



End-Point Assessment Handbook and Specification for Digital Support Technician ST0120 version 1.1 Level 3



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Contents

Section 1	4
Overview	4
Introduction	6
Apprenticeship standard objective	7
Progression	7
Who is Professional Assessment Ltd (PAL)?	7
What is needed prior to end-point assessment?	7
Language of assessment	8
Section 2	9
How is end-point assessment delivered?	9
Who can carry out end-point assessment?	11
Internal quality assurance requirements	11
External quality assurance requirements	11
Standardisation and moderation	12
Section 3	13
Grading	13
Preparing apprentices for end-point assessment	13
End-point assessment planning and scheduling	14
Reassessment	14
Resits and retakes	14
Reassessment requirements for each component	15
Capping	15
Booking reassessments	15
Section 4	16
Portfolio of evidence	16
What is the format of the underpinning portfolio?	16
How can a Digital Support Technician prepare for and complete the portfolio?	16
What is best practice in producing the portfolio of evidence?	17
Table 1: Mapping of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours for the Professional Discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence	18
Section 5	20
Assessment methods	20
Sample Assessment Materials	20
Assessment method 1 – Project report with presentation, questions, and answers	20
Key facts about the project report with presentation, questions, and answers	20
Component 1: Project Report	21

What is the format of the project report?	21
Table 2: Mapping of Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours for Assessment Method 2 – Project Proposal, Presentation and Questioning	22
Component 2 – Presentation with Questions	23
What is the format of the presentation with questions?	23
How can the presentation be undertaken?	23
How will the project report with presentation, questions, and answers be graded?	24
Table 3: Project Report with Presentation, Questions and Answers Pass and Distinction Grading Criteria	24
How can a Digital Support Technician prepare for the presentation?	26
Assessment Method 2 – Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio of Evidence	27
Key facts about the professional discussion	27
What is the format of the professional discussion?	27
How can the professional discussion be undertaken?	27
How can a Digital Support Technician prepare for the professional discussion?	28
How will the professional discussion be graded?	28
Table 4: Professional Discussion Pass and Distinction Grading Criteria	28
Section 6	31
Plagiarism	31
Appeals, complaints, maladministration, and malpractice policies - centre/candidate	31
Reasonable adjustments/considerations/adaptations	32
Certification	32
Validity, Authenticity, Relevancy, Currency, and Sufficiency	32

Section 1

Overview

The end-point assessment in this specification relates to the Digital Support Technician Apprenticeship ST0120 version 1.1. The apprenticeship is at Level 3 and is for apprentices who are responsible for maximising the effective use of digital office technologies, productivity software and digital communications in organisations, including collaborative technologies, and digital information systems.

Digital support technicians may work in large or small organisations, in all sectors, and within public, private and voluntary organisations. Organisations of all types are increasingly supporting their service users through online and digital channels and are developing omni-channel approaches to meeting customer needs to deflect telephone and face-to-face contacts and so reduce costs.

In their daily work, digital support technicians should:

- Interact with a wide variety of internal or external users of digital systems.
- Communicate through digital channels, by phone and/or face to face.
- Work under general direction, using discretion in identifying and dealing with complex issues.
- Receive clear instructions and have their work reviewed at frequent milestones and determine when issues should be escalated to a higher level.
- Interact with and influence others, having working level contact with colleagues or customers.
- Plan, schedule and monitor their own work within limited deadlines and according to relevant law, standards, and procedures.

They may supervise others or make decisions which impact the work assigned to others or to other phases of projects.

Digital support technicians will specialise in **one of two roles**:

- A Digital Applications Technician (DAT) helps their organisation and its internal users to maximise the use of digital technologies. They help organisations adapt to and exploit changes in technology to meet objectives and maximise efficiency. They ensure effective use of digital office technologies, productivity software, digital communications, including collaborative technologies, and digital information systems.
- A Digital Service Technician (DST) supports external customers and clients through a wide variety of digital channels. A DST helps them access and receive services and provides coaching and support to them in their use of the digital systems. A DST will support external customers and clients to complete and submit data remotely. They will help them to diagnose and resolve problems with their access to and use of digital tools.

Digital Applications Technicians (DAT) devise digital productivity solutions and roll them out in the organisation. They work as digital champions, training and supporting colleagues to make the best use of digital tools and diagnose problems. They provide internal end-user application support. The DAT may also assist with digital operations and digital change projects.

Digital Service Technicians (DST) help customers and clients register for and access data, products, and services through online and digital channels. This can be as part of a sales or customer service process. They support and coach external users in their use of these digital systems. They diagnose and resolve external users' digital problems with accessing and using digital tools. A DST also advises on related hardware and software problems. They use software packages and tools such as collaborative technologies, to interface effectively with external end-users. They will use a variety of digital channels to maximise effective external user support and to resolve external end-user problems. A DST will use and maintain information systems such as Customer Relationship Management tools to manage service delivery, improve user experience and increase efficiency.

The typical duration for this apprenticeship is 15 months but this will depend on apprentices' previous experience and their access to opportunities to gain the full range of competences. The minimum duration of training for any apprenticeship is 366 days, before entering end-point assessment.

To achieve the apprenticeship certificate, apprentices are required to successfully complete their on-programme period of learning and development and the end-point assessment. The purpose of the end-point assessment is to confirm that apprentices have met the required level of knowledge, skills and behavioural standards set by employers.

The overall apprenticeship is graded as fail, pass, merit, or distinction.

To achieve the apprenticeship certificate, apprentices are required to successfully complete the:

- On-programme period of training and development, including achieving the required Level 2 mathematics and English qualifications.
- End-point assessment (EPA) - all components, within the assessment window.

The certificate for the apprenticeship is awarded by the Institute for Apprentices and Technical Education (IfATE), through a process administered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

As the end-point assessment organisation, Professional Assessment Ltd (PAL) will claim for the certificate on behalf of the apprentice. Certificates are sent to the nominated employer, and it is the employer's responsibility to ensure the apprentice receives the certificate.

The standards and accompanying assessment plan can be accessed via the [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#).

Standard Title	Digital Support Technician
Level	3
Standard and Version (AP) Number	ST0120 version 1.1
LARS Number	439
Qualification Number	tbc
External Quality Assurance Provider	Ofqual
Duration of End-Point Assessment	3 months
Date the Assessment Plan is scheduled for review	This standard should be reviewed within 3 years of its approval date.
Mandatory Qualifications within the Standard	English and maths Level 2
End-Point Assessment Methods	<p>The EPA is designed to test the apprentice throughout the entire standard, the assessment methods used to achieve this are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project report with presentation, questions, and answers. ➤ Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio.

Introduction

This handbook contains the relevant information and guidance required of apprentices to achieve the end-point assessment for the Digital Support Technician Apprenticeship ST0120 version 1.1 and should be used in conjunction with the Digital Support Technician ST0120 v1.1 Padlet¹ – End-Point Assessment Information for Apprentices, Training Providers and Employers.

The overarching aim of the end-point assessment is to ensure that the apprentice meets the standard set out by employers of the relevant sector and that they are fully competent within their job roles. An apprentice must successfully complete all the end-point assessment components to receive the apprenticeship certificate.

References to third-party material made in this specification are made in good faith. PAL does not endorse, approve, or accept responsibility for the content of materials, which may be subject to change, or any opinions expressed therein. (Material may include textbooks, journals, magazines and other publications and websites.)

All information in this specification is correct at time of publication.

PAL has worked in close collaboration with employers, other assessment organisations and experts from professional bodies and training providers in developing the assessment tools for this end-point assessment. We are grateful to all who have generously shared their time and expertise to help us in the development process.

The end-point assessment (EPA) is an assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard, which have been learned throughout the apprenticeship programme. The purpose of the end-point assessment is to make sure that the apprentice meets the standard in its entirety.

All apprentices must undertake the independent end-point assessment at the end of the on-programme phase of training when their employer, and in some cases their training provider, is satisfied that they have met the 'Gateway' criteria to undertake the assessment. Apprentices will not be awarded the apprenticeship certificate until they have successfully completed the end-point assessment.

The end-point assessment can be delivered only by a registered assessment organisation, which must be independent of the employer, or any party involved in the delivery of the on-programme phase of the apprenticeship. In this context, independence, means without influence or bias and the independent assessor assigned is not affiliated to the employer or any training partner involved, and notably the independent assessor has played no part in the training of the apprentice.

All assessment decisions for this standard's end-point assessment must be made by the independent assessment organisation.

PAL has been working closely with occupational experts, employers, and training providers in the development of end-point assessment tools to ensure that they are:

- Valid and appropriate to assess occupational competence in the relevant industry and will deliver reliable outcomes.
- Fair to all apprentices and help them to make progress in their lives.
- Manageable for apprentices and the industry and can be delivered effectively and efficiently in the vocational setting.

¹ A Padlet is an on-line wiki-based resource, made available to all PAL clients. Resources are updated centrally, so the latest information can be accessed via the Padlet

Apprenticeship standard objective

The overall goal of the end-point assessment is to ensure that the apprentice has met the required level of knowledge, skills and behavioural standards set by employers and approved by the IfATE and that they are confident and competent in their role to take on responsibilities to deliver clearly defined business outcomes.

Progression

On completion of the apprenticeship, the apprentice could progress into a higher technical role such as a cyber security technician, a hardware, networks, and infrastructure technician or and IT systems technician.

Who is Professional Assessment Ltd (PAL)?

PAL provides services for training providers to include colleges and employers involved in the delivery of apprenticeships and adult learning. Our offer includes:

- End-point assessment for a wide range of apprenticeship standards. Our dedicated team offers national coverage and has built up extensive experience in administering the latest end-point assessments.
- Compliance and audit services. Our funding compliance team tailor their support to meet your specific needs; from ad-hoc advice and support to full ESFA-style audits.

The link to our website can be located by clicking [here](#).

What is needed prior to end-point assessment?

The employer and training provider must confirm that the apprentice has met the on-programme requirements and the apprentice is ready to undertake the end-point assessment.

The employer and training provider must hold a 'Gateway' review to agree that the apprentice has gained the required level of knowledge, skills, and behaviours, along with an English and maths qualification at a level 2 prior to end-point assessment as set by the apprenticeship standard.

For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement the apprenticeship's English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3 and British Sign Language qualifications are an alternative to English qualifications for those whom this is their primary language.

Please check with the EPA team via info@professionalassessment.co.uk if you do not know which English or maths qualifications are accepted. Evidence of qualifications must be in the form of a certificate.

The apprentice must have a completed portfolio of evidence that will underpin the professional discussion to be submitted to PAL as part of the Gateway evidence.

To confirm the Gateway review has taken place, the employer, training provider and apprentice are required to complete a Gateway Declaration Record, an example of which is included in the Appendix of this specification. Alternatively, training providers and employers can use their documentation, with the caveat that the document must record the information as stipulated on the PAL Gateway Declaration Record.

PAL will not confirm an end-point assessment booking until the required evidence is submitted. For auditing purposes, the Gateway Declaration Record should either be signed or dated by all parties, or email/DVR confirmation provided that all parties have agreed on readiness.

The recommended approach during the on-programme assessment phase (month 1-15) to ensure that the apprentice is on track is based on the employer's performance management process with the following key elements:

- Line manager uses the formal performance management process and regular 1:1s to discuss progress in the apprenticeship, provide feedback and guide development.
- The training provider can support this (if required) by ensuring that the requirements of the apprenticeship are reflected in the performance management process and filling any gaps through their work with the apprentice.
- The training provider can also support the apprentice on understanding the learning journey, providing advice and guidance on learning strategies and tools that will support the apprentice's preferred learning style and improve their learning agility.
- Regular check points between the line manager and training provider (aligned with the performance management process) to ensure that the apprentice is on track and agree how any issues will be addressed.
- Apprentices should be strongly encouraged to create a learning record that contains examples of their learning and areas for development/action points as they go through the apprenticeship.
- The training provider can carry out mock end-point assessments with the apprentice.

The Gateway decision regarding readiness will be taken by the line manager (or appropriate employer) representative and apprentice with input from the training provider.

Language of assessment

All components of the end-point assessment will be conducted in English.

Apprentices may be assessed in British Sign Language where it is permitted for the purpose of reasonable adjustment.

Further information on special considerations and reasonable adjustments can be found in our Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments policy.

Section 2

How is end-point assessment delivered?

The apprentice will be assessed to the apprenticeship standard using two discrete assessment methods. Each assessment method should directly assess the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours of the standard.

The assessment activities will be completed by the independent assessor as follows:





- Project report with presentation, questions, and answers.
- Professional discussion, underpinned by a portfolio.




There is no mandated assessment sequence. The result of one assessment does not need to be known before starting the next.

The content and structure of the assessment methods is provided by PAL to ensure consistency across all apprentices. The employer, with the support of the training provider where appropriate, will work with the apprentice to agree how the apprentice goes about completing the components of the end-point assessment and will provide guidance along the way as required. The training provider will ensure that the evidence presented for end-point assessment meets the assessment plan requirements but does not have a role in the formal end-point assessment or grade decision.

The following chart sets out the sequences of the Gateway review and end-point assessment.

Note – the assessments can be taken in any order.

Apprentice/Employer/Training Provider		PAL
Apprentice registered with PAL prior to the Gateway review.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ESFA advised of EPAO. ▪ EPAPro log-in credentials provided. ▪ Access to a range of assessment guidance materials available.
Gateway review held between the training provider, employer, and apprentice to confirm assessment readiness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of English and maths requirements having been achieved. ▪ Completed portfolio of evidence submitted with mapping document and employer validation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Declaration received that the apprentice is ready for assessment. ▪ Gateway evidence received. ▪ PAL approves or rejects the Gateway evidence. If rejected, the training provider to resubmit as required.
PAL contacts employer and apprentice. PAL undertakes assessment planning meeting with apprentice and employer and assessment schedule agreed.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment plan completed. Dates will be agreed for all methods of assessment to meet with the Digital Support Technician Assessment Plan and to allow for reasonable resit or retake activities within the required window, wherever possible.
Apprentice undertakes the project with presentation, questions. and answers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 1500 word (+/- 10%) project is started after Gateway and submitted to PAL by the end of week 4 of the EPA period, along with the presentation materials. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The independent assessor (IA) must have at least 2 weeks to review the project and presentation evidence. ▪ Project with presentation, questions and answers assessment completed. ▪ Assessment graded.

Apprentice/Employer/Training Provider		PAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The apprentice must have at least 2 days' notice of the presentation with questions and answers. ▪ The apprentice presents their project to the IA typically lasting 15 minutes, followed by questioning typically lasting for 30 minutes. The total assessment duration is 45 minutes (+ 10% at the IA's discretion). 		
<p>Apprentice undertakes the professional discussion assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The apprentice must have at least 14 days' notice of the professional discussion assessment date. ▪ Apprentice to have a copy of their portfolio of evidence to refer to during the assessment. Please note the agenda is not shared in advance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional discussion assessment must last for 60 minutes (+ 10% at the independent assessor's discretion). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The IA will have a copy of the apprentice's portfolio of evidence to refer to during the assessment. ▪ Professional discussion completed, responses to questions assessed. ▪ Assessment graded.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall grading undertaken – IA confirms to PAL grades for all assessment elements and overall grade using grade descriptors as detailed in the assessment plan. ▪ IQA undertaken. ▪ Assessment outcome provided within the assessment window timeframe.
<p>Employer informed of the outcome of end-point assessment via email from epasupportservices@professionalassessment.co.uk Apprentice and training provider are copied into the communication.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment reports will record decisions and grades. If a resit or retake is required, it is important that the relevant parties refer to the EPA summary record. ▪ Assessment decision data collated and used to inform standardisations processes and quality assurance. ▪ Assessment outcome provided to the training provider and apprenticeship service. ▪ Certificate requested where a pass or higher grade for all aspects of end-point assessment are achieved. ▪ Data provided to the regulator as necessary.

Who can carry out end-point assessment?

Independent assessors/the end-point assessment organisation for this standard are required to:

- Have recent relevant experience of the occupation or sector to at least occupational level 3 gained in the last 3 years or significant experience of the occupation or sector.
- Have a sound understanding of the Digital Support Technician Apprenticeship standard and have no relationship with the apprentice or the employer.
- Attend induction training.
- Attend a minimum of 2 standardisation events annually.
- Have, maintain and be able to evidence up-to-date knowledge and expertise of the subject matter.
- Have sufficient resources to carry out the role of independent assessor i.e., time and budget.

All independent assessors that meet the above criteria are trained and approved by PAL to ensure that they are capable carrying out end-point assessments in a fair and consistent manner to make reliable judgments.

PAL requires all end-point assessment staff to hold a recognised assessment qualification.

PAL will be responsible for all aspects of the end-point assessment for this standard and will review the evidence against the standard to ensure that the grading criteria have been met for each method of assessment.

Internal quality assurance requirements

PAL requires all quality assurance staff to hold a recognised internal quality assurance qualification. IQA staff are subject to the requirements of an independent assessor as outlined above and must show competence in subject specialist areas to be approved in internal quality assurance. Quality assurers are monitored to undertake continuous professional development, to ensure the currency of their industry specific knowledge and practice.

PAL implements validation and quality assurance policies and processes to ensure that all assessments are robust, fully align with the independent end-point assessment requirements, and are assessed consistently, reliably, and fairly by all independent assessors. Policies can be shared upon request, please contact info@professionalassessment.co.uk. Essential policies are also available via our website.

In accordance with these policies PAL will:

- Develop and maintain a set of assessment tools, to be used by all independent assessors when carrying out assessments.
- Ensure independent assessors for the standard meet with the assessment plan competency requirements.
- Train and develop all independent assessors to ensure reliable and consistent assessment of the standard.
- Apply robust quality assurance and verification processes to assessments, e.g., the use of standard formats, moderation, and standardisation of marking and assessment decisions.
- Apply and follow the appeals and disputes policy and procedure in response to any legitimate appeal or dispute.
- Hold standardisation and moderation activities of assessment process.
- Communicate with third parties any concerns or issues that may impact on assessment activities or outcomes.

External quality assurance requirements

External quality assurance for the Digital Support Technician Apprenticeship is undertaken by Ofqual.

Standardisation and moderation

All independent assessors are required to attend standardisation and moderation activities, to ensure the consistency of the assessment approach and to ensure assessment grading is aligned to the relevant assessment plan requirements. Standardisation activities are carried out on an on-going basis such meetings can be in the format of traditional meetings or via hangouts.

IQAs may accompany or 'remote in' with independent assessors carrying out end-point assessment to ensure that it is being administered safely, securely and in line with PAL guidance.

For further information on quality assurance, standardisation and moderation please see our policies, or contact our quality team via info@professionalassessment.co.uk.

Section 3

Grading

All end-point assessment methods must be passed for the end-point assessment to be passed overall. Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method will be awarded an overall end-point assessment fail grade.

Apprentices must achieve at least a pass in all the end-point assessment methods to get an overall pass.

In order to achieve an overall end-point assessment 'merit', apprentices must achieve a pass in any one assessment method and a distinction in the other assessment method.

In order to achieve an overall end-point assessment 'distinction', apprentices must achieve a distinction in both assessment methods.

Grades from individual assessment methods should be combined in the following way to determine the grade of the end-point assessment as a whole:

Project Report with Presentation, Questions and Answers	Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio	Overall Grading
Fail	Fail	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Fail
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Merit
Distinction	Pass	Merit
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

Preparing apprentices for end-point assessment

To ensure that apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that underpin occupational competence, it is recommended that they follow a structured programme of training and development. The period of training and development must include the minimum ESFA requirements for off-the-job training, away from the day-to-day job. Please refer to ESFA guidance and funding rules regarding the definition of what training interventions are permissible under the ruling and responsibilities for recording and evidencing off-job training activities.

To prepare apprentices effectively, it is recommended that employers and/or training providers should:

- Have a good understanding of the apprenticeship standard and the structure and format of the end-point assessment.
- Plan and implement a learning and development programme based on the apprenticeship standard, with regular reviews of progress and readiness, to ensure apprentices develop the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours.
- Use formative assessments and mock assessments to help prepare apprentices for the end-point assessment.

It is recommended, that the on-programme assessment includes:

- Regular performance reviews between the apprentice and a senior manager.
- Opportunities given and evidence generated to cover all assessment criteria.
- Feedback from line manager/employer.

End-point assessment planning and scheduling

Employers and/or training providers must have an agreement in place to conduct end-point assessments with PAL, we regularly check the ESFA portal to review pipeline business and ensure that training providers who wish to work with us, are attached to us, as EPAO for the relevant standard(s).

Apprentices must be registered and booked on to their end-point assessment in sufficient time to allow adequate planning and scheduling of the assessments. PAL encourages communication with all parties, in respect of apprenticeship progress and status and our accounts team will periodically communicate directly with other stakeholders, to seek clarification and updates regarding apprentices' assessment readiness. Once the employer or training provider has confirmed a Gateway date, PAL will arrange a planning meeting on receipt and validation of the Gateway evidence.

The planning meeting is attended by the employer, apprentice, and PAL. The purpose of the planning meeting is to share information with PAL, to support the assessment process and to agree a plan for the upcoming assessment activities for the apprentices. The independent assessor/PAL representative will agree a plan and schedule for each assessment activity to ensure that all assessment components can be completed within the end-point assessment time. The meeting can be conducted remotely using appropriate technology.

The end-point assessment will be conducted over a period of 3 months at the end of the apprenticeship. Assessments cannot take place if the apprentice has not served the minimum time in training and we require employers and training providers to check this requirement has been met, before submitting Gateway evidence.

Reassessment

PAL's Resit and Retake policy will apply in the event of reassessments, and we will discuss arrangements for such activities with all concerned parties.

Reassessments do incur a charge. All fees are detailed in PAL's pricing policy and outlined in the contracting process.

Reassessments wherever possible will be carried out by the original independent assessor, but if this is not possible PAL reserves the right to assign a different independent assessor.

Resits and retakes

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment methods will be offered the opportunity to take a resit or a retake. A resit does not require further learning, whereas a retake does. Apprentices should have a supportive action plan to prepare for a resit or a retake.

An apprentice who fails an assessment method, and therefore the end-point assessment in the first instance, will be required to resit any failed assessment methods only.

The employer and PAL agree the timescale for a resit or retake. A resit is typically taken within 1 month of entering Gateway. The timescale for a retake is dependent on how much re-training is required and is typically taken within 2 months of the end-point assessment outcome notification.

Failed end-point assessment methods must be resat or retaken within a 6-month period from entering Gateway, otherwise the entire end-point assessment will need to be resat or retaken in full.

Resits and retakes are not offered to apprentices wishing to move from pass to a higher grade.

Reassessment requirements for each component

If the apprentice fails the **project report with presentation, questions and answers** they will be permitted to rework their project and/or presentation materials before resubmitting to PAL. The apprentice will be required to carry out a further presentation with different questions.

If the apprentice fails the **professional discussion**, underpinned by a portfolio of evidence: a further, different professional discussion will be carried out. The apprentice cannot add to their portfolio during this period.

Capping

Where any assessment method has to be resat or retaken, the apprentice will be awarded a maximum end-point assessment grade of a distinction, therefore the grade **not** capped.

Booking reassessments

The timescale for any reassessment will be agreed on a case-by-case basis, with PAL. As part of that agreement, any reassessments must not provide an apprentice with an unfair advantage over others.

Section 4

Portfolio of evidence

A completed portfolio of evidence is required to be submitted to PAL as part of the Gateway review.

The portfolio **is not directly assessed** as part of end-point assessment, it provides a structure for the professional discussion.

The independent assessor will review the portfolio evidence and use it to identify areas for the professional discussion, and it is the professional discussion that will assess the apprentice's understanding and learning.

The portfolio should be produced during the on-programme period of the apprenticeship, showcasing competence by the apprentice having first learned and applied the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard.

It is of paramount importance that all the work submitted in the portfolio has been generated by the apprentice or relates directly to the named apprentice. The independent assessor will undertake authenticity checks regarding portfolio evidence as part of the professional discussion assessment.

The apprentice must refer to their portfolio evidence during the professional discussion assessment. To ensure that all evidence is accessible during the assessment PAL would recommend that audio and/or video recordings are supported by a written summary/list of bullet points which the apprentice can easily refer.

What is the format of the underpinning portfolio?

The portfolio of evidence will typically contain 5 pieces of evidence in total, a qualitative as opposed to quantitative approach is suggested.

The portfolio of evidence must evidence all the knowledge, skills and behaviours mapped to the professional discussion method of assessment (see Table 1). **At least one piece of evidence must relate to each of the criteria;** each piece of evidence can be referenced against more than one knowledge, skills, or behavioural requirement for a more holistic approach.

PAL has provided a mapping and employer validation statement record which can be accessed from the Digital Support Technician Padlet. Alternatively, training providers can use their own version, however **it is a mandatory requirement that a mapping document and employer validation statement is submitted with the completed portfolio.**

How can a Digital Support Technician prepare for and complete the portfolio?

The employer and training provider will assist the apprentice in producing their portfolio to ensure that it covers all standards outlined in the assessment plan for professional discussion method of assessment.

Please refer to Table 1 for the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be assessed by the professional discussion and evidenced in the portfolio.

The portfolio **must contain**:

- A mapping document which clearly shows how the evidence is mapped against the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours that will be assessed by the interview.
- A statement to confirm that the evidence provided is valid and attributable to the apprentice from the employer.

Please note - PAL will not accept a portfolio submitted without a completed mapping document and an employer statement of validity.

It is not required that the apprentice has evidence in all the described formats below, but the portfolio **may** contain the following items as evidence:

- Workplace policies, procedures, or records.
- Witness testimonies.
- Annotated photographs.
- Client feedback.
- Up to 5 multimedia clips (individual duration of 5 minutes max); the apprentice must be verified and where possible identifiable throughout, with a narrative of the actions being taken.

The portfolio should **not** contain reflective accounts or any methods of self-assessment.

The professional discussion points will be constructed to include all pass criteria, while allowing the opportunity for the apprentice to evidence the distinction criteria, either naturally in their responses or using further questions. The apprentice and independent assessor must be able to refer to the portfolio during the professional discussion assessment and therefore evidence should be user-friendly and quick to reference.

What is best practice in producing the portfolio of evidence?

Ensure that the evidence within the portfolio provides coverage against all the standards as outlined in the assessment plan for the professional discussion assessment method (see Table 1). Employers, training providers and apprentices can utilise this guidance to support in documenting and referencing the evidence against all standards required.

The evidence provided within the portfolio **must** be validated by the employer to confirm the authenticity and validity.

A range of evidence, methods and consistency over time is encouraged to show competence. All evidence provided within the portfolio should comply with usual assessment practices, such as:

- Valid Authentic Current Sufficient Reliable (VACSR) confirmed including signatures and dates as appropriate.
- Have detailed annotation to describe the evidence, audio files should be referred to clearly within evidence to show where supporting recordings are located and within recordings the evidence number being discussed should be clearly confirmed. Audio files limited to a 20 minute duration.
- Be referenced to the specific criteria being claimed.
- All evidence recordings and files to be clearly named as appropriate to evidence type/number.

Evidence should comply with data protection and GDPR. Ideally, the portfolio evidence should be presented electronically.

Table 1: Mapping of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours for the Professional Discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

Theme	KSB	Knowledge (K), Skills (S) and Behaviours (B)
Core – All Apprentices must have all of the following generic knowledge, skills, and behaviours.		
Core	K1	Digital office automation technologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use them to create, update, edit, manage, and present data. • The organisation’s use of templates and their best working practice. • How these tools can be used to collaborate with others.
	K3	The importance of backing up data securely and the technologies that support it.
	K4	The principles, processes, and procedures for the secure handling of data in compliance with legislation.
	K7	Principles of a helpdesk system, including accessing and maintaining stakeholder information and the contribution of helpdesk system to the organisations performance and customer service.
	K8	Approaches to risk mitigation for data loss including confidentiality, integrity, and availability.
	K10	Approaches to a range of communication channels and how to adapt to different audiences and situations.
	K11	The principles and constraints of searching the internet and accessing information securely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currency- Relevance- Authority-Accuracy- Purpose.
	K12	Approaches to planning and organising own learning activities to maintain and develop digital skills (CPD).
	K13	Approaches to effective time management and prioritisation.
	K14	Principles of continuous improvement within the context of the application and use of digital technologies and the benefits.
	K15	Current and emerging digital technologies and the possible implications for work on a support desk including the impacts of digital technologies for climate change, sustainability and moving to net carbon zero.
	S1	Use digital technologies, including collaborative tools, to operate effectively as part of a team, and with other stakeholders, enabling sharing of information and best practice.
	S3	Apply information security principles, for example: information transfer, deletion, storage, usage, and communications that may include using mobile devices.
	S5	Operate digital information systems, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management-Finance Human Resources. • Bespoke departmental or organisational systems or databases.
	S6	Communicate effectively through a variety of different channels using terminology appropriate to the audience.
	S7	Use digital resources to extend own knowledge and skills relevant to their role.
	S9	Use digital systems to identify productivity and performance improvements.
	S10	Use digital technologies to operate effectively as part of a team, and with other stakeholders, enabling sharing of information and best practice.
	B2	Use own initiative when implementing digital technologies and finding solutions to stakeholder’s problems.
	B4	Self-motivated for example takes responsibility to complete the job.
B5	Takes a sustainable mindset towards digital support activities ensuring climate change and the move to net carbon zero by 2050 is a consideration.	
Option – Apprentices must have all of the following knowledge and skills for either Digital Applications Technician OR Digital Services Technician.		
	K19	Working practices for the productive use and administration of stakeholder’s applications.

Theme	KSB	Knowledge (K), Skills (S) and Behaviours (B)
Digital Applications Technician	K21	Approaches to the training and support of stakeholders to make the best use of the organisation's applications.
	S14	Coach and guide stakeholders to develop their applications skills to use digital systems effectively.
OR		
Digital Service Technician	K25	Approaches to minimising and communicating the impact of required technical procedures.
	K26	Approaches to the training and support of stakeholders to make the best use of the organisation's digital systems.
	S19	Provide and direct end-users to tools and resources to help them to resolve their digital problems.

Section 5

Assessment methods

All end-point assessments should take place within the apprentice's usual working hours and will be planned by the PAL representative with the apprentice and line manager at the planning meeting to comply with the assessment plan and business requirements.

Assessment decisions will not be communicated by the independent assessor straight away, they will document and record their assessment decisions. These decisions are then shared for internal quality assurance checks prior to being communicated to the apprentice, employer, and training provider. Employers can access a record of assessment by accessing EPAPro. User guides are available for training providers and employers that detail how reports can be viewed.

Sample Assessment Materials

For this standard, PAL provides:

- A mock project presentation assessment record with sample questions.
- A mock professional discussion record with sample questions.

All sample materials can be accessed from the Digital Support Technician ST0120 v1.1 Padlet.

Assessment method 1 – Project report with presentation, questions, and answers

Key facts about the project report with presentation, questions, and answers

This method of assessment is used because it is a holistic assessment method, allowing the apprentice to demonstrate KSBs in an integrated way and it allows for a range of digital support activities to be demonstrated.

The project involves the apprentice completing a significant and defined piece of work that has a real business application and benefit.

The project must start after the apprentice has gone through Gateway. It gives the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method (see Table 2).

The project must meet the needs of the employer's business and be relevant to the apprentice's occupation and apprenticeship. The independent assessor/PAL does not need to approve the project title before the project starts, however, PAL must provide detailed specifications of what must be included in the project to allow an apprentice to evidence the KSBs mapped to this assessment method to the highest available grade.

This assessment method has two components:

- 1) A project report with project output.
- 2) A presentation with questioning.

The evidence from the project report, presentation and responses to questions will be assessed holistically.

The project can be based on any of the following:

- A specific problem.
- A recurring issue.
- An idea or opportunity.
- The implementation of new applications or systems.
- Proposed changes to operating procedures.
- System monitoring – common software issues including determining if the issue is caused by the software or user.

PAL has provided suggested project titles to enable the employer to select a project that will meet the requirements for end-point assessment for the apprentice.

The following suggested project titles are suitable for either the Digital Support Technician (DST) or the Digital Application Technician (DAT) options:

- Making the external stakeholder experience more valuable to my organisation. (DAT, DST)
- Identifying and resolving a specific digital issue for my organisation. (DAT, DST)
- Tailoring user training to meet the needs of different colleagues. (DAT)
- Gathering and presenting data for specific purposes to different types of audiences. (DAT)
- Supporting my organisation in migrating to a new digital platform. (DST)
- Configuring digital devices to meet the needs of different colleagues. (DST)

Component 1: Project Report

What is the format of the project report?

The project report is a **1500 word** (+/- 10%) **written document**. The word count does not include appendices, references, or diagrams.

The project report must be completed post gateway. The apprentice must complete and submit the report to PAL by the end of week 4 of the EPA period. This date will be agreed at the EPA planning meeting. The employer should ensure the apprentice has the time and resources, within this period, to plan and complete their project. The apprentice may work as part of a team to complete the project which could include technical internal or external support. However, the project output must be the apprentice's own work and reflective of their own role and contribution.

The apprentice must complete their project and the production of its components unaided.

The apprentice and their employer must confirm that the project output(s) is the apprentice's own work when it is submitted.

In order to ensure the project report is robust and sufficiently covers the knowledge, skills, and behaviours, it should include:

- An introduction.
- Project scope, including key performance indicators.
- How the proposed project outcomes will be achieved.
- Proposed implementation plan.
- Summary of actions undertaken.
- Project outcomes and how these have been achieved.

PAL will use plagiarism software to check the authenticity of work.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours mapped to this method of assessment can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Mapping of Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours for Assessment Method 2 – Project Proposal, Presentation and Questioning

Theme	KSB	Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs)
Core – All Apprentices must have all of the following generic knowledge, skills, and behaviours.		
Core	K2	Types of digital architecture and how it relates to their organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical storage versus cloud. Role of operating systems and servers.
	K5	The concepts and fundamentals of data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Searching, storing, integrating, and organising data. How organisations use various types of data. The key features and functions of information systems. Data formats and their importance for analysis. Data entry and maintenance.
	K6	The key principles and processes for diagnosing stakeholder’s digital problems.
	K9	Significance of an organisation’s digital presence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How this is maintained and what products are used. How the brand is represented and safeguarded.
	K16	Approaches to assessing the impact of their actions on other stakeholders within a support desk environment.
	S2	Use data accurately and securely to meet business requirements and in line with organisational procedures and legislation.
	S4	Provide an appropriate and effective response to enquiries, providing support and information utilising digital channels and in line with organisation protocols
	S8	Risk assess the organisational impact of decisions that they take.
	S11	Maintain system security in line with organisational policies.
	B1	Work independently and take responsibility to maintain productive and professional working environment with secure working practices.
	B3	Professional approach to dealing with stakeholder’s problems.
Option – Apprentices must have all of the following knowledge and skills for either Digital Applications Technician OR Digital Services Technician.		
Digital Applications Technician	K17	Principles of productivity software applications used to create, update, edit, manage, and present data and information including how to support stakeholders in their use.
	K18	The features and benefits of digital information systems and how these are used to maintain application support.
	K20	Organisational approaches to incorporating different digital applications across business functions and the implications for their stakeholders.
	S12	Support digital operations or digital change and transformation activities.
	S13	Investigate application problems and enable resolution to maintain productivity and improve quality of service.
	S15	Monitor data to analyse systems use and provide insights to recommend use or applications developments.
OR		
Digital Service Technician	K22	The components of databases and their use.
	K23	Approaches to stakeholder system configurations and how this impacts on providing technical support.

Theme	KSB	Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs)
	K24	The importance and security implications of updating and maintaining stakeholders systems.
	S16	Support customers in the use of information, products, and services through digital channels.
	S17	Diagnoses technical problems by identifying and applying tools and techniques to undertake fault finding, recording and rectification.
	S18	Maintain end-user systems physically or remotely. For example: software, hardware or operating systems.

Component 2 – Presentation with Questions

What is the format of the presentation with questions?

Apprentices will prepare and deliver a presentation that, along with the project report, appropriately covers the knowledge, skills and behaviours assigned to this method of assessment. It will be followed by questioning from the independent assessor.

The presentation materials, speaker notes, and any supporting materials must be submitted at the same time as the project report. The independent assessor should have at least 2 weeks to review the project proposal prior to the presentation and prepare questions.

The apprentice will receive a minimum of 2 days' notice of the presentation date; however, the presentation date will typically be agreed at the planning meeting.

The presentation must include:

- An overview of the project.
- The project scope (including key performance indicators).
- Summary of actions undertaken by the apprentice.
- Project outcomes and how these were achieved.

The apprentice will present to the independent assessor on a one to one basis.

The presentation and questioning must last for 45 minutes overall, the presentation will typically last 15 minutes, and the questioning will typically last 30 minutes. The independent assessor has the discretion to increase the time of the presentation and questioning by up to 10% to allow the apprentice to complete their last point or respond to a question. The discretionary additional 10% time can be allocated in any proportion across the presentation and questioning.

The independent assessor will ask a minimum of 8 questions at the end of the presentation. Questions will be used to explore elements of the project report and presentation.

The independent assessor will select question from the PAL question bank; they can also tailor their own questions to confirm their understanding of the presentation and how it demonstrates the relevant knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Further questions may be asked where clarification is required.

How can the presentation be undertaken?

The presentation can be presented to PAL either via online video conferencing or face to face. The independent assessor needs to ensure that the assessment takes place in a suitable environment. The presentation can be

undertaken at a suitable location, typically the apprentice’s workplace, or via a webinar. The independent assessor will record the presentation and question and answer session.

To deliver the presentation the apprentice will have access to:

- Audio-visual presentation equipment.
- Flip chart and writing and drawing materials.
- Computer.

It is the responsibility of the apprentice, employer, training provider and PAL to ensure accessibility where required and to have advised of any reasonable adjustments.

The presentation must be undertaken in a controlled environment (a quiet area, free from distractions and influence) and the apprentice will present on a one-to-one basis to the independent assessor.

Where the assessment is conducted using technology, fair assessment conditions must be maintained. Acceptable means of remote assessment include video conferencing/video calling and must include a two way visual and audio link. The video call will be recorded and submitted by the independent assessor for internal quality assurance.

The independent assessor will use the grading descriptors as set out in the Digital Support Technician assessment plan to inform their assessment decisions. These grading descriptors are detailed in the Table 3 below.

How will the project report with presentation, questions, and answers be graded?

To achieve a pass, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the pass descriptors for this method of assessment through their project report, presentation, and answers.

To achieve a distinction, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the distinction descriptors for this method of assessment through their project report, presentation, and answers.

Please see Table 3 below for the pass and distinction descriptors for this method of assessment.

Table 3: Project Report with Presentation, Questions and Answers Pass and Distinction Grading Criteria

KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Core Data Management K5, S2	Describes the concepts and fundamentals of data. (K5) Uses data accurately and securely to meet business requirements and in line with organisational procedures and legislation. (S2)	Evaluates the impact of maintaining data accuracy and security on the organisation. (K5, S2)
Core Working Safely and Securely (Cyber -Security) S11	Uses digital technologies to maintain system security. (S11)	Evaluates the organisation’s policies to demonstrate how system security is maintained and protects the organisation. (S11)

KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
<p>Core Digital Services Support K6, S4, B3</p>	<p>Demonstrates valid support and/or responses to enquiries using selected digital channels in line with organisational protocols. (S4)</p> <p>Interacts with stakeholders in a calm and logical manner in accordance with guidelines set out by the organisational code of conduct. (B3)</p> <p>Explains the key principles and processes for diagnosing stakeholder’s digital problems. (K6)</p>	<p>Appraises their support or response given to enquiries and if relevant their selection of digital channel by reference to alternative courses of action that were available to them. (S4)</p>
<p>Core Business and Decision making K2, K9, K16, S8, B1</p>	<p>Outlines their organisations digital presence, how it is maintained, what products are used and how relevant brands are represented and safeguarded. (K9)</p> <p>Explains how they establish an approach to work tasks which reflects (their) independent initiative and a responsibility to maintain a productive and professional working environment in line with the policies/code of conduct set out by the company/organisation. (B1)</p> <p>Describes their own organisation’s digital architecture. (K2)</p> <p>Applies organisational risk assessment strategies in the activity when dealing with stakeholders to make decisions (within a help desk environment). (K16 S8)</p>	<p>Evaluates the impact of their activity project on their organisation’s digital presence and/or brand. (K9)</p> <p>Evaluates the impact on the organisation of using of risk assessment strategies to make decisions which influence project outcomes. (K16 S8)</p>
<p>Applications Support Digital implementation K20, S12, S15</p>	<p>Demonstrates how they support digital operations and/or digital change and transformation. (S12)</p> <p>Explains how organisations incorporate different digital applications across different business functions and the implications for their stakeholders. (K20)</p> <p>Summarises how they monitor data to analyse systems use and provide insights to recommend use or applications developments. (S15)</p>	<p>Evaluates the improvements digital applications have made to business functions. (K20, S12, S15)</p>

KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Applications Support Application Problem Solving K17, S13	Explains how they support stakeholders of common productivity software applications used to create, update, edit, manage, and present data and information. (K17) Investigates application problems and enables resolution to maintain productivity and improve quality of service. (S13)	n/a
Applications Support Productivity K18	Describes the features and benefits of digital information systems and how these are used to maintain application support. (K18)	n/a
Technical Support Information and Products Service S16	Supports customers in the use of information, products, and services through digital channels. (S16)	Analyses trends which stakeholders use to identify a common theme or issue and recommends solutions to minimise the impact. (S16)
Technical Support Technical Problem Solving K22, S17	Explains the components of databases and their use in digital support activities (K22) Explains how they diagnose technical problems by identifying and applying tools and techniques to undertake fault-finding, recording and rectification (S17)	n/a
Technical Support System Support K23, K24, S18	Describes stakeholder's system configurations and how they impact on providing technical support. (K23) Explains the importance and security implications of updating and maintaining stakeholder's systems. (K24) Demonstrates how they maintain end-user systems physically or remotely. For example: software, hardware, or operating system. (S18)	n/a

How can a Digital Support Technician prepare for the presentation?

- Structure their project content as described in the guidance document.
- Practice in front of an audience.
- Complete a practice presentation assessment with feedback from their training provider.
- Check that the presentation is sufficient to meet the topic and criteria for assessment.
- Proofread written work to check for errors and mistakes, as well as for a 'sense check'. Is appropriate language used? Is correct terminology used?
- Ensure that, if technology is being used to present, that it is available, and they are competent in its use.

Assessment Method 2 – Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio of Evidence

Key facts about the professional discussion

The professional discussion is a meaningful, in-depth, and two-way dialogue designed to draw out the best of the apprentice's competence for the grading criteria assigned to this method of assessment (see Table 4). The agenda points will act as a base for the apprentice to make detailed and proactive contributions to confirm their competence. It will allow the apprentice to evidence both the knowledge gained and its application through skills and behaviours.

The discussion will allow the independent assessor to thoroughly test understanding through open and follow up (clarification) questions, giving apprentices the best possible opportunity to evidence their competence, including beyond the level outlined in the standard (distinction). The underpinning portfolio also includes naturally-occurring evidence, which can be probed in detail to ensure understanding of the KSBs.

PAL must give the apprentice a minimum of 14 days' notice of the professional discussion. The independent assessor must have at least 2 week(s) to review the portfolio evidence in advance of the professional discussion assessment.

Please refer to section 4 of this specification for detailed guidance about the portfolio of evidence. The portfolio evidence is NOT directly assessed but is used by the independent assessor as a basis for the agenda questions.

The professional discussion assessment duration is **60 minutes** (+10% at the independent assessor's discretion).

What is the format of the professional discussion?

The independent assessor will select a **minimum of 12 open ended, competency-based questions** from the PAL professional discussion question bank, which draw out the best of the apprentice's competence and excellence. Further questions may be asked for clarification purposes and to allow the apprentice the opportunity to cover the grading descriptors mapped to this method of assessment.

The apprentice and independent assessor will both have access to their own copies of the apprentice's portfolio of evidence throughout the discussion and both can refer to it as needed.

The agenda is not shared with the apprentice, employer, or training provider in advance of the assessment.

How can the professional discussion be undertaken?

The professional discussion can be conducted using a range of media, as appropriate for the apprentice, either via online video conferencing or face to face. Remote assessment is the preferred option.

It is the responsibility of the apprentice, employer, training provider and PAL to ensure accessibility where required.

The professional discussion must be undertaken in a controlled environment (a quiet area, free from distractions and influence) and the apprentice will be assessed on a one-to-one basis to the independent assessor.

Where the assessment is conducted using technology, fair assessment conditions must be maintained. Acceptable means of remote assessment include video conferencing/video calling and must include a two-way visual and audio link. The video call will be recorded and submitted by the independent assessor for internal quality assurance. Where the assessment is completed face to face, the independent assessor should complete a digital recording² of the presentation.

² Note in exceptional cases, PAL may allow an apprentice to be exempt from a digitally recorded professional discussion; a written record would still be required. Any exemption would need to be agreed at the assessment planning meeting and be subject to PAL's special considerations and reasonable adjustment policy

How can a Digital Support Technician prepare for the professional discussion?

- Practice undertaking professional discussions with their training provider, employer, and line manager.
- Practice discussions which cover a range of topics and areas of the standard, ensuring that they can provide full answers and specific examples of tasks/situations they have been involved in.
- Practice reflecting and analysing performance to determine successes and areas for development.
- Review terminology in the assessment plan and consider how this links to their role.
- Practice professional discussions mock agendas with their training provider building up to 60 minutes to support completing them within the given timescale.

How will the professional discussion be graded?

To achieve a pass, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the pass descriptors for this method of assessment through their professional discussion responses.

To achieve a distinction, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the distinction descriptors for this method of assessment through their professional discussion responses.

Table 4: Professional Discussion Pass and Distinction Grading Criteria

KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Core Digital Technologies K1, S1, B2, B4	Describes the use of a range of digital technologies to share information and best practice with co-workers, team members and external stakeholders. (S1) Explains their approach to using digital office automation technologies using their initiative to get the job done. (K1 B2 B4)	Evaluates the use of digital office automation technologies to the organisation. (K1, B2, B4)
Core Digital and Information Security K3, K4, K8, S3	Explains the importance of backing up data securely and the technologies that support it. (K3) Describes how to apply data security processes and procedures and comply with current legislation for the secure handling of data. (K4) Summarises the approaches to risk mitigation for data loss including confidentiality, integrity, and availability. (K8) Explains how they apply information security principles, for example: information transfer; deletion; storage; usage and communications that may include using mobile devices. (S3)	Evaluates the application of security measures to mitigate and protect data integrity, during transfer, storage and sharing. (K4, S3)

KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Core Digital Information Management Systems K7, S5	<p>Explains what is meant by a helpdesk system, how to use it for accessing and maintaining stakeholder information and the contribution of helpdesk systems to the organisation's performance and customer service. (K7)</p> <p>Describes how they operate digital information systems for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management, finance, or human resources systems. • Other bespoke departmental or organisational systems or databases. (S5) 	Outlines the impact of their use of digital information systems on the organisation's performance. (K7, S5)
Core Communication K10 K11 S6	<p>Describes how they communicate through a variety of different channels using terminology appropriate to the audience. (K10, S6)</p> <p>Explains the constraints of searching the internet and accessing information securely by reference to currency; relevance; authority; accuracy; purpose (CRAAP). (K11)</p>	n/a
Core Digital Learning K12, K15, S7	<p>Describes planning and organising their own learning to maintain and develop digital skills relevant to their role. (S7, K12)</p> <p>Summarises current and emerging digital technologies and the possible implications for their work including the impacts of climate change, sustainability, and the move to net carbon zero. (K15)</p>	n/a
Core Continuous Improvement K14, S9, B5	<p>Summarises the need for continuous improvement with the application and use of digital technologies and the benefits. (K14)</p> <p>Explains how they use digital systems to identify productivity and performance improvements including the consideration of sustainable approaches. (S9, B5)</p>	n/a
Core Teamwork K13, S10	<p>Outlines the organisational approaches to time management and prioritisation. (K13)</p> <p>Describes the use of digital technologies to operate effectively within a team and enable the sharing of information and best practice. (S10)</p>	Evaluates the importance and impact of their work on other team members. (K13, S10)

KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Applications Support Application Skills Support K19, K21, S14	<p>Explains working practices for productive use and administration of stakeholder’s applications. (K19)</p> <p>Describes how they coach and guide stakeholders to develop their applications skills to use digital systems effectively. (K21, S14)</p>	Evaluates the impact of the coaching and guidance provided to stakeholders. (K21, S14)
Technical Support Technical Support and Guidance K25, K26, S19	<p>Explains how they identify, minimise, and communicate the impact of required technical procedures. (K25)</p> <p>Explains how they train and support stakeholders to make the best use of the organisation’s digital system. (K26)</p> <p>Describes how they provide and direct end-users to tools and resource to help them to resolve their problem. (S19)</p>	Evaluates their selection of tools or actions taken to resolve customer problems. (S19)

Section 6

Fails/resits and retakes

PAL's Resit and Retake policy and pricing policy are available on request. The request can be made by contacting the account management team via email on info@professionalassessment.co.uk.

The apprentice, employer and training provider will be advised of the outcomes, and our policy works on the specific standard assessment plan's requirements regarding resits and retakes.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which applies to assignments or other types of written or recorded work completed by apprentices, where the work is meant to have been produced independently and be of their design. Plagiarism is the substantial, unacknowledged incorporation into an apprentice's work of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person.

PAL takes all incidents of plagiarism seriously, especially those incidents which are a determined and deliberate attempt by the apprentice to gain marks for an assignment/project/report without having done a substantial portion of the work themselves. Copying of work can include work from external published sources, as well as that of other apprentices and work colleagues.

PAL's plagiarism and cheating policy can be accessed on the PAL website or by request to info@professionalassessment.co.uk

Appeals, complaints, maladministration, and malpractice policies - centre/candidate

Where apprentices are unhappy with the results of their end-point assessment, the customer (either the employer or training provider) can enquire about the results. An enquiry means that PAL will invoke its Appeals and Disputes policy and procedure. Please refer to our latest emails.

To make an appeal, please contact: epaappeals@professionalassessment.co.uk

To declare a conflict of interest, please contact: declaration@professionalassessment.co.uk

To report a case of malpractice or maladministration please use one of the following addresses:

- If it relates to the EPAO, please contact: epamalpractice@professionalassessment.co.uk
- If it relates to the apprentice, please contact: apprenticemalpractice@professionalassessment.co.uk
- If it relates to the employer or training provider, please contact: eitpmalpractice@professionalassessment.co.uk

Note - access to these emails received under these addresses is restricted to personnel involved in compliance checks.

In the event of an appeal against the grade awarded PAL will carry out a further review of the evidence to confirm or modify the grade in line with their standard procedures.

Maladministration generally refers to a system or administrative mistake or failure, which has the potential or does not affect the assessment process and as such is reportable.

Malpractice is a grave offence and where proven will result in immediate sanctions, disciplinary action and possible dismissal and notification to the regulator, notifying them of the malpractice and action taken. Malpractice is the

term applied to any intentional and planned act to alter an assessment or quality assurance decision by changing/removing/not recording accurately or augmenting information.

PAL's Maladministration and Malpractice policy can be accessed on the PAL website or by request to info@professionalassessment.co.uk

Reasonable adjustments/considerations/adaptations

Where reasonable adjustments have been requested, the assessor at the assessment planning meeting will finalise any such arrangements. Discussions regarding a reasonable adjustment request should be made at registration and discussed with the EPA team.

It is the responsibility of the training provider or employer, acting on behalf of the apprentice, to make such requests.

Special considerations in respect of the assessment process will be applied, where it does not provide any fair or unfair advantage to the individual apprentice and subsequent assessment outcome and in line with PAL's policy.

PAL's Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustment policy is in place to ensure fair access to assessment and can be accessed on the PAL website or by request to info@professionalassessment.co.uk

Certification

PAL will request the apprenticeship certificate for successful end-point assessments using the Apprenticeship service portal. PAL does not certificate the apprenticeship standard; its role is to request the certificate.

PAL will provide information and reports to the relevant regulator and funding body, in line with their conditions, and as and when requested. Notification to these bodies includes successful achievements and completion. Incomplete assessments are recorded.

Certification requests are made by the EPAO, and the current process is the certificate is sent to the named employer. Employers must advise the EPAO of any specific location or person the certificate should be sent to, if this information differs from the apprentice's workplace location and employer contact details provided on the EPAO's booking system.

Cancelling or rescinding results - PAL reserves the right to cancel results if malpractice is identified.

Validity, Authenticity, Relevancy, Currency, and Sufficiency

The evidence presented must meet VARCS requirements.

- **Valid** - is the evidence appropriate to demonstrate the particular knowledge, skills and/or behaviours that it is intended to cover?
- **Authentic** - is the evidence proven to be the apprentice's own work; have any work products or witness testimonies been appropriately authenticated?
- **Relevant** - Is the evidence relevant to the particular knowledge, skills and/or behaviours that it is intended to cover and has a clear judgement?
- **Current** - does the evidence relate to the on programme element of the apprenticeship and does it demonstrate current competency?
- **Sufficient** - does the evidence match the level of the apprenticeship standard and is the relevant standard covered in full?

PAL will require all apprentices to sign statements of authenticity etc.

Glossary of Terms

EPA - end-point assessment.

IA - independent assessor.

Employer – A representative from the employer, this is usually a direct line manager, head chef or appropriate nominate representative who has supported the apprentice during their apprenticeship.

Gateway review – A meeting involving the apprentice, employer and on programme trainer where the readiness for end-point assessment is determined.

Planning meeting – A meeting involving the apprentice, employer and end-point assessor where the end-point assessments are clarified and planned.

PAL – Professional Assessment Limited.

IQA - Internal quality assurance/assurer, the department and/or personnel who are responsible for the quality of end-point assessment internally to Professional Assessment.

EQA – External quality assurance/assurer, the independent external body who are responsible to regulate the quality of end-point assessment plans, standards and administration of assessment.

Standardisation/moderation – Activity completed by end-point assessors to support validity and fairness in end-point assessment decisions.

Special considerations – Any permanent or temporary disability, specific learning needs or medical condition which may require support during end-point assessment.

Reasonable adjustments – Adjustments made to the assessment process in relation to special considerations, which do not provide an unfair advantage to the apprentice but are designed to reduce any disadvantages within assessment.

Assessment plan – The document produced by the employer group, approved by the EQA which documents the requirements of the standard and assessment methods.

Appendix One – Gateway Declaration Record for Digital Support Technician ST0120 v1.1

Guidance notes

Determining the readiness of an apprentice for the independent end-point assessment phase of their programme is a very important milestone. A formal review must be held and must include all the relevant people that have responsibility and accountability for the completion of the apprenticeship: the line manager (or a senior manager, as appropriate to the business), the training provider and the apprentice.

The Gateway Declaration Record must be completed once the line manager and training provider have discussed their views on the progress the apprentice has made. The record has been designed to ensure all essential information is captured in a standardised format. If there is additional information which the line manager and/or training provider wish to add supplementary space has been provided.

Completion of this Gateway Declaration Record confirms that the employer and training provider is satisfied the apprentice has fulfilled all requirements to apply for end-point assessment.³

All evidence requested must be provided. If the Gateway requirements below are not met, the Gateway request will be rejected.

All information received will be processed as per GDPR requirements and as detailed in Professional Assessment Ltd.'s (PAL) Data Protection Policy and Data Privacy Notice.

Please ensure the apprentice's name is spelled accurately as this is how it will appear on the results statement/certificate.

Apprentice Name	Click or tap here to enter text.	Apprentice Contact Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
Apprentice ULN	Click or tap here to enter text.	Apprentice Email Address	Click or tap here to enter text.
Line Manager Name	Click or tap here to enter text.	Line Manager Contact Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
Employer Organisation	Click or tap here to enter text.	Line Manager Email Address	Click or tap here to enter text.
Training Provider Name	Click or tap here to enter text.	Gateway Review Date	Click or tap to enter a date.
Start Date of Apprenticeship	Click or tap to enter a date.	End Date of Apprenticeship	Click or tap to enter a date.
Specialist Role	Applications Support <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Support <input type="checkbox"/>	Has the apprenticeship duration of 12 months minimum been met, as defined in the ESFA funding rules?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Section 1: Confirmation of Evidence

All requirements listed below must be uploaded to EPAPro at point of submitting the apprentice to gateway. Apprentices will not be permitted to proceed to their end-point assessment until all evidence is uploaded and approved by PAL.

³ Please refer to the latest ESFA funding rules guidance.

Requirement	Achieved by the apprentice	Evidence provided (e.g., PLR, certificate, statement of results)
Maths Level 2	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
English Level 2	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
*Portfolio of Evidence	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.

**Please note – the portfolio of evidence must be submitted with a fully completed mapping document and an employer signed statement to confirm that the portfolio evidence is valid and attributable to the apprentice.*

Gateway Review Outcome

If the apprentice is ready for end-point assessment, the following declaration must be signed by all parties and the Gateway Declaration Record submitted to PAL via EPAPro.

Should the apprentice not be ready for end-point assessment a period of additional training and preparation must take place.

Section 2: Declaration

The end-point assessment period should only start once the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard, that is to say they are deemed to have achieved occupational competence. In making this decision, the employer may take advice from the apprentice’s training provider, but the decision must ultimately be made solely by the employer.

Employer and Training Provider Declaration

I confirm the evidence has been reviewed and a Gateway meeting has taken place with the apprentice, employer, and training provider to confirm the apprentice’s competence and readiness for end-point assessment.

I confirm that the apprentice has developed, demonstrated, and achieved the required level of occupational knowledge, skills, and behaviours to satisfy the Gateway requirements in their workplace.

I confirm that the apprentice is eligible for end-point assessment by undertaking the required training in line with the specific Apprenticeship Standard’s requirements, including on and off the job training and experience to meet the full breadth and depth of the Apprenticeship Standard.

Employer		Training Provider	
Name	Click or tap here to enter text.	Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
*Signature	Click or tap here to enter text.	*Signature	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date	Click or tap to enter a date.	Date	Click or tap to enter a date.

*Supporting evidence to be submitted for electronic signatures, e.g., email confirmation, voice recording.

Apprentice Declaration

I confirm my readiness for the end-point assessment has been discussed with my employer and training provider.

I confirm I am aware of the requirements of the end-point assessment.

I give PAL, as the end-point assessment organisation, my consent to claim the apprenticeship certificate on my behalf on successful completion of the end-point assessment.

Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
Signature	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date	Click or tap to enter a date.

Any reasonable adjustments required? Please detail below and include any supporting evidence

State N/A if not applicable

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please note any other pertinent information, as a result of the Gateway review, which has not been recorded elsewhere, but has a bearing on end-point assessment readiness or end-point assessment scheduling

Click or tap here to enter text.