Specialist Teaching Assistant Level 5

SEND Pathway

Develop specialist SEND practice.
Advance learning.
Make a greater impact.



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SEND Pathway

A higher-level apprenticeship for experienced Teaching Assistants who want to deepen their SEND expertise, develop specialist practice and make a greater impact on learner outcomes.



24-month programme | Blended learning | Specialist SEND focus

What will I develop?

This programme is designed for experienced Teaching Assistants who want to build on their current practice and develop the knowledge, confidence and skills to provide high-quality specialist SEND support.

Throughout the programme, apprentices will explore how to:

- identify, assess and respond to individual learner needs and SEND
- apply specialist SEND knowledge to planning, teaching and assessment
- adapt learning activities, environments and resources
- promote inclusion, independence and positive outcomes
- work collaboratively with teachers, SENDCOs, families and external professionals
- support behaviour, self-regulation, health and wellbeing
- use research and evidence to evaluate and improve practice
- advocate for learners with SEND and share specialist knowledge with colleagues

What does the programme look like?

Learning designed around your role

1. **24-month programme:** Structured development over approximately two years, followed by the apprenticeship assessment period.
2. **Monthly learning:** A blend of focused online workshops and interactive face-to-face sessions.
3. **SEND specialist sessions:** Dedicated learning focused on SEND practice, assessment, adaptations, inclusion and advocacy.
4. **Occupational Therapy Sensory Clinic Days:** Four practical sessions led by a paediatric Occupational Therapist, covering sensory needs, strategies and environmental adaptations.
5. **Specialist Workshops:** Three additional sessions led by guest experts, sharing specialist knowledge and practical insights.



6. **Individual Support from a Dedicated Assessor:** Regular 1:1 support and progress reviews with the same assessor throughout, plus access to an e-portfolio and learning resources.
7. **Guided Off-the-Job Learning:** A minimum of 418 hours, supported by approximately 90 hours of structured workshops, specialist sessions and practical learning, alongside workplace development and independent study.

Frequently Asked Questions

Everything you need to know before getting started

Starting an apprenticeship can raise lots of practical questions. Here are some of the most common things learners and employers want to know about the Specialist Teaching Assistant Level 5 SEND pathway, including delivery, off-the-job training and the support available.



How is the apprenticeship funded?

The Specialist Teaching Assistant Level 5 apprenticeship has a funding band of £12,000. For employers that pay into the Apprenticeship Levy, the apprenticeship can be fully funded through the Levy, subject to available funds.

How often will I attend workshops?

Learning will take place monthly through a blend of online and face-to-face sessions. When you start your apprenticeship, you will receive a programme schedule showing when and where each session will take place.

What is off-the-job training?

Off-the-job training is learning completed during paid working hours that helps you develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for the apprenticeship. This can include workshops, research, shadowing, professional discussions, mentoring and activities that develop new learning.

Will all my learning take place away from school?
No. The programme uses a blended approach. Some sessions will take place online, selected workshops will be delivered face to face, and you will also apply and develop your learning within your normal school environment.

What are the Occupational Therapy Sensory Clinic Days?
Four practical specialist clinic days are planned across the programme, led by a paediatric Occupational Therapist. These will provide opportunities to explore sensory needs, strategies and environmental adaptations in greater depth.

Will there be any specialist workshops?
Yes. Three additional specialist workshops are planned across the programme, giving you the opportunity to benefit from additional SEND expertise and perspectives.

What support will I receive?
You will receive regular 1:1 support from your designated assessor, alongside formal progress reviews every 12 weeks, which your line manager will be invited to attend to support your development. You will also have access to an e-portfolio, learning resources and ongoing guidance throughout your apprenticeship.

Do I need to already work with learners with SEND?
Yes, your role should give you sufficient opportunity to develop and demonstrate specialist SEND practice, including working with children or young people with SEND and collaborating with relevant colleagues and professionals.

How will the apprenticeship be assessed?
You will receive guidance and preparation from the start of your apprenticeship to help you feel confident and ready for your final assessment. At the end of the programme, you will complete an independent apprenticeship assessment, which includes an observation of your practice with questions and a professional discussion supported by your portfolio of evidence.

Ready to take the next step?

Find out more about the SEND pathway

The Specialist Teaching Assistant Level 5 SEND pathway is designed to help experienced Teaching Assistants deepen their specialist knowledge, strengthen inclusive practice and make a greater impact on the learners they support.

Register your interest today with Varsity Training

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