Apprenticeship Assessment

VQA Level 2 End-Point Assessment for ST0867 Playworker

Standard Specification

Qualification Number: 610/2146/5

Version Number: 1.0

Contents

Key Information....3
Apprenticeship Summary.... 4
Assessment Methods 6
Multiple Choice Test 6
Observation with Questions....8
Portfolio of Evidence.... 12
Professional Discussion.... 13
Overall Grading 19
Resits and Retakes.... 19
Appeals.... 19

Key Information

Reference:	ST0867
Version:	V1.0
Level:	2
Typical duration to gateway:	18 months
Typical EPA period:	2 months
Maximum funding:	£5000
Route:	Care services
Approved for delivery:	2 February 2023
Date updated:	02/02/2023
Lars code:	696
EQA provider:	Ofqual

Apprenticeship Summary

Overview of the Role

Care for and support children in taking responsibility for themselves and their own playing whilst creating a stimulating and adventurous space for children to learn and explore.

Occupation Summary

This occupation is found in a range of play settings offering different models of Playwork. Most Playworkers are employed in the voluntary or public sector, while others work in the private sector. Playworkers may work in local community settings, such as Before and After School Clubs, Adventure Playgrounds and Mobile Play Provision, for example a Playbus. They may also offer play sessions in Women's Refuges, Prisons and Hospitals, as well as play ranger sessions in open spaces such as parks and woodlands. Playschemes are also offered in sport and leisure centres where Playworkers may be employed. Playwork jobs roles vary according to the type of service being provided and children being supported. Typical employers include local councils and government, charities and voluntary management committees, private companies offering After School/ Breakfast/Holiday clubs and private day care nurseries.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to care for and support children in taking responsibility for themselves and their own playing whilst creating a stimulating and adventurous space for children to learn and explore in their own way, following their own intent, ideas and inventions. The focus of all play settings is on child-directed and child-controlled play, with Playworkers planning for and providing an ever-changing environment that allows children to choose what and how they play. Playworkers observe and monitor this play for children's development, engagement and safety, both physical and emotional.

Playworkers subtly observe play rather than overtly leading activities in order to:

- understand individual children's needs and behaviours, as well as their likes and wants in playing.
- support individual children's emerging capabilities and competences.
- understand how to better resource the play environment so that children are provided with opportunities to engage with the elements and their senses to explore, create and change the world around them.
- reflect on how their adult presence is impacting on the children's play, in both positive and negative ways, to ensure that children can play and explore without interruption or the necessity to seek approval or permission. Reflections are undertaken individually and as a team in order to improve the quality of play provision and to improve their own practice.
- undertake dynamic risk-benefit assessments during play sessions to support children's playful risk-taking. This includes being aware of generally accepted abilities relating to ages and stages, but not being bound by them in order to support individual speed of

development. Playworkers support children to naturally stretch their boundaries physically, mentally, socially and emotionally, whilst balancing both the risks and the benefits that this incurs.

Playworkers use the outcomes of their observations to make better informed decisions about whether their intervention is needed and how to do this without taking away from children's own faculties, abilities and growing expertise. In doing so, Playworkers develop significant and non- hierarchical relationships with the children they support.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with:

- Children and young people and families from a range of backgrounds
- Team members
- Healthcare Professionals
- Police and other members of the Emergency Services
- Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Social Services
- Youth and Community Workers
- Representatives from the relevant Local Authorities
- Local residents
- Park Wardens.

Playworkers need to have excellent communication skills to support children and their families. Depending on the setting they work in, they may also interact with a range of people in the public and professional community.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for working in a team of Playworkers managed by a Level 3 Team leader. Operating as a team, they support children in their play, are an advocate for play to parents and local community members, regularly resource and create a range of stimulating play spaces, undertake risk-benefit assessments and contribute to ongoing reflective practice both personally and as a team.

The main varying factor in everyday Playwork practice is the type of setting. They will implement the organisation's policies and procedures, reporting all difficulties and concerns to the line manager. They will have an understanding of different theories of play and Playwork and know when and how to implement these to support children's individual needs. They will also participate in all necessary training and continuing professional development, maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of play and the legal requirements for an environment where children play.

Working as part of a team, Playworkers ensure that the play area is operating to legal standards, undertaking all necessary checks on the environment and resources in order to protect the health and well-being of all children using the facilities. They also ensure that play spaces and activities are made accessible and equipment is adjusted where necessary

for children with additional needs and/ or impairments, providing opportunity for all children to reach their full play potential.

Playworkers may also co-ordinate and take part in off-site trips and overnight residentials.

Typical Job Titles

Engagement Worker, Inclusion/Support Playworker, Play Ranger, Playground Assistant, Playworker.

Assessment Methods

This end-point assessment (EPA) for this standard consists of three assessment methods:

- Multiple choice test
- Observation with questions
- Professional discussion

Assessment Order

The assessment methods can be delivered in any order. The result of one assessment method does not need to be known before starting the next.

EPA Window

The EPA is taken in the EPA period. The EPA period starts when the VQA confirms the gateway requirements have been met and is typically two months.

Gateway Considerations

Before the apprentice can start their EPA, the training provider is required to upload the following:

- Photo ID
- Portfolio of evidence

At gateway, the training provider is also requested sign a declaration to confirm that the English and maths requirements have been met in line with the funding rules

Multiple Choice Test

Assessment Overview

This is a closed book test, meaning that an apprentice cannot refer to reference books or materials whilst taking the test.

The multiple choice test consists of 40 questions. Each equally-weighted question has four possible answers, one of which is correct.

One mark is awarded for each correct answer. The questions will assess the knowledge criteria assigned to this assessment method.

An apprentice will have a maximum of 60 minutes to complete the test. This is a formal assessment, therefore it must take place in a controlled environment, free from any distractions. The test can be computer- or paper-based.

Grading

This assessment is graded according to the table below.

Marks	Grade
0-25	**Fail**
26-40	**Pass**

Multiple Choice Test KSBs

Reference	Descriptors
K1	Playwork theory. The Playwork Principles and introduction to child development.
K3	The importance of professional conduct and implementing boundaries in your own practice.
K4	Diversity and inclusion in Playwork settings, including acknowledging and addressing own reactions and likely responses.
K7	How to support the development of resilience in children and young people
K9	Risk-benefit assessment and the importance of children managing risks for themselves.
K12	Health and safety procedures in the play setting.
K13	How to respond to accidents and different emergency situations (fire, extreme weather, serious injury, common illnesses and infections).
K14	Local and national Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures.
K15	Financial and administrative policy and procedures within open and closed settings.

Reference	Descriptors
K16	Basic food hygiene procedures and practice, taking into consideration cultural and dietary needs and the importance of consuming healthy balanced meals.
K17	Roles and responsibilities in opening, closing, cleaning and tidying the setting.
K18	The importance of recycling, reusing, reducing, repairing and inspiring sustainable attitudes.

Observation with Questions

Assessment Overview

During the observation with questions, the End-Point Assessor will observe an apprentice in their workplace and they will ask questions. An apprentice will be completing their day-to-day duties under normal working conditions, such as effective relationship-building with children and young people while observing and supporting their play. It would be difficult to replicate the working environment in a way that is congruent and authentic, consequently simulation is not permitted.

The observation and responses to questions will be assessed holistically, meaning that one task or one answer can be used to claim multiple KSBs.

Planning the Observation

The End-Point Assessor should observe the following four areas:

- The Playworker observing play behaviours
- The Playworker's interactions between a child and a young person
- The Playworkers interaction with children and young people to manage risk for themselves
- The Playworker creating, resourcing and changing play spaces.

These activities give the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

The observation must cover the following themes:

- Playwork approach to relationships and behaviours
- Behaviour contexts
- Play behaviours
- Communications
- Creating/resourcing Play Spaces

- The benefits of risk taking
- Health and safety.

Questioning

Questioning will take place both during and after the observation. The End-Point Assessor must ask at least four questions. They will aim to remain as unobtrusive as possible, and the questions will be asked during natural stops between tasks and after completion of work. Where clarification is required, follow-up questions will be asked. The End-Point Assessor will ask questions about KSBs that were not observed in order to gather assessment evidence.

Location and Duration

The observation with questions will be conducted at the Apprentice's normal workplace. Equipment and resources needed for the observation must be provided by the employer and be in good and safe working condition.

The observation must take 3 hours. The End-Point Assessor can increase the time of the observation with questions by up to 10%. No new tasks will be observed, and no new questions will be asked after the time limit has been reached.

The observation with questions may take place in parts but must be completed within two working days. A working day is typically 7.5 hours. The reason for this split is because a safeguarding incident that arises would take priority during the observation period. Where breaks occur, these will not count towards the total assessment time.

Grading

This assessment is graded distinction, pass or fail according to the grading criteria.

To achieve a pass in this assessment, an apprentice must meet all the pass criteria. To be awarded a distinction, an apprentice must meet all pass and all distinction criteria.

If an apprentice does not meet all the pass criteria, this assessment will be graded as a fail.

Observation with Questions Grading Criteria

Theme - Playwork approach to relationships and behaviours KSBs	
K2	Active listening and communication techniques to build relationships with children and young people.
S4	Identify ways to remove barriers which can prevent some children and young people playing.
S16	Use active listening and communication techniques when interacting with children and young people playing, identifying any potential concerns if they occur.

Theme - Playwork approach to relationships and behaviours KSBs	
B6	Treat people with dignity, respect, and empathy.

Pass	Distinction
Uses active listening and communication techniques when interacting with children. Acts with dignity, empathy and respect to build positive relationships when supporting children during play and identifies ways to remove any barriers to young people playing. (K2, S4, S16, B6)	Explains why it is important to remove barriers that may prevent children and young people playing and the consequences if this is not done. (S4)

Theme - Behaviour contexts KSBs	
K10	Different types of behaviour, why they need to be addressed and when and how to address them.
S10	Recognise that children and young people communicate with a range of different types of behaviour and may need Playworker support.
S11	Support children and young people to understand and manage their emotions, feelings and actions.

Pass	Distinction
Shows how they support children to manage their emotions, feelings and actions. (S11) Identifies the different types of behaviour children and young people may communicate with and demonstrates how to support their needs. (K10 S10)	Explains why children communicate different types of behaviours and describes how they adapt their approach in supporting them. (K10, S10)

Theme - Play behaviours	
S1	Observe and reflect on play behaviours.
B2	Work flexibly and adapt to both children and circumstances.

Theme - Play behaviours	
Pass	**Distinction**
Observes and reflects on play behaviours, demonstrates a flexible and adaptable approach to both children and circumstances in responses. (S1, B2)	Responds to the changing shape and nature of the play without leading the play. (S1, B2)

Theme - Communications KSBs	
S2	Communicate sensitively using relevant language and behaviour.
Pass	**Distinction**
Listens actively to the children as they share information and make requests and communicates sensitively using relevant language and behaviour. (S2)	Explains how to recognise their communication style is not having the expected effect on children and how to modify their language to respond to the situation. (S2)

Theme - Creating/resourcing Play Spaces KSBs	
S8	Assist with planning, creating and identifying loose parts to encourage and inspire sustainable practices, including recycling, reusing, reducing and repairing.
S23	Apply Playwork approaches in own role, incorporating new and emerging themes.
B3	Take responsibility and show initiative.
B4	Treat people with dignity, respect, and empathy.
Pass	**Distinction**
Plans and works collaboratively and reflectively with others to create and identify loose parts for sustainable practices including recycling, reusing, reducing and repairing. (S8, B4) Applies playwork approaches including new and emerging themes and takes responsibility for the changes. (S23, B3)	N/A

Theme - The benefits of risk taking KSBs	
S9	Recognise the benefits of risk taking in play and contribute to dynamic risk-benefit assessment.
B1	Work flexibly with an understanding of health and safety to support risk taking in play.

Pass	Distinction
Supports children to manage risk for themselves when playing, taking into consideration dynamic risk benefit assessment. (S9, B1)	N/A

Theme - Health and Safety KSBs	
S14	Contribute to health and safety checks.
S21	Contribute to ensuring security arrangements are followed, such as children's arrival and departures from the setting.

Pass	Distinction
Follows procedures in play setting to carry out formal health and safety checks and security arrangements such as those regarding children's arrival and departures. (S14, S21)	Explains the importance of maintaining health and safety of children within the play setting and reflects on their own and others behaviours. (S14, S21)

Portfolio of Evidence

Overview

To support the professional discussion, the apprentice must produce a portfolio of evidence (portfolio).

The portfolio, which is completed with the support of the training provider and the employer during the on-programme element of the Apprenticeship, will detail the progress made in learning the KSBs needed to be put forward for the EPA.

The evidence in the portfolio will be referenced and used by the End-Point Assessor to underpin the professional discussion. The portfolio will not be assessed.

The portfolio will typically contain 15 discrete pieces of evidence. Evidence should be mapped against the KSBs. Evidence may be used to demonstrate more than one KSB; a qualitative as opposed to quantitative approach is suggested.

Evidence sources may include:

- Workplace documentation and records, for example:
- Workplace policies and procedures
- Witness statements of playwork approaches
- Annotated photographs of playwork approaches in practice
- 1 dynamic risk benefit assessment
- Video clips (maximum total duration 30minutes); the apprentice must be in view and identifiable.

Content

The themes that must be covered in the portfolio are:

- Playwork practice
- Reflective observations
- Reflective practice
- Advocate for playwork
- Relationships with parents and caregivers
- Supporting health and wellbeing
- Roles and responsibilities
- Current and emerging playwork practice.

Professional Discussion

Assessment Overview

The professional discussion can take place face-to-face or remotely.

The training provider is required to submit the apprentice's portfolio of evidence at gateway. The End-Point Assessor will then have at least two weeks to prepare questions for the professional discussion, based on the contents of the portfolio and relevant to the KSBs assigned to this assessment.

The professional discussion must last 60 minutes. The End-Point Assessor can increase the time of the professional discussion by up to 10%, to allow the apprentice to finish their final answer or point. No new questions will be asked after the time limit has been reached. This is a formal assessment which must take place in a controlled environment.

The End-Point Assessor must ask at least seven questions. They may also ask follow-up questions when clarification is required.

The themes that must be covered are:

- Playwork approach to relationships and behaviours
- Playwork practice
- Reflective observations
- Reflective practice
- Advocate for playwork
- Relationships with parents and caregivers
- Supporting health and wellbeing
- Roles and responsibilities
- Current and emerging playwork practice.

During the discussion, an apprentice may refer to their portfolio.

Grading

This assessment is graded distinction, pass or fail according to the grading criteria.

To achieve a pass in this assessment, an apprentice must meet all the pass criteria. To be awarded a distinction, an apprentice must meet all the pass criteria and all the distinction criteria.

If an apprentice does not meet all the pass criteria, this assessment will be graded as a fail.

Professional Discussion Grading Criteria

Theme - Playwork practice KSBs	
K8	Principles of designing stimulating play spaces and how to create and resource them.
K20	Professional boundaries of self and other Playworkers' interaction with children.
K21	How to deal with the individual learning and or behavioural needs of a child.
S6	Contribute to play audits.
S13	Recognise the importance of respecting professional boundaries when lone working or conducting intimate care with children and young people and using social media with children, young people and families.

Theme - Playwork practice KSBs	
Pass	**Distinction**
Describes a play audit and explains the principles that underpin the design of stimulating play spaces and how to create and resource them. (K8, S6) Describes own responsibilities in relation to professional boundaries, lone working, use of social media and personal care, and how they apply that approach in practice. (K20, S13) Recognises that different children have individual learning and behaviour needs (K21)	Explains the importance of a play audit, how they contribute to it and why this is appropriate to the setting. (S6)

Theme -Reflective observations KSBs	
K5	Observation and record keeping methods to enhance play and inform future Playwork practice.
S5	Undertake reflective observations to improve own practice and the quality of the provision for children and young people.
Pass	**Distinction**
Describes the methods they use to observe and record children playing and how they reflect on these to inform own playwork practice and improve the quality of playwork provision. (K5, S5)	Explains why they use the methods described to observe and record children playing, and how this can inform future play work practice. (K5, S5)

Theme -Reflective practice KSBs	
K6	Methods of self and group reflection and how to implement these to enhance play and inform future Playwork practice.
S24	Reflect on own practice to create a personal development plan with supervisor.
B7	Seek out learning and continuing professional development opportunities.

Theme -Reflective practice KSBs	
Pass	**Distinction**
Explains the different methods of self and group reflection and their benefits, and how these inform future playwork practice. (K6) Describes how they would create a professional development plan after reflecting on their own practice and ways to seek out continual professional development opportunities. (S24, B7)	N/A

Theme - Advocate for playwork KSBs	
S7	Promote the value and benefits of play for all children and young people.
Pass	**Distinction**
Explains the importance and value of play in a child's life and how they communicate effectively with adults, colleagues and/or other professionals about the child's right to play. (S7)	Explains how they adapt their advocacy and approaches when promoting the value and benefits of play for all children. (S7)

Theme - Relationships with parents and caregivers KSBs	
K11	Parents and caregivers expectations and how to respond to these.
S12	Manage interactions with parents/caregivers professionally.
B5	Behave in a polite and courteous way with a positive attitude.
Pass	**Distinction**
Explains how they engage with parents and care givers to determine their expectations and how they manage their interactions to respond to these expectations, with a courteous and positive attitude. (K11, S12, B5)	Explains how they adapt their approach when giving less positive feedback about a child to a parent or caregiver. (K11, S12, B5)

Theme - Support health and wellbeing KSBs	
S19	Promote healthy eating and an active lifestyle, ensuring specific dietary and cultural needs are me

Pass	Distinction
Explains how they promote a healthy lifestyle and why it is important to meet the needs of children with specific dietary and cultural requirements. (S19)	Explains the consequences of not adhering to providing food that meets children's dietary requirements and cultural needs. (S19)

Theme - Roles and responsibilities KSBs	
K19	Off-site policies and procedures, including trips, visits and residentials.
S15	Follow emergency incidents or common illness/infections policies and procedures, administering first aid and completing records when required.
S17	Contribute to recording and reporting procedures as required by the play setting.
S18	Contribute to administrative and financial record keeping.
S20	Maintain a clean environment according to local and national policies and procedures.
S22	Work as part of a team to support and supervise children and young people on off-site trips, complying with formal risk assessment of venues visited.
S25	Recognise the boundaries of own self and other Playworkers' interaction with children, and when it is necessary to report incidents to the appropriate safeguarding lead and Local Authority Designated Officer – LADO if appropriate when a Playworkers' behaviour towards a child may pose a risk of harm.

Theme - Roles and responsibilities KSBs	
Pass	**Distinction**
Describes the correct cleaning procedures and disposal of waste for the different areas in a play setting, such as toilets, kitchens, indoor and outdoor play equipment. (S20) Describes the procedures that should be followed when there is an emergency, incident or accident in the play setting. (S15) Describes their own contribution to recording and reporting information as required by the play setting, including administrative and financial records. (S17, S18) Describes own and team responsibilities in following policies and procedures when supporting children on off site trips. (K19, S22) Works as part of a team recognising the professional boundaries of a playworker to support and protect children. (S25)	Explains why it is important to follow correct recording and reporting policies and procedures in play settings and for offsite trips. (K19, S17)

Theme - Current and emerging playwork practice KSBs	
S3	Promote diversity and inclusion in Playwork practice.
S26	Apply the play work approach depending on the individual need.
Pass	**Distinction**
Describes how they promote diversity and inclusion within their own and others Playwork practice. (S3) Uses the Play work approach to support children's individual needs. (S26)	N/A

Overall Grading

This standard is graded as distinction, pass or fail. Each assessment component is graded individually. Once all assessment components have been completed the grades are combined as described in the table below to determine the overall grade.

The apprentice needs to get the relevant grade in every single assessment component to achieve that grade overall.

Knowledge Test	Observation	Professional Discussion	Overall Grade
Pass	**Pass**	**Pass**	**Pass**
	Distinction	**Pass**	
	Pass	**Distinction**	
	Distinction	**Distinction**	**Distinction**
A fail in any assessment component will result in a fail overall.			

Resits and Retakes

If an apprentice fails any of the assessment components, they will be eligible for a resit or retake. A resit does not require further learning, whereas a retake does.

Retake and resit grade cap: distinction. Resit time frame: typically two months. Retake time frame: typically four months.

Appeals

VQA's Appeals Policy, including time frames, can be found here.

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