Qualification Specification

Accelerate People L3 EPA for IT Solutions Technician ST0505/V1.1

QAN 610/5006/4

Version History		
Version	**Date Amended**	**Changes Made**
1	December 2024	Document created.
2.0	February 2025	Edited gateway requirements to accommodate change in policy for English and Maths requirements.

Contents

Qualification Objective

The level 3 IT Solutions Technician apprenticeship is one of a suite of apprenticeships that have been designed by industry employers to meet a range of job roles across different industries and sizes of business.

Accelerate People are an end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) for apprenticeship standards that are defined by the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IfATE). The apprenticeship standard and assessment plan can be found on the IfATE website.

As part of this apprenticeship, all apprentices are required to complete an independent end-point assessment (EPA). The purpose of the EPA is to independently assess that any apprentice on this standard is competent in a relevant job role and can evidence meeting all the assessment criteria relating to the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSB) outcomes.

The Level 3 IT Solutions Technician Apprenticeship

Role Profile

Develop, implement, and maintain IT solutions. A solution is a means of solving a problem or a means of improving any existing functionality to gain demonstrable business efficiencies. For the IT Solutions Technician Standard, Solutions will be technical and involve consideration of multiple components and involve interdependencies with other systems. A solution would also seek to determine root cause issues rather than just address symptoms and viable alternatives would always be considered. An understanding of existing infrastructure and the potential impact that solutions can have, is key to this Standard. Appropriate Solutions could involve software, hardware, or a combination to address particular challenges.

This occupation is found in organisations, large and small, in all sectors including public, private, and voluntary organisations. Organisations are increasingly implementing technology to support all functions of business requiring planning and investigation, methodical implementation, and ongoing maintenance to deliver solutions that are suitable, effective and provide value for money.

The broad purpose of an IT Solutions Technician is to develop, implement, and maintain IT solutions. They work as part of a multi-disciplinary team and are required to work across the whole solutions lifecycle including requirements gathering, solutions development, testing, implementation, and ongoing support. The specific tasks undertaken vary depending on what needs to be achieved by the team at any particular time. Some tasks may be very technical, others may be more analytical, business or user focused.

Key to this role will be the need to understand the stakeholders and business needs within the organisation and be confident translating these into designs and solutions. The IT Solutions Technician will apply a structured methodology or framework to gather and analyse requirements. They will liaise with stakeholders and complete in-depth research to support their designs; presenting these to relevant parties in the business and advising how the solution will meet objectives. They will create concept and logical designs of the solutions, evidencing how the objectives can be met.

An IT Solutions Technician will be involved in the development, testing and implementation of designed solutions, including assisting in the management of solutions or projects. As such, they will have a broad understanding of technology areas and the needs of the organisation. This may involve working with other technicians to simplify complex processes and communicating with non-solution stakeholders on the reasons and justification of design choices. IT Solutions Technicians may develop prototype solutions to apply structured testing methodologies. They work within a change management processes during the implementation and are a key member of the problem team. Ongoing maintenance and support will be provided to users and the wider business, ensuring that the solution continues to function as expected and meet business needs.

Typical Job Titles:

Junior applications support technician, junior database technician, junior devops engineer, junior IT support technician, junior IT systems support.

Duties:

This apprenticeship standard includes duties to support alignment between the job role and the apprenticeship standard. Listed below are the duties that all apprentices must

demonstrate in their apprenticeship. These duties are not assessed or graded as part of the EPA.

Duty 1: Works within a defined role within a solutions development lifecycle.

Duty 2: Apply prioritisation methodologies to manage workload and tasks in order to support timely completion of projects and solutions whilst working within a defined and structured approach.

Duty 3: Apply technical IT knowledge and skills across solution architecture.

Duty 4: Investigate existing systems and apply technical research to support the design of new solutions in order to meet project and business requirements.

Duty 5: Identify a variety of potential solutions to meet requirements, considering economic impacts.

Duty 6: Demonstrate technical contribution to a chosen solution.

Duty 7: Safely implement tested solutions whilst considering sustainability factors.

Duty 8: Communicate with stakeholders throughout the solution process, managing expectations whilst providing an excellent and inclusive service.

Duty 9: Test and manage issues that arise across any stages of the Solutions Life Cycle.

Duty 10: Create, and or maintain, professional documentation to ensure a clear audit trail and progression of issues.

Duty 11: Create test plans and apply a range of testing tools that allow a solution to be thoroughly tested to ensure it is working as expected.

Duty 12: Apply security measures and securely manage data throughout the solution lifecycle, in line with legislation and the organisation's policies and requirements.

Duty 13: Practice guided continuous self-learning to keep up to date with technological developments to enhance relevant skills and take responsibility for own professional development.

Entry Requirements

Qualifications

Apprentices aged 16-18 on their apprenticeship start date, without level 2 English and maths, will need to achieve this level prior to taking the EPA. For those with an

education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification is an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

Apprentices aged 19+ on their apprenticeship start date, without level 2 English and maths, are exempt from achieving this prior to taking their EPA; this exemption is by prior agreement between the apprentice and employer.

Experience

There are no pre-requisite knowledge, skills or understanding requirements defined for entry onto this qualification.

EPA Requirements

To successfully complete the level 3 IT Solutions Technician apprenticeship apprentices must achieve at least a pass in both EPA assessment methods. This EPA consists of two discrete assessment methods which have the following grades awarded.

Assessment Method 1 (AM1): Project with presentation, and questioning.

- Fail.
- Pass.
- Distinction.

Assessment Method 2 (AM2): Professional discussion underpinned by portfolio.

- Fail.
- Pass.
- Distinction.

Failed assessment methods must be re-sat or re-taken within a 6-month period from the EPA outcome notification, otherwise the entire EPA will need to be re-sat or re-taken in full.

EPA Gateway

For this apprenticeship all apprentices must spend a minimum of 12 months on programme, of which a minimum of 20% must be spent undertaking off-the-job training, before being eligible to undertake the EPA.

Before starting the EPA, an apprentice must meet the following gateway requirements:

- The apprentice's employer must confirm that they think their apprentice is working at or above the occupational standard. The apprentice will then enter the gateway. The employer may take advice from the apprentice's training provider(s), but the employer must make the decision.
- Apprentices must have achieved English and Maths qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.
- For the professional discussion underpinned by portfolio (AM2), the apprentice must submit their portfolio.

Apprentices may request additional time if they require a reasonable adjustment. Information on how and when to apply is contained within the reasonable adjustments policy.

Once the apprentice is ready to enter gateway the following must be submitted to progress:

- Gateway form:
  - o Confirming any dates the apprentice is unavailable during the EPA period.
  - o Advising Accelerate People if the apprentice requires any reasonable adjustments to be made during the EPA.
  - o Confirmation signatures that the apprentice is ready for the EPA.
- Evidence of:
  - o Maths and English qualifications at Level 2 or above (or acceptable equivalent as specified in the entry requirements section), **or**
  - o Confirmation that the apprentice is exempt from achieving English and Maths qualifications.
- The apprentice's completed electronic portfolio (for AM2).

The gateway form along with all documentation must be uploaded before the EPA can commence. Failure to upload any of the required documentation may delay the EPA start date.

Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

There are no mandatory vendor qualifications or knowledge modules for this apprenticeship. Apprentices are expected to be able to demonstrate competence against the assessment criteria specified within the assessment plan. The assessment criteria are based on the following KSBs, which apprentices are expected to be competent in before entering gateway.

Knowledge

K1: The stages within a solutions lifecycle.

K2: Stakeholder management techniques and approaches.

K3: Project management approaches and methodologies.

K4: Principles of solution architecture.

K5: Creative and critical thinking principles to aid in solutions suggestions.

K6: The main components within an IT solution including how hardware and or software components may work together.

K7: The main components of a computer system and their purpose.

K8: The purpose of an Operating System OS.

K9: Concepts of cloud, cloud services and cloud storage, including cloud enablement and application e.g. SaaS, PaaS, IaaS.

K10: Different types of network devices and components.

K11: The requirements of systems hosting and access.

K12: Relative merits of different types of configurations for example default and custom.

K13: The data lifecycle including creation, processing and storage, usage archiving and destruction.

K14: Emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence and machine learning, the ethical usage of AI tooling and the potential implication for digital activities and solutions.

K15: Principles of the types of testing, such as functional and non-functional testing, user testing and performance testing, including where testing can be automated where possible.

K16: Significance of test plans.

K17: Principles and importance of change management for example version control.

K18: Organisation and industry legislation, policies and standards.

K19: Principles of cyber security and the implication on IT solutions.

K20: Fundamentals and application of health and safety legislation and policies.

K21: How their work contributes to Carbon emissions and what steps can be taken to reduce emissions.

K22: Communication techniques: verbal and written.

K23: Principles of cultural awareness and how diversity impacts on solutions.

Skills

S1: Work at any stage of the solution lifecycle.

S2: Interpret client requirements.

S3: Prioritise tasks to work within agreed project plans.

S4: Ensure resources are used efficiently and responsibly.

S5: Design solutions to meet client and business requirements.

S6: Identify technical solutions using creative and critical thinking.

S7: Install hardware or software, either physically or virtually.

S8: Search and use different types of data or information sources.

S9: Test and evaluate performance, functionality, and usability of solutions to ensure compliance with customer and project requirements.

S10: Deploy and implement solutions, supporting change management practices.

S11: Create and maintain documentation in accordance with best practice and organisational requirements.

S12: Support multiple contemporary or legacy solutions to required levels of service.

S13: Apply organisational policies and legislation in relation to security requirements, privacy, and confidentiality.

S14: Communicate using a variety of tools and approaches, adapting language for technical and non-technical stakeholders.

S15: Apply continuous professional development CPD to support their own learning, business needs and technical developments.

Behaviours

B1: Work independently, taking responsibility and initiative as necessary.

B2: Demonstrate standard business courtesies and professional ethics.

B3: Demonstrate a productive and organised approach to their work.

B4: Work with stakeholders whilst contributing to a supportive and inclusive workplace.

B5: Take an environmentally sustainable mindset towards solution design and implementation activities ensuring climate change and the move to net carbon zero is a consideration.

B6: Demonstrate due diligence in all working practices.

Assessment

AM1: Project with Presentation, and Questioning

A project involves the apprentice completing a significant and defined piece of work that has a real business application and benefit. The project must meet the needs of the employer's business and be relevant to the apprentice's occupation and apprenticeship.

This assessment method has two components:

- An outcome component – project with report.
- A presentation with questions and answers.

Together, these components give the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the assessment criteria and KSBs mapped to this assessment method. They are assessed by an independent assessor.

The employer should ensure the apprentice has sufficient time and the necessary resources, within this period, to plan and undertake the work associated with the work-based project.

The project report must be based on pre-gateway real work-based project activities carried out in the employer's workplace as part of the apprentice's day-to-day activities. The apprentice must complete the project report based on their involvement in technical solutions across the solution delivery lifecycle.

Component One: Project Report

The report can cover up to two projects, either equally weighted or any combination of total word count. The project report must have a word count of 2,000 words. A tolerance of 10% above or below is allowed. Appendices, references and diagrams are not included in this total. The apprentice must produce and include a mapping in an appendix, showing how the report evidences the KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

To ensure the project report is robust and sufficiently covers the KSBs, it must include:

A written report. The report must cover the following themes:

- Plan.
- Design.
- Build.
- Test.
- Deploy.
- Maintain.

It is recommended that the report follows the S.T.A.R.R. format.

- Situation.
- Task.
- Action.
- Result.
- Reflection.

The apprentice must complete and submit the work-based project report and presentation to the EPAO by the end of week four of the EPA period.

Component Two: Presentation with Questions and Answers

The presentation with questions will be structured to give the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method to the highest available grade.

The apprentice must prepare and deliver a presentation to an independent assessor. After the presentation, the independent assessor will ask the apprentice questions about their project report and presentation.

The overall presentation is typically 20 minutes, this can be one presentation of 20 minutes or two separate presentations totalling 20 minutes overall.

The presentation will focus and expand upon the project report and will allow the apprentice to cover the following:

- An overview of the project.
- The project scope (including key performance indicators).
- Summary of actions undertaken by the apprentice.
- Any project outcomes and how these were achieved.
- Lessons learned and reflections.

The apprentice must prepare and submit any presentation materials to the EPAO at the same time as the project report by the end of week four of the EPA period.

Key points:

- Presentation with questions will take place online via video conferencing.
- Apprentices will need access to the internet and a working webcam.
- The apprentice must have access to a quiet room and, unless reasonable adjustments have been requested for additional support, be alone in the room.
- Apprentices must have photographic identification (ID) to verify their identity, if they do not produce any ID then the presentation with questions will be cancelled.
- Apprentices are required to outline details of visual aids to be used and specify any equipment required for the presentation.
- The presentation with questions will last for 60 minutes, the presentation(s) will last 20 minutes, and the questioning will last for 40 minutes. The independent assessor can increase the time of the presentation and questioning by up to 10%.
- A minimum of six questions will be asked based on both project report and the presentation and will be formed based on the evidence and grading requirements in the table below.

- Apprentices are allowed access to their project report and presentation throughout the questioning.
- Questions will only be based on the evidence submitted for this assessment method.
- Apprentices will have two weeks' notice of the presentation with questions date.

AM2: Professional Discussion Underpinned by Portfolio

Portfolio

Training providers must work with the employer and apprentice to select the best evidence completed during the whole of the apprenticeship. All evidence should be real work tasks, and be clear, well documented and demonstrate competency against the assessment criteria listed in the assessment plan.

Typically, portfolios will contain eight discreet high-quality tasks covering a range of different assessment criteria in each, although it is expected that there will be overlaps of assessment criteria in each task. Evidence sources may include:

- Workplace documentation and records, for example:
- Workplace policies and procedures.
- Witness statements.
- Annotated photographs.
- Video or audio extracts (these should be a maximum total duration of ten minutes; and the apprentice must be in view and identifiable).
- This is not a definitive list; other evidence sources are possible.

Where apprentices have worked on confidential or secure tasks, they should write high level statements about these tasks, but not upload any restricted information. Apprentices should be prepared to discuss further details during the professional discussion.

Any employer contributions should focus on direct observation of performance (for example witness statements) rather than opinions. The evidence provided must be valid and attributable to the apprentice; the portfolio of evidence must contain a statement from the employer and apprentice confirming this.

The portfolio should **not** include reflective accounts or any methods of self-assessment. Any employer contributions should focus on direct observation of performance (for example witness statements) rather than opinions.

Portfolios should be in an electronic format which must be submitted to Accelerate People at gateway. Paper-based portfolios will **not** be accepted. If an apprentice uploads a video clip this must be a file that can be uploaded with their portfolio. A link to a video will **not** be accepted and will not be used as part of their evidence.

Professional Discussion

The professional discussion will take place at least two weeks after the portfolio has been accepted at gateway.

- The professional discussion will take place online via video conferencing.
- Apprentices will need access to the internet and a working webcam for the entire duration.
- The apprentice must have access to a quiet room and, unless reasonable adjustments have been requested for additional support, be alone in the room.
- Apprentices must have photographic identification (ID) to verify their identity, if they do not produce any ID then the professional discussion will be cancelled.
- The professional discussion will last for 60 minutes with the independent assessor having the discretion to increase the time of the questioning by up to 10%.
- A minimum of eight questions will be asked and will be formed based on the evidence and grading requirements in the table below.
- Apprentices are allowed access to their portfolio throughout the professional discussion.

Assessment Criteria

AM1: Project with Presentation, and Questioning

Themes and KSBs	Pass Criteria	Distinction Criteria
Plan K3, S2, S3, B3	Outlines the approaches and methodologies used when	Critically evaluates the approaches and methodologies

Themes and KSBs	Pass Criteria	Distinction Criteria
	interpreting client requirements, demonstrating a productive and organised approach within agreed project plans. (K3, S2, S3, B3)	used when interpreting client requirements. (K3, S2, S3, B3)
Design K4, K5, S5, S6, B1	Explains how they work independently to design solutions that meet client and business needs whilst adhering to the principles of solution architecture. (K4, S5, B1) Describes how they identify technical solutions by using creative and critical thinking principles which aid in solutions suggestions. (K5, S6)	Critically evaluates the design solution produced and the extent to which they meet client and business needs and considered feedback from others. (K4, S5, B1)
Build K6, S7	Explains how they install hardware or software components physically or virtually within an IT solution and how the components work together. (K6, S7)	Critically analyses their choice of tools, techniques and approaches in the installation of components within IT solutions. (K6, S7)
Test K15, K16, S9	Explains how they test and evaluate performance, functionality and usability of solutions, including user testing and performance testing, as well as the significance of test plans when ensuring compliance with customer and project requirements, including where testing can be automated, whilst explaining the principles and the types of testing. (K15, K16, S9)	Critically analyses their choice of tools, techniques and approaches to testing, whilst considering the project outcomes and feedback from others. (K15, K16, S9)
Deploy K17, S10	Explains how they deploy and implement solutions and the importance of change management practices. (K17, S10)	Critically analyses the methods used for deploying the solution and the methods used to validate the success of said solution. (K17, S10)
Maintain K22, S14, B2	Outlines the communication tools, techniques and approaches used when dealing with	Critically analyses the choice of communication tools, techniques

Themes and KSBs	Pass Criteria	Distinction Criteria
	technical and non-technical stakeholders and adhering to professional ethics. (K22, S14, B2)	and approaches used within the project or projects. (K22, S14, B2)

AM2: Professional Discussion Underpinned by Portfolio

Themes and KSBs	Pass Criteria	Distinction Criteria
Lifecycle K1, S1	Explains the stages of a solutions lifecycle and the work that they have undertaken at any of these stages. (K1, S1)	Critically evaluates the impact of the work that they have undertaken at any stage of the solutions lifecycle. (K1, S1)
Legislation and Policies K18, K19, K20, S13	Explains how they have applied organisational and industry policies, legislation and standards relating to security (including privacy and confidentiality), and health and safety. (K18, K20, S13) Describes how the principles of cyber security impact on the IT solutions. (K19)	Evaluates current and evolving security threats and the impacts this has on maintaining IT solutions. (K19, S13)
Sustainability K21, S4, B5	Explains the environmental considerations they make in their work to ensure resources are used efficiently and responsibly and carbon emissions are reduced. (K21, S4, B5)	None
Continuous Professional Development K14, S15, B6	Explains the potential implications that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and ethical usage of AI tooling have on digital activities and solutions. (K14) Explains how they have shown due diligence when applying	None

Themes and KSBs	Pass Criteria	Distinction Criteria
	continuous professional development to support their own learning, the business needs and technical developments. (S15, B6)	
Core IT K7, K8, K9, K10, K11, K12, S12	Describes the main components of a computer system and their purpose. (K7) Explains the concepts of cloud services and cloud storage, including cloud enablement and application and the requirements of systems in relation to hosting and access. (K9, K11) Explains the different types of configurations and their relative merits. (K12) Explains how they support multiple solutions using their knowledge of connectivity principles. (K8, K10, S12)	Critically evaluates the success of their choice of hardware, components or software within an IT solution. (S12)
Stakeholder Engagement K2, K23, B4	Explains how they worked with stakeholders to manage approaches and contribute to a supportive and inclusive workplace. (K2, B4) Explains how diversity impacts on solutions and the principles involved in cultural awareness (K23)	Critically evaluate their approaches to stakeholder management and the impact this had on supporting an inclusive workplace. (K2, B4)
Data K13, S8, S11	Explains how they search and use different types of data or information sources during the data lifecycle. (K13, S8) Outlines how they work in accordance with best practice	None

Themes and KSBs	Pass Criteria	Distinction Criteria
	and organisational requirements when creating and maintaining documentation. (S11)	

Grading

Each assessment method is graded individually and combined to give an overall grade. Assessment criteria do not appear in more than one assessment method, therefore assessment criteria failed in one assessment method cannot then be demonstrated in the other assessment method. All EPA methods must be passed for the EPA to be passed overall.

Grades from individual assessment methods will be combined in the following way to determine the grade of the EPA as a whole:

Project with Presentation, and Questioning	Professional Discussion Underpinned by Portfolio	Overall Grading
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Merit
Distinction	Pass	Merit
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

Re-sits and Re-takes

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method will be offered the opportunity to take a re-sit or a re-take at the employer's discretion. The apprentice's employer will need to agree that either a re-sit or re-take is an appropriate course of action.

A re-sit does not require further learning, whereas a re-take does. Apprentices should have a supportive action plan to prepare for a re-sit or a re-take.

The employer and EPAO agree the timescale for a re-sit or re-take. A re-sit is typically taken within two months of the EPA outcome notification. The timescale for a re-take is dependent on how much re-training is required and is typically taken within three months of the EPA outcome notification.

If the apprentice fails the project assessment method, they must amend the project output in line with the independent assessor's feedback. The apprentice will be given six weeks to rework and submit the amended report.

Failed assessment methods must be re-sat or re-taken within a six-month period from the EPA outcome notification, otherwise the entire EPA will need to be re-sat or re-taken in full.

Re-sits and re-takes are not offered to an apprentice wishing to move from pass to a higher grade.

The retake and re-sit assessment method only is capped not the overall EPA grade.

Specimen

All specimen materials can be accessed by registered training providers from the knowledge area on ACE360.

Accelerate People

Accelerate People are an independent EPAO specialising in digital apprenticeship EPAs. If you have any questions or queries relating to this qualification specification or EPA, please contact us using the details below.

Registered training providers with Accelerate People can access further guidance material on the knowledge base on ACE360.

Contact Details

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