



**VTCT**



**SKILLSFIRST**

## Apprentice Preparation Guide



# Professional Discussion

## End-point assessment International Freight Forwarding Specialist

### Assessment Method: Professional Discussion

#### Preparing for your End-point Assessment

This document is designed to support you (the Apprentice) in preparing for the **VTCT Skillsfirst Level 3 International Freight Forwarding Specialist – ST0539 v1.1** End-point Assessment.

During your End-point assessment, **one** of the **three** assessment methods that you (the Apprentice) will undertake is a Professional Discussion.

#### Purpose of the Professional Discussion

The Professional Discussion is one of the assessment methods within the International Freight Forwarding Specialist Apprenticeship Standard End-point Assessment. It is structured to cover the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) assigned and will focus on coverage of prior learning achieved during the on-programme stage of the apprenticeship standard.

The Professional Discussion will allow Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) which may not naturally occur in every workplace or within the Practical assessment and questioning to be assessed.

You will use the Portfolio of Evidence you collated during the on-programme stage of the apprenticeship standard, which will be submitted at the Gateway stage, to support the Professional Discussion.

#### Overview of a Professional Discussion

A Professional Discussion is an assessment method which is a planned, in-depth, two-way conversation between the Apprenticeship Assessor and yourself. It is an effective way of assessing your complex understanding and knowledge.

#### Delivery of the Professional Discussion

The Professional Discussion will be conducted as follows:

- a 1:1 conversation, with no other parties involved
- completed in an appropriate environment which is free from distractions and interruptions
- you and the assessor may refer to your Portfolio of Evidence to support the Professional Discussion

#### Where will the Professional Discussion take place?

The Professional Discussion will take place in your employer's workplace or your training provider's premises. The Professional Discussion may take place on the same day as the Practical assessment. The Professional Discussion may be conducted remotely by video conferencing.

The Professional Discussion should take place in a quiet room, free from distractions and influence, in a controlled environment.

- **What is a controlled environment?** *A controlled environment for an assessment refers to a setting where specific conditions are monitored to ensure fairness, security, and reliability in the assessment process across apprentices.*

## The Professional Discussion will include:

- A structured discussion lasting **90 minutes** (with a 10% +/- tolerance) with you and your VTCT Skillsfirst Apprenticeship Assessor who will conduct this assessment either remotely or face to face, in a controlled environment.
- The Assessor will ask you a minimum of **12 questions** in relation to:
  - Your understanding of your job role, duties, and responsibilities
  - Specific parts of the training that you have received
  - Your personal development and reflection on the training you have received
  - The pieces of evidence that you have compiled for your Portfolio of Evidence

**Please note:** the Professional Discussion will be recorded.

## Portfolio of Evidence

The Portfolio of Evidence that you complete during the on-programme stage is not assessed or graded by the Assessor; however, it is used to inform your Professional Discussion.

The following criteria for the Portfolio of Evidence is as follows:

- The content must be sufficient to evidence that you can demonstrate all of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours mapped to the Professional Discussion assessment method. An example of how the evidence can be mapped to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours, can be found in Appendix 1
- One piece of evidence can be mapped against more than one Knowledge, Skill or Behavioural requirement
- Your Portfolio of Evidence can be in any format, as long as it is legible and can be uploaded electronically to epaPRO.
- Your Portfolio of Evidence should contain written accounts of activities that you have completed and mapped against the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours, supported by appropriate evidence, including photographic evidence and work products
- Progress review documentation, witness testimonies, and feedback from colleagues and/or customers can also be included
- A Declaration of Authenticity Form (example Appendix 2) must be signed by yourself, your training provider and your employer alongside the Portfolio of Evidence submitted
- The Portfolio of Evidence must be submitted to the EPA Pro system at the Gateway stage
- VTCT will send the Portfolio of Evidence to the Apprenticeship Assessor at least two weeks prior to the Professional Discussion
- You cannot include reflective accounts or self-evaluation documentation as evidence within your Portfolio of Evidence
- A completed VTCT Level 3 International Freight Forwarding Specialist Mapping Document is required to be uploaded alongside your Portfolio of Evidence (Appendix 1)

## Preparation for a Professional Discussion

During the Professional Discussion, you must demonstrate a proficient understanding of the requirements for the technical skills outlined in the End-point Assessment Plan.

To prepare for the Professional Discussion, it is essential that the grade descriptors on pages 5-6 are considered. The grade descriptors include areas that must be covered throughout the Professional Discussion.

During the Professional Discussion, the Assessor will allow you to lead the discussion and to make reference to your Portfolio of Evidence.

When completing the Professional Discussion, you will:

- describe activities that you completed from your Portfolio of Evidence. You will discuss each activity in its entirety covering all applicable KSBs
- describe your understanding of your job role, duties and responsibilities, specific parts of the training you have received, your personal development, and reflection on the training you have received.

## How is the Professional Discussion graded?

The Assessor will use the grading criteria to assess the Professional Discussion and will evidence this using the assessment tools and procedures provided by VTCT Skillsfirst. The Assessor will make all grading decisions.

## Professional Discussion grading criteria

### Pass criteria

You will achieve a pass grade if you provide evidence to meet all the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour requirements set out for the Professional Discussion and all of the criteria below:

Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours requirements	Grading criteria
<b>(Core) Customs K11 K12 K15 K21 S4 S5</b>	The apprentice explained how to prepare customs declarations, or give custom clearance instructions to a third party, meeting the requirements of HMRC (K11, S4)
	The apprentice described how they use software systems to submit customs declarations in order to ensure an efficient freight forwarding service (S5)
	The apprentice explained how direct and indirect customs representation are applied and the rules of establishment (K12)
	The apprentice explained how Incoterms relate to international trade and customs declarations (K15, K21)
<b>(Core) Communication and relationships K17 K18 K20 S9 S10 S12 S13 B5</b>	The apprentice discussed how they use written communication techniques suitable for the context, adapting style and using correct sector and industry terminology and plain English, to suit the audience (S10, S12, K17)
	The apprentice discussed how they use verbal techniques, adapting style and use of terminology to overcome barriers, suit the audience and convey the message (S13, K18)
	The apprentice explained how they create and maintain productive working relationships with internal and external customers that support the achievement of business objectives and client requirements (S9, K20, B5)
<b>(Core) Industry Infrastructure K1 K4 K13</b>	The apprentice outlined the structure and function of the freight forwarding industry, including the key regulatory organisations and trade associations in logistics and international freight forwarding (K1, K4)
	The apprentice outlined the structure and key contents of the UK Trade Tariff and its role in their day-to-day work (K13)
<b>(Core) Environment and sustainability K6 K9 B4</b>	The apprentice explained how they consider environmental impact in their role and how this informs their working practices (K6, B4)
	The apprentice described how hazardous goods are classified, and any specific modal restrictions applied to their movement (K9)

## Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio of Evidence

### Distinction criteria

You will achieve a distinction grade for the Professional Discussion if you provide evidence to meet all the pass criteria and also all of the additional criteria below:

<b>Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours requirements</b>	<b>Grading criteria</b>
<b>(Core) Customs K11 K12 K21 S4</b>	The apprentice explained how to respond when declarations are rejected in order to resolve issues and meet client and HMRC requirements (K11, S4)
	The apprentice discussed how risk transfer between seller and buyer is managed, including how this affects costs (K12, K21)
<b>(Core) Industry Infrastructure K1 K4</b>	The apprentice evaluated the relationships and interdependencies between the key regulatory organisations, trade associations and functions of the freight forwarding industry (K1, K4)
<b>(Core) Environment and sustainability K6 B4</b>	The apprentice discussed how they have made choices that take into account the environmental impact their actions will have, using the most up to date information and initiatives to mitigate environmental impact (K6, B4)

## Please follow the guide outlined below to support your preparation

What can I do to prepare for my End-point Assessment?	Completed Yes/No
1. Access and familiarise yourself with the Mock Assessment Form for the Professional Discussion for your chosen pathway.	
2. Refer to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that may be assessed during the Professional Discussion. These are outlined in the table below.	
3. Collate pieces of evidence for your Portfolio of Evidence that demonstrate the relevant Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour which will be discussed in your Professional Discussion.	
4. Collaborate with others to seek constructive feedback on your performance.	
5. Practice questions and answers with peers/assessors in preparation for your Professional Discussion using the sample questions provided.	
6. Incorporate any feedback from your peers/assessor to enhance your approach and to address any identified areas for improvement in readiness for your Professional Discussion.	
7. Practise effective time management during the Professional Discussion. Allocate appropriate time to each task and ensure completion within the given timeframe.	
8. Approach the Professional Discussion with confidence. Remember that it is an opportunity to showcase your knowledge and skills.	
9. Stay calm under pressure and communicate effectively throughout the Professional Discussion.	
10. Remember to bring your identification with you on the day of your End-point Assessment. This can be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driving licence</li> <li>• Employee ID</li> <li>• Passport</li> </ul>	

## Planning and Preparing for your Professional Discussion

KSB Ref	Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that may be assessed during the End-point Assessment.	What do I need to remember?
<b>Knowledge</b>		
<b>K1: Core</b>	The structure and functions of the freight forwarding industry.	
<b>K4: Core</b>	The function of the key regulatory organisations and trade associations in logistics and international freight forwarding.	
<b>K6: Core</b>	The differing environmental impacts of road, ocean, and air transport.	
<b>K9: Core</b>	Dangerous and hazardous goods and the specific modal restrictions applied to their movement.	
<b>K11: Core</b>	The differences in how goods are moved under the different customs controls that apply to and from the UK and the purpose, function, and range of procedure codes.	
<b>K12: Core</b>	Direct and indirect customs representation and the rules of establishment.	
<b>K13: Core</b>	The structure and key contents of the UK Trade Tariff.	
<b>K15: Core</b>	The terms of international trade rules (Incoterms) and their part in customs valuation and financial risk transfer.	
<b>K17: Core</b>	Written communication techniques, plain English principles, including Industry terminology.	
<b>K18: Core</b>	Verbal communication techniques, giving and receiving information, matching style to audience, barriers to communication and how to overcome them.	
<b>K20: Core</b>	Techniques for forming and maintaining business relationships.	
<b>K21: Core</b>	Principle of value build-up in customs documentation.	

KSB Ref	Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that may be assessed during the End-point Assessment.	What do I need to remember?
<b>Skills</b>		
<b>S4: Core</b>	Prepare a customs declaration to a national standard or give custom clearance instructions to a third party.	
<b>S5: Core</b>	Use data systems to submit the information required by customs authorities as part of the management of the international movement of goods.	
<b>S9: Core</b>	Create and maintain productive working relationships with internal and external customers.	
<b>S10: Core</b>	Adapt communication based on the situation and the audience.	
<b>S12: Core</b>	Communicate in writing, preparing communications on technical matters.	
<b>S13: Core</b>	Communicate with others verbally, including internal and external customers.	

KSB Ref	Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that may be assessed during the End-point Assessment.	What do I need to remember?
<b>Behaviours</b>		
<b>B4: Core</b>	Takes personal responsibility for their own sustainable working practices.	
<b>B5: Core</b>	Collaborate with others for example, within teams, across disciplines, and external stakeholders.	

## Following your End-point Assessment:

<p><b>What happens following my End-point Assessment?</b></p>	<p>You will receive the results from your End-point Assessment within 10 working days.</p>
<p><b>What happens if I do not achieve my End-point Assessment?</b></p>	<p>If you do not achieve a pass result within this assessment method, you will be able to re-sit this assessment.</p>

### Appendix 1 - Professional Discussion Mapping Document

### Appendix 2 – Declaration of authenticity