

ST1409 Level 7 Advanced Digital Forensic Professional Assessment Plan

Introduction

This Apprenticeship Assessment Plan (AAP) sets out the requirements for the assessment of the Level 7 Advanced Digital Forensic Professional 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: Digital Forensic Strategy, Legal Compliance, and Ethical Practice Applies legislation, regulatory guidance, and ethical principles to develop and implement digital forensic strategies that support complex investigations, safeguard victims and vulnerable persons, manage investigative risk, and ensure impartial, legally defensible evidential decision-making.	K1*, K2, K3, K8, K19*, K26, K30, K31 S1, S2*, S4, S12

Assessment Outcome	Mapping
AO2: Digital Evidence Acquisition, Preservation, and Recovery Plans and conducts advanced acquisition, preservation, and recovery of digital evidence from diverse devices and environments, including encrypted, damaged, or compromised media, using specialist techniques to maintain evidential continuity and integrity.	K7, K20*, K22, K24*, K25, K27* S10
AO3: Digital Data Analysis and Evidential Interpretation Processes, interrogates, and interprets complex digital data and artefacts across systems, networks, and applications to identify evidential value, evidential anomalies, and investigative insight, drawing defensible conclusions that recognise technical limitations and bias.	K12, K16, K17, K18*, K21, K39 S8, S9, S13
AO4: Specialist and Emerging Digital Forensic Techniques Applies specialist, bespoke, and emerging digital forensic techniques, including advanced multimedia analysis, scripting, reverse engineering, and artificial intelligence, to extend forensic capability and address investigative challenges beyond standard tool functionality.	K11, K13, K14*, K15, K23, K28, K29, K40 S7, S11*, S18, S19
AO5: Quality Standards, Validation, and Innovation Assurance Validates, accredits, and embeds novel digital forensic techniques in line with scientific principles, quality standards, and regulatory codes of practice, managing technical, information security, and operational risks to ensure sustainable forensic delivery.	K5, K6, K32, K33*, K34, K35 S3, S14*, S15
AO6: Leadership, Capability Development, and Wellbeing Leads and supports digital forensic teams through mentoring, workload coordination, and professional development, promoting independent judgement, practitioner wellbeing, equity, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability in high-risk forensic environments.	K4*, K9, K10*, K37, K38 S5, S6, S17

Assessment Outcome	Mapping
AO7: Research, Collaboration, and Future Digital Forensics Capability Conducts applied research, evaluates emerging technologies and threats, and collaborates across disciplines and organisations to advance digital forensic science, inform national capability, and influence future investigative and evidential practice.	K32, K33, K34 , K35, K36 S14, S15 , S16

(*) 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 at least one **project**.

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

- **Portfolio**
- **Questions & Answers**
- **Professional Discussion**
- **Project**
- **Presentation**
- **Written assessment**
- **Simulated task**

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.

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	Reformulates and applies advanced digital forensic knowledge to generate effective solutions in highly complex interdependent contexts, demonstrating sound judgement and alignment with strategic, legal, and ethical expectations across forensic decision making.	Demonstrates insightful application of advanced digital forensic knowledge, reformulating it to create new or enhanced approaches in highly complex interdependent contexts, potentially leading to transformative outcomes in evidential strategy, capability, or professional practice.
Applied Skills	Uses specialised cognitive and practical skills to address highly complex problems, designing or applying research or development activities to inform complex interdependent courses of action or enable change within digital forensic practice.	Selects, designs and executes research or strategic initiatives that demonstrate impact and inform or deliver meaningful change, applying specialist digital forensic methodologies with flexibility and fluency across evolving technical and investigative contexts.
Regulatory and Procedural Awareness	Leads the interpretation and application of regulatory and procedural frameworks in complex interdependent environments, ensuring digital forensic practice remains aligned with strategic	Shapes and influences regulatory and procedural strategy, demonstrating foresight, ethical judgement, and the ability to lead through ambiguity or change in highly complex interdependent

	objectives, legal defensibility, and ethical standards.	forensic and investigative environments.
Communication and Collaboration	Leads communication and collaboration with authority and professionalism in complex stakeholder environments, ensuring clarity, alignment, and responsiveness in support of strategic digital forensic objectives.	Designs and leads communication approaches that shape stakeholder engagement and drive alignment, influencing understanding and commitment in support of strategic digital forensic objectives across complex interdependent environments.
Information Use and Decision Making	Critically analyses and evaluates complex digital forensic information, concepts and theories, demonstrating clear understanding of wider professional and investigative contexts, and adapting judgement and conclusions where necessary.	Synthesises and critically evaluates information, theories and developments, producing original or redefined conceptions with strong justification and contextual awareness that inform advanced digital forensic decision making.
Responsibility and Autonomy	Takes responsibility for planning and executing substantial changes or developments, initiating and leading complex digital forensic processes with clear accountability for own and others' work and resources, exercising autonomy within a significant area of practice.	Leads with strategic clarity, developing and sustaining substantial initiatives that deliver measurable improvement or innovation. Exercises high-level judgement and autonomy, managing complex responsibilities with assurance that contributes to wider organisational or sectoral advancement.

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