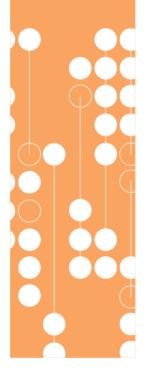# Student Handbook

Higher Apprenticeship Standard:

Level 7 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Specialist

Artificial intelligence (AI) data specialist / Skills England

V1.1 (15/10/2025)

QA

Learn. To Change.

1.　Welcome to the Programme

Welcome to the **AI Data Specialist Level 7 Apprenticeship**, delivered by QA through our innovative Digital by Design (DxD) model. This programme has been carefully structured to help you develop advanced technical, analytical, and professional skills to thrive in the field of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science.

Your learning journey will culminate in a final End-Point Assessment (EPA) composed of a written project, presentation, professional discussion, and technical test assessed through an external End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). Throughout your studies, you will be supported by dedicated teams to help you succeed throughout your apprenticeship programme.

1.1.　Delivery Model: Digital by Design (DxD)

This apprenticeship is delivered fully online using the DxD model, which is designed to provide maximum flexibility and engagement for learners in the digital workplace. You will complete your learning through three key phases in each module:

- **Discover**: Self-paced learning through QA's online platform, consisting of videos, readings, quizzes, and knowledge-check activities.
- **Practise**: Interactive, tutor-led live sessions where you will apply knowledge to real-world tasks and scenarios, collaborate with peers, and receive live feedback.
- **Apply**: Formative assessment activities that test your ability to integrate and demonstrate your learning, mapped to apprenticeship Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs).

1.2.　Learning Platforms

You will use the following platforms throughout your programme:

- **QA Platform**: Your primary learning environment for Discover and Practise content, and structured CPD learning in Python and Cloud technologies.
- **Bud**: Your apprenticeship management system for tracking progress, submitting reflections, and engaging with your Digital Learning Consultant (DLC).
- **Zendesk**: For raising technical or support queries.

Additional tools and software will be introduced throughout the modules (e.g. Google Colab, Jupyter Notebooks, Power BI, TensorFlow, and others) depending on the specific skills taught.

1.3.   Your First Week: Getting Started

In your first week, you will:

- Meet your **Digital Learning Consultant (DLC)**, who will support your apprenticeship progress.

- Gain access to **QA Platform** and begin working through your first Discover topics.

- Attend a **Programme Launch** session to familiarise yourself with the programme structure, tools, and expectations.

- Receive information about your first **Practise workshops**, which will be held live and are essential to your progress.

Your DLC will be in touch to guide you through this process and ensure your systems are set up correctly.

2.   Key Contacts and Communication

Effective communication is essential to your success on the programme. Below is a list of key personnel and support services you may need to contact.

2.1.   Programme Contacts

Role	Name	Email	About
Digital Learning Consultant (DLC)	Assigned individually	Assigned individually	You will be introduced to your named DLC at the start of your programme. **Your DLC is your primary contact.**
Programme Leader	Anne James	Anne.James@qa.com	The Programme Leader is the point of contact for any study related issues the DLC cannot answer.
Module Leader – Data Science Principles	Liam Webb	Liam.Webb@qa.com	The Module Leader is the point of contact for any study related issues in a specific module.
Module Leader – Programming for AI	Sam Ashcroft	Sam.Ashcroft@qa.com	The Module Leader is the point of contact for any study related issues in a specific module.
Module Leader – Other Modules	Anne James	Anne.James@qa.com	The Module Leader is the point of contact for any study related issues in a specific module.

2.2.   Support Services

Team	Purpose	Email
DLC Team	General queries and administration	Your DLC
Attendance Team	Notifications of absence form workshops, attendance queries	TeamQAAAttendance@qa.com
Mitigating Circumstances	Deadlines and breaks in learning (BILs)	Your DLC
Bud Support	Technical support for Bud platform	Zendesk Chat
Learn on Demand	Support accessing LOD activities	Zendesk Chat
IT Support / QA Platform	General technical support	Zendesk Chat
VLeBooks/Kortext Support	E-book access issues	Library@qa.com
EPA Queries	End-Point Assessment support	Your DLC

Tip: Always include your full name, programme title, and email when contacting any support team.

Further detail can be found at the Apprentice's Learner Portal

2.3. Communication Expectations

You are expected to check your registered email account and Bud notifications regularly. Most support staff will aim to respond to queries within one working day. During busy periods, please allow slightly longer.

3. Programme Structure and Delivery

The AI Data Specialist Level 7 Apprenticeship is structured to provide a coherent and progressive learning journey aligned with the occupational duties and the required Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs). The programme is delivered over **six 10-week teaching terms** using QA's **Digital by Design (DxD)** delivery model, culminating in the **End-Point Assessment (EPA)** conducted by the **EPAO**.

3.1. Programme Duration and Format

The structured learning phase spans 15 months, followed by a preparation and assessment phase leading up to Gateway and the End-Point Assessment. All learning is delivered fully online, combining self-paced and tutor-led elements.

Each term contains a core module aligned with a professional practice theme, supplemented by continuous CPD learning and apply stage assessment activities. The structure is designed to enable learners to build competence while simultaneously applying learning in a work-based context.

3.2. Teaching and Learning Model

Each module follows the **Discover – Practise – Apply** structure:

- **Discover**: Independent study using QA Platform, including readings, videos, quizzes, and knowledge checks.

- **Practise**: Live, tutor-led three-hour workshops scheduled regularly throughout the term. These interactive sessions focus on applying concepts in practical, collaborative tasks.

- **Apply**: A workplace activity during each module, typically involving the production of technical artefacts, written submissions, or presentations aligned to KSBs and mapped to occupational duties.

3.3.   Programme Module Overview

Programme Module Overview Term	Module	Topics
Terms 1 - 4	AI and Data Science Professional Practice	Ethics, Legal Aspects Limitations of AI. Contemporary Issues, Project Management Methodology.
Term 1	Data Science Principles	Data science concepts, visualisation, statistical analysis, Power BI, big data, NoSQL, machine learning fundamentals, legal and ethical considerations
Term 2	Programming for AI	Python for ML, regression, classification, prediction, clustering, time series, visualisation, maths behind ML algorithms
Term 3	Machine Learning Using Cloud Computing	Cloud platforms, neural networks, CNNs, RNNs, GANs, reinforcement learning, deep learning frameworks, ethics
Term 4	AI and Digital Innovation	NLP, transformers, GPT models, smart products, ethics and futures, sector innovation, product design
Term 5	Disruptive Leadership and Sustainable Strategy	Data strategy, transformation, organisational maturity, data value, leadership, sustainability, future trends

Each module integrates relevant CPD content delivered via QA Platform. Learners

select pathways appropriate to their experience level (e.g., Python for Data Science, Cloud Services, NLP foundations).

3.4.   Teaching Schedule and Workshops

Each module features a structured schedule, with workshops typically taking place on a **weekly or fortnightly basis**. Workshop dates and **session links will be published in advance via email.**

There are typically **six scheduled workshop sessions** per module, where learners consolidate their learning, seek clarification, and prepare their apply stage submissions.

A programme calendar outlining teaching weeks, key submission dates, and EPA milestones will be provided separately. All assessment deadlines and key dates will also appear in Bud.

3.5.   Learning Between Terms

There may be short breaks between terms, during which learners are encouraged to:

- Consolidate CPD learning on QA Platform.

- Continue developing their portfolio of evidence.

- Seek tutorial support or office hours if needed.

- Prepare for the next module and review upcoming materials.

Where applicable, learners may also use this time to advance their EPA project planning or engage in applied work-based learning.

3.6.   Programme Overview (Termly)

Term	Module	Themes & Topics	Key Activities	Apply Stage Activity
Term 1	**Data Science Principles** (with AI and Data Science Professional Practice)	Data analysis, visualisation, statistics, Power BI, big data, ethics	Discover content, Practise workshops, CPD on QA Platform (Python)	Visualisation artefact, statistical report, architecture design
Term 2	**Programming for AI** (with AI and Data Science Professional Practice)	ML algorithms, regression, classification, clustering, time series, evaluation	Discover content, Practise workshops, advanced Python in QA Platform, applied maths, CPD reflection	Presentation, model development, technical rationale
Term 3	**Machine Learning Using Cloud Computing** (with AI and Data Science Professional Practice)	Cloud ML platforms, deep learning, CNNs, RNNs, GANs, ethics	Discover content, Practise workshops, QA Platform CPD (Azure/AWS/GCP), EPA project exploration begins	Cloud platform evaluation, deep learning proof-of-concept
Term 4	**AI and Digital Innovation** (with AI and Data Science Professional Practice)	NLP, transformers, GPT models, smart services, ethics	Discover content, Practise workshops, QA Platform CPD (NLP), continue EPA project proposal and development	Innovation design brief, NLP concept demonstration
Term 5	**Disruptive Leadership and Sustainable Strategy**	Data strategy, organisational culture, future trends, sustainability	Discover content, Practise workshops, Complete EPA project practical component, no new CPD required	Technical test mock, viva presentation, EPA project submission
EPA Phase	**End Point Assessment** (via EPAO)	Integration of all KSBs	Project write-up and submission	EPA: 1. Project Report & Presentation 2. Professional Discussion 3. Technical Test

4.   Learning Platforms and Tools

The AI Data Specialist Level 7 Apprenticeship uses multiple systems to deliver high-quality learning, monitor apprenticeship progress, and manage assessments. Each system has a distinct and defined purpose. Understanding how and when to use each platform is essential to your success on the programme.

This section provides an end-to-end walkthrough of what each platform is for, how it is accessed, and where to find the resources needed at each stage of your module learning.

4.1.   Platform Overview: Roles and Responsibilities

System	Purpose	What you do here
Bud	Apprenticeship progress management	Track learning milestones, complete the Discover and Practise Learning Activity, access QA Platform, submit reflections and log Off-the-Job Hours (OTJH)
QA Platform	Primary e-learning environment	Access Discover topics (videos, quizzes, readings), complete CPD learning, prepare for workshops
Mimeo	Workshop content and tutor materials	Access live Practise session slides and activity materials using a code provided via Bud
WebEx or Microsoft Teams	Live workshop delivery	Attend your scheduled live Practise sessions with tutors and peers
Learn on Demand (LoD)	QA's browser-based virtual machine (VM) platform.	It allows you to complete lab-based exercises and practical activities in a secure, pre-configured environment without the need to install any software locally.

Zendesk	QA support desk	Raise technical issues or platform access problems (QA Platform, Bud, Mimeo, etc.)
Google Colab	Python development platform	Develop and run Python programmes
OpenAI	Transformer development platform	Run transformers in live Practise workshops.
Hugging Face	Transformer development platform	Run transformers in live Practise workshops.
GitHub	Version control code repository	Access existing solutions and code bases.
Kaggle	Data science and data set platform	Access open source data sets.

4.2.   Your Learning Journey: Platform Use at Each Stage

Each module follows the **Discover – Practise – Apply** structure. Below is a breakdown of exactly where to go and what to do at each stage:

4.3.   Discover Stage

Purpose: To build foundational knowledge by engaging with weekly topic activities before attending the live Practise workshop.

Start each module by logging into **Bud** and opening "Discover and Practise | [Module Title] Part *[1 or 2] (Online and Live)*". Topics/Weeks 1–4 are in Part 1, and 5–8 are in Part 2. This activity links directly to each **Discover Topic Pathwa**y on the QA Platform.

During this stage, you will:

- Read core content and guidance

- Watch video explainers

- Complete quizzes and knowledge checks

- Engage with discussion prompts (where available)

- Begin your CPD activity for the module (e.g. Python, Cloud, NLP) via QA Platform

Although Bud may display a single overall deadline for the Discover activity, you are expected to follow the structured weekly release of topics to stay on track. **Mimeo codes** for workshop resources are also located alongside the relevant week's content.

4.4.   Practise Stage

Purpose: To apply your learning through interactive, tutor-led workshops that promote deeper understanding and problem-solving.

Workshops are held live via:

- **WebEx** (for most cohorts)

- **Microsoft Teams** (for cohorts starting from Summer 2025)

Your delivery platform will be confirmed at the Programme Launch. Links to sessions are shared via email.

Workshop materials, including slide decks and activities, are accessed through **Mimeo**. To find your code:

1. Log into Bud

2. Open the *"Discover and Practise | [Module Title] Part [1 or 2] (Online and Live)""*

3. Locate the weekly content for your module — the code will be listed there which can be redeemed at https://www.mimeo.digital/ to retrieve your workshop learning materials.

If your module includes practical technical tasks, you may be asked to use **Learn on Demand (LoD)** — QA's browser-based virtual machine platform. This allows you to complete lab-based exercises without installing software locally. If LoD is required:

- An **event key** will be provided via your tutor or workshop communications

- You can use the **key once for the duration of the module**

The Practise workshops follow a blended learning model. You must complete the Discover activities beforehand. These sessions are designed to build on—not repeat—the knowledge gained during the Discover stage.

4.5.   Apply Stage

Purpose: To demonstrate your understanding through a formative, apply stage activity aligned to the module's KSBs.

You'll find your assignment brief and submission instructions within the *"Apply | [Module Title] (Assessment)"* activity in Bud. **Submission is also via Bud**, which is linked directly through the Bud activity.

During this stage, you will:

- Review the apply stage activity brief/

- Produce the required artefact (e.g. report, presentation, codebase, or visual output)

- Submit your work via Bud before the published deadline

Note: It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is original, properly referenced, and meets QA's academic integrity standards.

4.6.　Support and Troubleshooting

Issue	Action
Cannot find a Discover topic or Mimeo code	Check the "All Activities" filter in Bud and use Ctrl+F to search
Can't access Mimeo or unsure of login	Raise a ticket via [Zendesk Chat](#)
Unsure which workshop link to use (WebEx or Teams)	Contact your tutor or DLC
Trouble logging into QA Platform or Bud	Contact technical support through [Zendesk Chat](#)
Need clarity on assessment deadlines	Refer to Bud activity or contact your DLC
Platform error or system bug	Submit a screenshot and description via [Zendesk Chat](#)

4.7.　Top Tips for Staying Organised

- Bookmark all platforms in your browser and test logins early in each term.

- Use the calendar and Bud milestones to track deadlines.

- Download workshop resources from Mimeo **in advance** of each session.

- Attend all live workshops — they directly support your end-of-module assessments.

- If you're ever in doubt, ask your **DLC** or module leader — early clarification prevents bigger problems later.

5. Support and Guidance

QA is committed to supporting you throughout your journey on the AI Data Specialist Level 7 Apprenticeship. A comprehensive network of academic, technical, and wellbeing support services is in place to ensure that you receive timely, effective, and personalised assistance at every stage of your programme.

This section outlines the support available, how to access it, and the roles of key personnel.

5.1. Programme Support

5.1.1. Digital Learning Consultant (DLC)

Your DLC is the main point of contact throughout your apprenticeship. They will:

- Monitor your progress in Bud

- Lead quarterly progress review meetings (held virtually)

- Support OTJH tracking, reflection activities, and EPA preparation

- Liaise between QA, your employer, and the teaching team

Your DLC will support you with:

- Applying knowledge and skills to your work-based learning

- Guidance on English, maths (if required), and welfare concerns

- Raising requests via QA systems (e.g. PMQs or Learning Requests)

- Advice and guidance throughout the EPA process

You can expect a response from your DLC within 1 working day.

5.1.2. Programme Leader

The Programme Leader is responsible for the content and quality assurance of the programme. They oversee curriculum design and delivery, coordinate the teaching team, support EPA planning, and ensure regulatory obligations are met.

- **Name**: Anne James

- **Email**: Anne.James@qa.com

5.1.3.   Module Leaders/Tutors

Your Module Leader/Tutor is responsible for delivering the learning content for your module, including:

- Leading Practise workshops

- Hosting weekly Office Hours

- Providing formative feedback

You are encouraged to engage with your tutor regularly through live sessions and email where appropriate.

5.2.   Study Skills and Learning Support

5.2.1.   ACE Team – Academic Community of Excellence

The ACE Team are academic specialists who offer one-to-one or group support in academic writing, referencing, critical thinking, and study skills.

- **Email**: ACEDA@qa.com

- **Book via**: QA Learner Portal – Academic Community of Excellence

- **Response time**: Within 2 working days

Common areas of support include:

- Academic writing and referencing

- Structuring assignments

- Reading and research techniques

- Feedback interpretation

5.2.2.   Learning Support Specialists

QA's Learning Support Specialists provide tailored support for learners with diagnosed learning difficulties, disabilities, or mental health conditions.

- **Email**: DASpecialist.LearningTeam@qa.com

- **Response time**: Within 2 working days

Support available:

- One-to-one or group sessions

- Support plans and adjustments for learning or assessment

- Advice on exam arrangements and reasonable adjustments

5.2.3.   QA Library Services

QA provides access to curated library resources specific to your programme via the AI Data Specialist Degree Library:

- [QA Library Portal – AI & Data Specialist](#)

Resources include:

- Recommended reading lists

- Book 1:1 support sessions

- Core textbooks (e-books where available)

- Access to digital resources and academic databases

- Guidance on academic referencing

5.3.   Safeguarding and Wellbeing Support

QA's **Safeguarding Team** are trained professionals available to provide timely, confidential support regarding mental health, wellbeing, and learner welfare. You can also raise any Prevent-related or safeguarding concerns via this service.

- **Email**: safeguarding@qa.com

- **Response time**: Within 3 hours

You can contact the Safeguarding Team for:

- Mental health and wellbeing concerns

- Reporting bullying, harassment, or abuse

- Support with difficult personal circumstances

- Accessing external support agencies

6.   End-Point Assessment (EPA)

The final stage of your apprenticeship is the **End-Point Assessment (EPA)**, a rigorous, independently assessed process designed to confirm that you have met the requirements of the **Level 7 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Specialist apprenticeship standard**.

The EPA is administered by an approved End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). You will be supported throughout the EPA preparation phase by your Digital Learning Consultant (DLC) and the EPA Team.

6.1.   What Is the Purpose of the EPA?

The EPA is your opportunity to demonstrate that you have achieved full occupational competence. It evaluates your ability to apply the **Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs)** developed across the programme in a work-based and professionally relevant context.

You must successfully complete the EPA to be awarded your apprenticeship certificate.

The EPA confirms your readiness and competence as a Level 7 Artificial Intelligence Data Specialist. It is independently delivered by the EPAO in line with the formal standard.

You can refer to the official EPA plan for detailed guidance:
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Specialist (ST0763) EPA Plan

6.2.   Components of the EPA

The EPA comprises **three independent components**, each mapped to the apprenticeship standard:

Component	Description
1. Project Report and Presentation	After Gateway, the EPAO will confirm a project title. You will have six weeks to complete a written report and presentation that demonstrates how you have applied AI and data techniques to address a real business problem. The presentation is followed by supplementary questioning.

2. Technical Test	A supervised, on-screen test of your applied technical skills, such as data modelling, coding, and problem-solving.
3. Professional Discussion	A structured interview with an EPAO assessor. It is based on your submitted portfolio (created during the on-programme phase) and is used to assess the full breadth of KSBs. The portfolio is not graded but informs the discussion.

EPA Readiness: The Gateway Process

You will only be recommended for EPA after successfully completing all the required elements of the on-programme phase. This includes:

- Completion of all five core modules

- Submission of all apply stage activities

- Engagement with CPD, Bud activities, and reflective practice

- Completion of a work-based portfolio of evidence

- Meeting functional skills requirements (if applicable)

This process is known as **Gateway**, and it marks your formal entry into the final phase of the apprenticeship. The Gateway process is managed by your DLC. You will receive guidance and a checklist of requirements as you approach this point.

6.3.   Timeline and Key Milestones

Stage	Estimated Timing
Completion of final module	End of Term 5
Gateway review and confirmation	~1–2 weeks after final module
EPA preparation (briefs, mock sessions)	Weeks 1–4 post-Gateway
Final submission of EPA Project Report	As per published deadline

| Technical Test and Professional Discussion | Scheduled by the EPAO following report submission |

A detailed timeline and preparation pack will be provided during your final term.

6.4. Support During EPA

You will receive:

- A **project proposal template and guidance** during Term 4

- Individual support from your DLC during project planning

- EPA **workshops or mock sessions** to help you prepare for the report, test, and discussion

- **Feedback on draft project proposals** before Gateway

- Opportunities to raise questions or concerns via Office Hours or 1:1 meetings

6.4.1. EPA Grading

EPA components are assessed independently and result in an overall grade of:

- **Pass**

- **Merit**

- **Distinction**

- **Fail**

Only the EPA determines your final apprenticeship grade. **Module grades achieved during the on-programme phase do not count toward the final EPA outcome**, but they are required for Gateway and demonstrate your readiness.

7.   Policies and Procedures

As a QA learner and an apprentice, you are expected to engage with the programme professionally and in accordance with all academic and regulatory requirements. This section outlines the key policies and procedures that guide your conduct, progress, and access to support throughout your programme.

You can access all QA's policies and procedures via the Apprenticeship Learner's Portal: Policies and procedures | QA

7.1.   Attendance and Engagement

Active participation in all scheduled learning activities is a core expectation of the apprenticeship. This includes:

- Attending all live Practise workshops

- Participating in Office Hours and CPD activities

- Engaging with Bud and QA Platform as required

If you are unable to attend a workshop or scheduled activity due to illness or other valid reasons, you must notify the Attendance Team: **TeamQAAAttendance@qa.com**

All absences are recorded and monitored as part of your apprenticeship commitment. Persistent non-attendance may result in disciplinary action or withdrawal from the programme.

7.2.   Break in Learning (BIL) and Withdrawal

If your circumstances change and you are unable to continue temporarily, you may request a Break in Learning (BIL). You may also withdraw from the programme if required.

- Requests must be submitted to your DLC.

- Your employer will be consulted as part of the decision-making process

Returning from a BIL requires a re-entry plan and may affect your learning schedule or Gateway timing.

7.3.   Academic Conduct and Plagiarism

All learners are expected to uphold high standards of academic integrity. Plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, and the unauthorised use of AI tools are all considered academic misconduct.

You can access all QA's policies and procedures via the Apprenticeship Learner's Portal: Policies and procedures | QA, which includes:
- QA In Learning Code of Conduct
- QA Cheating & Plagiarism Policy
- QA Using AI in Apprenticeship Assessment & Learning

Guidance on proper citation and avoiding plagiarism is available from the **ACE Team** at:

Email: ACEDA@qa.com

7.4.   Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

QA is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where all learners are treated fairly, respectfully, and without discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments and inclusive support are available for learners with:

- Disabilities or learning differences

- Long-term health conditions

- Temporary impairments

To request adjustments or support, contact:

Email: DASpecialist.LearningTeam@qa.com

All requests are confidential and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

7.5.   Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Your safety and wellbeing are a top priority. QA's **Safeguarding Team** provides confidential advice and intervention where needed.

- **Email**: safeguarding@qa.com

- **Response time**: Within 3 hours

You can contact the Safeguarding Team about:

- Mental health concerns

- Bullying or harassment

- Domestic abuse or exploitation

- Prevent or radicalisation concerns

Safeguarding applies to all learners, regardless of mode of study or location.

8. Student Voice and Feedback

QA actively values learner input and encourages feedback at every stage of your journey. Listening to your experiences and acting on your suggestions helps us maintain quality, improve services, and create a responsive and supportive learning environment.

Your feedback contributes to programme review, curriculum development, learner support, and the Continuous Improvement Plan, led by the Programme Leader and Associate Dean for Apprenticeships.

8.1. Structured Feedback Opportunities

Learners are invited to provide feedback through multiple surveys and meetings throughout the programme lifecycle:

Feedback Opportunity	Timing	Purpose
Pulse Surveys	After every Practise workshop	Quick feedback on content clarity, session quality, and tutor support
Start-of-Programme Survey	Within the first two weeks	Captures initial impressions, onboarding experience, and early support needs
On-Programme Survey	Midway through the programme	Provides insight into progress, workload, and platform usability
End-of-Term Survey	At the close of each module	Collects comprehensive module-level feedback
End-of-Programme Survey	After final assessment	Gathers reflections on the full learning journey and readiness for EPA

All survey responses are anonymised and reviewed by the Programme Leader, Module Leaders, and Associate Dean.

8.2.   Student Representative System

QA encourages learners to volunteer as **Student Representatives**, serving as a vital communication channel between the student cohort and the programme team.

Responsibilities of a Student Rep:

- Represent your cohort by collecting and sharing collective feedback

- Attend termly Student Rep Meetings (minimum two terms)

- Review the **Action Table** and help track progress on agreed items

- Maintain a constructive, respectful tone in all feedback

- Dedicate time to prepare for meetings and gather learner views

Student Rep Meeting Process:

- Meetings are chaired by a member of the QA Programme Team

- Feedback is recorded and summarised in formal meeting minutes

- An **Action Table** is created, detailing next steps, responsible staff, and timelines

- Actions are reviewed at the next meeting and any outstanding items are discussed

Minutes and Action Tables are shared with the Programme Leader, Delivery Managers, Associate Dean, and the Retention & Careers Team for oversight and response.

Learners can express interest in becoming a Student Rep by contacting their **DLC or Programme Leader**.

8.3.   Impact of Feedback: Continuous Improvement

All learner feedback — including surveys, progress reviews, Office Hours discussions, and Student Rep meetings — is used to inform a **formal Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)**. This plan is managed by the Programme Leader and Associate Dean and reviewed regularly to ensure:

- Timely responses to learner concerns

- Evidence-based improvements to teaching and delivery

- Ongoing enhancement of QA systems and learner support

You will be notified via tutor communications when actions have been taken in response to student feedback.

8.4. Raising a Concern

If you wish to raise a concern or complaint, you are encouraged to email your DLC and digitalapprenticeships@qa.com

Informal complaints or queries submitted in this way will be managed confidentially and promptly. This approach often allows for a swift and supportive resolution before the matter requires escalation.

8.5. Escalating a Concern

If you feel that an issue has not been adequately addressed through informal feedback or Student Rep channels, you may raise a formal concern via QA's complaints process. A formal response will be provided in line with QA's complaints policy

9. Key Information and FAQs

This section answers many of the most frequently asked questions raised by learners on the AI Data Specialist Level 7 Apprenticeship. You are encouraged to check this section before raising a query with your tutor or DLC, as many issues can be quickly resolved with the information below.

9.1. Progress and Assessment

9.1.1. When will I get feedback?

Feedback for Apple Stage Activities will be released within **48-hours** of the submission. You will receive an email notification once your feedback via Bud.

9.1.2. Do Apply Stage Activities count towards my apprenticeship grade?

All Apple Stage Activities must be completed to recommend progress through Gateway. However, **only your performance in the End-Point Assessment (EPA)** determines your final apprenticeship grade (Pass, Merit, Distinction).

9.1.3. Can I still pass if I struggle with Python?

Yes — support is available through CPD content, live workshops, Office Hours, and the ACE Team. You will be supported to develop confidence over time, especially during Terms 1–2.

9.2. Workshops and Learning Platforms

9.2.1. Where do I access Discover, Practise and Apply materials?

- **Discover & CPD content**: Accessed via QA Platform (linked through Bud)
- **Practise workshop slides and activities**: Accessed via **Mimeo**, using a code found in the Bud activity
- **Apply stage assessment brief and upload**: Found and submitted in Bud.

9.2.2. Where are live workshops held?

- Most cohorts use **WebEx**

- Cohorts starting from **Summer 2025** will use **Microsoft Teams**

Check your module communications or ask your DLC if unsure.

9.2.3. How do I find my Mimeo code?

Log into Bud, open the **"Discover and Practise Learning Activity"**, and locate the weekly activity. The Mimeo code is displayed there.

9.3. Systems and Technical Queries

9.3.1. Do I have to use Google Colab?

No — you may use Colab, Jupyter, or another IDE as long as your code is readable and accessible for assessment purposes.

9.3.2. I can't find something in Bud – what should I do?

Use the **"All Activities"** filter and **Ctrl+F** to search by keyword. If you still can't find it, contact your DLC or tutor.

9.3.3.

9.3.4. What is Learn on Demand and where do I find my event key?

Learn on Demand (LoD) is a virtual lab platform provided by QA that enables you to run coding and data science exercises in a ready-made environment accessed through your web browser. You do not need to install any software. Your event key for LoD will be shared via Bud or during your live workshop sessions. If you have not received a key or cannot access a specific lab, contact your module tutor or DLC for support.

9.3.5. What if nothing is set in Bud at the start of my programme?

Notify your DLC. They will check your enrolment status and ensure content is released to your account.

9.3.6. Where can I get help with sensitive workplace data in assessments?

Discuss anonymisation or redaction techniques with your DLC. You may be able to simulate or adapt the dataset while preserving integrity.

9.4. Apprenticeship and Progress Tracking

9.4.1. How do I log Off-the-Job Hours (OTJH)?

OTJH must be logged in Bud. Your DLC will review this regularly during progress reviews.

9.4.2. Do I need to complete all five hours of reflection in Professional Practice tasks?

No —reflections are part of your own practice professional development.

9.5. Support and Communication

9.5.1. Who is my DLC?

You will be assigned a named Digital Learning Consultant (DLC) at the start of your programme. Their name and contact details will be provided via Bud or email. If you are unsure, contact Zendesk Chat.

9.5.2. What's the difference between a DLC, a Tutor and other roles?

- **Tutor/Module Leader** – Plans and delivers Discover and Practise learning

- **DLC** – Monitors progress, leads reviews, provides Apply stage feedback, supports apprenticeship structure and welfare

- **Programme Leader** – Oversees the curriculum and quality assurance

9.5.3. Who do I email for…?

Topic	Email Address
General queries or concerns	Your DLC
Absences	TeamQAAAttendance@qa.com
Study skills and referencing	ACEDA@qa.com
Library services	QA Library – AI & Data Specialist
Learning support	DASpecialist.LearningTeam@qa.com
Safeguarding/wellbeing	safeguarding@qa.com