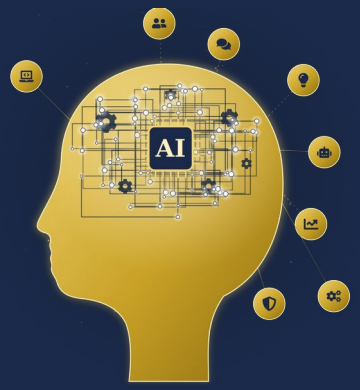
A2A Qualifications

Turning Aspiration to Achievement

QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

AI and Automation Practitioner Level 4

ST1512 · Assessment plan version 2.1 · Ofqual 610/7363/5



2	6	Typically 45 to 60	Grading
assessment components Work-based project Live assessment underpinned by a portfolio	**assessment outcomes covered by your project**	**minute live assessment, up to 75 if needed**	**Distinction, Pass or Fail**

Which version applies

This specification is for apprentices on **ST1512 assessment plan version 2.1** who started on or after 22 May 2026, until a new version is released. The version is set by the apprentice's start date, not by the current version. **The assessment plan takes precedence** over this specification and all A2A guidance materials, and apprentices and training providers should use it as their first port of call for guidance. Read it at https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/st1512-v2-1

The assessment at a glance

1 Work-based project

COVERS

All six outcomes, including a solution the apprentice configured (S7)

WHEN

Submitted and marked at **any appropriate point** whilst on the apprenticeship

GRADE

Distinction, Pass or Fail

2 Live assessment

COVERS

All **25 mandatory statements** and a sample of the others. Apprentices need to prepare to be asked about all mandatory and non-mandatory statements.

WHEN

Last. Portfolio due **at least 2 weeks** before the live assessment. **45 to 60 minutes**, up to 75 minutes if the A2A assessor feels this is needed.

GRADE

Distinction, Pass or Fail

OVERVIEW

Your assessment journey

ST1512 • Assessment plan v2.1 • Starts from 22 May 2026

Four stages from choosing your project to completing your apprenticeship. Each card shows who is responsible.

1 Access to assessment

APPRENTICE, EMPLOYER AND PROVIDER

Choose a **pre-approved project title**, or get your own approved. Agree it with your employer and provider and choose your formats.

2 Submit your evidence

TRAINING PROVIDER

Your project can be submitted **at any appropriate point** whilst on the apprenticeship and is marked on submission. Your portfolio and mapping document reach A2A **at least 2 weeks** before your live assessment.

3 Your live assessment

APPRENTICE AND A2A ASSESSOR

Once your project has passed: **Option A**, presentation and Q&A, or **Option B**, professional discussion. **45 to 60 minutes**, up to 75 if needed.

4 Results and completion

A2A, EMPLOYER AND PROVIDER

Each component graded separately, results **within 7 working days**. Your employer confirms your **behaviours**, and the **Gateway to Completion Declaration** is signed before your certificate is requested.

Be ready for any statement

Your live assessment covers all 25 mandatory statements and a sample of the others, so prepare examples for all of them.

Key information

Purpose	Confirms occupational competence as a Level 4 AI and automation practitioner
Qualification	A2A Qualifications Level 4 Apprenticeship Assessment for ST1512 Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation Practitioner (610/7363/5)
Assessment plan	Version 2.1. https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/st1512-v2-1
Grading	Fail, Pass or Distinction
Delivery	Remote and online. Set and delivered by A2A Qualifications. Marked by A2A, or the project by an A2A approved training provider
Funding	£18,000
Behaviours	Confirmed by the employer. Not assessed or graded by A2A
Document	Document revision 2.1 Final, issued 22 November 2026

CONTENTS

In this specification

Select a heading to go straight to it.

MAIN SPECIFICATION

01 About this specification

02 Purpose of the assessment

03 The occupation

04 Entry and completion requirements

05 The assessment components

06 Component 1: Work-based project

07 Component 2: Live assessment

08 Grading

09 Results, feedback and appeals

10 Resits and retakes

11 Reasonable adjustments and special consideration

12 Use of AI

13 Malpractice and maladministration

14 Assessors and quality assurance

REFERENCE

15 Assessment outcomes and statements

16 Grading criteria by outcome

17 Behaviours

18 Glossary

19 Contact and document control

01 About this specification

This specification sets out how A2A Qualifications assesses the Level 4 AI and Automation Practitioner apprenticeship (ST1512) for apprentices on assessment plan version 2.1. It is written for training providers, employers, apprentices and A2A assessors.

The assessment plan version tells you which apprentices this document applies to. The document revision is A2A's own version number for this specification, which changes when A2A updates the document. This is document revision 2.1 Final.

Disclaimer

The assessment plan published by Skills England takes precedence over this specification and over all A2A guidance materials. Where they differ, the assessment plan applies. Apprentices and training providers should refer to the assessment plan as their first port of call for guidance. The assessment plan is at https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/st1512-v2-1

Supporting documents, including example questions, the portfolio mapping document, apprentice guidance and the Employer Behaviour Approval Form, are available on the A2A Assessment Platform to training providers with apprentices registered with A2A.

A2A Qualifications Ltd is an Ofqual regulated awarding organisation (RN6096) and is on the register of apprenticeship assessment organisations (EPAO0889). All A2A assessment is delivered remotely.

02 Purpose of the assessment

The objective of this apprenticeship assessment is to confirm that the apprentice is occupationally competent as an AI and automation practitioner at Level 4. They must have shown the knowledge and skills in occupational standard ST1512 to the standard set out in assessment plan version 2.1.

In line with Ofqual's general purposes for apprenticeship assessment, it is designed to:

- show that the apprentice can apply their knowledge and skills in different but comparable contexts, for example with a different employer
- give employers reliable evidence of the apprentice's attainment, so they can be confident the expected performance standard has been reached
- build the apprentice's confidence in the workplace

03 The occupation

AI and automation practitioners work in a wide range of sectors and organisations that rely on digital tools, online systems and data-driven processes. They are typically embedded in operational teams, digital support roles or change delivery functions, or work for consultancies and service providers.

They identify opportunities to improve workflow efficiency and productivity, analyse current systems and processes, and configure and implement low or no-code solutions, including AI-driven automations. They

support user adoption and the responsible, safe and ethical use of AI and automation. They are not expected to lead teams, but take ownership of specific projects or tasks.

04 Entry and completion requirements

Entry

There are no entry requirements set by the assessment plan beyond those of the employer. Apprentices must follow the English and maths requirements in the Department for Education apprenticeship funding rules. There is no mandatory qualification for this standard.

When the apprentice can be assessed

There is no gateway before assessment. At access to assessment, the apprentice chooses a project title (one of A2A's pre-approved titles, or their own title approved by A2A), agreed with their employer and training provider, and chooses the project format and the live assessment option. The project can be submitted and marked at any appropriate point whilst on the apprenticeship. The live assessment is always taken last, once the project has been passed.

Language of assessment

All assessment is carried out in English. British Sign Language may be used as a reasonable adjustment.

Recognition of prior learning

Prior learning or experience cannot be used to exempt the apprentice from any part of this assessment. All evidence must be produced during the apprenticeship.

Completing the apprenticeship

Before A2A can request the apprenticeship certificate, all of the following must be confirmed:

- all assessment components passed
- the minimum time on programme met (currently 8 months) and the off-the-job training requirements met (minimum 420 hours), as set out in the funding rules
- English and maths requirements met
- behaviours confirmed by the employer on the A2A Employer Behaviour Approval Form

The employer, the apprentice and the training provider confirm these requirements by signing the **A2A Gateway to Completion Declaration**. A2A requests the apprenticeship certificate once all the requirements of the assessment plan and A2A's requirements are met, and the signed declaration has been received.

05 The assessment components

The apprentice completes two components: a work-based project and a live assessment underpinned by a portfolio of evidence. Both are set and delivered by A2A and each is graded Fail, Pass or Distinction separately. The project is marked first and must be passed before the live assessment, which is always taken last. The live assessment is always marked by A2A. The project is marked by A2A unless a training provider has been approved to mark it, as explained below. Both components use the same headings: what to prepare, what happens and how it is graded.

Synoptic assessment

The live assessment is the synoptic part of this assessment. It is one of the two components, so it makes up half of the assessment. It covers all 25 mandatory statements across the six outcomes and draws on the apprentice's project, portfolio and wider role, so the apprentice shows how they combine their knowledge and skills in real situations. The project also brings together knowledge and skills from all six outcomes in one piece of real work.

Training provider marking

In line with the apprenticeship assessment reforms, A2A Qualifications may approve a training provider to mark the project on A2A's behalf. A training provider can only mark once A2A has approved it in writing and A2A Qualifications' external quality assurance (EQA) and Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) requirements are fully met. Provider markers must meet the same requirements as A2A assessors and take part in A2A standardisation. A2A samples provider marking and can change any grade. The live assessment is always marked by A2A. Unless a training provider has been approved, all marking is carried out by A2A.

06 Component 1: Work-based project

What to prepare

The project is a **real AI or automation project the apprentice delivered at work**, during their apprenticeship. It must include an AI or automation solution the apprentice configured, adapted and implemented themselves (S7). The apprentice chooses one of A2A's ten pre-approved titles, or proposes their own title, which A2A approves within 3 working days. The employer and training provider must agree the project.

At access to assessment, the apprentice chooses one format:

- a written report of 2,500 to 5,000 words, with a 10% tolerance either way; annexes are extra and are not counted
- a video walkthrough of 20 to 30 minutes with supporting artefacts. The apprentice must be on camera throughout. If an avatar is used, the apprentice must personally introduce and close the video on camera

The project must cover all six assessment outcomes, at least 29 of the 58 statements and at least 13 of the 25 mandatory statements, including S7. AI tools are expected: the apprentice signs a declaration confirming the decisions and analysis are their own, and includes a prompt log as an appendix showing key prompts, what was tested and changed, and the AI tools used. Personal and confidential data must be removed.

What happens

The training provider uploads the project and supporting artefacts to the A2A Assessment Platform at any appropriate point whilst on the apprenticeship. By uploading it, the provider confirms the employer has agreed and supported the project. The project is marked on submission and must be passed before the live assessment takes place.

How it is graded

The project is graded **Fail, Pass or Distinction** by an independent A2A assessor, or by an A2A approved training provider where approval has been given, using the rules in the Grading section. A project that does not meet the coverage requirement is normally graded Fail. Where a project is slightly short but has clear merit, the assessor may accept it for grading, recording the reason, and every such decision is sampled by internal quality assurance.

07 Component 2: Live assessment

What to prepare

The live assessment is **underpinned by the portfolio of evidence**: work the apprentice produced during the programme. As a guide, it contains at least one piece of evidence per knowledge statement and two per skill, and one piece can cover several statements. The portfolio is not marked on its own: the assessor uses it to prepare questions.

One mapping document shows where each statement is evidenced across the project and the portfolio, with the apprentice's declaration and the provider's confirmation. The portfolio and mapping document must reach A2A **at least 2 weeks before the live assessment**. They can be updated before a resit or retake.

The apprentice chooses an option at access to assessment, and can change it up to 3 weeks before the assessment:

- **Option A: presentation with questions and answers.** A presentation of typically 20 minutes on the apprentice's wider job role and other work, not the project, linked to the statements. It can be live or pre-recorded. If pre-recorded, the apprentice must be visible on camera at all times; if an avatar is used, the apprentice must personally introduce and close it on camera. A question and answer session of 25 to 40 minutes follows, in which the assessor may also ask about the project to verify it.
- **Option B: professional discussion.** Phase 1 is project verification, typically 10 to 15 minutes, with questions about the project to confirm it is the apprentice's own work, always including K7. Phase 2 covers the apprentice's wider role and the remaining statements.

What happens

The live assessment is held online with an independent A2A assessor and lasts **45 to 60 minutes** for either option. It can be extended to up to 75 minutes if the A2A assessor feels this is needed. It covers all 25 mandatory statements and a rotated sample of the others, using a coverage map so every outcome is fully covered. The assessor may rephrase questions and ask follow-up questions, but will not lead the apprentice towards an answer.

On the day:

- The apprentice shows photographic ID to the assessor before the recording starts. No copy is taken.
- The apprentice shows the assessor around the room before the session. This is done off the recording, for privacy.

- The apprentice is on their own, unless a support person has been agreed in advance as a reasonable adjustment.
- The camera stays on throughout. Smart watches and other wearable devices must not be worn.
- Internet searches, ChatGPT and other AI tools must not be used during the session.
- The session is recorded for quality assurance and assessor training.
- If technology fails and cannot be fixed, the session is rebooked and does not count as an attempt.
- Breaks of up to 15 minutes may be agreed with the assessor if needed.

How it is graded

The assessor grades the live assessment **Fail, Pass or Distinction** using the rules in the Grading section.

08 Grading

Grading each component

- **Pass (project).** The coverage requirement is met, every statement the project covers is evidenced to the pass standard, and the pass descriptors are met.
- **Pass (live assessment).** Every mandatory statement and every non-mandatory statement asked about is evidenced to the pass standard, and the pass descriptors are met.
- **Distinction.** The apprentice meets every pass requirement for the component and shows distinction-level performance in **at least four of the six performance categories**.
- **Fail.** The pass requirements are not met. A shortfall in one area cannot be made up by strength in another.

Where the evidence for a statement is weak, the A2A assessor and internal quality assurer moderate the decision together and may award a Fail at their discretion.

The grading criteria for each assessment outcome, showing what is needed for a pass and for a distinction, are set out in the **Grading criteria by outcome** section at the back of this specification.

What pass and distinction look like

A simple guide, based on Bloom's taxonomy, to the difference between the two grades.

Remember › Understand › Apply › Analyse › Evaluate › Create

Pass

APPLY, ANALYSE, EVALUATE

- Analyses complex but clearly defined situations and explains the reasons for their decisions, using real examples from their own work
- Evaluates options and applies legislation, procedures and tools correctly, adapting to non-routine situations
- Justifies decisions with evidence, working within their authority and escalating where needed

Distinction

EVALUATE CRITICALLY, CREATE

- Evaluates critically, weighing alternatives and wider implications, and justifies decisions with insight
- Creates or improves solutions and processes, showing the measurable difference their work made
- Uses independent judgement to anticipate risks, needs and opportunities

This is a guide to the level expected. Assessors grade against the performance descriptors in the assessment plan, and a distinction is not guaranteed.

Overall grade

The apprentice must pass both components. Each component is graded separately. A distinction overall needs a distinction in both.

Project	Live assessment	Overall grade
Fail in either component		**Fail**
Pass	Pass	**Pass**
Pass	Distinction	**Pass**
Distinction	Pass	**Pass**
Distinction	Distinction	**Distinction**

Performance descriptors

The assessment plan sets pass and distinction descriptors for six performance categories. A2A assessors use these descriptors to grade both components.

Performance category	Pass	Distinction
Applied Knowledge	Demonstrates sound application of AI automation knowledge to address well-defined but complex and non-routine problems and reach outcomes.	Applies AI automation knowledge with autonomy, precision, and strategic insight to consistently deliver high-quality solutions that enhance outcomes or processes to complex, non-routine problems.
Applied Skills	Identifies and applies suitable cognitive and practical skills in AI or automation contexts to complete work activities, adapting as necessary to meet requirements. Methods chosen produce results to meet organisational or sector standards.	Adapts and applies cognitive and practical skills in AI automation contexts with a high degree of flexibility and operational fluency, ensuring that methods applied both enhance quality, and the overall service impact.
Regulatory and Procedural Awareness	Applies legislation, regulation, and organisational procedures with sound judgement, adapting appropriately to varied and occasionally complex AI or automation situations.	Interprets and applies regulatory and procedural requirements with insight and flexibility, identifying implications and making informed decisions in varied and occasionally complex AI or automation situations.
Communication and Collaboration	Communicates clearly and collaborates with colleagues and stakeholders, contributing to service delivery in AI or automation adoption.	Communicates and collaborates with confidence and insight, tailoring approach to meet diverse stakeholder needs, contributing to improved collaboration and enhanced service outcomes in AI or automation adoption.
Information Use and Decision Making	Analyses and interprets relevant information to make informed decisions, showing a clear awareness of the AI automation context and the broader scope of the occupational area.	Analyses, interprets and evaluates information from a range of sources, providing insightful justification for decisions, and demonstrating a strong awareness of broader implications within the AI or automation occupational area.

Performance category	Pass	Distinction
Responsibility and Autonomy	Takes responsibility for actions and decisions within set parameters. Manages own work and, where relevant, oversees others or allocates resources in AI or automation contexts with adequate awareness of risks and priorities.	Proactively takes responsibility for actions and decisions within set parameters. Manages own work and the coordination of others in AI or automation contexts. Independently uses sound judgement about risks and priorities to manage resources or actions.

09 Results, feedback and appeals

Results are released **within 7 working days** of the assessment. Each assessment is internally quality assured before the result is released. The apprentice receives a feedback form for each component, and results are available to the training provider on the A2A Assessment Platform.

The feedback form confirms the result for each assessment component. It is not an apprenticeship certificate. A2A requests the apprenticeship certificate once all the requirements of the assessment plan and A2A's requirements are met. Apprentices then download their certificate from the GOV.UK website.

Appeals, complaints and other policies are published at www.a2aqualifications.co.uk/policies.

10 Resits and retakes

A resit is a further attempt without additional learning. A retake is a further attempt after additional learning. The employer and training provider must agree to any resit or retake.

- The apprentice only resits or retakes the component they did not pass.
- If one component is not passed and the apprentice does not complete or pass the other component, A2A may award an **overall Fail** grade.
- Resit and retake grades are not capped, so a distinction is still possible.
- A project resit is a revised project using the feedback; a retake is a revised project or a new project on a pre-approved or approved title, after further learning. A live assessment resit or retake is a new session with a different version of the questions. The live assessment is booked once the project has passed. There is no fixed resit window; bookings normally need 14 days after evidence is submitted.
- An apprentice who has passed a component can resit it to try for a distinction. The apprentice must let A2A know **within 7 calendar days** of the result, by email to info@a2aqualifications.co.uk. Up to three improvement resits are allowed per component, and more only with A2A approval. The higher grade stands.
- Resits, retakes and improvement resits are **charged in full**. The training provider is responsible for paying and may pass the cost on to the employer if it wishes. Apprentices are never charged.

11 Reasonable adjustments and special consideration

Reasonable adjustments are available so that apprentices can show what they know and can do on equal terms. A2A uses the Skills England reasonable adjustment matrix to decide which adjustments are suitable for each assessment method.

The training provider requests an adjustment by completing the **reasonable adjustment request form**, which is available with the support materials on the A2A Assessment Platform. The form should be submitted as early as possible, and before the assessment is booked, so the adjustment can be in place on the day.

Adjustments do not change the standard the apprentice must meet. Decisions are made by the A2A head office team in line with the A2A Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy, and the assessor is told about any agreed adjustment before the assessment.

Special consideration

If something outside the apprentice's control affects their assessment, such as illness or bereavement, the training provider can apply for special consideration. Requests are considered in line with the A2A Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy, published at www.a2aqualifications.co.uk/policies.

12 Use of AI

AI tools are expected in this apprenticeship, which is about working with AI responsibly. The apprentice must use AI honestly and the work, decisions and analysis must remain their own. The apprentice signs a declaration confirming this, and AI use is declared on the mapping document.

The project must include a prompt log as an appendix, showing key prompts, what was tested and changed, and the AI tools used. The assessor may ask about AI use in the live assessment. AI must not be used to produce evidence for the apprentice, to replace their own judgement or to answer questions during a live session.

13 Malpractice and maladministration

A2A Qualifications takes malpractice and maladministration seriously. Malpractice includes:

- submitting work that is not the apprentice's own
- using AI to produce evidence or answers without declaring it
- using AI to produce false records, or to answer questions during a live session
- copying, or receiving help that is not allowed
- impersonation
- a provider or employer completing or changing evidence for the apprentice

Training providers and employers must report any suspected malpractice or maladministration to compliance@a2aqualifications.co.uk straight away. A2A investigates in line with its Malpractice and

Maladministration Policy, published at www.a2aqualifications.co.uk/policies. Results may be withheld while an investigation takes place.

14 Assessors and quality assurance

Assessors

Every A2A assessor:

- has relevant occupational experience and knowledge of AI and automation, kept up to date through CPD, which is checked by the lead IQA at least once a year
- holds a recognised assessing qualification, such as CAVA or AVRA, or is registered and working towards one, completing it within 12 months
- completes A2A training and standardisation before their first assessment on the standard, and at least once a year after that
- has no conflict of interest and does not assess apprentices from an organisation they also work for

Internal quality assurance

Every A2A internal quality assurer holds a recognised internal quality assurance qualification and relevant occupational knowledge. A2A samples assessment decisions in line with its sampling policy, using recordings, recording forms and feedback forms, before results are released.

15 Assessment outcomes and statements

The assessment plan groups 29 knowledge and 29 skills statements into six assessment outcomes. All six outcomes must be assessed. Statements marked as mandatory (shaded) must be assessed in every version of the assessment. Under plan version 2.1 there are 25 mandatory statements.

At A2A, the project must cover all six outcomes, at least 29 of the 58 statements and at least 13 of the 25 mandatory statements, including S7. Every statement must be evidenced across the project and the portfolio. In the live assessment, the assessor covers all 25 mandatory statements and a rotated sample of the others. The apprentice will not know in advance which non-mandatory statements will be covered, so they should be ready to give examples for all of them.

AO1: Strategic and ethical adoption of AI automation

Supports leaders in adopting AI or automation responsibly by aligning solutions and benefits, with organisational values, ethical principles, and workforce needs. Applies change management strategies and evaluates social, economic, and reputational impacts.

DEPTH AT LEVEL 4: At Level 4, the apprentice identifies AI or automation opportunities and supports their responsible adoption, explaining legal, ethical and workforce impacts and supporting leaders and colleagues through change. They are not expected to set organisational AI strategy.

Ref	Knowledge and skills statement	Mandatory
K1	The role of organisational leadership in responsible AI adoption, including setting values, policy, and strategy. The business case for ethical AI adoption, including reputational risk, staff morale, and long-term sustainability.	No
K2	Legal and regulatory frameworks including employment rights, equality, and responsible automation, data protection and GDPR. Ethical principles and professional standards relevant to AI development such as fairness, transparency, and accountability.	**Yes**
K3	Understand the potential social and economic impacts of AI and automation on different roles, particularly for non-technical staff including change management principles.	**Yes**
K6	The importance of designing AI and automation systems that augment rather than replace human work, where feasible.	No
K7	The capabilities, benefits and risks of automation, AI and digital tools including responsible use, ethical considerations and the potential impact on the workforce.	**Yes**
K9	AI and automation concepts, models and limitations. The impact adoption may have on workplace culture and wellbeing.	No
K15	Principles of human oversight and human AI collaboration to achieve shared outcomes.	**Yes**
K24	Principles to support project and change management delivery.	No
K26	The benefits of wellbeing and safe working practices.	No
S2	Follow ethical, responsible and safe working practices respecting confidentiality and sensitive organisational matters.	**Yes**
S5	Support with the introduction, adaption, and implementation of change. Contribute to constructive dialogue between leaders and employees about the adoption of AI and automation solutions.	**Yes**
S13	Identify opportunities to deliver automation. Support leaders in integrating ethical, empathetic approaches when decision-making.	**Yes**
S20	Work collaboratively to deploy AI and automation strategies. Support where required to deal with the impact of automation for example retraining, redeployment, or upskilling of affected staff.	No
S23	Work with others to achieve agreed outcomes or outputs. Provide evidence-based analysis and insight to leaders on the likely human impacts of automation projects.	No
S24	Use project management principles, techniques and tools to support the development of clear, balanced communications and briefings, articulating both opportunities and risks.	No

AO2: Solution design and development

Use AI or automation tools, platforms, and integration methods configuring AI or automation solutions. Applies technical understanding to align solutions with business needs, supporting scalability, accessibility, and strategic fit.

DEPTH AT LEVEL 4: The apprentice configures, adapts and implements AI or automation solutions themselves, typically using low or no-code tools, prompts and integrations, aligning them with business needs and user requirements.

Ref	Knowledge and skills statement	Mandatory
K8	The capabilities, risks and implications of on-premise, cloud-based and third party solutions.	No
K11	User requirements when designing and implementing AI and automation solutions including accessibility considerations.	No
K12	Product development lifecycle including consideration of user experience (UX) principles such as user centred design (UCD), data informed design and experimental testing.	**Yes**
K22	Collaborative working principles to explore AI and automation solutions and implement prototypes, pilots or proof of concepts.	No
S7	Use automation design tools to suit the organisational context to configure, adapt and implement AI or automation solutions, such as conversational agents, text processing AI, workflow automation platforms and cloud based SaaS or PaaS.	**Yes**
S8	Create and refine prompts for AI tools, using iterative testing to achieve accurate and useful outputs.	No
S10	Integrate AI and automation technologies to collect, process, and manage data effectively, enabling intelligent and efficient system operation.	**Yes**
S11	Design, integrate, and test digital workflows and AI automation tools using APIs, connectors, or low-or no-code integration methods.	No
S26	Apply ethical and human-centred design principles when scoping, developing, and deploying automation and AI solutions, underpinned by robust governance.	No
S27	Apply technical understanding to help align business needs with technical capabilities, supporting the development of solutions that are scalable, efficient, and aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives.	**Yes**

AO3: Testing, evaluation and iteration

Assesses solution viability through testing, user feedback, and feasibility analysis. Iterates and refines solutions to improve security, accessibility, reliability, and alignment with organisational constraints and user requirements.

DEPTH AT LEVEL 4: The apprentice assesses whether automation is viable, tests solutions with real data and users, and refines them based on results and feedback.

Ref	Knowledge and skills statement	Mandatory
K4	Approaches for identifying and implementing incremental change, including piloting, evaluating solutions in relation to organisational constraints such as budget, time, and resources.	No
K13	How to assess the viability of solutions, for example testing and evaluating solutions, using test data and results, feasibility (time, cost, data quality and process maturity), and user testing.	No
K14	Principles and application of testing methodologies and their application in practice.	No
K16	Feedback and evaluation loops to improve systems, processes, productivity and performance including human in the loop safeguards.	No
S3	Undertake analysis to identify if automation is viable. Including assessing risks such as data quality, process maturity and unintended consequences of AI automation projects, such as the impact on job roles.	**Yes**
S12	Iterate solutions based on testing and feedback to ensure reliability, security, accessibility, and alignment with organisational needs.	**Yes**
S21	Undertake data analysis, preparation, and conversion to support automation solutions.	No

AO4: Governance, assurance and ongoing risk management

Implements assurance activities to evidence responsible AI or Automation. Follows governance frameworks, risk mitigation strategies, and algorithmic impact assessments to support compliance, transparency, and accountability.

DEPTH AT LEVEL 4: The apprentice follows governance and assurance frameworks, documents design and decisions, contributes to risk and impact assessments and monitors solutions over time. They are not expected to own the organisation's governance framework.

Ref	Knowledge and skills statement	Mandatory
K10	Sources of error and algorithmic bias, including how they may be affected by choice of dataset and methodologies applied, and the impact on the user and or organisation. Fairness metrics and mitigation approaches.	No
K18	Governance principles to ensure accountability and compliance, including methods to identify system vulnerabilities and mitigate threats or risks to assets, data and cyber security.	**Yes**
K23	Mitigation strategies for post-deployment issues such as overreliance and automation bias.	No
K27	Methods for assuring compliance in AI and automation projects, including documentation of model decision-making, conducting structured risk assessments, and aligning implementation with recognised AI assurance and governance frameworks. The importance of auditability, transparency, and accountability in organisational contexts.	**Yes**
K28	Principles and practices of algorithmic impact assessment and workforce equality monitoring, including methods to identify, assess, and mitigate potential disproportionate impacts of automation and AI systems on different workforce groups. Organisational responsibilities under equality and employment law, and methods to evidence fairness and transparency in adoption.	No
K29	Principles and practices for the long-term monitoring of AI and automation solutions, including detection and mitigation of risks such as model drift, emerging bias, degraded performance, and security vulnerabilities.	**Yes**
S28	Undertake assurance activities to evidence responsible AI and automation, including maintaining clear documentation of design and decision-making, contributing to risk assessments, and applying assurance frameworks to support compliance with organisational, regulatory, and ethical standards.	**Yes**
S29	Apply algorithmic impact assessment and workforce equality monitoring techniques when scoping, implementing, and reviewing AI and automation projects. Gather and analyse relevant workforce data, identify potential equality risks, and contribute evidence-based recommendations to support fair and inclusive adoption.	No

AO5: Stakeholder engagement and workforce enablement

Engages with diverse stakeholders to encourage adoption of AI or Automation. Delivers training, adapts resources, and communicates technical concepts in accessible formats to enable workforce understanding and participation.

DEPTH AT LEVEL 4: The apprentice engages colleagues, including non-technical staff, produces guides and training, and explains technical concepts in accessible ways to encourage adoption.

Ref	Knowledge and skills statement	Mandatory
K19	Engagement and training approaches used with non-technical staff to understand their roles, responsibilities, and concerns when AI automation solutions are proposed. Including best practice and methods to deliver training.	**Yes**
K20	Methods to develop resources such as manuals, short explainers, chat-based guidance, interactive wikis and training materials.	No
K21	Strategies for inclusive communication with stakeholders from diverse and non-technical backgrounds.	No
S4	Engage with non-technical staff to understand their roles, responsibilities, and concerns when automation solutions are proposed and implemented. Adapt approach to support workforce needs when implementing solutions that impacts the workforce.	**Yes**
S18	Support with the delivery of training to technical and non-technical user groups or audiences adapting content and format responding to feedback and organisational context.	**Yes**
S19	Contribute to the creation and or adaption of resources such as user guides, training materials, process documents to meet user requirements.	No
S22	Present and communicate information including the translation of technical concepts into accessible materials to support clear dialogue with stakeholders.	No

AO6: Continuous improvement and change delivery

Identifies opportunities to improve productivity and performance through automation. Contributes to sustainable change initiatives, supports improvement strategies, and reports on outcomes to support organisational decision-making.

DEPTH AT LEVEL 4: The apprentice maps processes, measures and reports productivity and efficiency gains, makes evidence-based suggestions and keeps up to date with AI and automation developments.

Ref	Knowledge and skills statement	Mandatory
K5	Methods to identify opportunities to enhance productivity such as improve processes, reduce waste, increase user or customer satisfaction or optimise outcomes.	**Yes**
K17	Principles for designing sustainable solutions to support organisational strategies and objectives.	No
K25	Approaches to maintaining up-to-date knowledge of existing, evolving and emerging technologies and sector trends for example peer learning, online forums, AI tool release notes.	No
S1	Review, establish, follow and or amend policies and procedures on data and information security.	No
S6	Review and complete workflow and process mapping to identify problems or inefficiencies and recommend solutions including pilots, incremental changes and scaling opportunities.	**Yes**
S9	Apply analytical and computational techniques using tools and datasets to design, evaluate, and optimise automation solutions.	**Yes**
S14	Support in the identification and evaluation of opportunities for increased productivity. For example, use of low-or no-code tools, streamlining processes and use of AI platforms.	No
S15	Make evidence based suggestions to support governance, outcomes and facilitate improvement for example cost benefit analysis.	**Yes**
S16	Report on productivity and efficiency savings and the opportunities for automation and where applicable when automation does not improve experience or processes.	**Yes**
S17	Contribute to sustainable and efficient AI and automation solutions.	No
S25	Keep up to date with existing, evolving, emerging technologies and sector trends in AI, automation and technology including methods to evaluate vendor and supplier solutions.	No

16 Grading criteria by outcome

These criteria show what the apprentice must demonstrate in each assessment outcome. They reflect the performance descriptors in the assessment plan. Statement references are shown in brackets. Across the project and the portfolio, every statement must be evidenced.

Project: the pass criteria apply to the statements the project covers, which must meet the coverage requirement. **Live assessment:** the pass criteria apply to every mandatory statement and the non-mandatory statements asked about. **Distinction:** every pass requirement is met and the apprentice shows distinction-level performance in at least four of the six performance categories. The distinction column shows what distinction-level performance typically looks like in each outcome.

AO1: Strategic and ethical adoption of AI automation

Pass

- Explains leadership's role in responsible AI adoption and the business case for ethical adoption (K1)
- Applies legal, regulatory and ethical frameworks and safe, ethical working practices (K2, S2)
- Explains the social, economic and workforce impacts of AI and automation, AI concepts and limitations, and the value of augmenting human work (K3, K6, K9)
- Explains the capabilities, benefits and risks of AI and automation and the principles of human oversight (K7, K15)
- Identifies opportunities for automation and supports leaders to make ethical, empathetic decisions (S13)
- Supports change, constructive dialogue and collaborative deployment, using project and change management principles (S5, S20, K24, S24)
- Provides evidence-based insight to leaders on human impacts and works with others to agreed outcomes (S23)
- Explains the benefits of wellbeing and safe working practices (K26)

Distinction

- Weighs efficiency against fairness and workforce impact with insight, and justifies the approach taken
- Influences leaders' decisions on responsible adoption with well-evidenced insight
- Anticipates the human impact of change and adapts support before issues arise

AO2: Solution design and development

Pass

- Explains the capabilities, risks and implications of on-premise, cloud-based and third party solutions (K8)
- Applies user requirements, accessibility and user-centred design across the product lifecycle (K11, K12, S26)
- Configures, adapts and implements an AI or automation solution using suitable design tools (S7)
- Creates and refines prompts through iterative testing (S8)
- Designs, integrates and tests digital workflows and integrates AI to manage data (S10, S11)
- Works collaboratively on prototypes, pilots or proofs of concept and aligns business needs with technical capability (K22, S27)

Distinction

- Chooses and configures the solution with precision, explaining the trade-offs behind design decisions
- Designs a solution that is scalable and efficient, with clear benefit to the organisation
- Shows ethical and human-centred design choices built in from the start, not added later

AO3: Testing, evaluation and iteration

Pass

- Explains approaches to incremental change and piloting within organisational constraints (K4)
- Assesses the viability of solutions, including data quality, process maturity and unintended consequences (K13, S3)
- Applies testing methodologies and feedback and evaluation loops, including human in the loop safeguards (K14, K16)
- Iterates solutions based on testing and feedback (S12)
- Undertakes data analysis, preparation and conversion to support automation (S21)

Distinction

- Designs testing that is proportionate and thorough, and explains how results changed the solution
- Evaluates viability with insight, including risks others might miss
- Shows measurable improvement in reliability, security or accessibility from iteration

AO4: Governance, assurance and ongoing risk management

Pass

- Explains sources of error and algorithmic bias and how they are mitigated (K10)
- Applies governance principles for accountability, compliance and cyber security (K18)
- Explains mitigation for post-deployment issues such as overreliance and automation bias (K23)
- Applies methods for assuring compliance and undertakes assurance activities with clear documentation (K27, S28)
- Applies algorithmic impact assessment and workforce equality monitoring (K28, S29)
- Explains long-term monitoring of solutions, including model drift and emerging bias (K29)

Distinction

- Interprets governance and assurance requirements with insight and explains their implications
- Identifies and mitigates risks proactively, including subtle bias or drift
- Produces assurance documentation that would stand up to audit, and explains why

AO5: Stakeholder engagement and workforce enablement

Pass

- Engages and trains non-technical staff, understanding their roles and concerns (K19, S4)
- Delivers training to user groups, adapting content and format to feedback (S18)
- Develops resources such as guides and training materials to meet user needs (K20, S19)
- Communicates inclusively and translates technical concepts into accessible materials (K21, S22)

Distinction

- Tailors engagement confidently to diverse audiences, with evidence of improved adoption
- Responds to resistance or concern in a way that builds trust
- Produces resources that measurably improve users' confidence or use of the solution

AO6: Continuous improvement and change delivery

Pass

- Uses methods to identify productivity opportunities and maps workflows and processes to recommend solutions (K5, S6, S14)
- Applies analytical and computational techniques to design, evaluate and optimise solutions (S9)
- Makes evidence-based suggestions, such as cost-benefit analysis, and reports productivity and efficiency savings, including where automation does not help (S15, S16)
- Applies data and information security policies and procedures (S1)
- Contributes to sustainable and efficient solutions in line with organisational strategy (K17, S17)
- Keeps up to date with technologies and sector trends, including evaluating vendors (K25, S25)

Distinction

- Quantifies improvement accurately and explains its wider value to the organisation
- Recommends next steps or scaling with clear evidence and awareness of risk
- Evaluates new tools or vendors critically and explains how this informs practice

17 Behaviours

The behaviours below are part of the occupational standard. They are not assessed or graded by A2A. The employer confirms the apprentice has shown them by completing the A2A Employer Behaviour Approval Form, which is required before the certificate can be requested.

Ref	Behaviour
B1	Demonstrates empathy by actively considering the perspectives and concerns of staff who may be impacted by AI-driven change. Acts responsibly, recognising organisational efficiency goals with fairness to employees.
B2	Maintains professionalism and upholds confidentiality when discussing sensitive workforce impacts, showing respect for individual contributions.
B3	Demonstrates confidence in sharing concerns or alternative perspectives of self or others, even when under pressure to deliver efficiencies.
B4	Balances respect for leadership decisions with advocacy for employees.
B5	Support leaders to consider the impact of AI automation adoption, not just immediate organisational gains.
B6	Shows curiosity and initiative, experimenting with AI and automation, while ensuring such exploration is conducted safely, ethically, and with regard for potential impacts.

18 Glossary

Plain English meanings of the terms used in this specification.

A2A Assessment Platform	The online system training providers use to register apprentices, upload evidence and see results.
Apprenticeship assessment	The independent assessment that confirms the apprentice is competent in their occupation.
Assessment outcome	A group of related knowledge and skills statements from the assessment plan. Every outcome must be assessed.
Assessment plan	The document published by Skills England that sets out how the apprenticeship must be assessed. It takes precedence over this specification.
Gateway to Completion Declaration	The A2A form signed by the employer, apprentice and training provider to confirm all completion requirements are met before the certificate is requested.
Improvement resit	A further attempt at a component the apprentice has already passed, to try for a distinction.
Mandatory statement	A knowledge or skills statement shown in bold in the assessment plan, which must be assessed in every version of the assessment.
Non-mandatory statement	A knowledge or skills statement that is assessed across the assessment as a whole, but not necessarily in every assessment.
Performance descriptor	The plan's description of the level of performance needed for a pass or a distinction in each performance category.
Resit	A further attempt at a component that was not passed, without additional learning.
Retake	A further attempt at a component that was not passed, after a period of additional learning.
Synoptic assessment	Assessment in which the apprentice brings together knowledge and skills from across the standard to show they are competent in an integrated way.

19 Contact and document control

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Apprentices should contact their training provider first with any questions.

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Document control

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A2A Qualifications

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Questions about your assessment?

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