Autism Education Trust

Post-16 Competency Framework

Additional resources

Introduction

The Autism Education Trust (AET) Post-16 Competency Framework has been written for all Post-16 settings in the education sector. The framework can be used by professionals working in Post-16 as a self-reflection tool that enables them to evaluate their practice when supporting autistic learners. In this document, each Competency is linked to a set of resources that will help you to meet that Competency.

It should be noted that these suggested resources are not the only way to meet the Competency and the resources in this document have been provided as an example. It is important to remember that the learner is the most valuable resource and any resource used should be person centred to be truly effective. Utilising the learner's interests is often key in building effective relationships as well as co-creating strategies/resources that empower the learner to be independent. As Post-16 settings provide a range of courses for an expansive age and ability range, we do not want to suggest a one size fits all approach.

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Principle One

Understanding the strengths, interests, and needs of each autistic learner.

Competency 1: I work in partnership with the autistic learner to identify and share the key strengths and challenges that they face in the areas of social understanding and communication; flexibility, information processing and understanding, and sensory processing and integration.

AET resources/templates

- Learner profile template – This is provided in the ‘Making Sense of Autism’ module.

External resources

- Weston College: Student Initial Specialist Assessment (ISA)

- Learner profile example

- Beardon, L., Martin, N., & Woolsey, I. (2009). What do students with Asperger syndrome or high functioning autism want at college and university?(in their own words). Good Autism Practice (GAP), 10(2), 35–43

- Hastwell, J., Martin, N., Baron-Cohen, S., & Harding, J. (2010). The Cambridge Project: Reflections on a university-based AS social group, 1–21

Videos

- Autism Wales: What is autism?
  The film follows three autistic people as they explore what their autism means to them, including: social communication; patterns and routines; sensory experience; and how to make things better. It also includes the professional voice of Dr Elin Walker Jones, Consultant Psychologist.

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Competency 2: I recognise that many autistic learners have co-occurring differences. They can experience high levels of anxiety and stress, and these can create barriers to learning. I know that autistic learners may display behaviour based on a combination of factors and I work hard to understand the causes and functions of the behaviour.

AET resources/templates

- Learner profile template – This is provided in the ['Making Sense of Autism' module](#).

- Specialist learner support plan – This is provided in the ['Good Autism Practice' module](#).

External resources

- [Learner profile example](#)

Useful websites

- [Education and Training Foundation (ETF): Autism wellbeing resources](#)

- [National Autism Society (NAS): Autism and mental health presentations (2019)](#)

- [NAS: Related Conditions](#)

Videos

- [Weston College and ETF's Centre for Excellence in SEND: Reconnection and engagement programmes for learners with autism and anxiety](#)

- [Ambitious about Autism: Meltdowns and shutdowns](#)

- [Ambitious about Autism: Know your normal](#)

- [Sarah Hendrickx: How anxiety affects everything](#)

- [Birmingham Communication and Autism Team: How autism affects 6 young people](#)

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Principle Two

Empowering autistic learners to be at the centre of decision-making about their education and to make informed decisions about their future.

Competency 3: I understand the importance of listening to the autistic learner and regularly consult, involve, and arrive at joint decisions with them.

AET resources/templates

- Transition to employment toolkit

External resources

- Preparing for Adulthood: Outcomes across the age ranges for CYP with SEND
- City College Norwich: Hints and tips on how best to support us

Useful websites

- Preparing for Adulthood: Outcomes tool
- Preparing for Adulthood: Introduction to person-centred planning tool
- Helen Sanderson Associates

Videos

- Preparing for Adulthood
  These case-study videos showcase how local authorities and FE providers work together to support learners with SEND to achieve their aspirations, including progressing into employment.

Competency 4: I see the autistic learner as a partner in their learning and actively involve them as part of the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle so that the autistic learner is at the centre of educational planning.

AET resources/templates

- Assess, Plan, Do, Review template – This is provided in the 'Good Autism Practice' module.

Useful websites

- Education and Training Foundation (ETF): Co-design of the curriculum resource

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Principle Three

Ongoing and positive collaboration between the autistic learner, staff, a range of services, and parents/carers.

Competency 5: I work closely with the autistic learner, other staff in my provision, parents/carers (where appropriate), and with a range of services to support the autistic learner to self-advocate what is important to them at key transition points in their life.

AET resources/templates

- Integra report: Case study G
  This case study involve the Springfields School, an independent specialist provision for pupils aged 5–19.

External resources

- Falkirk Council: A practical approach at home for parents and carers

- Falkirk Council: Life skills for teenagers

- Axcis: Supporting autistic people at university (and college)

Useful websites

- Gov.uk: Careers guidance and access for education and training providers

- Bristol Local Authority : Autism transition pack

Competency 6: I collaborate with the autistic learner, and with health, social care, parents/carers, and other professionals to improve educational experiences and outcomes for the autistic learner.

AET resources/templates

- Team Around the Learner template – This is provided in the 'Good Autism Practice' module.

External resources

- Weston College: Parent/carer Initial Specialist Assessment (ISA)

- Association of Colleges: Provision for Post-16 high needs students

Useful websites

- Gov.uk: Disabled students allowance

- Scottish Autism Toolbox

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Principle Four

Workforce development related to Good Autism Practice.

Competency 7: I engage in professional development that enables me to address the needs of autistic learners and to enhance and embed inclusive practice. I take onboard the perspectives of autistic young people and adults.

AET resources/templates

- AET training modules

- CPD log

Useful websites

- Preparing for Adulthood

- Education and Training Foundation (ETF): Excellence gateway

- Education and Training Foundation (ETF): SEND Excellence gateway

- Education and Training Foundation (ETF): Professional Standards

- Society for Education and Training

Competency 8: I utilise the competency framework as a working document to gather data, reflect on, and note down the implications of my learning and development for my own practice, and ultimately for the autistic learner(s) I work with.

AET resources/templates

- AET Post-16 Competency Framework

- Next Steps Action Plan template

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Principle Five

Leadership and management that promotes and embeds Good Autism Practice

Competency 9: I proactively work with my line manager and/or Learning Support Manager to identify, share, and embed Good Autism Practice.

AET resources/templates

- Self-evaluation exercise

- AET: Bite size resources

- AET: GAP Principles and Inclusion Promises flyer for staff

- AET Young Experts Panel: The impact autism can have on the ability to learn

Competency 10: I support the autistic learner to engage in opportunities to participate in college and community activities, and I enable autistic learners to develop skills to support independence and pathways to employment.

AET resources/templates

- Good Autism Practice report (2019)

- Integra report: Case studies

- Autism resource suite: Promoting autism inclusive attitudes

- Exclusions guidance (relevant to sixth forms within a school)

External resources

- Autism Centre for Education and Research (ACER): Exclusions report

- ACER: Executive summary

- National Specialist Colleges (Natspec): Value of developing skills of independent living in an education rather than care setting

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Principle Six

An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for autistic learners.

Competency 11: I create positive, supportive, and caring relationships between autistic learners and their autistic or non-autistic peers, and between staff and parents/carers.

AET resources/templates

- Integra report: Case study F
  This case study involves the Phoenix School, a Community Special School for pupils aged 3–19.

- Friendship circle template – This is provided in the 'Good Autism Practice' module.

External resources

- Brene Brown's constructive feedback checklist

Useful websites

- PREVENT

- Educate against hate

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Competency 12: I create structured, predictable, and calm environments. I am mindful of adapting to the needs of individual autistic learners and I make reasonable adjustments accordingly.

AET resources/templates

- Sensory preferences and differences template – This is provided in the 'Good Autism Practice' module.

- Environmental audit template – This is provided in the 'Good Autism Practice' module.

- Autism resource suite

External resources

- Mitchell, W., & Beresford, B. (2014). Young people with high-functioning autism and Asperger's syndrome planning for and anticipating the move to college: what supports a positive transition?. British Journal of Special Education, 41(2), 151–171

Useful websites

- NAS transition tips: A guide for Higher Education professionals

Videos

- Ambitious about Autism: Repetitive behaviours and stimming

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Principle Seven

Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic learners.

Competency 13: When assessing progress towards learning goals, I have a holistic approach that builds on strengths and interests, whilst addressing skills and understanding that the autistic learner may find difficult.

AET resources/templates

- AET: Progression Framework

- Specialist learner support plan – This is provided in the 'Good Autism Practice' module.

External resources

- Weston College: Scheme for learning example

Useful websites

- Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) guidance – This includes a link to ETF RARPA comprehensive guidance.

Competency 14: I am involved in or contribute to the development and implementation of person-centred learner profiles and specialist learner support plans in partnership with autistic learners, parents/carers, and other staff. These include details of how the staff can support the autistic learner.

AET resources/templates

- Learner profile template – This is provided in the 'Making Sense of Autism' module.

- Specialist learner support plan – This is provided in the 'Good Autism Practice' module.

- Assess, Plan, Do, Review template – This is provided in the 'Good Autism Practice' module.

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Principle Eight

Adapting the curriculum, teaching and learning to promote wellbeing and success for autistic learners.

Competency 15: I differentiate support and/or teaching to embed a dual academic and social, emotional curriculum.

AET resources/templates

- Autism resources suite

External resources

- Autism West Midlands: Strategies to support students with autism in Further Education

Videos

- Education and Training Foundation (ETF): Adapting and redesigning support programmes for students with autism

Competency 16: I work with the autistic learner to identify and use technology to enable autistic learners to take control of their learning journey and to gain independence.

Useful websites

- Education and Training Foundation (ETF): Making technology work for you
- Natspec
- Jisc: Assistive technologies for FE and skills

Apps

- Brain in hand
- My study life
- Autistica: Molehill mountain

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Further resources

Legislation

- Equality Act (2010): Technical guidance on Further and Higher Education
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Education and Training Foundation (ETF): Professional Standards for teachers and trainers in FE (2014)
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2021)
- Children and Families Act (2014)

Useful websites

- Education Training Foundation (ETF)
- National Autistic Society (NAS)
- Ambitious about Autism
- Whole School SEND
- National Specialist Colleges (Natspec)
- Autism West Midlands
- Scottish Autism Toolbox
- Preparing for Adulthood
- National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN)
- Gov.uk
- The Student Room
- Disability Rights UK

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Post-16

Discover the Post-16 Professional Development Programme
Explore our free, downloadable, editable resources:

- **The Progression Framework**

  An interactive assessment tool that helps staff/practitioners identify learning priorities, set key learning intentions, and track progress for Post-16 autistic learners in both mainstream and specialist settings.

- **The Post-16 Standards Framework**

  A set of descriptors and examples that can be used by leaders/leadership teams to support the implementation of Good Autism Practice across a whole organisation.

Learn about autism with experienced local trainers

Do you work regularly with autistic children and young people? You can embed Good Autism Practice into your teaching with our CPD-certified autism education training. We offer training for mainstream and specialist settings across three phases: Early Years, Schools, and Post-16.

Find out more: www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/training

Find all our framework documents and free-to-download resources here:
https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources