

Personal Development Resources

Study Skills Guide for Level 2 and Level 3 Apprenticeships in Adult Care

Study Guide



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Welcome to this study skills guide to help you plan your time for off-the-job training and complete your studies for your Apprenticeship.

Your Apprenticeship will involve a 3-stage process of Teaching and Learning each month using a 'flipped learning approach' to develop your knowledge, skills, and behaviours.



Stage 1 - Introductory Video

Each month your Tutor will provide you with an introductory video for the subject that you are going to be taught in your next learning session.

You will be required to watch the video and then research the subject in preparation for the learning session the following month.

You will be required to watch the video in preparation for the learning session the following month. There will be suggested weblinks for you to access and familiarise yourself with relevant legislation. Speak with your manager regarding workplace policies and procedures relevant to the subject.



Stage 2 - Teaching and Learning Video

The following month your Tutor will check your understanding of the information contained in the Introductory Video to ensure that any research that you need to do has been completed, this enables you to build on your knowledge and skills in the learning session.

The learning session will then involve you watching another video with your Tutor with various activities to deepen your understanding of the subject and gain an understanding of how you will apply the new knowledge and skills in your day-to-day practice.



Stage 3 - Completion of Workbooks

At the end of each learning session, you will be given an on-line workbook to complete.

This will involve a number of activities for you to complete to develop your writing skills, this is essential to help you develop the skills required to progress in your career and to provide evidence of your understanding of the new knowledge and skills that you have developed for your Apprenticeship.



Finding the time to study

Balancing your workload with time to study is not easy, especially when you work in social care. However, it is an essential requirement of your Apprenticeship that you complete the mandatory off-the-job training. This is set at a baseline of six hours per week for the duration of your Apprenticeship and this must be during your paid working hours. Speak to your manager or allocated workplace mentor to agree a suitable time for this off-the-job training time. Ideally this needs to be in an environment where you have access to a computer to watch the Introductory Videos and complete your on-line workbooks.

Don't worry if this doesn't take up a full six hours each week as your monthly learning sessions with your Tutor and any training, coaching, or mentoring provided by your employer in relation to developing you in your job role is also contributes to this.

Each month your Tutor will review and plan your off the job training with you and your employer or workplace mentor and record this to ensure that it is met.



Developing your research skills

To prepare for each learning session you will be provided with an introductory video. It is essential that you watch the video and then research the subject in preparation for the learning session the following month. You will also need to research further information when you are completing your on-line workbooks.

A large amount of the research that you will need to undertake will be about policies and procedures in your workplace. Make sure that your manager or allocated workplace mentor can support you in obtaining this information from the outset. This will make your life much easier as you progress through your Apprenticeship!

Sometimes you will need to research information from other sources. Textbooks are always useful but since most of us now rely heavily on the internet to find information, we need to refine our internet search techniques so that the information returned is useful. As well as filtering out the rubbish so you don't have to, refined search techniques will save you a lot of time.

To do this use the following techniques:

1. Have a clear idea of what information you want before you start – vague searches will result in vague results!
2. Give the search engine specific instructions about what you want – think about the difference between asking for “care policies” and “policies around safeguarding in social care in England”...
3. Use refining techniques such as limiting the number of search results to be displayed, specifying the country from which the results are returned and the date of any results returned by year, month or date.
4. Use inverted commas (“”) in your search to ensure that only results which contains specific words are included.
5. Use the minus sign (-) to remove certain results. e.g. a search for mini could give you results about the car or about very small things. If your search asks for mini -car, your results will only be about very small things.



Assessing your search results

Once your search has returned some results, you need to understand them – you need to know the information you have found is valid, authentic, current, relevant, and sufficient.

In the age of fake news and misinformation, you need to be able to assess the information you have found and be able to tell the real from the fake.



Top tips for considering the information you have found

When was the information written?

If it was several years ago, you may want to find something more recent in case the facts have changed – this is a particularly useful approach when looking for information about legislation as it changes more often than you might think.

Where is the information stored?

Websites which end in .gov.uk (official UK government websites), .org.uk (typically third sector organisations) and .ac.uk (academic institutions in the UK) will contain unbiased, factual information which can be relied upon. This does not mean that all other sites contain unreliable information – just that you need to think about it carefully. Sites such as Wikipedia and forums can be a useful place to start but you must remember that these sites can be edited by anyone, and they are often not regulated for content so you cannot rely on the information contained in them to be factual.

Who wrote the information?

Has it come from a source such as a professor or doctor? If so, check their academic credentials from another source. Articles written by experts which have been 'peer reviewed' (that is, reviewed by other experts in the same or a similar field), can generally be considered reliable but remember that an article like this often contains opinions, and you will need to find other writing on the same topic to form your own, rounded opinion on the topic.

Is there enough information?

To prepare a full answer, you need to make sure that you have accessed a range of opinions and facts about the topic. If your search consistently turns up the same information, you might want to consider changing the terms of your search.

You should also consider the different writing styles that you are likely to come across:

- Academic writing - essays, dissertations, journal articles, and reports
- Journalistic writing - usually in news media, including both online and print media
- Fiction - based on imagination and including novels, stories, myths, and legends
- Non-fiction – such as textbooks and biographies

There may be overlap between different types of writing, for example, academic writing is also classed as non-fiction and there are plenty of people who would describe journalism as fiction!



Different types of sources

You will also need to gain an understanding of what is meant by primary, secondary, and tertiary documents and how they may be sourced.

Primary Source

Primary sources are documents, images, or objects that were created at the time of an event.

For example, if someone were looking for information about the first PRIDE parade, an eyewitness account of the event would be a primary source; a letter from someone who was there and described it to a friend would also be a primary source. News reports which covered the event at the time would also be primary sources.

Primary sources can be excellent sources of information but remember - an eyewitness account is only one person's memory or opinion of what occurred; they still need to be verified with other sources.

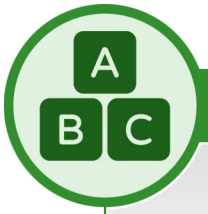
Primary sources are not the same as primary research, which is when a person carrying out research questions people about their experiences directly and records their responses.

Secondary Source

A secondary source is information which is written about a primary source. Usually these are books and/or journal articles written about the topic of the primary source using the primary source for information.

If someone were to write a book about the first PRIDE parade, it would likely contain the primary sources we mentioned above. Secondary sources are never written by people who actually witnessed events.

Secondary research is similar in approach, where rather than questioning people directly, a researcher uses the primary research which has already been completed to formulate their opinions on the topic.



Different types of sources - Continued

Tertiary Source

A tertiary source is usually a compilation of primary and secondary sources. Tertiary sources do not really lend themselves to the type of academic work you will need to do for your qualification.



Developing your writing skills

When you produce written work for your Apprenticeship, you will need to start developing an academic style of writing. Academic writing demands attention to style, the type of language you use, and spelling, punctuation, and grammar. It can seem like a daunting task at first, but effective planning makes writing work much easier.

Style

Academic writing requires the use of an appropriate style that differs in significant ways from other forms of communication. Using an academic writing style is not just about choosing the right words; it is about setting out your ideas and arguments in a coherent, accessible, and well-evidenced way.

Language

- Use more formal vocabulary such as 'state' instead of 'say' or 'discover' rather than 'find out'
- Never use contractions such as don't, can't, won't etc
- Never use slang or profanity
- Avoid exaggeration and overly descriptive language
- Avoid using personal pronouns for example 'It could be suggested that...' rather than 'I think...'
- Use the passive voice to ensure that you sound objective for example 'A sample was taken' rather than 'I took a sample'
- Any facts and/or theories must be backed up by acceptable sources on the subject

Structure

- Ensure your piece of writing has a clear introduction, body, summary, and conclusion
- Avoid overlong sentences and make sure that you are not repeating yourself – academic writing must be concise
- Be specific and use quantifiable evidence where possible for example '100 people' rather than 'a lot of people'
- Make sure that you use appropriate headings and sub-headings to signpost to relevant sections

Content

Ensure your writing meets the brief. It is helpful to return to the question several times as you think about your answers so you can be sure that you have answered it rather than simply spilling every fact you know about the topic into the workbook.

It is not acceptable to use sources in your writing without acknowledging them. This is called plagiarism. Awarding organisations that provide accreditation for your Diploma take plagiarism very seriously and it can result in your qualification not being awarded, so it is extremely important that you make sure your sources are acknowledged in your writing.

You must also ensure that you proof read your work and correct any spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. Each time you submit a piece of written work, your Tutor will use a SPaG guide to help you develop these skills. They will point out where you have made a mistake and help you to correct it. Given time and practice, you will develop the skills to do this on your own.

You can also use your bksb account to improve your spelling, punctuation, and grammar skills, even if you have already completed your Functional Skills requirement. If you still have Functional Skills left to do, developing these skills will help you to pass. Many people find it helpful to leave a piece of writing for a day or two before attempting to proofread it as you can come back to it with a fresh pair of eyes.

✓	Good answer	
Sp	This line contains a spelling mistake	
P	This line contains a punctuation mistake	<p>Punctuation has been used incorrectly or punctuation has not been used where needed. This includes use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apostrophes • Capital letters • Commas • Colons • Exclamation marks • Full stops • Inverted commas (speech or quotation marks) • Question marks • Semi-colons
G	This line contains a grammar error	<p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words in the wrong order or in the wrong tense. • use of the wrong word such as 'pacific' where 'specific' would have been appropriate • confusion with words such as their/they're/there, your/you're, here/hear, write/right/rite • use of made up words such as 'irregardless' and 'supposeably' • incorrect phrases such as 'could of' instead of 'could have'
//	A new paragraph is needed	
?	The meaning of this section is not clear	

We hope this guide to Study Skills has been useful.
If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your Tutor.