

Specification

IAO Level 3 Award for the Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator

Qualification number: 610/7909/1

Contents

Change Control Sheet 3

Innovate Awarding Organisation 4

Qualification Summary 5

Qualification Structure 7

Target Audience 7

Progression Opportunities 7

Support Materials 7

Funding 8

QUALIFICATION UNITS 9

Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator 100

Methods for supporting children with special educational needs and their families 10

APPENDIX 15

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) 16

Occupational Competence Requirements 19

Additional Information 21

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Change Control Sheet

Innovate Awarding will continuously review all support material to ensure its accuracy. All amendments will be recorded on the change control table below.

Version Number	Date Revised	Description of Revision	Page Affected

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Innovate Awarding Organisation

Innovate Awarding is an Ofqual regulated awarding organisation offering a wide range of Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) approved Qualifications ranging from Level 1 to Level 7, including skills for life and bespoke Qualifications.

This Specification version number is 1. We will inform centres of any changes to this Specification. Centres can keep up to date by visiting our website www.innovateawarding.org

This Specification provides details on administration, Quality Assurance policies and requirements as well as responsibilities that are associated with the delivery of vocational qualifications.

For more information on our range of Qualifications, email contactus@innovateawarding.org

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Qualification Summary

Qualification Title	**IAO Level 3 Award for the Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator**		
Qualification Number (QN)	**610/7909/1**	**RQF Level**	**3**
Operational Start Date	**1st October 2026**		
Qualification Appropriate For Age Ranges	**16 and over**		

Total Qualification Time (TQT)	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Qualification Credit Value
24	**20**	**2**

Qualification Objective

It is a requirement of the SEND Code of Practice that every early years setting has a SEND coordinator.

This qualification will develop learners' understanding of the role of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator in early years settings.

Assessment Requirements

This qualification is internally assessed and internally quality assured by Centre staff and externally quality assured by Innovate Awarding External Quality Advisors (EQAs).

To pass, the learner must demonstrate that they have met all the learning outcomes and their associated assessment criteria. If the learner has not demonstrated competence, they would be provided with feedback for the criteria not yet met.

Portfolio of Evidence

Learners are required to complete a portfolio of evidence.

Evidence may include written assignments and professional discussions.

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Statement of Authenticity

Learners will need to provide a Statement of Authenticity to confirm that work submitted for assessment is their own and that they have not copied it from someone else or allowed another learner to copy it from them.

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Qualification Structure

Mandatory Units

Unit Number	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	GLH
T/652/3630	Roles and responsibilities of the Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator	3	1	10
Y/652/3631	Methods for supporting children with special educational needs and their families	3	1	10

Target Audience

Learners will be working in or seeking to work in early years settings.

There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification.

This qualification is regulated for learners aged 16 years old.

Progression Opportunities

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress into or within employment in early years roles and/or continue their study in this or other areas.

Learners who complete this qualification may go on to further learning in related areas such as the following apprenticeship standards:

- Level 3 Early Years Educator
- Level 5 Lead Practitioner in Early Years

Support Materials

The following support materials available for this qualification are:

- Portfolio of Evidence Locator

All the support materials for this qualification can be found on Accolade, including the Assessment Key Verbs Document.

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Funding

This qualification is not currently eligible for public funding.

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QUALIFICATION UNITS

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Unit Title Roles and responsibilities of the Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator

Unit Number T/652/3630
Level 3
Credit Value 1
GLH 10

Unit Aim

This unit focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator, who will need to understand the relevant legislation, principles, statutory guidance and best practice within early years settings. This unit also covers working in partnership and the identification of special educational needs.

Learning outcome The learner will	Assessment criteria The learner can
1. Understand the principles, statutory guidance and legislation underpinning practice for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in an early years setting.	1.1 Explain the term Special Educational Needs and Disability in relation to statutory guidance. 1.2 Summarise the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice for an early years setting in line with statutory requirements. 1.3 Identify **key legislation and statutory frameworks and guidance relevant to SEND**. 1.4 Explain the importance of inclusive practice in early years provision.
2. Understand the role of the Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo).	2.1 Compare the role of the SENCo in private, voluntary and independent early years settings. 2.2 Explain the responsibilities of the Early Years SENCo to share best practice and raise confidence of colleagues in their work with children with SEND. 2.3 Describe how SENCos support staff development. 2.4 Describe the SENCo's role in **monitoring and evaluating provision**.

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3. Understand partnership working for the Early Years SENCo.	3.1 Explain the importance of working with parents/carers. 3.2 Describe how SENCos work with **other professionals** and the support they provide. 3.3 Describe services available for children and their families through the Local Offer. 3.4 Identify **barriers** to effective partnership working. 3.5 Explain the role of the Early Years SENCo during transition. 3.6 Explain how information sharing with others within and beyond the setting contributes to effective transition and supports achievement of agreed outcomes.
4. Understand approaches to identifying and supporting children with SEND.	4.1 Describe: • communication and interaction difficulties • cognition and learning difficulties • social, emotional and mental health difficulties • sensory and/or physical needs 4.2 Describe the impact of SEND on children's development. 4.3 Describe how to identify high and low incidence of special educational needs (SEN). 4.4 Describe processes for identification and early action for children with SEND in an early years setting in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage. 4.5 Explain the importance of early identification and intervention. 4.6 Explain how adjustment strategies and interventions for supporting the learning of children with different types of SEN ensure positive learning outcomes. 4.7 Describe **person-centred approaches** in supporting children. 4.8 Explain how to **adapt environments** to meet individual needs.

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Additional Information

Key legislation and statutory frameworks and guidance relevant to SEND include:

- Children and Families Act (2014)
- SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years
- Equality Act (2010)
- EYFS Framework
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Monitoring and evaluating provision may include:

- Reviewing children's progress
- Evaluating interventions
- Supporting quality improvement
- Maintaining SEND records/documentation

Other professionals include:

- Health visitors
- Speech and language therapists
- Educational psychologists
- Social workers

Barriers may include:

- Communication difficulties
- Cultural differences
- Time constraints
- Lack of trust or understanding

Person-centred approaches may include:

- The child's voice and preferences
- Individualised support
- Strengths-based practice

Adapt environments may include:

- Sensory-friendly spaces
- Accessible resources
- Quiet areas

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Unit Title Methods for supporting children with special educational needs and their families

Unit Number Y/652/3631
Level 3
Credit Value 1
GLH 10

Unit Aim

This unit provides the learner with knowledge and understanding of methods for supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families. Methods include the graduated approach, Education, Health and Care plans and reflective practice.

Learning outcome The learner will	Assessment criteria The learner can
1. Understand the graduated approach in an early years setting.	1.1 Describe each stage in the **graduated approach cycle**. 1.2 Explain how following a graduated approach provides SEND support in the early years. 1.3 Describe ways of engaging with parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals throughout the graduated approach. 1.4 Detail benefits to the child of parent/carer participation throughout the graduated approach to include: • confidence and well-being • improved social skills • holistic condition improvement 1.5 Analyse the reviewing processes for progress monitoring and action planning to inform practice within the graduated approach.
2. Understand how to support families of children with SEND.	2.1 Explain the importance of working in partnership with families. 2.2 Describe methods of supporting parents/carers. 2.3 Identify sources of support available to families.
3. Understand English as an additional language (EAL).	3.1 Explain the needs of children with EAL in an early years setting. 3.2 Explain the needs of children with EAL and SEN in the early years.

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4. Understand Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.	4.1 Describe the principles underpinning Education, Health and Care plans. 4.2 Analyse clear goal setting for effective Education, Health and Care plans. 4.3 Explain record keeping for best practice in tracking progress for children in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage and Local Authority requirements.
5. Be able to practice as a reflective SENCo.	5.1 Develop a skills gap analysis against the Early Years SENCo job description. 5.2 Reflect on own practice to identify professional development opportunities, training and support needs for Early Years SENCo role. 5.3 Analyse funding implications in relation to SEND for the Early Years SENCo.
Additional Information (normally shown by Learning Outcome)	
Graduated approach cycle: Assess, plan, do, review.	

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APPENDIX

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The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)

What is the RQF?

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) is an Ofqual regulated system of cataloguing qualifications. Qualifications on the RQF can be found by their size or level. Qualifications at a given level can differ depending on their content and purpose.

All of Innovate Awarding's qualifications are on the RQF.

Qualification Level

The level reflects the challenge or difficulty of the qualification. There are eight levels of qualification from 1 to 8, supported by three 'Entry' levels.

Qualification Size

The size of a qualification reflects the estimated total amount of time it would take the average learner to study and be assessed. The size of a qualification is expressed in terms of Total Qualification Time (TQT). The time spent being taught or supervised, rather than studying alone, is the Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Qualifications can sit at different levels but require similar amounts of study and assessment. Similarly, qualifications at the same level can take different amounts of time to complete.

Credit Values

Every unit and qualification on the RQF has been given a credit value, which denotes the number of credits that will be awarded to each candidate who successfully completes the unit or qualification.

- **1** credit represents **10** notional learning hours.

Notional learning hours represent the amount of time a learner is expected to take, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the unit to the standard required within the assessment criteria. It is important to note that notional learning hours is not the same as guided learning hours (GLH). GLH represents the hours during which a tutor or trainer is present and contributing to the learning process. Notional learning hours represents the hours which are needed to successfully cover all the learning required to achieve the unit, either guided or independently.

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RQF Terminology

Whilst the evidence outcomes required from RQF and NVQ units are the same, the RQF units use different terminology to the NVQ units. The assessment criteria for NVQ units are 'what you must do' and 'what you must know' whereas the RQF units are all 'the Learner can' or 'the Learner is able to'.

Rules of Combination (RoC)

Every qualification on the RQF is structured through Rules of Combination. Rules of Combination are important because they define the number of credits which need to be achieved and where these credits must come from in order for a Learner to achieve the qualification. Rules of Combination also state what the potential is for Learners who wish to transfer credits between qualifications and awarding organisations.

Assessment Principles

Learners must be registered with the Awarding Organisation before formal assessment commences.

Assessors must be able to evidence and justify the assessment decisions that they have made.

Where an assessor is occupationally competent but not yet qualified as an assessor, assessment decisions must rest with a qualified assessor. This may be expressed through a robust countersigning strategy that supports and validates assessment decisions made by as yet unqualified assessors, until the point where they meet the requirements for qualification.

Assessment of knowledge-based learning outcomes:

- May take place in or outside of a real work environment
- Must be made by an occupationally qualified and knowledgeable assessor, qualified to make assessment decisions
- Must be robust, reliable, valid, and current; any assessment evidence using pre-set automated tests, including e-assessment portfolios, must meet these requirements and can only contribute to overall decisions made by the assessor.

Those involved in assessment must demonstrate their continuing professional development, up to date skills, knowledge and understanding of practice at or above the level of the unit.

Regardless of the form of recording used for assessment evidence, the guiding principle must be that evidence gathered for assessment must comply with policy

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and legal requirements in relation to confidentiality and data protection. Assessors must ensure they are satisfied the evidence presented is traceable, auditable and authenticated and meets assessment principles.

Quality Assurance

Internal quality assurance is key to ensuring that the assessment of evidence is of a consistent and appropriate quality. Those carrying out internal quality assurance must be occupationally knowledgeable in the unit they are assuring and be qualified to make quality assurance decisions.

Those involved in internal quality assurance must have the authority and the resources to monitor the work of assessors. They have a responsibility to highlight and propose ways to address any challenges in the assessment process (e.g. to ensure suitable assessors are assigned to reflect the strengths and needs of particular learners).

Those carrying out external quality assurance must be occupationally knowledgeable and understand the policy and practice context of the qualifications in which they are involved.

Those involved in external quality assurance have a responsibility to promote continuous improvement in the quality of assessment processes.

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Occupational Competence Requirements

Tutors, Assessors and Quality Assurance Staff

All Tutors, Assessors and Quality Assurance Staff must:

- Have a specific qualification equivalent to the qualification or units being taught/assessed or quality assured
- Have relevant industry experience
- Demonstrate active involvement in a process of industry relevant Continued Professional Development during the last two years (this may be discipline/context specific or relevant to tutoring assessing or quality assurance)

Tutors

Tutors must hold or be working towards a teaching qualification. The following are acceptable:

- Level 3 Award, Level 4 Certificate or Level 5 in Education and Training
- Level 3 Award in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTTLS)
- Level 4 Award in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTTLS)
- Level 4 Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTTLS)
- Level 5 Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTTLS)
- Qualified Teacher Status
- Relevant predecessor tutor qualifications, such as Level 3 Awards and Certificate in Assessing the Quality of Assessment (QCF), Certificate in Education in Post Compulsory Education (PCE) or L&D9DI - Assessing workplace competence using Direct and Indirect methods (Scotland)

Assessors

Assessors must hold or be working towards any of the following:

- Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement

Assessors holding historical qualifications such as unit A1, unit A2, or Level 4 Awards and Certificates in Assuring the Quality of Assessment (QCF), are required to demonstrate that they meet the same standards as current assessment practice requirements. Suggested evidence that demonstrates this requirement may include CPD records, a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and/or records of work completed.

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Internal Quality Assurers

Internal quality assurers must hold or be working towards any of the following:

- Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice

Internal Verifiers holding historical qualifications such as unit V1 – Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process, are required to demonstrate that they meet the same standards for monitoring assessment processes and decisions as current assessment practice requirements. Suggested evidence that demonstrates this requirement may include CPD records, a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and/or records of work completed.

It is recommended that internal quality assurance staff also hold a relevant assessing qualification as detailed above.

External Quality Assurers

External Quality Assurers must hold or be working towards any of the following:

- Level 4 Award in the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice

External verifiers holding historical qualifications such as unit V2 – Conduct External Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process, are required to demonstrate that they meet the same standards for monitoring assessment processes and decisions as current assessment practice requirements. Suggested evidence that demonstrates this requirement may include CPD records, a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and/or records of work completed.

It is recommended that external quality assurance staff also hold a relevant assessing and internal quality assurance qualifications as detailed above.

All new assessors and quality assurance staff must be given a clear action plan for achieving the appropriate qualification(s) and should be countersigned by an appropriately qualified individual until the qualification(s) are achieved.

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Additional Information

Centre Approval

We approve organisations such as colleges, schools, providers and employers as approved centres. As an approved centre you will be able to deliver our qualifications.

To become an approved centre complete our Centre Approval Application Form which can be download from our website. Our support team will contact you within two working days to help you through the process.

Feedback

Your feedback is very important to us. We're always open to suggestions when it comes to enhancing and improving our services, products and systems.

Email contactus@innovateawarding.org or call 0117 314 2800.

Complaints

If we do get things wrong, we will make every effort to resolve your issues quickly and efficiently. If you'd like to raise a formal complaint, then we recommend you read our Complaints Procedure which can be found on our website.

Fees

Our fees structure is transparent and straightforward. Our fees are published on our website in a clear format with no hidden charges. Unlike other awarding organisations, we do not charge an annual centre fee. Visit our website to compare our fees.

Enquiries and Appeals

We recognise that sometimes decisions are made that a centre (or learner) may wish to appeal. We have an Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Process on our website that sets out guidelines on grounds for appeal and the process.

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Data Protection

Innovate Awarding takes the protection of data seriously; we have a data protection statement outlining how we and our centres, comply with the current legislation on data protection. This statement can be found on our website.

Equality and Diversity

Innovate Awarding is committed to giving everyone who wants to gain one of our qualifications an equal opportunity of achieving it in line with current UK legislation (Equality Act 2010) and EU directives.

Centres are required, as conditions of approval, to use an equality and diversity policy that works together with ours and that they maintain an effective complaint and appeals process. We expect centres to tell learners how to find and use their own equality and diversity and appeals processes. For information, please visit our website.

Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration

All learners must be treated fairly and equally and be given every opportunity to achieve our/the qualifications. A copy of our policy on Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations, and application form, can be found on our website.

Malpractice and Maladministration

Innovate Awarding has a responsibility to do everything it can to prevent any malpractice or maladministration from occurring, and where it has already occurred, ensuring action is taken proportionate to the gravity and scope of the occurrence.

A copy of our policy and procedure on Malpractice and Maladministration is available on our website.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and referencing

Learner submissions such as reports, presentations, business projects and portfolios must be produced by themselves. Correctly cited quotes and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be used to enhance and support the document, but the document itself must be the learner's own work and not generated by AI.

Innovate Awarding expects all forms of plagiarism to be treated very seriously by staff at centres, and centres should have in place their own plagiarism policy and process for handling suspected cases of plagiarism.

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL recognises how the contribution of a learner's previous experience could contribute to a qualification or unit. Innovate Awarding have produced guidance on RPL, and this can be found within our Information and Guidance for Centres on our website.

Please note the above is not a comprehensive guide to running qualifications. Once approved, centres must adhere to the Centre Agreement and Information and Guidance for Centres.

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