

Guidance for apprentices

Introduction

VTCT Skillsfirst is an End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO); you will be assessed by an Independent End-point Assessor (IEA) to ensure that you are meeting the requirements of the Customer Service Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard. The IEA will independently assess your competency after you have completed the on-programme training and learning.

Each IEA will carry identification as proof of whom they are before commencing an assessment. EPAs will be carried out by an IEA, who is an assessment expert and has the required occupational expertise within the sector. IEAs will carry out the range of required assessments securely and safely in your workplace or remotely. The IEA will not provide you (or your manager) with a preliminary grade, as it will be subject to the internal quality assurance process. Once all assessments have been completed and quality assured, your final grade will be available to view by your provider/employer on SEPA approximately within 10 working days.

Abbreviations

EPA	End-point Assessment
EPAO	End-point Assessment Organisation
AAS	Apprenticeship Assessment Service
IEA	Independent End-point Assessor
IQA	Internal Quality Assurer
KSB	Knowledge Skills & Behaviour
PO	Practical Observation
PD	Professional Discussion
SEPA	Skillsfirst End-point assessment system
Skillsfirst	VTCT Skillsfirst

Your Identification (ID) requirements

VTCT Skillsfirst will need to ensure that you are the right person undertaking an assessment, therefore the IEA will need to see ID from you, and this can be:

- ✓ A valid passport
- ✓ A signed UK photo card driving licence
- ✓ Employee ID card

The IEA will need to confirm they have seen your ID before they proceed, so please ensure you have this with you on the day. If a remote assessment is taking place via a virtual meeting room, you will still be required to show your identification prior to the assessment start. Failure to do so may result in the assessment being cancelled and a charge being incurred by your employer and/or provider.

Successful completion of EPA demonstrates that you are competent in your role and will result in the award of the apprenticeship certificate from the AAS. This certificate will be applied for by VTCT Skillsfirst and will be sent directly to your employer from the AAS.

The purpose of this document is to ensure you, the apprentice, know about the requirements within the Customer Service Practitioner Level 2 Apprenticeship Standard. This will help you to meet the assessment requirements.

Your apprenticeship standard is composed of the following assessment requirements:

On-programme training and learning

On programme training and learning must meet the requirements set out in the apprenticeship standard. Your employer and provider will support you throughout your apprenticeship; this should take a minimum of 12 months.

Gateway to End Point Assessment (EPA)

Once you have completed the relevant on-programme training and learning, you, your employer, and your provider will confirm that you are ready for EPA. Confirmation is via a Gateway meeting and once you have all agreed you are ready, you will be booked in for your EPA on an appropriate date for you.

End Point Assessment

The EPA is the final assessment of your apprenticeship. It will test your knowledge, skills, and behaviours; the Customer Service Practitioner Level 2 Apprenticeship Standard is made up of three different assessment methods, the IEA will grade these as a fail, pass, or distinction. We have provided your employer and provider with guidance regarding what you will need to know and how to achieve a pass or distinction.

Methods of assessment

The EPA methods for the Customer Service Practitioner Level 2 Apprenticeship Standard include the following three stages:

1. Showcase

It can be showcased by you to the IEA either face-to-face or remotely, depending on you and your employer's needs. This can be completed through the delivery of a presentation or by a virtual form of assessment such as submission of a report, storyboard, journal etc.

It is expected that the apprentice showcase will include a range of your work-based evidence, including:

- customer feedback
- recordings
- manager statements
- witness statements
- mid and end-of-year performance reviews and feedback

Your showcase is not your portfolio. It is a selection of the best work created by you throughout your apprenticeship to 'showcase' your understanding of the requirements within the apprenticeship standard. The IEA will review your showcase evidence, and interview you to delve deeper into the learning experience and to ensure rigor, competence, and independence. They will make a judgment against the marking criteria, however, will be unable to provide you with a preliminary grade due to our full marking and moderation process.

2. Practical Observation

The practical observation will be conducted in your place of work and will be assessed over a minimum of one hour. This will take place via live stream, however, can be requested as a face-to-face assessment. During the practical observation, wherever possible, situations and evidence should be naturally occurring. The practical observation will be pre-planned and scheduled to when you will be in your normal place of work and will be carried out by the IEA.

The observation should enable you to evidence your skills, knowledge, and behaviour from across the standard to demonstrate genuine and demanding work objectives. Each situation within the observation will be different, and examples are, handling a general enquiry, dealing with a customer complaint or a need for further information or detail, but it is mandatory that the observation covers as a minimum: presentation, equality, interpersonal skills, communication and right first time. Those areas of the standard which are not able to be evidenced during the observation will be discussed subsequently as part of the professional discussion with the IEA.

This can be arranged before the assessment takes place to give you the best opportunity to meet all of the criteria. The IEA will take notes during your observation and review these against the marking criteria and the apprenticeship standard.

3. Professional Discussion

The purpose of the professional discussion is to discuss with you any areas the IEA requires clarification on from their assessment of your learner journey and practical observation. This will need to take place in a suitable environment and should last for a maximum of one hour, this will be recorded for accuracy.

Your professional discussion will be conducted against set criteria and will also clarify any questions the IEA has from their assessment of the learner journey and practical observation.

Your discussion will be based on the standard outcomes and designed to draw out evidence against the criteria. You will be required to provide real-life examples of how you have applied knowledge and understanding whilst carrying out your job role. The professional discussion will take place on the same day following the practical observation.

Re-taking your End-point Assessment

Should you be required to re-take any component of your EPA, in line with the guidance from the ESFA:

“If a learner is doing a re-take for a Customer Service Practitioner standard and they FAIL they can re-take the assessment. If they then pass at the second attempt, regardless of the amount of work they do, they will only receive a PASS mark”.

Guidance for completing your showcase

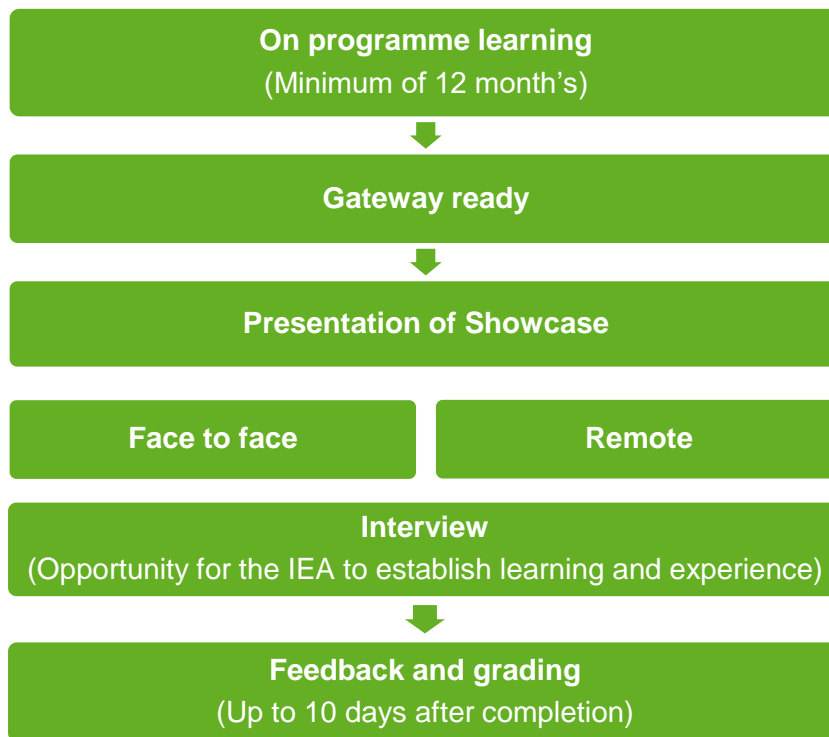
Scope

The showcase is a significant display of your competence in the work you have done and the evidence you have collected as part of your Customer Service Practitioner apprenticeship. The purpose of the showcase is to enable you to reflect and present your best work as examples of your development, gained throughout the apprenticeship. You should look to:

- Demonstrate your ability to influence, organise, deal with conflict and challenge, develop self, be open to feedback and work as a team.

- Describe your understanding of the organisation, regulations and legislation, systems and resources and products and service knowledge.

Timescale



Supervision and verification arrangements

The IEA knows that the work being looked at is your own work. This is because at the same time as uploading your showcase evidence, you and your employer complete and upload a Declaration of Authenticity form.

Format of evidence

The face to face or remote presentation* of your showcase will take place depending on what your employer and you want. Just let us know what is best for you. This is an important part of your apprenticeship; see the weightings and the grades you could get:

Showcase Weighting	Grades available
65%	Fail, Pass or Distinction

* **Presentation** - Your showcase can be presented to Skillsfirst in two ways, either face to face or remotely. You will need to discuss your preferred option with your employer/provider you are showcasing the best of your knowledge, skills, and behaviours. The showcase can be presented face to face, which allows the IEA to delve deeper which allows you to explain further. You can also present your showcase remotely, either by your provider/employer uploading your showcase to SEPA or through online platforms such as smart room and skype. Presenting your showcase through an online platform will also allow the IEA to delve deeper and allow you to elaborate on your showcase via an interview. Below are some suggested types of evidence for you can include in your showcase.

What the Independent End-point Assessor will be looking for

- You have taken ownership of your showcase and have presented it using suitable methods. You have used methods that are meaningful to you, and that compliment your working style, your confidence level, and your ability to demonstrate the application of the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours. For example, you lack confidence when communicating verbally, however, enjoy producing engaging written work, therefore to achieve your potential you have used written reports, journals, and reflective accounts to document what you know and what you do
- You have worked independently
- The evidence provided is authentic and is your own work
- You have selected the most appropriate evidence from your on-programme portfolio to demonstrate the required skills and knowledge, as outlined in Annex A of the Customer Service Practitioner Level 2 Assessment Plan.
- The evidence provided is authentic (the IEA will check that the Declaration of Authenticity form has been completed by you and your employer and uploaded to SEPA).

Suggested types of evidence

Evidence type	Points to consider
Presentation - Face to face or remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and practice • Location/environment • Equipment, technology and connectivity • Information to be communicated • Introduction • Expected outcome • Visual aids • Body language and tone of voice
Report <i>Written or verbal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account of situations/events you have been involved in • Relevant, concise and factual • Headings and topics • Tables, graphs and charts
Storyboard <i>Written or digital</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message to be conveyed • Sequence of events; flow of activities
Journal <i>Written or digital</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods for recording learning events and activities i.e. video diaries, social media, blogs or paper based • Methods for recording feedback from others i.e. email, statements, recordings • Reflection, analysis and development
Reflective account <i>Written or verbal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How theory has been put into practice • Who, what, where, when, why and how? • Specific, work related examples
Witness statement <i>Written or verbal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed by person who is familiar with you • Who, what, where, when, why and how? • Specific, work related examples
Manager statement <i>Written or verbal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who, what, where, when, why and how? • Specific, work related examples
Video/audio recordings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment and technology • Quality of recording • Environment (background noise, GDPR)
Customer feedback <i>Written or verbal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods for recording feedback i.e. email, recording, statements, surveys, questionnaires

Performance reviews (Mid and end) <i>Written or verbal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methods of performance review i.e. self-evaluation, 360-degree feedback, behavioural checklist, ratings scale, one to one recording/documentation
Work product <i>Written or digital</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email; screen shots; documents; reports; projects; diaries; journals

*** NB. Assessor-led evidence (assessments that are planned and carried out by your assessor) will not be accepted for the showcase component of the Customer Service Practitioner Standard. This includes and is not limited to professional discussions, question and answer sessions, witness statements, observations***

Choosing your evidence

The amount of evidence you should submit should be kept to a minimum, criteria linked to the showcase component only needs to be covered once. We understand that some larger pieces of evidence may cover the same criteria as another piece of evidence and this is unavoidable.

When choosing evidence, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it relevant?
- Is it the most appropriate (best) piece of evidence to cover specific criteria?
- Does it sufficiently demonstrate the required skills, knowledge, and behaviours gained over your 12 months on programme learning?

Your employer / provider should then ask

- Are all criteria covered?
- Are there multiple pieces of evidence that demonstrate the same criteria, un-necessarily?
- Has the most appropriate evidence available been used to try and achieve the highest grade?
- Is the evidence submitted authentic and is your own work?

Good luck with your Apprenticeship, we look forward to meeting you.

Please feel free to view our website for further information

<https://www.skillsfirst.co.uk/end-point-assessment>