

Adult Care Worker – Assessment Strategy

Summary of Assessment

The Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship is an integrated programme of knowledge and skills acquisition, developed alongside core behaviours expected of a competent worker operating in a regulated field. The award of the apprenticeship certificate will signify a recognition of competence in a role and enable progression to higher levels of skills development.

This assessment strategy, when delivered by high-quality learning providers and assessed by independent assessment organisations will ensure that candidates can progress towards the achievement of an Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship as the first step in a career as a professional care worker. Independent assessment organisations referenced within this plan must be on the SFA Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations.

Apprentices must undertake a programme of study in a suitable care setting and complete the Care Certificate as part of a high-quality induction programme. The Care Certificate, which builds on the previous Common Induction Standards (CIS) and National Minimum Training Standards, is a requirement for all apprentices on this standard. For those staff who have completed the CIS prior to the launch of the Care Certificate, it is the employer's responsibility to judge where the gaps are for staff to meet the additional standards in the Care Certificate. The Diploma in Health and Social Care level 2 (England) is completed with the support of a learning provider or employer who trains apprentices. Apprentices can only attempt the separate, mandatory end-point assessment once the recognised Diploma and Care Certificate have been attempted and *achieved*.

The *synoptic end point assessment* will include two distinct components. Firstly, the completion of a **situational judgement test** answered through a multiple choice exercise (but not necessarily undertaken as an online or computer-based test) and secondly a **professional discussion**. To achieve final certification, the apprentices must have completed and achieved these end point assessments in addition to the Care Certificate and the Diploma. The assessment will demonstrate that the apprentice can apply their knowledge, skills and behaviours in an integrated way and will satisfy the requirements for the award of an apprenticeship certificate.

Delivery of training and any qualification-based assessment up to the end point will be considered as being *on programme*. The end-point assessment will be the only assessment that can count towards the achievement of the apprenticeship certificate.

End-Point Assessment Overview

Assessment Method	Area Assessed	Assessed by	Grading	Weighting
Situational judgement test	<p>Knowledge <i>All knowledge elements will be assessed in this component</i></p> <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake the main tasks and responsibilities according to their job role • Communicate clearly and responsibly 	Independent Assessment Organisation	Pass/Merit/Distinction	50%
Professional Discussion	<p><i>All knowledge and behaviours will be assessed in this component using a wide range of evidence sources including the self-assessment and testimonies from people who use services</i></p>	Independent Assessment Organisation	Pass/Merit/Distinction	50%

A pass will be considered as the minimum attainment to achieve an apprentice certificate.

Qualifications and On-programme Assessment

It is recommended that apprentices are supported through their on-programme learning by their employer and or learning provider in the following elements:

- The Care Certificate
- Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care (England) (QCF) (Adult Care pathway only)
- Ongoing assessment by the employer and provider – for example meetings with apprentice, employer and learning provider, observations of workplace, gathering evidence
- Completion of the Self-Assessment exercise

Assessment Gateway

Before the apprentice is adjudged ready to undertake the end-point assessment by their employer and learning provider, they will need to:

- Achieve the Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care (England) (QCF) (Adult Care pathway only)
- Complete the Care Certificate
- Achieve Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy
- Undertake a self-assessment in the last month of their apprenticeship to enable them to see whether they are confident that they have taken on board all aspects of the occupation. This self-assessment must be submitted to the independent end point assessor as a source of evidence to prepare for the professional discussion

- In the last three months of the apprenticeship following the completion of the Diploma, collate testimonies from people who use services. This must be submitted to the end point assessor to support the professional discussion assessment

End Point Assessment

What is being assessed?

The Adult Care Worker's knowledge must include:

- Understanding the job they have to do, their main tasks and responsibilities
- The importance of having the right values and behaviours
- The importance of communication
- How to support individuals to remain safe from harm
- How to promote health and wellbeing for the individuals they support and work colleagues
- How to work professionally, including their own professional development

The Adult Care Worker's skills must include being able to:

- Undertake the main tasks and responsibilities according to their job role
- Treat people with respect and dignity and honour their human rights
- Communicate clearly and responsibly
- Support individuals to remain safe from harm
- Champion health and wellbeing for the individuals they support and for work colleagues
- Work professionally and seek to develop their own professional development

The Adult Care Worker's key behaviours are summed up by the "Six Cs":

- Care – is caring consistently and enough about individuals to make a positive difference to their lives
- Compassion – is delivering care and support with kindness, consideration, dignity and respect
- Courage – is doing the right thing for people and speaking up if the individual they support is at risk
- Communication – good communication is central to successful caring relationships and effective team working
- Competence – is applying knowledge and skills to provide high quality care and support
- Commitment – to improving the experience of people who need care and support ensuring it is person centred

How will assessment be undertaken?

Situational judgement test

The situational judgement test will present the candidate with a range of real-life scenarios about which the learner will have to answer questions in a multiple choice format (60 questions). The assessment will normally be undertaken online, under controlled conditions with a time limit applied. Questions will draw from the stated knowledge and skills elements of the standard and focus on the higher order competencies. Material may be drawn from any part of the apprenticeship standard.

The grading threshold will be:

Acceptable achievement (Pass)

40 correct answers

Good achievement (Merit) 50 or more correct answers
Outstanding achievement (Distinction) 55 or more correct answers
Candidates achieving between 25 and 39 correct answers may retake the assessment on one further occasion within three months. Candidates achieving fewer than 25 correct answers will not be allowed to retake the assignment until they have completed a professional review of performance and acted on its findings.

Professional discussion

A professional discussion will be undertaken with an independent assessor. The discussion will be of no more than 45 minutes duration. Candidates can only apply to undertake the discussion component once the multiple choice assessment has been *achieved*. The discussion will draw questions and amplifications from prior learning and experience including, where applicable, the candidate's self-assessment and supporting evidence including testimony from users of services and a sample of standardised candidate questions asked of every apprentice candidate in the interview. These questions will be developed and made open and public on the internet.

Acceptable achievement	Pass using a standard interview record template (to be developed and shared with all assessment organisations)
Good achievement	Merit using a standard interview record template (to be developed and shared with all assessment organisations)
Outstanding achievement	Distinction using a standard interview record template (to be developed and shared with all assessment organisations)

The situational judgement test will take place under examination conditions run by the independent assessment organisations. The professional discussion may take place in the workplace under controlled conditions.

Who will undertake the end-point assessment?

End-point assessments will be carried out by staff from independent end-point assessment organisations on the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations. The situational judgement test will normally be undertaken online or face-to-face under controlled conditions with a time limit applied.

The independent assessor should be a qualified IQA with an understanding and knowledge of the sector. Current, relevant occupational competence within the work place is also required. The assessor would also need to be qualified at or above the level they are assessing.

The criteria for the award of an apprenticeship – the final judgement

Although employers may be involved in the professional discussion, the final decision on whether the apprentice has passed the end-point test lies solely with the independent assessor who will grade the apprenticeship according to the components set out in this plan.

Independence

End point assessments will be conducted by an independent assessor drawn from the SFA's Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations.

End-point – Summary of roles and responsibilities

Assessor	Role
Employer	To agree a candidate's preparedness for the interview and to participate in the professional discussion. They will not have a role in final grading of the apprenticeship.
Learning Provider	To advise the employer on whether the apprentice is ready to undertake the end-point test through review of the gateway steps such as testimony from people who use services and self-assessment.
Assessment Organisation	To devise and administer the end-point situational judgement test and run assessment centres for such tests and professional discussions.

Quality Assurance – internal

Internal quality assurance will be undertaken by independent end-point assessment organisations who will be expected to regularly compare judgements and grading decisions offered by their assessors for consistency. It is strongly recommended that they have:

- Sound understanding of the sector (independent assessors who have worked in and have a qualification in adult care) and the assessment requirements for this Standard, together with the expertise to administer the Assessment Tools required.
- Capability to deliver assessments at the scale and with the levels of service required, giving confidence that this is a strategic part of their business.
- Geographical coverage required.
- Assessors with the background specified above.
- Robust verification and quality assurance processes that can ensure the end point assessment is of the required standard.

Quality Assurance – external

External Quality Assurance will be led by an Adult Care Apprenticeship Board and conducted and managed by Skills for Care. The Board will consist of representatives of all sizes and types of adult care employers. Membership and control of this Board will be opened out to all care providers. The membership will choose a strategic board of a minimum of 10 and will ensure representation from organisations of different types and size (including SMEs) across different sectors. Members will serve for a term of three years. Supporting information on external quality assurance and links to how to apply to be a member of the board will be available through www.skillsforcare.org.uk. There will be a formal application process with a published skills matrix for candidates.

A separate operational group of at least six members will report to the Board and will have specific responsibility for conducting external quality assurance through Skills for Care. In the first three months of end-point assessments for the standard, 30% of results will be sampled. In the following three months, 25% will be sampled. Thereafter 10% of results will be sampled every three months. It will also convene standardisation meetings of end point assessment organisations twice a year. Membership of the operational group will be made up of representatives of care providers by appointment of the strategic board. Members will need to be involved in learning and development in their organisations.

Skills for Care will work with the Adult Care Apprenticeship Board to create and maintain a dataset on which all end point assessment organisations will be required to record their results.

The dataset will require end-point assessors to note characteristics of the assessed candidate as well as detailed results of the assessment tests in order that a picture can be drawn of the pattern of assessment results. This will enable any anomalies in the pattern to emerge and be followed up by the operational board.

Sampled data will match grades awarded against profiles of locality, personal profile of the apprentice, type and location of employer and profile of their learning provider.

Funding of this system will be through a fixed fee per apprentice tested from the end-point organisations. This will be a non-profit-making exercise.

Precise details will be published at www.skillsforcare.org.uk

It should be noted that *all* components forming part of the end-point assessment will be made available to every assessment organisation which is registered for the purpose of end-point assessment on SFA's Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations. All online tests will therefore be made available as open-source or equivalent at www.skillsforcare.org.uk.

End-point - Grading

A candidate will be required to complete and achieve a minimum of a Pass in both of the end-point assessment components as above in addition to achieving the pre-requisite components to allow the end point to be attempted. The grade for each component will appear on the achievement certificate. The final grade is decided by the following combinations:

		Professional Discussion		
		Pass	Merit	Distinction
Situational Judgement Test	Pass	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Merit</i>	<i>Merit</i>
	Merit	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Merit</i>	<i>Distinction</i>
	Distinction	<i>Merit</i>	<i>Merit</i>	<i>Distinction</i>

The professional discussion will carry the grade determining outcome.

All the knowledge and skills set out in the standard are of equal importance and therefore are equally weighted. That means that none of the competencies have been selected for specific inclusion in the end-point assessment. The end-point assessment can therefore draw on all competencies.

The knowledge based assessments will be graded, with outcomes on a scale that includes at least one grade above satisfactory performance.

Implementation

There are currently over 19,000 achievements annually of apprentices as Adult Care Workers and this volume is expected to continue. Based on detailed work we have done with existing assessment organisations to date, it is estimated that approximately 15-30% of the cost of the apprenticeship will be taken up by the end point assessment. However, we hope as more assessment organisations enter the market, the cost of delivering end point assessment will continue to fall, and settle below 20% once the apprenticeship is fully established. There is already a well-established framework which this standard will replace and therefore an existing base of potential assessors. The workforce is well spread around the country so assessors exist across all regions. Employer-led approaches for quality assurance and governance are being considered, and we are working through the options directly with BIS. Consistency of delivery will be achieved through the employer-led Quality Assurance Body which will commission the creation of the end-point tests, convene standardisation conferences of the different end-point assessment organisations and create a central database on which results are recorded so that quality can be monitored nationally and risk-based audits can take place where necessary.

Summary of the Assessment Model

