



VTCT Skills

/// EARLY YEARS



**/// APPRENTICE PREPARATION GUIDE
PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION**

Early Years Educator

Preparing for your End-point Assessment

This document is designed to support you (the Apprentice) in preparing for the **VTCT Skills Level 3 Early Years Educator – ST0135 v1.3** End-point Assessment.

During your End-point assessment, **one** of the **two** assessment methods that you will undertake is a Professional Discussion. The Professional Discussion will allow 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 your Professional Discussion.

Overview of a Professional Discussion

A Professional Discussion is a planned, in-depth, two-way conversation between the Independent Assessor and yourself. It gives you the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

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 Independent Assessor, who will conduct this assessment either remotely or face to face.
- The Independent Assessor will ask you a minimum of **10 questions**.

The following themes will be assessed during your Professional Discussion:

- Equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Safeguarding
- Relationships
- Learning and child development
- Continuous professional development

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.
- 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 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 Independent 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 Early Years Educator Professional Discussion Mapping Document is required to be uploaded alongside your Portfolio of Evidence. The mapping template provides an example of how to map your evidence
- One piece of evidence can be mapped against more than one Knowledge, Skill or Behaviour requirement

Preparation for a Professional Discussion

To prepare for the Professional Discussion, it is essential that the grade descriptors on pages 4-5 are considered. The grade descriptors include areas that must be covered throughout the Professional Discussion.

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

How is the Professional Discussion graded?

The Independent Assessor will use the grading criteria below to assess the Professional Discussion. The Independent 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 in the criteria below:

| Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours requirements | Grading criteria |
|--|---|
| Equality, diversity, and inclusion (K1, K6, K7, S12) | Describes the importance of respecting social and cultural contexts and EDI whilst supporting a child to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture. (K1, S12) |
| | Describes the legal rights of each child and how these legal rights are met according to the individual's current and future needs. (K7) |
| | Describes the statutory and non-statutory frameworks and guidance for provision in the early years, including SEND. (K6) |
| Safeguarding (K2, K3, K4, S1, S2, B3) | Describes the indicators of abuse for children and colleagues, and the actions taken to protect individuals at risk of abuse in line with safeguarding policies and procedures. (K2, K3, S1, B3) |
| | Justifies how they apply legislation, policy, and procedure in order to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of children within the setting. (K4, S2) |
| Relationships (K8, K9, K11, K12, K13, K14, S5, S6, S8, B1) | Describes the role of an early years educator, colleagues, and different agencies and how developing confident professional relationships and interactions ensures the needs of the child are met. (K8, K9, K13, S5, B1) |
| | Explains how parents, carers and other key individuals impact a child's learning and development and how this can be enhanced by developing professional collaborative relationships with parents, carers and other key individuals. (K12, K14, S6) |
| | Explains the significance of attachment, and how they apply theories of attachment to support the development of relationships with children. (K11, S8) |

| | |
|--|---|
| Learning and child development (K16) | Explains how children learn from conception to age 7, the interaction and impact of biological and environmental factors, and the implications for practice. (K16) |
| Continuous professional development (K27, S21, B6, B8) | Explains how they reflect on their practice to inform their CPD needs and develop professionally and personally, including how they have engaged in supervision. (K27, S21, B6, B8) |

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:

| Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours requirements | Grading criteria |
|--|--|
| Safeguarding (K2, K3) | Evaluates decisions taken when applying policies and procedures related to children’s wellbeing. (K2, K3) |
| Relationships (K8, K12, K14) | Analyses the impact of professional multi-agency relationships and co-operation with parents, families and carers on child development. (K8, K12, K14) |
| Continuous professional development (K27, S21, B8) | Evaluates how continuous professional development has impacted on provision and improved outcomes for children. (K27, S21, B8) |

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. | |
| 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"> • Driving licence • Employee ID • Passport | |

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? |
|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Knowledge | | |
| K1 | The importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion, and respecting children’s social and cultural context. | |
| K2 | Safeguarding policies and procedures for children and colleagues, including child protection and wellbeing. | |
| K3 | Types of abuse including domestic, neglect, physical, emotional and sexual, and know how to act to protect children and colleagues. | |
| K4 | The legal requirements and guidance on health and safety, security, confidentiality of information, and safeguarding. | |
| K6 | The statutory and non-statutory frameworks and guidance for provision in early years including SEND. | |
| K7 | The legal rights of each individual child according to their current and future needs. | |
| K8 | The role of colleagues and multi-agency working to support the child. | |
| K9 | The role and responsibilities of the early years educator, including providing supervision to staff. | |
| K11 | Theories and significance of attachment. | |

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|------------|--|--|
| K12 | The importance of professional relationships and collaboration with parents, families, or carers. | |
| K13 | The importance of professional relationships with colleagues, other organisations, and agencies. | |
| K14 | The influence of all key individuals in children's lives on children's learning and development. | |
| K16 | How children learn and develop from conception to age 7; physiologically, neurologically, biologically, psychologically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Including the interaction and impact of biological and environmental factors. | |
| K27 | Methods of reflective practice, including supervision, and opportunities for continuous professional development. | |

| KSB Ref | Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that may be assessed during the End-point Assessment. | What do I need to remember? |
|----------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Skills | | |
| S1 | Recognise when a child or a colleague is in danger or at risk of abuse and act to protect them in line with safeguarding policy and procedure. | |
| S2 | Apply legislation, policy and procedure to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of children in the setting (for example, food safety, diets, starting solid food, allergies, COSHH, and accidents, injuries, and emergencies). | |
| S5 | Use a range of communication methods, including technology, with other professionals to meet the individual needs of the child. | |
| S6 | Develop and maintain effective professional, collaborative relationships with others involved in the education and care of the child. | |
| S8 | Recognise and apply theories of attachment to develop effective relationships with children. | |
| S12 | Support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture. | |
| S21 | Use reflection to develop themselves both professionally and personally. | |

| KSB Ref | Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that may be assessed during the End-point Assessment. | What do I need to remember? |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Behaviours | | |
| B1 | Confident to have difficult conversations. | |
| B3 | Vigilant and act with professional curiosity. | |
| B6 | Self-motivated, using initiative and proactive. | |
| B8 | Reflective and reflexive and committed to CPD. | |

Following your End-point Assessment:

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