



Autism
Education
Trust

Post-16

Post-16 Standards Framework

Additional resources



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Introduction

The Autism Education Trust (AET) [Post-16 Standards Framework](#) has been written for all Post-16 settings in the education sector. The framework can be used by leaders and leadership teams as a tool to enhance and embed good autism practice across any Post-16 organisation. In this document, each Standard is linked to a set of resources that will support further for you to meet that Standard.

It should be noted that these suggested resources are not the only way to meet the Standard, 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 autistic learner's interests is often key in building effective relationships as well as co-creating strategies/resources that empower the autistic 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.



Principle One

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

Standard 1: We support the autistic learner to self-advocate and share information that is important to them, and we work with them to identify the right tools to do so.

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.



Standard 2: We take account of how each autistic learner’s co-occurring differences, including anxiety and stress, can affect behaviour and can cause barriers to learning. We work closely with the autistic learner to understand their needs and to find strategies for regulating feelings and emotions.

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](#)



Principle Two

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

Standard 3: The person-centered approaches we use are co-created with the autistic learner and enable the autistic learner to self-advocate and communicate their future aspirations in terms of community, housing, work, and relationships.

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.

Standard 4: We actively involve autistic learners as part of the ‘Assess, Plan, Do, Review’ cycle so the autistic learner is at the centre of educational planning. The voice of the autistic learner informs all policy-making, planning, engagement, and equal opportunities.

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](#)



Principle Three

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

Standard 5: We support the autistic learner to share information with a range of professionals and their family about what is important to them at key transition points in their life.

AET resources/templates

- [Integra report: Case study G](#)
This case study involves 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](#)

Standard 6: We work collaboratively with the autistic learner, and with health, social care, mental health services, parents/carers (if appropriate), and other professionals to help the autistic learner to consider future pathways, and to ensure that the autistic learner is supported by a range of professionals to have as much control as possible of their lives.

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](#)



Principle Four

Workforce development related to Good Autism Practice.

Standard 7: We are committed to continuing professional development on autism across our workforce. We ensure staff receive ongoing training that is appropriate to their role, and we involve autistic learners in providing workforce development.

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](#)

Standard 8: We use the AET Competency framework to audit staff confidence levels, understanding and knowledge of autism, and the changes staff make to their practice as a result of undertaking professional development.

AET resources/templates

- [AET Post-16 Competency Framework](#)
- [Next Steps Action Plan template](#)



Principle Five

Leadership and management that promotes and embeds Good Autism Practice

Standard 9: We promote a supportive, enabling environment in which all staff are knowledgeable about autism and we empower staff to approach senior staff when their input is required.

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](#)

Standard 10: We embed Good Autism Practice in the organisation and work with all staff to ensure this is consistent across the setting. We address the risk of social exclusion for autistic learners, enable autistic learners to access college and community activities, and develop 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](#)



Principle Six

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

Standard 11: Our enabling approaches foster a calm, low-arousal learning environment and we promote a sense of wellbeing, security, and belonging for all our autistic learners.

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](#)



Standard 12: We create structured, predictable, and calm environments. We are constantly mindful of adapting to the needs of individual autistic learners.

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](#)



Principle Seven

Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic learners.

Standard 13: We work with autistic learners to recognise and celebrate their achievements, and we have rigorous procedures for recording autistic learners' progress and achievement, including employability skills, to support them towards their future goals.

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.

Standard 14: We work with autistic learners to complete an learner profile and specialist learner support plan in partnership with key staff members, and we ensure that these are regularly reviewed to monitor progress.

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](#).



Principle Eight

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

Standard 15: We provide a broad, flexible, and balanced curriculum that addresses the learning needs of autistic learners and their social and emotional wellbeing, communication needs, and life skills.

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](#)

Standard 16: We use assistive 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](#)



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](#)



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 Competency Framework**

A set of descriptors and examples that can be used by staff/practitioners as a self-evaluation tool to rate their current understanding and knowledge of Good Autism Practice.

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



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