14-19 Workforce Support

Foundation Learning Support

LSIS LEARNING AND SKILLS IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

Using Personal Progress qualifications to recognise the achievements of learners working at entry level 1

A resource for providers working with learners with special educational needs or learning difficulties and/or disabilities

This resource is one of a suite of five resources for providers and practitioners working with learners with special educational needs (SEN) or learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). It will help providers become familiar with the structure of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) units within the entry level 1 Personal Progress qualifications, including the achievement continuum. It incorporates two tasks to help providers think about the needs of their learners and how to record their achievements using these qualifications.

Learning outcomes

This resource should help providers to:

- become familiar with the structure of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) units within the entry level 1 Personal Progress qualifications, including the Achievement Continuum

- understand how they can use the units to recognise achievements relevant to learners working at a level currently known as 'pre-entry', 'P levels' or 'milestones'

- understand how to record achievements against the assessment criteria within the units

- use the Achievement Continuum to identify small steps of progress.

Introduction

The *Foundation Learning Tier: 14-19 Delivery Guidance for 2009/10* (LSC/QCDA, August 2009) tells us that: 'providers are expected to plan a curriculum based on the learner's needs and then identify qualification(s) which will allow them to recognise relevant achievements'.

This means being able to use qualifications as an underpinning structure, but not allowing external accreditation to dictate the content of a learner's programme.

The entry level 1 units within Personal Progress qualifications have been explicitly designed to enable providers to adopt a learner-centred approach to recognising achievement. To find out more about the Personal Progress qualifications, check them out on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications at: www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk

In this resource, the tasks focus on communication skills, as these are likely to be a part of most learner programmes at entry level 1.

Tasks

These tasks will help you to think about the needs of your learners and how to record their achievements using Personal Progress qualifications.

Task 1 Using a unit to recognise relevant achievement

1 Read through 'Recognising Aasif's achievements' on page 6.

2 Think of your own learners. Who is (or could be) on a Foundation Learning programme?

- Using the learner information template supplied on page 10, write a brief profile of the learner, like the one provided for Aasif.

- Record the learning needs you have identified for this learner in relation to communication skills, including any targets set. These should be based on the outcomes that Aasif hopes to achieve by the end of his programme.

- Describe the kind of curriculum/activities/learning experiences that you will offer or have set up for this learner to give them the opportunity to develop their communication skills.

Task 2 Recording relevant achievements

1 Read through the 'Entry level 1 Personal Progress qualifications factsheet' on pages 13–15 to get a background understanding of how the Personal Progress qualifications (and the units within them) work.

2 Now look at the entry level 1 sample unit Developing Communication Skills (on pages 15–16), paying particular attention to the assessment criteria. Then turn to 'Relating Aasif's achievement to the entry level 1 unit Developing Communication Skills' (on page 7), to see how Aasif's teachers are using the unit to recognise his achievements in communication. If you are working with learners with very complex needs (P levels 1 and 2 or milestones 1 and 2), you might also like to look at the entry level 1 unit, Engaging with the World Around You: People (see page 17), as this might be more appropriate for recognising your learners' developing communication skills.

If you are working with a facilitator or with other colleagues, take the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues, so that you feel confident about how the units work.

3 Once you have a reasonable understanding of how Aasif's teachers have used the unit:

- consider your learner's **potential** achievements in the area of communication. These should be closely linked to their individual targets and relevant to their planned progression

- record the learner's predicted achievements on the appropriate recording template (see pages 11 and 12).

If you are working in a group, you might like to share your ideas with your colleagues. You should be able to get an idea of the wide range of individual achievements that can be recorded through this single unit.

4 Read through the entry level 1 Achievement Continuum on pages 8–9 and:

- see if you can decide which stage your learner has achieved (or will achieve if they meet their targets) in terms of communication skills

- record the Achievement Continuum stage at the bottom of the recording template.

If you are working in a group, try doing this in pairs, with each pair placing both their learners at the relevant stage on the continuum. You might then find it helpful to discuss as a group how you went about making your decisions.

Resources

Resources include:

- Recognising Aasif's achievements (page 6)
- Relating Aasif's achievement to the entry level 1 unit 'Developing Communication Skills' (page 7)
- Entry level 1 Achievement Continuum (page 8)
- Learner information template (page 10)
- Recording template for entry level 1 unit 'Developing Communication Skills' (page 11)
- Recording template for entry level 1 unit 'Engaging with the World Around You: People' (page 12)
- Entry level 1 Personal Progress qualifications factsheet (page 13)
- Entry level 1 Personal Progress qualifications: sample units (page 15).

Recognising Aasif's achievements

Learner profile (written at early stage of programme)

Aasif has autism. He exhibits very challenging behaviour, sometimes putting himself and others at risk. He has some expressive language, although is reluctant to speak, preferring to gesture to make himself understood. Those close to Aasif are aware that his receptive understanding is fairly good, but it is not obvious to most people who come into contact with him. He has a particular interest in cars, especially fast ones.

Identified needs (communication)

Aasif needs to use more consistent gestures and, most importantly, more speech in order to make himself understood by a wider range of people, including his peers. He gets very frustrated when other people don't understand what he wants and that is when his behaviour deteriorates and he frequently becomes aggressive. Aasif would benefit from showing that he understands what others are saying to him, as he dislikes people checking that he knows what he should be doing when, in his own mind, it's obvious that he does.

Communication targets

- Use gestures consistently.
- Use short spoken phrases more often.
- Show that you understand what people say to you.

Learning programme

Over an extended period of time, Aasif was given opportunities first to build up a small repertoire of gestures for the requests and responses that he made most frequently. This was done through the whole curriculum, including music sessions, sensory work, outside visits, number activities, etc. At first he used these gestures with a single support worker, and then gradually extended them to a wider range of staff and to some of his peer group. Once he was using the gestures fairly consistently, he was encouraged to use single words and short phrases (eg yes, no, drink please, stop now) as well as the gestures, and then gradually to replace some of the gestures with words. Throughout his programme, Aasif was rewarded for even the smallest achievements with time spent looking at car magazines.

Staff echoed back to him what he said or they verbally interpreted his gestures, to demonstrate that they understood what he meant. In this way they modelled ways of demonstrating understanding (eg 'You've chosen to spend time in the sensory room. Good choice'). They also spent time looking at car magazines with Aasif, at first just sitting alongside him looking at a magazine of their own, then making observations (eg 'That's the kind of car I'd like') and finally asking Aasif questions (eg 'Is that a Ferrari?'; 'What model is that one?'). Aasif enjoyed the role of expert and began to give short verbal responses. By the end of the programme he was beginning to initiate some car-related conversations during these magazine sessions (eg 'Mazda fast car').

Relating Aasif's achievement to the entry level 1 unit 'Developing Communication Skills'

Assessment criteria from entry level 1 unit	Learner achievement (evidence available in the form of observation records, witness statement and short video)
Show understanding in response to what he has heard	Aasif shows understanding of simple instructions by doing as he is asked (or saying 'don't want to' or 'not now!'). He can provide answers to closed questions such as 'Is that a Ferrari?', either by nodding or shaking his head or saying 'yes' or 'no'. When a plan for the morning has been explained to him, he can anticipate elements. For example, if told 'after we have finished playing the instruments, it will be break time and you will be going outside today', Aasif might go to get his coat off his peg at the end of the music session.
Use words, signs, phrases, objects or symbols to communicate	Aasif can use a range of gestures consistently, such as nodding and shaking his head, pointing at objects, putting his hands over his ears (when he is getting agitated or confused and wants time out). He can use these with all familiar staff and his peer group. He can also use a range of key words and some short phrases. He has just begun to use some phrases to communicate some of the triggers to his anger or frustration, eg 'biscuit please', 'too noisy', 'tired now'. Some of these echo the staff's questions, eg 'Is it too noisy in here for you?'.
Share ideas or preferences with others	Aasif can indicate preferences by pointing, nodding and shaking his head, and using short phrases such as 'Don't want to'. He is just beginning to share ideas, although at the moment only in relation to cars, which are his passion, and only then to familiar, trusted staff. He can make very brief statements such as 'Porsche fast car'.

Achievement Continuum stage: initiation/consolidation

Entry level 1 Achievement Continuum

For use in assessing the 32 shared entry level 1 units

Ten developmental stages	Stage characteristics	Stage descriptor
1. Encounter	Characterised by presence and reflex responses	Learners are present during an activity or experience. Any participation is fully prompted by facilitators. Learners may remain passive or they may resist. For some learners, being able to tolerate a shared activity may, in itself, be significant. Learners may show simple reflex responses to encounters but it will be difficult to tell if any learning has occurred.
2. Early Awareness	Characterised by fleeting attention and inconsistent responses	Learners begin to show that they are aware of activities and experiences. They may notice, fleetingly focus on or attend briefly to an object, event or another person. Learners may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects. They may begin to respond, although not consistently, to what is happening.
3. Interest	Characterised by more consistent and differentiated reactions	Learners begin to show interest in people, events and objects. They respond more consistently to familiar people, events and objects. Learners begin to give reactions that show that they can tell the difference between specific people, objects, places and events in their surroundings.
4. Supported Participation	Characterised by co-operation and engagement	Learners accept supported participation. They co-operate with shared exploration. Learners engage in activities. They participate in shared activity, although their responses may be supported by staff or other learners.
5. Active Involvement	Characterised by recognition, anticipation and proactive responses	Learners begin to be proactive in their interactions. They may actively strive to reach out, join in or comment in some way on the activity itself or on the actions or responses of other people. Learners recognise familiar people, events and objects. They may acknowledge familiar sequences of events and communicate consistent preferences and affective responses.
6. Development	Characterised by remembered responses and intentional communication	Learners begin to develop and refine actions and reactions, often by trial and improvement. They remember responses over short periods of time. Learners begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities.

Ten developmental stages	Stage characteristics	Stage descriptor
7. Exploration	Characterised by concentration, recall and observation	Learners begin to explore materials in increasingly complex ways. They concentrate for longer periods and participate in shared activities with less support.

Learners remember responses over more extended periods and participate in shared activities with less support. Learners remember responses over more extended periods. They observe the results of their actions with interest. |
| **8. Initiation** | Characterised by established responses and conventional communication | Learners begin to initiate activities. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures. They greet known people and use emerging conventional communication.

Learners maintain established responses over increasing periods of time and anticipate more and more known events. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods. |
| **9. Consolidation** | Characterised by the formation of skills, knowledge, concepts and understandings | Learners gain, strengthen or make general use of skills, knowledge, concepts or understandings that relate to their experience of the world around them. They are aware of cause and effect and know that certain actions produce predictable results.

Learners apply potential solutions systematically to problems. They use single words, gestures, signs or symbols to identify or request familiar objects or to communicate about events and express their feelings. |
| **10. Application** | Characterised by the application of skills, knowledge, concepts and understandings | Learners apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to a range of familiar experiences. They carry out simple tasks in familiar settings and are able to engage in familiar, straightforward routines, anticipating some of the stages.

They are aware of cause and effect and are able to anticipate the effects of a range of familiar actions. They can review activities, identifying what they enjoy and what they don't. They are able to access appropriate sources of help when carrying out routine activities.

Learners can apply knowledge or skills used in one familiar activity to another familiar activity, using this ability to solve simple problems.

Learners can speak or otherwise communicate in simple exchanges and discussions, make requests, ask questions and make statements. They can listen and respond to requests and follow single-step instructions. |

Learner information template

Learner profile

Identified needs (communication)

Communication targets

Learning programme

Recording template for entry level 1 unit 'Developing Communication Skills'

Assessment criteria from entry level 1 unit	Learner achievement
Show understanding in response to what he has heard	
Use words, signs, phrases, objects or symbols to communicate	
Share ideas or preferences with others	

Achievement Continuum stage:

Recording template for entry level 1 unit 'Engaging with the World Around You: People'

Assessment criteria from entry level 1 unit	Learner achievement
Engage with people	

Achievement Continuum stage:

Entry level 1 Personal Progress qualifications factsheet

What areas of learning can be accredited at entry level 1?

There are 32 common units at entry level 1, each relating to aspects of early awareness and engagement with people, objects and events, communication, number, ICT, working with others, learning to learn, dealing with problems, independent living, being part of the community and preparing for work. They are shared by any awarding organisation wanting to use them.

Why have they been developed?

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority commissioned their development to ensure that there are units and qualifications in the QCF that are relevant for learners working at all stages of entry level 1 and which can be used within Foundation Learning personalised learning programmes.

What is different about these units?

The units are learner-referenced. This means that the learner and provider together can choose what sort of evidence will be relevant for them to produce, taking into account the individual learner's particular needs. They can also decide the level within the broad range of entry level 1 at which to have the learners' achievements recognised. This is particularly important for a level that spans what we currently call 'pre-entry' or 'P levels' as well as the existing entry level 1.

A set of descriptors of the different levels of achievement within entry level 1 accompanies the units. It is known as the 'Achievement Continuum' and ranges from encountering experiences to the application of basic skills, knowledge and understanding. Learner achievement is reported against this Achievement Continuum.

Providers fill in a transcript for each unit completed, which gives a clear and more personalised statement of precisely what the learner has achieved against each of the assessment criteria for a unit. A copy of this transcript accompanies the certificate.

How have these units been packaged into qualifications?

A number of awarding organisations are now offering these units within entry level 1 Personal Progress qualifications. An Award (8 credits), a Certificate (14 credits) and a Diploma (37 credits) have all been developed. The rules of combination for these qualifications allow learners to use whichever of the units are most relevant to them; there are no mandatory units. ▶

There are also a small number of other entry level 1 qualifications built from these units. These are:

- Entry Level Award in ICT Skills
- Entry Level Award in Communication Skills
- Entry Level Award in Mathematical Skills
- Entry Level Award and Certificate in Independent Living Skills
- Entry Level Award in Skills for Supported Employment.

You can view all these qualifications on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications: www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk

You can find more information on the Personal Progress units on the QCDA website (www.qcda.gov.uk/qualifications/foundation-learning/560.aspx).

Unit titles

1 Developing communication skills

2 Developing reading skills

3 Developing writing skills

4 Developing ICT skills

5 Early mathematics: developing number skills

6 Early mathematics: position

7 Early mathematics: shape

8 Early mathematics: measure

9 Early mathematics: sequencing and sorting

10 Developing independent living skills: having your say

11 Developing independent living skills: keeping safe

12 Developing independent living skills: looking after your own home

13 Developing independent living skills: being healthy

14 Developing independent living skills: looking after yourself

15 Developing skills for the workplace: getting things done

16 Developing skills for the workplace: following instructions

17 Developing skills for the workplace: health and safety

18 Developing skills for the workplace: looking and acting the part

19 Developing community participation skills: getting out and about

20 Developing community participation skills: personal enrichment

21 Travel within the community: going places

22 Using local health services

23 Developing learning skills: learning to learn

24 Dealing with problems

25 Getting on with other people

26 Developing self awareness: all about me

27 Rights and responsibilities: everybody matters

28 Encountering experiences: being a part of things

29 Engaging with the world around you: people

30 Engaging with the world around you: events

31 Engaging with the world around you: objects

32 Understanding what money is used for

Entry level 1 Personal Progress qualifications: sample units

Title	Developing communication skills
Level	Entry 1
Credit value	3
Unit aim	This unit aims to provide learners working within Entry 1 (but not able to access the Functional Skills in English at E1) with the opportunity to have recognised their achievements in relation to developing communication skills.

Learning Outcomes The learner will:	Assessment Criteria The learner can:
1. Listen and respond to other people	1.1 Show understanding in his/her response to what they have heard
2. Speak (or use other means) to communicate with other people	2.1 Use words, signs, phrases, objects or symbols to communicate
3. Engage in discussion with other people	3.1 Share ideas or preferences with others

Guidance on degree within the assessment criteria

This guidance is intended to provide assessors with an indication of the range of ways in which learners might meet the assessment criteria. These responses in turn will be embedded in a variety of contexts/learning opportunities. The degree of achievement is most likely to relate to the development to application stages on the achievement continuum.

The examples provided are just that; learners may demonstrate their ability to meet the criteria in many other ways. Learners are certainly not expected to undertake all these activities in order to meet the assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria	Possible ways of demonstrating that the criteria have been met
1.1 **Show understanding in his/her response to what they have heard**	● single word, sign or symbol responses to key words in context ● responding to simple prompts, questions, requests and instructions ● demonstrably paying attention ● answering simple questions about a range of personal information ● listening to and following brief narratives In the earlier stages of the continuum, learners will be responding to familiar people. In the later stages, they will begin to respond to those they do not know well or even to those that they are meeting for the first time.
2.1 **Use words, signs, phrases, objects or symbols to communicate**	● repeating single words, signs and symbols and using these with familiar people ● making simple requests and joining in with music or rhyme ● using short phrases and asking simple questions ● referring to past, present and future events and using conjunctions ● using vocabulary to convey meaning which goes beyond words of purely personal significance In the earlier stages of the continuum, learners will be communicating with familiar people. In the later stages, they will begin to communicate to those they do not know well or even to those that they are meeting for the first time.
3.1 **Share ideas or preferences with others**	● using single words, signs or symbols ● presenting single concepts, ideas or preferences by combining 2 or 3 words, signs or symbols ● taking part in one-to-one and group discussions ● taking part in conversations and role-play ● pro-actively contributing to a range of oral interactions on a simple idea or subject In the earlier stages of the continuum, learners will be sharing ideas or preferences with familiar people. In the later stages, they will begin to interact with those they do not know well or even with those that they are meeting for the first time.

Title	Engaging with the world around you: people
Level	Entry 1
Credit value	2
Unit aim	This unit aims to provide learners working at the early stages of Entry 1 with the opportunity to have their responses to people recorded

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Interact with people	1.1 Engage with people

Guidance on degree within the assessment criteria

This guidance is intended to provide assessors with an indication of the range of ways in which learners might meet the assessment criteria and the possible range of achievement at E1. These activities in turn will be embedded in a variety of contexts/ learning opportunities. The degree of achievement is most likely to relate to the Early Awareness to Active Involvement stages on the achievement continuum.

The examples provided are just that; learners may demonstrate their ability to meet the criteria in many other ways. Learners are certainly not expected to undertake all these activities in order to meet the assessment criteria.
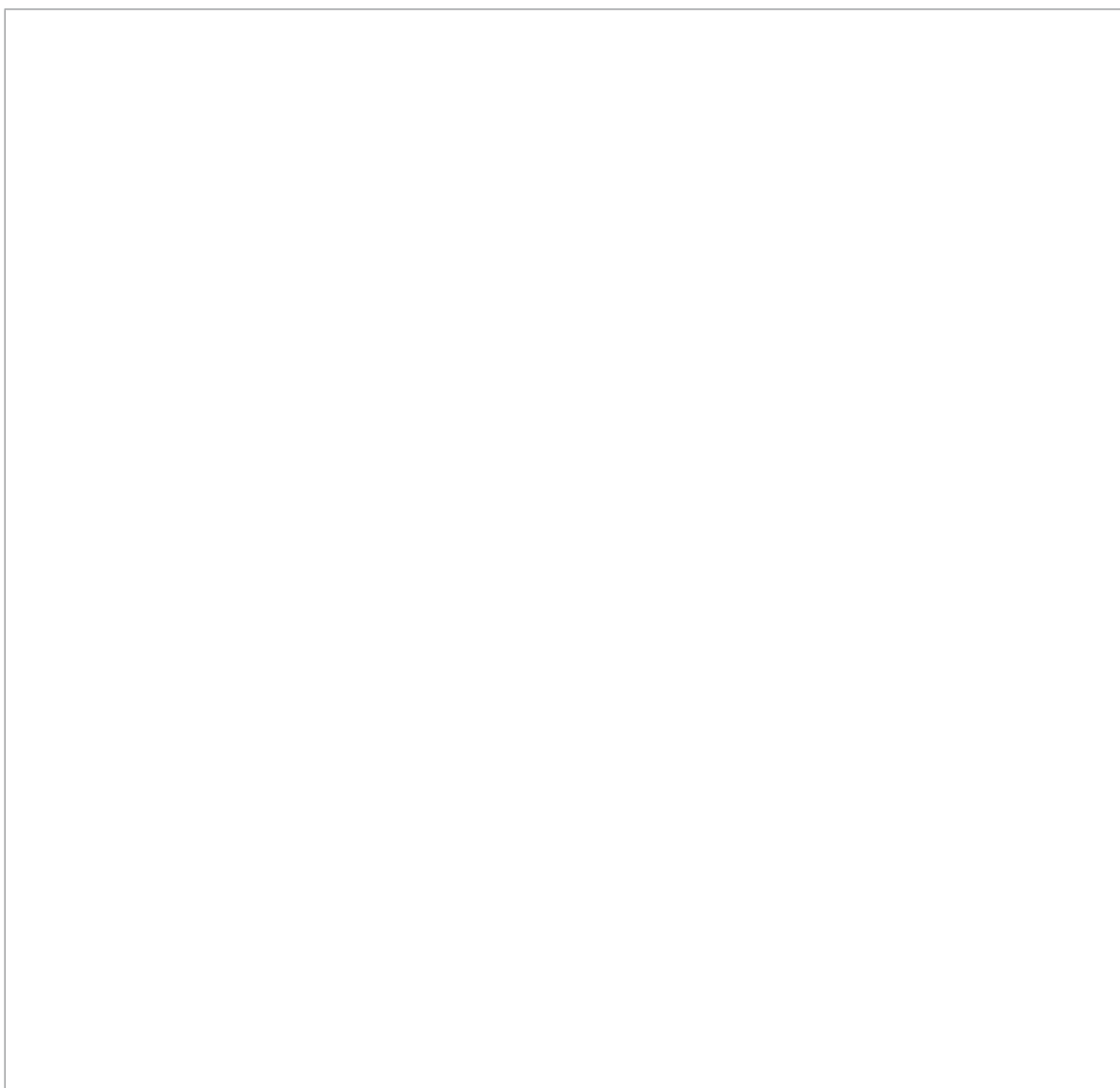
Assessment criteria	Possible ways of demonstrating that the criteria have been met
1.1 Engage with people	• showing that they are aware that there are other people present (eg through a reflex response to the noise that others are making)
	• briefly focusing on a person (eg when a tutor is talking directly to them)
	• taking interest in the people around them (eg by tracking them as they move around the room)
	• demonstrating response and deliberate reaction to people (eg smiling at a person they like)
	• indicating wish to communicate (eg by attempting to vocalise or gesture)
	• initiating communication and indicating that a response is expected (eg making a request by vocalising or gesture and waiting for an answer)

Reflecting on your learning

You may find that the following prompt questions
help you to reflect on what you have learned
in working through the tasks above.

- What have I learned about recognising achievement
  at entry level 1 within Foundation Learning?

- What more do I need to find out about the Personal Progress
  qualifications, so that we can make informed decisions?

- How might we use the Personal Progress qualifications
  to recognise our learners' achievements?

- How will we manage the process for groups of learners
  where the range of achievements may be very diverse?

- What actions should we be putting into our
  Foundation Learning implementation plan?

Use the space below to record your initial reflections.

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Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service's aim is to accelerate the drive for excellence in the learning and skills sector, building the sector's own capacity to design, commission and deliver improvement and strategic change. LSIS's vision is that every learner acquires the skills, knowledge and appetite for learning, living and working and every provider is valued by their community and employers for their contribution to sustainable social and economic priorities.

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