



Vtct

Instructions for Conducting Exams



Contents

This document is divided into four sections and two appendices which provide additional guidance regarding the invigilation of Functional Skills ICT exams and checking that exams have been uploaded to SecureAssess. Where stated that VTCT need immediately informing – e.g. problems during an examination with possible adverse effects – for functional skills this will usually also mean Skillsfirst.

This **MUST** be read and understood by ALL invigilators prior to invigilating any exams.

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Introduction

The rules set out in this document must be adhered to exams. They apply to both on-screen and paper-based exams.

It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure all invigilators have familiarised themselves with VTCT's requirements and adhere to these rules. All invigilators must be trained to carry out this role. Regular training/standardisation must take place to ensure all invigilators are aware of any changes.

No special software exists for using Linx2Achieve. However, centres must ensure any software (e.g. SecureClient for functional skills), required for on-screen exams has been installed on all machines that will be used for learner exams prior to the exam date. Should you encounter any problems with any aspect of your installation please contact us via customersupport@vtct.org.uk or 02380 684500.

It is important centres have a plan in place to cover any disruption to exams and how the arrangements will be communicated to centre staff and learners i.e. fire evacuation or bomb alert. In the event a centre is unable to open to facilitate the scheduled exams, VTCT should be notified immediately.

In the event the security of an exam, albeit on-screen or paper-based is put at risk, VTCT should be notified immediately.

VTCT reserves the right to conduct unannounced invigilation audits; this will include a review of the centres secure exam storage.

Any breach of the invigilation process will be treated as maladministration and/or malpractice and will be dealt with in line with VTCT's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Section A

General guidance for conducting exams

1.1 Invigilators

The role of the invigilator is to:

- ensure the security and integrity of all exams before, during and after the exam
- prevent learner plagiarism / collusion
- minimise the impact to the learner of potential hardware failures
- ensure previously agreed reasonable adjustments are put in place

The head of centre or designated personnel **must** make these instructions available to **all** invigilators. This may be a printed version or an electronic copy and **must** be visible at all times via a computer.

The head of centre **must** make sure that **all** invigilators are suitably qualified and experienced adults; they **must not** be current learners at the centre. Although the head of centre may decide who is suitably qualified and experienced, any relative, friend or peer of a learner in the exam room is not permitted.

At least one invigilator for every 30 learners should be present at all times. If only one invigilator is required, he/she must be able to access help easily, without disturbing the learners, or leaving the learners unattended. If necessary, the invigilator is allowed to keep a mobile phone in the exam room for emergency purposes only, however it **must** be kept on silent mode.

1.2 Preparing the exam room

Centres must ensure suitable accommodation is used for **all** exams as follows:

- the exam room must be of a suitable size
- learners must be seated a minimum of **1.25 metres apart and** facing in the same direction; each learner should have a separate desk and must be far enough apart from other learners to prevent them from seeing each other's work
- heating, lighting, ventilation and the level of outside noise must be appropriately controlled to allow the learners to take their exam comfortably
- display material which might be helpful to learners **must not** be visible
- ensure there is a working clock visible to each learner
- make sure all relevant exam signage is clearly displayed
- the invigilator must be able to freely move around the room and be able to observe each learner at all times

1.3 Before the exam

Before learners are allowed to start the exam, the invigilator **must always**:

- make sure photographic identification of each learner has been authenticated
- inform learners that they must follow the regulations of the exam
- create a seating plan that shows the exact position of each learner in the exam room
- confirm emergency procedures to all learners
- remind learners that they are not allowed to communicate in any way with, ask for help from, or give help to, another learner while they are in the exam room
- check that learners have the correct equipment and materials for their exam, for example; calculators and source documents (where applicable)
- check that no information is included inside the calculator case (where applicable) and that these are not programmable calculators
- check all pencil cases are see-through
- inform learners that they cannot bring mobile phones/smart watches/tablets into the exam room; if this is not practical, an area within the exam room, out of the reach of learners **must** be identified and monitored by the invigilator at all times
- instruct the learners to sign and write their name exactly as it appears on the attendance register (paper-based exams only)
- identify and learners with special requirements and ensure provision to support these learners is in place
- instruct the learners to complete any rough work in the question booklet and cross through it neatly unless it is maths workings out. Rough work needs to be legible (paper-based exams only)
- ensure all learners are seated before commencing the exam and they have been issued with the correct question papers for the exam they are about to sit
- ask learners to confirm they are sitting the exam for the correct qualification and level
- clearly announce to learners when they may begin and inform them of the duration of their exam
- if a reader or scribe is required for the exam, ensure there is an invigilator also present and that no other learners are disadvantaged by this arrangement; readers and or scribes are **not** allowed access to the exam paper prior to the start of the exam
- learners who are late for the exam may be permitted to enter the exam room and sit the exam (at the centres discretion)

1.4 During the exam

The invigilator must:

- supervise the learners throughout the exam and give complete attention to this duty at all times
- be vigilant, looking out for potential plagiarism / collusion. Any irregularities **must** be recorded on the invigilation / supervision report and VTCT **must** be notified immediately
- move around the exam room quietly and at frequent intervals
- be able to observe all learners
- any changes made to seating arrangements during the exam **must** be recorded on the seating plan, this must be made available to VTCT upon request

- accurately complete the attendance register and invigilation / supervision report during the exam, specifying any learners who were absent
- adhere to the correct timings of the exam
- ensure any disturbances/emergencies (if applicable) are dealt with appropriately, recorded on the supervision report and notified to VTCT immediately
- make sure advice is provided to learners if they suspect there is an error on the paper, contact VTCT immediately
- inform VTCT if any learners were allowed to leave the room unaccompanied

The invigilator must not:

- direct learners to particular questions or particular sections of the question paper
- read a word or words printed on the question paper to a learner, other than instructions before the exam
- carry out any other task, such as; read or scribe during the exam unless permission has been granted by VTCT
- allow the use of correction fluid or erasable pens by learners
- offer any advice or comment on the work of a learner

1.5 At the end of the exam

- clearly tell the learners to stop working, reminding them exam conditions still apply
- for on-screen exams, remind learners they must select the 'finish' button on-screen
- for paper-based exams, ensure all learners have entered their details correctly on their scripts and included their name on all documents being submitting for marking
- for paper-based exams, ensure all exam papers (used and unused), learner scripts and documents are collated prior to the learners leaving the room
- ensure learners who were granted extra time continue their exam

1.6 After the exam

- for on-screen functional skills exams, ensure the exam has been submitted/uploaded to SecureAssess
- for paper-based exams, ensure all exam papers (used and unused), invigilation records, learner scripts and documents are despatched to VTCT immediately via a secure postal method; if you are unable to return them to VTCT immediately, ensure they are stored in the centre secure location until no later than the following day

1.7 Retaining invigilation records

Centres **must** retain signed records of the seating plan, attendance register, and invigilation / supervision reports for each exam sitting for a minimum of 3 years from the date of the exam sitting. VTCT reserves the right to request copies of these records and any time. As part of our quality assurance process, VTCT EQAs will sample these records during external quality assurance visits.

Section B

On-screen exams

See Appendix 1 for additional guidance specifically relating to Functional Skills ICT

The following additional guidance must be adhered to when conducting **on-screen exams**

1.1 Preparing for the exam

As well as ensuring the exam room is appropriate (refer to Section A), computers must be checked to ensure they are **fit for the purpose** for running the exam. This includes ensuring:

- the software required for on-screen functional skills exams (SecureClient) has been installed on all machines (see table below)
- each computer has a stable internet connection (via Wi-Fi or a wired connection) **unless** the exams are downloaded and run in offline mode. Dongles are **not** permitted to be used. **An internet connection is required for all FS ICT exams**
- the PC / laptop is fully charged and will remain so for the duration of the exam
- all passwords and login details for onscreen exams are kept secure prior to the exam commencing
- all learners receive guidance on how to use the onscreen testing software. NB: practice exams are available on VTCT website
- learners have been provided with their security key codes prior to commencing the exam and that they thoroughly check their personal details are correct; notify VTCT **immediately** if they are incorrect
- for functional skills **ICT exams only**, that learners have access to the internet (for the first part of the exam only - Section A), email and data files
- all computers must meet or exceed appropriate specifications to run SecureClient for functional skills exams (see below). Failure to ensure this, could result in learners being disrupted during the exam

Hardware	Minimum requirements
Processor	2.33GHz or faster x86-compatible processor
RAM	1GB
HDD Space	1GB of free space
Video	Single display Screen resolution of 1024x768 Graphics card with at least 128MB of memory
Peripherals	Two button mouse Keyboard
Software	Supported platforms

Operating System	Windows 7 (32bit or 64bit) Windows 8 (32bit or 64bit) Windows 8.1 (32bit or 64bit) <i>NB: Windows XP and Windows Vista are not supported</i>
Software	Supported platforms
.NET	Microsoft .Net Framework 2.0 (service pack 2) to Microsoft .Net Framework 3.5 <i>NB: There is no download for .NET Framework 2.0 or 3.5 for Windows 7, 8 or 8.1 (note .NET Framework 3.5 is backwards compatible with 2.0)</i>
Internet Browser	Internet Explorer 8 to 10
Adobe Reader	Adobe Reader XI (version 11.0.07)
Adobe Flash Player	Adobe Flash Player 12.0.0.38 to 14.0.0.145 <i>This needs to be the ActiveX version of Flash, i.e. it needs to have been installed from Internet Explorer</i>
Bandwidth	Minimum requirements
Bandwidth	A centre connection of 2Mbps or greater for every 30 learner exams being sat at the same time is recommended to ensure learners are not affected by connection issues during the exam. <i>Please note, the use of 3G cards may not guarantee a constant bandwidth and could therefore not meet the minimum requirements.</i>

1.2 During the exam

Invigilators must ensure that:

- in the event of a problem with the exam or the software, the following guidelines are adhered to:
 - pause the exam (please refer to the User Guide for further guidance located on the VTCT website www.vtct.org.uk)
 - immediately contact the VTCT customer support team on 02380 684500 to seek advice and support
 - check that the exam resumes correctly and that the learner has not lost their work
- in the event of a hardware failure, the centre's IT department are contacted and that the learner is allowed to resume the exam on a different workstation where necessary

Where the above is not possible, the learner must be given the opportunity to re-sit the exam at a later date.

1.3 After the exam

Invigilators must ensure that:

- if rough paper for notes have been used by any learner, this must be collected before the learner(s) leave the room
- ensure all common user areas accessible to learners are clear of all work immediately after the exam

Section C

Paper-based exams

Paper-based exam papers will be despatched from VTCT to arrive at least one working day before the scheduled exam (five working days for national series exams)..

1.1 Secure storage of paper-based exam materials

Centres must:

- inform VTCT **immediately** if it appears that the security of the package has been breached in transit
- have a system in place to record the receipt and despatch of paper-based exam materials
- upon receipt, check the contents of the package carefully in the centres secure storage facilities; notify VTCT **immediately** if the contents do not meet your requirements
- once checked, **immediately** store all paper-based exam materials in the centres secure storage facilities until the day of the exam; if you are unable to check the contents of the package immediately, it **must** be stored in the centres secure storage facilities
- ensure **only** authorised personnel have access to the centres secure storage facilities
- be able to demonstrate that secure systems are in place to prevent unauthorised access to the exam materials
- ensure paper-based exam papers are not left unattended at any time

1.2 The exam room

- a board/flipchart/whiteboard should be visible to all learners showing the:
 - qualification/exam title and level
 - the actual start and finish times of the exam
- all learners should face in the same direction
- each learner should have a separate desk or table big enough to hold question papers, and answer booklets (if applicable). Learners who are not working at

individual desks must be at least **1.25 metres apart** so that their work cannot be seen by and contact cannot be made, with other learners

1.3 Dictionaries

- bilingual dictionaries (without definitions) may be used following approval by VTCT. These must be thoroughly checked to ensure no unauthorised information such as notes or revision information have been included within, or written on the dictionary
- learners may use dictionaries for functional skills exams in English, Mathematics and Information and Communication Technology

1.4 Finishing the exam

At fifteen and five minutes before the end of a paper-based exam, the invigilator should inform learners of the time remaining.

At the end of the exam the invigilator must:

- tell the learners to stop working
- make sure learners have entered their details correctly on their scripts and included their name on all documents being submitting for marking
- make sure their answers are correctly numbered (if applicable)
- collect all scripts before learners leave the room
- ensure there is a script for every learner marked as present
- collect all rough paper notes before the learners leave the room
- complete the supervision report

1.5 Packing and despatching exam papers

- all exam materials (scripts, answer books, exam papers, attendance registers, supervision reports) **must** be sent to VTCT on the **same** day as the exam where possible, and **in all cases no later than one working day after the exam**. If exam materials have to be kept overnight, they must be kept in secure storage
- **under no circumstances should unused exam papers be kept or destroyed by the centre, they must be returned to VTCT**
- care must be taken when packing exam materials, all items should be sent by recorded delivery. VTCT accepts no liability for exam paperwork lost in transit.

Section D

Invigilating learners with access arrangements

VTCT has a Reasonable Adjustments & Special Consideration policy to prevent discrimination in the assessment of skills and knowledge, therefore allowing reasonable adjustments to assist learners in demonstrating competence. Visit our website to view the Reasonable Adjustments & Special Consideration policy and permissions table www.vtct.org.uk It is important approval is granted from VTCT where applicable.

It is important the following invigilation rules are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments.

In cases where additional support is required to facilitate access arrangements, the head of centre has the responsibility to ensure that invigilators and those facilitating access arrangement i.e. readers, scribes and sign language interpreters understand their role and responsibilities. All involved must be trained appropriately in their role.

1.1 Reader (approval required)

The invigilator is responsible for ensuring that the reader and learner do not distract, or can be overheard by other learners. If the learner and reader are accommodated in a separate room to other learners, an additional invigilator will be required.

A reader is **not** permitted for the Functional Skills English Reading exam (levels 1 or 2).

1.2 Scribe (approval required)

The invigilator is responsible for ensuring that the scribe and learner do not distract, or be overheard by other learners.

It is normal practice for the learner and scribe to be in a separate room to other learners, an additional invigilator will be required.

A scribe is **not** permitted for the Functional Skills English Writing exam (levels 1 or 2).

1.3 Sign language interpreter (approval required)

The invigilator is responsible for ensuring that the interpreter and learner do not distract other learners. Learners requiring a sign language interpreter may need to be in a separate room to other learners, an additional invigilator will be required.

1.4 Prompter (approval required)

A prompter may be requested if a learner loses concentration easily, has little or no sense of time, or is affected by an obsessive compulsive disorder, leading them to repeatedly go over a question, rather than moving onto another question.

A prompter:

- must not be the learners tutor, assessor, relative, friend or peer
- must be a responsible adult
- should keep the learner focused on the question in hand and then move him/her onto the next question
- has a different role to a reader, scribe and practical assistant, however the same person can conduct more than one role to support the learner if permission has been granted by VTCT
- the invigilator may act as the prompter if no other learners are present

1.5 Bilingual dictionaries (approval required)

A bilingual dictionary **must** only be used by a learner whose first language is not English, Irish or Welsh and **must** reflect the learner's normal way of working.

Bilingual dictionaries must be checked by the invigilator to ensure there are no notes, data or other unauthorised information available to the learner and should be retained in the centre under secure conditions.

Monolingual dictionaries which define words and phrases or contain pictures are not permitted.

Appendix 1

Functional Skills ICT invigilation guidance

This appendix is also available as a separate document on the VTCT website and should be used alongside the learner guidance for Functional Skills ICT exams.

Onscreen Functional Skills ICT exams

Invigilators should adhere to the following additional guidance when invigilating onscreen Functional Skills ICT exams.

1. Before the exam

1.1. It is the invigilators responsibility to ensure that:

- a. previously used “dummy” email accounts have been cleared of all previous learner data, before providing this account to another learner
- b. all previous learners work (their answers) has been deleted from the computer on which the exam is going to be sat on
- c. internet history of the web browser has been deleted from the computer on which the exam is going to be sat on
- d. learners download the data files available on the introduction page

1.1. Whilst Skillsfirst and VTCT do not specify which software should be used during the exam, learners must not create work in software that is not available to the public and no longer supported by the manufacturer (i.e. Microsoft Works)

1.2. Learners **must** be instructed to click on the exclamation mark on the introduction page to view guidance on how to upload their work at the end of each task

1.3. Learners **must** be instructed to attach/upload **ALL** of their work (the answers to the questions) **BEFORE** they press ‘FINISH’. If they do not do this we will not have all of the information we need to mark their exam. This will mean they will not achieve the mark they deserve and could result in them having to re-sit

Some ICT exams require learners to complete a task using an email account; we would therefore strongly recommend creating “dummy” email accounts for learners to use during this task. For example, student1@gmail.com, student2@gmail.com these should be prepared and ready for use prior to the start of the exam. If you require any support to set this up please contact secureassess@skillsfirst.co.uk

2. During the exam

- 2.1 The duration of Functional Skills ICT examinations is 2 hours. **The exam does not carry an automatic timer in SecureClient**, therefore it is important to note, it is the invigilators responsibility to manage the duration of the on-screen exam, as they would with a paper based exam. **Learners must not spend longer than 30 minutes on Section A and 90 minutes on Section B.** All ICT exams will be monitored by Skillsfirst to ensure this guidance is adhered to. Should an exam be identified as not being compliant it will be voided, resulting in a fail
- 2.2 Internet access is required for Section A **only** and is **not permitted** for Section B. Internet access **must be disabled prior to learners commencing Section B.** All ICT exams will be monitored by Skillsfirst to ensure this guidance is adhered to. Should an exam be identified as not being compliant it will be voided, resulting in a fail and will be dealt with in line with VTCT's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy which can be located on our website www.skillsfirst.co.uk
- 2.3 A comfort break is **not** permitted between the two sections of the exam. A short pause may take place in order for the invigilator to ensure that internet access is disabled during Section B. **Learners are not permitted to leave the exam room unaccompanied at any point during the exam, normal exam conditions must be applied**
- 2.4 Learners should minimise SecureClient when required to complete tasks outside of the software. SecureClient should not be closed at any time during the exam
- 2.5 Only one version of SecureClient should be open at any given time. Launching the SecureClient more than once could result in the loss of exam data
- 2.6 When saving work, learners should ensure that they have made a note of the file type (e.g. 'docx', '.xls', '.jpg') as the learner will need to select this when uploading their work to the exam in SecureClient. The exclamation mark appears on each question as a reminder if the learner has trouble completing this
- 2.7 Learners should upload their work whenever prompted. Learners will **not** be able to upload their work unless the file is closed in the program it was created in first
- 2.8 Ensure all learners upload their work after completing each task (please refer to 1.4 for further information)

3. Before a learner selects the 'Finish' button

- 3.1. It is the invigilators responsibility to ensure the learner is aware he/she has to upload (attach) all relevant work to each task before they click on the 'Finish' button

To check work has been attached to the learners' exam, learners should complete the following steps:

1. Navigate your way through the exam, checking each question as you go along. They can do this by using the 'next' and 'previous' button



2. Click on the 'attach file' button



3. Here they will see the upload manager, in here is where their work will appear

Upload Manager

Upload The maximum file upload size is 500MB

File Name	File Type	Date Uploaded	
Test Document	.docx	08/06/2015	Rename Replace  

In the event that there is a problem with uploading the work, Skillsfirst should be contacted **immediately** on 0121 270 5100. If this is not possible, the learner should click on the 'Finish' button and the invigilator **must** contact Skillsfirst within 24 hours of the exam taking place to arrange for the work to be sent for marking. Failure to abide by these timescales could potentially disadvantage the learner and affect their result. Under no circumstances should the exam be left open on screen once the learner has left the room

- 3.2. **Before leaving the examination room**, the invigilator must ensure that the exam is uploaded to Skillsfirst to be marked. The success of the upload can be monitored in SecureAssess by navigating to the 'Invigilation' tab and searching for the exam. A successfully uploaded exam will show a **green** tick in the 'State' column

State	PIN	Exam Name
✓	5j6f	Functional Skills Qualification in English Writing Level 1
✓	4f4h	Functional Skills Qualification in English Reading Level 2

If the exam has failed to upload, please refer to the guidance document "uploading exams in SecureAssess" Appendix 2

- 3.3 You must ensure learners who are using the “dummy” email accounts have been cleared from learner data before providing this account to another learner
- 3.4 The invigilator must ensure that learners work (their answers) is saved to a secure storage location or device for a minimum period of six months after the exam has taken place and **deleted from the computer on which the exam was sat on. The storage location must not be accessible to other learners who are registered for Skillsfirst Functional Skills ICT qualifications**
- 3.5 The invigilator must ensure that the **internet history of the web browser has been deleted** following each exam. If there is more than one web browser on the computer, the history of each web browser should be deleted



Paper based Functional Skills ICT exams

Invigilators should adhere to the following additional guidance when invigilating paper based Functional Skills ICT exams.

1. Before the exam

1.1. It is the invigilators responsibility to ensure that:

- a. previously used “dummy” email accounts have been cleared of previous learner data, before providing this account to another learner
- b. previous learners work (their answers) has been deleted from the computer on which the exam is going to be sat on
- c. internet history of the web browser has been deleted from the computer on which the exam is going to be sat on
- d. the data files emailed to them by VTCT are available to the learners at the start of the exam

2. During the exam

- 2.1 Internet access is required for Section A **only** and is **not permitted** for Section B. Internet access **must be disabled prior to learners commencing Section B**. All ICT exams will be monitored by Skillsfirst to ensure this guidance is adhered to. Should an exam be identified as not being compliant it will be voided, resulting in a fail and will be dealt with in line with VTCT’s Malpractice and Maladministration Policy which can be located on our website www.vtct.org.uk
- 2.2 A comfort break is **not** permitted between the two sections of the exam. A short pause may take place in order for the invigilator to ensure that internet access is disabled during Section B. **Learners are not permitted to leave the exam room unaccompanied at any point during the exam, normal exam conditions must be applied**

3. Following the exam

- 3.1 The invigilator must ensure that learners work (their answers) is saved to a secure storage location or device for a minimum period of six months after the exam has taken place and **deleted from the computer on which the exam was sat on. The storage location must not be accessible to other learners who are registered for Skillsfirst Functional Skills ICT qualifications**
- 3.2 The invigilator must ensure that the **internet history of the web browser has been deleted** following each exam. If there is more than one web browser on the computer, the history of each web browser should be deleted
- 3.3 The invigilator must ensure learners who are using the “dummy” email accounts have been cleared from learner data before providing this account to another learner

Appendix 2

Checking exams have been uploaded into SecureAssess

If your exams have been taken offline, they **must** be uploaded back to SecureAssess once you are connected to the internet. Failure to do this will delay the marking of the exam and could result in the exam being lost and the learner being forced to re-sit

To upload your learners work back to SecureAssess to be marked, please complete the following steps:

1. Open Skillsfirst SecureClient



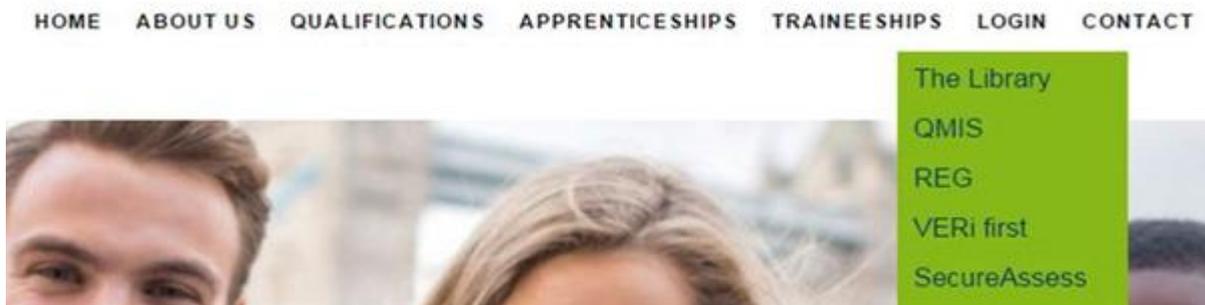
2. Click on the **'Show Admin'** link and enter your login details for SecureAssess

A screenshot of a dialog box titled 'Please enter your Keycode in the box below.' It contains a two-part input field for a keycode, an 'OK' button, a 'Show Admin >' link with a mouse cursor, and a 'Preferences' button.

3. Select the exams you wish to upload (to highlight more than one exam, hold down the **CTRL** key whilst clicking on each exam) and click **'Upload Results'**
4. A message will appear to confirm your exam has successfully uploaded
5. You will know an exam has uploaded back to Skillsfirst as it will no longer appear in the list of exams in the **'Show Admin'** section

We **highly** recommend logging into SecureAssess to check that the exam has uploaded successfully

1. In order to do this, you will need to navigate to the Skillsfirst website www.skillsfirst.co.uk
2. Click on the login drop down box at the top, right hand side of the home page and click 'SecureAssess'



3. A new window will appear, please enter your login details here to access SecureAssess

4. Click on the 'Invigilation' tab
5. The state of the exam should appear as 'Finished', this will be represented by a green 'tick', demonstrated in the screenshot below

State	PIN	Exam Name	Keycode	Centre Name	Candidate	Candidate ref.	Start Date	End Date	Start Time	End Time	Duration
✓	8688	Practice ICT Functional Skills	FLEQ8284	Skillsfirst (Test centre only)	B88 Test	1026491	18/11/2014	31/12/2014	00:00:00	23:59:00	Untimed

It is **extremely** important to check every exam following completion to ensure that it has been uploaded to Skillsfirst

Not uploading an exam straight away will result in a delay to the results being released.

If you experience difficulties uploading an exam, please contact secureassess@skillsfirst.co.uk