Functional Skills ICT in-app
Assessment guidance

In-app assessment provides a robust, self-contained, on-screen assessment utilising commercial applications that is easily administered by centres with or without a live internet connection. Candidates can use MS Office applications (eg Word, Excel) to complete relevant tasks and upload the completed document to *e-volve* during their test.

NB: For guidance during test delivery, please see the **Trouble-shooting Guide** on p12.

1:   DELIVERING THE TEST

1.1   Minimum technical requirements:
The hardware and software required to deliver an in-app test must meet the minimum technical requirements for the *e-volve* platform. These can be found on the City and Guilds website [here](#), along with further information on the *e-volve* platform.

1.2   Software applications required:
For in-app tests, a full MS Office suite is required on the PC/ laptop used, including MS Access. Adobe reader will also be required to access and view source documents within the assessments.

Documents available for download within the test are provided in compatibility mode, which will mean that they can be opened by all versions of MS Office. Candidates using PCs/ laptops with MS Office 2013 installed are **not** required to save the document in MS Office 2013 (eg **.docx**) in order to gain full functionality of the latest application. See section 2.1 regarding applications assessed.

It is possible to use *Apache Open Office* as a proxy for MS Office, however this may place restrictions on the candidates' abilities to complete certain tasks. Also, where *Open Office* is used, candidates must save their work using recognised MS Office file extensions to allow upload. For more guidance on this, please see section 2.8.

1.3   Scheduling a test:
As with all of our ICT assessments, in-app is scheduled via Walled Garden. Below are the unit references to book a live in-app test, as well as the references for the alternative assessment methods currently available for Functional Skills ICT.

Delivery method:	Level:	Unit number:
In-app on-screen (*e-volve*)	**Level 1**	**3748-924**
In-app on-screen (*e-volve*)	**Level 2**	**3748-925**
Paper-based (on-demand)	Level 1	3748-324
Paper-based (on-demand)	Level 2	3748-325

1.3 Saving and accessing files/ folder and network access:

It is important to note that creating the candidate folder required to store the documents downloaded and uploaded during the test is part of the assessment, however the invigilator may **advise** the candidate regarding a suitable and easily accessible location on the network or hard drive being used.

In-app does not restrict access to any folder that can be ordinarily accessed by a candidate with the necessary permissions to the local machine or network, but it is important to **ensure that the candidate has full access to the folder or location within the network or hard drive where their work will be stored**. It's important to bear in mind too that access to certain parts of a machine's hard drive, specifically the C:\ drive, can be restricted to users with administrator rights only. Similarly, the person logged on to the machine used – whether tutor or candidate – may have restricted access to certain other drives so again these too should be avoided.

When creating and accessing a folder linked to the **desktop**, note that different users may see or have access to different folders that may appear the same. For example, a typical networked machine will have its own 'desktop' folder, but the person logged on – again whether tutor or candidate – will also have their own 'desktop' folder linked to their user profile. There is no reason that either cannot be accessed, but it is possible that candidates may inadvertently go to the 'wrong' desktop location, ie go to the machine's desktop rather than that linked to their profile. If in doubt, using the 'Recent Places' link in Windows Explorer (or via the Upload Manager) should show those folder(s) the candidate has most recently accessed.

1.4 Delivering a test offline:

In-app is designed to be delivered either online or offline, ie with or without a live internet connection.

Where a test is delivered offline, please note that the time required to upload the completed test (which includes all documents attached by the candidate) may take a little longer than a 'standard' test. A live internet connection must be maintained for the entire duration of the completed test upload.

For more information on delivering a test using our *e-volve* platform, please see the City & Guilds website [here](#).

1.5 Internet access:

Access to the internet is not required and in-app tests can be taken without a live internet connection – see section 1.3 above. It is suggested, however, that a live connection is maintained where possible as this will minimise the time required to upload a submitted test.

Candidates are **not permitted to access the internet** during their test and invigilators must remain vigilant in this regard. For more information and guidance on this, see sections 5.3 and 5.4 below.

1.6 Support and guidance materials:

A range of support and guidance materials are available to tutors and candidates alike, to help familiarise them with both the functionality and content of in-app. These include:
- A web-based **animated demonstration** of the key in-app functionality, specifically how to download and upload documents.
- **Sample assessments** in a number of different formats.
- A **trouble-shooting guide** for invigilators.

For further information on, and links to, these resources please see sections 5.1-5.4 below.

Once a test has been completed, a **candidate score report** is available to help evaluate performance. For further information, please see section 4.2 below.

1.7   Deleting previous candidate material:

Centres must **not** retain any material downloaded or produced by a candidate during their live assessment.

Where a PC or laptop has been used previously Functional Skills ICT in-app tests, the invigilator is responsible for ensuring that **all candidate material produced during a previous test is deleted** before further tests are taken.

Similarly, no previous work completed by a candidate as part of a sample test or their learning programme should be accessible during the live assessment.

Failure to delete candidate material following completion of the assessment could be considered to be malpractice.

2.1   Applications/ skills assessed:

In-app is a new method of delivering Functional Skills ICT assessment, but the applications and tasks covered by in-app will conform to those of previous and existing delivery methods.

A list of the most common applications and tasks assessed is presented below.

Application/ task:	Typically assessed by:
MS Access	In-app upload (screenshots)
MS Excel	In-app upload
MS Paint	In-app upload (screenshots)
MS Publisher	In-app upload
MS PowerPoint	In-app upload
MS Word	In-app upload
E-mail	Simulation (screenshots)
File/ folder management	In-app upload (screenshots)
Mail merge	In-app upload (screenshots)
Web browser skills	Open response/ multiple-choice questions and in-app upload
Mail merge	In-app upload (screenshots)

Files relating to just three of the above applications are actually uploaded via in-app. Tasks involving, for example, MS Paint will often be combined with another application such as MS Word and in such cases it is the file from the latter application that is uploaded.

2.2   Assessing e-mail:

E-mail tasks will be assessed by a simulated e-mail application presented in a mock desktop. Candidates must launch the application within the desktop and follow the task guidance provided.

In some cases, candidates will be required to attach a document to their e-mail. In this case, the candidate will be directed to a simulated folder containing the content – the simulation is not linked to the folder created by the candidate at the outset of their test.

Candidates will be required to take screenshots of the completed e-mail task. These screenshots should be saved in the **Screenshot Evidence Document** which is downloaded from the introduction screen. This **Screenshot Evidence Document** will also be used to capture file/folder management screenshots and should be uploaded when instructed, in task 7 or task 8.

2.3   Assessing database skills:

Database skills form an integral part of the ICT standards at Level 2 only. Typically the source data will be provided in a .txt file, which candidates must import into MS Access – note that this import process forms part of the assessment and candidates should not be assisted in this by invigilators.

Where a candidate is unfamiliar with MS Access, or it is not installed on the PC/ laptop used, it is possible to import the .txt file into MS Excel and attempt the task with this application. Where this occurs, however, it is probable that the candidate will not be able to gain all of the marks available for the task. No marking considerations can be made by City & Guilds where candidates use MS Excel to complete such a task.

With most standard MS Access files, 'linked tables' must be maintained between the data and the host network on which the file was created which can prevent easy sharing of this data. For this reason, where a candidate completes a task involving MS Access they will be asked to **upload screenshots** of their work rather than the actual MS Access or MS Excel file used to complete the task.

2.4   Assessing file/ folder management:

Candidates will be required to demonstrate their ability to manage the storage of documents (files) and folders as part of the assessment, including appropriate naming. Typically they will be required to take screenshots of their file and folder management, insert these into an evidence document and upload this as evidence.

2.5   Assessing mail merge:

Where a mail merge is required, candidates will typically be provided with a list of recipients and a piece of correspondence required to complete this task.

As with database skills – see section 2.3 – linked tables can prevent the easy sharing of data. For this reason, candidates will again be asked to **upload screenshots** of their completed work, including merged and unmerged fields, rather than the file they used for the task.

2.6   Assessing web browser skills:

In order to allow for the delivery of tests without the need of a live internet connection, a new approach to web browser has been produced.

Typically, three items will cover the relevant skill standards for web browser skills. One item will require a candidate to input a search term, a second will require them to select a suitable search result and a third will ask them to locate suitable information.

The main departure with this approach from existing delivery methods is that all items are independent of one another – the 'results' presented will be the same regardless of the search term entered previously while the page displayed in will be the same regardless of the option selected in from the results. The web 'page' will typically be provided by way of a .pdf document downloaded by the candidate.

2.7   Assessing text (word) processing skills:

Tasks which assess a candidate's skills with text or word processing can be found at both Levels 1 and 2 and typically require the formatting of text documents and may include the requirement to insert images or tables.

2.8   Use of *Apache Open Office*:

Apache Open Office is a suite of open-source office software applications available free of charge to download on any machine. The applications available are relatively similar to MS Office, allowing rudimentary completion of most office-type tasks.

While all centres offering Functional Skills through City & Guilds are required to have a full MS Office suite (including MS Access) installed on every machine used for assessment, *Open Office* can be used to attempt tasks involving the key applications. Note that use of *Open Office* may add to the complexity of the test experience and candidates may be limited in how they attempt to complete a given task.

It is important to note that documents created or saved within *Open Office* **cannot** be directly uploaded using in-app, however they can be saved as common MS Office file types and uploaded in this way. A list of *Open Office* applications and the equivalent MS Office extensions which can be used to submit evidence is presented below.

Open Office application:	MS Office equivalent:	Use file extension:
'Base'	MS Access*	.mdb
'Calc'	MS Excel	.xls
'Draw'	MS Paint*	.png, .bmp, .jpg
'Impress'	MS PowerPoint	.ppt
'Writer'	MS Word	.doc

Note that files are not typically uploaded in these formats, with evidence instead provided by way of screenshots and/ or a text document as instructed.

3.1   Secure Client test window:

Unlike most other City & Guilds on-screen assessments, in-app tests are not 'locked down' in Secure Client (the programme used to run the test) as candidates are required to access folders and documents contained on the PC/ laptop's hard drive.

As the test window is not locked down, it is possible to inadvertently close the test window. If this occurs, simply re-launch the Secure Client programme and re-enter the original keycode for that candidate. The test will resume where it was at the point where the window was closed, with the same time left to complete the test also remaining.

Note that this applies only to the closing of the test window. If the candidate exits the test in the conventional manner, ie on completion of all tasks, the test cannot be recommenced.

3.2   Creating a folder on the hard-drive:

At the start of their test, candidates are instructed to create a folder into which they should save all of the source files they download as well as their completed documents for upload.

It is important to note that **creating and managing the folder is part of the assessment and should not be done in advance by the invigilator**, however the invigilator may advise the candidate on a suitable location within the hard-drive to create this folder.

The folder should be given an appropriate name by the candidate and be easily accessible in order to facilitate the download and upload of documents.

3.3   Downloading a document or file:

For certain tasks, candidates will see a **green paper-clip** – as below – with instructions to download and save the source document provided in order to complete the task. Note that some tasks will require more than one document to be downloaded.

  To download a source document, **click once** on the **green paper-clip**.

As a candidate downloads and saves a document, note that the document will open on screen.

It is recommended that candidates save and retain (for the duration of the test) all downloaded files in the folders they have created.

As in section 1.7 above, all documents downloaded and uploaded as during a test must be deleted by the invigilator once the test has been submitted.

3.4   Uploading a completed document:
Where required, candidates will be instructed to upload a completed file as evidence of their work.

 To do this, **click** on the **blue arrow**.

Once the **blue arrow** is clicked, the **Upload Manager** will open on screen – see below.

Click on the **Upload** button and navigate to the folder where the completed document for this task is saved. **Double-click** on the document to upload it.

When the name of the completed document (file) is visible in the **Upload Manager**, the upload is complete.

When uploading a file, please note:
- File names must **only** contain alphanumerical characters (**A-Z** and **0-9**). Characters can be both upper and lower case. Candidates **must not use special characters** (such as &, !, %) as this will lead to uploaded files being inaccessible by the system for that task, and any subsequent tasks, even if the original file title is removed or replaced.
- Only **one** document can be uploaded per relevant task.
- You must **save and close the document** before attempting to upload.
- The **maximum file size** for most tasks that can be uploaded is **1MB** (or 1024KB).
  (The maximum file size for a presentation or file management task is **2MB** or 2048KB).

3.5   File types/ extensions:
All source files (the files downloaded by a candidate to help complete the task) are provided in compatibility mode so they can be opened by different versions of MS Office. Candidates are **not** required to change the file type or extension (eg .doc or .docx) of the documents they download as part of the test.

However, if a candidate saves a document using a different file type/ extension to that which was downloaded, they will need to change the file type/ extension in the drop-down menu of the open folder – see example below – to the file type/ extension the document was saved with.
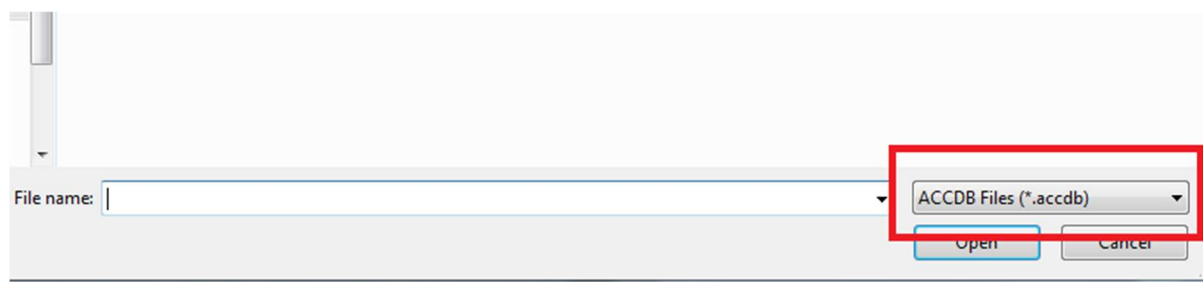
NB: The exact appearance of this file extension feature may differ depending on the operating system installed on the PC/ laptop.

While a wide variety of applications and processes are assessed as part of Functional Skills ICT, the in-app functionality is only applied to a small number of these. The table below provides the file extensions which can uploaded using in-app, by each relevant application assessed.

Application:	File extensions allowed:
Ms Access	N/A (see section 2.3)
MS Excel	.xls, .xlsx, .xlt, .xltx
MS PowerPoint	.ppt, .pptx, .pot, .potx
MS Publisher	.pub
MS Word	.doc, .docx, .dotx, .docb

3.6   Replacing an uploaded document:

Candidates are encouraged to review their work before submitting their completed test. If they make changes to a document which they have uploaded already, they must ensure that the revised document is uploaded so that it is available to mark.

While a 'replace' function is available via the **Upload Manager**, to replace an uploaded document it is suggested that the candidate:

- **Rename and save the document** to the original folder in which it is saved previously.
- Return to the relevant task in the test and **click on the blue arrow**.
- Click on **Delete** to remove the original document uploaded.
- Via the **Upload Manager**, repeat the upload process with the revised document.

If a candidate wishes to use the 'replace' function, the document to be uploaded must have a different name from the document being replaced.

3.7   Renaming an uploaded document:

A 'rename' function does exist within the **Upload Manager**, but is important to note that this will **not** change the name of that document in the folder where the original document is saved.

3.8   Ensuring correct files are uploaded:

As above, the final screen within the assessment encourages candidates to take whatever remaining time available to check their work. **In advance of their tests**, candidates should be prepared so that they know to double-check that they have uploaded all of their completed documents and **ensure that the correct documents have been uploaded to the relevant task for which it was created**. This should include checking that they have uploaded the file version they have worked on, and not the original 'unedited' source file they downloaded.

3.9   Submitting a completed test:

Should a candidate omit to upload a document, or upload an incorrect document, for a relevant task before exiting the test it cannot be subsequently forwarded to City & Guilds and the candidate will not receive marks for that task.

Candidates should be encouraged to review their work and ensure they have uploaded the correct document to each relevant task before submitting/ exiting the test.

4:   RESULTS

4.1   Results processing:

Results will be available within **20 working days** from the time that a test has been completed and uploaded. As with our other Functional Skills subjects, note that grades issues via *e-volve* are provisional only – final grades will be available via Walled Garden.

4.2   Candidate score reports:

Once a test has been completed and marked, a candidate score report is available to download which provides a percentage breakdown of performance by each application assessed.

Note that the percentages presented by application represent the number of marks achieved as a proportion of the number available *for that application*.

5:   FURTHER GUIDANCE

5.1   Further guidance:

For further information and guidance on offering Functional Skills qualifications through City & Guilds, please refer to the following documentation which can be found on our website here (see 'Centre Documents'):
- 3748 (Functional Skills) Qualification Handbook.
- 3748 External Assessment Guide.

5.2   Sample assessments:

Sample assessments for in-app will be available in a number of formats:
- **Offline 'paper' versions**, **accessed via our website**. These will allow candidates to complete relevant in-app tasks using MS Office software. Marking guides are available to tutors to allow them to determine the performance of the candidate.
- **On-screen versions via *e-volve***, scheduled exactly as 'live' tests but are free of charge: schedule under 3748-724 for Level 1 and 3748-725 for Level 2.
- **On-screen 'stand-alone' versions, accessed via web browser**.

Note that with any on-screen sample, it is **not possible to upload documents** as City & Guild cannot retain candidates' practice material, however centres may retain the documents completed by candidates and mark these internally using the marking guides referred to above.

5.3   Invigilation:
The assessment must take place under **supervised** conditions. These are less prescriptive than the JCQ Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations (ICE) regulations and are explained more fully in the Functional Skills handbook and FAQs (available on our **Functional Skills qualifications webpage –** link in section 5.1 above). Centres can make a local decision to apply the ICE regulations, although candidates should not be disadvantaged as a result.

Candidates are **not permitted to access the internet** during their test and invigilators must remain vigilant in this regard. For more information, please see the '3748 External Assessment Guide' (link in section 5.1).

5.4   In-app guidance:
A number of resources specific to in-app assessment are available:
- A 'Trouble-shooting Guide' for use by invigilators during test delivery can be found on the final two pages of this document.
- An animated demonstration of the in-app download and upload functionality can be found online here[1].

6:   CONTACT

6.1   General queries:
For general queries, please contact our centre support team:
- centresupport@cityandguilds.com
- 0844 543 0000

6.2   Queries regarding the *e-volve* platform:
Please refer to the *e-volve* page on the City & Guilds website here, or contact our support team:
- evolvesupport@cityandguilds.com

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[1] The demonstration is hosted on *Youtube* and is best viewed in normal screen mode.

Functional Skills ICT in-app
Trouble-shooting guide

The purpose of this guidance is to allow invigilators to trouble-shoot any issue or query that may arise during an in-app Functional Skills ICT test taken as part of our pilot process. Note that this refers only to the test functionality rather than assessment content.

Why is the test window not 'locked down'?
Unlike most other City & Guilds on-screen assessments, in-app tests are not 'locked down' in Secure Client (the programme used to run the test) as candidates are required to access folders and documents contained on the PC/ laptop's hard drive.

Should the invigilator create a folder for candidates to store their work?
No, creating the folder required to store the documents downloaded and uploaded is part of the assessment however the invigilator may advise the candidate regarding a suitable and easily accessible location on the hard drive.

Why can't a candidate upload their completed document?
If a candidate has difficulty uploading a document, it may be as a result of one of the following:
1) Candidates must save and close a document before attempting to upload it.
2) The document being uploaded must be relevant to the task at hand, eg it is not possible to upload an MS Excel spreadsheet for a task where an MS Word document is required.
3) The document being uploaded must not be larger than 1MB (1024KB) in size.
4) Only one document can be uploaded against any one task. If a document has already been uploaded, the candidate must either delete the original document or replace it with the intended one.
5) Candidates must have full access to the network folder in which their files are stored.

The candidate wants to upload a document but cannot see it in their folder – why?
All source files (the files downloaded by a candidate to help complete the task) are provided in compatibility mode. If a candidate saves a document using a different file type/ extension to that which was downloaded, they will need to change the file type/ extension in the drop-down menu of the open folder – see example below – to the file type/ extension the document was saved with.
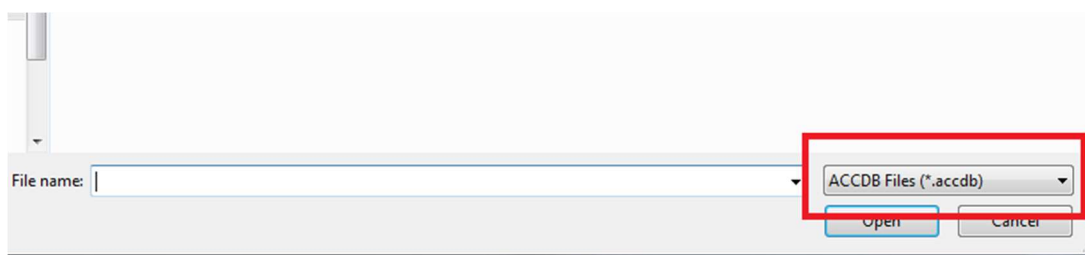
The candidate cannot access a folder to save a file or retrieve a saved file – why?

In-app does not restrict access to any folder that can be ordinarily accessed by a candidate with the necessary permissions to the local machine or network, so it is important to ensure that the candidate is attempting to access the correct folder and one that they have full access to.

When creating and accessing a folder linked to the **desktop**, note that different users may see or have access to different folders that may appear the same. For example, a typical networked machine will have its own 'desktop' folder, but the person logged on (whether tutor or candidate) will also have their own 'desktop' folder linked to their user profile. There is no reason that either cannot be accessed, but it is possible that candidates may inadvertently go to the 'wrong' desktop location, ie go to the machine's desktop rather than that linked to their profile. If in doubt, using the 'Recent Places' link in Windows Explorer (or via the Upload Manager) should show those folder(s) the candidate has most recently accessed.

The candidate's file exceeds 1MB – what can they do?

The 1MB file upload limit is necessary to ensure a fair and robust assessment process for all candidates, and 1MB is sufficient to complete all tasks. There are a number of occasions when a candidate may inadvertently exceed this limit:

- **Backgrounds/ themes:** typically in MS PowerPoint, including an over-elaborate background or theme can bulk out the file size. Changing to a more simple background or theme will reduce this significantly
- **Inserting images:** screenshots or images edited by the candidate may push the overall file size upward. Re-taking a screenshot or using the 'compress image' function under the *Format/ Picture Tools* tab of the application in question will help to reduce the file size.

The candidate has accidentally closed the test window – what do we do?

As the test window is not locked down, it is possible to inadvertently close the test window with actually exiting the test.

If this occurs, simply re-launch the Secure Client programme and re-enter the original keycode for that candidate/ test. The test will resume where it was at the point where the window was closed, with the same time left to complete the test also remaining.

Can a candidate make changes to a document they have already uploaded?

Yes, though they will have to upload the document again.

While a 'replace' function is available via the **Upload Manager**, it is suggested that the candidate:

- **Rename and save the document** to the original folder in which it is saved previously.
- Return to the relevant task in the test and **click on the blue arrow**.
- Click on **Delete** to remove the original document uploaded.
- Via the **Upload Manager**, repeat the upload process adding the revised document.

If a candidate wishes to use the 'replace' function, the document to be uploaded must have a different name from the document being replaced.

If a candidate forgets to upload a document, can it be provided at a later time?

No. Should a candidate omit to upload a file for a relevant task before exiting the test it cannot be subsequently forwarded to City & Guilds and the candidate will not receive marks for that task.

Candidates should be encouraged to review their work and ensure they have uploaded the correct document to each relevant task before exiting the test.