



Level 2

Apprenticeship Assessment For
Administration Assistant (ST1472)

nqual.

APPRENTICESHIP
SPECIFICATION

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Introduction

This Apprenticeship Specification provides the requirements, advice, and guidance for the assessment of the NQual Level 2 Apprenticeship Assessment for Administration Assistant (ST1472). It outlines the assessment components, timelines, and expectations for apprentices, employers, and training providers, and is structured to cover all relevant aspects of the assessment process.

The information in this Specification is based on the Skills England Apprenticeship Assessment Plan for the Administration Assistant Apprenticeship. For reference, you can access the official document: [Administration assistant / Skills England](#)

The Administration Assistant Apprenticeship provides learners with a structured, supportive route into business administration. It develops professional behaviours, practical skills and theoretical knowledge, alongside English and maths, through a blend of hands-on experience in the workplace and planned off-the-job learning activities.

Reference Glossary

Below is a reference glossary of the new Skills England terminology, with a brief explanation of what each term means. You might want to refer to this table when using this document.

New Term / Process	What it Replaces	What it Means:
Apprenticeship Specification	New Concept	NQual designs Apprenticeship Specifications to support employers, learners and training providers in their delivery of Apprenticeship Standards. This document also outlines the assessment requirements in full.
Training Provider / Approved Centre	New Concept	Both terms refer to the organisation that delivers the on-programme training for an apprentice. Approved Centre refers to those who have undergone additional quality and compliance checks with NQual and are approved to undertake assessments on NQual's behalf, as per the CASS strategy. Training Providers refer to those who have chosen the NQual Approach and have not undergone additional quality and compliance checks with NQual and are not approved to undertake assessments on NQual's behalf.
Gateway to Completion	Gateway	Final checkpoint before an apprenticeship certificate can be requested. Confirms the apprentice has met all completion requirements (English & maths, any mandatory qualifications, and behaviours).

Employer Verification of Behaviours	NQual Assessment of Behaviours	Employers confirm the apprentice has sufficiently demonstrated the behaviours in the occupational standard. NQual no longer assesses behaviours. NQual requires behaviours to be confirmed as achieved prior to finalising 'Gateway to Completion'.
Apprenticeship Assessment Plan (AAP)	End-Point Assessment Plan	The document sets out how a specific apprenticeship is assessed: assessment outcomes, assessment requirements/methods, and performance descriptors. NQual are required to use the Apprenticeship Assessment Plans (AAP) to design their Apprenticeship Specification.
Assessment Organisation (AO)	End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)	The organisation responsible for designing, quality assuring and (where applicable) delivering the apprenticeship assessment. NQual is the Assessment Organisation.
Assessment Outcomes	New Concept	Broad statements group knowledge and skills to describe how an apprentice demonstrates occupational competence. Each knowledge/skill statement maps to one outcome; all outcomes must be fully assessed in every version.
Performance Descriptors	New Concept	Describe the level of performance needed for a pass or distinction. They bridge assessment outcomes and NQual's grading approach and support comparability; apprentices are not marked directly against them. Performance Descriptors have been set by Skills England, prescribed for each level.
Mandatory Knowledge and Skills Statements	New Concept	The subset of content in an AAP that must be assessed in every version of the assessment. Other statements must still be assessed but can be covered over time.
Sampling	New Concept	A structured approach allowing NQual to assess across the full range of non-mandatory content over time, rather than every statement in every assessment version.
Centre Handbook	Centre Handbook	A document specifically for Approved Centres who are undertaking apprenticeship assessment on behalf of NQual, outlining key policies and processes to support success.

Mandatory assessment component	New Concept	Featured in the AAP. The single assessment method that must appear in every version of an assessment, giving a common Feature regardless of when/where the assessment happens. NQual may add additional methods from the set list in the AAP.
Mandatory Qualification (MQ)	Mandated Qualification	An additional qualification required for completion (For legal, professional body or sector requirements). Depending on coverage, an MQ may be the sole assessment or sit alongside an apprenticeship assessment.
Pass / Distinction	Pass / Merit / Distinction	The standard grades under reform. Merit has been removed to improve consistency and fairness across apprenticeships.
Resits and Retakes	Same Concept	Resit = resitting without further training Retake = Further training, then reassessment. Apprentices can choose to resit/retake to achieve a higher grade.
Skills England	IFATE / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education	The body is now responsible for occupational standards and apprenticeship assessment plans, working with DfE, Ofqual and OfS.

Important Information For Employers

The Administration Assistant apprenticeship assessment has been developed as part of national assessment reform led by Skills England. These changes are designed to reduce duplication and ensure assessments reflect occupational competence.

Key changes include:

Assessment timing can be flexible and based on apprentice readiness, and the 'Gateway Period' has been replaced by the 'Gateway to Completion' process. Apprentices can now complete some or all their assessments on the programme; at least one assessment should be towards the end of the programme.

Employers are responsible for verifying that apprentices have sufficiently demonstrated the behaviours set out in the occupational standard before 'Gateway to Completion'.

Assessment Organisations (AO) and Training Providers (TP) are no longer required to assess behaviours themselves. This ensures behavioural judgements are made by those with direct workplace insight and supports a more streamlined and appropriate assessment approach.

Please note that, as set out in the reformed standard, new starts on ST1472 are restricted to apprentices aged under 25.

Gateway to Completion will take place once the apprentice has:

- Passed both assessment components (Portfolio and the additional component: Project).
- Had their behaviours verified as sufficiently demonstrated by the employer.
- Achieved any English and maths qualifications required in line with funding and employer rules.

Entry Requirements

- Minimum age: 16 years old. In line with the reformed standard, new starts are restricted to apprentices who are under 25 at the start of the apprenticeship (that is, aged 16 or over but under 25).
- Apprentices must be employed in a relevant administrative role for the duration of the programme, with sufficient opportunity to develop and evidence the knowledge and skills set out in the standard.

Assessment Options

NQual offers two options for Apprenticeship Assessment:

- The NQual Approach.
- The Approved Centre Approach.

The nQual Approach

If providers choose this option, NQual will complete all assessment components.

Registration

Apprentices must be registered on ACE360 at least 90 days before their first assessment. Assessments can take place on the programme in any order.

Training Providers are required to complete the NQual Booking Form, confirming that the apprentice, provider and employer agree that the apprentice is ready to complete the assessments.

Booking forms must be submitted via ACE360 at least 2 weeks prior to the requested assessment date for both the Portfolio assessment and the additional component (Project). Where booking forms are not completed within the timelines, preferred dates might not be accommodated.

Results

Results will be sent to the apprentice, the training provider and uploaded onto ACE360 within 10 working days after the completion of the final component.

Following completion of all assessment components, centres must submit Gateway to Completion evidence in line with the requirements set out in the Gateway to Completion section of this document. NQual will confirm completion within 48 working hours of all evidence being uploaded.

Resits and Retakes

For standards comprising multiple assessment components, apprentices will only be required to resit or retake the component(s) in which they have been unsuccessful.

Apprentices may also choose to resit an assessment component with the aim of improving their grade; however, an increased grade cannot be guaranteed.

There is no formal cap on the number of resits and retakes, and the grade achievable is not restricted through reassessment attempts. However, it is strongly recommended that the apprentice is adequately prepared prior to reassessment to minimise repeated attempts.

NQual's approach to resits and retakes will not limit an apprentice's ability to achieve a distinction grade or place a cap on the grade an apprentice can achieve.

All resits and retakes must be completed within 12 months of the initial fail notification. Each resit or retake is subject to employer agreement and confirmation of apprentice readiness prior to booking.

The Approved Centre Approach

If providers choose this option, specified components of the assessment can be undertaken by the approved centre. These components are carried out in line with NQual's CASS strategy and are subject to ongoing External Quality Assurance (EQA).

Centres wanting to use this approach must undergo NQual's Centre Approval process prior to registering and undertaking any form of assessment of any apprentices. If you would like to become an NQual Approved Centre, please contact admin@nqual.co.uk for our helpful NQual Centre Approval Process Guide.

Centres must declare conflicts of interest in advance, and apprentice tutor/assessors must not undertake formal assessments.

When choosing this approach, all assessors and internal quality assurers (IQA) details must be recorded by NQual and are subject to EQA review to ensure competence. Please see 'Assessment Assessor and IQA Requirements'. Assessors conducting apprenticeship assessments on behalf of NQual are subject to initial standardisation and the completion of an 'Assessor Declaration'.

Registration

Apprentices must be registered on ACE360 at the start of the programme, within 60 days of the start date, and will be subject to ongoing EQA activity.

For assessment components delivered by the Centre, NQual must be notified of the assessment date and time at least 2 weeks in advance, by completing the NQual Booking Form, which must be uploaded to ACE360.

Results

All results remain subject to confirmation through NQual's External Quality Assurance process. Results from components completed by the centre will be subject to additional external quality assurance, and results will be confirmed within 10 working days.

Following completion of all assessment components, centres must submit Gateway to Completion evidence in line with the requirements set out in the Gateway to Completion section of this document. NQual will confirm completion within 48 working hours of all evidence being uploaded.

Resits and Retakes

NQual must be informed of booked resits and retakes via the NQual Booking Form, uploaded to ACE360. The resit and retake terms set out under the NQual Approach apply equally to the Approved Centre Approach.

Assessment Design

The Apprenticeship for Level 2 Administration Assistant requires the completion of two assessment methods.

To meet the requirements of this apprenticeship assessment, apprentices must complete one mandatory component and one additional component. As outlined within the Assessment Plan, the mandatory component must be a Portfolio. Apprentices must then complete one additional component, a Project, which can be delivered as either a Written Project Report or a Presentation with Q&A.

Mandatory Component

Portfolio

The Portfolio allows the apprentice to demonstrate the practical application of knowledge and skills through authentic evidence generated in the workplace. It is compiled by the apprentice during the on-programme period and is assessed directly against the assessment outcomes and knowledge and skills statements mapped to it in the Component Mapping Table.

The Portfolio is typically finalised at the end of the apprentice's programme and should be submitted no earlier than 2 months prior to completion.

What the Portfolio Must Contain

The Portfolio must contain the following:

- A maximum of 20 pieces of evidence, generated by the apprentice during the on-programme period.
- Authentic work products drawn from the apprentice's day-to-day role, such as records, correspondence, reports, spreadsheets, meeting notes, diaries and booking records.
- Witness statements from the employer confirming the apprentice's direct performance in the workplace.
- Observation records completed during on-programme delivery.
- A completed Portfolio Submission Document showing which assessment outcome(s) and knowledge and skills statement(s) each piece of evidence addresses.
- An authenticity declaration signed by both the apprentice and the employer.

Evidence Requirements

The following requirements apply to all evidence submitted within the Portfolio:

- Each piece of evidence must be no more than 5 pages in length.
- Any video or audio evidence must be no longer than 30 minutes in length.
- Product evidence may include annotation. An annotation should explain the context of the work, the apprentice's own contribution and any decisions taken, and must not be used to introduce evidence that does not appear in the work product itself.
- All evidence must be authentic, current and generated by the apprentice in the workplace.
- Confidential or personal information must be redacted or anonymised in line with the employer's data protection requirements.
- Reflective accounts and self-assessment alone are not sufficient.

Timings

The Portfolio is compiled across the on-programme period and submitted at the point of booking, typically towards the end of the programme.

The NQual Approach

NQual will mark the apprentice's Portfolio.

The Portfolio must be submitted via ACE360. NQual must be notified at least 2 weeks prior to submission, using the NQual Booking Form uploaded to ACE360.

NQual will mark this component within 10 working days of submission. Portfolios must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the additional component (Project) assessment.

The Approved Centre Approach

The Centre will mark the Portfolio.

Centres must complete the NQual Grading Documentation and upload it, together with the Portfolio, to ACE360 within 10 working days of completion.

All centre marking decisions remain subject to NQual's External Quality Assurance, which will be completed within a further 10 working days of upload.

Additional Consideration

The Portfolio may be assessed by an NQual Independent Assessor or, under the Approved Centre Approach, by an approved centre assessor working under NQual's EQA. Evidence should focus on authentic work products and witness statements of direct performance rather than reflective accounts or self-assessment. Details of all criteria covered in this component can be found in the Component Mapping Table within this document.

Additional Component

Project

In addition to the Portfolio, each apprentice completes one additional component, a Project. The Project requires the apprentice to complete a piece of work drawn from their role. It allows the apprentice to demonstrate the knowledge and skills mapped to the additional component in the Component Mapping Table.

The apprentice can choose to deliver their project as either a Written Project Report or a Presentation with Q&A. The apprentice can only choose one delivery method for their project. Both delivery methods assess the same knowledge and skills and are graded against the same assessment outcomes.

For this standard, the additional component (Project) must be completed by NQual.

At the point of booking, the apprentice will be given a project brief detailing what their project should be based on.

Delivered as Written Project Report

If the apprentice decides to deliver their project as a Written Project Report, they should review this section.

The written project report must not exceed 2,000 words. The apprentice must complete the written project report independently. Any referenced material must be cited appropriately, and the submission must not include plagiarism and must not be produced, in whole or in part, using artificial intelligence.

Please refer to NQual's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy regarding the use of AI and plagiarism.

The written project report must be submitted via ACE360, on the approved NQual Submission Documentation, no later than 12 weeks from the booking date.

The written project report will be marked by an Independent Assessor from NQual within 10 working days of submission.

Timings

The apprentice has a maximum period of 12 weeks to complete their project. This includes 8 weeks to complete the project and gather evidence, and a further 4 weeks for the write-up.

Delivered as Presentation with Q&A

If the apprentice decides to deliver their project as a Presentation with Q&A, they should review this section.

The Presentation requires the apprentice to present their project, drawn from their role, using appropriate visual support, followed by a question-and-answer (Q&A) session with the assessor. It allows the apprentice to demonstrate the knowledge and skills mapped to this component.

The Presentation is typically delivered towards the end of the programme and is conducted by a qualified Independent Assessor from NQual.

The apprentice must complete the assessment in a controlled environment, ensuring they are alone in the room and free from any external influence, in accordance with the required assessment conditions.

The presentation and Q&A will be video/audio recorded in line with NQual's Assessment Processes.

Timings

The total time for the Presentation with Q&A is 30 minutes. The presentation will typically last 15 minutes, followed by the Q&A session with the assessor.

Assessor Responsibilities

Throughout the additional component (Project), apprentices should not receive feedback. Assessors are responsible for ensuring assessment conditions are followed, and for completing and recording in full the Assessor Declaration.

Where the Project is delivered as a Presentation with Q&A, the assessment must be video/audio recorded in line with NQual's Assessment Processes for quality and compliance purposes. If required recordings are not received, NQual reserves the right to request a resit.

Assessment Materials

The required assessment materials, including assessment documentation and sample question banks, are available to Approved Centres and Training Providers. These materials support centre preparation and assessor standardisation and should be reviewed before delivery commences. Materials are available via ACE360, with Approved Centre Assessment materials being shared directly with each centre following standardisation and training.

Please note that, to align with sampling requirements, regular review of Approved Centre Assessment materials will be completed by NQual's Quality Team, which will result in assessment material updates and version changes. These will be communicated in advance, and a clear start date will be indicated on each.

Centres must use the correct assessment materials; if outdated assessment materials are used, NQual reserves the right to request a resit of assessments where they deem appropriate.

Apprentice Assessment Timelines

Step	NQual Approach	Approved Centre Approach
Sign-up	Apprentice signs up with their training provider/centre.	
Registration	Apprentices registered on ACE360 at least 90 days before First assessment.	Apprentices registered on ACE360 within 60 days of their 'sign-up' date. This must be before learners complete any assessments.
Learning	On-programme learning	
Booking Assessments	Training Providers should submit the portfolio and the NQual's Booking Form at least 2 weeks prior to the additional component (Project) assessment date. Once the Portfolio has been submitted, it will go through the EQA process within 10 working days.	Centres should submit the portfolio and the NQual's Booking Form at least 2 weeks prior to the additional component (Project) assessment date. Once the Portfolio has been submitted, it will go through the EQA process within 10 working days.
Assessments	Assessments are conducted by NQual Independent Assessors. NQual Independent Assessors will mark the portfolio and complete the additional component (Project), delivered as a Written Project Report or Presentation with Q&A.	Independent Assessors From the Centre will mark the apprentice's portfolio. Subject to external quality assurance from NQual. Centres submit their evidence using NQual's required paperwork within 10 working days of completion. NQual will complete the additional component (Project), delivered as a Written Project Report or Presentation with Q&A.
Results	Results of the component conducted by NQual will be sent out a maximum of 10 working days after each assessment component. If an apprentice Fails an assessment method, they must book a resit or retake using the NQual booking Form.	Results of the component conducted by NQual will be sent out a maximum of 10 working days after the assessment component. Final confirmed results of centre assessed components will be issued by NQual following completion of the EQA process within 10 working days of confirmed uploaded evidence.
Gateway to Completion	The Training Provider / Centre provides evidence of: - Both components achieving Pass or Distinction. - Maths & English evidence. - Employer-verified Behaviours. NQual confirms Gateway to Completion.	
Certification	NQual applies for the apprenticeship certificate.	

Assessment Assessor Requirements

Assessment Assessor and IQA Requirements remain the same regardless of the Option chosen.

Assessor Requirements

- Assessors must hold a relevant assessor qualification, such as the Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement (CAVA). Assessors currently undergoing training must have all assessment decisions confirmed by a suitably qualified assessor.
- Assessors must also be occupationally competent to assess the standard, typically demonstrated by at least two years of recent experience in a business administration or comparable office environment, supported by a regularly updated CPD record. This should evidence current, practical experience and knowledge of the sector to ensure valid assessment decisions.
- Conflict of Interest: Assessors must declare any personal or professional relationship, or any potential benefit from the assessment outcome.
- Independence: The assessor must be independent from the apprentice to ensure impartiality and integrity in the assessment process.

IQA Requirements

- IQAs must hold a relevant IQA qualification, such as the Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice. IQAs currently undergoing training must have all assessment decisions confirmed by a suitably qualified IQA.
- IQAs must also be occupationally competent in the sector area, typically demonstrated by recent and relevant experience, supported by an up-to-date CPD record evidencing current knowledge of industry standards and assessment practices.
- Conflict of Interest: IQAs must declare any personal or professional relationship, or any potential benefit from the sampling process, before carrying out quality assurance activities.
- Independence: The IQA must be independent from the apprentice and assessor to ensure impartiality and integrity in the quality assurance process.

Grading and Standard Setting

The available grades for this standard are Fail, Pass and Distinction. To achieve a Pass, all assessment outcomes must be demonstrated to the level described in the performance descriptors in both assessment components to achieve an overall Pass grade.

To be considered for an overall Distinction, the apprentice must first meet all assessment outcomes at the Pass standard in both assessment components. A Distinction will then be awarded where the apprentice achieves a minimum of 50% of the available Distinction criteria in each assessment component.

The final grade will be decided on the following combinations:

Mandatory Component: PortFolio	Additional Component: Project	Overall Grading
Any grade	Fail	Fail
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

Gateway to Completion

Gateway to Completion is the last part of the apprentice's journey and requires the training provider/centre to upload evidence that the apprentice is ready to complete their apprenticeship. The Gateway to Completion form must be completed and submitted to NQual, along with required evidence via ACE360.

Requirements for Gateway to Completion:

- Both components have achieved a minimum of a Pass grade.
- Evidence of achieving relevant English and maths qualifications or exemptions where required, in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.
- Evidence is required to confirm that the employer deems the apprentice competent against the required behaviours.

This standard does not include a mandatory qualification, so no additional qualification evidence is required at Gateway to Completion.

Behaviours

As part of this apprenticeship standard, it is the responsibility of the employer to review behaviours throughout the apprentice's programme and confirm sufficient demonstration of these behaviours before a certificate can be requested. Behaviours do not contribute to the grade.

Below is a list of behaviours the employer is required to confirm for this standard.

Behaviours	Description
B1	Team working to provide support. Collaborate with internal or external stakeholders to help achieve the goals of the organisation.
B2	Flexible and responds positively to changing work requirements or environments.
B3	Act upon and respond respectfully to feedback. Displays commitment to personal and professional development.
B4	Acts in an ethical manner, embracing equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
B5	Professional in approach to work and internal or external stakeholders to meet the requirements of the organisation and codes of conduct.
B6	Focussed on the importance of delivering a quality service, identifying, meeting or exceeding key performance indicators.
B7	Works sustainably ensuring resources are used efficiently and responsibly.
B8	Committed to personal well-being and an awareness of the support and resources available to help them.

Certification

For this apprenticeship standard, NQual is responsible for requesting the apprentice's certificate once Gateway to Completion has been confirmed.

NQual Details

To find out further information or discuss anything within this Apprenticeship Specification, please reach out to a member of the team via admin@nqual.co.uk



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