ST0949 Level 4 Application Support Lead Assessment Plan

Introduction

This Apprenticeship Assessment Plan (AAP) sets out the requirements for the assessment of the Level 4 Application Support Lead apprenticeship. It should be read in conjunction with the General Requirements for Apprenticeship Assessment. Where there is conflict between this AAP and the General Requirements, this AAP takes precedence. Assessment organisations must also comply with the relevant regulatory framework for apprenticeship assessment.

It is important that the assessment of apprentices is proportionate, valid, and provides reliable evidence of an apprentice's attainment of the relevant knowledge and skills. As such, assessment organisations must design assessments to ensure:

- employers have confidence that the apprentice has reached the expected performance standard
- apprentices are sufficiently secure in their knowledge and skills, so that they could demonstrate their competence in different contexts (for example, a different workplace)

Assessment Outcomes

The assessment outcomes group and summarise the knowledge and skills that must be demonstrated in assessments. All assessment outcomes must be assessed.

Knowledge and skills statements in **bold** are mandatory and must be assessed in every version of the assessment that is made available.

Assessment Outcome	Mapping
AO1. Legal, Ethical & Sustainability Compliance Demonstrate accurate application of legal, ethical, and sustainability frameworks when supporting applications and handling data.	K1, K2, **K8,** K20, **S10**
AO2. Requirements & Stakeholder Communication Translate customer/user needs into actionable support requirements and communicate clearly with diverse stakeholders.	K5, K18, S4*, S5*, S12*, **S13***

Assessment Outcome	Mapping
AO3. Information Security & Secure Data Management Protect organisational information assets and manage data securely across support activities.	K3, **K16***, **S1***
AO4. Data Analysis, Modelling & Visualisation Collect, interpret, blend, and present data to support decisions and continuous improvement in application support.	K4*, K6*, **S3, S7***
AO5. Testing, Quality Assurance & Defect/Release/Transition Ensure application quality through testing, defect management, change/release control, and safe transition into live support.	**K10**, **K13**, K14*, K15, K17*, **S8, S9*,** S11*
AO6. Service Lifecycle, Collaboration, Accessibility & Continuous Improvement Apply service, project, and lifecycle methods; collaborate effectively; embed usability/accessibility; and use prompt engineering to research and improve support.	K7*, **K9**, K11, K12, **K19***, **S2*,** S6, S14*, S15

(*) Knowledge and skills statements which offer opportunities to develop functional English and maths are identified with an asterisk.

Assessment requirements

Assessment organisations must set apprenticeship assessments. Assessment organisations should consider how technology and digital tools can support innovation and efficiency.

Assessment organisations must design apprenticeship assessments to include a **Professional discussion.**

Additional assessment(s) must be selected from the following list of methods to ensure the assessment outcomes are met in full:

- **Portfolio**
- **Project**
- **Presentation**
- **Simulated task**
- **Observation**

- **Question and answer session**

Apprentices may be assessed at any appropriate point during their apprenticeship programme.

Assessments may be designed to allow a centre or training provider to mark assessments. The Assessment organisation is responsible for ensuring all assessments are sufficiently reliable and valid, and for the accuracy of any centre or training provider marking.

Assessment requirements should be as flexible as possible, allowing for multiple assessment design options where appropriate. They should focus on key skills or tasks that must be performed and provide a narrative or rationale that explains the intended outcome. They should be compatible with the DfE assessment principles, the general requirements, Ofqual regulations etc.

Additional requirements should relate to assessment outcomes, rather than K&S statements, wherever possible.

Individual K&S statements should not generally be mapped to the required assessment method.

Performance descriptors

Performance descriptors describe the level of performance required to achieve a pass or distinction grade. Assessment organisations must design assessments that align with these descriptions.

Performance Category	Pass	Distinction
Applied Knowledge	Applies operational knowledge of application support to triage incidents, reproduce defects, select test methods (manual/automated), and blend data sources (logs, ticket data, telemetry) to support decisions. Demonstrates sound understanding of ITIL service lifecycle, project controls, accessibility/usability expectations, and prompt engineering for reliable research when resolving support requests. Choices are consistent, and lead	Applies knowledge with insight and foresight to anticipate failure modes and compliance impacts; optimises testing strategies for risk reduction and user adoption; selects the most effective data types and blending techniques to illuminate patterns; and shapes service and project plans for smoother transitions into live. Solutions

	to safe, effective outcomes across BAU scenarios.	frequently enhance processes (e.g., standardising RCA templates, refining acceptance criteria) and elevate quality outcomes.
Applied Skills	Executes core support tasks competently: runs test suites and verification checks; performs defect logging and root cause analysis; follows change/release plans; configures data/access securely (Privacy by Design); creates dashboards/reports for stakeholders; and uses collaborative platforms to deliver user guides and training. Methods are aligned to the context, outputs that meet organisational expectations (SLAs, quality gates).	Adapts methods with operational fluency, improving efficiency and service value automates repeatable checks/scripts; tailors test coverage to risk and lifecycle stage; proactively hardens security through targeted vulnerability checks; designs accessible user journeys and training that increase adoption; and optimises collaboration workflows/tools to reduce MTTR. Outputs are both effective and optimised for quality and throughput.
	Consistently applies GDPR/DPA, Copyright/Computer Misuse, organisational information security (CIA) controls, environmental/sustainability policies, and testing/security procedures. Follows ITIL-aligned incident/change/release workflows, produces required documentation (test evidence, change records, go-live checklists), and adapts to changing circumstances while maintaining audit-ready compliance.	Interprets regulations and procedures with judgement, identifying implications across complex scenarios (e.g., AI assisted support, cross system data flows). Advises on Privacy by Design decisions; pre-empts audit findings with stronger evidence trails; proposes pragmatic improvements to change/release

		controls and sustainability practices; and calibrates security/testing rigor to threat landscape and business risk.
Communication and Collaboration	Communicates clearly with users, suppliers, and colleagues; uses both technical and non-technical language to bridge stakeholders; practices active listening; and delivers coaching/training supported by accurate, accessible KB articles/runbooks. Collaboration is timely and responsive, sustaining a positive service culture and smooth handoffs with Dev/Test/Ops.	Tailors' communication to diverse audiences and leads collaboration facilitates swarm/bridge calls during major incidents; aligns users, suppliers, and technical teams on scope, risks, and acceptance criteria; designs training with accessibility by default; and curates KB/runbooks that reduce rework and handoff friction. Influence demonstrably improves stakeholder confidence and service outcomes.
Information Use and Decision Making	Analyses and interprets logs, monitoring data, and ticket histories; combines data sources to produce credible visualisations (tables/dashboards/infographics); and makes informed decisions that reflect domain requirements, user experience needs, and business constraints. Uses prompt engineering to locate reliable information and validates sources before action.	Evaluates information from multiple sources (monitoring, user feedback, test evidence, industry guidance) to justify decisions with transparent trade-offs. Uses prompt engineering to triangulate reliable data, identifies leading indicators for defects, drives RCA quality, sets meaningful KPIs (e.g., defect escape rate, MTTR, adoption

		metrics) and refines decision frameworks for continuous improvement.
Responsibility and Autonomy	Manages own queue to SLA, escalates, and completes end-to-end tasks within defined parameters (e.g., test execution, defect lifecycle, change windows, release readiness checks). Maintains documentation, flags risks, and coordinates tasks with others when needed, demonstrating consistent, safe autonomy.	Takes end-to-end ownership, coordinating others and making risk-based calls within authority. Leads release readiness and production transitions; steers incident/problem management to resolution; maintains RAID logs; mentors peers; and proactively removes bottlenecks. Demonstrates mature autonomy—balancing service stability, user satisfaction, and organisational priorities—while delivering measurable added value.

Professional recognition

This apprenticeship aligns with the professional body recognition detailed in the occupational standard.

Please contact the relevant professional body for further information.