



Specialist Teaching Assistant v2.0

☆ Level 5 £ £12,000 📅 24 months

1. What the role entails

The broad purpose of the occupation is to support the education of learners by providing specialist support. Specialist teaching assistants plan, implement, and adapt activities in order to advance learning. They draw on research to develop a critical understanding of their specialist area and establish relationships with learners, families, other professionals and external agencies to support the education of the learners they work with.

Specialist teaching assistants contribute to developing a sense of inclusion and belonging for the benefit of the learners within the communities that they serve and reflect on both their own practices and support the training and development of others within their specialist area. They will specialise in one of three options:

- SEND
- social and emotional wellbeing
- curriculum provision.

2. On-programme

An apprentice will typically spend 24 months on-programme (this means in training before the gateway to completion) working towards occupational competence. They **must** spend a minimum of 8 months on-programme and complete the minimum required off the job training time, in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.

The apprentice must receive training to develop the occupational standard's knowledge and skills (K&S) criteria and achieve English and maths in line with the DfE apprenticeship funding rules, if required.

While on-programme, apprentices **must** undertake both assessment methods; these can take place in any order but must **not** be taken before month 6 of the apprenticeship. It is suggested that the Portfolio with Question and Answer (Q&A) is taken just before gateway to completion to ensure the Portfolio contains examples from the full duration that the apprentice has spent on-programme.



3. Gateway to completion requirements

Gateway to completion should be used as the final opportunity to check an apprentice has met all the requirements for completion. An apprentice can only be put forward for gateway to completion when the apprentice and their employer (in consultation with the centre) are content they have attained the sufficient knowledge, skills and behaviours to successfully complete the apprenticeship and the apprentice has achieved their apprenticeship assessments.

For the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant, the requirements are:

- the off-the-job requirements from the apprenticeship funding rules have been met
- English and maths qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules
- confirmation from the employer that the apprentice has met the behaviour requirements as set out in the apprenticeship assessment plan
- all assessment components have been taken and passed.

4. Apprenticeship assessment

The apprenticeship assessment for Specialist Teaching Assistant contains two methods of assessment. A Professional Discussion that must be NCFE assessed and a Portfolio with Q&A which can be delivered using one of two models offered by NCFE.

NCFE combined	Delivered and assessed by centre assessors, subject to IQA and NCFE EQA.
NCFE assessed	Delivered and assessed directly by NCFE assessors.



Assessment 1: Professional Discussion

During the Professional Discussion, the assessor and apprentice take part in a recorded, structured, two-way conversation that enables the apprentice to demonstrate the assessment criteria associated with this assessment method.

The Professional Discussion should be planned and conducted in a way that provides the apprentice with the opportunity to present evidence of the K&S mapped to the assessment method and to achieve the highest grade available. The Professional Discussion may last for up to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The Professional Discussion is graded fail, pass or distinction.

NCFE will assess this method.



Assessment 2: Portfolio with Q&A

The Portfolio is compiled by the apprentice throughout the apprenticeship and submitted for assessment once the apprentice, employer, and centre agree that it is complete and that the apprentice is ready to undertake the assessment process. The Portfolio will contain no more than 25 discrete pieces of evidence, including at least two observations of the apprentice carrying out their role in the workplace. The Portfolio must not be submitted before the 6-month point. The Q&A can only take place after the Portfolio has been assessed.

The Q&A will last up to 30 minutes and is designed as a targeted supplement to the Portfolio, which is the primary assessed component. The assessor will use the Q&A to confirm and authenticate evidence, address any gaps in knowledge and skills, explore the apprentice's understanding, and gather any additional evidence required, including evidence that may support a higher grade.

The Portfolio with Q&A is graded fail, pass or distinction.

The Portfolio with Q&A can be delivered through either an NCFE-combined model or an NCFE-assessed model. In the NCFE-combined model, a centre assessor delivers and grades the assessment, with outcomes subject to Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and NCFE External Quality Assurance (EQA). In the NCFE-assessed model, assessments are delivered and graded directly by NCFE assessors. Both options are supported by robust quality assurance processes to ensure valid, reliable and consistent assessment outcomes.

5. Grade aggregation information

Professional Discussion	Portfolio with Q&A	Final grade
Pass	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

A fail in any assessment method will result in a fail overall.

6. Completion and certification

Once NCFE verifies the apprentice has successfully completed all apprenticeship assessment methods and gateway to completion requirements, they will activate certification. Working with the apprenticeship certificate issuing authority, NCFE will ensure the apprentice receives their certificate.

7. What next?

On successful completion of this apprenticeship, the apprentice may be able to progress to take on senior and specialist teaching assistant roles in a range of educational settings. They may also be able to progress onto higher level qualifications and apprenticeships, such as the Level 6 Early Years Teacher and Level 7 Teacher.

Why NCFE?

We are an approved Assessment Organisation (AO) specialising in apprenticeship assessment across health, education, social care, business, active leisure and digital apprenticeship standards. NCFE offers flexible and reliable apprenticeship assessment solutions supported by sector expertise, guidance documents and proactive service and support.