerical data.
Guided learning hours – <i>recommended nominal teaching time for content in this Unit</i>	10
Level	Entry Level 3
Mandatory/optional	Mandatory

Skills Statement	Learning Outcome	Assessment criteria	Range statement/ amplification
<b>Creating and editing</b>			
<b>2.1.</b>	<b>Use a suitable application</b> to enter, <b>edit and format text</b> (including bold, underline, italics, font sizes and colours, text alignment, bulleted lists, numbered lists).	<p>Use an appropriate document application to enter information for a range of purposes and audiences.</p> <p>Edit and format text and numbers.</p> <p>Understand and use terminology and concepts relating to types of documents and their uses, along with the purpose of different document applications.</p>	<p><b>Using a suitable application</b> refers to understanding terminology and concepts relating to documents and media and associated applications, such as word-processed or presentations, with an understanding of the purpose of different applications and typical uses.</p> <p><b>Editing text</b> includes entering or amending, selecting, copying, cutting, and pasting text.</p>
<b>2.2.</b>	Use a suitable application to enter, <b>edit and format graphics</b> (including position, size).	Edit and format graphics, tables, and charts.	<p><b>Formatting text</b> includes bold, underline, italics, font sizes and colours, text alignment, bulleted and numbered lists.</p>



			<b>Formatting graphics</b> includes positioning, sizing, borders.
<b>2.3.</b>	<b>Combine different types of information</b> (including text, graphics, images) for a given purpose.	Create a poster, presentation, booklet, or leaflet which combines different types of information.	<b>Combining different types of information</b> for a given purpose refers to using text, graphics, and images in a work or real-life or context, such as creating a poster or presentation for colleagues.
<b>2.4.</b>	<b>Capture digital media</b> (including image, video) and view in a suitable application.	Capture and save an image and video and use appropriate applications to view captured materials.	<b>Capture digital media</b> refers to using simple applications such as 'Snip & Sketch' to capture onscreen images and capturing video by acquiring URLs or using simple recording applications.  Viewing refers to the use of simple media viewing or presentation software.

## Unit 3 – Communicating

Unit summary	This unit will enable learners to develop the knowledge and skill involved in managing contacts and communicating with them as individuals and groups.
Guided learning hours – <i>recommended nominal teaching time for content in this Unit</i>	7
Level	Entry Level 3
Mandatory/optional	Mandatory

Skills Statement	Learning Outcome	Assessment criteria	Range statement/ amplification
<b>Communicating</b>			
<b>3.1.</b>	Create and edit details in a <b>contacts list</b> .	<p>Create a contact on a device.</p> <p>Edit a contact on a device.</p> <p>Create and edit aspects of a contact list on a device.</p>	A <b>contacts list</b> refers to a simple list with a maximum of five contacts and five fields associated with each contact.
<b>3.2.</b>	Compose and reply to <b>online communications</b> comprising text and <b>other digital content</b> to individual and multiple recipients.	<p>Draft original online communications comprising text and other digital content.</p> <p>Receive and appropriately access online communications comprising text and other digital content.</p> <p>Reply appropriately using online communications comprising text and other digital content to both individual and multiple recipients.</p>	<p><b>Online communications</b> refers to short, simple texts using email or other messaging applications.</p> <p><b>Other digital content</b> refers to graphics, images, and videos.</p> <p>Digital content includes sharing access to online content.</p> <p>Online communications includes emailing, texting, messaging apps, social media, and video calls.</p>

			Use of email includes good practice (sensible subject, greetings, salutations, appropriate language).
<b>3.3.</b>	Initiate and participate in a <b>video call</b> .	Communicate with an individual through video tools.	<p>A <b>video call</b> refers to a one-to-one communication via live video.</p> <p>It does not include a video call involving a group of people, nor does it require scheduling meetings or inviting participants.</p>
<b>3.4.</b>	Know what is meant by a <b>digital footprint</b> , understand the <b>implications</b> of a digital footprint, and know the range of digital activities (including social media activity, web searches, emails), that leave a digital footprint.	<p>Be able to demonstrate awareness of the types of digital activities that leave a digital footprint.</p> <p>Understand the implications of a digital footprint.</p>	<p>A <b>digital footprint</b> – sometimes called a digital shadow or an electronic footprint – refers to the trail of data left when using the internet. It includes websites visited, emails sent, and information submitted online.</p> <p>A digital footprint has <b>implications</b> – it can be used to track a person’s online activities and devices. It can also be used by employers for example during hiring, it can cause reputational damage and could be used for the purposes of exploitation.</p>

## Unit 4 - Transacting

Unit summary	This unit will enable learners to develop the knowledge and skill involved in carrying out an online transaction, and buying items online
Guided learning hours – <i>recommended nominal teaching time for content in this Unit</i>	10
Level	Entry Level 3
Mandatory/optional	Mandatory

Skills Statement	Learning Outcome	Assessment criteria	Range statement/ amplification
<b>Transacting</b>			
4.1.	Complete and submit an <b>online form</b> (including <b>personal details</b> ) and comply with <b>data validation</b> .	Complete and submit a basic online form as part of accessing a service or making an online purchase which requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data validation</li> <li>• Entering text</li> <li>• Entering numerical date.</li> </ul>	An <b>online form</b> refers to a single page form used to enter information such as registering for or requesting a service or making an online purchase.  <b>Personal details</b> refers to name, address, telephone number, email address and payment details.  <b>Data validation</b> refers to automatic computer checks to ensure that data is entered correctly, such as password requirements or key fields that cannot be left blank.
4.2.	Comply with <b>verification checks</b> to complete an online transaction.	Successfully undertake simple verification checks and 'buy' an intended item / access a service online.	<b>Verification checks</b> refers to a check carried out to ensure the user has entered their details accurately, such as following a link

			in an email received when setting up an online account.
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## Unit 5 - Being safe and responsible online

Unit summary	This unit will enable learners to develop the knowledge and skill involved to use the internet safely, legally, and responsibly
Guided learning hours – <i>recommended nominal teaching time for content in this Unit</i>	9
Level	Entry Level 3
Mandatory/optional	Mandatory

Skills Statement	Learning Outcome	Assessment criteria	Range statement/ amplification
<b>Being safe and responsible online</b>			
5.1.	<b>Understand the need to stay safe</b> and respect others when using the internet and communicating online.	Describe the main risks that can occur through online activities.  Be able to demonstrate awareness of how others should be respected during online activities such as during direct communications and through the use of indirect methods such as the use of social media.	<b>Understanding the need to stay safe</b> online refers to examples such as being aware of risks associated with clicking on unknown links or phishing emails, being aware of the evolving nature of such risks, or knowing that devices may be hacked resulting in personal data being compromised or stolen.
5.2.	Know simple methods to protect <b>personal information</b> and privacy during <b>online activity</b> (including not sharing personal information, looking for HTTPS when logging in).	Be able to demonstrate awareness of simple methods to protect personal information and privacy online.	<b>Personal information</b> refers to information about individuals stored by devices and <b>online activity</b> refers to the collection and use of personal information and data by organisations (often used to personalise online experiences and target advertisements).

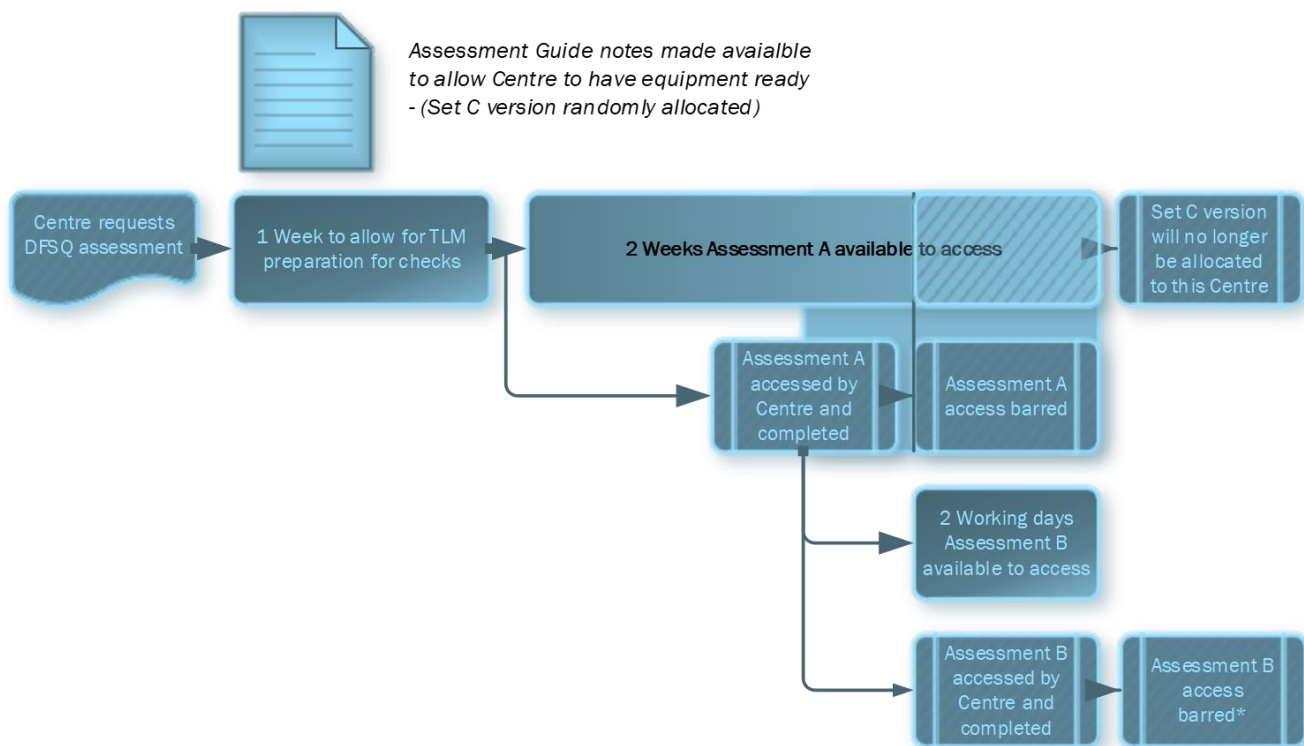
			<p>Methods of protecting personal information and privacy may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guarding your date of birth and telephone number online</li> <li>• using a pseudonym on social media sites</li> <li>• looking for HTTPs when entering login credentials or other personal data</li> <li>• being aware that the security of your digital devices can be compromised, hacked, and/or hijacked etc.</li> </ul>
5.3.	Set up and use security features (including <b>authentication methods</b> ) to access devices and online services.	Use simple methods to protect a device and data from online risks and threats	<b>Authentication methods</b> to access devices refers to examples such as strong passwords, fingerprint, facial or voice recognition.
5.4.	Understand the <b>benefits of using security software</b> (including anti-virus, firewall) to protect against online risks.	Be able to demonstrate awareness of typical online risks and their effects in simple terms, and the benefits of using security software to tackle them.	<b>Benefits of using security software</b> refers to examples such as preventing, detecting or removing viruses, malware and other threats.
5.5.	Know of and know how to <b>minimise the effects of physical stresses</b> (including pain from poorly positioned equipment and/or bad posture, repetitive strain injury, eye strain) that may result from using devices.	<p>Be able to demonstrate awareness of the physical stresses of excessive using devices.</p> <p>Set out how physical stresses caused by device use can be tackled.</p>	<b>Minimising the effects of physical stresses</b> refers to examples such as using an adjustable chair, not being too close or too far away from the screen/device and keyboard or mouse.

## Section 4 - Assessment and moderation

### How the qualification is assessed

Assessment is the process of measuring a learner’s skill, knowledge and understanding against the standards set in a qualification.

The Learning Machine Entry Level 3 Digital Functional Skills (Entry 3) is externally set. The practical assessments and the examination are both externally assessed.



*\* Assessment B may be made available after this time under certain limited circumstances, i.e. Learner illness*

### Practical assessment

One practical assessment will be set and marked by The Learning Machine.

### External Examination

An external examination will be set by and marked by The Learning Machine.

The marks will be allocated in the following indicative manner:



	Assessment A (practical assessment)	Assessment B (multiple- choice test)	Overall mark	GLH – nominal (hours)
<b>Marks available</b>	35	15	50	
<b>Pass</b> <i>(nominal for each component – overall compensatory model applies)</i>	24.5	10.5	35	
<b>Skills area</b>				
• Using devices and handling information	13	7	20	22
• Creating and editing	11	0	11	12
• Communicating	6	2	8	9
• Transacting	3	0	3	3
• Being safe and responsible online	2	6	8	9
<b>Total:</b>	35	15	50	55

This indicative mark allocation is provided for illustrative purposes only to show balance of coverage across the various assessment components. The ‘pass mark’ is nominally set at a *design threshold* of 70%. It is at this level because with all areas being taught and an overall compensatory assessment model; 70% reflects sufficient levels of knowledge and understanding, and mastery of skills. Although, the actual mark to pass the qualification may well vary slightly to ensure the maintenance of appropriate standards, and it will be based on actual performance against the overall set of assessment components.

## Section 5 - Support

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TLM provides several web-based resources to support this qualification.

The specification is available in a downloadable PDF format, as well as available on the main website under qualification: <https://tlm.org.uk/digital-functional-skills/>

In addition, we supply the following sites:

### Unit Specific Support

Each unit has a specific set of requirements that need to be undertaken in a practical way by earners. It is likely that Centres offering this qualification have their own systems, but TLM provide systems to be used in conjunction with these DFS qualifications.

#### Unit 4

<https://ecomm.tlm.org.uk>

This site is a basic shopping web site, but it is designed so that learners can use a dummy credit card to purchase materials without giving any real details.