

**Issued: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

This guidance relates to those digital apprenticeship standards that have been replaced or rewritten but remain live until the last enrolled apprentices have gone through their end-point assessments.

**For Vendor Qualifications on the following digital apprenticeship standards only:**

- Network Engineer (ST0127)
- Infrastructure Technician (ST0125)
- Digital Marketer (ST0122)
- Software Development (ST0116)
- Software Tester (ST0129)
- Unified Communication Trouble-shooter (ST0131)

EPAOs are now able to introduce a process that will allow employers and providers to:

1. Follow the assessment plan instruction on vendor qualification requirements,
2. If no vendor qualification/s are available or considered appropriate then the knowledge modules can be taken, or
3. Use an alternative or new vendor qualification not listed in the assessment plan that can adequately serve as a suitable proxy for a particular knowledge module.

**Using alternative or new vendor qualifications (Option 3 above)**

Where option 3 is taken, the training provider is expected to undertake a mapping exercise which can be used to demonstrate that the chosen vendor qualification is appropriate and that the learning objective is aligned with that of the knowledge module it is being used to serve as a proxy for.

The EPAO will use this evidence to re-assure itself that the vendor qualification is suitable. In deciding whether a new or different qualification is suitable, EPAOs should consider whether:

- The relationship between the Knowledge Module and the vendor qualification being used as a proxy or replacement for it has the same learning intent and can be reasonably argued that the apprentice will get the same or a better understanding of the target subject or skills.
- The motivation for selecting the vendor qualification is based on enhancing the learning experience for the apprentice, and the selected vendor qualification represents this enhancement of learning.

Training providers are expected to confirm with EPAO at earliest opportunity that the vendor qualifications they tend to use in this way are acceptable. This process should not be invoked at Gateway. Agreement that the vendor qualification will be permissible should be sought from the EPAO in advance of the Gateway and good practice would suggest that this agreement should be obtained in advance of the apprentice taking the vendor qualification.

Please note, as with the vendor qualification requirements presently, Certificates of Achievement signify summative vendor qualification attainment. Proof of attendance, practice assessment or other evidence related to taking the course do not.