



End-Point Assessment Handbook and Specification for Retailer ST0327 Level 2 v1.2





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Section 1

Overview

The end-point assessment in this specification relates to the Retailer Apprenticeship ST0072 version 1.2. The apprenticeship is at Level 2 and is for apprentices who help customers buy products or services from retail organisations such as department stores, garden centres, high street chains, supermarkets and online and mail order businesses.

Version 1.2 of the Retailer apprentice standard is for all apprentices **starting on-programme on or after 29/05/2023**. It supersedes versions 1.1 and 1.0 (AP01).

The broad purpose of the role is to advise on and sell products and services in a customer-centric retail environment. This includes creating an accessible and well-presented environment. A retailer will provide information and advice to customers regarding stock, products, different ways customers can shop and various payment methods.

A retailer may work in organisations of all sizes within the retail and tourism sector such as food, fashion, furniture, and automotive. Retail outlets range from traditional high street shops to larger organisations such as supermarkets and department stores, and can be multi-national organisations, small independent organisations, and organisations who trade using a variety of channels such as face to face, telephone, on-line or mail order. They typically work as part of a wider team, depending on the size of the organisation, reporting to a line manager or small shop owner.

The role of a retailer should include:

- Interacting with internal stakeholders such as members of their own team, other departments, and senior management.
- Interacting with external stakeholders such as customers, delivery drivers and compliance officers.
- Identify specific needs of individual customers.
- Responding to customer enquiries complying with both business and legal requirements.
- Taking responsibility for maintaining business standards; ensuring stock is presented, replenished and available for the customer to purchase.
- Contributing towards the commerciality of the business by achieving targets, including sales and customer service.
- Following stock control in line with business objectives.
- Knowing the services they are selling to be able to build customer confidence in their business.
- Meeting or exceeding customer expectations and experience.
- Knowledge of sustainability in relation to products such as dealing with excess packaging, waste, and product sourcing.

The typical duration for this apprenticeship is 14 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 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 of English and maths qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.
- 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 standard and accompanying assessment plan can be accessed from the [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#).

Standard Title	Retailer
Level	2
Standard and Version (AP) Number	ST0327 v1.2
LARS Number	101
EQA Organisation	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	Apprentices must achieve English and maths qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.
End-Point Assessment Methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observation with questions. 2. Interview underpinned by portfolio.

Introduction

This handbook contains the relevant information and guidance required of apprentices to achieve the end-point assessment for the Retailer Apprenticeship ST0327 v1.2 and should be used in conjunction with the Retailer ST0327 v1.2 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 end-point 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 retail team leader role.

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 in line with the apprenticeship funding rules, 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.

For this standard, the apprentice must submit a **portfolio of evidence** at Gateway. Please refer to Section 4 of this specification for further information.

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 in 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 and 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 1-14) 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 assessment methods. Each assessment method should directly assess the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours of the standard related to that method.

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

- Observation with questions.
- Interview supported by a portfolio of evidence.




The assessment methods can be delivered in any order.

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 sequence of the Gateway review and end-point assessment.

Note – **the observation and interview can take place in either order.**

Apprentice/Employer/Training Provider		PAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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.
<p>Gateway review held between the training provider, employer, and apprentice to confirm assessment readiness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of English and maths in line with the apprenticeship funding rules. ▪ Portfolio of evidence, mapped and validated. 	➔	<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.
<p>PAL contacts employer and apprentice.</p> <p>PAL undertakes assessment planning meeting with apprentice and employer and assessment schedule agreed.</p>	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment planning meeting takes place. Dates will be agreed for all methods of assessment to meet with the Retailer Assessment Plan and to allow for reasonable resit or retake activities within the required window, wherever possible.
<p>Apprentice undertakes the practical observation with questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observation with questions duration is 2.5 hours (+10% at the IA's discretion). 	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observation with questions completed. ▪ Assessment graded.

Apprentice/Employer/Training Provider		PAL
<p>Apprentice undertakes the interview assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interview assessment must last for 60 minutes (+10% at the IA's discretion). ▪ Please note the agenda will not be shared in advance. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interview completed, responses to questions assessed. ▪ Assessment graded.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall grading undertaken – independent assessor 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</p> <p>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/is required to:

- Understand the retail sector and of the role covered by the apprentice.
- Have recent relevant experience of the occupation or sector to at least occupational level 4 gained in the last 3 years **or** significant experience of the occupation or sector
- Have a sound understanding of the Retailer apprenticeship standard and the end-point assessment.
- Have no relationship with the apprentice or the employer.
- Attend a minimum of one standardisation event annually.
- 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 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 Retailer 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 EPA 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

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 meet the 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 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, the 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 apprentice. 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. The apprentice's employer will need to agree with PAL that either a resit or retake is an appropriate course of action.

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 the EPA outcome notification.

The timescale for a retake is dependent on how much retraining is required and is typically taken within 3 months of the EPA outcome notification.

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

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

Reassessment requirements for each component

If the apprentice fails the **observation with questions**, they will be required to undertake another, different observation with questions.

If the apprentice fails the **interview**, a further, different interview will be carried out. The apprentice will **not** be permitted to submit additional evidence for the underpinning portfolio.

Capping

Where any assessment method has to be resat or retaken, the apprentice will get a maximum end-point assessment grade of a pass, unless PAL determines that there are exceptional circumstances.

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.

Grading

Both end-point assessment methods must be passed for the end-point assessment to be passed overall.

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

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

Grades from individual assessment methods must be combined in the following way to determine the overall end-point assessment grade:

Observation with Questions	Interview underpinned by Portfolio	Overall Grading
Any grade	Fail	Fail
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

Section 4

Portfolio

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 interview.

The independent assessor will review the portfolio evidence and use it to identify areas for the interview, and it is the interview 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 interview 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 will typically contain 14 pieces of evidence in total. A qualitative as opposed to quantitative approach is suggested.

The portfolio must evidence all the knowledge, skills and behaviours mapped to the interview 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 Retailer 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 Retailer apprentice prepare for and complete their 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 interview method of assessment.

Please refer to Table 1 for the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be assessed by the interview 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 documentation and records.
- Workplace policies and procedures.
- Witness statements.
- Annotated photographs.
- Video clips (a maximum total duration of 5 minutes). The apprentice must be in view and identifiable.

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

The interview questions 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 interview assessment and therefore evidence should be user-friendly and quick to reference.

What is best practice in producing the portfolio?

Ensure that the evidence within the portfolio provides coverage against all the standards as outlined in the assessment plan for the interview 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 total 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 Interview underpinned by a Portfolio

KSB	Knowledge (K), Skills (S) and Behaviours (B)
K1	The customer profile of the business and customers’ purchasing habits
K2	The business aims and objectives and how their work contributes to them.
K3	The principles of running a retail business to support the overall financial performance for example by aiming to exceed targeted sales and reduce wastage and returns.
K4	The makeup of the local community and the requirements of customers within it.
K7	The brands, products and services provided by the business including knowledge of the technical specification of a product and aftercare service.
K12	How to support and influence the team and how all colleagues and teams work together to meet business objectives.
K13	Relevant regulatory and legislative requirements which impact on the retail sector such as the sale of bladed items, high fats, salt and sugar, safety requirements, and age restricted sales.
K14	Principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and the impact on the customer experience and business.
K15	The support requirements and/or coaching needs of their team.
K16	The business’s policy for exchange and refunds of products for in-store and/or on-line purchases.
S3	Provide a retail service that balances the customers’ needs with additional linked products and services.
S5	Promote seasonal or local offers through in-store or online promotions.
S6	Identify situations that may damage business reputation in line with company policy and escalate as required.
S10	Support team and colleague development through buddying and/or coaching.
S12	Contribute to continuous improvement activities which focus on improving sustainability within the business.
S13	Handle complaints within remit or escalate as appropriate.
S14	Support sales across a range of promotional events throughout the calendar year.
B1	Acts in a professional manner with integrity and confidentiality.
B3	Seeks learning opportunities and continuous development.
B4	Has accountability and ownership of their tasks and workload.
B6	Acts in an open and approachable manner to build and maintain inclusive relationships with others.

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. 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 practical observation assessment record with sample questions.
- A mock interview record with sample questions.

All sample materials can be accessed from the Retailer v1.2 Padlet.

Assessment Method 1 – Observation with Questions

The observation with questions enables the independent assessor to observe the apprentice in their workplace and asks questions. The apprentice completes their day-to-day duties under normal working conditions. Simulation is not permitted. It gives the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours mapped to this assessment method. Equipment and resources needed for the observation must be provided by the employer and be in good and safe working condition.

Each situation within the observation may be different due to levels of business and customer requirements but the following should be observed by the independent assessor:

- Customer support.
- Stock control.
- Communication

What is the format of the observation?

The observation with questions will be planned and scheduled when the apprentice will be in their normal place of work and will be carried out by the independent assessor.

The observation assessment will last for a total of **2.5 hours**. The independent assessor has the discretion to increase this time by 10% to allow the apprentice to complete a task, or to respond to a question if necessary.

The observation may be split into discrete sections held on the same working day. The independent assessor must manage invigilation of the apprentice during the assessment, to maintain security of the EPA, in line with their malpractice policy. This includes breaks and moving between locations during the working day if necessary.

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

PAL must give an apprentice a minimum of 7 days’ notice of the observation with questions.

The independent assessor must explain to the apprentice the format and timescales of the observation with questions before it starts. This does not count towards the assessment time.

What is the format of the questioning?

The independent assessor must ask **at least 5 questions** which can occur **both during and the following** the observation. The time for questioning is included in the overall assessment time.

To remain as unobtrusive as possible, the independent assessor should ask questions during natural stops between tasks and after completion of work rather than disrupting the apprentice’s flow. Follow-up questions are allowed where clarification is required. The independent assessor must use the questions from PAL’s question bank and can self-generate their own questions. Questioning that occurs after the observation should take place in a quiet room, free from distractions and influence.

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

The independent assessor must make the grading decision. The observation and responses to questions must be assessed holistically by the independent assessor when they are deciding the grade.

Please refer to **Table 2** for the observation pass and distinction grading criteria.

How can a Retailer apprentice prepare for the observation with questions?

- Read the guidance documents and ask questions if the information provided is not clear.
- Undertake a mock observation with questions with their training provider and use the feedback provided.
- Be prepared for observation by practising within the assessment timeframe; line managers can give support by providing useful feedback.
- Ensure that the basics are covered, such as having access to a clean uniform and check equipment and resources are available and in good working order prior to assessment.
- Remember fundamental customer service principles such as being friendly and courteous.
- Be prepared to answer questions about the tasks you are completing – what you are doing and why.
- Be aware that unexpected situations can occur during practical tasks. Practice working on wider skills such as keeping calm and focused. It may be useful to write a list of scenarios that could go wrong during the observation and what possible solutions there are for you to implement.

How will the observation with questions be graded?

To achieve a pass, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the pass descriptors for this method of assessment.

To achieve a distinction, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the distinction descriptors for this method of assessment, in addition to ALL of the pass descriptors.

Please refer to **Table 2** for the pass and distinction descriptors for this method of assessment.

Table 2: Observation with Questions Pass and Distinction Grading Criteria

Theme and KSBs	Pass – the apprentice must meet all of the pass descriptors below:	Distinction – the apprentice must meet all of the distinction descriptors below, in addition to all of the pass descriptors
<p>Customer Support</p> <p>K6 K8 S1 S2 S4 B2</p>	<p>Communicates using a range of techniques to identify customer requirements and influence their purchasing decisions in line with legislation, brand standards, and business procedures and values (K6, S1, S2, S4).</p> <p>Acts as an ambassador for the business or brand to maintain its reputation (K8, B2).</p>	<p>Explains how their approach encourages customer loyalty and repeat business and why this is important (K6, K8, S1, S2, S4, B2).</p>
<p>Stock Control and Merchandising</p> <p>K5 K9 K10 S7 S8 S11</p>	<p>Contributes to effective and safe merchandising activities, applying visual and/or digital skills to enhance sales (K9, S7).</p> <p>Organises and maintains stock levels and storage conditions in order to meet customer demand and minimise losses (K10, S8).</p> <p>Complies with relevant regulations, legislation, and business procedures, including those related to the business approach to sustainability such as waste reduction and recycling (K5, S11).</p>	<p>Explains how implementing successful merchandising and stock control supports the business, and the potential consequences of poor practice (K10, S8).</p>
<p>Technology</p> <p>K11 S9 B5</p>	<p>Uses technology and applications to support sales and service, reporting maintenance issues in line with the business' procedures, and explaining how they have adapted when necessary (K11, S9, B5).</p>	<p>Uses IT and digital systems confidently, explaining how they can improve the customer experience and benefit the business (K11, S9).</p>

Assessment Method 2 – Interview underpinned by Portfolio

The interview is a meaningful, structured two-way conversation designed to draw out the best of the apprentice's competence for the grading descriptors assigned to this method of assessment (see Table 3).

The agenda points will act as a base for the apprentice to make detailed and proactive contributions to confirm their competence. It allows the apprentice to be assessed against the knowledge, skills and behaviours that may not naturally occur as part of the observation.

The interview will allow the independent assessor to thoroughly test understanding through open and follow up (clarification) questions.

What is the format of the interview?

The interview assessment duration is **60 minutes**. The independent assessor can increase the time of the interview by up to 10% to allow the apprentice to respond to a question.

The independent assessor will ask the apprentice **at least 6 questions**. Follow up questions are permitted.

Questions will be a combination of those taken from the PAL interview question bank and those generated by the independent assessor to 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.

PAL must give an apprentice a minimum of 7 days' notice of the interview. The independent assessor must have at least 2 weeks to review the portfolio evidence.

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

How can the interview be undertaken?

The interview 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 interview 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 Retailer apprentice prepare for the interview?

- Practice undertaking interviews with their training provider, employer, and line manager.
- Practice interviews 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 an interview mock agenda with their training provider building up to 60 minutes to support completing the interview within the given timescale.

How will the interview be graded?

To achieve a pass, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the pass descriptors for this method of assessment.

To achieve a distinction, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the distinction descriptors for this method of assessment, in addition to ALL of the pass descriptors.

Please refer to **Table 3** or the pass and distinction descriptors for this method of assessment.

Table 3: Interview Pass and Distinction Grading Criteria

Theme and KSBs	Pass – the apprentice must meet all of the pass descriptors below:	Distinction – the apprentice must meet all of the distinction descriptors below, in addition to all of the pass descriptors
Legislation, Regulations and Organisational Policies/ Procedures K13 K16 S13 B6	<p>Explains the regulatory and legislative requirements which impact on their role in retail (K13).</p> <p>Details the business's policy for exchange and refunds of products (K16).</p> <p>Explains, with examples, how they have handled or escalated complaints in an approachable and professional way, building positive relationships with customers (S13, B6).</p>	<p>Explains how dealing with refunds, exchanges and legislative requirements can impact on the business, both positively and negatively (K13, K16).</p>
Customer Profiles, Business Objectives and Reputation K1 K2 K3 K4 K7 S3 S5 S6 S12 S14 B1	<p>Describes the typical customers of the local community, the business, and their purchasing habits and how they use this to provide a retail service that balances customer needs with additional linked products and services, and the promotion of seasonal or local offers (K1, K4 S3, S5).</p> <p>Describes the brands, products and services provided by the business and explain how this supports sales throughout the calendar year (K7, S14).</p>	<p>Explains the importance of understanding the makeup of their local community and how this impacts the requirements of the customer (K4).</p>

Theme and KSBs	Pass – the apprentice must meet all of the pass descriptors below:	Distinction – the apprentice must meet all of the distinction descriptors below, in addition to all of the pass descriptors
	<p>Explains how their role contributes to the business aims and objectives, and how it supports the overall financial performance of the business (K2, K3).</p> <p>Gives examples of ways in which they can support the business’s approach to sustainability in their role (S12).</p> <p>Describe how they identified a situation that had the potential to damage the business’ reputation and the professional actions they took to minimise any damage (S6, B1).</p>	
<p>Self and Team Development</p> <p>K12 K14 K15 S10 B3 B4</p>	<p>Provides examples of how they support and develop their team in line with equality, diversity, and inclusion principles, explaining how this benefits the customer and business (K12, K14, K15, S10,).</p> <p>Explains how they manage their workload and gives examples of when they have sought learning and development opportunities (B3, B4).</p>	n/a

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@rofessionalassessment.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 but a fail. 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 be 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 – Example Gateway Declaration Record for Retailer v1.2

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.
Has the minimum apprenticeship duration of 12 months 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	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
English	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
*Portfolio	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

*Please note – the portfolio 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.