

# 5

# National Vocational Qualifications

This section covers

- What are National Vocational Qualifications?
- National occupational standards
- Units of competence
- How to enrol for an NVQ
- Awarding bodies

# 5.1

## What are National Vocational Qualifications?

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are performance-based qualifications. They are not given on the basis of results in an examination. Instead, they require you to prove that you can do a particular job.

In order to gain the NVQ for teaching assistants, which is recognised by the Department for Education and Skills and head teachers everywhere in the UK, you need to show that in performing your job you meet a series of guidelines which have been drawn up by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the organisation which has responsibility for maintaining the curriculum in schools. These guidelines are known as National Occupational Standards.

# 5.2

## Units of competence

The National Occupational Standards describe what is considered to be best practice for each particular part of a teaching assistant's job. They take the form of units of competence (or competencies). These are actually short descriptions of something you might do as part of your job. Printed below are two examples of units of competence.

**Candidates must:**

- support literacy and numeracy activities in the classroom.
- help with the care and support of pupils.

There are two levels at which you can be awarded the NVQ for teaching assistants, levels 2 and 3. (The job of teaching assistant is considered beyond the scope of level 1.) Level 2 is designed to be suitable for teaching assistants who may be new to the profession. Level 3 is designed to be suitable for experienced teaching assistants.

To achieve level 2 you need to show that you meet seven units of competence, four of which are mandatory (compulsory). The remaining three can be chosen from a list of five options. To achieve level 3 you must show that you meet ten units of competence, four of which are mandatory, the remaining six being chosen from nineteen further options.

Section 6 of this resource provides a brief, simplified summary of what is involved for each of the units of competence needed to meet the requirements of level 2. Section 7 provides the same information for level 3.

For a detailed list of everything that is involved, you should consult the full list of National Occupational Standards which can be obtained from the Local Government National Training Organisation (LGNTO). Their address is:

Local Government National Training Organisation  
Layden House  
76 – 86 Turnmill Street,  
London EC1M 5LG

Tel: 0207 296 6600 Fax: 0207 296 6666  
<http://www.lgnto.gov.uk>

or from one of the NVQ Awarding Bodies listed on pages 53 – 54.

## 5.3

### Level 2 requirements

In order to achieve NVQ level 2 you must show that you can achieve seven units of competence. Four are mandatory and three are optional.

#### Mandatory units

- Help with classroom resources and records
- Help with the care and support of pupils
- Provide support for learning activities
- Provide effective support for your colleagues

**Optional units (Choose three of the following)**

- Support literacy and numeracy activities in the classroom
- Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour
- Support the maintenance of pupil safety and security
- Contribute to the health and well-being of pupils
- Support the use of ICT in the classroom

**5.4****Level 3 requirements**

In order to achieve NVQ level 3 you must show that you can achieve ten units of competence. Four are mandatory and six are optional. If you have already taken level 2 then this is taken into account as follows. Each of the level 2 mandatory units contributes towards the requirements for two of the level 3 units and four of the optional units are common to both levels and can be carried forward.

**Mandatory units**

- Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour
- Establish and maintain relationships with individual pupils and groups
- Support pupils during learning activities
- Review and develop your own professional practice

**Optional units (Choose one from each group plus any two others)****Group A**

- Assist in preparing and maintaining the learning environment
- Contribute to maintaining pupil records
- Observe and report on pupil performance
- Contribute to the planning and evaluation of learning activities

### Group B

- Promote pupils' social and emotional development
- Support the maintenance of pupil safety and security
- Contribute to the health and well-being of pupils
- Provide support for bilingual/multilingual pupils
- Support pupils with communication and interaction difficulties
- Support pupils with cognition and learning difficulties
- Support pupils with behavioural, emotional and social development needs
- Provide support for pupils with sensory and/or physical impairment

### Group C

- Support the use of information and communication technology in the classroom
- Help pupils to develop their literacy skills
- Help pupils to develop their numeracy skills
- Help pupils to access the curriculum

### Group D

- Support the development and effectiveness of work teams
- Develop and maintain working relationships with other professionals
- Liaise effectively with parents

# 5.5

## Awarding Bodies

In order to obtain an NVQ, it is first necessary to register with an Awarding Body. At the time of going to press, the list of Awarding Bodies for the new teaching assistants' NVQ has not been finalised but is likely to include some or all of the following:

### **Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE)**

8 Chequer Street  
St Albans  
Herts AL1 3XZ

Tel: 01727 847636 Fax: 01727 867609  
e-mail: [info@cache.org.uk](mailto:info@cache.org.uk)

## NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

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### **City & Guilds**

1 Giltspur Street  
London EC1A 9DD

Tel: 020 7294 2800 Fax: 020 7294 2400  
e-mail: enquiry@city-and-guilds.co.uk

### **Edexcel Foundation**

Stewart House  
32 Russell Square  
London WC1B 5DN

Tel: 0870 240 9800 Fax: 020 7758 6960  
e-mail: enquiries@edexcel.org.uk

### **Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)**

1 Regent Street  
Cambridge CB2 1GC

Tel: 024 7647 0033 Fax: 024 7642 1944  
e-mail: cib@ocr.org.uk

### **Scottish Qualifications Authority**

Hanover House  
24 Douglas Street  
Glasgow G2 7NQ

Tel: 0141 242 2214 Fax: 0141 242 2244  
e-mail: helpdesk@spa.org.uk

# 6

## Working at NVQ level 2

This section covers

- Unit 1 – Help with classroom resources and records
- Unit 2 – Help with the care and support of pupils
- Unit 3 – Provide support for learning activities
- Unit 4 – Provide effective support for your colleagues
- Unit 5 – Support literacy and numeracy activities in the classroom
- Unit 6 – Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour
- Unit 7 – Support the maintenance of pupil safety and security
- Unit 8 – Contribute to the health and well-being of pupils
- Unit 9 – Support the use of information and communication technology in the classroom

# 6.1

## Choosing your units

In order to achieve NVQ level 2 you must show that you can achieve seven units of competence. Four are mandatory and three are optional.

### Mandatory units

- Help with classroom resources and records
- Help with the care and support of pupils
- Provide support for learning activities
- Provide effective support for your colleagues

### Optional units (Choose three of the following)

- Support literacy and numeracy activities in the classroom
- Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour
- Support the maintenance of pupil safety and security
- Contribute to the health and well-being of pupils
- Support the use of ICT in the classroom

# 6.2

## Unit 1 – Help with classroom resources and records

Status: Helping with classroom resources and records is a mandatory unit.

### What you need to show:

- You contribute to the organisation of the learning environment.

*Definition*

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A learning environment is anywhere that learning takes place. That usually means a classroom but not necessarily. During a PE class, the hall is probably the learning environment.

- Part of maintaining that environment involves setting up and looking after the resources being used, which can include general classroom items like pencils and chairs as well as teaching resources.

### COMMON CLASSROOM RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- photocopied sheets
- teaching games and activities
- word lists
- rulers
- paint and paintbrushes
- individual white boards and marker pens
- books, pens and pencils
- number lines
- dictionaries
- number squares
- drawing paper

- You check safety equipment such as the first-aid box and fire-extinguishers and report to the teacher any damage to these or to the resources or materials.
- You encourage pupils to look after the learning environment by treating resources and materials carefully and putting them back in their correct places and clearing away waste.
- You complete classroom records when directed to do so by the teacher. There are a large number of records used by teachers. They might include reading records for individual pupils or group reading records, records of the number of letter sounds or words a child knows, observations sheets about individuals or groups. You are also expected to help with records required by the school office such as orders for school photographs or records of pupils going on a school trip.

### COMMON CLASSROOM RECORDS

- pupil's reading record
- group reading record
- record of number of letter sounds/words a pupil knows
- record of numbers a pupil knows
- orders for school photographs

## 6.3

## Unit 2 – Help with the care and support of pupils

Status: Helping with the care and support of pupils is a mandatory unit.

### What you need to show:

- When you are working with pupils you encourage them to interact positively and meet their behaviour targets. You respect the rights of others and encourage pupils to do so. You keep pupils on-task and help where there are physical difficulties, while encouraging independence.
- You monitor the behaviour of a group or individual to spot potential conflicts, which you deal with using the school's anti-social behaviour policy, and you know who to go to for help. You understand the school's policies on issues such as supporting inclusion and equal opportunities (see section 2) plus any Individual Education Plans or Behaviour Support Plans (see below) drawn up for pupils.

### Definition

#### INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

An Individual Education Plan builds on the curriculum that a child with learning difficulties is following and is designed to meet each child's needs. It sets out programmes of work, targets, review dates, parental involvement and other advice.

#### BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN

A Behaviour Support Plan is a statement prepared by the LEA giving details of the arrangements for a child's education. It is prepared for a child with behavioural difficulties to help parents and schools deal with them more effectively.

- You understand your responsibility for safety as it is defined in your job description and you are aware of your legal responsibilities. You provide comfort and care for minor accidents and report serious problems to the right people. You know who the designated First Aider is in the school (or other setting). You recognise signs of distress in a pupil and report these to the appropriate person.

## 6.4

### Unit 3 – Provide support for learning activities

Status: Providing support for learning activities is a mandatory unit.

#### What you need to show:

- You understand what objectives the learning activity you support is designed to achieve. You are able to help the teacher in the planning of that activity (whether verbal or written) as well as its delivery and evaluation. There are all sorts of ways in which you can do this, such as making useful suggestions when the teacher is explaining the support he or she wants you to provide, explaining any difficulties you face providing that support, offering constructive feedback about how the activity went and providing information which makes a contribution to the teacher's reports or records.

#### *Definition*

##### **LEARNING ACTIVITY**

A learning activity is anything a pupil does which assists with his or her learning. Modern teaching presents pupils with a series of carefully planned learning activities.

- You support the learning of individuals or groups in the way the teacher directs you, using the appropriate learning materials and following the activity plan. You are available for pupils to approach and ask for support during a learning activity and you use praise, encouragement and help to keep them working. You monitor their progress and provide support to help them complete any follow-up tasks.

**WORKING AT NVQ LEVEL 2**

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- You understand your own role in the learning environment as well as the teacher's role. You are familiar with the school's policies on equal opportunities and inclusion and what this means in practice, as well as the school's policy with respect to rewards and sanctions.
- You know what sort of problems to expect when providing support for learning activities with individuals and groups and how to seek assistance if necessary.

**HELP AND SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL PUPILS**

- you provide the pupil with the level of support specified by the teacher
- you encourage the pupil towards independence and responsibility
- you take care of pupils' minor problems and report more serious concerns

**HELP AND SUPPORT FOR GROUPS**

- you encourage pupils to interact positively
- you deal with conflicts promptly and appropriately

**6.5**

## **Unit 4 – Provide effective support for your colleagues**

Status: Providing effective support for your colleagues is a mandatory unit.

**What you need to show:**

- You maintain working relationships with colleagues and support them to the best of your ability, being honest about any difficulties you incur, such as not having enough time or the necessary skills to do what you are asked. You deal with any difficulties yourself or by referring them to someone in authority. You are aware

*Definition***COLLEAGUES**

- teachers
- other teaching assistants
- other adults working in the school, e.g. voluntary helpers
- educational psychologists
- learning support service staff

of issues of confidentiality of information (see page 21), you know the correct lines of communication and methods of communicating within the school and you understand school policies or procedures (see page 16) for dealing with any problems in working relationships.

- You are continually developing your effectiveness by thinking about your role, taking account of feedback from others on how you perform, identifying, agreeing and undertaking SMART development objectives (see below), using the existing appraisal system as a way of considering how you are developing your skills and practice, and taking advantage of opportunities for training and development which are provided.

*Definition***DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

Development objectives are clearly stated goals for your professional development.

**SMART development objectives are:**

Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time-related

**6.6**

## Unit 5 – Support literacy and numeracy activities in the classroom

Status: Supporting literacy and numeracy activities in the classroom is an optional unit.

**What you need to show:**

- You help pupils working as a whole class, in groups or as individuals, to develop their literacy and numeracy skills by supporting them as you are directed by the teacher.

## WORKING AT NVQ LEVEL 2

This involves knowing what the teacher expects you to do and understanding the purpose (learning objectives) of the learning activities you are supporting. The Literacy and Numeracy Hours often involve quite specialised teaching so you need to understand the way that pupils develop the skills they need to learn and the problems that they encounter.

### Learning objectives in numeracy might include getting children to:

- use and apply mathematics in practical tasks
- be able to measure accurately using appropriate measuring instruments and units
- read and interpret number scales accurately

### Learning objectives in literacy might include getting children to:

- read with confidence, fluency and understanding
- develop legible handwriting
- contribute to discussions and take part in conversations

- You give encouragement and feedback to pupils using language which they will understand. You use praise and help to keep them on-task and where you are working with children with special needs, you understand the implications of this. You monitor pupils' progress as you work with them and keep the teacher informed of how they are doing and any difficulties they might be experiencing.

### Literacy activities may focus on:

- |                     |                                  |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| • letter sounds     | • reading out loud               |
| • stories           | • getting information from texts |
| • writing           | • telling and sharing news       |
| • word construction | • sentence construction          |

### Numeracy activities may focus on:

- |                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| • counting                    | • matching numbers   |
| • putting numbers in sequence | • estimating sizes   |
| • problem solving             | • identifying shapes |
| • making models               |                      |

## 6.7

## Unit 6 – Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour

Status: Contributing to the management of pupil behaviour is an optional unit.

### What you need to show:

- You promote positive behaviour among the children and you do so in line with the school's behaviour policy. You recognise when conflict may be developing in a situation and you can take the right sort of action to deal with it. If necessary, you refer the matter to someone in higher authority, generally the teacher.

#### EXAMPLES OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

- to be safe
- to receive respect whatever their age, ability level, race, gender, religion, cultural background, etc.
- to be listened to with consideration

#### EXAMPLES OF CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- to treat other people safely
- to be on time for school
- to treat property carefully

- You are aware of any pupils with Behaviour Support Plans (see page 58) and you carry out strategies for managing behaviour which have been agreed between you and the teacher.
- You are aware of the school's policy on bullying (see page 23) and you understand how to respond if you encounter it. You encourage children to use the right language and do not accept inappropriate language, insults or stereotyping.
- You understand which rewards and sanctions you are allowed to use and which are a matter for the teacher. You are consistent in the way you give encouragement and discouragement, not favouring some children over others.

## 6.8

## Unit 7 – Support the maintenance of pupil safety and security

Status: Supporting the maintenance of pupil safety and security is an optional unit.

### What you need to show:

- You comply with legal requirements and with the school's own requirements for maintaining the safety of everyone in the workplace. In case of a health emergency you summon assistance immediately from a competent person, such as the designated First Aider or a paramedic. You do not take action beyond your own capabilities because this could be much more dangerous than waiting for someone with the appropriate skills, but you provide comfort and support for the individual involved in the health emergency until help arrives.
- You are able to identify risks or hazards to the health and safety of others and do your best to minimise them. A practical example of something that presents a safety hazard might be a pair of scissors. You are aware of the dangers these present to pupils and you use equipment and materials safely and store them away securely afterwards. In the event of breakage or spillage of materials that might be dangerous, you can take appropriate action.
- You understand how the alarm system works and how to set it off, should this prove necessary, and you are familiar with the school's procedures for evacuation in case of fire, bomb scare or the threat of violence. You are also aware of any special cultural, religious or ethnic factors which might have a bearing on the appropriate action to be taken in an emergency.
- You understand the need for security with respect to the school building itself and you follow the correct procedures in dealing with visitors to the school and in allowing pupils in and out. You also ensure that someone in authority knows where you are at all times.

Of course it should be pointed out that you do not have the sole responsibility for the safety of pupils and colleagues. You are part of a team and you are only expected to play your part. However, this does mean being fully aware of what is expected of you in terms of ensuring safety and being able to play your part in dealing with any emergency,

should one arise. For the purposes of an NVQ assessment it may be necessary for the school to simulate an emergency situation (e.g. a fire-drill) so that you can demonstrate your competence.

#### EXAMPLES OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

- severe bleeding
- epileptic seizure
- electric shock
- fainting
- burns and scalds
- shock
- falls
- cardiac arrest
- choking
- substance abuse

## 6.9

### Unit 8 – Contribute to the health and well-being of pupils

Status: Contributing to the health and well-being of pupils is an optional unit.

#### What you need to show:

- You support pupils in adjusting to a new setting such as joining the class in mid-term, starting in a new class at the beginning of the year or rejoining a class after a long absence. You reassure pupils and give them the information they need to settle in to their new environment, e.g. informing them about school rules and routines, explaining where they need to go or which person they need to see. You are aware of any special factors, e.g. care history, home background or EAL (see page 31) which need to be taken into account. You understand the sort of problems they might encounter when adjusting to a new setting and you know how to recognise signs of distress and respond appropriately.
- You support pupils in maintaining standards of health and hygiene: for example, making sure they wash their hands after using the toilet. You respond to signs of health problems in individuals, such as asthma, or in the whole class, such as head lice. You follow the school policy when reporting and recording health problems, including observing confidentiality. You understand when parents or carers need to be informed of problems and you are aware of the procedures for doing so.

**WORKING AT NVQ LEVEL 2**

- You are aware of any special factors which need to be taken into account when responding to health problems. These might include an existing medical condition (for example, a pupil might be diabetic) or cultural or religious factors. You respond in a way that is appropriate to the age, stage of development and particular circumstances of the pupil. You understand the school's policy on administering medicines and dealing with communicable diseases and the legal requirements relating to child-protection issues.

**EXAMPLES OF HEALTH CARE ISSUES AFFECTING INDIVIDUALS:**

- asthma
- incontinence
- diabetes
- allergies

**EXAMPLES OF HEALTH CARE ISSUES AFFECTING THE WHOLE CLASS:**

- head lice
- contagious diseases
- worms

**6.10**

## Unit 9 – Support the use of information and communication technology in the classroom

Status: Supporting the use of information and communication technology in the classroom is an optional unit.

**What you need to show:**

- You are able to set up and operate information and communication technology (ICT) equipment as directed by the teacher and help pupils use it. ICT equipment can include a range of different machines such as overhead projectors, tape-recorders, televisions and video-players as well as computers, scanners and printers.

- You can prepare ICT equipment for use in the classroom. This may include checking on the availability of equipment or booking it, making sure the necessary accessories, such as blank tapes, printer cartridges, etc. are available, reporting any faults or damage to the appropriate person, checking that equipment is switched on and ensuring that any unsafe equipment is not connected to a power source.
- You help pupils develop their ICT skills for example, by giving them an appropriate level of support while they use a computer program. You monitor pupils' use of equipment, making sure they behave safely and intervening promptly if they act in ways that are likely to prove dangerous. You also make sure equipment is left in a safe condition after use and store it away securely if required to do so.
- You know the school's policy on the use of ICT, including the use of the internet and virus controls, you understand how to use the software used in the classroom and what level of ICT skills to expect from the pupils. You know where consumables such as printer cartridges are stored and who to report faults or problems to.

#### EXAMPLES OF ICT EQUIPMENT

- overhead projectors
- televisions
- radios
- computers
- scanners
- tape recorders
- video recorders/players
- CD players
- printers