

apprenticeship FRAMEWORK

Digital Application Support (Wales)

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION FOR ALL APPRENTICESHIP STARTS FROM 14 OCTOBER 2016

Modifications to SASW came into effect on 14 October 2016. These changes relate to the **Essential Skills and Employer Rights and Responsibilities** requirements of a framework and they **ONLY** apply to new Apprenticeship starts on, or after, 14th October. Apprenticeship starts before this date must continue to meet the 2013 SASW requirements for Essential Skills and Employer Rights and Responsibilities.

For more details of the changes and how they will affect new apprenticeship starts, please read the following preface page to the framework document. NB: Please check the "Revising a Framework" section for information on any additional changes that may have been made to this framework.

Latest framework version?

For any previous versions of this framework: www.acwcerts.co.uk/framework_library

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Digital Application Support (Wales)

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Framework information

Information on the Issuing Authority for this framework:

Instructus

The Apprenticeship sector for occupations in air conditioning, building services engineering, business and administration, cleaning, customer service, digital/information technology, electro technical, electrical and electronic servicing, enterprise and business support, facilities management, heating and ventilating, housing, human resources and recruitment, industrial relations, leadership and management, marketing and sales (also includes contact centres and third sector), plumbing, property and refrigeration.

Issue number: 1	This framework includes:
Framework ID: FR04247	Level 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level 4-7 <input type="checkbox"/>
Date this framework is to be reviewed by: 31/03/2023	This framework is for use in: Wales

Short description

This framework is for apprentices developing into the role of 'subject matter expert' for digital application skills within their workplace. Typically this will be in a smaller business, outsourcing their IT technical support but needing someone in house to liaise with external suppliers and provide on-the-job help internally for colleagues, or in a larger business looking for advanced IT skills to develop efficient, application-based solutions. The framework is defined at Level 2 and 3.

Apprentices may progress to IT professional helpdesk support, database or web development/digital content management roles.

Contact information

Proposer of this framework

This apprenticeship has been proposed and developed by Instructus, with support from Agored Cymru. Employers were engaged through Innovation Point and training providers and Colleges were also invited to feedback and input to the framework development.

Consultation events in Wales brought together employers and subject matter experts to provide detailed input and feedback. An online consultation was conducted to gather views from other employers and interested stakeholders.

A steering group, established with Agored Cymru, gave detailed comments on the structure and content of the framework and component qualification at each level. The group comprised representatives from the Awarding Organisation, private training providers and colleges, together with independent consultants and subject matter experts appointed by Instructus. Individual meetings were held with key stakeholders in Wales, including Qualification Wales. The development period coincides with their review of ICT qualifications to better prepare candidates for the digital world.

This framework for Wales is based on a similar framework introduced in Scotland in 2016 following extensive consultation and recommendations from the IT sector employer Apprenticeship Advisory Group including members from BT, IBM, NHS, RBS, Cisco, Net Resources, Openreach, SCVO and Oracle. The Modern Apprenticeship in Digital Application Support at SCQF Level 6 in Scotland has attracted significant interest from employers and providers with over 100 registrations per quarter in its first year.

Those involved in development and consultation include:

Education: Cardiff Met, Swansea University, Coleg Gwent, ALS, CAD Centre, Dysgu Bro Ceredigion, Skills4Success, Coleg Llandrillo, Coleg Menai, Coleg Meirion Dwyfor, Cwmbran High School

Employers: ONS, BT, NHS Wales, Innovation Point, IWPL, BBC, Lloyds Banking Group, DVLA

Other Stakeholders: JISC, Qualification Wales, Agored Cymru

Developer of this framework

Name: Damian Brown

Organisation: Instructus

Organisation Type: Sector Skills Council

Job Title: Standards and Qualification Manager

Phone: 01536 738631

Email: skills@instructus.org

Postal address: Unit 3, Cherry Hall Road
North Kettering Business Park
Kettering, Northants
NN14 1UE

Website: www.instructus-skills.org

Issuing Authority's contact details

Issued by: Instructus

Issuer contact name: Damian Brown

Issuer contact phone: 01536 738631

Issuer Email: skills@instructus.org

Contact Details

Who is making this revision

Your organisation

Your email address:

Revising a framework

Why this framework is being revised

Summary of changes made to this framework

Qualifications removed

Qualifications added

Qualifications that have been extended

Purpose of this framework

Summary of the purpose of the framework

The pace of technological change is such that digital transformation has become a key driver in business and general 'digital competence' is now required for employability and in most if not all jobs.

Changes to the Welsh curriculum mean digital skills are now developed and taught through all parts of a pupil's schooling to equip them for employment and to become competent users and confident creators using technology. The shift in the thinking behind the Digital Competence framework to include citizenship, collaboration and computational thinking as well as developing and producing solutions using IT, means that the old ITQ-based framework will no longer be appropriate or sufficient for a new generation of Digital Application Support staff entering the workforce.

What will be needed, however, is advanced digital user skills to help, support and coach today's digital workforce and bridge the gap with IT professionals and technical support.

The Barclays Digital Development Index 2017, which analysed 88,000 UK job adverts and 6,000 adults, claims that Welsh employees score among the lowest of all UK regions for their digital skills. Welsh respondents only scored 5.28 out of 10 in a digital skills test used for The Index. The report said Welsh employers are willing to pay a premium for workers with word processing, data analysis and social media capabilities. Indeed, almost a quarter (24%) of jobs advertised in Wales require advanced digital skills such as graphic design, data analysis or 3D modelling (national average 15%).

The Barclays Index finds that 63% of UK jobs require digital skills such as word-processing, database spreadsheet or social media management skills, but only 57% of the workforce have these capabilities. Those aged 35 and 44 are 11% less likely than their millennial colleagues to say they are confident about their digital skills. Generation X workers are also more worried about their ability to keep their skills up to date (21.5% have confidence in their ability to do so, versus 28% for millennials).

What is included in this framework

At the heart of the framework is the Diploma for Digital Application Support at Level 2 or 3. This is based on the new NOS for IT Users, approved in 2014. The Diploma at Level 3 is a substantial qualification of 84 credits, on a par with equivalent Level 3 qualifications for IT and Telecoms Professionals.

The Apprenticeship in Digital Application Support is a broad-based apprenticeship allowing some scope for specialisation in:

- data management, administration and processing
- multimedia and web applications
- application helpdesk support

The qualified Apprentice will be able to troubleshoot and solve problems using a range of different application software packages as appropriate to the business context in which they are working.

The Apprentice also needs good knowledge and practical skills in the industry context in which they are operating. The European Commission 2017 report "ICT for Work: Digital Skills in the Workplace" shows that digital technologies are used in all types of jobs, also in economic sectors not traditionally related to digitisation e.g. farming, health care, vocational training and construction. They report:

- 38% of workplaces report that the lack of digital skills has an impact on their performance. Loss of productivity (46%) and decrease in the number of customers (43%) are the main negative impacts.
- 15% of workplaces report employees lack digital skills. Digital skills gaps are more likely to be found in high- and medium skilled than in low-skilled jobs.
- 88% of workplaces have not taken any action to tackle the lack of digital skills of their employees. Training is the most common action undertaken.]

Aims and objectives of this framework (Wales)

[The framework, produced as part of IT sector provision, is aimed at a cross-sector audience. It replaces the 2011 framework for IT users FR04062.

The Digital Application Support specialist combines advanced digital and technical IT skills with sector-specific knowledge.

This framework is aimed at those:

- working in offices in large organisations across all industry sectors acting as the 'expert' in Application Software, devising solutions and providing help and support to colleagues to relieve the pressure on the technical IT helpdesk
- working in IT helpdesks with specific responsibility for end user Application Support
- in smaller businesses without an on-site IT function, taking responsibility for setting up systems, users and day-to-day troubleshooting
- responsible for working with third party IT service providers

The aims of the framework are:

- to develop advanced digital skills to offer application helpdesk support
- to develop approaches to improve personal effectiveness and business productivity using

IT

- to offer an entry pathway for those seeking to enter or change to IT professional careers, which will in time help address skills gaps and shortages in data analytics, information security and software/web development. The IT & Telecoms Professional qualifications and Apprenticeship framework are well established, but do not meet the needs of the non-technical ICT specialist.

The framework will also contribute to meeting the skills priorities in Wales by:

- Developing essential skills to improve general literacy, numeracy and ICT competence in Wales
- Helping employers to grow their online presence and increase business reach, competitiveness and prosperity
- Providing a clear pathway into digital jobs to support growth of the Welsh economy
- Building the apprentice's employability and ability to contribute to employers' success

This framework will also help to deliver digital skills for everyone as part of the Digital Wales Delivery Plan.

Entry conditions for this framework

There are no specific qualifications required for entry on to the apprenticeship framework.

While it is not mandatory for a candidate to have achieved a lower level qualification in IT prior to embarking upon this Apprenticeship, it may be beneficial. Some of the fundamental IT principles and core technical skills need to be learned at a basic level before more advanced skills and techniques can be effectively applied in the workplace. This may be evidenced by Essential Digital Literacy Skills. In some instances however, prior training or experience may have equipped a candidate for direct entry to the Apprenticeship.

The majority of Digital Application Support apprenticeship roles require:

- Proactive, fast learners
- Individuals who are able to work independently or as part of a team
- The ability to focus on assisting customers and colleagues find solutions to problems
- Good attention to detail and the ability to deliver what is required, when it is required
- Individuals to be open to change and focus on the requirements of the business at all times

Roles in data management and administration would suit individuals who:

- Are well organised and efficient
- Have good problem solving ability
- Can manage multiple or complex tasks

Roles in web publishing or creative industries would suit those who:

- Have an interest in design and creativity with a flair for creating audio, video and other multimedia products;
- Have good communication and team-working skills

Roles in technical support would suit those who are:

- Good communicators
- Meticulous and methodical, and can work under pressure to set deadlines
- Analytical and systematic in their approach to problem solving

There are no barriers to entry into the sector for any group of people.

All parties involved in the delivery of Apprenticeships should ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all and any barriers (real or perceived) are addressed to support anyone seeking to enter employment and undertaking an Apprenticeship.

Applicants from diverse backgrounds are welcomed and Instructus expects employers and

training providers to comply with the provisions of the Equality Act to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against in terms of entry to, and progression within the sector.]

Level 2

Title for this framework at level 2

Foundation Apprenticeship in Digital Application Support

Pathways for the framework at level 2:

Pathway 1: Digital Application Support

Level 2, Pathway 1: Digital Application Support

Description of this pathway

Total minimum credit value for this pathway is 82 credits

Combined qualification: 64 credits

ESW Communication, IT and Application of Number - 18 credits.

Entry requirements for this pathway in addition to the framework entry requirements

There are no additional requirements other than the general entry conditions. However, most employers will require good (A*-C) GCSE passes in English and Maths as a minimum for entry.

Job title(s)	Job role(s)
IT Helpdesk technician	Recording and responding to requests for help and support from IT users
Application support	Improving on-the-job productivity using digital apps and solutions
ICT technician	Setting up and maintaining ICT hardware and software
Data processing administrator	Preparing, entering, querying and reporting using data management systems
IT support technician	Providing first-line support to customers
Web content developer	Designing and developing websites and multimedia content

Qualifications

Competence qualifications available to this pathway

N/A

Knowledge qualifications available to this pathway

N/A

Combined qualifications available to this pathway

B1 – Level 2 Diploma in Digital Application Support

No.	Ref no.	Awarding organisation	Credit value	Guided learning hours	UCAS points value
B1a	C00/1231/7	Agored Cymru	72	600	N/A

Relationship between competence and knowledge qualifications

Not applicable - single combined qualification only.

This framework exceeds the minimum of 37 credits set by the SASW. |

Essential Skills

An apprenticeship framework must specify as a Welsh certificate requirement the expected achievement levels of Essential Skills in Communication and the Application of Number, and Digital Literacy (where required).

ESSENTIAL SKILLS WALES

Communication	Min.Level 1
Application of Number	Min.Level 1
IT/Digital Literacy	Min.Level 2

For the current list of acceptable proxy qualifications and appropriate minimum grade/level requirements, please refer to the most recent version of SASW on the gov.wales website. Additional guidance materials can be found on the Knowledge Base section of the ACW website.

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Progression routes into and from this pathway

There are no specific entry conditions for the Level 2 framework but qualifications which may provide a useful grounding for the Apprenticeship include:

- Learning from the 14 to 19 Pathways
- Qualifications in the Welsh Baccalaureat
- Wider Key Skills
- Essential Skills Wales
- GCSEs or National Diplomas in ICT-related subjects

The Level 2 Apprenticeship programme offers successful apprentices the opportunity to further progress in their studies and go on to undertake a Level 3 Apprenticeship programme, Foundation degrees, Higher Nationals or another higher level qualification. Apprentices may also elect to continue within their job role and pursue their learning by undertaking additional technical or business training and qualifications.

UCAS points for this pathway:

[Framework Developer to complete with relevant info]

Employee rights and responsibilities

Please note that for Apprenticeship starts from 14/10/2016 onwards ERR is no longer a **mandatory** requirement in all frameworks.

However, it may still be included in some frameworks and where it is not explicitly stated that ERR is not a requirement then confirmation of an Apprentice's ERR achievement will still remain a requirement for Apprenticeship certification purposes.

Is ERR a requirement for this framework? **YES** **NO**

Delivery and assessment

[Framework Developer to complete with relevant info]

|

Level 3

Title for this framework at level 3

Apprenticeship in Digital Application Support

Pathways for the framework at level 3:

Pathway 1: Digital Application Support

Level 3, Pathway 1: Digital Application Support

Description of this pathway

Total minimum credit value for this pathway is 102 credits

Combined qualification: 84 credits

ESW Communication, Digital Literacy and Application of Number - 18 credits.

Entry requirements for this pathway in addition to the framework entry requirements

There are no specific entry conditions for the Level 3 framework but qualifications which may provide a useful grounding for the Apprenticeship include:

- Learning from the 14 to 19 Pathways
- Qualifications in the Welsh Baccalaureat
- Wider Key Skills
- Essential Skills Wales
- GCSEs, A Levels or National Diplomas in ICT-related subjects

Job title(s)	Job role(s)
Website technician or designer	Recording and editing audio and video clips; preparing text and images for publication
Teaching Assistant	Preparing presentations or other learning resources; keeping records using databases or spreadsheets
Database administrator	Developing and maintaining business databases
Application helpdesk technician	Responding to hardware and software problems; setting up user hardware, software and security; designing solutions to improve business processes using IT
IT trainer	Working with one-to-one or small groups to develop digital skills, including preparation, resource development and training activities
App developer	Planning, designing and developing mobile applications for business
Project office manager	Providing the back-office functions for a range of IT and other projects, including planning, monitoring and evaluation of business and IT projects

Qualifications

Competence qualifications available to this pathway

N/A

Knowledge qualifications available to this pathway

N/A

Combined qualifications available to this pathway

B1 – Level 3 Diploma in Digital Application Support

No.	Ref no.	Awarding organisation	Credit value	Guided learning hours	UCAS points value
B1a	C00/1231/4	Agored Cymru	84	600	N/A

Relationship between competence and knowledge qualifications

Not applicable - single combined qualification only

This framework exceeds the minimum of 37 credits set by the SASW.

Essential Skills

An apprenticeship framework must specify as a Welsh certificate requirement the expected achievement levels of Essential Skills in Communication and the Application of Number, and Digital Literacy (where required).

ESSENTIAL SKILLS WALES

Communication	Min.Level 2
Application of Number	Min.Level 2
IT/Digital Literacy	Min.Level 2

For the current list of acceptable proxy qualifications and appropriate minimum grade/level requirements, please refer to the most recent version of SASW on the gov.wales website. Additional guidance materials can be found on the Knowledge Base section of the ACW website.

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Progression routes into and from this pathway

There are no specific entry conditions for the Level 3 framework but qualifications which may provide a useful grounding for the Apprenticeship include:

- Learning from the 14 to 19 Pathways
- Qualifications in the Welsh Baccalaureat
- Wider Key Skills
- Essential Skills Wales
- GCSEs, A Levels or National Diplomas in ICT-related subjects

The Level 3 Apprenticeship programme offers successful apprentices the opportunity to further progress in their studies and go on to undertake a related degree programme.

They could select from Bachelors degrees, Foundation degrees, Higher Nationals or another higher level qualification. Apprentices may also elect to continue within their job role and pursue their learning by undertaking additional technical, business or managerial level training and qualifications.

Apprentices who have completed a Level 3 apprenticeship programme have often progressed within their career to take on team leader or senior level positions, utilising their expanding technical expertise – and guiding and training others within the organisation.

UCAS points for this pathway:

(No requirement specified)

Employee rights and responsibilities

Please note that for Apprenticeship starts from 14/10/2016 onwards ERR is no longer a **mandatory** requirement in all frameworks.

However, it may still be included in some frameworks and where it is not explicitly stated that ERR is not a requirement then confirmation of an Apprentice's ERR achievement will still remain a requirement for Apprenticeship certification purposes.

Is ERR a requirement for this framework? **YES** **NO**

Delivery and assessment

Framework Developer to complete with relevant info

How equality and diversity will be met

Instructus Digital Application Support Framework offers no barriers to entry and is intended to accommodate all learners regardless of gender, age, disability or ethnic origin.

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender imbalance remains a significant issue for the IT & Telecoms sector. Female representation has fallen from 22% in 2001 to 16% in 2016 (51% across Wales as a whole). The gender imbalance is worsening across IT-related courses and industry. Instructus has initiated a number of programmes to encourage girls to consider a career in IT.

AGE OF WORKFORCE

The average age of IT & Telecoms professionals in the UK is 39 years old (41 for workers more generally). 47% are aged 40 or above and only 19% are aged 16-29 (down from 33% in 2001). Strong apprenticeship programmes in this sector will help establish the pipeline of skilled professionals moving into higher level job roles in 5-10 years time.

ETHNICITY AND DISABILITY

The Information and Communication Technologies industry is one of the most ethnically diverse industries in the UK, with 13% of the workforce (an increase from 8% of the workforce in 2002) coming from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds compared to 9% across the whole economy.

There is significant provision for individuals with disabilities throughout the IT & Telecoms sector with many, varied opportunities for rewarding careers at all levels. A wide range of IT apprenticeships are available for those with differing levels of disability. [

On and off the job training

Summary of on- and off-the-job training

Training hours are delivered during contracted working hours under an Apprenticeship agreement, or must have been completed no more than three years prior to commencing the apprenticeship.

For the Level 2 Foundation Apprenticeship pathway: 420 hours

For the Level 3 Apprenticeship pathway: 500 hours

On and off the job training hours:

- must be planned, reviewed and evaluated jointly between the apprentice and tutor, teacher, mentor or manager
- must allow training support via a tutor, teacher, mentor or manager
- may be delivered through one or more of the following methods: individual and group teaching, e-learning, distance learning, coaching, mentoring; feedback and assessment; collaborative/networked learning with peers; project work; guided study

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is encouraged e.g. relevant content from the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Off-the-job training

Off-the-job training includes those learning activities undertaken away from normal work duties.

A minimum of 40 hours for mentoring (or at least one hour per week for the duration of the programme) is included at each level to support qualification units.

LEVEL 2

The minimum required is 240 hours. This is made up of:

- Qualification units: 60 hours
- Essential Skills Wales (for apprentices without the required levels): 180 hours

LEVEL 3

The minimum required is 240 hours. This is made up of:

- Qualification units: 60 hours
- Essential Skills Wales (for apprentices without the required levels): 180 hours

How this requirement will be met

Off-the-job learning will be required for the Apprentice to achieve the designated knowledge outcomes of the combined Diploma qualification. This may involve a combination of day release, block release, web based learning, mentoring and coaching.

Off-the-job training must be formally recorded. This evidence needs to be checked and signed by both assessor and employer.

Previous work-related experience, recorded through the appropriate Awarding Organisation's QCF/RQF 'Recognition of Prior Learning' procedures, can count towards the off-the-job hours required to complete the Apprenticeship. Uncertificated off-the-job learning must have been acquired within 3 years of application, or the Apprentice must have been continuously employed in the relevant job role in the industry for 12 months duration. |

On-the-job training

LEVEL 2

An Apprentice must receive a minimum of 360 hours on the job training

This includes:

- 20 hours related to the on the job elements of induction and Employer Rights and Responsibilities
- 15 hours on the job to practice the three Essential Skills

LEVEL 3

An apprentice must receive a minimum of 420 hours on the job training

This includes:

- 20 hours related to the on the job elements of induction and ERR
- 15 hours on the job to practice the three Essential Skills

Previous work-related experience, recorded through the appropriate Awarding Organisation's QCF/RQF 'Recognition of Prior Learning' procedures, can count towards the on the job hours required to complete the Apprenticeship. Training providers are encouraged to identify additional on the job training programmes that customise the learning to the new workplace. Uncertificated on the job learning must have been acquired within 3 years of application, or the Apprentice must have been continuously employed in the relevant job role in the industry for 12 months duration.

How this requirement will be met

An Apprenticeship programme is fundamentally designed to be a work-based programme, whereby instructor-led learning can be immediately applied by apprentices in a real work context.

The qualifications contained in the framework reflects the overall design of an apprenticeship, containing some learning outcomes which are designed to be delivered off-the-job and some

practical outcomes designed to be delivered on-the-job. Wherever possible, the competences should be assessed holistically in the workplace, ensuring that any knowledge elements in the units are learned in the work and organisational context.

This can be recorded by any suitable means including, for example, portfolios of work, performance reviews and work logs/diaries.

An Apprentice can plan and review their use of predefined or commonly used tools and techniques for complex and non-routine activities. As a result of reviewing their work, they will be able to devise solutions in the use of these in order to improve productivity for themselves and others.

Through coaching on-the-job, they will develop transferable skills and techniques for self-help and in turn be prepared to offer support and advice to others.

Evidence of guided learning hours undertaken should be recorded in the apprentice's Individual Learning Plan, and updated at 12 week reviews throughout the programme.

On completion of the Apprenticeship, the total number of guided learning hours can be evidenced through submission of the Combined Qualification and Essential Skills Wales. |

Wider key skills assessment and recognition

While Wider Key Skills are not a **mandatory** part of the framework, training providers are encouraged to provide apprentices the opportunity to achieve them.

For this framework, there are natural opportunities for Wider Key Skills to be embedded within the mandatory units of the following qualifications:

[Enter Qualification Names]

Improving own learning and performance

[Give examples - signpost to specific units in framework qualifications that would meet these requirements]

Working with others

[Give examples - signpost to specific units in framework qualifications that would meet these requirements]

Problem solving

[Give examples - signpost to specific units in framework qualifications that would meet these requirements]

apprenticeship FRAMEWORK

For more information visit-
www.acwcerts.co.uk/framework_library