

Learner Handbook

Adult Skills Fund (ASF) and Individual Learners



Welcome...

Welcome to The Skills Network

Thank you for choosing to study with us. We're pleased to support your learning and look forward to being part of your journey.

At The Skills Network, we're committed to providing a high-quality learning experience. You'll benefit from expertly designed materials, responsive support from our Contact Centre and Learning Support teams, and personalised guidance from your Assessor.

How Your Course Works

Your course follows a clear structure with set deadlines to help keep you on track. These have been designed to be manageable alongside everyday commitments.

If you're facing challenges, don't worry - we're here to help. Just get in touch as soon as possible.

Our Commitment to You

We encourage you to make the most of this opportunity:

- Engage fully with your learning
- Go beyond the basics
- Build skills to support your future

In return, we'll provide you with a supportive, rewarding experience to help you succeed.

Thinking Ahead

Our dedicated Careers and Progression Team is here to help you take the next step - whether that's further study, a new job, or progression in your current role.

Let's Get Started

We hope you find your course inspiring and enjoyable. On behalf of everyone at The Skills Network: good luck, and we look forward to supporting you every step of the way.

Your voice matters to us - we're always looking to improve, so we encourage you to share your feedback throughout your learning journey. We're also keen to hear about your progression, whether that's moving into work, further study, or achieving your personal goals.

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Application & Enrolment

Complete your initial assessment and learner intent questions so your assessor can tailor your feedback to your specific needs and aims. If you have any additional learning support needs, please tell us about them to we can give you the right support to succeed.

You'll receive an email asking you to accept your funding partner and their terms and conditions before you are enrolled.

On-boarding - Week 1

You'll receive everything you need to get started via email. If you'd prefer a call, you can request a callback on your EQUAL account.

If you've told us you need some additional support on your course, you'll be assigned a specialist Learning Support Advisor (LSA) who will be in touch to discuss your support needs and come up with a plan to suit you.

Your Learner Journey

First Impressions Survey

Your feedback is incredibly important to us so we can improve our services. You'll be able to complete your survey at the end of your first unit, as a reminder you'll also receive a link to complete the survey in your first feedback or by email around week 4 of your course.

Learning & Assessment

Work through your learning and submit your assessments in line with your deadlines. Your Assessor will give you feedback on your work and guidance on progress for improvements and subsequent units.

Your Assessor can also give you 121 support by phone or email if you need it. Just let us know if you need any help or guidance.

Completion & Achievement

Our Contact Centre and Learning Support teams, as well as your Assessor, will support you to complete and achieve your course.

When you achieve, we'll carry out a quality check before your certificate is claimed from the Awarding Organisation. This helps uphold the high standards of your qualification.

You'll also complete an exit survey to give feedback on your overall experience and how this will benefit you in your next steps. This helps us understand what worked well, where we can improve, and how your learning supports your progression.

Progression & Next Steps

Our Careers and Progressions Team offers personalised advice to help you take your next step - whether that's a new job, further study, or career growth. You can access this support by emailing Progression@theskillsnetwork.com

Funding Compliance

Sometimes we need extra evidence from you before your funding can be confirmed - such as proof of residency, ID, salary, or benefits.

If this applies to you, our Compliance Team will contact you by phone and email. Please respond as soon as possible, as we can't assess your work until your funding is confirmed.

Progress Checks & Intervention Support

We'll send you regular check-ins by email as you progress through your course - these are here to help you stay motivated and supported.

It's important to keep to your due dates so that you can complete your course on time. If you do fall behind or need more time, our team will get in touch to offer support and agree a new plan with you.

You can also contact us directly if you're struggling - we're here to help.

If you've told us about an additional learning need and have a support plan in place, we'll check in with you by phone or email as often as needed to make sure you're getting the right support throughout your course.

How is my course delivered?



Your course runs over 8–12 weeks and is delivered via distance learning - meaning you can study at your own pace, in your own space, while working towards set deadlines.

How It Works

- You'll use our online learning resources to complete assessments independently.
- Your Contact Centre Advisor (CCA) is here to support you and will check in when needed.
 - If you're on track, this will usually be through automated email reminders.
 - If you've shared that you have a learning difficulty or additional needs, and told us you'd like additional support while on your course, a specialist Learning Support Advisor (LSA) will call you shortly after enrolment to discuss the support available and agree support and interventions that suit you.

Falling Behind?

Your course has set deadlines within an 8-12 week course duration. It is expected that you meet these deadlines.

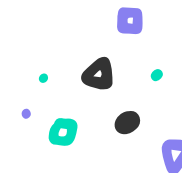
- If you miss a deadline, your advisor will get in touch to agree an action plan and offer support.
- If you consistently miss deadlines, you may be withdrawn from the course. This could result in an administration fee.

How is my course delivered? (cont.)

Need Support?

You can contact us at any time to:

- Discuss your course
- Request additional support
- Explore reasonable adjustments
- Be referred to a specialist Learning Support Advisor



Our contact details are at the back of this handbook - we're here to help!

Getting Started With Your Course

Once you've successfully enrolled, you'll receive a **Welcome Email** with everything you need to get started on your course. If you'd prefer to speak to someone, you can also request a call back through your EQUAL learning account to talk through the process with a member of our team.

Additional Support

If you've told us that you have any **additional learning needs** and would like support, a member of the Learning Support team will contact you directly to discuss your needs and the support we can offer. You can also tell us about any support you'd like.

How is my course delivered? (cont.)

Your Welcome Course

You'll also gain access to a short **Welcome Course** on your EQUAL account, which covers all the key information you need while studying with The Skills Network.

We strongly recommend taking the time to complete it before getting started in your learning.

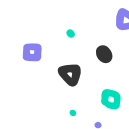
What's in Your Welcome Email?

- How to access your **learning materials**
- Contact details for our **Safeguarding Team**
- Key learner themes:
 - **Safeguarding**
 - **Prevent**
 - **British Values**
 - **Online Safety**
- **Study tips** and guidance on plagiarism, the use and misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and referencing
- A **handy video** explaining how your course works and what to expect



Make sure to read through everything carefully and reach out if you have any questions - we're here to help you get off to a great start!

Getting the most from your EQUAL account



EQUAL is the bespoke online learning platform where you'll find all your **learning resources, assessments, and feedback**, as well as the useful **Learner Room** for additional information.

click here for a short video to show you how to use your EQUAL account

<https://youtu.be/yugRIBD3z9k>

Getting Logged In

- You'll receive an email with your **EQUAL login details** - please check your junk/spam folder if it's not in your main inbox.
- When logging in for the first time, you'll be prompted to **reset your password**.

Password requirements:

Must be at least **8 characters**, including at least one number.

Tip: Choose a password that's secure but easy for you to remember.

If you forget your password, just click '**Forgot your password?**' on the login page and follow the email instructions.

Navigating EQUAL

Once logged in, your course summary page will show key information such as:

- A calendar of your upcoming **submission dates**
- The **number of units** in your course
- Quick access to your assessments

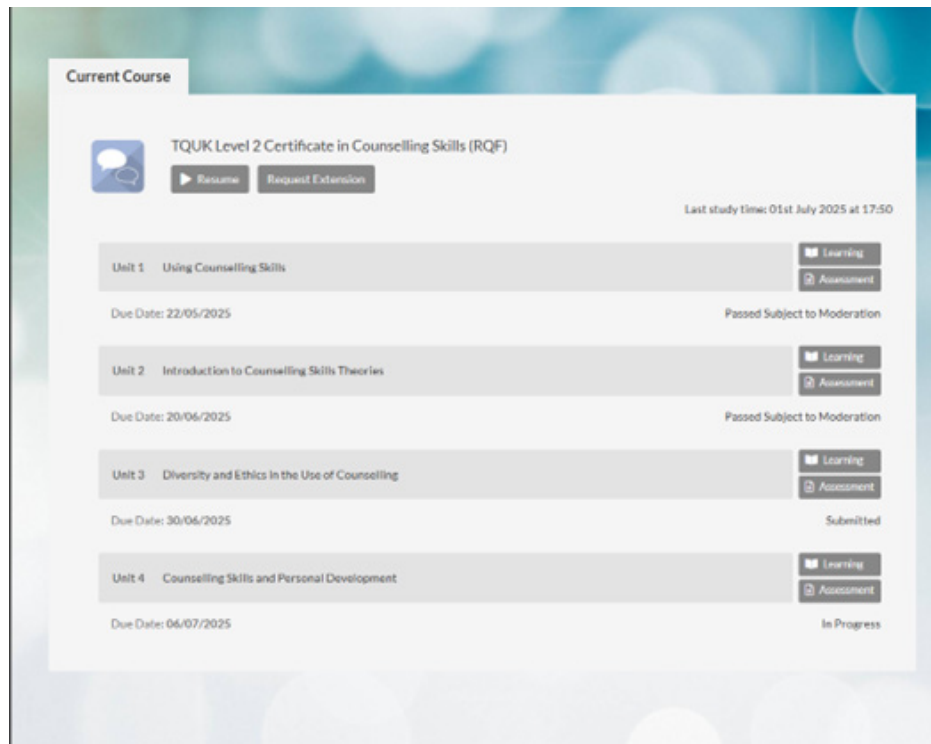
To access your study materials, go to the '**Learning**' tab. This is where you'll find all your learning materials and resources.

If you need help using EQUAL at any point, please reach out to the Contact Centre Advisors - we're happy to support you.

Getting the most from your EQUAL account (cont.)

How to access your learning materials:

Once you have clicked on your active course, you'll be presented with the below. Each unit is broken down into Learning and Assessment. To access your learning materials click on the learning button for your unit:



Getting the most from your EQUAL account (cont.)

To complete your course successfully, make your way through the **learning resources**. They're designed to give you all the knowledge you need to confidently answer your **assessment questions**.

Our content is **engaging and interactive**, with:

- Activities to get you thinking
- Quizzes to test your understanding
- Additional reading to deepen your knowledge

All materials are written by **subject experts** and approved by **nationally recognised Awarding Organisations**.

Important: You must show **Evidence of Learning within 4 weeks** of enrolment to secure your course funding. This means submitting some units of work within that timeframe.

Keep an eye on your course calendar (visible in your EQUAL account) to track your **upcoming submission dates** and stay on schedule. You can also request an extension of up to 7 days through your course calendar. This video shows you how to request an extension through your EQUAL account: <https://youtu.be/S6fKwTHAaz8>

Once you've worked through your learning content, your assessment questions

Getting the most from your EQUAL account (cont.)



Completing and submitting your assessment:

will appear at the end of the learning.

Answering Your Questions

- Answer each question **in full, in your own words**, and with care.
- If you take a break, you can return to your questions at any time via the **Assessment** tab on your course overview page.
- Each question starts with a **command verb** - this tells you how much detail is expected (e.g. describe, explain, evaluate).

For more help understanding command verbs, click here:

<https://theskillsnetwork.com/documents/command-verbs-sep-24.pdf>

Using the Assessment Tab

- Go to the 'Assessment' tab for an overview of the unit.
- Click '**Click to answer**' on the right-hand side of the screen to begin inputting your responses.
- You can navigate freely between questions and complete them in any order.

Copy and paste restriction:

You are unable to copy and paste answers into the answer box. This system has been put in place to assist in preventing plagiarism.

Getting the most from your EQUAL account (cont.)

Before You Submit

- After answering every question, you'll be taken to the **Assessment Overview** page.
- From here, you can review your answers and click '**Click to edit**' if you want to make changes.
- If you have used other sources to help with your research or answers, please ensure you have cited your source in your answers.
- When you're happy with all your responses, click '**Submit**'.
- If a question is showing in a **blue box** – you have not answered this.
- If a question is showing in an **orange box** – you have written an answer, and is ready to be submitted.

You'll be asked to confirm that the work is your own. This is your declaration that you haven't copied from other sources or misused AI tools. Plagiarism is not tolerated at The Skills Network.

For some learners, a feature called **Turnitin** is available to you. You will see an additional box asking you to review the Turnitin End User License Agreement (EULA). Turnitin is automated software that scans work for AI Writing and Plagiarism. In the EULA agreement, you are being asked to agree that your work is your own and that it can be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin. This helps make sure everyone is submitting original work and not copying from others.



Getting the most from your EQUAL account (cont.)

For further information on Turnitin or **plagiarism** or AI misuse please refer to the Plagiarism and AI Misuse section of this handbook, or refer to the Plagiarism and AI Misuse Policy in the "About Us" section of our website. <https://theskillsnetwork.com/about-us/>

As part of our assessment process, your work will be sent to Turnitin which will perform automated checks for plagiarism and/or usage of AI. Please read the Turnitin's End User Licence Agreement and choose whether you accept or reject the terms.

☐ I accept the Turnitin EULA
☐ I decline the Turnitin EULA

☒ I can confirm that all of this work is my own.

Submit

Here's a quick video to support you in submitting your assessments:

<https://youtu.be/3ufWrBjQmTs>

After Submission

- Your assessment will be sent to an Assessor for marking.
- Once submitted, you can no longer edit your answers.
- A confirmation screen will confirm that your submission was successful.

If any questions are showing in a **red box** – your work has been marked by an Assessor and they would like you to re-submit some parts of it. Don't worry, just refer to your assessor's feedback to guide you.

If your assessment is showing in a **green box** – you have passed this subject to moderation!

Getting the most from your EQUAL account (cont.)

How to access your feedback:

Once your Assessor has marked your assessment, you'll receive an **email notification**. Be sure to check your **inbox and junk/spam folder** regularly so you don't miss it.

How to Access Your Feedback

1. Log in to EQUAL using your email address and the password you created.
2. If you've passed the unit, you'll see a congratulatory message on your course overview.
3. Go to the Assessment tab for the relevant unit.
4. Click Review to see your feedback and assessment outcome.
 - Your assessment outcome will appear at the top.
 - Your Assessor's written feedback will be displayed below.

Please see this handy video to help with accessing and reviewing your feedback:

https://youtu.be/0DnFe_o19pM

Understanding Your Feedback

- Questions you've **passed** will be highlighted in **green** – no further action is needed.
- Questions marked in red require more attention and need to be **re-submitted** within 7 days.
- Carefully read the feedback provided - it's there to help you improve and meet the learning outcomes.

Getting the most from your EQUAL account (cont.)

Re-submitting Your Work

Once you've made your changes:

1. Return to the **Assessment Overview** page.
2. Review all your answers.
3. Click **Submit** to re-send the assessment for marking.

We're here to support you through every step - reach out to your Assessor if you need help with your feedback or making changes to your responses.



Your Assessor



Once you submit your first assessment, you will be assigned a dedicated **subject-expert** Assessor. They will guide you throughout your learning journey by reviewing your work and providing personalised, constructive feedback.

If you require assessor support before submitting your first assessment, please contact Assessor.Services@theskillsnetwork.com who can arrange this for you.

Your Assessor will:

- Mark your submitted work.
- Provide detailed, personalised feedback based on the goals and information you shared in your Learner Intent.
- Focus feedback on key areas, including:
- **Summary, Strengths, Areas for Development, and Next Steps.**

Feedback may include guidance on:

- Strengthening your answers through **external research, referencing, or personal examples.**
- Embedding key themes such as **Safeguarding, Prevent, British Values, or Online Safety**, where relevant.
- Improving your **English and maths skills**, along with helpful resources to support your development.

Your feedback is designed to support and guide you for future submissions, helping you continually improve and achieve your learning goals.

If you wish to contact your Assessor, you can email them directly using the contact details provided in your feedback.

If you haven't submitted any work yet but would like to speak with an Assessor, please contact Assessor.Services@theskillsnetwork.com to arrange a support call.

What do my outcomes mean?



After you submit your work, your Assessor will review it and give one of the following outcomes:

- **Pass (Subject to Moderation)** - This means your Assessor believes you have met all the required learning outcomes for the question or assessment. However, this decision may still be subject to an internal quality check before it is final.
- **Refer** - This means you haven't yet fully met the learning outcomes. Your Assessor will give you clear, supportive feedback explaining what's missing and how to improve your answer. A "Refer" is **not a fail** - it simply means more information or evidence is needed to meet the requirements set by the Awarding Organisation.

What is Moderation?

Moderation (also known as Internal Quality Assurance or IQA) is a quality check carried out by a qualified internal quality assurer. Their role is to review your Assessor's marking and feedback to ensure it:

- Meets the Awarding Organisation's requirements.
- Is consistent, fair, and of a high standard.
- Accurately reflects whether the learning outcomes have been achieved.

Moderators may:

- Agree with your Assessor's decision.
- Request more information if they feel the learning outcomes haven't been fully met.
- Override a Refer and award a Pass if they believe all assessment criteria have been met.

Not all learners are selected for moderation, and in most cases, you won't be aware if it has happened. It's a normal part of our quality assurance process to ensure fairness and accuracy for all learners.

If you have any questions about moderation, you can contact our Quality Team at Quality.Team@theskillsnetwork.com

Command verbs and Study Tips

Command Verbs

Assessment questions are a common way to test your knowledge and understanding of a subject. To answer these questions effectively, it's essential to identify the type of response that is expected.

Command verbs play a crucial role in this process, as they indicate the specific action you should take when answering the question. In this section, we will help you identify command verbs in assessment questions and provide tips on how to respond to them.

Command Verbs and their meaning

Identify: Point something out or give a list of main features.

State: Express clearly and briefly.

Define: Give a definition or specify meaning of an idea or concept.

Compare: Examine subject matter to note the similarities and differences.

Outline: Give brief details that cover the main points in summary.

Summarise: Give the main ideas or facts in a concise way.

Describe: Give a detailed account that sets out the main points of an argument, account or opinion.

Explain: Set out purposes or reasons or make something clear in relation to a particular situation. An explanation requires understanding to be demonstrated.

Evaluate: Make a qualitative judgement taking into account different factors and using available knowledge/experience/evidence.

Analyse: Break the topic down into separate parts and examine each part. Show how the main ideas are related and why they are important.

Discuss: Give an account that addresses a range of ideas and arguments.

You can also find a copy of the command verbs in your Learner Room and here: <https://theskillsnetwork.com/documents/command-verbs-sep-24.pdf>

Command verbs and Study Tips

Study Tips

Your assessors have put together some useful tips to help you get the most out of your course:

Support your answers with examples

- Always try to give an example to back up your responses. This strengthens your answers and demonstrates understanding.

Engage with interactive activities

- Make the most of your online learning by completing 'stop and think' exercises. These support course understanding and build digital skills.

Self-assess your learning

- After each topic or section, take a short break.
- Before moving on, write bullet points from memory about what you've learned, then check your notes or resources for accuracy.

Capture ideas on the go

- Use mobile apps like Google Keep or Evernote to save thoughts, ideas, or questions.
- These apps also allow you to store links, images, and voice notes for review during study time.

Command verbs and Study Tips

Use alternative learning resources

- Listen to podcasts or videos while doing other tasks.
- These are great for hearing current trends and practices from professionals in your sector.
- Make use of Microsoft Word tools
- 'Read Aloud' – to help with reading and comprehension
- 'Dictate' – to support writing by speaking your responses
- 'Editor' – to check and improve spelling and grammar before submitting your work (note please tell your assessor in your answer if you have used editing software).

Create a dedicated study space

- Choose a quiet area and reduce distractions to stay focused.

Stick to a study schedule

- Break tasks into smaller steps, plan your time, and take regular breaks to maintain concentration.



Learner Voice and Compliments

Your views matter to us - whether you want to share a compliment or suggest something we could do better. Feedback from learners like you helps us improve our courses and enhance the learning experience for everyone.

At different stages of your course, we'll ask for your input:

- **First Impressions Survey:** Shortly after you start, we'll ask how your learning experience is going so far.
- **Exit Survey:** At the end of your course, we'll ask for your thoughts on the support you received, what you learned, and how the course is helping you reach your goals.

These surveys will be sent to you via **text message or email** or will be available in your first and last units, and we encourage you to complete them - your insights are important and appreciated, and allow us to improve our services.

We also offer additional ways for you to get involved and share feedback:

- Learner Focus Groups (via Teams)
- Telephone Feedback Interviews
- Case Studies
- Monthly Learner Newsletters
- Learner Reward and Recognition Initiatives.

Occasionally, we may contact you during your course to ask for feedback on a specific part of your learning journey. If you'd like to register your interest, please contact Learner.Voice@theskillsnetwork.com

By sharing your views, you're helping us make our courses even better.

Careers, Progressions and Next Steps

At The Skills Network, we are committed to supporting your lifelong learning journey and helping you achieve your personal and career aspirations. Our dedicated Careers and Progressions Team is here to provide tailored information, advice, and guidance to help you take the next step - whether that's further study, entering the workforce, or advancing in your current role.

We offer a wide range of support services, including:

- Guidance on progression routes and further study opportunities
- Help with creating and refining your CV
- Mock interviews to build your confidence and interview skills
- Support with job searching and applications
- Access to a variety of workshops designed to enhance your employability and career readiness
- Support with getting into volunteering.

You can explore and book onto our full range of workshops via this link: <https://outlook.office.com/book/TheSkillsNetworkCareersProgressionsWorkshops@theskillsnetwork.com/>

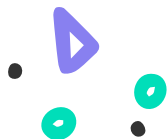
For personalised support, contact our team at:

Email: progression@theskillsnetwork.com

Telephone : 01757 600709



Safeguarding, Wellbeing and key topics



Safeguarding and Wellbeing at The Skills Network

At The Skills Network, safeguarding means **protecting yourself and others from harm** by taking the right steps to stay safe and supported.

We are committed to providing a **safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment** for all learners - particularly young people and vulnerable adults.

Our Safeguarding Team

Our fully trained Safeguarding Team is here to offer advice, guidance, and support to anyone who may be at risk or feeling unsafe. If you have concerns about your own wellbeing or someone else's, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Craig Tupling - Executive Director of Delivery and Quality

Safeguarding Manager:

Anna Valentine-Marsh

Contact Details:

Email: safeguarding@theskillsnetwork.com

Phone: 01757 600 706

To learn more about our safeguarding policies, visit:

<https://theskillsnetwork.com/safeguarding/>

You can also view safeguarding policies and procedures relevant to your Funding Provider by visiting their website.

Safeguarding, Wellbeing and key topics (cont.)

Looking After Your Wellbeing

We know that studying, especially remotely can be challenging at times. Your wellbeing matters. If you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or struggling with your mental health:

- Reach out to our team - we're here to listen and support you
- Access resources linked in your assessment feedback and on our Safeguarding page, linked above

Your safety and wellbeing are our priority. If something doesn't feel right, speak up - we're here to help.



Safeguarding, Wellbeing and key topics (cont.)

PREVENT at The Skills Network

At The Skills Network, we are committed to playing our part in protecting the UK from the threat of terrorism and extremism.

We believe that everyone - **staff and learners alike** - has a role to play in recognising and preventing extremist behaviour or views that may lead to harm.

- We take all concerns, complaints, or suspicions related to extremism extremely seriously.
- Our Safeguarding Team is trained to respond appropriately and provide support when needed.
- We aim to create a safe and inclusive learning environment where all learners are respected and supported.

To learn more, please refer to our full **Safeguarding and Prevent Policy**:

<https://theskillsnetwork.com/safeguarding/>

If you ever feel concerned about extremism, radicalisation, or unsafe behaviours - speak up. Your safety and the safety of others comes first.



Safeguarding, Wellbeing and key topics (cont.)

Understanding British Values

At The Skills Network, we actively promote and uphold **British Values** to help create an inclusive, respectful, and safe learning environment for everyone.

British Values are defined as:

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

These values are outlined in the UK Government's Prevent Strategy (2011)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011 and in the updated guidance Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales-accessible>

We expect all learners to treat others with **respect and fairness**, in line with the **protected characteristics** listed in the **Equality Act 2010**.

Safeguarding, Wellbeing and key topics (cont.)



Online Safety and Digital Literacy

As an online learner, it's important to feel confident and safe when using digital tools and platforms.

At The Skills Network, we encourage all learners to develop strong **digital literacy skills** this is the ability to use technology safely, responsibly, and effectively.

This includes:

- Protecting your **personal information** online
- Being aware of **cyberbullying**, scams, and misinformation
- Using secure passwords and recognising unsafe websites or links
- Communicating respectfully and appropriately in digital spaces.

If you ever feel unsafe or unsure while studying online, **please speak to your Assessor or Contact Centre Advisor** or the **Safeguarding Team**, we're here to support you.



Safeguarding, Wellbeing and key topics (cont.)

Optional online learning modules

To further support your understanding of Safeguarding, British Values, Online Safety, and Prevent, we offer **optional online learning modules** through your EQUAL account.

- These modules are not mandatory and should not take priority over your main qualification.
- However, we encourage you to complete them to broaden your awareness and personal development.

If you'd like these added to your account, please speak to a member of the Contact Centre.



Useful Policies and Links



Please note: if you are studying with one of our **external partners**, their own specific policies and procedures will apply here. Please speak to the Contact Centre team if you need any assistance regarding this.

Complaints and Compliments Procedure

Have a Concern? We're Here to Help

If something isn't right, we want to hear from you. We're committed to resolving concerns quickly and fairly.

Step 1: Raise It Informally

Please start by speaking to your **Assessor** or the **Contact Centre**.

Staff will do their best to resolve your concern informally and promptly.

Step 2: Make a Formal Complaint (If Needed)

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, you can make a formal complaint in writing by:

- **Emailing:** complaints@theskillsnetwork.com
- **Writing to:** The Skills Network Complaints
Abbey Court, 6-16 Benedict Drive,
Selby, YO8 8RY

If you prefer, you can **ask a member of staff** (e.g. your Assessor or Contact Centre Advisor) **to raise the formal complaint on your behalf**.

Your complaint will be assigned to an **Investigating Manager** from the relevant area. You will receive a response and outcome within **10 working days**.

Note: *Complex complaints may take longer, but you'll be kept informed throughout.*

Useful Policies and Links (cont.)

Compliments Are Welcome Too!

Want to recognise great service or support?

You can send compliments:

- Directly to a staff member by email, phone, or letter
- Or email: Learner.Voice@theskillsnetwork.com

Fairness and Respect

All complaints are handled in line with our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**.

You will be treated with **respect and fairness** throughout the process.

For more details, see our full **Complaints Policy**: <https://theskillsnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/complaints-policy-v3.pdf>

Plagiarism and AI Use and Misuse – What you need to know

At The Skills Network, your assessments **must be your own original work**. Plagiarism and the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) are **not acceptable** and are treated seriously.

We use **Turnitin**, an automated plagiarism detection tool, along with manual reviews to ensure your work is authentic. Your work may also be reviewed by our Quality Team to confirm it meets academic standards.

Our guidelines on plagiarism and AI misuse align with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance on plagiarism and AI use and misuse within assessments.



Useful Policies and Links (cont.)

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism means using someone else's words, ideas, or content **without proper credit**. This includes:

- Copying and pasting from websites, books, or other learners' work
- Using AI tools (like ChatGPT) to generate answers without adapting or acknowledging the content
- Submitting work that doesn't reflect your own understanding or thinking

Examples of What to Avoid

- Copying text directly from an online article without referencing the source
- Submitting AI-generated responses word-for-word
- Asking someone else to write your answers
- Using templates or model answers without adapting them in your own words

How to Avoid Plagiarism and AI Misuse

- **Use your own words:** Write based on your own knowledge, experience, or research
- **Reference sources:** If you use a quote, statistic, or idea from somewhere else, state where it came from
- **Be transparent:** If you used a tool to help (e.g. AI for research prompts), make sure your final response reflects your own thinking and cite any external support
- **Ask for help:** If you're unsure, your assessor or the Quality Team can guide you on how to use sources correctly

Useful Policies and Links (cont.)

Why This Matters

Your responses are assessed against the course's learning outcomes. If your work is found to be inauthentic or not your own, this could result in:

- Your work being rejected and needing to be redone
- A formal written warning
- Notification to your employer (if applicable)
- Removal from your course
- Withdrawal of previously issued certificates

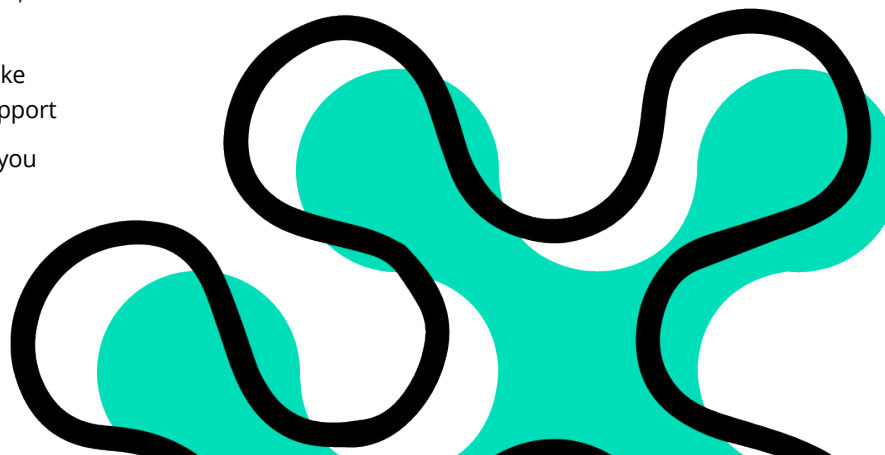
Stay Safe – Be Original

It's your responsibility to make sure your work is your own. If you use information from a source, **reference it properly**, and always include your own independent thoughts and insights.

To learn more, please see:

- The Skills Network's Plagiarism and AI Misuse Policy
<https://theskillsnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/plagiarism-and-ai-policy-apr25.pdf>

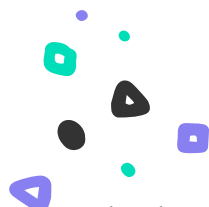
The Skills Network has an internal appeals procedure in place to give you the opportunity to formally challenge:



Useful Policies and Links (cont.)

Appeals Procedure

- Assessment results or outcomes
- Assessment timings or procedures
- The assessment materials
- Any part of the assessment process



Step 1: Informal Resolution

If you disagree with an assessment decision, the first step is to speak with your Assessor. Many issues can be resolved quickly through informal discussion.

Step 2: Formal Appeal

If you're unable to reach a satisfactory outcome, you have the right to submit a formal appeal.

To do this, please email Quality.Team@theskillsnetwork.com with a written account of your appeal as soon as possible - ideally within 5 working days of your assessment outcome.

Appealing External Assessments

If your appeal relates to an external exam or assessment, The Skills Network will raise the issue with the relevant Awarding Organisation on your behalf.

Please contact Quality.Team@theskillsnetwork.com to begin this process.

Further information can be found in our Appeals Policy
<https://theskillsnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/appeals-policy-apr25.pdf>

At The Skills Network, and in partnership with your **Funding Provider**, we are committed to ensuring that **everyone has equal access to education and support**,

Useful Policies and Links (cont.)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

regardless of background or personal circumstances.

We actively promote a learning environment where **everyone feels valued, respected, and included**.

There will be **no discrimination** on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sex or sexual orientation.



You can access your **Funding Provider's policies and procedures** on their website.

To view The Skills Network's **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**, visit :

<https://theskillsnetwork.com/about-us/>

If you feel you've experienced discrimination or have concerns about inclusion, please contact a member of staff - we're here to listen and support you.

The Skills Network is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of current Data Protection legislation. We follow procedures that aim to ensure that

Useful Policies and Links (cont.)

Data Protection

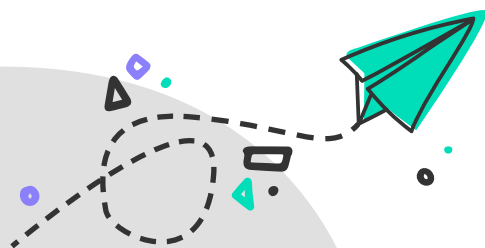
all employees, consultants, partners, or other members of The Skills Network (who have access to any personal data held by, or on behalf of, The Skills Network) are fully aware of, and abide by, their duties and responsibilities under the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) 2020 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

Any personal information collected by The Skills Network must be handled, used, and stored in compliance with current Data Protection legislation including the DPA (2018) and the UK GDPR (2020) (GDPR). The Skills Network takes measures to ensure all staff are aware of the importance of data protection.

The Skills Network regards the lawful storage of personal information as fundamental to the success of its operations.

For further information on how your data may be used please visit:

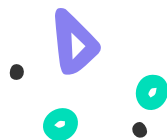
<https://theskillsnetwork.com/privacy-notice/>



Terms and Conditions

- I understand that I am enrolling on a distance/blended learning course.
- I am committed to completing the course, and in the event that I do not achieve the course, I may be liable to pay a fee of £100 to cover administration, registration, and learning material costs. These fees apply to co-funded learners aged 19 or over.
- I have completed an enrolment form and have read the terms and conditions.
- I agree to provide all the required evidence to ensure that I am entitled to funding for this course.
- I understand that I cannot access this course if I have already received funding for it before.
- I have received access to my learning materials and Learner Handbook and am now working towards completion of my first assessment.
- I will complete my assessments and submit them to The Skills Network, ensuring they are received by the due dates stated in my EQUAL account.
- I understand that I must complete each relevant unit and achieve a 'PASS' outcome in each unit in order to successfully achieve the programme of learning.
- I am fully aware of who to contact and how to contact them if I have any problems with my coursework.
- I can confirm that I have received an explanation of the information and resources.
- I understand that my Contact Centre Advisor/Learning Support Advisor will rate my progress throughout and should I show a lack of, or no, progress, I may be withdrawn from my course.
- I will demonstrate a positive attitude to learning in line with the provider's code of conduct and I will treat other learners and staff with mutual respect and courtesy to foster a supportive and inclusive environment.

Frequently Asked Questions



What is Distance Learning?

Distance learning is a flexible way to gain a qualification in your own time. You'll be provided with all the learning materials you need and can choose how much support you receive from our Learner Services team or your Assessor. Most courses last around **12 weeks**, with deadlines set to keep you on track.

However, distance learning isn't for everyone - some learners may benefit more from face-to-face or classroom-based study depending on their learning style.

What if I Need Additional Support?

We're here to help. Our support policy ensures that **everyone has an equal opportunity** to succeed. We can offer:

- 1-to-1 support from specialist **Assessors** or a dedicated **Learning Support Advisor (LSA)**
- Alternative formats (e.g. large print, audio, paper-based)
- Adjustments like extra time, verbal assessments, or read-aloud content
- Feedback presented in alternative ways to suit your needs

Just let us know your requirements early so we can support you effectively.

What Are the Eligibility Criteria?

Eligibility depends on the funding stream and provider. You'll have received full details during your enrolment. In general:

- You must be **aged 19 or over** on 31st August of the academic year (unless agreed otherwise)
- You must live in **England**
- If you were born outside the UK, you'll need to provide proof of **ID or residency**

If we need any information from you to confirm your funding eligibility, our **Compliance team** will be in touch.

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

How Am I Assessed?

You'll answer a series of assessment questions built into your online course. These are directly linked to the learning outcomes set by the awarding organisation. You can edit your answers before submission. Once submitted:

- Your Assessor will mark your work
- You'll receive **detailed feedback** overall and a pass or refer decision for each question.

All your answers and feedback are stored in your **EQUAL account**.

What Happens if I Need More Time?

You're expected to complete the course in line with your EQUAL deadlines. However:

- If you need a short extension, you can request **up to 7 days** via the extension button on your course overview page
- If you're likely to miss a deadline, contact our **Contact Centre** as soon as possible - extensions can't always be guaranteed.

If you consistently miss deadlines you may be withdrawn from your course, which can incur a fee.

Do I Have to Meet with My Assessor or Support Staff?

No. All communication is done **remotely** through:

- Email
- Phone
- Live chat
- Assessment feedback via your EQUAL account.



Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

What Happens if I Don't Pass an Assessment?

No need to worry. If you receive a 'Refer', it just means you need to revisit certain answers. Your Assessor will provide feedback to help you improve. You can then rework and resubmit only the questions that didn't meet the criteria.

Can I Pause My Learning or Take a Break?

We understand that unexpected circumstances can arise. While we can offer **short-term flexibility** through deadline extensions (e.g. up to 7 days via your EQUAL account), we are **unable to pause your course for an extended period**.

If you feel you cannot continue right now, it may be better to **withdraw and re-enrol at a later date** when you're ready to commit.

Important: If you've already started your course and submitted work, please be aware that you may **not be eligible for funding again** for the course in the future. If you withdraw, this may incur a fee.

If you're unsure or would like advice, please contact **the Contact Centre** before making any decisions.



Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

What If I Change My Mind About the Course?

Changing Your Mind

If you decide the course isn't right for you, please let us know as soon **as possible** by contacting **the Contact Centre**. We'll talk through your options, which may include:

- **Withdrawing** from the course
- **Switching** to a more suitable course (if eligible)
- **Re-enrolling** at a later date when the timing is better

Please note: If you've already started your course and submitted work, please be aware that some of these options may not be available to you and you may **not be eligible for funding** again for the course in the future. If you withdraw, this may incur a fee.

It's important to speak with us before making a final decision.

When Will I Receive My Certificate?

After you've successfully completed your course and received a **PASS** for each assessment:

- Your work will go through an **internal quality check** process
- This typically takes no longer than **2 - 4 weeks**, but can take up to **8 -10 weeks**
- Once approved, your certificate will be sent by email (if your course is awarded by TQUK) **or post** (all other Awarding Organisations)

Please note: if you are studying with one of our **external partners**, the timeframes for certification may be longer. Get in touch if you haven't received your certificate after 12 weeks of passing all assessments.

Here's a video on how to access your certificate online (TQUK awarded qualifications only): https://youtu.be/_Ha4jhMNjIo

If you have any other questions, you can access common FAQs here: <https://learnersupport.theskillsnetwork.com/>

Or speak to a member of the team using the contact details on the next page.

Contact details

We're here to support you throughout your course. Use the details below to contact the right team for your query.

General Support – Contact Centre

For help with:

- EQUAL login or navigation issues
- Extensions or deadline queries
- General course advice (non-subject specific)

Live Chat: <https://learnersupport.theskillsnetwork.com/article/35/contact-learner-support-team>

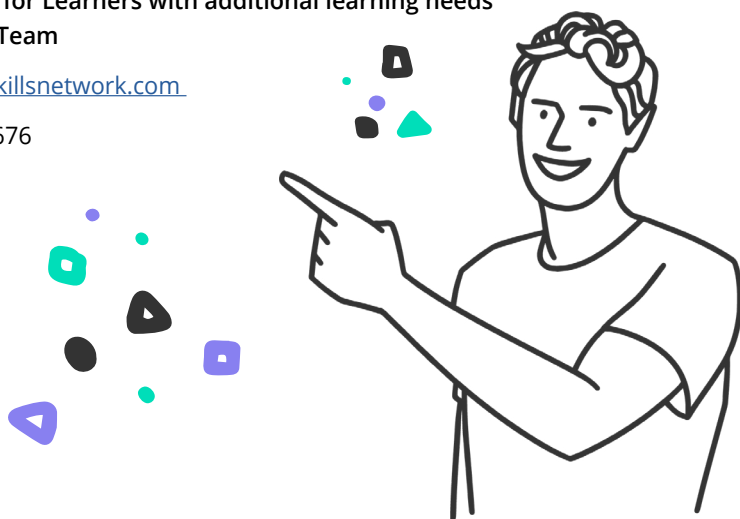
WhatsApp: 07429 959331

Phone: 01757 600915

Specialist Support for Learners with additional learning needs Learning Support Team

Email: LLDD@theskillsnetwork.com

Phone: 01757 606676



Contact details (cont.)

Additional Teams

Team	Contact	Use For
Information Services	Compliance@theskillsnetwork.com	Funding eligibility, ID, residency or compliance queries
Quality Team	Quality.Team@theskillsnetwork.com	Appeals, moderation, plagiarism and AI misuse guidance
Feedback & Compliments	Learner.Voice@theskillsnetwork.com	Share positive experiences, suggestions or general learner voice contributions
Complaints	Complaints@theskillsnetwork.com	Raise a formal complaint after informal resolution has been attempted
Safeguarding	Safeguarding@theskillsnetwork.com 01757 600706	Any wellbeing, safety or safeguarding concerns
Careers & Progression	Progression@theskillsnetwork.com	Tailored advice on further study, job search, and career planning after your course

Contact details (cont.)

Contacting Your Assessor

If you've been assigned an assessor, you can email them directly via the relevant course inbox below.

Include "FAO [Assessor Name]" in your subject line.

- **Business and Digital course:** business.academy@theskillsnetwork.com
- **Early Years and Education/Childcare courses:** earlyyears.academy@theskillsnetwork.com
- **Health and Social Care courses:** healthandsocial.academy@theskillsnetwork.com

Not sure who your assessor is? Contact us via Assessor.Services@theskillsnetwork.com and we'll help.

Good luck with your learning journey - we're here to support you every step of the way. You've got this, and we're excited to see what you'll achieve!

