

Report from the chief examiner and chief moderator

**T Level Technical Qualification
in Education and Early Years (Level 3)
(603/5829/4)**

**Summer 2023 – Occupational
specialism (Assisting Teaching)**

Chief examiner and chief moderator report

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Assessment dates: **24 April – 03 May 2023**

Paper number: **P002050 and P002051 and P002052**

This report contains information in relation to the externally assessed component provided by the chief examiner and chief moderator, with an emphasis on the standard of student work within this assessment.

The report is written for providers, with the aim of highlighting how students have performed generally, as well as any areas where further development or guidance may be required to support preparation for future opportunities.

Key points

- grade boundaries
- standard of student work
- evidence creation
- responses to the external assessment tasks
- administering the external assessment

It is important to note that students should not sit this external assessment until they have received the relevant teaching of the qualification in relation to this component.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for the series are:

	Overall
Max	406
Distinction	272
Merit	216
Pass	160

Grade boundaries are the lowest mark with which a grade is achieved.

For further detail on how raw marks are scaled and the aggregation of the occupational specialism element, please refer to the qualification specification.

Standard of student work

External assessment

Students were well-prepared for assignments 1 and 3 and it was clear that providers had created and followed planned and structured courses of study which effectively reflected the requirements of the qualification specification.

In **assignment 1**, there was a template available for students to use to show how they would differentiate the class teacher's planning, and most students took advantage of this which helped them to achieve higher marks as they were more likely to include all the required information.

Although completing the lesson plan was not mandatory, providers should encourage their students to use any templates provided as they have been designed alongside the mark scheme, therefore providing a useful and appropriate framework for students.

Students were also expected to expand on their ideas by explaining their choices in the answer pages following on from the lesson plan. Most students were organised in their approach to this but those students who achieved higher marks followed the assignment brief in a more logical and structured way.

In **assignment 3**, the approach to both case studies was consistent and neither study seemed to be easier or more challenging than the other.

Student responses produced a range of achievement and in **assignment 1**, where the individual needs of each pupil were considered and addressed, the students scored higher.

Some responses lacked information about how the student could support the individual needs and preferences of the pupils and gave generic examples which could be used to support pupils in any given lesson and not necessarily the individuals in the case study. Wider aspects of the assignment proved to be a challenge to some students and opportunities to show their knowledge and understanding of these were missed.

In **assignment 3**, there was also a range of achievement. Students who achieved higher marks considered a wider range of aspects affecting the pupil's health and wellbeing as well as their learning and development. Most students recognised different ways they could support the pupils, although some students missed opportunities to explain why they would offer the support they had identified and the impact that this support could have; therefore, providers need to encourage students to fully explain their suggestions in order to achieve higher marks.

Moderated assignments

Students in the 2021 cohort have performed well in assignment 2. Students had generally taken time to plan their structured observations in detail and in collaboration with the class teacher, showing effective working practices and contributing well to the lessons in line with agreed objectives and planning. This detailed planning supported students in maximising marks achieved throughout the assessed criteria.

Throughout the cohort, students modelled high levels of professional behaviours, alongside consistently demonstrating confidence in clarifying classroom rules and reinforcing positive behaviour, showing an understanding of school and class strategies.

Where students performed less well, it was usually evident that planning had not taken place in partnership with the class teacher, and subsequently communication and collaboration were limited.

Evidence creation

Assignment 2 relies on the assessment records of the provider assessors. Assessment records are generated throughout the observation of assessment and include the observation of skills recording form and records of professional discussion. Templates have been provided for assessors to capture the structured observations. In most instances, these templates have been used. In the best examples, assessors have referenced the assessment plan created by the student and have reviewed this at the start of the observation to establish if there are any known changes to the plan that should be considered.

There were some notable differences in the quality and detail of the evidence records provided. The best examples of observation records give detailed accounts of the assessment, including specific examples of performance that will support the assessment decisions and justify the outcome. For example, rather than say: 'the student communicated well with the class teacher and contributed to the assessment process', the assessor will capture the detail observed, the language the student used, the context, and the specific contribution the student made to assessment, with examples of the responses from the class teacher.

A notable issue across the cohort was seen in the professional discussion aspect of the assessment. Students were often interrupted by others at the placement during the professional discussion which can have a significant impact on the student's thought process and flow of the discussion. All industry placements should be reminded that students are undertaking a marked assessment and that a suitable space should be provided for the professional discussion where students will not be interrupted.

Some of the best examples of professional discussion were when students led the discussion using notes only as prompts and confidently linked responses to their own practice. Assessors demonstrated that they fully understood the criteria and marking bands and asked further questions to support students to achieve higher marks. Discussions were recorded using digital recording and time stamped reference to criteria being assessed was captured on the professional discussion template.

Responses to the assignments

Assignment 1: Planning activity

Students showed a good understanding of the assignment brief and were able to complete the task to show how they could support the class teacher and enhance the pupil's learning,

Students who achieved higher marks were able to identify and explain a wide range of pedagogical strategies and use resources (often different to those mentioned in the planning although still in line with the planned lesson) effectively to address the individual needs and learning styles of the pupils. They explained their choices well and supported their answers with links to theorists. They showed a very good understanding of the curriculum and used their prepared notes well to reference their sources. Higher achieving students also recognised the importance of working in partnership with a range of other professionals (and parents) to provide suitable and appropriate interventions. They used their written explanations well to show a highly developed understanding of how to support inclusion and wellbeing by effective assessments, praise and feedback, as well as scaffolding children's learning and development.

Students who did not score as highly often missed opportunities to expand on their ideas and fully explain their choices. Most students showed a reasonable understanding of how to differentiate the planning and use strategies and resources to support the children's needs; however, their answers were not as highly developed as those students who scored higher.

Assignment 1: English, mathematics and digital skills

Students presented their answers well, showing a good use of functional skills.

Assignment 1: Overall summation

Students showed a good understanding of the task and were able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviour needed for the role of a teaching assistant. It was good to see that students were empathetic to the needs of the pupils and wanted them to do well.

Most of the responses were well-presented and relevant.

Assignment 2

Planning for the structured observations was mostly very detailed. Students largely demonstrated that they had formed effective professional relationships with colleagues and pupils, and feedback to moderators throughout the assessment window positively reinforced this.

Structured observation 1: Support the class teacher to engage pupils in planned activities promoting literacy development

In the best examples, students demonstrated how they worked highly effectively alongside the class teachers to deliver activities promoting literacy development. Students demonstrated high levels of skill in working with small groups of pupils, often to support the school's chosen phonics programme, and were often able to demonstrate how they used techniques such as scaffolding and open questioning to support learning. Students consistently demonstrated confidence in clarifying classroom rules and reinforcing positive behaviour, showing an understanding of school and class strategies.

In examples where students did not perform so well, there were some common themes noted.

S2.15 Support the development of literacy using appropriate strategies for the context. It was evident that students demonstrated understanding of literacy development limited to the age range they were working with. For higher marks, students needed to show an understanding across the national curriculum with relevant examples.

S3.26 Participate in digital safety and cyber-bullying initiatives. Generally, students were able to demonstrate how they contribute to digital safety; however, marks were lost where knowledge around cyber-bullying initiatives were not discussed.

S3.28 Ensure pupils use technology safely. Students continue to lose marks for this criterion as they are not always observed supporting pupils to use technology. Careful planning and communication with the class teacher should support the student to achieve higher marks here.

Structured observation 2: Promote effective, inclusive teaching, learning and assessment opportunities for pupils

This observation requires students to work with an individual or small group of pupils, following guidance from the class teacher to deliver targeted intervention that supports a specific need or pupils to progress.

In all cases, the best examples of this observation were seen when the student had carefully planned how they would meet the criterion in collaboration with the class teacher. Students performed less well where they were not clear on the targeted interventions/reasons for these.

S2.14 Help pupils develop ownership of their learning and education, through student-led approach.

S3.37 Help pupils to choose realistic goals that are challenging but achievable. Students found the associated criteria linked to setting SMART targets problematic – there was little evidence of how these were being formed with the pupil, and this was misunderstood by a lot of students. In the best examples of this, students have planned to incorporate some goal setting into their structured observation so it can be observed. They then further discuss other examples of this in detail within their professional discussion. The focus should be on how the student supports the pupil to set their own goals and targets. Professional discussion examples commonly lean more towards how the student and teachers set the targets and are limited in their responses.

Structured observation 3: Facilitate educational experiences to support holistic learning and wellbeing

As with structured observations 1 and 2, the quality of the planning was a key factor influencing marks achieved. The best examples were seen when students had worked in collaboration with the class teacher to provide an activity to support children's emotional wellbeing through developing their resilience and self-esteem.

S1.15 Facilitate learning outside the classroom. In many cases, students had incorporated this criterion into their planning by providing activities using outside space (for example, forest school areas). This allowed students to demonstrate their skills in providing appropriate challenge, considering the needs of all pupils, whilst looking at practical considerations and showing an awareness of health and safety. Where outdoor experiences were not observed, the professional discussion could be used to capture the students' understanding of this; however, in some cases, professional discussions did not fully explore the range within the marking bands, meaning some opportunities for higher marks were missed.

Assisting Teaching criteria featured across the 3 structured observations

S2.17 Identify and use unplanned opportunities to develop mathematical understanding as they arise. Many students achieved a lower mark for this criterion as they would discuss general ideas within the professional discussion rather than mathematical opportunities relevant to the session observed. There were too many missed opportunities within the structured observation to enhance pupils' mathematical understanding and skilfully consolidate and extend pupils' mathematical understanding in different contexts across a range of mathematical concepts.

S1.9/2.9 Contributing to the assessment process. Marks were often lower for this criteria as feedback given was generally about pupil performance only. Where higher marks were achieved, students had considered their feedback on pupil progress including sharing creative ideas to plan next steps, ensuring communication with the class teacher was highly effective.

S4.21 Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. It is problematic for students to achieve the higher mark here, as the assessed skills must be observed but they may not have the opportunity to address discriminatory behaviour. The best examples were seen where the student had planned an activity specifically indicating how it will promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Students were also able to show how they differentiated their resources and activity effectively to promote inclusive practice.

Task 2: Overall summation

It is worth noting that each structured observation is designed to be completed within an hour, including the professional discussion. Providers should support students to plan and prepare for their assessment to be completed in a timely manner.

In some cases, total marks were not calculated accurately by providers (for example, 4 marks were awarded for criterion where the maximum achievable mark was 3). Providers must ensure they have a robust system of checking marks entered, to confirm the marks are submitted accurately.

Providers and assessors were dedicated to ensuring that all structured observations were completed for the cohort within the assessment window. Effective and timely communication with the moderator ensured that all changes were noted, and the required samples could be seen.

Assignment 3: Analysis and evaluation of case studies

Students approached each case study with equal enthusiasm.

Case study 1: Safeguarding and wellbeing

Students who achieved higher marks were able to identify and discuss the impact of the behaviours described and the safeguarding concerns that these raised, showing a highly sophisticated understanding. They explored a range of possible concerns and discussed the wider aspects that could be affecting the behaviour, considering a wide range of strategies that could be used to support the pupil's learning and development. Their understanding of multi-agency and collaborative working was extensive and included safeguarding concerns, as well as possible special educational needs, and was demonstrated through fully relevant and detailed explanations. They analysed the different factors and environments that might be contributing to the behaviours and gave some excellent suggestions about how to support the pupil's emotional wellbeing, resilience and social inclusion. They supported their answers with links to theories, legislation, policies and procedures.

Some students who did not score as highly showed a limited understanding of the impact of the behaviours described, although most showed a good awareness of safeguarding protocols and procedures. Their answers were not fully developed and opportunities to explain their actions were missed.

Case study 2: Learning and development

Students who achieved higher marks for case study 2 demonstrated a very good understanding of collaborative working and explained the impact of this on the pupil's learning and development. They recognised the importance of evaluating activities and strategies to support the pupil's engagement and academic progress. They thought carefully about the different resources available to support the pupil. They explored a range of possible factors impacting on the pupil's behaviour and gave some very good examples of how to support this and considered the likely outcomes of each idea. They showed an excellent understanding of SEND codes of practice and legislation relating to equality and anti-discriminatory practice.

Some students who did not score as highly did not consider a range of ways to foster and encourage positive and safe environments to support pupils' progress. They did not fully explain the reasons for their suggestions and the impact of their actions was missing in some responses.

Assignment 3: English, mathematics and digital skills

Students presented their answers well, showing a good use of functional skills.

Assignment 3: Overall summation

Students demonstrated a good understanding of each case study and were able to explain how they would support each pupil in their role as a teaching assistant. It was reassuring to see that nearly all students demonstrated an understanding of safeguarding procedures and explained what they need to do if they have a concern about a pupil's health, safety and wellbeing.

Most of the responses were well-presented and relevant.

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment](#). Students may require additional pre-release material to complete the tasks. These must be provided to students in line with our regulations.

Students must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery \(QSID\)](#).