



# APPRENTICE PORTFOLIO GUIDE

L6 Digital & Technology Solutions Degree

## Contents

|                                                                  |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Introduction.....                                             | 1 |
| 2. Portfolio Guidance.....                                       | 2 |
| 2.1. How to Approach Your Portfolio.....                         | 2 |
| 2.2. Narration Style.....                                        | 3 |
| 2.3. Adding your evidence .....                                  | 3 |
| 3. Portfolio Checkpoint Expectations .....                       | 5 |
| 3.1. Portfolio Checkpoint 1 .....                                | 5 |
| 3.2. Portfolio Checkpoint 2 .....                                | 5 |
| 3.3. Ongoing Portfolio Checkpoints, tips and resources .....     | 6 |
| 4. Company sensitive information.....                            | 6 |
| 5. Use of Artificial Intelligence in relation to Portfolio ..... | 7 |
| 6. Quick Portfolio Map .....                                     | 8 |
| 7. Grading Criteria and Link to Apprenticeship Standard .....    | 9 |
| 8. Support & Adjustments .....                                   | 9 |

## 1. Introduction

Throughout your Apprenticeship you will be building a portfolio of evidence that will be used as the basis for your professional discussion which you will have during your End Point Assessment (EPA).

This guide is designed to help you understand how to build your portfolio effectively and identify the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) you need to meet.

Your Digital Learning Consultant (DLC) will be adding 'Portfolio Checkpoints' to your learning plan within Bud, this will support the development of your portfolio and ensure you have demonstrated the best examples of applying the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours in the workplace.

Please note that your portfolio is not a graded assessment however, it is reviewed by the End Point Assessment Assessors prior to your professional discussion and is one of the Gateway requirements to progress to EPA. It is therefore important that the information and examples you provide are specific to work you have personally completed.

Your DLC will be able to support you with this. **You must complete** all core sections, and your specific pathway section.

There are two systems you will use on your apprenticeship and where you will upload academic assignments, and your portfolio, as it develops.



Bud is where you will upload your portfolio checkpoints for your DLC to give you feedback



Canvas is where you will upload your academic assignments and your, final portfolio.

Every apprentice and employer is unique, so this guide may not align perfectly with your specific role, responsibilities or experience.

## 2. Portfolio Guidance

As an Apprentice on a Degree Apprenticeship, it's important that your portfolio demonstrates your professional competence by presenting your work in a clear, polished and industry-standard format.

You can create the main body of your portfolio using standard word-processing software, and it should be submitted as either a Microsoft Word document or a PDF. We have created a template portfolio, with all the sections and pathways ready to be completed. If you wish to use this, please ask your DLC for access. You can edit the document to delete the pathways which are not relevant to you. This template has been designed for you to easily add evidence to, and you can start using it straight away. The EPA assessors are also familiar with it. However, you are free to use and create your own portfolio design if it demonstrates your knowledge, skill and behaviour to the required standard, and subject to approval by your DLC.

### 2.1. How to Approach Your Portfolio

Your portfolio should showcase real workplace examples that demonstrate how you have applied your learning on the job. All portfolio content must relate directly to the business needs of your employer and reflect genuine workplace activity.

#### What is good evidence?

- **Relevant:** Directly link evidence from your work-based activities to a specific KSB statement.
- **Work-based:** Drawn from your business-as-usual projects, work activity tasks or elements of your academic assignments to support knowledge of KSB's across L4–L6.
- **NOTE:** *Extracts from academic assignments **MUST** refer to or utilise examples of real work-based projects/digital technology solutions from your organisation and completed within the context of your role.*
- **Triangulated:** STARR narrative (see section 1.3) + 1–2 pieces of evidence (e.g. screenshot, code snippet, test plan, data model, meeting notes etc.)
- **Reflective:** Shows what you have learned, the impact, and how you would improve and WHY.

There are no limitations on this; the depth and breadth of your reflections will provide a stronger outcome.

When preparing your portfolio, remember that your EPA assessor will be a subject specialist. You do not need to explain basic concepts; instead, focus on clearly demonstrating how you have applied your knowledge in practice. However, the assessor may not be familiar with the specific terminology used in your organisation or industry.

## 2.2. Narration Style

The writing style used in your portfolio may differ from what you are used to. Your portfolio should always be written in first-person and in the past tense. This means using phrases such as “*I completed...*”, “*I analysed...*”, or “*I created...*”. Your evidence must describe what you have done, not what you might do in the future, so avoid speculative statements like “*I could...*” or “*I would...*”.

You should also avoid general statements about how your organisation or team operates, such as “*we do this*” or “*we handle that*”. Your End Point Assessor needs to clearly understand your individual contribution, not the actions of your wider team. If you use “*we*,” the assessor may assume you are referring to team-based work rather than your own actions.

Additional advice about academic writing, including 1:1 support sessions, is available via our ACE team [Academic Community of Excellence](#)

## 2.3. Adding your evidence

For each KSB, it is recommended that you include clear and tangible visual evidence to support your written responses and demonstrate how you have met the required KSB. Visual evidence can be provided in formats such as screenshots, images, snips, or screen recordings. While not mandatory, including relevant visual evidence strengthens your portfolio and helps verify your competence. If a KSB is not supported by tangible visual evidence and is explored further by an End Point Assessor during your Professional Discussion, you may find it more challenging to demonstrate your knowledge, skills, and behaviours effectively, which could impact the overall assessment outcome.

Once you have added your evidence you will need to give context to it. This is to make your portfolio understandable to someone who does not know you or your organisation, we strongly encourage the use of the STARR methodology.

[This Video here](#) created by one of QA’s DLCs goes through the method of creating a Portfolio and using STARR to demonstrate a KSB.

### **S – Situation**

You will need to “set the scene” for the EPA assessor by explaining the details of the situation which surround your project, so that you can establish the context you are working in.

### **T – Task**

Then, you should explain the task you were set in a way that clearly defines what you were meant to accomplish.

### **A – Action**

Next, explain the actions you took to complete the task.

### **R – Result**

Lastly, detail the result of your efforts, including how your work benefitted or impacted the business and any feedback you received from your management or stakeholders.

### **R – Reflection**

The use of the “R – Reflection” is an opportunity to write a short descriptive statement on the learning applied in your work to meet the required KSBs of the activity. Consider what you may have done differently, or how you might approach a similar task in the future having completed and learnt from this one.

## Key things to consider

- Is your personal contribution clear?
- Is the outcome measurable/observable?
- Does the reflection show growth/next steps?
- Is evidence legible and appropriately redacted?

It is important to remember that the portfolio is a living document until the day it is sent to the EPA assessor.

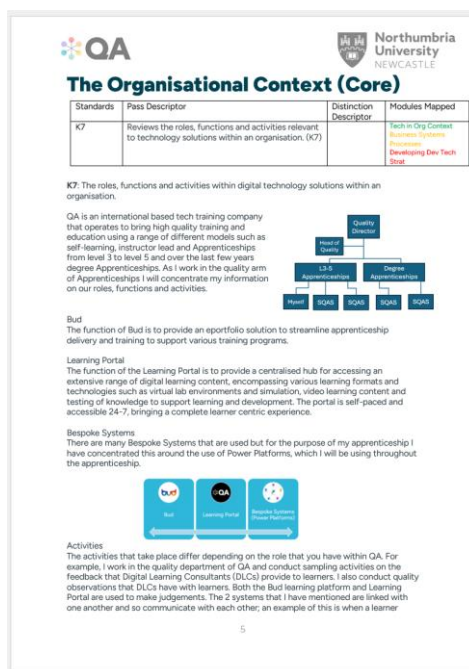
The STARR method is a guide for how to write your portfolio. Avoid STARR as headings or subheadings directly, as they make the piece look formulaic and artificial. Use appropriate headings which describe the steps and flow of the work in a meaningful way reflective of the context.

While STARR is strongly recommended, it is **not the only reflective approach** you can use. You may choose a structure that best suits your thinking and communication style, such as:

- **STAR** (without reflection) – useful for concise examples
- **Gibbs Reflective Cycle** – supports deeper reflection and evaluation
- **CARL (Context, Action, Result, Learning)** – a simplified reflective model

Regardless of the model used, your evidence must clearly demonstrate:

- Your **actions and decision-making**
- The **outcomes and impact**
- Meaningful **reflection and learning**



The image shows a sample portfolio page titled "The Organisational Context (Core)". It includes a table with columns for Standards, Pass Descriptor, Distinction Descriptor, and Modules Mapped. The table contains information for Standard K7, which involves reviewing roles, functions, and activities relevant to technology solutions within an organisation. Below the table, there is a detailed description of QA as an international based tech training company, a diagram showing the organisational structure with QA at the top, followed by Quality Assurance, Quality Improvement, and Quality Management, which then branches into various roles like QA Manager, QA Specialist, QA Analyst, QA Support, QA Training, QA Development, QA Design, QA Testing, QA Deployment, QA Monitoring, QA Evaluation, QA Reporting, QA Communication, QA Collaboration, QA Innovation, QA Leadership, QA Mentoring, QA Coaching, QA Consulting, QA Advising, QA Facilitating, QA Enabling, QA Empowering, QA Inspiring, QA Motivating, QA Encouraging, QA Supporting, QA Assisting, QA Helping, QA Guiding, QA Directing, QA Managing, QA Controlling, QA Organising, QA Planning, QA Implementing, QA Evaluating, QA Improving, QA Innovating, QA Creating, QA Developing, QA Designing, QA Building, QA Constructing, QA Producing, QA Manufacturing, QA Distributing, QA Marketing, QA Selling, QA Servicing, QA Maintaining, QA Repairing, QA Replacing, QA Upgrading, QA Enhancing, QA Optimising, QA Streamlining, QA Simplifying, QA Automating, QA Integrating, QA Connecting, QA Linking, QA Bridging, QA Joining, QA Merging, QA Combining, QA Blending, QA Mixing, QA Blending, QA Mixing, QA Blending, QA Mixing.

Example section of a typical completed portfolio using the QA template from canvas.

### 3. Portfolio Checkpoint Expectations

At your baseline review (within 42 days of your start date) and first progress review (10-12 weeks after the baseline review) your DLC will be able to discuss your job role and the portfolio requirements in more detail.

Your DLC is here to help and support you through your Apprenticeship and will offer you advice and guidance on your portfolio, they are your 'go to' if you have any questions or queries about what you are working on.

#### 3.1. Portfolio Checkpoint 1

**Getting started** – usually this is the hardest part, once you have done the following you'll be underway and ready to start creating your portfolio.

##### First Month (baseline review)

- ✓ Set up portfolio template aligned to your pathway
- ✓ Add role overview
- ✓ Add company overview
- ✓ Identify first piece of work that may be a good fit.

##### First Review (10-12 weeks)

- ✓ Submit one portfolio entry
- ✓ Add one piece of evidence
- ✓ Identify KSBs covered

If you follow the above steps, you will be ready for first portfolio submission onto Bud which is PC01.

#### 3.2. Portfolio Checkpoint 2

For your second checkpoint you should be able to **start evidencing** KSB's that you are demonstrating in your role.

Remember every role is different and your DLC will be able to guide you on which KSB's relate to the work you are doing.

As you complete work towards your portfolio you can use your DLCs feedback to improve your work or if the KSBs have been evidenced sufficiently they will be approved.

### 3.3. Ongoing Portfolio Checkpoints, tips and resources

Your DLC will set the Portfolio Checkpoints as activities on your Bud learning plan, it is important you are updating and adding evidence to your portfolio on an ongoing basis to aid successful timely completion. Your DLC will accept your portfolio on Bud once the associated KSBs have been evidenced in full.

The End Point Assessor's priority is to understand your professional capabilities and competence. Ensure everything you include supports this and keeps the spotlight on your own contributions and development.

## 4. Company sensitive information.

It is common that as an apprentice you could be working on projects or tasks which are sensitive and may require information redacting before being presented in your portfolio.

Redacted evidence is still perfectly valid and acceptable – the EPA Assessors are looking for evidence you have done the task, project etc. they don't necessarily need to see the specific details.

#### Tips: -

- EPA Assessors are looking for **quality over quantity**.
- A picture and a couple a paragraph or two of context is more than sufficient – you do not need to write large amounts of descriptive text – the document is a prompt for your professional discussion
- When referring to colleagues in your team or within your organisation, use job titles and/or initials only
- The **EPA Assessors will not follow external links to** hyperlinks or external resources such as company websites or other sources. If you believe the content is relevant, it should be included in your portfolio
- Be succinct – for example if you have written some code, you do not need to add multiple pages of all the code you have written. The same goes if you are using work from assignments – just use the relevant section, you do not need to add the whole assignment.
- Do not use negative comments
- Do not criticise other organisations, people or their work in your portfolio, this is viewed as unprofessional
- You can use evidence from your Major Project that you have done, up to the portfolio submission point

## 5. Use of Artificial Intelligence in relation to Portfolio

### Assessment Integrity

All apprentices are expected to act with integrity - a commitment to ethical, honest and fair practice - in their study. This means that the work that you submit for any activities/assessments must be your own. Any part of work that is created by others, including AI generated content, must be fully acknowledged and referenced. It is good practice to treat any response generated through AI as a potentially unreliable source, so you should verify the accuracy of any information provided

For this reason, AI-generated outputs should not be used as primary sources of information in conducting assessments. AI tools might, for example, be used to assist with generating ideas, researching topics, or planning a piece of work, ensuring that any elements that are AI generated (such as an image or data set) included in assessments are referenced appropriately.

If you have doubts regarding the acceptable use of AI for a specific assessment, then please discuss this with your Digital Learning Consultant and/or module tutor.

You can also refer to our organisations [AI policy here](#).

### Conducting Assessments

When preparing work for your apprenticeship programme you should always ensure that you are accurately representing who created it. All work that you submit is assumed to be presented as your own, i.e. created entirely by you, unless otherwise stated.

Failing to declare where parts or the whole of work submitted has been created by someone or something else could be classed as Academic or Assessment Misconduct, where the penalty or consequence may vary by programme depending on the specific regulations in place.

Submitting work for EPA that is represented as your own but has been generated by Generative AI tools and not appropriately referenced could result in the failure of that assessment. Guidance from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education on EPA states that:

- “where AI has been used as part of the apprentice’s day-to-day work and forms part of a project report, presentation, or artefact, it should be referenced as such within the work. AI must not be used to produce the report or portfolio
- where AI has been used as part of a portfolio that underpins an interview or professional discussion or any other assessment method, it should be fully referenced within the portfolio
- EPA must be carried out in accordance with the EPA plan and any project reports, presentations, artefacts etc must be the apprentice’s own work

## 6. Quick Portfolio Map

These are the KSB's that your portfolio must cover. You must complete the KSBs for all the core sections and your chosen pathway. If you are using the portfolio template, you can delete all other pathway sections except yours before you start.

You **must** make it clear in your portfolio where the KSB's have been mapped, so the End Point Assessment Assessors can easily identify this. The QA portfolio template provides this naturally. If you create your own portfolio template, you must add an index or contents page so it can be identified which KSBs have been covered in which page.

Core Sections (everyone MUST complete):

- **Organisational Context** → K7
- **Core Technical Concepts** → K6, K11, K12, K14, K16
- **Applied Technical Solutions** → K13, S4, S9, S10, S11, S12
- **Leading & Working Together** → K8, K9, K10, S7, S8, B4, B6, B7
- **Social Infrastructure (Legal, Ethics & Sustainability)** → K19, K20, S15, B1, B2, B8

Select your specialist pathway –

- **Software Engineer** → K21, K22, K23, K24, K28, S20, S21, S23
- **IT Consultant** → K30, K31, K34, K35, K36, S25, S27, S29
- **Data Analyst** → K53, K55, K57, K59, K60, S48, S49, S51
- **Network Engineer** → K63, K64, K65, K67, K68, S58, S59, S61
- **Business Analyst** → K41, K42, S33, K38, K43, S37, K39, S35
- **Cyber Security Analyst** → K46, K47, K48, K49, K50, S41, S43, S45

The QA portfolio template has a module mapping key that links the academic modules you will be doing to each of the core and pathway sections. It also has a pass and distinction descriptor for each taken from Skills England website listed below.

## 7. Grading Criteria and Link to Apprenticeship Standard

To support your understanding of what is required at EPA, it is important that you are familiar with the grading criteria for your standard. While your portfolio itself is not graded, the evidence you include will be used during your professional discussion to assess whether you meet the criteria for a Pass or Distinction.

Reviewing the grading descriptors will help you to:

- Understand what is expected at each level
- Identify the depth of analysis, justification, and reflection required
- Strengthen your evidence to align with higher-level performance (e.g. Distinction criteria)

Below is an example of how grading criteria may be structured:

| Theme                         | Pass                                                                                                                | Distinction                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Core – Solution Proposal (S1) | Analyses the business problem behind the project proposal to identify the role of digital and technology solutions. | Justifies their choice of digital and technology solutions for specific roles in the project proposal. |

You should use the grading criteria as a guide when developing your portfolio, particularly when aiming to demonstrate higher-level thinking, justification, and professional judgement.

Below is a link to all the standards on the Skills England website – full details can be found under the EPA plan tab.

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/digital-and-technology-solutions-professional-v1-2?view=standard>

## 8. Support & Adjustments

It is worth noting that reflections and evidence do not have to be submitted solely in written format. You can also use alternative methods such as audio reflections, video logs (vlogs), screen recordings, or voice notes to demonstrate learning and support evidence gathering.

Your portfolio should reflect your individual learning style, so you are encouraged to use the methods that work best for you. A combination of different approaches can often provide a more engaging and effective way to record your progress. If you would like to explore these options, please speak with your DLC for guidance and support.

If you have a Statement of Reasonable Adjustment in place you will be assigned a dedicated member from our learner services team who will work with you throughout your learning journey or as required.



**QA.com**

QA logo ® is a registered trademark of QA Limited, in the United Kingdom and the European Union.