

# Digital Skills Newsletter - 26

## Keep-in-Touch

### Dispensation, Mitigations and Adaptations

Reminder: **28 February 2022** will be the last date that you will be able to use some of the dispensations, mitigations and adaptations that have been allowed over the last 2 years.

Training providers delivering Apprenticeship Standards need to refer to the NSAR document published on 15 December 2021 that provides guidance on what they will allow us to accept.

Links and options available:

- ✓ **City & Guilds – allowed by Ofqual**
  - [Assessment arrangements for 2022 - Covid-19 | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](#)
  - [Adaptations 2022 - Covid-19 | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](#)
  - [End-point assessment - Covid-19 | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](#)
    - ✓ Includes for declaring venue for assessment is safe where face-to-face activities required
- ✓ **NSAR – issued 15 December 2021**
  - [NSAR Consistency Monitoring Observation Guidance \(cityandguilds.com\)](#)
- ✓ **IfATE – extension to end of February 2022**

### Synoptic Projects at home

Following conversations with NSAR, the Synoptic Project assessment dispensation - **Assessments taking place outside of usual venues** – looks set to continue for the foreseeable future (i.e., into 2022). The NSAR document is available on our website under the Digital and IT qualifications area, on the Updates and webinars page - <http://bit.ly/CGDigitalUpdate>.

### Digital Marketer review update

There has been a bit of confusions, the co-Chairs of Trailblazer Group involved in the review did not understand that the proposal for the new Standard needs to be signed off by IfATE before it could be circulated for a wider consultation. They would have like to have done it now and then incorporate any changes from the consultation and required by IfATE in one final revision.

The proposal for the new Standard has now been submitted to IfATE and they will go through and check language, any ambiguities, etc. Once this has been done, we should then get a copy to send out to all of our centres delivering Digital Marketer for their input.

### VRQ qualification reminder

#### IT Professional qualifications - update

When the revised versions of 7540 Level 2 and 3, 7630 Level 4 and 4520 Level 2 to 4 are first published on Walled Garden you will see that the old named vendor certifications have been removed. The changed and new units that have been added will not be made available until the handbooks have had their final quality check and been signed off by the review body.

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Our expectations are to have this available during the next few weeks and will also be looking to provide a document to show the types of programmes that could be delivered using these products.

## IT qualifications in Wales – Apprenticeship changes

Training providers working in Wales will be aware that there have been a number of apprenticeship frameworks published that are more role specific and this will mean some changes for the market going forward. We have been told that the IT, Software, Web and Telecoms framework is likely to close this September and at some point so will the IT User framework, the latter not being seen as a job role and the drive being the Digital Application Support framework.

In response to this, City & Guild has provided a list of qualifications that it would like to put into the role specific apprenticeship frameworks which have appropriate units to use for each. This is a short-term action, and the medium term will see us create specific certification routes within these products to meet the job role of the framework. While Wales has led in the use of qualifications in this way, this last piece of work aligns with what is now expected in England to create Occupational-entry Technical Qualifications (OTQs) that align to Level 3 Apprenticeship Standards.

### Qualification re-alignment requested

Apprenticeship Framework	Qualification (s)
Digital Application Support	7574 Diploma in IT Use Skills (Level 2 and Level 3)
Data Analytics	7630-04 and/or 4520-04 (suggested Level 3 Option)
Digital Telecommunications	7540-13 and 7630-04 (suggested Level 2 Option)
IT Infrastructure	7540-13 and 7630-04 (suggested Level 2 Option)
Information Security	7540-13 and 4520-03 / 7630-04 and 4520-04
IT Solutions Development and Support	7540-13 and 7630-04 (suggested Level 2 Option)
Digital Content Management	7513-30 and 7513-40

## Occupational-entry Technical Qualifications (OTQs)

Digital is still the first sector where these will need to be developed, but the deadline for submission has now been moved to the Autumn as IfATE/DfE have not completed the work they need to do in order to provide the guidelines and documentation that needs to be completed.

## Supporting learning and EPA

### CompTIA – mapping learning to the latest Apprenticeship Standards

We have always supported the use of Vendor learning and certification to enhance the development of learners. In our qualifications we created Vendor Alike units that would link to a variety of vendor certifications to allow training providers to teach all internationally recognised learning and for those able to do the exams recognition of that achievement, but for those who do not like exams or fail them then the City & Guilds unit can still be achieved through a portfolio of evidence. The key is that all have been trained to the same level.

CompTIA recognise the use of their products in education and especially alongside Digital Apprenticeships, providing support for apprenticeships through:


- Comprehensive mapping of CompTIA learning products to current apprenticeship standards
- Free to become CompTIA Partner – materials and certification discounted pricing for partners
- Opportunity for Apprentices to achieve globally recognised certifications
- Learning products to support virtual, in person and hybrid teaching


Network Engineer – Revised (example)

LEVEL 4


Network Engineer - Revised Standard

View Full Mapping







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



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Level 4 Network Engineer - Revised Standard Mapping	90% Mapped	57% Mapped	66% Mapped	71% Mapped
Available CompTIA Training Bundles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> eBook</li> <li> Learn + Practice</li> <li> Learn + Practice + Labs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> eBook</li> <li> Learn + Practice</li> <li> Learn + Practice + Labs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> eBook</li> <li> Learn + Practice</li> <li> Learn + Practice + Labs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> eBook</li> <li> Learn + Practice</li> <li> Learn + Practice + Labs</li> </ul>
<small>*All Training Bundles include a Certification Voucher</small>				

This information also exists for:

- Information Communication Technician (Level 3)
- Cyber Security Technician (Level 3)
- Cyber Technologist (Level 4)
- Digital Support Technician (Level 3)
- IT Technical Salesperson (Level 3)

They will soon have mapping for the Data Analyst that will use CompTIA Data+ (DA0-001), the exam for this will be available from the end of this month and the Apprentice Pricing from the beginning of next.

If you would like to discuss these products, then please contact:

- **Marie Cronin | Senior Manager Skills Certification**  
[mcronin@comptia.org](mailto:mcronin@comptia.org)
- **Zeshan Sattar | Director, Learning & Skills Certification**  
[zsattar@comptia.org](mailto:zsattar@comptia.org)

**Feedback from LIEPA reports**

We have looked at the recent LIEPA reports and some of the comments we are seeing internally from our IEPAs. In the main we are seeing some really good work coming through – currently running at **98% Pass** – which shows that you are doing a good job out there, but some bad habits are creeping back or have yet to be fully ironed out. Here is a selection that we presented and urge you to speak with us if you are unsure about anything to do with EPA.

**One piece of evidence  
for each TC, TKU and  
USABs**

We have always said these are not sufficient evidence on their own for the TKUs of a Standard. This is the result of an exam on one day and does not show how the knowledge has been used.

The result is that some of the apprentices find it hard to answer questions when asked about the use of the knowledge and there needs to be some explanation of what they have used it for or how they have used.

We are not looking for a regurgitation of the curriculum learned, but how what they have learned informs their decisions or actions. One centre has had their apprentices put in the certificates, given a brief precis of learning and then how they have used that within their job role. Either way will work, but your apprentice and you cannot just rely on that bit of paper.

Where this approach has been used, the evidence does not fully display how the apprentice has applied the skills and knowledge developed during their apprenticeship. No linking between the tasks to demonstrate how the tasks were conducted from start to finish.

Remember it is about their story, it is why we recommend the STARR approach to putting the evidence together and say to you “get evidence from the work-place and then map it to the Outcomes”. It will flow more naturally, and you will find you have to spend less of your time trying to get them to generate specific evidence.

**General errors**

There has been a tendency to focus on evidencing TCs, but not the TKU criteria. The Assessment Plan (not a City & Guilds dictat) state very clearly that **ALL** Outcomes must be addressed in the Portfolio. It is not about writing loads, it's about making sure there is something in there, no matter how small or slight, for the Outcomes that can then be picked up during review and expanded on, if necessary, in the Interview.

We do not mind video or audio evidence, but it needs to be accessible, and you are better off submitting an MP3 or MP4 file rather than what we are seeing, which is

- submitting externally hosted evidence (e.g., Google Sites) for assessment
- apprentices including links to YouTube or Google Drive videos.

Competences (Skills) must be addressed in some part within the evidence submitted, i.e., employer reference, portfolio and synoptic project, for the IEPA to explore further in the PD – we need to be able to see the skill used rather than just described

Employer Reference

Your employers are missing the opportunity to provide to evidence of the apprentice working in a manner that meets the requirements of the USAB criteria, which cannot always be shown or seen in the portfolios.

Look to get your employers to provide some specific details of apprentice tasks undertaken and comment on how critical the tasks are or the complexity of the tasks, his helps with the types of questions the apprentice will get and can show the competence toward higher grades.

## Virtual Assessment Service

We have had quite a number of providers using Packet Tracer to undertake the Synoptic Projects; however, the apprentices still need to include their planning documentation. As this shows them demonstrating their understanding of the underpinning concepts and meets the given task on planning.

## Bad practice

Please, make sure you are not including any of your feedback to apprentices or that from employers on the evidence you submit. While we will ignore how good you think the apprentice is, it is distracting, and the Assessment Plans do say we should not be accepting material that is marked up.

Of course, you should be giving your apprentices feedback and of course the employer should also. Just make sure the documents you send us are nice and pristine.

## **Links to various external information for apprenticeships**

Area	Links
Coronavirus	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response</a>
Coronavirus	<a href="https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/covid-19-information-regarding-apprenticeships/">https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/covid-19-information-regarding-apprenticeships/</a>
App Redundancy Support	<a href="https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/articles/360015630040-Redundancy-SupportService-for-Apprentices">https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/articles/360015630040-Redundancy-SupportService-for-Apprentices</a>
QAR Achievement Rates	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-achievement-rates-qar-2020-to-2021">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-achievement-rates-qar-2020-to-2021</a>
Apprenticeship & Traineeship Latest Data	<a href="https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2020-21">https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2020-21</a>
Apprenticeship Funding Bands	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-bands?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=84ccd136-7a5e-4b36-b402-8809afaef7d0&amp;utm_content=daily">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-bands?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=84ccd136-7a5e-4b36-b402-8809afaef7d0&amp;utm_content=daily</a>
Apprenticeship Funding Rules	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=b948706d-a63b-4ec0-94db-800ec0744760&amp;utm_content=daily">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=b948706d-a63b-4ec0-94db-800ec0744760&amp;utm_content=daily</a>
Ofqual Approach to EQA	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-end-point-assessments-a-guide-for-employers">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-end-point-assessments-a-guide-for-employers</a>



## Other news

### Princes Royal Training Awards (PRTAs) - reminder

The 2022 PRTAs are now open for applications.

<https://twitter.com/CityGuildsGroup/status/1478679591346655234>

Honouring employers (including colleges and private training providers) who have created outstanding training and skills development programmes which have resulted in exceptional commercial benefits.

**Free** to enter, the PRTAs are open to all UK employers who can show how investing in training has directly improved their people and organisational performance.

Training is at the core of every successful business. It allows you to recruit better staff, retain quality colleagues and future proof your talent pipeline.

It is the investment that offers a return time and time again.

### Changes to ESFA following 2021 review

In 2021, the Govt. instigated a review of the ESFA, its duties and responsibilities, and the findings have been published this week with the following recommendations:

- ESFA remain an arms-length body from DfE, but that all post-16 skills policy and implementation within ESFA should move to DfE. This would result in the ESFA becoming a funding body only, responsible for its core funding delivery role, as well as assurance and compliance responsibilities (funding audit).
- Suggested that the ESFA directorates responsible for Apprenticeships, and for Post 16 Professional and Technical Education move to DfE and be integrated into the new 'Further Education Higher Education and Employers' (FEHEE) Group, which DfE has decided to create
- WorldSkills and National Careers Service will also move to DfE.

For anyone interested in more detail, the full document can be found:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-education-and-skills-funding-agency>

### Adult Education Budget – funding rules update (V3)

ESFA has published updated AEB Funding rules for 2021-22 (version 3). The main changes we are:

- From 1 April 2022, eligibility for the National Skills Fund level 3 adult offer will be expanded to those who meet the definition of low wage or unemployed
- The National Skills Fund level 3 adult offer can be delivered in the workplace
- ESFA will fund delivery up to 110% of providers 16 to 18 traineeship funding year contract value (this is for new private providers who have recently been allocated new funding contracts for 16-19 Traineeships for funding year 2021-22). This means that these providers can deliver up to 10% more than their agreed contract value and it should be paid at year-end. The rules do note that providers do this at their own risk!

## Call to arms

### Continual look out for more IEPAs and LIEPAs

While we are in a good position with the numbers we have for our Standards, we want to make sure that we are in a strong position as our numbers grow and allow for holidays, etc. To that end

we would urge your or colleagues to have a look at becoming an IEPA, or even a LIEPA for one of our Standards.

We have said in the past, that the best way to see how this all works within City & Guilds is to be party of the team.

In terms, Software and Cyber are areas where we would like to increase capacity now and in one of our LIEPAs has stepped away from Software as their job role has changed and they are now more involved with Cyber and Data Analysts, so wish to concentrate in those areas.

### **Meet the Vendor**

Following the information from CompTIA we would like to know if you would like to have meetings with Vendors and question them on how their products could help you with delivery and getting your apprentice prepared for the marketplace.

### **Face-to-face events**

As the world starts to open, we are also seeking your opinion on whether you would travel to events if we started arranging them in our offices around the country. Please let us know, as we do not want to schedule these if we are going to have just a couple of people there.

Also, don't forget if you would like us to come and visit you for a discussion then let us know.

### **Hot off the Press**

#### **Additional NSF Adult L3 Funding Available to Providers without an Allocation**

ESFA will shortly be running an additional performance review for ESFA Funded National Skills Fund (NSF).

Providers will have the opportunity to submit a first-time request for an ESFA Funded NSF allocation up to the value of £45,000 (grant providers only – this means colleges and Local Authorities with AEB allocations, private providers that have Contract or Service allocations). If you have a devolved NSF contract (i.e. they are based in an MCA region), you can still request an ESFA Funded NSF contract for non-devolved learners (learners with postcodes outside the MCA regional boundaries). The submission deadline is 5pm on 4 March 2022. Further details and the form for application can be found:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aeb-performance-management-requests>

#### **DfE Prior Information Notice (PIN) - Strengthening Supported Internships Programme – Of Interest to Providers**

Supported Internships (SI's) are a work-based study programme for 16-24 year olds with SEND, who have an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan. SI's are designed to equip young people with the skills they need to secure and sustain employment through learning in the workplace.

The DfE has published a Prior Information Notice (PIN) and is considering its commissioning approach for the delivery of the 'Strengthening the Supported Internships Programme' contract and want to build the capacity of the programme. They are aiming to double the number of SI's from c.2,250 internship enrolments per annum to c.4,500 per annum by 2025. DfE anticipates awarding contracts up to a total maximum value of £8,000,000 including VAT. The programme aim is to

- Support to Local Authorities to establish and develop SEND employment forums, including payment and administration of section 14 grants
- Deliver accredited job coach training programmes and training in systematic instruction
- Engage and support employers to offer high-quality work placements.

## Post 16 Skills And Education Bill – Progress through Parliament and LLE Consultation

The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill completed its stages through Parliament earlier this week, the ping-ponging back and forth between House of Commons, House of Lords and various committees, is now over so the Bill is ready to become an Act of Parliament shortly. The following bullets are a reminder of the main points in the bill, which will affect you;

- To put employers at the heart of the post-16 skills system by legislating to place local skills improvement plans on a statutory footing.
  - LSIP's - currently being piloted in 8 areas of England with further pilots expected later this year, are employer-led (by local Chamber of Commerce), locally-owned and set out the key changes needed in a local area to make post-16 technical education and training more responsive to employers' labour market skills needs.
  - We are watching closely the current Trailblazer LSIP's, with first draft of plans expected to be published in March this year. These plans will affect your curriculum planning in the coming years.
- To strengthen the system of accountability by extending existing powers for the Secretary of State (SoS) to intervene where colleges/providers have failed to meet local needs as laid out in LSIP's, by amending the regulation of post-16 education and training providers to ensure quality (i.e. funding decisions, contracting and intervention measures).

In other words, if you fail to comply with the plans and adjust your curriculum to meet local needs, the SoS can withdraw/reduce funding/withdraw contracts.

- To introduce the powers needed for the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE), which will give individual learners access to the equivalent of up to four years' worth of student loans for level 4–6 qualifications.
  - Learners can use this flexibly across their lifetime, at colleges as well as universities. This isn't due to be implemented till 2025 and still has a lot of planning in play, but pilots of the first Lifelong Learning Accounts to support the loans are expected this Autumn.
  - **A consultation on the LLE has been published** and outlines the way post-18 education is to be funded and accessed including a "streamlined" funding system for modular courses at levels 4 to 6.
  - Students will have access to loan funding worth up to the equivalent of four years of undergraduate study – £37,000 by today's fee levels. However, DfE are including eligibility criteria such as must-have maths and English GCSE to access to LLE,
- Links to the relevant .GOV webpages.

Announcement - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fairer-higher-education-system-for-students-and-taxpayers>

Consultation - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/lifelong-loan-entitlement>

- Legislating to extend the existing statutory framework for the approval and regulation of technical education qualifications.
  - This legislation will allow the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) to approve a broader range of technical education qualifications than it does currently. It indicates strongly that IfATE will become the key body for qualification approval, although Ofqual will still have regulatory duties for non-technical quals.



22 February 2022

## Funding and Policy update webinar

This **free** webinar is part of the regular termly funding and policy updates for England,

This session will cover:

- Apprenticeships Policy and Funding Update & Accountability Framework
- 16-19 Funding Changes for 2022-23
- Sub-contracting/Due Diligence Update
- Qualification reforms (Level 3) and the Post 16 Skills Bill
- T Level Funding
- Adult Skills

There will be time for questions and discussion at the end of the presentation

**Wednesday, 9 March 2022**  
**12.00 to 13.15pm.**

[https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4402895778306654479?dm\\_i=1LRR,7Q6XG,5DQB9,VI28F,1](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4402895778306654479?dm_i=1LRR,7Q6XG,5DQB9,VI28F,1)

## Updates and webinars – and more

Are you still a bit unsure as to how some of the things around Apprenticeship Standards work or just want a reminder of some of the things we have discussed at events and on webinars? Then, please visit our Updates and Webinars page. <http://bit.ly/CGDigitalUpdate>

Please check out the information held there as this may answer many of the questions you have.

## Next Digital and IT Skills Keep-in-Touch webinars

8 March 2022 (09.30 – 10.30)

<https://bit.ly/CGDigitalKiT8Mar22>

29 March 2022 (09.30 – 10.30)

<https://bit.ly/CGDigitalKiT29Mar22>

If you have any specific topics, you would like discussed at these events, please forward your suggestions to:

Ken Gaines [ken.gaines@cityandguilds.com](mailto:ken.gaines@cityandguilds.com)

OR

David Wackett [david.wackett@cityandguilds.com](mailto:david.wackett@cityandguilds.com)