



# Employer Guide

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## Introduction

This booklet has been produced for all employers who have employees enrolled on a Government funded programme with B2B Engage Ltd.

Our programmes are supported by the Learning and Skills Council and the people enrolled on them are referred to within this booklet as 'candidates'.

## Core features of the NVQ / Apprenticeship Programme

The programme has two main aims. These are:

1. Learning – to gain the practical skills and knowledge required to carry out their job role
2. Assessment & achievement – to gain formal accreditation of the skills they develop through the achievement of a National Vocational/Apprenticeship Framework Qualification and Key Skills

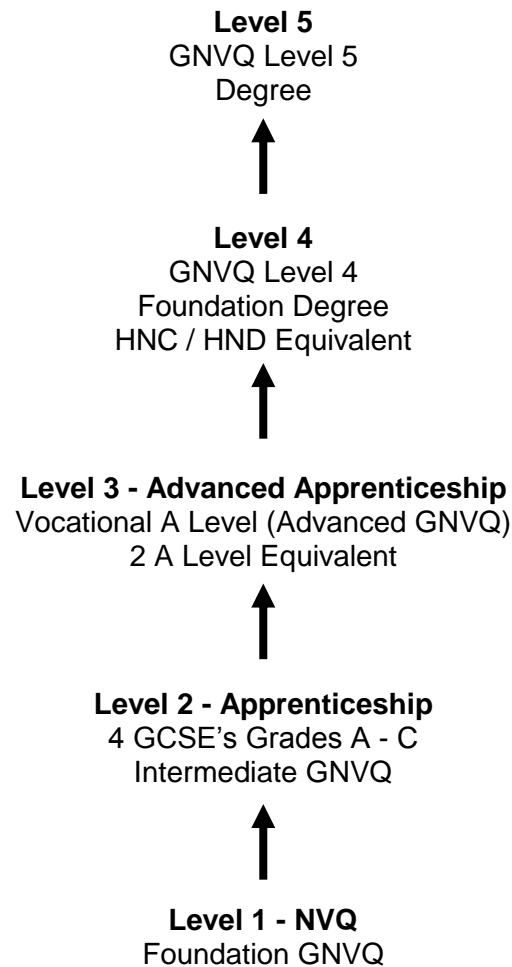
Candidates will need to gain sufficient, relevant work experience within your company in order that they can achieve the National Vocational Qualifications agreed in their Individual Learning Plan.

## Qualifications Available

B2B Engage Ltd offers the following subject areas as NVQ's, Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships where available:

- Business Administration
- Customer Service
- Team Leading
- Management
- Advice & Guidance
- Learning & Development
- Cleaning & Support Services

## NVQ Levels and Their Qualification Equivalents



### Apprenticeships and NVQ's at Level 2

Apprenticeships and NVQ's at level 2 offer you an opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications while you work, rather than separately at school or college. They are designed for young people and adults who wish to follow careers in industry or business.

The criteria for achieving an Apprenticeship are laid down in a "framework". Apprentices work towards achieving an NVQ level 2, Key Skills and a Technical Certificate by the end of the programme. Some frameworks require additional qualifications, which are specific to your job (e.g. Basic Food Hygiene Certificate for Chef Apprenticeships).

This qualification is valuable on its own but it can also be used as a foundation for the Advanced Apprenticeship, providing you with solid experience and knowledge.

## Advanced Apprenticeships and NVQ's at Level 3

The criteria for achieving an Advanced Apprenticeship and NVQ at level 3 are similar to those laid down in an Apprenticeship and NVQ framework. Advanced Apprentices work towards achieving an NVQ level 3, Key Skills and a Technical Certificate by the end of the programme. Once again, some frameworks require additional qualifications, which are specific to your job (e.g. Basic Food Hygiene Certificate for Chef Apprenticeships).

Some Apprenticeships, such as engineering, are built around a foundation-training programme that involves a period at college or a training centre. During this time you develop your skills and knowledge for use in the workplace.

Advanced Apprentices learn the skills and gain the qualifications required to work in a variety of technical, supervisory and managerial jobs, and will also give you the qualification to progress onto Foundation Degrees or HNC's.

The Advanced Apprenticeship is designed to provide you with the skills you will need to do your job and advance your career. As well as learning specialist technical skills relevant to the industry or occupation you choose, you will also learn valuable skills, known as "Key Skills". Key Skills are described later in this booklet.

Your training, assessments and reviews are all outlined in your Individual Learning Plan.

As your programme is based on the National Vocational system you will be assessed on your ability to perform to fixed national standards. The faster you learn, the faster you can progress. However we expect that you would take between twelve months and two years to complete the apprenticeship depending on the framework.

Upon successful completion of the framework, you will receive NVQ, Key Skills and Technical certificates (if applicable) together with an Advanced Apprenticeship Certificate. Each of these qualifications is nationally recognised.

## Programme Duration

Programmes funded by the Learning & Skills Council need to be completed within the funding entitlement period. At present these are:

### Standard Length of Stay – programme timescales

- **NVQ** 9 months
- **Apprenticeship** 12 months
- **Advanced Apprenticeship** 18 months

## Employer involvement

For the programme to be a real success for both your business and your employees, your active support and involvement is needed every step of the way!

### *How can you help?*

You can be actively involved in a number of ways. For example:

#### **Induction**

You can make sure that your candidates are enrolled on the most appropriate programme to meet your needs and their needs. We offer a broad range of vocational qualifications and in many cases candidates could complete any one of a choice of two or three programmes. Your Assessor will explain what each programme involves and you can choose the one that best fits your needs.

#### **Agreement of the learning plan**

Once you and your candidate have decided on the most appropriate qualification route you can then choose optional units that exactly match the person's job role, or the job role you hope they can develop into.

Again, the Initial Assessment Specialist / Assessor will explain what your options are and you and your candidate can decide which options would be the most appropriate.

#### **The skills scan and identification of training and learning needs**

Before the training and assessment can begin it is important that a thorough skills scan is completed with the candidate. The skills scan is completed to identify all of the candidates' training needs in relation to each of the units to be undertaken. The Assessor can complete this with the candidate; however candidates are often insufficiently self-critical. As the person's employer you will have the best idea of your own employee's strengths and weakness and so are key to the process and for this reason you are pivotal to the process.

Once the skills scan is complete, you, your candidate and the Initial Assessment Specialist / Assessor will need to agree an individual learning plan.

The learning plan will need to show:

- Which qualification(s) the candidate plans to achieve
- Which units they will complete
- A target achievement date for each unit to be achieved
- What on-the-job training the candidate will need to undertake before they are ready to be assessed for each unit
- What off-the-job training the candidate will need to undertake before they are ready to be assessed for each unit
- When progress will be formally reviewed by the candidate, employer and Assessor to ensure everything is happening as planned

## **Training**

Where the candidate needs some training first before they can be assessed, you will need to discuss what training opportunities are available, with your Assessor. In some cases your own in-house training will be best, in other cases (e.g. application of number, using IT) it may be useful for the person to attend an off-the-job training session. You will need to decide, from the opportunities available, which ones will be provided for your candidate. The training methods and specific activities to be undertaken will then need to be formally agreed and recorded on the Individual Learning Plan.

## **Assessment**

The Assessor will be responsible for carrying out assessments for both the NVQ and Key Skills units. They will observe the candidate and will assess evidence produced in the workplace. Your input, however, is extremely important. The Assessor will only see a 'snap shot' of the candidate during their monthly assessment visits. Whereas, you, as the employer, will have a clearer understanding of how the person performs within their job role on a daily basis. It is helpful if you can provide your assessment of the person's competence against the NVQ and Key Skills standards and the best way to do this is through the provision of 'witness testimonies'. The booklet 'training and assessment – a guide for employers' explains how to do this; please ask your Assessor for a copy.

## **Review**

Every 8-12 weeks that the person is on the programme, you, the candidate and the Assessor should formally review the person's progress against the objectives originally agreed in their training plan. As achievement of the NVQ and Key Skills is centred on the candidate's ability to perform a job, the review is an excellent opportunity to provide feedback on job performance as well as discuss the progress being made with the achievement of the qualifications in the training plan.

## Ongoing Monitoring and Support

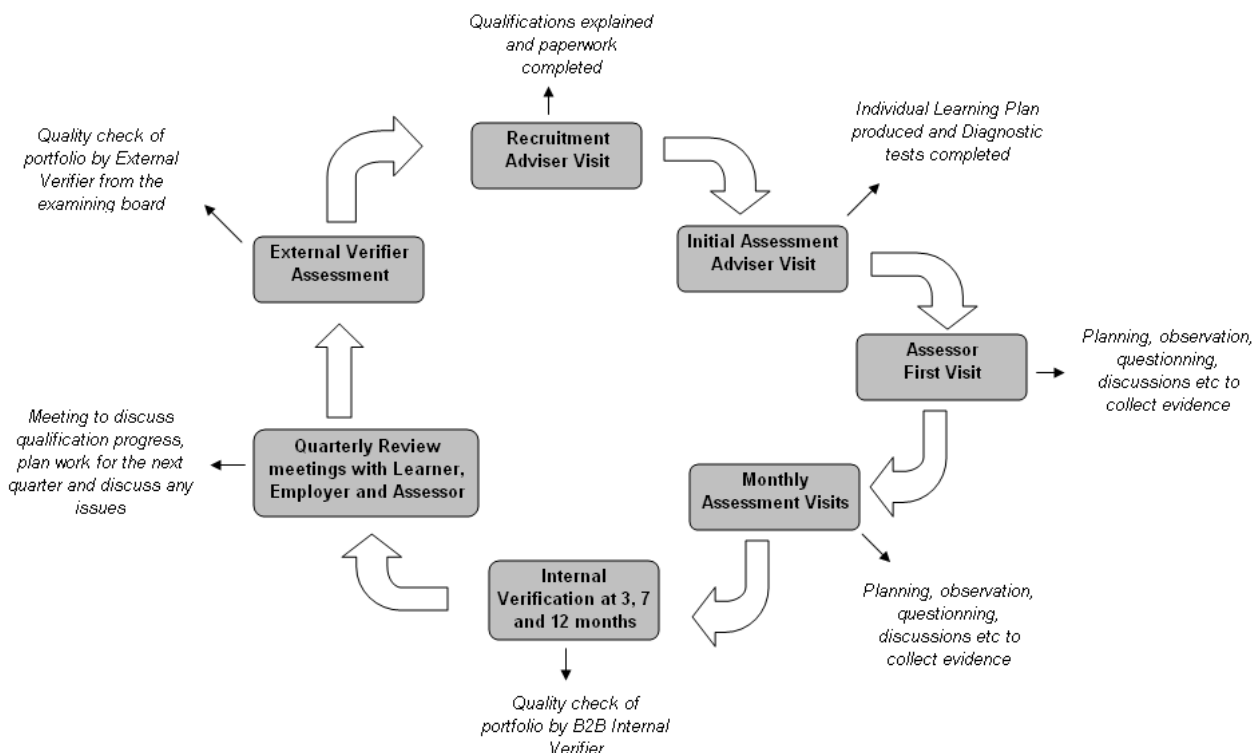
The Assessor will visit your candidate(s) at least once a month to:

- Provide training, guidance and support to help the person develop their skills and knowledge to the standards required
- Carry out an assessment for the NVQ and key skills
- Set assignments or questionnaires that need to be completed by the next visit
- Review any evidence collected or produced for their NVQ portfolio
- Agree the evidence to be collected prior to the next visit

Every 10 - 12 weeks, the Assessor will:

- Carry out a full 'Progress Review'. This is an opportunity for you and your candidate to discuss the progress being made with the Assessor. You will also need to agree any further training needs and how these will be met.

### The Assessment Cycle



## The Work-based Assessment Process

### Structure

NVQ's and Apprenticeships are competence-based qualifications. They are linked to a person's ability to perform competently a range of tasks to a nationally agreed standard. The standards for each qualification have been agreed by an Industry Lead Body, a group of senior personnel from organisations within the industry. The standards are revised periodically to reflect changes occurring within the industry.

B2B Engage Ltd currently offers programmes leading to National Vocational Qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 4.

Level 2 qualifications are designed for new entrants to an industry, Level 3's are for supervisors and junior managers and the level 4 is for middle managers, normally with some responsibility for managing a budget.

Each qualification is divided into what are referred to as units and elements. Each element of each unit concentrates on a particular aspect of a job role and the tasks that are involved in fulfilling that function.

In summary this means:

### National Vocational Qualification Structure:

<b>Element</b>	WHAT the candidate needs to be able to do
<b>Performance Criteria</b>	HOW the candidate must perform the task
<b>Range Statements</b>	The situations in which the candidate must be able to demonstrate competence (i.e. the where and when)
<b>Knowledge requirements</b>	WHY the tasks must be carried out in a certain way

To achieve each element candidates will need to collect evidence to demonstrate competence against all of the performance criteria, ranges and knowledge requirements.

## Apprenticeship / Advanced Apprenticeship Programme structure

The programme will be made up of a number of units and these will fall into three groups:

- Vocational NVQ Units; and
- More generic Key Skills Units
- Technical Certificate (if applicable)

The Vocational units assess your candidates' ability to perform certain key tasks. The Key Skills units assess the more general skills that any employee will need when performing a whole variety of tasks.

The Key Skills Units are usually:

- Communication
- Application of Number

But they may also include:

- Information Technology
- Working with Others
- Improve own Learning
- Problem Solving

The level of key skill will depend on the type of work your candidate is currently undertaking and the level of responsibility they have within their department/company. If the candidate is in a non-supervisory position they will probably work towards key skills at level 1 or 2. If they are in a supervisory role it is more likely that they will work towards key skills at either level 2 or 3. The key skills levels that each candidate must achieve are outlined in their Individual Learning Plan.

Some examples of the types of evidence that candidates can collect are outlined below:

## Types of evidence

'Evidence' is the word used in the assessment process to describe anything that directly demonstrates that a candidate can complete a task to the standards required by the NVQ and the Key Skills.

Examples of evidence include:

- Observation reports – written accounts provided by a Assessor , describing step by step how a candidate completed a task
- Case studies – written reports produced by the candidate, explaining how they dealt with a specific problem or task. The case study must be authenticated by a supervisor or colleague who can confirm that the text is an accurate account of what the candidate actually did
- Witness testimony – written reports provided by the supervisor, or an experienced colleague, describing specific examples of a candidates competence
- Products of the candidates' work – this type of evidence includes anything that the candidate actually completes or produces as part of their normal working activities. Product evidence could include complete records or forms, letters, memo's and faxes
- Projects and assignments – sometimes candidates will need to complete a project or assignment to show that they can complete tasks that may not be required by the current job role. Projects can include customer satisfaction questionnaires or assignments used to test the candidates numeracy skills
- Questioning – these can be asked either orally or in writing. Answers are normally provided in the candidates own handwriting or, in some, cases transcribed for them by the Assessor
- Discussion – a recorded discussion between the candidate and Assessor , used to gain examples of where and how competence has been demonstrated and to check that the candidate understands why tasks must be completed in a certain way
- Video evidence – showing the candidate performing tasks in a real working environment

Each type of evidence collection is described in more detail below. Each section sets out to explain how each type of evidence must be presented and the role that the supervisor can take in the decision making process.

Evidence from activities carried out in the workplace:

- Letters
- Memo's
- Booking forms / customer orders
- Customer service related records
- Print out from IT related records
- Diary entries / schedules
- Diagrams
- Rough notes
- Complaint records / forms
- Minutes from meetings
- Training notes
- Appraisals

## The employer role within the assessment & verification process

### Introduction

This section of the employer guide has been produced to help supervisors of people enrolled on a work-based learning programme, to gain a good basic understanding of how the NVQ and Key Skill Assessment process actually works. Once you have developed a clear understanding of the assessment process, hopefully you will be able to use this knowledge to actually contribute to the assessment process.

Candidates who are working towards achieving an NVQ and Key Skills will need to provide evidence that they are competent at completing a range of tasks that are key to the job role they perform, or wish to perform in the future.

To demonstrate competence candidates will need to provide evidence that they can complete tasks to a nationally agreed standard and that they are able to do this repeatedly.

Within this booklet we will explain what we mean by 'evidence' and we outline the different ways in which this evidence will be collected. We will also explain how the evidence your candidates collect will be assessed and how a decision will be arrived at regarding the candidate's competence. No one knows more about an employee's job competence than the supervisors who work with them on a daily basis. For this reason, it is important that supervisors play an active role in contributing to the assessment decisions made about their candidates and the guide will help you to do this.

The success of work-based learning programmes is often dependent on the level of employer involvement. To gain the most from the programme, it is important that you help guide the learning and assessment process. You can do this in a number of ways. Supervisors can help to choose the units to be achieved in the first places, and can help assess candidates' current skills levels by assisting with the completion of a skills scan. Once training needs have been identified, supervisors will invariably be able to identify the best ways of addressing these. Finally, once your candidates are ready to be assessed, you can help to decide whether tasks are being carried out in accordance with your company's procedures. You can also help to judge whether your candidates have a sufficiently clear understanding of the company practices and procedures that must be followed.

## The role of the supervisor in the assessment process

Assessment method	Supervisor role
<b>Observation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on the most suitable times for the training coordinator to observe specific tasks being carried out</li> </ul>
<b>Witness testimony</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testimony can be provided by a supervisor, or an experienced colleague</li> <li>• Testimony provides the candidate with excellent evidence that the candidate consistently works to the national standards, rather than just when they are being observed by the training coordinator</li> <li>• Testimony should be signed and dated by the person supplying it</li> <li>• The witness should also sign the contributors profile at the front of the portfolio</li> <li>• The testimony should be supplied on letter headed paper (where this is not available, the testimony should be authenticated with a company stamp or similar)</li> </ul>
<b>Product evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors should sign pieces of product evidence to confirm they are the candidates own work</li> <li>• Supervisors should also confirm that the piece of evidence was produced on time and in accordance with company requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Case studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors should read what the candidate has actually written in each of their case studies and confirm, by signing and dating the document, that it is a true account of what actually happened</li> <li>• Check that product evidence submitted to support the information provided in the case study are the candidates own work</li> </ul>
<b>Questioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check that the answers provided to questions are correct. Many questions relate to your companies own practices and procedures. Although training coordinators are job competent they will never of course have the same in-depth knowledge of company policies that you do</li> </ul>
<b>Projects and assignments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the candidate and training coordinator with practical ideas for projects that can be completed in the workplace and will benefit the candidate and the company</li> </ul>
<b>Professional discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and check content of what has been discussed. Sign and date records to confirm that examples of competence described are true and that the outcome met company standards and requirements</li> </ul>

Funded by:

## Setting up a portfolio

Your candidates should now have a folder or portfolio. It will contain the standards for the NVQ and key skills and will be used to file evidence.

The folder for evidence should be set up to contain the following information at the very front:

- NVQ Title Page and Progress Summary\*;
- A copy of the candidates Individual Learning Plan\*;
- Contributors Profile\*;
- Up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (CV);
- Job description;
- A short one page company profile; and
- An organisational chart.

Copies of the first three documents (i.e. those marked with an \*) will be provided by the Assessor. The candidate will need to produce the rest.

All of the documents listed above, should be filed at the front of the folder. These documents will, in a sense, 'set the scene' for the Internal and External Verifiers who will eventually check the completed portfolio. The verifier's look at hundreds of folders a year and it helps them if they can find out a bit about each candidate and their company.

### Matrix Sheets

Matrix sheets are grid sheets that are used to mark off the evidence that is produced. This forms a summary for each element to show the candidate has demonstrated competence against the national standards.

One piece of evidence may cover all performance criteria in one element or only one. Similarly one piece of evidence may cover more than one element and hopefully more than one unit. Discuss with your Assessor the best way to effectively collect evidence.

## The basic rules of assessment

To achieve an element the candidate must:

- Demonstrate that they are competent through at least three assessment methods. The requirement for varied assessment methods is based on the idea that if the candidate was only observed by the training coordinator then this might not show an accurate picture of the candidate's competence as a demonstrated on a daily basis
- Have demonstrated competence against the 'performance criteria' on at least three occasions
- Have demonstrated competence within the context of each of the 'range statements' (e.g. the candidate is able to assist customers who are angry, anxious, unsure of their specific needs etc.)
- Have demonstrated that they have the required level of knowledge and understanding (in most cases, the candidate will need to answer a set of written questions to demonstrate this)

## Health and Safety

While the candidate is on a programme, you are responsible for managing their health and safety.

As part of your responsibilities you will need to ensure that:

### Management of candidate health and safety:

- The candidate must be aware of their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act (these are summarised on the HSE Poster 'What You Should Know' which should be on display at all business premises)
- The person must be made aware of the contents of your Health and Safety Policy document. It is a legal requirement for all organisations employing five or more staff to have such a document in place. All members of staff should be aware of the contents regardless of whether or not they are on a LSC funded training programme.
- You should complete a risk assessment specifically for persons 16-18 working on your premises. The document should identify the risks attached to a person performing a job role at your site. As well as identifying the potential risks and hazards, you must also state in your risk assessment how these risks will be controlled or eliminated altogether.
- Make the candidate aware of any changes to procedures as soon as they occur.
- Provide adequate supervision appropriate to the person's level of experience.

## Equal opportunities policy statement

Your Business Development Manager will have issued you with a copy of our equal opportunities policy statement. It is important that you read this document carefully as you will be expected to ensure that staff and candidates enrolled on the programme are provided with the opportunity to train and work in an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination. If you have your own equal opportunities policy we would appreciate if you could provide your Assessor with a copy.

## Ongoing documentation and record keeping

The following records should be completed and / or retained for LSC audit purposes:

### Records:

- **Accident Book entries** – if the learner has an accident on a day they are at work the details must be recorded in the accident book and B2B Engage Ltd must be informed (this includes an accident that occurs during a lunch or tea break).
- **Holiday records** – should be maintained to verify that the learner has used their full holiday entitlement at the end of each year.
- **Disciplinary records** – If you need to follow the disciplinary procedure for any reason, it is vital that you inform your Training Co-ordinator first. Records of meetings should be made and retained and copies sent to B2B Engage Ltd.

## The complaints procedure

If you, or your staff, are unhappy about any aspect of the programme or how it is being delivered it is important that you let us know about your concerns early on.

We are committed to handling any complaints you may have in a pro-active but sensitive manner.

Complaints can be made by telephone, letter, and e-mail or in person by contacting the Programme Manager / Lead Internal Verifier:

Lyn Curran  
Programme Manager / Lead Internal Verifier  
B2B Engage Limited  
Asmec Centre  
Eagle House  
The Ring  
Bracknell  
Berkshire, RG12 1HB

T: 0800 0191867

F: 01344 303192

E-mail: [lync@b2bengage.co.uk](mailto:lync@b2bengage.co.uk)

## Employer Acknowledgement

I confirm that:

- I have been issued with a copy of the 'employer guide'
- I pledge my company's full commitment to providing equality of opportunity and a workplace and training environment that is free from all forms of unfair discrimination
- I have read the B2B Engage Ltd Equal Opportunities Policy Statement and agree to the full implementation of all areas of the policies

AND/OR

My organisation already has an equal opportunities policy statement and a copy of this is attached

Company name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Position in company: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_