



Changing lives through learning

Open Awards Level 3 Diploma for the

# Early Years Educator (RQF)

**Ofqual: 610/4351/5**

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### Version Control

v1.0	New document March 2024
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## About the Qualification

<b>Title</b>	Open Awards Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Educator (RQF)
<b>Qualification Accreditation Number</b>	Ofqual – 610/4351/5
<b>Sector</b>	1 Health, Public Services and Care
<b>Level</b>	Level Three
<b>Funding</b>	<a href="#">Please click here for more information</a>
<b>Pricing Information</b>	<a href="#">Please click here for more information</a>
<b>Review Date</b>	31/08/2029

<b>Purpose</b>	D. Confirm occupational competence and/or 'licence to practise'
<b>Sub-Purpose</b>	D1. Confirm competence in an occupational role to the standards required

Total Qualification Time/Guided Learning	
Total Qualification Time (hours)	640
Guided Learning (hours)	416

Age Range and Restrictions	
Pre -16	x
16 – 18	✓
18+	✓
Any other restrictions specific to the qualification(s)	None

## **Introduction and Positioning**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework<sup>1</sup> sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learning and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to help children thrive and to give them a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide a foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The Department for Education has confirmed that this qualification meets the minimum qualification requirements that staff must meet to be recognised as Level 3 members of staff for the purpose of working within the EYFS staff:child ratios. The full list of qualifications that meet this criteria can be viewed [here](#).

The unit specifications have been written to meet the criteria that Early Years Educator (Level 3) qualifications must meet to be recognised as full and relevant by the Department for Education. These criteria outline the minimum skills, knowledge and understanding that a practitioner must demonstrate to meet the EYFS and support the learning and development of young children.

The qualification requirements are given legal force by Regulations<sup>2</sup> made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006.

## **Early Years Qualification Requirements (Level 3)**

To be included in the staff:child ratios at Level 3, staff must hold a full and relevant level 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 qualification and a suitable Level 2 English qualification.

Suitable Level 2 English qualifications are:

- Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 2
- GCSE or International GCSE qualification in English language and/ or literature to at least grade 4 (or grade C)
- Key skill qualification in communication at Level 2
- A Level or AS Level qualification in English language and/ or English literature to at least grade E
- O Level qualification in English to at least grade C
- CSE grade 1 English (language)
- Basic skills certificate Level 2 – certificate in adult literacy
- British Sign Language (BSL) for people who use BSL as their primary language.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

<sup>2</sup> The Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/938), as amended.

## **Any Specified Entry Requirements**

This qualification is suitable for learners aged 16+.

Learners will work in an early years setting (or undertake significant work experience) and have responsibility for providing person-centred, values-driven care and support for the children accessing the service. They will typically work under the direction of their manager or supervisor.

Providers are required to carry out an initial assessment process with all individual learners. This process should ensure the learner can demonstrate the full requirements or if needed, act as an advisory process so the potential learner can reach the required standard to achieve the qualification.

You will be asked to submit your process for initial assessment at the point of applying to deliver the qualification as part of pre-verification checks.

To be included in the staff:child ratios at Level 3, staff must also hold a suitable Level 2 English qualification. If learners do not already hold a suitable Level 2 English qualification, they should be supported to achieve this alongside the Open Awards Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Educator (RQF).

## **Recommended Assessment Method Summary**

Learners will be required to complete a portfolio of evidence set and marked by the education provider and externally quality assured by Open Awards.

This qualification will take 1-2 years to complete depending on experience.

Candidates must provide sufficient evidence that they have the required knowledge, skills and understanding of the assessment criteria and that it is their own work.

Types of evidence could include:

- a) Written assignments
- b) Examinations
- c) Observation of performance
- d) Questioning (written or oral)
- e) Practical Activities
- f) Photographs or videos
- g) Personal statements
- h) Reflective logs
- i) Project work
- j) Witness testimonies
- k) Group discussion

Assessment practices must follow the [Skills for Health Assessment Principles](#).

Assessment practices must reflect the Equality and Diversity Policy of Open Awards.

This qualification is graded as pass/fail and learners must evidence they have met all assessment criteria in the units they are registered to in order to meet the rules of combination.

# Qualification Structure

## Rules of Combination

Credit Value of the Qualification:	64
Minimum Credits to be achieved at the Level of the Qualification:	64
Mandatory Unit Group A	64

## Qualification Units

**Mandatory Units** (all units must be achieved to be awarded the qualification)

Unit Reference Number	Unit Name	Credits	Level
M/651/2884	<u>Assessing Children's Learning and Development</u>	6	Level Three
A/651/2879	<u>Implementing Support for Children with Special Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</u>	6	Level Three
Y/651/2878	<u>Effective Teamwork and Communication in an Early Years Setting</u>	4	Level Three
R/651/2885	<u>Keeping Babies and Children Safe</u>	6	Level Three
H/651/2880	<u>Personal Development for Early Years Educators</u>	6	Level Three
T/651/2886	<u>Planning a Curriculum for Children</u>	6	Level Three
Y/651/2887	<u>Supporting Child Development</u>	6	Level Three
D/651/2889	<u>Supporting Healthy Lifestyles in Children</u>	3	Level Three
L/651/2883	<u>Understanding How Children Learn</u>	6	Level Three
J/651/2881	<u>Understanding Safeguarding and Child Protection</u>	6	Level Three
K/651/2882	<u>Understanding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</u>	3	Level Three
A/651/2888	<u>Working In Partnership with Others in Early Years Education</u>	6	Level Three

## Delivering this Qualification

### Becoming a Provider

To deliver this qualification you must be a recognised Open Awards Provider. For more information, head to our [website](#) or contact the team on 0151 494 2072.

### How to Deliver

To request to deliver this qualification, please login to [the Portal](#) and then click on 'Tracking' and 'Initiate a Workflow'. You will then need to select 'Apply to Deliver Regulated Qualification(s) – Specialist Resources'.

For support with this process, please see the following document in the Portal 'Provider Portal Guidance – Qualification Approval' or contact the team on [customerservices@openawards.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@openawards.org.uk) or 0151 494 2072.

For this qualification, you will be required to submit a delivery and assessment plan as part of this application to ensure that you are able to meet the assessment principles outlined below.

In addition, you will be required to provide evidence that you have the following in place:

- Appropriate qualified and experienced staff
- Sufficient staff from relevant disciplines to deliver the course and support early years staff learning
- Sufficient resources to deliver the course
- Facilities that are fit for purpose
- Access to appropriate learning resources

### Registering Learners

Once you are ready to deliver this qualification, you will need to register your learners in line with the timescales below:

Short courses (15 weeks or less) within 25 working days of the course start date.

Long courses (over 15 weeks) within 60 working days of the course start date.

You will need to register your learners via [the Portal](#).

Learners must be registered with the Awarding Organisation before formal assessment commences.



## **Quality Assurance and Standardisation**

Delivery of this qualification must be done so in accordance with Ofqual regulatory guidelines and in line with Open Awards' quality assurance processes. Please see our website for more information.

### **Provider Staff Requirements**

It is expected that providers will have occupationally competent staff with relevant sector experience for their role in the delivery of the units/qualifications being offered.

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are occupationally competent and have access to appropriate training and support. They are also responsible for notifying Open Awards of staff changes.

#### **Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers (IQA) must:**

- be occupationally competent in the area of practice to which the unit being assessed applies (e.g. holding a relevant qualification at an equivalent or higher level than the level of the qualification or demonstrate current occupational experience)
- hold or be working towards the appropriate assessor or IQA qualification (relevant to role being undertaken). Staff holding legacy qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are assessing or internally verifying to current standards
- have credible experience which is clearly demonstrable through continuing learning and development

In addition, IQAs must understand the nature and context of the assessors' work and that of their candidates due to the critical nature of the work and the legal and other implications of the assessment process. This includes having a working knowledge of the working environment in which the learner is being assessed.

It is recognised that internal quality assurers are expected to verify the assessment process and not reassess the evidence provided but it is expected that IQAs will have undertaken an appropriate assessor qualification and practised as an assessor prior to undertaking the internal quality assurer role.

### **Expert witnesses**

The use of expert witness testimony is encouraged as a contribution to the provision of performance evidence presented for assessment. The role of the expert witness is to submit evidence to the assessor as to the competence of the learner in meeting the unit. This evidence must directly relate to learner's performance in the work place which has been seen by the expert witness.

However, the use of an expert witness does not replace the need for direct observation. If there is an additional factor in which this needs to be explored to

support achievement of the learner, then again this must be discussed and agreed prior with the awarding organisation.

An expert witness in the workplace can be used to provide direct observation evidence when the assessor is not occupationally competent in a specialist area e.g., specialist healthcare tasks.

The use of an expert witness could also be used to enrich, supplement, and add triangulation to the main direct observations which have been carried out in person by the assessor. When an expert witness is used, it remains that overall assessment decisions relating to a learners competency must be made by the assessor and be subject to the internal quality assurance process.

The expert witness must be:

- occupationally competent and knowledgeable in the area of practice to which the unit being assessed applies

The expert witness must have:

- a working knowledge of units on which their expertise is based
- credible experience which is clearly demonstrable through continuing learning and development.

Providers are responsible for ensuring that all expert witnesses are familiar with the standards for those units for which they are to provide expert witness testimony. They must also understand the provider's recording requirements and will need guidance on the skills required to provide evidence for the units. It is not necessary for expert witnesses to hold an assessor qualification because the qualified assessor makes all assessment decisions about the acceptability of evidence regardless of source. This would include expert witness testimony.

### **Co-ordinating and Lead Assessors**

In order that the requirements for occupational competence of assessors and expert witnesses can be met while allowing flexibility of delivery, candidates may have more than one assessor or expert witness involved in the assessment process.

Where more than one assessor is involved in the qualification there must be a named assessor who is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the assessment for each candidate. This person will be responsible for integrating, planning and directing the assessment for the whole qualification. Where more than one assessor is involved in a unit, there must be one named assessor who is responsible for the overall coordination of the assessment for that unit. The lead assessor must ensure that the best use is made of all available evidence and will make the final judgment of competence in each unit where other assessors have been involved. It is expected that all assessors will work closely with internal quality assurers to ensure standardised practice and judgments within the assessment process.

Open Awards will also ensure that, **External Quality Assurers (EQA)** must:

- have working knowledge of early years settings, the regulation, legislation and codes of practice for the service (where applicable) at the time any assessment is taking place
- hold, or be working towards, the appropriate external verifier qualification as identified by the qualification's regulators. External quality assurers holding legacy qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are assessing to current standards
- have credible experience which is clearly demonstrable through continuing learning and development

External quality assurers who are not yet qualified against the appropriate competences but have the necessary occupational competence and experience, can be supported by a qualified external quality assurer who does not necessarily have the occupational expertise or experience.

External Quality Assurers will monitor the provider's processes and practice to ensure they meet the Awarding Organisation, qualification and regulatory requirements. The EQA will also provide support to provider staff and give advice and guidance to facilitate improvements.

## **Student Support and Induction**

### **Entry Requirements**

Learners must be aged 16+.

Providers must complete initial assessments with learners **before** confirming their place on the course.

There are no specific entry requirements for a learner with regards to prior qualifications.

Learners (or trainees) must be employed in a suitable early years setting to ensure they have the opportunity to develop competencies and complete tasks as outlined in the units within this qualification, or undertake significant work experience.

This should include access to appropriate supervision and mentoring opportunities.

At a minimum, learners must be:

- employed in a suitable role within an early year setting, or undertake significant work experience placements as part of the qualification
- working under the direction of their manager or supervisor
- given tasks within their area of competence
- given tasks that allow them to develop and evidence the knowledge, skills and behaviour within the qualification specification

Providers must provide evidence that learners will work with:

- other members of the early years team(s);
- other teaching staff; or
- relevant healthcare professionals with a range of experience or relevant qualifications.

Providers must provide evidence that:

- learners will be supported by staff, both in their learning and training environments, who have relevant experience in the area of work where the trainee is training;
- there are mechanisms for securing sufficient levels of resourcing to deliver a care certificate course to the required standard;
- their staffing profile can support the delivery of the course and the learner's experience; and learning resources

Providers are required to have clear procedures in place for managing these responsibilities with any relevant employers or other parties, including who is responsible for completing a DBS check and/or health checks. Providers must ensure that learners are aware of why these checks are taking place and how the data collected about them will be used.

To be included in the staff:child ratios at Level 3, staff must also hold a suitable Level 2 English qualification. If learners do not already hold a suitable Level 2 English qualification, they should be supported to achieve this alongside the Open Awards Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Educator (RQF).

### **Information, Advice and Guidance**

Providers must ensure that all learners are supported with clear and accurate advice and guidance in relation to the requirements of the course, and progression routes.

This must include, as a minimum:

- Entry requirements
- Progression routes
- Course content and level of demand
- Professional behaviours and attitudes expected
- Work-place requirements including the requirement to access role models; health and care professionals; and multi-disciplinary teams

IAG should be provided on application to the learner to ensure the course is appropriate for the learner and that they are fully informed of the expectations and demands of the course. IAG should be provided throughout the course to ensure that the learner is fully supported, and receives ongoing feedback to support their ongoing professional development.

## **Induction**

In addition to IAG, providers should provide a full induction to the course to include:

- roles and responsibilities
- learning agreements/ stakeholder agreements
- delivery plans, timescales and deadlines
- course content and level of demand
- supervision arrangements
- assignments, observations and resits
- work-place requirements including the requirement to access role models; health and care professionals; and multi-disciplinary teams
- Induction, training and ongoing support
- Professional behaviours and attitudes expected

Employer specific induction and mandatory training should be completed in line with the employer's usual working practices.

The induction should include training on the following policies and procedures to cover both the training provider and the employer:

- Health and Safety
- Whistleblowing
- Equality and Diversity
- Complaints and Appeals
- Plagiarism
- Supervisions and Observations
- Data Protection
- Confidentiality
- Conflicts of Interest

## **Supervision**

Providers must work directly with the learner and their employer to put robust supervision systems in place to ensure child safety. This must include clear stakeholder agreements that outlines roles and responsibilities relating to supervision of trainees.

As a minimum:

- Learners must be supervised in all learning and training requirements (including in the workplace)
- Risk assessments must be implemented to ensure individual safety at all times

## Ongoing Support

Throughout the course, providers must ensure that learners receive regular supervision and feedback. This should include feedback on:

- Performance within assessments
- Occupational performance
- Behaviour and attitude
- Professional development

Evidence of monitoring and feedback should be retained to support annual quality compliance activities.

## Assessment

Open Awards units and qualifications have been designed around the principle that the learner will build evidence towards the achievement of the assessment criteria over a period of time. Each unit specification includes assessment guidance, including requirements for specific criteria.

This qualification consists of both skills units and knowledge units. This qualification will be graded pass or fail.

Each learner is required to build a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that all the assessment criteria associated with each unit has been met.

Learners are permitted to use one piece of evidence to demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding across different assessment criteria and/or different units. This qualification should incorporate holistic assessment for the units where appropriate.

Tutors and Assessors need to ensure that all evidence presented in a portfolio is:

**Valid:** it should be clearly demonstrating the knowledge or skills that are set out in the assessment criteria. It should be clearly the work of the learner.

**Reliable:** which means that it will in general, produce the same range of responses from learners, as long as they are used in similar circumstances and with similar groups of learners.

**Inclusive:** so that no individual learner is excluded from the opportunity to show their achievement because of their individual background or experience.

Assessors are required to review and assess all learner evidence and must be satisfied that learners have achieved all learning outcomes and assessment criteria relating to the unit being assessed prior to deciding the learner has completed the unit. Assessors will also ensure that the evidence produced by the learner is their own work.

Assessors retain records (e.g. Feedback Sheets, Individual Progress Records, Group Progress Records) on behalf of the provider which are made available and used by the provider's internal verifier / AIV and Open Awards Quality Reviewer / External Verifier.

### **Delivery and Assessment Plan**

Provider are required to produce a delivery and assessment plan **before** they start delivering this qualification. This plan is subject to pre-verification by the Quality and Standards Advisor to ensure it meets the following assessment principles.

This qualification must be assessed in line with Open Awards Quality Assurance procedures as well as in line with the [Skills for Health Assessment Principles](#).

### **Skills-based Criteria**

The primary method of assessment for the skills-based units is observation in the workplace by the assessor. Evidence should be generated over a period of time to show consistent performance. Evidence should be naturally occurring and so minimise the impact on individuals and their families and carers.

Expert witness testimony may be used where it is difficult for an assessor to observe aspects of practice. Expert witness testimony is NOT a substitute for the requirement of observations by the assessor across the qualification.

Any knowledge evidence integral to skills-based learning outcomes may be generated outside of the work environment, but the final assessment decision must show application of knowledge within the real work environment.

Where the assessment activity involves individuals using early years services, consent should be sought from parents/ carers that they are happy for the assessor to be present and this should be recorded by the assessor.

At any time during assessment the assessor observes unsafe practice, the assessment will be stopped immediately.

Video or audio recording will require consent from parents/ carers and should not be used where this compromises the privacy, dignity or confidentiality of any individual.

Learners are required to achieve all learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Where learners are not able to achieve the skills-based learning outcomes in their usual place of employment, the training provider and employer must ensure that the learner is given opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes in a work placement or another suitable setting in line with the assessment guidance within the unit content. This may include simulation dependent on the specific criteria. Prior to starting the qualification, an assessment of the learner's employment setting should be carried out by the training provider and employer to identify such gaps.

## **Knowledge-based Criteria**

Assessment of knowledge based learning outcomes

- may take place in or outside of a real work environment
- must be made by an occupationally qualified and knowledgeable assessor, qualified to make assessment decisions
- must be robust, reliable, valid and current; any assessment evidence using preset automated tests, including e-assessment portfolios, must meet these requirements and can only contribute to overall decisions made by the assessor

Assignments will be internally quality assured, then subject to externally quality assurance sampling by Open Awards.

Providers must also carry out regular standardisation activities as part of the ongoing quality assurance of assessment decisions within the assignments used for knowledge-based units and assignments should be refreshed over time.

## **Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)**

All providers delivering Open Awards provision must operate rigorous internal quality assurance systems. A provider must identify how they will internally quality assure and standardise their delivery and assessment before delivering a course.

Internal Quality Assurers must have the relevant Internal Quality Assurance qualification and occupational competence.

## **External Quality Assurance (EQA)**

Delivery of this qualification must be done so in accordance with Ofqual regulatory guidelines and in line with Open Awards' quality assurance processes. This qualification has been allocated a 'high' risk rating and therefore External Quality Assurance will be undertaken in line with the procedures outlined in the Provider Handbook for 'high risk' qualifications.

Each provider is allocated a Quality and Standards Advisor (QASA) who has overarching responsibility for ensuring the provider's ongoing compliance through their quality assurance policies and practices. The QASA role is designed:

- To support providers to improve the quality and standards of delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance
- To externally quality assure providers' recommendations for awards
- To ensure consistency in standards between providers and over time
- To ensure ongoing compliance with the Open Awards provider agreement, policies and procedures.



For this qualification, provider will also be allocated an External Quality Assurer (EQA) to undertake external quality assurance activities. This is due to the specialist knowledge and experience required to effectively undertake the role.

The level of external quality assurance intervention a provider receives is determined by the provider's quality risk rating (New Provider; Low; Medium; or High). Risk ratings are reviewed, as a minimum, on an annual basis.

Please refer to the Provider Handbook for more information on the Quality Assurance reviews and compliance activities.

### **External Verification**

The process of external verification is to make sure that assessments meet nationally agreed standards by reviewing whether assessment decisions (including grading decisions where appropriate) made by assessors and the checks carried out by the Internal Quality Assurer at the provider are valid.

The frequency of external verification activities required at each approved provider is dependent upon a number of factors.

### **Standardisation**

Providers are required to complete internal standardisation activities to ensure all assessors are making consistent and valid assessment decisions.

In addition, providers are required contribute to national standardisation events, as a minimum once a year. Open Awards offers Standardisation events and qualification-specific forums that are held throughout the year. Such events will also provide an opportunity to identify and share best practice. Up to date details of training and standardisation events can be found on [our website](#).

Internal standardisation involves ensuring that, where there is more than one tutor/assessor delivering Open Awards provision or more than one site, internally set tasks and the outcomes of internal assessment are consistent across the range of courses.

### **Training and support**

Open Awards offers a variety of training and support to Providers. Our online training and support is free of charge and can be accessed on the following link <https://oalearn.org.uk/shop>. An everlasting coupon (PLUC code) will be issued to each Provider to gain free access to these resources.

## **Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement (RPL)**

RPL is a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they may already possess. Evidence of learning must be sufficient, reliable and valid.

It is the responsibility of the Provider to inform Open Awards at registration of any exemptions and/or equivalences for which a claim may be made. These claims will be subject to external quality assurance by the Open Awards Quality Assurance Team.

For more information, please see our Recognition of Prior Learning Policy found on [the Portal](#).

## **Health and Safety**

Due to the practical requirements of some of the units within this qualification, providers must ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place for both the activities and individual learners to ensure the learners, staff and patient safety throughout the course.

As part of this, providers must ensure that learners and staff have access to appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Provider must work directly with the learner and their employer to put robust supervision systems in place to ensure individual safety. This must include clear stakeholder agreements that outlines roles and responsibilities relating to supervision of trainees.

As a minimum:

- Learners must be supervised in all learning and training requirements (including in the workplace)
- Risk assessments must be implemented to ensure patient safety at all times

Providers must have clear reporting procedures in place for any concerns, whether these are raised by the trainee, employer or provider staff. Any serious concerns that could impact patient safety should be reported to Open Awards.

## Appendices and Links

The following documents can be viewed on the Open Awards [website](#):

1. Provider Handbook
2. Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures
3. Complaints Policy
4. Equality and Diversity Policy
5. Invoicing Policy
6. Privacy Policy
7. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures

Additional supporting documents can be viewed in the Open Awards Portal.

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