



Specification

Level 3 Early Years Educator Version 1.3

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Innovate Awarding

Meet our Managing Director

Welcome to the Level 3 Early Years Educator Apprenticeship. Our Innovate Awarding EPA Journeys are designed to ensure the employer, provider, assessor 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.

Charlotte Bosworth

About Innovate Awarding

We are an EPAO approved by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 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 ensuring a 'no surprises' approach to EPA for all apprentices.

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

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

Our EPA Journeys

We have created four bespoke EPA Journeys tailored to the individual needs of the employer, provider, assessor and apprentice to enable a cross functional approach to EPA.

The Level 3 Early Years Educator EPA Journeys are available to download on epaPRO.

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 Early Years Educator 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 Early Years Educator 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

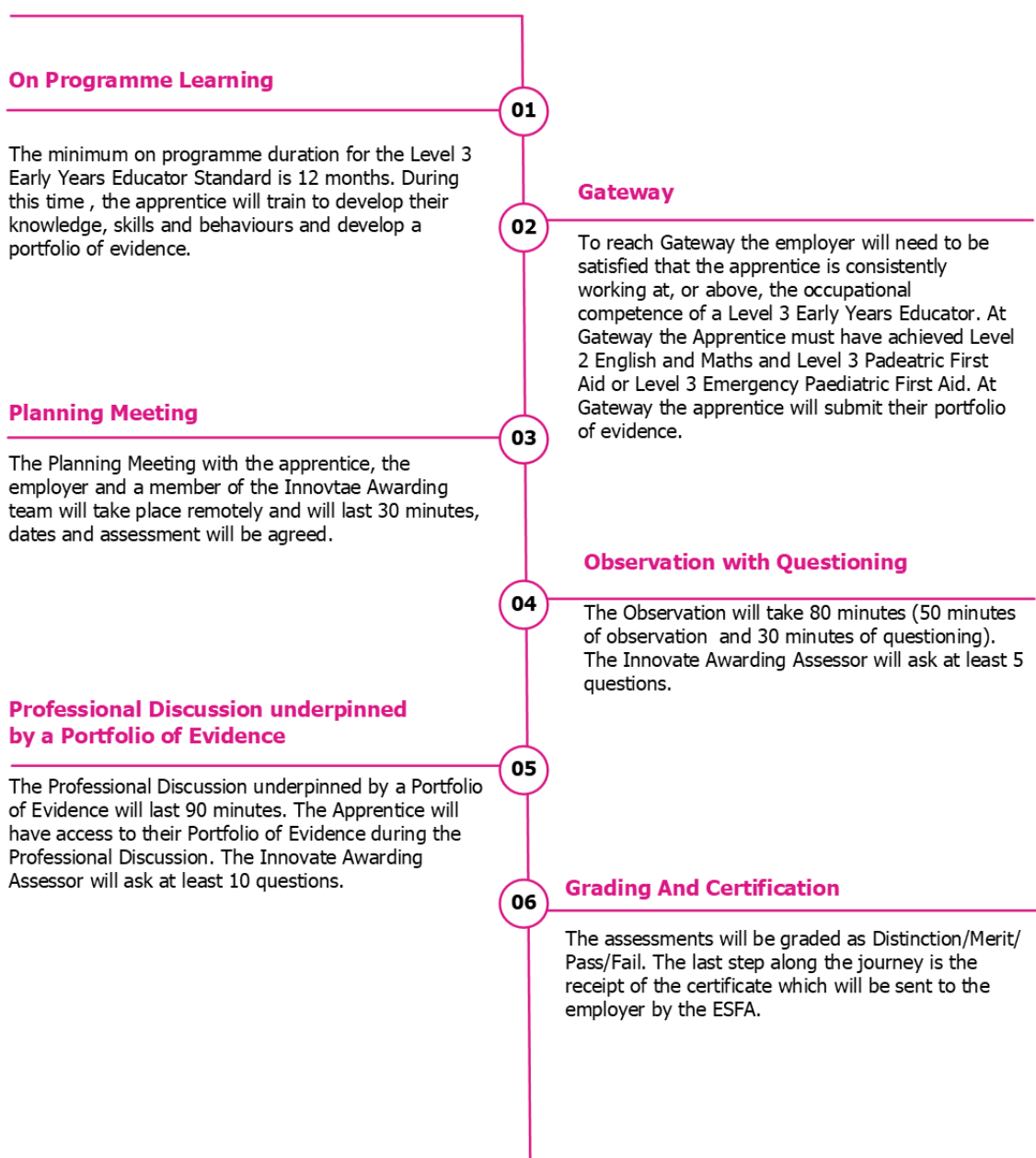
Standard for an existing employee, it is important to be aware that the role must represent new learning. Providers should support employers with this.

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

The EPA period will last three months, consisting of:

- Observation with questioning
- Professional discussion, underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

Assessment Journey



The Apprentice

The role of Early Years Educator is found in a range of maintained and private, voluntary, and independent settings such as full day care, children's centres, pre-schools, reception classes, playgroups, nursery schools, home based provision, hospitals, social care settings, out of school environments, and local authority provision.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to provide high quality early education and care to children. Through an evidence-based approach, they provide opportunities and learning experiences for all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Early years educators follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements set by government for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to 5 in both indoor and outdoor environments.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with children, parents, carers, colleagues, and wider multi agency professionals such as health visitors, early help services, social workers, and speech and language therapists. This includes supporting children with SEND.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for ensuring a safe and secure environment for children's learning. They ensure that the learning environment and provision is inclusive and supports all children, and demonstrate a clear understand of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Early years educators teach and facilitate children's learning play. They apply the observation, assessment, and planning cycle to support progress and children's development. An early years educator will act as the key person for one or more children within their setting. They may play a leadership role within the setting or may act under the supervision of a manager.

Off-the-Job Training

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 learner is completing.

It is an important aspect of apprenticeship training, as it gives the learner time to properly develop knowledge and skills from the programme. At the same time, it can develop a deeper understanding of the wider business, giving a learner insight into the supply chain or different departments.

Off-the-job training allows the learner 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

The minimum volume of off-the-job training is six hours per week, irrespective of the hours worked by the apprentice.

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 Early Years Educator 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 an Early Years Educator and ready to enter EPA. This decision should be taken after conversation with the provider and apprentice. It is vital this 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 Early Years Educator 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 18 months. They must also have:

- Achieved Level 2 English and Maths
- Achieved Level 3 Paediatric First Aid or Emergency Paediatric First Aid
- Satisfied their employer that they are consistently working at, or above, the occupational competence of the Level 3 Early Years Educator
- Compiled, and be ready to submit, a portfolio of 12 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 Early Years Educator Standard. This will be confirmed at Gateway and documented on epaPRO. This notifies us that the apprentice is ready for their assessment and the EPA planning meeting will be organised.

Assessment Booking

Applications for any reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations should be submitted prior to Gateway, to allow time to review the request before the planning meeting.

The Innovate Awarding Assessor will book a planning meeting on epaPRO once Gateway documents have been reviewed and approved by us.

The purpose of the meeting is to allocate an Innovate Awarding Assessor, discuss assessment dates, confirm assessment timings, assessment requirements and assessment preparation. During the meeting we will discuss what happens if assessments are cancelled/rescheduled and how this could impact the EPA period, as well as providing information on certification and appeals.

The Level 3 Early Years Educator 30 minute planning meeting will book assessment timeslots for the:

- Observation with questioning
- Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio

The provider will incur a charge for non-attendance of a planning meeting.

After the planning meeting, the apprentice will receive an email confirming everything discussed in the meeting and a calendar invite for all booked assessments. The apprentice will then prepare for EPA.

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 by us.

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 epaPRO.

Portfolio of evidence content and format are typically Word documents, presentations, video or audio recordings. You will upload the portfolio of evidence to epaPRO 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 contain typically 12 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
- All evidence must be anonymised before submission and the employer's policies regarding the sharing of information must be followed
- 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 policies and procedures
- Witness statements and observation records from training providers, managers, and peer observations
- Case records, SEND records, and safeguarding records
- Risk assessments
- Records of continuous professional development

This is not a definitive list; other evidence sources can be included.

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.

End-Point Assessment

Assessment Methods

Assessment Method 1: Observation with questioning

In the observation with questions, the Innovate Awarding assessor observes the apprentice in their workplace and asks questions. The apprentice completes their day-to-day duties under normal working conditions. Simulation is not allowed. It gives the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

The Innovate Awarding assessor must only observe one apprentice at a time to ensure quality and rigour. They must be as unobtrusive as possible.

Innovate Awarding must give the apprentice 2 weeks' notice of the observation with questioning.

The observation with questioning must take 1 hour 20 minutes. The observation with questioning must take place in person.

The Innovate Awarding assessor can increase the time of the observation with questions by up to 10%. This time is to allow the apprentice to complete a task or respond to a question if necessary.

The observation with questioning may be split on the same working day, to allow for a break between the observation element and the questioning element. This is to support the employer to ensure there is adequate cover within the setting. The assessment method should typically be completed within a total time of 2 hours.

Apprentices must provide the Innovate Awarding assessor with a teaching information pack to provide context for the apprentice's observation at least five days before the observation with questioning. Evidence should be naturally occurring and be produced as part of the apprentice's typical working practice, in line with the expectations of their employer. All evidence should be anonymised prior to submission and the employer's policies regarding the sharing of information must be followed. Evidence would typically include:

- evidence of observation and assessment of children, and subsequent planning
- risk assessments
- evidence of support for significant transitions for a child or children
- evidence of the intent, implementation, and impact of the curriculum

The Innovate Awarding assessor will observe the following during the observation:

- interacting with children and other adults
- supporting children's learning through facilitating learning opportunities

The observed session should form part of a normal working day for the apprentice, and should reflect their typical working practice.

The Innovate Awarding assessor must ask at least 5 questions.

The purpose of the questions is:

- to provide additional detail and contextual information to what the independent assessor has observed, and to explain how the teaching information pack relates to the observed activity
- to fully meet the requirements for S9 to ensure coverage of the provision of personal care across all the specified age ranges

Questions must be asked after the observation. The total duration of the observation with questioning assessment method is 1 hour and 20 minutes and the time for questioning is included in the overall assessment time. The total time for the observation element is 50 minutes. The time allocated for questioning is 30 minutes. Follow-up questions are allowed where clarification is required.

The Innovate Awarding assessor must ask questions about KSBs that were not observed to gather assessment evidence. These questions are in addition to the set number of questions for the observation with questions and should be kept to a minimum.

Assessment Method 2: Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

In the professional discussion, the Innovate Awarding assessor and apprentice have a formal two-way conversation. It gives the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

The apprentice must have access to their portfolio of evidence during the professional discussion. The apprentice can refer to and illustrate their answers with evidence from their portfolio of evidence however, the portfolio of evidence is not directly assessed.

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

- equality, diversity, and inclusion
- safeguarding
- relationships

- learning and child development
- continuous professional development

Innovate Awarding will give the apprentice one week's notice of the professional discussion.

The Innovate Awarding assessor must have at least one week to review the supporting documentation.

The professional discussion must last for 90 minutes. The Innovate Awarding assessor can increase the time of the professional discussion by up to 10%. This time is to allow the apprentice to respond to a question if necessary.

The independent assessor must ask at least 10 questions. Follow-up questions are allowed where clarification is required.

Grading

Performance in the EPA determines the apprenticeship grade of:

- Distinction
- Merit
- Pass
- Fail

The Innovate Awarding Assessor must individually grade the observation with questioning and professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence.

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

To achieve an overall distinction, the apprentice must achieve a distinction in both assessment methods.

To achieve an overall merit, the apprentice must achieve a distinction in the observation and a pass in the professional discussion.

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

If the apprentice fails one assessment method or more, they will be awarded an overall fail.

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

Observation with Questioning	Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio of Evidence	Overall Grading
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction
Distinction	Pass	Merit
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Fail

Annex 1

Assessment Plan and Occupational Standard

The Level 3 Early Years Educator Occupational Standard and the latest version of the Assessment Plan can be accessed by following this link:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/early-years-educator-v1-3>

Level 3 Early Years Educator ST0135

Version 1.3

Sector: Education and Early Years

EQA Organisation: Ofqual

Annex 2

Additional Information

Results and Certifications

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

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

Re-sits and Re-takes

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.

The employer and Innovate Awarding should agree the timescale for a re-sit or re-take. A re-sit is typically taken within 2 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:

<https://innovateawarding.org/end-point-assessment/apprentice-information>

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

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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