



Handbook

SEA3 – VTCT (Skillsfirst) Level 3 Award in the Principles
of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

603/3351/0

Version 4.0

About Skillsfirst

VTCT is a market-leading Awarding, Assessment and End-point Assessment (EPA) Organisation offering vocational and technical qualifications in a range of 'services to people' sectors.

The VTCT group of companies is comprised of three innovative awarding brands: VTCT, iTEC and Skillsfirst. Together they have over 2,500 approved centres in over 40 countries across the world.

The qualifications suite offered by VTCT (Skillsfirst) spans a range of sectors including Childcare, Business Services, Health & Social Care, Recruitment and Social Media.

For more information visit us at www.vtct.org.uk and www.skillsfirst.co.uk, contact our dedicated Customer Support Team via email at customersupport@vtct.org.uk and customerservices@skillsfirst.co.uk or call 0121 270 5100

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1 Qualification at a glance

Qualification title	VTCT (Skillsfirst) Level 3 Award in the Principles of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Qualification number	603/3351/0
Product code	SEA3
Age range	There are no age limits attached to learners undertaking this qualification, unless this is a legal requirement of the process or the environment.
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	110
Guided Learning (GL) hours	89
Assessment	To be awarded this qualification, learners must successfully achieve the following assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portfolio of evidence
Entry requirements	There are no formal entry requirements for learners undertaking this qualification; however, centres must ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to gain evidence for the qualification in the workplace.
Legal considerations	There are no formal entry requirements for learners undertaking this qualification however, centres must ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to gain evidence for the qualification in the workplace.
Support materials	Support materials can be found on the website (if applicable)

2 Qualification information

2.1 Qualification aim and design

This qualification has been designed to provide the learner with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to understand Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the process of early intervention. It also covers the legislation which impacts on SEND, as well as the role and responsibilities of the SEN Co-ordinator. It could also be suitable for those seeking employment who having the ability and the opportunity to demonstrate recognisable competencies. It could also be used as CPD for experienced and specialist staff seeking a qualification to recognise their competence.

2.2 Progression opportunities

This qualification provides progression to the following qualifications:

- Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)
- Level 3 Diploma for the Children & Young People's Workforce (RQF)

and other related qualifications within child/adult care.

3 Qualification structure

To be awarded the VTCT (Skillsfirst) Level 3 Award in the Principles of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities learners must achieve all mandatory units.

The minimum TQT required to achieve this qualification is **110**.

Product code	Unit title	Level	GLH	Unit reference number
Mandatory units (Group M):				
BB3	Principles of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	3	89	T/617/0918

4 Centre requirements

4.1 Resources

Centres must possess the physical resources needed to support the delivery of the programme and the assessment of knowledge and skills, which should therefore be of industry standard. Where specific resources are required these have been indicated in individual units.

4.2 Occupational expertise of those who deliver, provide expert witness, assess performance, moderate and verify assessments

Assessors and those responsible for internal quality assurance are appointed by the recognised centre and approved by Skillsfirst through the external verifier.

4.3 Occupational competence

To be occupationally competent, an assessor must be capable of carrying out the full requirements within the competence unit/s they are assessing. Occupational competence must be at the unit level which might mean different assessors across a whole qualification. Being occupationally competent means that the assessor is also occupationally knowledgeable. This occupational competence should be maintained through clearly demonstrable continuing learning and professional development. This can be demonstrated through current statutory professional registration.

4.4 Occupational knowledge

To be occupationally knowledgeable, each assessor should possess knowledge and understanding relevant to the qualifications and/or units they are assessing. Occupationally knowledgeable assessors may assess at unit level for specialist areas within a qualification, while the final assessment decision for a qualification remains with the lead assessor. Those carrying out internal quality assurance must be occupationally knowledgeable in the unit they are assuring and be qualified to make quality assurance decisions.

This occupational knowledge should be maintained annually through clearly demonstrable continuing learning and professional development.

4.5 Qualification requirements of those involved in assessment and internal quality assurance

While the Assessor/Verifier (A/V) and the Assessor/Internal Quality Assurance (TAQA) units are valued as qualifications for centre staff, they are not currently a requirement for this qualification. It is strongly recommended, however, that staff must be able to show occupational competence, through mapping their competencies and knowledge against the relevant NOS and the assessor and verifier requirements.

Centre staff should have verifiable relevant experience and current knowledge of the occupational working area at, or above, the level they are assessing or verifying. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when judging learner competence or verifying assessment processes and decisions. This could be verified by:

- curriculum vitae and references
- possession of a relevant qualification
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution

Centre staff may undertake more than one role, for example, tutor and assessor or moderator/IV, but must never internally verify their own assessments.

4.6 Expert witnesses

4.6.1 Overview

Where the assessor is not occupationally competent in a specialist area, expert witnesses can be used for direct observation where they have occupational expertise in the specialist area. The use of expert witnesses should be determined and agreed by the assessor, in line with internal quality assurance arrangements and Skillsfirst's requirements for the assessment of units within the qualification and the sector. The assessor remains responsible for the final assessment decision.

4.6.2 Requirements for expert witnesses

An expert witness must:

- have a working knowledge of the units for which they are providing expert testimony
- be occupationally competent in the area for which they are providing expert testimony
- have EITHER any qualification in assessment of workplace performance OR a work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff within their area of expertise.

4.7 Continuous professional development (CPD)

Centres are responsible for ensuring that deliverers, assessors and those responsible for internal quality assurance plan and maintain their CPD. Centres are expected to support their deliverers, assessors and IQAs in ensuring that their knowledge remains current of the occupational area and of best practice in delivery, mentoring, training, assessment and verification, and that it takes account of any national or legislative developments. Centres may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to these requirements.

4.8 Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Each qualification has a Total Qualification Time (TQT) value based on the total number of hours learning required to achieve it. The TQT value reflects the number of supervised learning hours required to achieve the knowledge and assessment requirements, plus the length of time a learner would need to take to achieve the skills and capabilities to be deemed competent. All RQF qualifications are subject to an evaluation process to determine their fitness-for-purpose.

5 Assessment

5.1 Summary of assessment methods

This qualification will be assessed by internally-set questionnaire, which will be marked by centre staff. This will then be sampled and moderated by VTCT (Skillsfirst). All aspects of the learning outcomes will be tested in every questionnaire although details will vary between questionnaires.

5.2 Assessment principles

Learners must be registered with VTCT (Skillsfirst) before formal assessment commences.

The questionnaires will be multiple choice/short answer, all of which should be completed by the learner, but the order in which they are undertaken will not be specified.

Centres must retain copies of learner assessment records for at least three years after certification.

Qualification certificates will be issued to learners who have met the full requirements of the qualification.

5.3 Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

RPL is a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a component of a qualification through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning. Should any opportunities for RPL be identified, it is important that a complete process of recognising prior experience and learning is undertaken, by ensuring that:

- it covers relevant or appropriate experience for previous activities, as well as accredited learning and qualifications
- it is incorporated into the assessment planning, with details of how this will take place
- mapping of prior learning to the national occupational standards to identify gaps is documented and auditable
- assessment methods or processes for recognising prior experience and learning, are documented and made available to the external verifier
- the audit trail covers the whole process and methodology of RPL
- the authenticity and currency of presented evidence is established by the assessor

This evidence will need to be referenced clearly on recording documentation and will need to be appropriately authenticated and validated, perhaps by an employer or expert witness.

Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award. The evidence gathered must meet the standards of the qualification or component and the assessment process must be subject to the same quality assurance procedures as any other assessment process. In summary, evidence submitted to the RPL process must:

- be authentic and prove conclusively that RPL is based on the learner's own work;
- meet the requirements of the current the skills and knowledge requirements and be appropriate to the content of the component or qualification being considered for RPL;
- be sufficient to conclusively prove consistency of learner performance in meeting the skills and knowledge requirements.

6 Units

Unit Handbook

BB3 – Principles of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Unit reference number: T/617/0918

Level: 3

Guided Learning (GL) hours: 89

Unit aim

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to develop the skills and understanding of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), the process of early intervention and the legislation which impacts on SEND. It also enables the learner to gain an understanding of the role and responsibilities of the SEN Co-ordinator.

Learning outcomes

There are four outcomes to this unit. The learner will:

LO1 Understand Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

LO2 Understand the process of early intervention

LO3 Understand what Special Educational Needs (SEN) are

LO4 Understand the legislation which impacts on SEND

LO5 Understand the role and responsibilities of the SEN Co-ordinator

LO6 Understand the principles, statutory guidance and legislation underpinning the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice'

LO7 Assess own skills and competencies, identify any gaps and next steps in professional development

LO8 Understand the local offer, including the provision that the Local Authority expects to be available from providers of all relevant early years education

LO9 Understand the support available for SEN

Version 2

Unit content

Evidence requirements

Learners must demonstrate the minimum requirements of knowledge and understanding for this unit.

Learning outcomes

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO1 Understand Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	1.1 Describe the difference between special educational needs and disabilities
	1.2 Compare the medical and social model of SEND
	1.3 Explain the impact of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EYFS Statutory Framework • Early Years Inspection Handbook on SEND

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO2 Understand the process of early intervention	2.1 Explain the benefits of early intervention
	2.2 Describe the process of early intervention

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO3 Understand what Special Educational Needs (SEN) are	3.1 Describe the four areas of need and give examples of the difficulties associated with each: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and interaction • Cognition and learning • Social, emotional and mental health difficulties • Sensory and/or physical needs
	3.2 Describe the characteristics of the different types of high and low incidence special needs you are likely to see in your setting and how these are identified
	3.3 Explain how any differences in a child's rate of progress are related solely to learning English as an additional language (EAL) and not SEN
	3.4 Explain how to identify when SEN is occurring in children with EAL
	3.5 Explain the legal obligations that early years providers have towards disabled children
	3.6 Explain what the Graduated Approach is and how each aspect helps to provide suitable SEN support, within the cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess • Plan • Do • Review

	3.7 Explain how to actively engage the child and the child's parents/carers in the assess, plan, do, review process
	3.8 Explain the importance of the child and the child's parents/carers, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
	3.9 Explain the role of the early years practitioner/key worker and that of the SENCO within the cycle 8
	3.10 Explain the roles and responsibilities of conducting progress reviews, including formal progress checks, and explain how these should be used to inform the Graduated Approach.
	3.11 Explain what an effective support plan should include and why clear outcomes are important
	3.12 Give examples of adjustment strategies and interventions for supporting the learning of children with different types of SEN to ensure positive learning outcomes
	3.13 Explain what information can and/or should be shared with others within the setting and beyond to support the achievement of the agreed outcomes and effective transition

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO4 Understand the legislation which impacts on SEND	4.1 Describe the legislation which protects children with SEND
	4.2 Describe the principles underpinning the SEND Code of Practice
	4.3 Compare the definition of SEND against the Code of Practice and the EYFS Statutory Framework
	4.4 Explain the importance of the personal inclusion plan (PIP) for children with SEND
	4.5 Describe the requirements for providers to support children with SEND
	4.6 Explain own responsibility to support colleagues in their work with children with SEN 9
	<p>4.7 Explain how you would identify and support practitioners to develop their expertise in relation to SEN to ensure practitioners have the relevant skills and knowledge, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction of new staff • Their responsibilities to children with SEN these are AC's • The setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEN • How the setting works in partnership with parents/carers to identify a child as having SEN • How the practitioner and the SENCO agree, in consultation with the child and the child's parents/carers, the outcomes they are seeking for the child • Assessing their skills, competencies, and next steps in professional development in relation to particular impairments • Identifying and using training and other sources of support available locally help them in explaining the duties to colleagues

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO5 Understand the role and responsibilities of the SEN Co-ordinator	5.1 Describe the role and responsibilities of the SEN Co-ordinator
	5.2 Explain the importance of the SEN Co-ordinator role to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child • Parent • Nursery
	5.3 Describe the information required to chart a child's behaviour
	5.4 Explain the action to be taken as a result of behavioural concerns

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO6 Understand the principles, statutory guidance and legislation underpinning the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice'	6.1 Explain the role of the SENCO in private, voluntary and independent early years settings, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring all early years practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEN advising and supporting colleagues • Ensuring parents/carers are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting and liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting • Gaining the views of the child

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO7 Assess own skills and competencies, identify any gaps and next steps in professional development	7.1 Reflect on own practice to identify competencies, identify any gaps and next steps in professional development
	7.2 Identify and use professional development opportunities, including training and other sources of support, to address own development needs
	7.3 Explain the principles underpinning Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans
	7.4 Explain what and how records should be maintained and used to track progress and achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes for children

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO8 Understand the local offer, including the provision that the Local Authority expects to be available from providers of all relevant early years education	<p>8.1 Liaise with professionals, agencies and services beyond the setting, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEN support or learning support services including 'local offer'⁴ • Sensory support services or specialist teachers or therapies such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy • Support available to parents/carers to aid their child's development at home, including such services as Portage • Independent Advice and Support Services (IASS) • Local voluntary agencies who provide support to children and their families • Childminder Agencies/Networks • Social Care Services • Area SENCO, inclusion officer, or equivalent where available

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO9 Understand the support available for SEN	<p>9.1 Describe what support is available for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Health and social care services for disabled children and children with SEN • Services assisting providers to support young children with medical conditions • Childcare for disabled children and children with SEN • Services providing parents/carers and children with information, advice and support on SEN and disability • Groups who can support disabled children and their parents/carers
	9.2 Explain how to signpost families for advice and services beyond the setting and encourage use of them
	9.3 Liaise with local authority over individual children and links on wider strategic issues such as securing sufficient expertise and experience on SEN and disability locally
	9.4 Explain how funding can contribute to whole setting support to improve children's SEN and disability outcomes
	9.5 Explain why SEN support should include planning and preparing for transition, before a child moves into another setting or school
	9.6 Explain how to share information with the receiving setting or school and how to involve children and their parents/carers in this

Document History

Version	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v1.0	31/01/2023	Rebranded	Qualifications Administrator
v2.0	28/03/2024	Reviewed and updated in line with revised L3 EYE standard. Added LO3; LO4 4.6, 4.7; LO6; LO7; LO8; LO9. Increased GLH and TQT accordingly.	Product and Regulation Manager

SEA3 Document History

Version	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v2.0	31/01/2023	Handbook re-branded to VTCT. No content or learning outcomes have been amended.	Compliance Manager
v3.0	27/06/2023	Section 5.2 Assessment principles updated. There is no written examination.	Qualification Administrator
v4.0	??/??/2024	Reviewed	