

AIM Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Special Educational Needs Specification

603/2790/X

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AIM

Document version history

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2	June 2025	Centre staffing requirements added to align with website Additional Information section, Quality Assurance Requirements.

Contents

About us	3
Qualification specification for Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Special Educational Needs	3
About this qualification specification	3
Offering this qualification	3
Section 1 – Qualification overview	4
Purpose of this qualification	5
Qualification details	5
Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF)	5
Entry requirements	5
Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	6
Progression opportunities	6
Requirements to deliver this Qualification	6
Section 2 – Qualification structure	7
Qualification structure and components	8
Level descriptors	8
Section 3 – Assessment	9
How this qualification is assessed	10
Reasonable adjustment and special considerations	10
Section 4 – Operational guidance	11
Offering this qualification	12
Approval to offer qualifications	12
Registration and certification	12
Section 5 – Appendices and links	13
Link 1 - AIM Centre handbooks and forms	14
Link 2 - AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook	14
Link 3 - Fees and Charges	14

Link 4 - Qualification Search.....	14
Command verbs	15

About us

Qualification specification for Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Special Educational Needs

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is a leading Awarding Organisation supplying hundreds of centres with high-quality regulated vocational and technical qualifications. We also offer non-accredited provision and apprenticeship end-point assessments.

AIM qualifications cover a range of academic levels from Entry Level to Level 6 across a wide range of subject areas. All our UK Level 3 qualifications carry UCAS tariff points which can count towards university entry requirements.

About this qualification specification

This specification is intended for tutors, internal verifiers, centre managers and other staff within AIM recognised centres and/or prospective centres. It provides information about the structure and delivery of the qualification. The specification should be read in conjunction with the AIM Centre Handbook and other policy documents available on the website.

Offering this qualification

In order to offer this qualification, you must be an AIM recognised centre and be approved to deliver this qualification. If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact our business development team to discuss becoming an AIM recognised centre. They can advise you on the best qualifications for your organisation.

You can arrange a meeting by emailing businessdevelopment@aimgroup.org.uk or calling [0333 034 8833](tel:0333 034 8833). More information can be found on: www.aim-group.org.uk/newcentre



Section 1 – Qualification overview



Purpose of this qualification

The Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Special Educational Needs is aimed at professionals working in education or carrying out a caring role in nursery nursing, teaching assistance, childcare or play work, and are looking to develop knowledge and understanding of Special Educational Needs to progress within the sector as part of a new or existing role.

Qualification details

AIM Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Special Educational Needs	
Qualification Type	Vocational
Assessment	Portfolio of evidence
Grading	Pass/fail
Geographical coverage	England
Operational start date	18/12/2017
Review date	18/12/2026
Sector	1.5 Child development and well-being
Qualification number	603/2790/X
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	154
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	200
Minimum learner age	16+
Rules of combination	Learners must achieve 20 credits to achieve this qualification.

Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF)

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) provides a single, simple system for cataloguing all qualifications regulated by Ofqual. Qualifications are indexed by their level and size. Levels indicate the difficulty and complexity of the knowledge and skills associated with any qualification. There are eight levels supported by three “entry levels”. Size refers to the estimated total amount of time it could typically take to study and be assessed for a qualification. Size is expressed in term of Total Qualification Time (TQT). The part of the TQT spent being taught or supervised is known as Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Entry requirements

Learners will need to have the equivalent of Level 2 literacy and numeracy skills to support children and young people in schools.

Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Special Educational Needs

www.aimgroup.org.uk/qualifications
0333 034 8833

Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the number of notional hours it takes a typical learner to achieve the full qualification and is **made up of two elements**:

- the minimum number of Qualification Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - the number of Tutor led contact hours
- the number of hours spent on preparation, studying and the assessment that is non-guided

For example, the number of tutor-led contact hours (GLH) for a qualification is 30 and the number of hours spent by the learner (non-GLH) on preparation, studying and the assessment is 6 hours. Therefore, the Total Qualification Time (TQT) for the qualification is 36 hours.

Progression opportunities

This qualification provides a mechanism for you to recognise and develop your knowledge and understanding and establish personal, learning and employment goals. Learners may choose to seek employment in one of many varied occupational areas for example:

- SEN Teaching Assistant
- Teaching Assistant
- Foster Carer
- Children and Families Support Worker
- Learning Mentor

With further study learners could become a fully qualified SEN or mainstream teacher, or you may be interested in related careers that would require further study, including:

- Communication Support Worker
- Early Years Tutor
- Higher Level Teaching Assistant
- Portage Home Visitor
- Primary School Teacher.

Requirements to deliver this Qualification

Centres wishing to deliver this qualification will need to demonstrate the ability to adhere to quality assurance and assessment regulations. To offer this qualification, Centre must ensure the following staffing resource is in place and approved by AIM.

Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Special Educational Needs

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Tutors:

- All tutors must hold or be working towards a relevant teaching and assessing qualification at Level 3 or above.
- Have undergone related training in the Principles of Special Educational Needs.
- Have at least one years' experience in teaching, tutoring and assessing of learners (desirable).

Internal Quality Assurer (IQA):

- All nominated IQA staff must hold or be working towards a Level 3 Award, or above, in Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practices or its equivalent.
- Have substantial experience of working in or assessing qualifications in the Principles of Special Educational Needs sector.
- Is familiar with the assessment requirements of the qualification for which they are the Internal Quality Assurer.



Section 2 – Qualification structure



Qualification structure and components

This section details the rules of combinations for the qualifications. Select the component titles to view the component details.

Rules of combination for:		Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Special Educational Needs		
Learners must achieve 20 credits to achieve this qualification.				
Component code	Component title	Level	Credit	GLH
Mandatory				
K/616/7983	Development of Children and Young People	3	4	30
M/616/7984	Professional Practice in Special Educational Needs Service	3	3	20
A/616/7986	Understand How to Support Children and Young People to Achieve Learning Potential	3	4	32
F/616/7987	Understand How to Support Children and Young People with Speech, Language and Communication Needs	3	5	40
J/616/7988	Understand How to Support Disabled Children and Young People and those with Specific Requirements	3	4	32

Level descriptors

Components are assigned a level based in the current requirements for the RQF as issued by OFQUAL.

Level	Knowledge descriptor	Skills descriptor
Level 3	<p>Has factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Is aware of the nature of the area of study or work.</p> <p>Is aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Use appropriate investigation to inform actions.</p> <p>Review how effective methods and actions have been.</p>



Section 3 – Assessment



How this qualification is assessed

Guidance on our expectations is available in the [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#).

Reasonable adjustment and special considerations

Reasonable adjustments and Special Considerations are available for all assessments, irrespective of whether they are internally or externally set. Where a learner or group of learners may not be able to access the assessment without Reasonable Adjustments, centres should ensure that they apply in good time for relevant reasonable adjustments to be made, using the [AIM Qualifications Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy](#) which gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the achievement of the assessment criteria.



Section 4 – Operational guidance



Offering this qualification

Centres wishing to offer this qualification must be an AIM recognised centre. New centres can apply to become a centre using the centre recognition application process on our website: www.aim-group.org.uk.

We can advise centres of the best and most efficient methods for offering this qualification. All procedures for the use of this qualification, including approval, registration of learners, verification and certification will be completed through AIM and all centres will have an allocated customer experience advisor to support them.

Approval to offer qualifications

Centres wishing to offer this qualification must complete and submit a qualification approval request. [This can be found on the AIM website when choosing a qualification](#). Some qualifications require centres to have specific resources in place and/or their assessors/internal verifiers should hold certain qualifications. Where this is the case, centres must provide evidence of resources/staff qualifications when completing the Qualification Approval request.

Registration and certification

Once your centre has approval to offer a qualification, you will be able to register learners to these qualifications via our Quartzweb portal, at this point you can also select their chosen components. Please ensure that learners are registered against the correct qualification and are aware of the rules of combination required to achieve the qualification.

For all registration and certification processes, please refer to the Quartzweb guidance document which can be downloaded from our website's [centre handbooks and forms page](#). Details of assessment, internal verification and external verification can be found in the [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#).

Learners achieving a qualification will be issued with a qualification certificate detailing the achieved qualification and components. Learners who have not achieved a qualification will, on request, be issued with a component certificate detailing the components achieved.



Section 5 – Appendices and links



Appendices and links

Select an appendix or link from the list below to view the document.

Useful links

Link 1 - [AIM Centre handbooks and forms](#)

Link 2 - [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#)

Link 3 - [Fees and Charges](#)

Link 4 - [Qualification Search](#)

Command verbs

Level 3	
Analyse	Learners present the outcome of methodical and detailed examination either: breaking down a theme, topic, or situation in order to interpret and study the interrelationships between the parts. and/or of information or data to interpret and study key trends and interrelationships.
Assess	Learners present careful consideration of varied factors or events that apply to a specific situation or identify those which are the most important or relevant and arrive at a conclusion.
Compare and Contrast	Learners can identify the main factors relating to two or more items/situations or aspects of a subject that is extended to explain the similarities, differences, advantages, and disadvantages. This is used to show depth of knowledge through selection and isolation of characteristics.
Create	To produce work in response to a brief or to apply skills and techniques to meet an intention.
Demonstrate	Learners' work or practice shows the ability to carry out and apply knowledge, understanding and/or skills in a practical situation.
Describe	Learners give a clear, objective account in their own words showing recall and, in some cases application, of the relevant features and information about a subject.
Discuss	Explore issues, lines of reasoning and situations, articulating different viewpoints.
Estimate	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge or experience.
Evaluate	Review information then bring it together to form a conclusion, drawing on evidence including strengths, weaknesses, alternative actions, relevant data or information. Come to a supported judgement of a subject's qualities and relation to its context.
Explain	Learners' work shows clear details and gives reasons and/or evidence to support an opinion, view, or argument. It could show how conclusions are drawn.
Justify	Learners are able to give reasons or evidence to, support an opinion, or prove something right or reasonable.
Outline	Learners provide a general description or plan showing the essential features of something but not the detail.
Summarise	Briefly present an abstract of the main points.

All levels	
Calculate	Work out a numerical problem, showing how they arrived at their answer.