

Specialist Status in SEND (SSSEND)

Competency framework

This framework forms the basis of the Specialist Status in SEND (SSSEND). It describes **competencies** that those working in the Further Education (FE) and Skills sector can demonstrate to positively impact SEND outcomes for themselves, their learners, their organisation and the wider sector.

Specialist statuses validate the current expert knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) of those working within educational settings in the FE and Skills sector. They ensure and sustain impact and influence on professionals, on learners and within organisations. Specialist statuses are underpinned by the Professional Standards, and the Specialist Status in SEND specifically links to **PS11. Develop and apply your knowledge of special educational needs and disabilities to create inclusive learning experiences.**

The Specialist Status in SEND has been created to recognise SEND practice in any role in the FE and Skills sector – from professional and business support staff, teachers and educators to leaders. How you demonstrate the competences will depend on your context, role and organisation.

To illustrate different ways different people could practise and demonstrate the competencies, we have provided examples of what each might entail and what this could look like. The following list is not exhaustive. Instead, it illustrates what SEND competencies are and the breadth of ways in which SEND can be delivered. If you contribute to SEND differently because of your role and context, that is absolutely fine. We will just ask you to outline how you demonstrate each competency as part of the specialist status process.

The nine competency descriptors are:

1. I have a strong **awareness of my SEND responsibilities, values, and behaviours** and apply these within my educational context.
2. I promote learner (and parent/carer) **voice**, confidence, advocacy, and independence through inclusive communication and adaptive practice.
3. I embed **inclusive values and behaviours** that respond to diverse needs, backgrounds, and lived experiences.
4. I support personalised learner **progression**, recognise all forms of **achievements** and enable long-term life opportunities.
5. I regularly develop and **share up-to-date SEND-related expertise** relevant to my role.
6. I build and maintain **relationships, partnerships and networks** that impact organisational practices or systems.
7. I **engage with communities and the sector** to advocate for inclusive change and positive learner impact.
8. I use **feedback and evaluation** to understand and improve the impact of my SEND practice.
9. I reflect on my practice and actively pursue **ongoing professional development** related to SEND.

Competency	This might entail	Examples of this in practice could include a(n)...
1. I have a strong awareness of my SEND responsibilities, values, and behaviours and apply these within my educational context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding your role in supporting SEND learners • Reflecting on your values and behaviours • Recognising how your actions impact inclusion • Being aware of your own strengths and areas for development in SEND practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer reflecting on how their teaching style supports neurodiverse learners • Support staff attending training on inclusive communication • Manager reviewing team practices to align with SEND values • HR representative setting up appraisal systems where staff can set inclusive SEND objectives
2. I promote learner (and parent/carer) voice , confidence, advocacy, and independence through inclusive communication and adaptive practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating opportunities for learners to express themselves • Adapting communication methods to meet diverse needs • Promoting learner autonomy and self-advocacy • Ensuring feedback is gathered and acted upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor using visual aids and assistive tech to support communication • Administrator adapting forms and processes for accessibility • Curriculum lead embedding learner voice in programme design • Student Union president/representative actively conducting surveys and gathering

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up Learner Voice sessions with total communication options - voice, gesture, symbols, choices, etc. • Universal Design for Learning that allows for a range of ways of expressing learning. 	<p>learner voice - being an advocate for SEND learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing officer engaging with SEND learners to adapt websites and media to be more inclusive and accessible
3. I embed inclusive values and behaviours that respond to diverse needs, backgrounds, and lived experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting inclusive values in curriculum and delivery • Recognising and responding to diverse learner identities • Embedding lived experiences into teaching and support practices ensuring programme aims reflect inclusive principles • Challenging bias and promoting equity in learning environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor designing lesson plans that reflect cultural and neurodiverse perspectives • Programme coordinator reviewing curriculum to ensure alignment with inclusive values • Support worker adapting approaches based on learners' lived experiences • Manager leading team discussions on intersectionality and inclusive behaviours
4. I support personalised learner progression , recognise all forms of achievements and enable long-term life opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking and celebrating small steps of progress • Linking learning to future goals and life chances • Supporting both educational and personal development • Recognising the role of all staff in learner progression • Tracking progression data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business manager aligning resources to support SEND learner pathways • Tutor using personalised learning plans • Teacher measuring incremental achievements, designing trackers for progress over time, not just the end qualification. • Careers advisor helping learners explore realistic and aspirational destinations • HR Manager showing that they have worked with curriculum and support teams to ensure recruitment, staffing, and training reflect learners' needs (eg employment coaches, SEND specialists) and that robust safer recruitment and DBS processes for staff working with vulnerable learners have been followed. • Data Manager creating new data dashboards to support colleagues in recognising trends in learner progress and outcomes.
5. I regularly develop and share up-to-date SEND-related expertise relevant to my role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting inclusive values in everyday practice • Recognising and responding to intersectional identities • Ensuring lived experiences inform programme delivery • Aligning behaviours with organisational inclusion goals • Keeping up to date with SEND legislation and guidance • Applying policy knowledge to practice • Influencing change within your organisation and beyond • Advocating for SEND priorities in strategic planning • Attending update training provided by the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer designing activities that reflect diverse learner backgrounds • Team leader facilitating discussions on inclusion and bias • Support worker adapting support strategies based on learner feedback • Senior leader embedding SEND priorities in strategic documents • Practitioner contributing to sector consultations • Coordinator aligning provision with EHCP requirements • HR or manager ensuring legislative updates are available and provided.
6. I build and maintain relationships, partnerships and networks that impact organisational practices or systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships with SEND stakeholders • Sharing best practice across networks • Co-developing inclusive initiatives • Sustaining partnerships that support SEND learners • Joining professional networks e.g. NATSPEC, AoC, NASEN, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND lead working with local authorities to improve transition planning • Employer engagement officer creating supported internships • Tutor collaborating with parents/carers to support learner needs • Estates team leader or operative seeking student voice minutes, notes or attend student voice forums and listen to the views of students to address any issues • Advanced Practitioner launching a 'SEND-specific' teaching and learning group to identify, develop and disseminate practices across the organisation.

<p>7. I engage with communities and the sector to advocate for inclusive change and positive learner impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding what “community” means in your context • Advocating for SEND inclusion locally and sector-wide • Sharing successful strategies to inspire change • Participating in networks and forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community liaison officer working with local SEND groups • Assessor contributing to national SEND working groups • Leader promoting inclusive practices at sector events • Enrichment officer launching a community network of local employment opportunities and group work-placements for SEND learners. • Teacher creating community based projects raising community confidence for learners (and awareness in the community); • Different professionals volunteering to community activities or projects; helping in local care settings.
<p>8. I use feedback and evaluation to understand and improve the impact of my SEND practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and analysing feedback about my work from learners, staff, and stakeholders • Using qualitative and quantitative data to assess my impact on SEND outcomes • Reflecting on the effectiveness of inclusive strategies • Linking evaluation of my work for continuous improvement and strategic planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor analysing learner/stakeholder feedback to refine inclusive teaching methods • SEND coordinator conducting surveys to assess support effectiveness • Manager using feedback on own work to inform staff training priorities • Manager setting up stakeholder feedback opportunities and actively responding to make changes • Team leader presenting SEND impact findings in annual reports • Support staff reviewing own practice after learner feedback
<p>9. I reflect on my practice and actively pursue ongoing professional development related to SEND.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in CPD focused on SEND • Reflecting on practice to improve outcomes • Sharing learning with others • Using feedback to guide development (also applicable to #8 above) • Maintain a reflection log as part of appraisal/annual performance review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor attending training on autism strategies • Manager engaging in peer learning sets on SEND • Work experience officer engaging in CPD to understand SEND in the work place and how they might better support learners and employers with their placement to make them as successful as possible. • Leader and manager reading policy updates and cascading information through leadership levels within their organisation • Catering manager engaging in training and disseminating that training to their assistants to provide a more understanding and inclusive service in college facilities. • Teacher summarising independent research and implementation of ideas/strategies in their work for a mid-year review and/or appraisal

Acknowledgements

The competency framework was created by the ETF in collaboration with SEND specialist in the Further Education and Skills sector to support the Specialist Status in SEND validation process.

- Education and Training Foundation – ETF
- NASEN
- NATSPEC
- Meta Gedu
- National Star
- Mercury College
- York College
- City College Norwich
- Education Partnership Northeast
- New College Swindon
- Bath College

