

Specification

Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer v1.0

Contents

WELCOME TO INNOVATE AWARDING 3

About Innovate Awarding 3

THE APPRENTICESHIP STANDARD AND ASSESSMENT PLAN 4

Summary of Assessment 5

The Apprentice 5

Off-the-Job Training 7

Gateway 7

Pre-Gateway Checks 8

Assessment Booking 8

Portfolio of Evidence Guidance 9

End Point Assessment 10
- **Assessment Method 1: Presentation with questions** 10
- **Assessment Method 2: Professional discussion, underpinned by a portfolio** 11

Grading 12

Grading Descriptors ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- **Assessment Method 1: Presentation with questions** 13
- **Assessment Method 2: Professional Discussion underpinned by portfolio of evidence** 16

ANNEX 1: APPRENTICESHIP DETAILS AND ASSESSMENT PLAN 20

ANNEX 2: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 21

Results and Certifications 21

Re-sits 21
- **Re-sits and Re-takes** 21

Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations and Appeals 22

Support Materials 22

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Referencing 22

English and Maths Qualifications 22

ANNEX 3: VERSION RECORD 23

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Welcome to Innovate Awarding

Welcome to the Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer Apprenticeship. Our Innovate Awarding Specifications are designed to ensure the employer, provider and apprentice have the appropriate support and guidance to allow successful completion of an apprenticeship, providing further confidence and assurance having chosen us as an End-Point Assessment Organisation.

We are an Ofqual approved End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), experienced in operating within a regulated market. Driven by the employers we work in partnership with, we deliver End-Point Assessment (EPA) in the Health, Care, Education, Leadership, Management, Leisure, Customer Service, Creative, Hospitality, Retail, Transport and Logistics sectors.

Delivering an apprenticeship is an extremely rewarding role. We recognise the need for a clear specification, resources and support, so more valuable time can be spent delivering to an apprentice.

At Innovate Awarding we stand by our 'no surprises' approach to assessment, making an apprenticeship journey as simple as possible, ensuring the best chance of success for every apprentice who undertakes EPA with us.

About Innovate Awarding

We are an EPAO with a collaborative approach to doing business. We work with providers to deliver fit for purpose EPA, providing assessments for a wide range of apprenticeship Standards, certificating thousands of apprentices, continuing to learn and improve with each experience.

We have experienced and responsive teams to ensure the EPA experience is smooth and efficient, working closely with our provider partners.

Please see our website for the range of Standards we are approved to deliver:

https://innovateawarding.org/end-point-assessment/apprenticeship-standards/

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The Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan

An Apprenticeship Standard details the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required to be occupationally competent:

- **Knowledge** - the information, technical detail, and 'know-how' that someone needs to have and understand to successfully carry out the duties. Some knowledge will be occupation-specific, whereas some may be more generic.

- **Skills** - the practical application of knowledge needed to successfully undertake the duties. They are learnt through on and/or off-the-job training or experience.

- **Behaviours** - mindsets, attitudes or approaches needed for competence. Whilst these can be innate or instinctive, they can also be learnt. Behaviours tend to be very transferable. They may be more similar across occupations than knowledge and skills. For example, team worker, adaptable and professional.

Apprenticeships are an invaluable tool for upskilling in areas that matter most to employers. They are a highly effective route to recruit and train future talent, address skills shortages and develop careers across core parts of the business.

The Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer apprenticeship has been developed by employers working in the sector detailing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be occupationally competent and outlining the training and assessment journey for an apprentice.

The apprentice will typically spend 18 months on-programme, working towards the Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer Standard, combining practical training in a job with study. The extent of the on-programme time should be decided for each apprentice based on their prior learning, skills and experience. If employers are using this Standard for an existing employee, it is important to be aware that the role must represent new learning. Providers should support employers with this.

It is vital the apprentice is prepared and fully ready before they commence their EPA period, which is detailed in the Assessment Plan.

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Summary of Assessment

An Apprenticeship Standard details the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required to be occupationally competent:

Standard name	Safeguarding Support Officer
Level	3
Sector	Care Services
Typical duration	18 months
Minimum time on programme	8 months
EPA period	3 months
Assessment methods	• Presentation with questions • Professional discussion underpinned by portfolio
Grading	Assessment methods are graded as: • Distinction • Pass • Fail Overall EPA and apprenticeship can be graded: • Distinction • Merit • Pass • Fail

The Apprentice

This occupation is found in a range of public, private, and voluntary sector organisations to support statutory safeguarding responsibilities to be fulfilled and demonstrate how organisations work to protect an individual's health, wellbeing and human rights; enabling individuals to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. These include Education and Training Providers, Health and Social Care Providers, Police Support Staff, Fire and Rescue Services, Housing organisations, Charities and the Voluntary Sector, Religious Organisations and Professional Sports Organisations. Safeguarding support officers have an emphasis on preventative safeguarding and cooperate with different organisations to support in making informed decisions in the safeguarding of children and adults. Safeguarding support officers will be skilled in recognising and responding to emerging safeguarding needs, initiating and

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advocating early intervention when a problem first arises. Safeguarding support officers will be knowledgeable in multi-agency early help strategies, referral pathways and key legislation and processes to help prevent children, young people and adults with care and support needs being referred into safeguarding services. The safeguarding support officer will be able to support staff in developing professional curiosity and how to ask the right questions to gain the information needed to complete any risk assessments. Safeguarding support officers ensure that wellbeing is promoted, having regard to the individual's views, wishes, feelings and cultural influences in deciding on any action and recognising vulnerable individuals are less likely to identify abuse or report it.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to work alongside designated safeguarding leads to support and enable their employing organisation to safeguard the vulnerable populations they work with. A safeguarding support officer will be the first point of contact when there is a safeguarding concern, conducting initial risk assessments, triaging, and signposting to the most appropriate person within their organisation or external agency if appropriate. The safeguarding support officer will maintain accurate and up to date documentation of any decisions and advice given, ensuring information is accurately recorded and that documentation is safely stored and shared appropriately, proportionately and securely according to national and organisational policy.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with staff and volunteers in their organisation, service users and members of the public as the first point of contact for raising safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding support officers will also interact externally with investigative statutory agencies. A safeguarding support officer will report into the designated lead for safeguarding within their organisation.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for responding and triaging, initial safeguarding concerns. This will include investigating the concern, seeking advice as needed and signposting and or referring to the most appropriate person or organisation. Safeguarding support officers will assist practitioners to collate and assess information and intelligence to prepare an accurate account of the safeguarding concerns to ensure a high-quality referral is made to ensure that the most appropriate action is taken to safeguard the vulnerable persons. Safeguarding support officers will also be responsible for recognising and responding to early signs of abuse and neglect in vulnerable children, young people and adults and supporting staff within their employing organisation to report concerns about the safety of individuals working alongside external organisations and agencies to adhere to safeguarding best practice principles.

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Off-the-Job Training

This Apprenticeship requires a minimum of 326 hours off-the-job learning.

Off-the-job training is a statutory requirement for an English apprenticeship. It is training, which is received by the apprentice during the apprentice's normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the approved apprenticeship the apprentice is completing.

It is an important aspect of apprenticeship training, as it gives the apprentice time to properly develop knowledge and skills from the programme.

Off-the-job training allows the apprentice to take full advantage of the programme, improving the return on investment in training costs for the employer. A developed and upskilled apprentice will lead to an increase in productivity, a clear benefit to the business.

Examples of off-the-job training include:

- Learning new skills at work through shadowing other members of the team, where this activity has been agreed and documented as part of the agreed training plan
- In-house training programmes relevant to the apprenticeship
- Coaching sessions
- Attendance at workshops, training days and webinars relevant to the apprenticeship
- Completion of online learning
- Self-study that includes reading or watching videos
- Training in new working practices or new equipment
- Role-playing or simulation exercises
- Industry visits/conferences relevant to apprenticeships
- Writing assessments, assignments and completing projects or activities
- Practical training or training in the workplace relevant to the apprenticeship

Gateway

Gateway is the entry point to EPA, and it is vital that all parties understand its importance. It is the point at which the apprentice has completed their learning, met the requirements of the Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer Apprenticeship Standard, and the provider and employer have reviewed the apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours to confirm they satisfied the provider and employer that they are competent and ready to enter their EPA.

Employers are ultimately responsible for deciding when their apprentice is competent as a Safeguarding Support Officer and ready to enter EPA. This decision should be taken after conversation with the provider and apprentice. It is vital this

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decision is based on each individual apprentice's readiness and not because they have reached the end of the initially agreed training period.

Pre-Gateway Checks

Knowing when an apprentice is Gateway-ready is much more than simply checking the apprentice has completed their learning and obtained all the mandatory requirements outlined in the Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer Assessment Plan. Although this is important, it is about the provider, apprentice and employer being convinced that the apprentice is at the level of competence set out in the Standard and that they are prepared for the EPA, so they can claim that competency.

To pass through Gateway, typically the apprentice will have been training for a minimum of 12 months. They must also have:

- Achieved Level 2 English and Maths, if applicable
- Satisfied their employer that they are consistently working at, or above, the occupational competence of the Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer
- Compiled, and be ready to submit, a portfolio typically consisting of a minimum of 10 discrete pieces of evidence towards the professional discussion
- A signed declaration
- Declared any reasonable adjustments and special considerations

Readiness for Gateway includes confirming that the apprentice's portfolio meets the requirements of the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out within the Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer Standard. This will be confirmed at Gateway and documented on Proficient. This notifies us that the apprentice is ready for their assessment and the EPA planning meeting will be organised.

Readiness for Gateway requires confirmation from the employer, provider and apprentice, that the apprentice has met all the mandatory requirements.

Assessment Booking

Assessments should be taken at the appropriate time for the apprentice to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills fully.

Please refer to the assessment booking process for further details.

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The Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer planning meeting will book assessment timeslots for the:

- Presentation with questions
- Professional discussion underpinned by portfolio

After the planning meeting, the apprentice will receive an email confirming everything discussed in the meeting and a calendar invitation for all booked assessments. The apprentice will then prepare for their end point assessment.

Portfolio of Evidence Guidance

Employers will ensure their apprentice has compiled a portfolio of evidence during the on-programme period of the apprenticeship, which will be submitted at Gateway. It underpins the professional discussion but will not be assessed.

We will review the portfolio of evidence in preparation for the professional discussion prior to Gateway. Feedback is not required, although generally if Gateway is rejected due to the portfolio of evidence being inadequate, a courtesy email will be sent with an explanation, including the rejection reason on Proficient.

The portfolio of evidence must be uploaded to Proficient at Gateway, either by inserting a link to a SharePoint or including a zip file.

Portfolio of evidence requirements:

- The apprentice must compile a portfolio of evidence during the on-programme period of the apprenticeship
- It must contain evidence related to the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) that will be assessed by the professional discussion
- The portfolio of evidence will typically contain a minimum of 10 discrete pieces of evidence
- Evidence must be mapped against the KSBs
- Evidence may be used to demonstrate more than one KSB; a qualitative as opposed to a quantitative approach is suggested
- The evidence provided must be valid and attributable to the apprentice; the portfolio of evidence must contain a statement from the employer and apprentice confirming this

Evidence sources may include:

- Workplace documentation/records, for example
- workplace policies/procedures,
- records
- Witness statements

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- Annotated photographs
- Video clips (maximum total duration 10 minutes); the apprentice must be in view and identifiable

The portfolio of evidence should not include reflective accounts or any methods of self-assessment. Any employer contributions should focus on direct observation of performance, for example, witness statements, rather than opinions. The evidence provided should be valid and attributable to the apprentice; the portfolio of evidence should contain a statement from the employer and apprentice confirming this.

End Point Assessment

The apprentice may choose to end the assessment method early. The apprentice must be confident they have demonstrated competence against the assessment requirements for the assessment method.

The Independent Assessor must ensure the apprentice is fully aware of all assessment requirements.

The Independent Assessor cannot suggest or choose to end the assessment methods early, unless in an emergency.

Innovate Awarding is responsible for ensuring the apprentice understands the implications of ending an assessment early if they choose to do so. The Independent Assessor may suggest the assessment continues. They must document the apprentice's request to end the assessment early.

The assessment methods can be delivered in any order.

The result of one assessment method does not need to be known before starting the next.

Assessment Methods

Assessment Method 1: Presentation with questions

In the 45 minute presentation with questions, the apprentice delivers a presentation on a set subject. The Independent Assessor must ask at least 8 questions after the presentation.

The apprentice will prepare and deliver a presentation on a set subject followed by questioning by the Independent Assessor.

The presentation must cover:

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An anonymised case review of a safeguarding case, or cases, which the apprentice has supported and must include.

- a summary of the case or cases
- an explanation of the apprentice's role in the case
- the decisions they made during the case underpinned by published local and national safeguarding reviews
- how they embed theory into practice
- how they communicate with the individuals
- how they support colleagues to follow safeguarding policy and procedures
- the data and recording processes they follow
- how they assist in delivery of safeguarding training

The apprentice must submit any presentation materials to Innovate Awarding by the end of week 2 of the EPA period. The apprentice must notify Innovate Awarding, at that point, of any technical requirements for the presentation. The presentation with questions should take place in a quiet room, free from distractions and influence/video conferencing.

The presentation and questioning will last for 45 minutes (+10%). The presentation will typically take 25 minutes, followed by 20 minutes of questioning. At the end of the presentation the Independent Assessor will ask a minimum of eight questions which will be used to confirm understanding of the presentation and how it demonstrates the relevant KSBs.

To deliver the presentation, the apprentice will have access to:

- PowerPoint
- Flip chart
- Videos
- Notes
- Computer

Assessment Method 2: Professional discussion, underpinned by a portfolio

The professional discussion will be appropriately structured to draw out the best of the apprentice's competence and cover the KSBs assigned to this assessment method.

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The purpose is to assess the apprentice's competence against the following themes:

- Collaboration
- Safeguarding practice
- Legislation, policy and procedures
- Personal development

The professional discussion must last for 60 minutes (+10%), and the Independent Assessor will ask a minimum of 12 questions, plus follow up questions to draw out further evidence.

The apprentice must bring their portfolio of evidence to the assessment, and can refer to and illustrate their answers with evidence from their portfolio.

Grading

Performance in the EPA determines the apprenticeship grade of:

- Distinction
- Merit
- Pass
- Fail

The Independent Assessor must individually grade the presentation with questions and professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence.

The Independent Assessor must combine the individual assessment method grades to determine the overall EPA grade.

To achieve an overall pass, the apprentice must achieve at least a pass in all the assessment methods.

If the apprentice fails one or more assessment method, they will be able to resit or retake.

Grades from individual assessment methods must be combined in the following way to determine the grade of the EPA overall.

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Presentation with Questions	Professional Discussion Underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence	Overall Grading
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction
Pass	Distinction	Merit
Distinction	Pass	Merit
Pass	Pass	Pass
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Fail

Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours

Assessment Method 1: Presentation with questions

Theme	Assessed Criteria
Communication	**K2** Methods for person-centred communication.
	S2 Use person-centred communication.
	S6 Tailor safeguarding responses to suit the individuals views, feelings and cultural influences.
	K5 Ways of tailoring responses to safeguarding cases to suit the individuals views, feelings and cultural influences.
	B1 Treat people fairly and with dignity and respect.
	K20 Different communication styles and approaches to suit the needs of individuals views, feelings and cultural influences.
	S21

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Theme	Assessed Criteria
	Use communication styles and approaches to suit the needs of individuals.
	B3 Show discretion and empathy whilst maintaining confidentiality
Safeguarding Principles	**K17** How to link safeguarding theory to practice.
	K22 Published local and national safeguarding reviews and how they can be applied to practice
	S23 Embed lessons learned from local and national safeguarding reviews to practice.
	S18 Apply safeguarding theory to practice.
Data Management and Recording	**K8** Ways to use, record and store paper based, digital data and information securely, in line with local and national policies and procedures.
	S9 Use, record and store paper based and digital data and information securely and in line with local and national policies and procedures.
	K9 When and how to share data and information in a safeguarding context, in line with local and national policy and procedures.
	K10 Data sources available to inform safeguarding decisions, in line with local policy and procedures.
	S10 Share data and information in a safeguarding context in line with local and national policy and procedures.
	K11 Ways to maintain accurate and up to date safeguarding logs and registers through the use of digital and paper systems in line with local and national policy and procedures.
	S12

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Theme	Assessed Criteria
	Maintain accurate and up-to-date safeguarding logs and registers through the use of digital or paper systems in line with local and national policy and procedures.
	K14 Referral processes and local well-being services for individuals and staff
	K15 How to make a comprehensive and accurate referral to children or adult social care.
	B6 Show honesty and integrity
	S11 Collate and use data to create reports to inform safeguarding meetings, processes and audits.
Developing and supporting others	**K23** Legislative safeguarding training requirements and how to deliver training content to stakeholders using different teaching and learning approaches.
	S24 Assist with the delivery of safeguarding training to stakeholders in accordance with safeguarding training frameworks to ensure stakeholders achieve desired learning outcomes.
	K30 Principles in supporting colleagues to follow safeguarding **policy and procedures.**
	S15 Provide emotional and practical support to internal and external stakeholders during safeguarding work.
	S16 Support and supervise internal and external stakeholders to make multi-agency referrals.
	B4 Be adaptable and consistent.

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Assessment Method 2: Professional Discussion underpinned by portfolio of evidence

Theme	Assessed Criteria
Collaboration	**K12** Local safeguarding escalation pathways.
	S13 Identify when decisions are not in an individual's best interest and escalate concerns within scope of own role using the local safeguarding escalation pathway.
	K18 Ways to support the management of safeguarding caseloads working together within the wider team
	S19 Work together within the wider team to plan and manage safeguarding caseloads.
	B7 Be professional and courteous.
Safeguarding practice	**K1** Principles of safeguarding and how to respond to safeguarding concerns within own scope of practice and organisational protocol.
	S1 Identify and respond to safeguarding concerns within role and responsibilities.
	S20 Comply with the safeguarding process when a safeguarding concern is raised in line with organisational policy.
	B2 Be caring and compassionate.
	K13 Types of concerns and mechanisms for reporting incidents.
	K19 The safeguarding process from when a safeguarding concern is raised to the end outcome.
	S14 Recognise and report incidents to own organisation.
	K4

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Theme	Assessed Criteria
	The priority and recommended course of action of different safeguarding concerns based on local and national guidance.
	S4 Triage and prioritise safeguarding concerns.
	S5 Recommend courses of action in relation to safeguarding concerns.
	K24 Principles of safeguarding inspections, reviews and audits.
	K25 Methods of collating evidence to prepare for external safeguarding inspections, reviews and audits.
	S25 Collate evidence to prepare for external safeguarding inspections, reviews and audits.
	K26 How to interpret the results of inspections, reviews and audits to apply feedback to practice.
	S26 Apply feedback from safeguarding inspections, reviews and audits to improve safeguarding practice
	K28 Models of safeguarding supervision and how to prepare and access supervision.
	K31 Principles of safeguarding culture, safeguarding supervision and compassionate care.
Legislation policy and procedures	**K3** How to offer safeguarding advice based on legislation, working in remit of own role
	K16 Safeguarding legislation, local and national policies, procedures and codes of conduct that apply to own role
	S3 Use safeguarding legislation and organisational policies and procedures to advise colleagues on safeguarding matters.

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Theme	Assessed Criteria
	S17 Apply safeguarding legislation, local and national policies, procedures and codes of conduct to safeguarding practice within own role.
	K6 When and how to escalate complex cases to senior staff in line with local policy and procedures.
	S7 Escalate cases to senior staff in accordance with local policy and procedures**.**
	K7 Local policy and procedures relating to safeguarding allegations against staff, including whistleblowing, and how to report allegations whilst maintaining confidentiality.
	S8 Report allegations about staff in line with local policies and procedures, whilst maintaining confidentiality.
Personal development	**K21** Principles of reflective practice and peer support related to safeguarding cases and concerns within scope of own role.
	K27 The importance of continuous professional development and identifying and evaluating own learning and development needs
	S27 Participate in training and continuous professional development activities and evaluate the impact of learning on own practice.
	B5 Be self-aware, resilient and objective.

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Theme	Assessed Criteria
	K29 How safeguarding can impact on own wellbeing and personal safety.
	S28 To seek advice and support from senior staff to preserve own wellbeing and personal safety when required.
	S22 Reflect on own performance within a group environment with other colleagues to inform best safeguarding practice.

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Annex 1: Apprenticeship Details and Assessment Plan

The Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer Occupational Standard and the latest version of the Assessment Plan can be accessed by following this link:

https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeship-standards/st1030-v1-0?view=standard

Level 3 Safeguarding Support Officer

ST1030

Version 1.0

Sector: Care Services

EQA Organisation: Ofqual

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Annex 2: Additional Information

Results and Certifications

All final assessment component results are published on epaPRO within **ten working days** of the assessment taking place.

We will submit a certificate claim with the DfE within 15 working days after the final result has been uploaded to epaPRO. The DfE will send the certificate directly to the employer.

For replacement certificates a request must be emailed to epa@innovateawarding.org Within two days of receiving the email, a replacement certificate will be requested from the DfE.

Re-sits

Re-sits and Re-takes

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method will be offered the opportunity to take a re-sit or a re-take. A re-sit does not require further learning, whereas a re-take does.

Apprentices should have a supportive action plan to prepare for the re-sit or a re-take. The apprentice's employer will need to agree that either a re-sit or re-take is an appropriate course of action.

An apprentice who fails an assessment method, and therefore the EPA in the first instance, will be required to re-sit or re-take any failed assessment methods only. In the event of a resit/retake the apprentice must use a different project but can use the same portfolio of evidence.

Any assessment method re-sit or re-take must be taken during the maximum EPA period, otherwise the entire EPA must be taken again, unless, in the opinion of Innovate Awarding, exceptional circumstances apply outside the control of the apprentice or their employer.

A re-sit must be taken within one month and a re-take must be taken within three months.

If the apprentice fails one assessment method or more, they can take a re-sit or a re-take at their employer's discretion. The apprentice's employer needs to agree that a re-sit or re-take is appropriate. A re-sit does not need further learning, whereas a re-take does. The apprentice should have a supportive action plan to prepare for a re-sit or a re-take.

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The employer and Innovate Awarding should agree the timescale for a re-sit or re-take. A re-sit is typically taken within 1 months of the EPA outcome notification. The timescale for a re-take is dependent on how much re-training is required and is typically taken within 3 months of the EPA outcome notification.

Failed assessment methods must be re-sat or re-taken within a 6-month period from the EPA outcome notification, otherwise the entire EPA will need to be re-sat or re-taken in full.

Re-sits and re-takes are not offered to an apprentice wishing to move from pass to a higher grade.

The apprentice will get a maximum EPA grade of pass if they need to re-sit or re-take one or more assessment methods, unless Innovate Awarding determines there are exceptional circumstances.

Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations and Appeals

Information on reasonable adjustments, special considerations and the appeals process can be accessed by using this link:

Policies Procedures

Support Materials

All the support materials for this apprenticeship can be found on Proficient.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Referencing

Apprentice submissions as part of their portfolio of evidence must be produced by themselves. Correctly cited quotes can be used to enhance and support the document, but the document itself must be the apprentice's own work and not generated by AI. If you are using AI to amend your own words, then these are no longer your own words and this becomes plagiarism.

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.

English and Maths Qualifications

Apprentices must follow the English and Maths formal qualification requirements as set out in the Department for Education Apprenticeship funding rules.

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Annex 3: Version Record

Innovate Awarding continuously review all support material to ensure its accuracy. All amendments will be recorded in the Version Record.

Version Number	Effective From	Reason for Change	Location
V1	June 2026	Document created	Throughout
V2	September 2026	Qualification Number removed from cover page Update to Summary of Assessment for grading of each assessment method.	Cover Page Page 5

Please ensure that you use the current version.

All enquiries relating to the version change of the document should be directed to epa@innovateawarding.org

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