



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 (Early Years Educator)**

Chief examiner and chief moderator report

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Assessment dates: 01 February – 26 May 2023

Paper number: **P00215**

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	640
Distinction	438
Merit	334
Pass	231

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

This was the second time this assessment has taken place for this qualification, which has allowed for further development of approaches to the assignments by providers.

The purpose of the assessment is for students to demonstrate skills and knowledge of the relevant concepts and techniques reflected in this sector and to integrate and apply knowledge, understanding and skills with breadth and depth. It also requires them to demonstrate their capability to apply knowledge, understanding and skills across the chosen occupational specialism.

Generally, across the external assessment assignments, there was good engagement from students, with some detailed contributions submitted, and understanding of the assessments has developed. Providers have taken on board previous assessment guidance, including the use of sample papers, to prepare the students for the three assessments.

A clear understanding of the task requirements could be seen across all three assignments and the tasks included within the brief had been complied with.

In the main, all questions had been attempted although occasionally some parts of the sections had been missed, such as observation methods and aims for assignment 1, which limited the awarding of some marks.

Students will benefit from an awareness of how the assessment objectives are embedded within the assignments and understand how marks will be awarded for these. This area could be further developed and will support their understanding of the level of performance that will achieve higher marks. Those students who achieved higher marks could apply their knowledge and understanding to the assessment criteria and write coherently, with both depth and detail in response to the brief. Where students developed analytical responses and remained focussed on the question, some excellent responses were seen, gaining higher marks.

Some students omitted relevant detail which left the response lacking in specifics and showed a limited depth of knowledge and application to practice. Where this occurred, students were limited in the marks they could achieve. Providers must guide students to the verb explanations for this assessment to ensure understanding of the expectations for the command verbs and encourage students to focus on the practical skills required to be an effective early years practitioner. For example, for command verbs such as 'analyse', students must avoid simple description and instead present evidence of more detailed evaluation, making evidence-based connections.

Moderated assignments

Assignment 2 is internally assessed within the industry placement by provider-appointed assessors and externally moderated by NCFE-appointed moderators. There were some challenges faced due to the nature of the assessment, specifically, that assessment takes place within early years settings rather than a simulated assessment. However, most students were well-prepared for the assessment and subsequent moderation process. This was particularly evident with students who were able to demonstrate flexibility during planned activities to incorporate unplanned opportunities and recognise these as an opportunity to extend learning and development holistically. In these examples, students scored higher during the marking of structured observations. Students achieving lower marks lacked consistency within their practice and did not apply a holistic approach to the assessment.

Assignment 2 is a known assignment, in that the assessment materials have been available for tutors from the beginning of delivery, therefore providing an opportunity to ensure that students were well-prepared for the assessment window. A range of scenarios were provided for each of the structured observations, each of which enabled the student to plan sufficiently to ensure that the specified criteria could be assessed. Students made

effective use of planning, in the majority of cases, to show how each of the criterion would be covered. In the best examples of planning, the students took full responsibility for the assessment planning and were able to link this to the relevant work products, detailing how this would be met (such as how the criteria would be assessed and why this would meet the criteria).

Evidence creation

External assessment

All assignments were provided as written documents that are either digital or handwritten.

All evidence is submitted digitally, and some examiners had issues accessing written documents that through scanning were not clearly visible. Additionally, some documents were missing completely thereby the evidence was only a partial response and impacted the overall score for the student. These issues were identified early in the marking window, and, in most cases, providers were swift to respond and resolve.

It is crucial to the assessment process that providers ensure that they prepare for the assessments correctly and check that evidence is correctly uploaded, scanned and accessible.

Moderated assessment

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. This might be where a specific child is no longer involved in the planned activity, ensuring that the student is not disadvantaged in this instance. Another example of this is an outdoor activity that has been planned; however, the indoor provision has to be used due to adverse weather conditions. Children's interests are incorporated following previous planning and assessment reviews.

The observation of skills recording form is used to record the observed activity. Assessors provide a detailed written narrative of the assessment, and, in the best examples, the detail recreates the assessment, including specific examples of performance that will support the assessment decision or justify the outcome. For example, rather than say: 'the student has good communication skills', the assessor included examples of the language used and the context in which it was used; the record might also include responses from the children and how this, in turn, influenced the practice of the student. Alternatively, give examples of how the student has demonstrated being a 'positive role model' or is able to use 'effective behaviour management skills'.

Some of the assessment can be supported by planned professional discussion. Each structured observation shows the criteria that can be assessed using this method. This is where the most variance in practice occurred, highlighting the need for assessors to develop professional discussion practice. In the best examples, students took the lead in the discussions with minimal prompting from the assessor. Discussions flowed naturally as the student confidently reflected on the observed activity and gave examples from their own practice. The content of the discussion was contextualised and relevant to the observed assessment, whilst ensuring that the scope of the criteria was covered, providing supplementary evidence accordingly. In examples where students did not perform as well, the discussion was overtly led by the assessor with limited responses to posed questions and over-reliance on notes rather than being able to refer to their own practice, specifically maintaining relevance to the structured observation rather than isolated assessment. Some of the best examples of professional discussion were recorded

using digital voice recordings and time stamped to reference criteria being assessed and then captured on the professional discussion template. Key notes/evidence can also be referenced here to fully reflect the criteria. Time is limited during the assessment window; however, it was evident when students had planned effectively in advance which often resulted in achieving the higher marks.

Responses to the assignments

Assignment 1: Planning educational activities for individual needs

Students are required to plan educational activities for individual needs in response to the detailed scenario in the assignment brief, the main focus for these planned activities for this assessment window is: activity 1 mathematics (number) and activity 2 expressive arts and design.

Students gained marks by providing creative, accurate and concise information on the activity plans, using information in relation to the current requirements of the early education curriculum and making consistent links to the assignment brief. Activity plans were presented in the main legibly and coherently, allowing implementation of the activity and focusing on the suggested theme provided in the scenario. However, some students did focus on mathematical concepts such as space and time rather than number which limited opportunities within the activity.

Some students had included headings within the plan; whilst this is generally useful and consistent with practice, the use of templates must comply with assessment conditions.

Most students created activity plans with a proficient level of detail and a reasoned selection and justification of resources to be used. For those students who accessed the higher marks, there were excellent references to relevant educational theories, concepts and pedagogies underpinning the activity plans. Specifically, applying Vygotsky to scaffold learning for activity 1 was used effectively and allowed for the achievement of higher marks.

At times, references to resources and safeguarding were quite generic and not relevant to the activity planned, with some students copying and pasting these areas between the two plans. Specific issues with permissions for outings planned were not considered and general health and safety regulations were not applied, which limited the marks for these students. The students that had demonstrated an understanding of the specific safeguarding risks per activity achieved the higher marks.

Higher marks were gained where students focused on all components of the assessment outcomes. For example, where the outcome required planning next steps, these were considered in respect of the expected developmental milestones and stretch, and challenge opportunities provided. Additionally, in respect of partnership working, some students missed the opportunities for working with parents and other professionals and mainly referred to colleagues or the key worker. Higher marks would be achieved when considering all partnership working opportunities and the impact on developmental outcomes for the children specifically.

Meeting the individual needs of specific children referred to in the scenario has mostly been explored well and the higher achieving students have linked the inclusive methods to theory and pedagogical approaches. Students have been awarded lower marks for isolated statements that are underdeveloped, and generic adaptations applied to both activity plans.

Again, the second activity plan was less detailed than the first. Some reference to the theme was made but often not always expanded, and there was limited application to theory in respect of supporting individual needs of specific children. Providers could remind students of the importance of allocating equal time to each activity plan to gain higher marks.

Providers should continue to support students with embedding issues such as safeguarding, planning next steps and partnership working throughout their activity plans. This will provide an opportunity for achieving higher marks.

Assignment 2

Structured observation 1: Supporting children's learning and development

Students selected from a range of literacy or numeracy activities; typically, those who performed better had selected 'plan a literacy session that requires the student to lead a story time session'. When selecting this activity, students were able to plan more effectively to ensure that all the relevant criteria were covered. In the best examples, assessment plans included details of child development theory and philosophical approaches that were relevant to their chosen activity. This was then confidently referred to during professional discussion, clearly demonstrating how knowledge was informing practice and how it had informed the observed activity. Where some students scored lower, assessment records were not evidenced sufficiently. For example:

S1.29 Implement a range of pedagogical strategies to support early literacy. Students must demonstrate all bullet points to achieve the higher marking bands. Many students missed the opportunity to demonstrate strategies to support emergent literacy, mainly systematic synthetic phonics and guided reading.

S1.30 Demonstrate flexibility during planned activities by acting on unplanned opportunities to develop children's mathematical understanding. Many students achieved a low mark for this criterion as there were too many missed opportunities for extending learning and mathematical and spontaneous development. Some students had planned mathematic opportunities but did not recognise unplanned opportunities (for example, recognising shapes, colours, time, positional language and sequencing).

S1.31 Use observational assessment to identify children's mathematical skills. Mathematic observation records should have been included for 2 marks or higher. They had not always been referred to in the planning or during professional discussion. Some students needed to show a greater depth of knowledge of the observations of child development and how they were used to inform the planning cycle.

Structured observation 2: Contributing to an enabling environment

This contains the least criteria of the 3 structured observations; it should be noted that the majority must be observed as the professional discussion is only allowed for 2 criteria, therefore pre-planning the activity thoroughly against the criteria is vital.

There were two scenarios provided for this structured observation, both of which should have provided sufficient opportunity for the student to meet the relevant criteria. In some cases, students focused too heavily on a specific activity, missing the opportunity to contribute to an enabling environment. Each provided an opportunity for holistic assessment. Most students performed well within this structured observation. The criteria that students found most challenging were:

S1.26 Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Many students achieved lower marks for this criterion. They were able to demonstrate that they were confident with understanding and implementing the setting's policies and procedures, either through observation or professional discussion, and they were able to recognise discriminatory behaviour and explain how this would be addressed if not observed. However, often the individual needs and interests of the children had not been considered in the planning and provision of resources, and celebrating diversity of culture and family backgrounds and challenging discrimination were regularly omitted from the assessment. This criterion needs careful consideration when planning for future assessments.

S2.17 Encourage children’s participation by ensuring a balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Students performed better for this criterion when they incorporated both adult-led and child-initiated play by providing children with easy access to a wide range of resources and equipment. Some students demonstrated confidence in allowing children to initiate play (for example, through choosing what they wanted to make and/or engaging in imaginative play). Higher marks were missed where observations were predominantly adult led, resulting in limited opportunities for students to demonstrate how they offer the appropriate level of support for children to apply their knowledge and skills to different situations and know when to step back.

Structured observation 3: Meeting the individual needs of children

This is the largest of the structured observations, covering 40% of assignment 2. Students who performed well with this observation had robust, detailed planning that maximised the opportunities presented within the given scenarios and against the higher marking bands. Professional discussions were well-planned and contextualised rather than isolated, supporting the holistic assessment of the student. Students who were in an early years foundation stage (EYFS) setting rather than a school were able to meet the expectations of structured observation more effectively.

S4.20/S4.21 Plan and carry out care routines and S4.24 Undertake tasks to ensure the prevention and control of infection. Students scored higher typically where they were more involved with all aspects of the care routine across age ranges. Students in school settings needed to consider how they could incorporate a care routine alongside their planned ‘play’ activities to achieve higher marks for both these criteria.

S4.13 Identify and act upon own responsibilities in relation to health and safety, security, confidentiality of information, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This was poorly planned in some cases, leading to isolated professional discussions that were disjointed at times and did not provide sufficient opportunity for the student to discuss the criteria at the level and detail needed to achieve the higher marks. Examples from practice should also be included to show sufficient knowledge and understanding. For example, if the student has supported staff during a fire drill, completing medical records or bump notes, security and authorised permissions, this evidence should be referred to within the professional discussion.

S5.9 Work collaboratively with other professionals to meet the needs of babies and children and enable them to progress. These need careful planning to ensure they are covered sufficiently. Not all students were able to evidence through performance and, in many examples, the professional discussions were weak, therefore scoring a low mark for this criterion. In the best examples, professional discussion was well-planned and provided sufficient scope of evidence, especially when students had been given the opportunity to meet with parents and outside professionals in practice (supervised). In these cases, students were able to give a range of accurate and detailed examples, demonstrating detailed understanding against the assessed skills.

Early Years Educator criteria featured across the 3 structured observations

Embedded into the structured observations are some EYE part 1 criteria. For example:

EYE1.1 Understand the expected patterns of children’s development from birth to 7 years. This criterion is in 2 of the structured observations and can be assessed by observation with supporting professional discussion. Students achieving the highest marks were able to clearly demonstrate how their knowledge of child development was informing their practice and were able to confidently lead professional discussions to provide contextualised examples to meet the requirements of the higher marks. Students will have already demonstrated their competence in these criteria in EYE part 1; this assessment provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate

how far this practice has developed, enabling them to achieve a mark that contributes to the overall outcome of assignment 2. These criteria require careful planning to ensure that the scope is sufficiently demonstrated across the birth to 7 age range and all areas of learning and development whilst maintaining relevancy to the assessment observed.

S2.20 Support children to manage their own behaviour in relation to others. This criterion is in all 3 of the structured observations; no professional discussion is allowed. Students overall did not gain the higher marks; some scored 0. Generally, children's behaviour across the observations was positive so not all students had the opportunity to manage this. To gain the higher marks, students needed to consistently talk about 'setting' rules to reinforce them and discuss feelings – even a short plenary about how the child/group felt after the activity. A 'thumbs up, thumbs down' or visual emotions cards would support higher marks for this criterion.

Assignment 2 part 2 consists of 3 separate structured observations. Each observation must be carried out once and observed by the provider-appointed assessor. These can be observed in the industry placement only to accurately assess student competency. The students have one opportunity to complete each assessment, therefore they should not be carried out until the provider is confident the student can demonstrate their skills to the very best of their ability.

Assignment 3: part 1(a)

Students are required to carry out a range of observations in response to the assignment brief, evaluate their own practice and skills and suggest ways to engage in opportunities for continuing professional development.

For part 1(a), students generally did well in this assignment. It was evident that some students demonstrated a good ability to carry out and record a range of observations in response to the assessment brief. However, some students included subjective statements throughout their observations and there were missed opportunities for capturing holistic learning and development. Additionally, when providing the aim for the observation, this appeared to be inconsistent with the task requirement or lacked specific detail for the area of learning. Providers should remind the students to consider the aim of the observation to ensure that the observation provides information and data to reflect this.

Occasionally, the observations were difficult to read and consisted of crossings out and diagrams which made for content that is irrelevant. It would, therefore, be advisable to remind students that where work is crossed out, it may not be marked.

Providers should remind students about confidentiality and safeguarding in relation to not including the name of settings and staff in observations. Children's names should also be anonymised throughout.

Part 1(b)

2(a): Students gained higher marks when they showed effective evaluative skills in their reflection on own strengths and weaknesses, particularly when they were identifying improvements to their own observation practice and skills. Some evaluations were very basic or a list of simple descriptive statements, and some did not include any reference to own skills, limiting marks awarded for this task. These students would reflect on the skills the child in the observation was developing rather than the skills they were using to undertake the observation. A few students provided a basic evaluation, which was unbalanced. The higher marks were achieved where the reflective cycle, specifically Kolb's, was applied and woven into the evaluation.

2(b): There were some comprehensive responses that suggested an extensive range of ways to engage in continuing professional development; however, some students did not refer to the areas for improvement identified in the previous task which would provide a clear audit trail and consistency for development. Additionally, the ways were a little vague and did not refer to improvement of observation practice and skills as required in the brief. Overall, these suggestions were mostly relevant and likely to improve the student's own practice and skills, although lacking the depth of response to achieve the higher marks.

Assignment 3: part 2

Students are provided with a series of observations on a young child. Students are required to identify each method used, analyse and draw conclusions from the observations and discuss next steps in relation to the current requirements of the early education curriculum.

Generally, students performed well in this assignment. The use of facts, theory and approaches were embedded throughout. Some students made good use of relevant knowledge and demonstrated skills and knowledge relevant to the sector. Many students demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the current requirements of the early years curriculum and demonstrated how this supports a young child 's next steps.

Task 1(a): Students generally performed well and demonstrated a good understanding of a range of observation methods. Only occasionally were the incorrect methods given and some students did not add a description which limited achievement of the full marks available.

Task 1(b): Students were able to develop the purpose of these specific observations well and the lower marks were only awarded when three clear explanations were missed.

Part 2: Students performed well in this question. Some students listed key stages from the current requirements of the early years curriculum but often lacked development of the answer to access the higher marks. For higher marks, some students were able to clearly demonstrate the use of current early years curriculum to analyse, draw conclusions and make valid judgements regarding a young child's stage of learning and development.

Specifically, providers should draw attention to the application of the command verb 'analyse' for this section which will allow for developed, investigative responses.

Part 3: In this final section, students were mostly able to suggest the next steps for Charlie, but often these were isolated statements that were underdeveloped to represent how progress could be achieved and lacked links back to the analysis in the previous section.

In some cases, students made technical inaccuracies in the answer, showing a limited understanding of how the early education curriculum is used to support children's development.

Higher achieving students were rewarded for applying analytical results for part 1 and then discussing a range of steps with consideration for individual needs and impacts on Charlie's own developmental outcomes. Likewise, consideration of partnership working and working with parents lifts the level of achievement.

Again, for this section, providers should remind the students to adhere to the command verb within the brief, which in this case was 'discuss', and avoid the use of description and explanation.

Overall, most students demonstrated an effective understanding of observation and assessment.

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).