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Meeting Learners' Needs at Entry Level

**Using the Gateway Qualifications
Entry Level Suite to Support
learner-centred programmes**

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Using qualifications in outcome-focused study programmes

The SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) reforms, enacted in the Children and Families Act of 2014, clearly state that young people with SEND aged 16-19/25 should be offered

a coherent study programme which provides stretch and progression and enables them to achieve the best possible outcomes in adult life¹

Under the revised Common Inspection Framework, Ofsted is specifically inspecting provision for high needs learners. They will be considering the extent to which:

- *individual learning programmes challenge learners to develop their independence and prepare them for their future*
- *[learners are offered] individually tailored learning programmes that lead to paid employment where appropriate, including to supported internships, traineeships and apprenticeships and/or greater independence in their everyday lives*
- *the choice of accreditation helps learners progress towards further learning, vocational training, employment and independent living, where appropriate²*

Department for Education guidance on Study Programmes³ and changes to the funding methodology for 16-19 provision and for adult learning mean that it is no longer a requirement to base programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on qualifications.

All of this means that providers are freed from the necessity of using qualifications in order to fund provision. Instead they can exercise their professional judgement and choose to use qualifications only where they will clearly benefit learners, and offer non-accredited provision where that is not the case. In addition they can select the amount of accreditation and size of qualification that best meets their learners' needs rather than choosing qualifications to maximise funding.

So when might it be appropriate to use qualifications with learners with SEND?

Qualifications offer an excellent way of recognising learner achievement when:

- the qualification content is clearly relevant to the learner's goals and aspirations
- achievement of the qualification and/or units within it clearly support progress towards the learner's goals
- the learning outcomes in the qualification/selected units match the learner's skills needs as identified through initial assessment.

Gateway Qualifications has developed a suite of qualifications which we believe providers **can** use to underpin (or contribute to) high quality personalised and outcome-focused programmes for learners with SEND. To make effective use of these qualifications, providers will need to choose carefully the type, size, and number of qualifications they offer (and equally select units from their chosen qualification judiciously), matching content and purpose to learner need interest and aspiration).

¹SEND Code of Practice, Department for Education, 2015

²Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook, Ofsted, 2015

³http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/media/309641/factsheet_study_programmes.pdf

We have been guided in our Entry level qualification development both by Ofsted and DfE good practice guidance and by practical suggestions from providers. We have designed our suite of qualifications to:

- Allow learner needs, interests and aspirations to determine the curriculum, while offering you a straightforward means to evidence achievement.
- Encourage experiential and exploratory learning and learner-led activity.
- Allow you to spend time on developing and consolidating skills and offering opportunities to transfer skills
- Support you in structuring planned learning relevant to your learners – without determining the content of a learning programme.
- Support progression to a specific course or job.

We have put this guide together to help you understand our Entry level suite, so that you can make informed choices about:

- Whether or not our qualifications would be right for your learners
- Which qualifications might be most appropriate
- How best to use the qualifications to support learners to progress to the adult life outcomes they have identified.

The guide demonstrates how providers can use the different qualifications within the suite to meet different learners' needs at different stages of their learning journey.

Examples of typical progression routes and practical uses of the qualifications within the suite are also included to help providers begin to think about how they could use the flexibility and scope provided.

The Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Suite

Qualifications in the Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Suite may be relevant for any learner working within Entry level, including those, for example, who have missed out on education or have had negative experiences at school. However, the primary user group is likely to be learners with some form of learning difficulty and/or disability or Special Educational Need, including learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The qualifications have therefore been developed with the needs of these learners in mind. They include a broad range of units covering the full range of skills which are important at this level to support progression to the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes:

- Employment (and further learning)
- Independent Living
- Community Inclusion
- Health.

The skills covered by the qualifications include:

- Personal and social skills.
- Employability skills.
- Enterprise skills.
- Introductory sector-specific skills.
- Learning skills, including skills for directing own support.

Underpinning principles

The Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Suite has been developed to be consistent with the following principles:

- They support a personalised, learner-centred curriculum.
- They recognise the development of skills and knowledge needed in adult life, as relevant to the individual learner.
- They offer choice and flexibility.

- They recognise what learners can do (rather than can't).
- They recognise spiky profiles.
- They support progression to further learning, increased independence and/or employment.
- They provide a route into qualifications at higher levels.
- They fit with 16-19/25 study programmes.
- They are suitable for learners at a wide range of ages, from 14 plus through to Adult.

Key design features

In order to meet these core principles, the qualifications include the following design features:

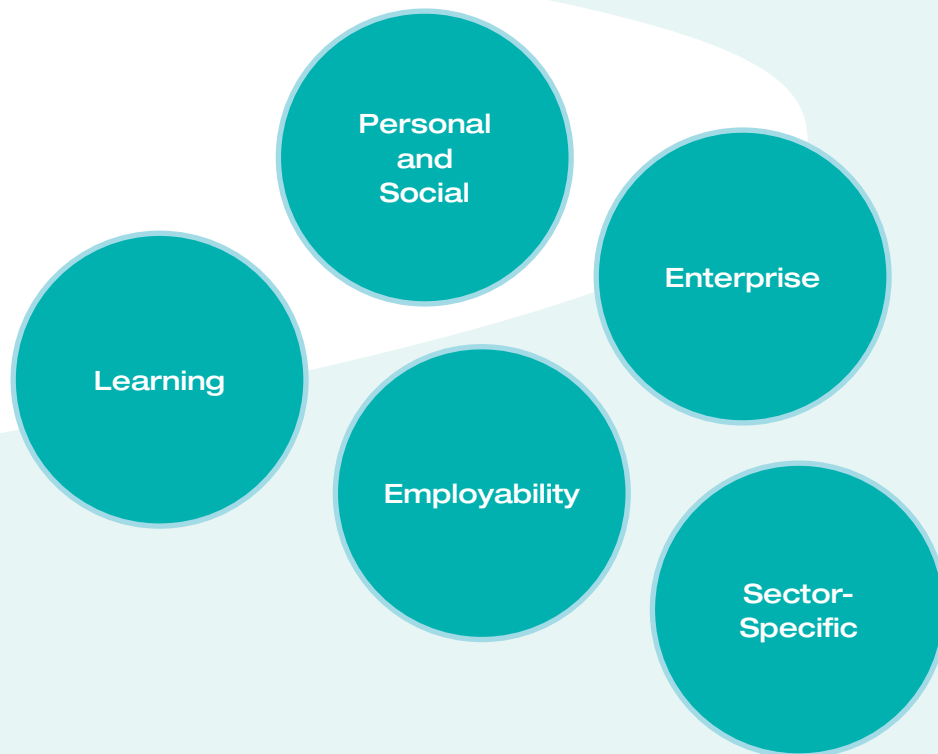
- Flexible rules of combination which support the creation of personalised learning programmes to meet individual needs.
- Wide range of optional units to ensure the breadth of content required to meet diverse learner needs.
- Access to multiple levels within a single qualification, to stretch or support learners.
- Learning outcomes and assessment criteria which are not overly detailed and evidence requirements which are not prescriptive, to allow for creative teaching and learning approaches and learner-led activity.
- Assessment through a portfolio of evidence in which naturally-occurring evidence can be presented, without introducing unnecessary barriers to demonstrating skills and/or knowledge.
- Inclusion of those skills and aspects of knowledge that are considered most significant in achieving a fulfilling adult life.
- Where relevant, inclusion of units which appear in other qualifications. For example the Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Suite, include units from qualifications such as 'Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills' and the vocational Suite of Skills qualifications.

How the suite works

The Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Suite covers the main skill areas illustrated below, and includes the following qualification titles:

- Personal and Social Skills
- Preparation for Employment
- Employability Skills
- Enterprise
- Directing Own Support/Making Support Work for You
- Skills for Active Learners
- Skills for Independent Living

The Entry level qualifications are built up from a bank of skills units at Entry 1 to Entry 3; and at Level 1 in the Skills for Active Learners qualifications. Each qualification focuses on a particular skill area or contains a different combination of skill areas. Some units appear in more than one qualification.



Skill areas covered by the qualifications

Preparation for Employment	Employability Sector-specific (Entry 3 units only) Personal and social (small range supporting employability, e.g. independent travel)
Employability Skills	Employability (plus Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills)
Personal Progress	Personal and social Employability (small range) Learning (small range) Basic communication and number
Personal and Social Skills	Personal and social
Skills for Active Learners	Learning
Making support work for you/Directing support effectively	Learning skills (sub-set related to using support)
Enterprise	Enterprise Employability
Skills for Independent Living	Personal and social Employability Learning

The relationship between the different qualifications within the suite

Although all of the qualifications within the suite are suitable for Entry Level learners, each has a different focus and will therefore be relevant at a different stage of a learner's progression pathway or fit better with one type of learning programme than with another. There is considerable overlap in terms of units between some of the different qualification titles and it is therefore important to understand the similarities and differences between the qualifications when making choices about which to use with a particular group of learners. Some of the qualifications will offer lateral progression from one title to another but because of the overlap in units, it will not simply be a case of completing one qualification and then moving on to the next.

The table below shows how the suite works, with examples of titles available at each level and indications of the lateral and vertical progression routes available to learners. For most titles, there are different sizes of qualification, for example an award, a certificate and an extended certificate available at each Entry sub-level. At the back of this guide, there is an at-a-glance overview of the full set of Entry Level qualifications offered by Gateway Qualifications, including information on levels, credit values, skills covered and key target groups.

Level 1	Employability Skills, Suite of Skills, Skills for Active Learners, Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills, Exploring Enterprise, Managing own Support...				
	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑				
Entry Level 3	Skills for Independent Living				
	Personal and Social Skills	Preparation for Employment	Skills for Active Learners	Enterprise	Directing own Support
		Employability Skills	Personal Learning and Thinking Skills		
	Suite of Skills				
Entry Level 2	Skills for Independent Living				
	Personal and Social Skills	Preparation for Employment	Skills for Active Learners	Enterprise	Directing own Support
Entry Level 1	Skills for Independent Living				
	Personal Progress	Preparation for Employment	Skills for Active Learners	Enterprise	Making Support Work for You



Key differences between similar-sounding titles

The Gateway Qualifications suite of Entry Level qualifications includes a number of qualifications with similar-sounding titles. This is a necessary consequence of providing the appropriate range of flexibility that is required when working with learners at Entry Level.

For example, the suite includes qualifications entitled **Preparation for Employment** and **Employability Skills** at Entry 3, with many of the same units appearing in both qualifications. However, **Preparation for Employment**

contains some Entry 3 sector-specific units to allow learners to explore possible career pathways; it also permits learners to achieve some of their units for the Certificates at Entry 2 or Entry 1. **Employability Skills**, however, has been designed as part of a different suite which extends from Entry 3 to Level 2. It contains only generic skills and does not permit achievement below the level; but it does allow for some units for the Certificate to be achieved at Level 1 or Level 2, for learners for whom that is desirable.

Preparation for Employment (Entry 3)

Shares many units with Employability Skills

Contains some Entry 3 sector-specific units

Permits some achievement at Entry 1 and 2

Allows achievement only at Entry Level

Employability Skills (Entry 3)

Shares many units with Preparation for Employment

Contains only generic employability units

Does not permit achievement below the level

Allows some achievement at Level 1 or 2

Personal and Social Skills qualifications cover those skills that learners will need for personal growth, to take up their place within their community, to enjoy an active social life and to take care of themselves. **Skills for Independent Living** qualifications

contain all those skills which learners may need to lead lives that are as independent as possible, including personal and social skills, but also employability and learning skills, to be combined in the way most appropriate to the learner's aspirations for adult life.

Progression

The following diagrams outline typical progression routes through the Entry Level Suite.

Simple vertical progression



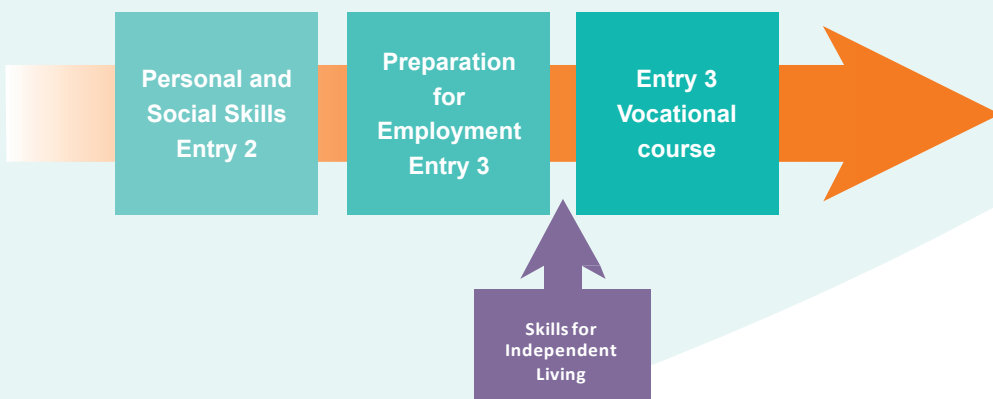
Simple lateral progression



Lateral progression reflecting change of focus as learner moves closer to adult life



Progression reflecting changing focus and increase in skill level



In the example above, a provider might also decide to combine credits previously gained through the first two qualifications with further learning relating to personal and social or employability skills or new learning skills units to enable the learner to achieve an Extended Certificate or Diploma in Independent Living Skills.

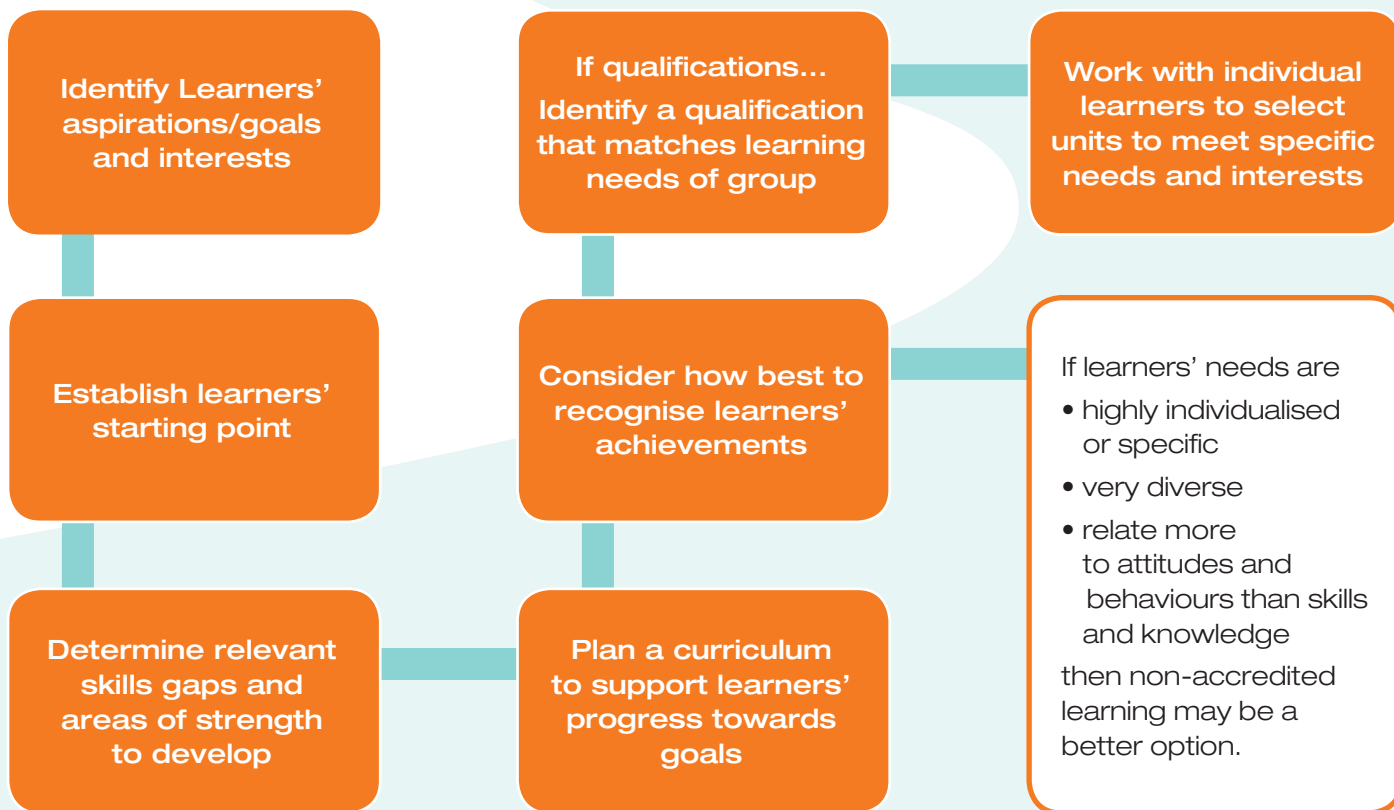
Choosing suitable qualifications

When deciding which qualification is right for their learners, providers should consider each of the following:

- Programme focus
- Planned progression routes/desired outcomes
- Learners' skills needs
- Relevant prior learning and achievement
- Level(s) at which they are learning
- Length of programme
- Proportion of programme to be accredited
- Delivery model
- Age of the learners.

The following process map can be helpful in ensuring that you fit the qualification to the learners rather than the other way round.

A process for selecting external accreditation for learners



Suggested best fits by programme focus

Programme Focus	Qualification Title
Personal growth and autonomy	Personal and Social Skills
Employability	Preparation for Employment Employability Skills (E3 only)
Combined personal development and employability	Skills for Independent Living
Enterprise	Enterprise Skills
Programmes where content provides context for development of learning skills	Skills for Active Learners Directing Own Support

Examples of the qualifications in use

The following examples demonstrate how these qualifications can be used in practice; they are not exhaustive and providers will undoubtedly be able to think of many more relevant to their own learners and settings.

Supported internship programme for 18-24 year olds

A one year programme in which the majority of learning takes place in the workplace, with one day a week in college focused on generic employability skills.

Suitable qualifications might include: E1, E2 and E3 Award in Preparation for Employment (plus relevant Entry level Awards in different aspects of English and Maths).

Get Set for Work course for 16-19 year olds

A two year programme in which learners first acquire generic employability skills before undertaking a range of enterprise activities in which they apply the employability skills they have learned and develop their confidence through dealing with customers in a variety of different situations.

Suitable qualifications might include: E2/E3 Certificate in Preparation for Employment and E2/E3 Certificate in Enterprise.

Pottery class for adult learners with mental health difficulties

A six month part-time course for adults with mental health difficulties, where the aim is to re-build confidence, to focus learners on their future, and encourage further learning.

Suitable qualifications might include: E3 or Level 1 Award/ Certificate in Skills for Active Learners.

Personal pathways for learners aged 16-24

A programme of between one and three years designed to help learners with more complex learning difficulties to develop the personal and social skills they need to increase their independence and make the most of the communities in which they live.

Suitable qualifications might include: E2 Award or Certificate in Personal and Social Skills.

Be in charge

A short local authority-sponsored course for adults with learning disabilities to help them develop greater agency in determining their own support needs and directing their own support.

Suitable qualifications might include: E1 Making Support Work for You, E2/E3 Directing Own Support.

The Suite of Entry Level Qualifications in summary

Title	Skill areas	Levels	Sizes and credit values	Eligibility by age	Notes
Personal Progress	Personal and social Employability (small range) Learning (small range) Basic communication and number	Entry 1	Award 8 Certificate 14 Diploma 37	14+	All units assessed using E1 achievement continuum*
Personal and Social Skills	Personal and social	Entry 2 Entry 3	Award 6 Certificate 13 Extended Certificate 26 Diploma 37	14+	
Employability Skills	Employability Personal Learning and Thinking	Entry 3	Award 6 Certificate 13	14+	Levels 1 and 2 also available
Preparation for employment	Employability Sector-specific (E3 units only) Personal and social (small range supporting employability, e.g. independent travel)	Entry 1 Entry 2 Entry 3	Award 6 Certificate 13 Extended Certificate 26	14+	Some E1 units must be assessed using E1 achievement continuum*
Enterprise	Enterprise Employability (E1 only)	Entry 1 Entry 2 Entry 3	Award 6 Certificate 13 Extended Certificate 26 (E2 and E3)	14+	
Skills for Active Learners	Learning	Entry 1 Entry 2 Entry 3	Award 6 Certificate 15	16+	E1 units must be assessed using E1 achievement continuum.*
Directing own Support/ Making Support Work for You	Learning (sub-set related to using support effectively)	Entry 1 Entry 2 Entry 3	Award 4 at E1 5	16+	L1 also available. E1 units must be assessed using E1 achievement continuum*.
Skills for Independent Living	Personal and social Employability Learning	Entry 1 Entry 2 Entry 3	Certificate 13 Extended Certificate 26 Diploma 37	14+	L1 also available. Some E1 units must be assessed using E1 achievement continuum*.

*Where use of the E1 achievement continuum is required in the assessment process, this indicates that some E1 units within the qualification are 'bottomless' and allow achievement to be recognised at any stage from basic awareness and stimulus response through to the top end of Entry 1, known as 'the application stage' which is consistent with the level of demand for E1 adult basic skills or functional skills, for example. Where E1 units do not require use of the E1 achievement continuum, the unit can only report achievement at the application stage (i.e. the top end of Entry 1). For more information about use of the E1 achievement continuum, please contact Gateway Qualifications.



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