



National Occupational Standards for Learning Support Staff

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Introduction

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) for learning support staff in the lifelong learning sector describe the skills, knowledge and understanding required of all those who perform a learning support role. The standards will contribute to the professionalisation of the learning support workforce and support a wider recognition of the valuable role it plays in teaching and learning. The standards provide a benchmark for performance and will underpin professional development opportunities that recognise the developing skills of staff.

These standards do not apply to teachers undertaking what is maybe termed learning support. Their practice should rightly be considered in relation to standards for teachers. In addition, these standards do not relate to the wider support workforce, for example, those providing information, advice and guidance. The role of the wider support workforce is primarily concerned with supporting learners rather than learning. As such, their practice should be considered in relation to the appropriate standards for the area they support.

The role of learning support staff

Provision of quality learning support takes place in the broad context of teaching and learning. Learning support staff work under the direction of a person leading the learning. They contribute to the provision of learning opportunities that promote the achievement and progression of the learners they support. The learner is at the heart of this process.

Not all the standards detailed here apply to all learning support staff. For any individual the relevant standards are determined by the role and responsibilities undertaken. The learning support staff role has been detailed in the learning support practitioner role description Lifelong Learning UK 2007. This will provide a basis on which to define any particular role together with its responsibilities and demands in terms of knowledge, understanding and practice.

Individuals may carry out a broad range of support roles which relate to other areas of specialism. Where a combination of support roles is undertaken these should be underpinned by standards taken from the appropriate specialisms. For example, those providing learning support for disabled learners may also have care responsibilities; these roles should be underpinned by a combination of the appropriate standards from the learning support staff standards and those for care.

Similarly, if learning support staff are responsible for the co-ordination of others' work, this aspect of the role should be underpinned by the appropriate leadership and management standards and qualifications.

Some learning support staff have more responsibility than others. Such staff have a high level of knowledge, understanding and practice related to a particular specialism. They include, for example, those who are experienced in work with disabled learners.

The development of a qualification framework will support career development and progression opportunities for learning support staff. Learning support staff need opportunities to progress within learning support and also into other related fields. Their career path is not necessarily into teaching, but can be into community learning and development, youth work, social work and others. They can have different but equally important knowledge, understanding and practice to those leading the learning. Learning support staff need standards which can be combined with standards from other specialisms to underpin professional development activities. These will provide for progression within the learning support role and/or into other related fields.

Developing the standards

In 2004 the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) produced a draft of the NOS for learning support. These have been reviewed and revised with reference to current and emerging contexts. Staff, employers and stakeholders throughout the sector and across the four nations of the UK were consulted on the first draft of the standards and confirmed the need to recognise this valuable role more widely. Respondents were clear that the provision of learning support is significant in supporting effective learning.

Lifelong Learning UK has now developed standards which are overarching and appropriate for all learning support staff, whether new or experienced, and in any context. The standards apply to any stage in the career of the staff. They will be used to underpin professional development for all staff.

About National Occupational Standards

National Occupational Standards (NOS) describe what a person needs to do, know and understand in their job, in order to carry out their role in a consistent and competent way. In essence, they inform ‘best practice’ by bringing together skills, knowledge and values. Lifelong Learning UK has worked in consultation with a wide range of employers, partner organisations and stakeholders to develop NOS. This ensures they are relevant and fit for purpose.

Our aim is that the standards are versatile and support employers in a range of ways, including:

- Performance management (e.g. appraisals)
- Identifying training needs
- Aid in structuring learning programmes (formal and informal)
- Recruitment and selection (e.g. job descriptions)
- Assessing achievement
- Formal recognition of competence (e.g. continuing professional development)
- Careers guidance and counselling.

A wide range of individuals and organisations will find the standards a useful tool for a variety of activities. A good starting point is to look at the titles of the individual standards and then decide which ones will be relevant to meet your needs.

NOS follow a similar format across all sectors; however, Lifelong Learning UK works with employers and others to ensure that the relevant information required to describe best practice is included. Standards can inform qualification development, are structured into units and as a minimum must include:

- A title indicative of the content of the unit
- An overview of the content of the unit
- Knowledge, understanding and skills needed to effectively carry out your tasks and responsibilities within a particular job role or function
- Performance statements. Detailed description of the activities which would represent effective performance of the tasks within a unit
- Development of NOS is usually preceded by both occupational and functional mapping.

An occupational map provides the context and background to the development of NOS. It illustrates the main features and characteristics of job roles within an occupational sector, highlighting overlaps with other roles and their boundaries with other sectors.

A functional map identifies the functions that people carry out on a day-to-day basis as part of their job role within the broad work activities that take place across an occupational sector. This information then forms the basis of standards development.

NOS are free to use and easily downloaded from www.lluk.org and from www.ukstandards.org.uk. We welcome your feedback and would like to hear how you have used the NOS, and in what ways they have supported your work. Please contact us at www.lluk.org

Standard A:

Providing learning support to individuals or groups of learners

■ What this standard is about

This standard addresses the knowledge, understanding and practice required when learning support staff are working with others to support the learning of an individual or groups of learners. This standard is underpinned by the professional attributes. Standard A expresses the central aspects of the role, that of meeting learners' needs by directly engaging the learner in activities which promote their learning. This standard places an emphasis on the role of learning support staff in enabling the learner to gain in self determination and to move towards independence in their learning. Standard A places an emphasis on the responsibility that all learning support staff have in supporting learners' literacy, language, numeracy and ICT needs. It also places an emphasis on the need for staff to develop their own skills in these areas in order to provide effective support.

■ Values

Learning support practitioners in the lifelong learning sector value:

- All learners, their progress and development, their potential, their learning goals and aspirations, and the experience they bring to learning
- Learning, its potential to benefit individuals (emotionally, intellectually, socially and economically) and its contribution to the wider community
- Learners' independence and self-determination
- Equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to learners, the workforce, and the community
- Constructive working relationships with colleagues, groups and/or organisations to promote the progress and development of learners
- Improving the quality of their practice through reflection, evaluation of their own practice and continuing professional development.

■ The standard

Performance criteria Learning support staff:	Knowledge and understanding Learning support staff know and understand:
<p>1 Provide high quality learning support that enables learners to achieve identified goals.</p>	<p>KU1.1 The importance of having high expectations of learners.</p> <p>KU1.2 The contribution learning support can make to learners' achievement.</p> <p>KU1.3 The nature, extent and boundaries of learning support role(s).</p> <p>KU1.4 The aims, objectives, content and approaches of the learning programme.</p> <p>KU1.5 How individual learning objectives are agreed with the learner.</p>
<p>2 Engage learners in activities that advance learning for individuals and groups.</p>	<p>KU2.1 Ways in which learning activities can meet learner needs.</p> <p>KU2.2 Ways of motivating and engaging learners that promote learner confidence.</p> <p>KU2.3 Flexible and varied approaches to learning.</p> <p>KU2.4 Ways of working with individuals.</p> <p>KU2.5 Ways of working with groups.</p>
<p>3 Develop and maintain effective relationships with learners that promote learning.</p>	<p>KU3.1 The importance of mutual respect.</p> <p>KU3.2 The role of advocacy and self-advocacy in the achievement of learner goals.</p> <p>KU3.3 The boundaries of the teacher/learner relationship, including ethical and professional considerations.</p>
<p>4 Communicate effectively with learners.</p>	<p>KU4.1 Ways to structure and present information and ideas clearly and effectively to support learning.</p>
<p>5 Use, adapt and / or develop resources that support learners' needs.</p>	<p>KU5.1 The contribution that resources can make to the learners' achievement.</p>

Performance criteria Learning support staff:	Knowledge and understanding Learning support staff know and understand:
<p>6 Provide support that builds on learners' experience, learning preferences and levels of independence and encourages learners to work independently.</p> <p>7 Work with colleagues with appropriate expertise to identify and address the language, literacy, numeracy and ICT needs of learners.</p> <p>8 Support learner progression.</p> <p>9 Provide learning support in a purposeful learning environment where learners feel safe, secure, confident and valued.</p> <p>10 Promote, maintain and model behaviour that demonstrates respect for others.</p>	<p>KU5.2 Ways to encourage learners to manage and use resources independently.</p> <p>KU5.3 How to use new and emergent technologies to meet the needs of individual learners.</p> <p>KU6.1 Individual learners' learning and support needs.</p> <p>KU6.2 Ways in which learning activities can promote learner independence.</p> <p>KU7.1 The different ways in which language, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are integral to learners' achievement.</p> <p>KU8.1 Ways in which learning promotes the wellbeing of individuals and communities.</p> <p>KU8.2 Progression opportunities and routes for learners.</p> <p>KU8.3 The routes available to the learner to access guidance and support for progression.</p> <p>KU9.1 The contribution a learning environment can make to learners' success and achievement.</p> <p>KU9.2 Ways of promoting a learning environment that is inclusive and that complies with safe practice.</p> <p>KU10.1 Ways to support learners consistently and as individuals.</p> <p>KU10.2 Ways to encourage behaviour that promotes respect for and between others.</p> <p>KU10.3 Ways to identify and respond to discriminatory behaviour in order to promote and maintain an inclusive environment for learning.</p>

Performance criteria Learning support staff:	Knowledge and understanding Learning support staff know and understand:
11 Enable learners to manage, reflect on and make decisions about their learning.	KU11.1 Ways to help the learner to understand and take responsibility for their own learning.
12 Collaborate with and respect the contribution of colleagues and others.	KU12.1 Roles and responsibilities of colleagues and others. KU12.2 The importance of effective team working. KU12.3 When to seek advice from colleagues and others.
13 Communicate relevant information about learners to others with a legitimate interest.	KU13.1 The need for confidentiality, respect and trust in communicating with others about learners. KU13.2 Legal requirements relating to confidentiality and disclosure.
14 Maintain accurate records relating to learning support.	KU14.1 Organisational systems and processes for record-keeping.
15 Provide learning support that conforms to organisational and legal requirements.	KU15.1 Relevant legal requirements and codes of practice. KU15.2 The needs and rights of young people and vulnerable adults.
16 Contribute, and encourage learners to contribute, to review of learning programme and of organisation.	KU16.1 Own role in the organisation's planning and review processes. KU16.2 Ways in which learners can contribute to planning and review.
17 Evaluate and improve the effectiveness of own practice, identify own professional development and training needs, and take steps to address these.	KU17.1 Ways to identify, reflect on and evaluate the impact of own practice on the learning of individuals. KU17.2 Ways to develop and improve own practice. KU17.3 Ensure own personal skills in English and/or Welsh, mathematics and ICT are appropriate for the effective support of learners.

Further information

■ Who is this standard for

This standard applies to learning support practitioners in a generic or a specialist role who are working under the direction of the person leading the learning who:

- provide learning support for individual and/or groups
- work with others to provide learning support
- promote learner independence and self-determination
- promote inclusion and participation
- improve own practice and that of the organisation.

■ Behaviours

There are no specific behaviours associated with standard other than within the performance criteria.

■ Terminology

There is no terminology specific to this standard.

■ Links to other standards

There are no explicit links to other standards.

Standard B:

Planning and assessing for learning support

What this standard is about

This standard details the knowledge understanding and practice needed to plan for learning support, to support the planning of learning activities, to support the assessment of learning and to carry out the evaluation of learning support. These activities are carried out collaboratively with the person leading the learning, with other colleagues and with the learners themselves. Learning support staff can enable the learner to be at the heart of planning and assessment processes. This standard, especially, supports a personalised approach to learning provision in the lifelong learning sector.

Values

Learning support practitioners in the lifelong learning sector value:

- All learners, their progress and development, their potential, their learning goals and aspirations, and the experience they bring to learning
- Learning, its potential to benefit individuals (emotionally, intellectually, socially and economically) and its contribution to the wider community
- Learners' independence and self-determination
- Equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to learners, the workforce, and the community
- Constructive working relationships with colleagues, groups and/or organisations to promote the progress and development of learners
- Improving the quality of their practice through reflection, evaluation of their own practice and continuing professional development.

The standard

Performance criteria Learning support staff:	Knowledge and understanding Learning support staff know and understand:
1 Contribute to the planning of learning support that is inclusive and meets curriculum requirements.	KU1.1 Ways to contribute to the planning and preparation of learning support. KU1.2 How to plan for learning support that is equitable, inclusive and engages with diversity.

<p>Performance criteria</p> <p>Learning support staff:</p>	<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Learning support staff know and understand:</p>
<p>2 Contribute to the planning of learning support that meets the learning support needs of individual learners and enables them to progress towards their identified learning objectives.</p> <p>3 Contribute to the negotiation and monitoring of individual learning objectives.</p> <p>4 Support colleagues in the development and application of assessment methods.</p> <p>5 Promote learning through questioning and constructive feedback and involve learners in feedback activities.</p> <p>6 Encourage learners to share responsibility for assessment of their own learning.</p>	<p>KU1.3 Requirements of learner’s programmes(s).</p> <p>KU2.1 Ways to respond to and meet individual learning goals through a variety of approaches.</p> <p>KU2.2 Principles and practices of personalised approaches to learning support.</p> <p>KU3.1 Ways to work with learners and with colleagues to establish and monitor individual learning objectives.</p> <p>KU3.2 Ways to support learners in communicating their learning preferences and needs to inform the planning of provision.</p> <p>KU3.3 The role that advocacy and self-advocacy play in ensuring that learner’s experiences, aspirations and objectives are central to the planning process.</p> <p>KU4.1 Approaches to formative and summative assessment that support accessibility, fairness and consistency.</p> <p>KU4.1 The practical application of different forms of formative and summative assessment.</p> <p>KU4.3 Theories and principles of assessment and methods that promote learning and progression.</p> <p>KU5.1 Methods of assessment for learning (formative assessment) that promote learning and progression.</p> <p>KU5.2 The role of feedback and questioning in assessment for learning.</p> <p>KU6.1 Ways to involve learners in the assessment of their own learning.</p>

Performance criteria Learning support staff:	Knowledge and understanding Learning support staff know and understand:
<p>7 Work in accordance with the quality requirements of the organisation in relation to assessment and monitoring of learner progress.</p>	<p>KU6.2 How to support learners in their understanding of assessment requirements and their provision of appropriate assessment evidence.</p> <p>KU7.1 Methods of recording assessment information.</p> <p>KU7.2 How assessment and review contribute to the monitoring, review and improvement of the quality of provision.</p>

Further information

■ Who is this standard for

This standard applies to learning support practitioners in a generic or a specialist role who are working under the direction of the person leading the learning who:

- provide learning support for individual and/or groups
- work with others to provide learning support
- promote learner independence and self-determination
- promote inclusion and participation
- improve own practice and that of the organisation.

■ Behaviours

There are no specific behaviours associated with standard other than within the performance criteria.

■ Terminology

There is no terminology specific to this standard.

■ Links to other standards

There are no explicit links to other standards.

Standard C:

Providing specialist learning support

What this standard is about

This standard addresses the additional areas of knowledge, understanding and practice required by specialist learning support staff. Specialist roles entail additional responsibilities to a generalist role in relation to the specialist area. These responsibilities may require specialist learning support staff to work with other specialist roles in order to support learning.

Values

Learning support practitioners in the lifelong learning sector value:

- All learners, their progress and development, their potential, their learning goals and aspirations, and the experience they bring to learning
- Learning, its potential to benefit individuals (emotionally, intellectually, socially and economically) and its contribution to the wider community
- Learners' independence and self-determination
- Equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to learners, the workforce, and the community
- Constructive working relationships with colleagues, groups and/or organisations to promote the progress and development of learners
- Improving the quality of their practice through reflection, evaluation of their own practice and continuing professional development.

The standard

Performance criteria Learning support staff:	Knowledge and understanding Learning support staff know and understand:
1 Use knowledge of learning support in their specialist areas(s) to provide high quality learning support.	KU1.1 Their specialist areas(s) including current developments and initiatives, relevant internal and external agencies, and networks.
2 Use the specialist knowledge to identify and address individual learners' learning support needs.	KU2.1 Theories and principles of learning related to their specialist area(s). KU2.2 Ways to identify individual learners' support needs in their specialist area(s).

Performance criteria Learning support staff:	Knowledge and understanding Learning support staff know and understand:
<p>3 Use learning support activities relevant to their specialist area(s).</p> <p>4 Evaluate learner response to specialist learning support and use this information with colleagues in the planning of further support.</p> <p>5 Support learners, colleagues and others in the selection, development, use and evaluation of resources in providing specialist learning support.</p> <p>6 Engage in professional development in specialist area(s) and in relevant learning support.</p> <p>7 Support progression and the transition of the learner in the context of the specialist area(s).</p>	<p>KU2.3 Ways that specialist learning support can effectively address individual learning needs and promote inclusion.</p> <p>KU3.1 Use of learning support strategies in their specialist area(s).</p> <p>KU4.1 Way to evaluate own specialist role and performance in planning and contributing to future learning support.</p> <p>KU5.1 Use of resources in the context of specialist support, including the use of new and emerging technologies.</p> <p>KU6.1 How to access and engage in professional development in specialist area(s) and relevant learning support.</p> <p>KU7.1 Progression opportunities and routes for learners in specialist area(s).</p> <p>KU7.2 Ways to assist learners to manage transitions in the context of the specialist area(s).</p>

Further information

Who is this standard for

This standard applies to learning support staff working under the direction of the person leading the learning who:

- use specialist knowledge to contribute to identifying learner needs
- use specialist knowledge and skills to support learners
- communicate information about learners in relation to specialist area of expertise
- use specialist knowledge and skills to contribute to curriculum development
- use specialist knowledge and skills to contribute to design and implementation of learning activities, resources and assessment methods undertake professional development to develop and maintain specialist knowledge and skills
- support the professional development of others in relation to specialist support area.

Further information

■ **Behaviours**

There are no specific behaviours associated with standard other than within the performance criteria.

■ **Terminology**

There is no terminology specific to this standard.

■ **Links to other standards**

There are no explicit links to other standards.



This information is available in alternative formats from Lifelong Learning UK

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