



National Portage Association

Student Handbook

Open Awards Level 3 -The Portage Model: A Small Steps Approach to Learning for Children with Special Educational Needs

Welcome to the National Portage Association and Open Awards L3 qualification The Portage Model – A Small Steps Approach to Learning for Children with Special Educational Needs. You are now a student and it is recommended that to help you complete this qualification successfully you read this document carefully and refer to the information and guidance it provides.

If you need further clarification, you can ask your Accredited Trainer/Mentor for advice or contact the NPA Office by emailing office.manager@portage.org.uk

This document has been produced by the Open Awards Coordinators for the National Portage Association

This handbook is available on the [NPA website](#)

While we have done everything possible to ensure accuracy, the information in this publication may change in the light of altered regulations or policy or because of financial or other constraints.

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Section 1 - Introduction

Welcome to the Open Awards Level 3 qualification; The Portage Model – A Small Steps Approach to Learning for Children with Special Educational Needs

This course is open to all students who have successfully completed a Portage Workshop delivered by an NPA Accredited Trainer and received a numbered certificate.

As a student on this course you will already have:

- Individual Membership of the NPA
- Made contact with a Mentor and have an agreement that they will provide information, advice and guidance, if required. You will both have signed the Student/Mentor Agreement
- Enrolled and paid the fee required by Open Awards to the NPA Office [on receipt of an invoice from the NPA office.]
- Committed to completing the course work outlined within this handbook.

The suggested time for completing assignments is approx. 15 hours. See section 3 for submission guidance.

How to use this handbook

This Handbook is for you to use during your Level 3 study. It outlines the NPA's requirements for completion of your portfolio and explains the process of assessment on completion.

Examples of forms and the information sheets required in order to complete your portfolio are attached within this handbook. All documentation and templates required to build and submit your portfolio have been brought together in a Student Portfolio Pack which you will be given access to download from the website once enrolment is complete.

This Handbook is updated regularly, and the most up-to-date version will always be available on the NPA website.

Completion of portfolio

Once you have enrolled it is recommended that you submit your work for assessment following the completion of each individual module. However you can discuss this with your Assessor and make arrangements that suit you both. Once all assignments have been assessed you are required to submit your completed portfolio for Internal Verification or Sampling. The whole process should take up to a maximum of 40 weeks including Assessment and Verification. Students should aim to complete and submit all modules for assessment within 30 weeks.

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However, the NPA recognises that in some cases, students may start to complete their award but then be unable to complete all the work within the scheduled timetable. Application should then be made to the NPA Open Awards Coordinator; after which you may be permitted an extension of up to 10 weeks.

Preparing assignments

Your portfolio assignments serve two main purposes. They help you to learn and to enable the NPA to judge the standard you have achieved in developing your practice in using Portage skills. The preparatory work you do for each assignment and the process of writing should help you to concentrate on particular aspects of the qualification and to consolidate what you have learned through attending a Portage Workshop. Your Mentor will offer advice about the scope of the assignments and what is expected of you.

We expect that you will want to draw on a wider range of resources as you prepare your assignments. As an independent student, you will benefit from reading a range of materials and having discussions with others who are interested in this specialist area. As an NPA member this can be done by accessing the discussion forums on the Portage Support Hub or through peer mentorship.

Level 3 Descriptors

1. Understand the Portage Model and its relevance to early years settings
2. Be able to use clear language when planning for children with special educational needs
3. Be able to effectively plan for success
4. Be able to apply a 'small steps' approach to learning
5. Be able to plan, record and share information
6. Understand how to support the development of play
7. Be able to implement positive approaches to children's behaviour

Confidentiality of portfolios

All information you give in assignments is regarded as confidential to you, your Mentor, Assessor, Internal Verifier and the NPA. Information will not be divulged to anyone outside the NPA other than for External Verification by Open Awards.

In your assignments, you will be encouraged to make reference to your own working practice. This sometimes means that you may need to give information about, and occasionally to pass judgement on, children and families with whom you are working.



The NPA treats such information with complete confidentiality, however real names should never be included and every effort made to anonymise children and their Families.

Monitoring and Internal Verification

Assignments marked by Assessors are monitored to ensure a reasonable uniformity of marking standards and an adequate level of feedback comments. Throughout the year all assignments marked by each Assessor will be checked by the Internal Verification Team. There will also be random sampling sessions that will look at standardisation and quality of marking and feedback. The NPA office will contact you to tell you if this has happened and if your work has been included.



Section 2: Who does What ? and Where you can go for Help?

Mentors

Your Mentor must have agreed to act in this capacity during your time as a student. Their role is to help you by making sure you have the information that you need in order to complete the assignments. They are there to guide you, answer questions and offer support. Mentors will not be marking your assignments or making comments on the content once your work is completed and submitted.

Often Mentors are the people who delivered the NPA Portage Workshop that you attended before applying to become a student on this Open Awards Level 3 distance learning qualification, or it could be your team leader or supervisor if you do not have an Accredited Trainer in your area.

Please note: If your Mentor is also an Assessor, your work will be allocated to another member of the Assessor Team.

Assessors

You will be sent the contact details of the Assessor assigned to mark your work once you have registered with the NPA. Modules should be sent by email to your assigned Assessor. They should be sent in as each module is completed. A pass or fail will be awarded. If a module gains a pass no further action is required. If the Assessor feels you need to make changes or additions they will send feedback offering advice to help you gain a pass following re-submission.

The Assessor will give you feedback on all modules sent in. The Assessor will return your modules within two weeks of receiving modules. Once they have marked all your modules they will sign off your portfolio and recommend either a pass or not achieved.

Internal Verifiers

This is a group of NPA Accredited Trainers, some may also be Assessors, who will check portfolios in order to ensure that the marking meets the criteria set and is of the required standard. Please note that your Assessor will not Internally Verify their own work.

They can ask for remedial action to be taken and they can suggest that the assessment decision be amended.

NPA Administrator and Office Manager

They are responsible for the administration of the course.

Remember the NPA Website and Portage Support Hub has valuable information to support your studies.

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Section 3 - Time Frame and Presentation of Portfolio

Time Frame for submission of portfolio

Once your enrolment on this Open Awards Level 3 course is confirmed, you should follow a time line of **30 weeks***, for completion of all the assignments, including sign off by your Mentor and submission to your Assessor, this will allow sufficient time for Assessor feedback and Internal Verification. In total the qualification should take a maximum of 40 weeks.

*you can request an extension of a further 10 weeks in certain circumstances. [see Introduction]

PLEASE NOTE; it is requested that you submit work for assessment on completion of each module. You will have your own unique start date for this course. Once enrolled the Open Awards Coordinator will send you a recommended submission timetable, it is suggested that students adhere to this as closely as they can. Submission before recommended dates will be accepted.

Presentation of assignments

The way you present your work may have a limited, but important, effect on the assessment it receives.

- Carefully read the instructions for each assignment before starting.
- Do your background reading.
- If required, gain permission from the parents of the children who you are working with if you are including information about them in your assignment. Real names should never be included and every effort should be made to anonymise children and their families.
- All work should be typed – unless there are specific circumstances that mean this is not possible. In such cases discuss this with your Mentor and Assessor and agree a suitable alternative format.
- Each page of work submitted should be labelled with the assignment heading, your name and the date of writing.

Typed written work should be presented using:

- Calibri
- Font size 11 or 12
- With 1.5 line spacing

All work, unless stated, should be in essay format, using grammatically correct English and appropriate paragraphing. The expected length of work is given with each assignment. If not stated then you should use your own discretion but remember that you are required to give as much relevant information as possible in accordance with the expected outcomes.

Some of the assignments have a template. These can be found in the Student Portfolio Pack, available on the website for you to download.

Work submitted should show how the work you have done has developed over time which means that any additions and corrections as discussed and agreed with your Mentor should be shown, as should any additions requested by your assessor.

If you have completed further reading and used this in your work this needs to be referenced within your work and the bibliography included as an appendix at the end of each module submitted.

Guidance for written work

Remember that the objective of a piece of writing is to produce something readable and evidence-based that puts your points across clearly.

- Use straightforward unambiguous wording with short descriptive sentences. Choose words because they are clear and precise and convey exactly the meaning you intend, not because they sound complex and clever. There should be no room for misinterpretation.
- Sentences should be no more than 2 or 3 lines at the most - any longer sentences are probably too long and should be broken down.
- Ensure your spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct. Using correct English is a key part of being able to communicate ideas and demonstrate your knowledge, as well as a courtesy to the reader to make your work as readable as possible. It is recommended that you use computer spell and grammar check at all times.
- Choose to write in a specific 'voice', and do this consistently. For example, an active voice in the first person would be "I observed the play of a group of children within my setting" - this is a good voice to use for describing observations. The same statement in the passive voice would be "The play of the children within the setting was observed" - this is a good voice to use for less specific and more discursive work.
- When you have finished writing a draft of your work and are reasonably happy with it, read it through to yourself and maybe ask someone else to proof-read it. They may then make suggestions about your use of language, grammar, etc.; but it is your responsibility to decide what to change. You should acknowledge any assistance you have received, and you must never let anyone else extensively edit or rewrite your assessed work for you.

- **Always proof-read your work (yourself) before submission.**

Submitting Modules for Assessment

To submit a module for assessment you should:

- Use headings that include your name, the module and assignment number.
- Include a title page with contents headings and page numbers.
- Attach a completed Assignment Feedback form [see example form 3] for each module.
- Attach a completed and hand signed Authenticity Statement [see example form 2] for each module

It is strongly advised that you keep a copy of all modules;

- Email work for both Assessment and Internal Verification.

Submitting a Completed Portfolio for Internal Verification

In addition to all the paperwork sent in for assessment, you should also ensure that you have included

- All Assessment Feedback Records, hand signed by your Assessor
- Student submission and Authenticity Declarations [Authenticity Statement] – one for each Module; hand signed by you to say that each piece of work you are submitting is your own [see example form 2]
- The Assignment Tracking – Portfolio Content and Internal Verifiers Checklist that will have been completed and signed by your Assessor and sent to you on completion and passing of all seven modules

If it is necessary to submit a completed portfolio in hard copy it should be presented using an A4 soft cover binder. Dividers should be used to separate each module and labelled with the number of the Module. Each assignment should also be numbered.

The portfolio should include:

- As a front page: the Assignment Tracking – Portfolio Content and Internal Verifiers Checklist as hand signed and Dated by your Assessor
- A clear title page with contents headings and page numbers;
- Completed Assignment Feedback form (see example form 3) for each module;
- A Student submission and Authenticity Declaration – this must be hand signed by you to say that each piece of work you are submitting is your own.

Section 4: Assessment and Marking of Portfolios

Marking of portfolios

Your Assessor is expected to mark and feedback on your work within a timeframe of 2 weeks.

[Working days do not include weekends, bank holidays or school summer holidays].

You will receive an email from your Assessor and they will send you feedback sheets to inform you of the outcomes regarding each module. These will explain if additional work needs to be completed and outline the work required. You will be given between 1 to 4 weeks to submit any changes that need to be made, depending on the type of changes.

If no further work is required, once all modules are completed, you will be asked to submit your completed portfolio for Internal Verification. Your Assessor will advise you which Internal Verifier and give you their email contact. The IV will contact you to confirm outcomes following this stage of verification. Your portfolio will then be uploaded onto Open Awards Portal for External Verification. They will advise the NPA office who will then apply for and send you your certificate.

If you have not been contacted about your work within 4 weeks of submission, you should contact the NPA Open Awards Coordinator, who will contact your Assessor. If there is a problem they will be addressed and contact you regarding outcomes.

Querying the results of your Portfolio

If you want to query your results, you must contact your Assessor within 30 days of the date of your feedback email, stating your grounds for the query. The assignment can then if needed be sent to another Assessor for second marking. The query should always be sent to the Assessor who marked your work first, and copied NPA Open Awards Coordinator. If you are not satisfied with your Assessor's response, you have the right to appeal.

You should forward to the NPA Open Awards Co-ordinator:

- The assignment/s
- The related correspondence from your Assessor.
- The grounds for your appeal and any other relevant information.

This should be sent and arrive within 28 days of the date of notification of your Assessor's decision on your query. The NPA Open Awards Co-ordinator will acknowledge receipt of your documents within 3 days of their arrival and provide the name of the delegated Internal Verifier/Assessor who will be asked to respond directly to you.

A query or a subsequent appeal may not change the outcome. You may have to resubmit your work with requested additions and alteration if the Assessor's decisions are upheld. For more information see the Enquiries, Appeals and Complaints Policy Statements.

Special circumstances affecting completion of portfolio

If any special circumstance has seriously affected your ability to complete the assignments for your portfolio you can ask your Mentor/Assessor to inform the NPA Open Awards Co-ordinator. This arrangement is intended to make the NPA aware of matters of a serious nature that are interfering with your ability to study over a period of four weeks or more. The four main categories of special circumstance information that the NPA considers serious are:

- Serious disruption of studies caused by the NPA (such as continual delay in receiving module feedback and exceptionally late return of Assessor-marked assignments).
- Serious and prolonged illness of yourself or a member of your immediate family. Proof in the format of a doctor's note may be required.
- Serious disruption of personal life (such as bereavement).
- Difficulties caused by a disability or additional requirement, for which you feel that any adjustments made by your Mentor or the NPA, were not appropriate.

The NPA will use the information only to your benefit and will look at ways in which you can be helped once your circumstances change to complete the work required. It is unlikely that consideration will be given to such circumstances as moving house, pressure of work, change of employment or normal pregnancies but this may depend on additional circumstances. Before you decide to report special circumstances, please consider carefully how much they have genuinely affected your ability to complete your assignments.

To report special circumstances relating to completion of your portfolio contact:

- The NPA Open Awards Coordinator via email, they are:
- Audrey Cooper – audreyc_53@yahoo.co.uk
- Jill Evans – jill_palmer@hotmail.co.uk

Depending on the request and reasons it may be necessary to have to complete a formal request to Open Awards for an extended submission period, your mentor or assessor will be informed of their decision and a period of up to twelve months may be agreed.

If you have a disability or additional requirements

If you think that your disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition has seriously disadvantaged you in the completion of your portfolio, it is in your own interest to complete a special circumstances submission.

Information about your condition that you have given the NPA or your Mentor/Assessor will only be shared outside of the NPA with your consent.

RECOMMENDED READING

Allen, K.E and Marotz, L.R, [2000] *By the Ages: Behaviour & Development of Children Pre Birth through Eight*, Delmar Thompson Learning.

Allen, S., Gordon, P. and Hughes, C., [2011] *How Children Learn 4: Thinking on Special Educational Needs and Inclusion*, London, Practical Preschool Books.

Cheminais, R., [2009], *Effective Multi-Agency Partnerships: Putting Every Child Matters into Practice*, London, Sage.

Dale, M., [1995] *Working with Families of Children with Special Needs: Partnership and Practice*, London, Routledge.

Department for Education [2014] *Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage*.

Dickins, M. [2014] *A-Z of inclusion in early childhood*, McGraw-Hill.

Dickins, M. and Denziloe, J [2004] *All Together*, National Children's Bureau.

Jones, C., [2004] *Supporting Inclusion in the Early Years*, Open University Press.

Lindon, J., [2012] *Equality and Inclusion in Early Childhood: Linking Theory and Practice*, Oxon, Hodder Education.

Lindon, J., [2012] *Parents as Partners (Positive Relationships in the Early Years)*, London, Practical Preschool Books.

Newman, S., [2008] *Small Steps Forward: Using Games and Activities to Help Your Pre-School Child with Special Needs*, London, Jessica Kingsley.

Nunukoosinga, K. and Phillips, D., [1999] *European Journal of Special Needs Education: Supporting families in the early education of children with special needs: the perspectives of Portage home visitors* Vol 14, Issue 3, pp 198-21.

Nutbrown, C., Clough, P. and Atherton, F. [2013] *Inclusion in the Early Years*, London, Sage.

Pugh, G. and Duffy, B., [2013] *Contemporary Issues in the Early Years*, London, Sage.

Roffey, S. and Parry, J. *Coordination*, London David Fulton., [2013] *Special Needs in the Early Years: Collaboration, Communication and*

Shearer, M.S and Shearer, D., [1972] *The Portage project: a model for early childhood education*, *Exceptional Children*, Vol. 39, [1972] p 210-217.



Sigston, A., et al [1985] *Early Child Hood Development and Care: Portage in the UK; a community response to children in need*, Vol 20, Issue 1, pp 87 – 96.

Siraj-Blatchford, I., Clarke, K. and Neeham, M., [2007] *The Team Around the Child: Multi-agency Working in the Early Years*.

Sturmeya, P. and Crispa, A.G., [1986] *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology* Portage Guide to Early Education: a review of research, Vol 6, Issue 2, pp 139 – 157.

Thornton, L. and Brunton, P. [2010] *The Parent Partnership Toolkit for Early Years*, Optimus Professional Publishing Ltd.

Wolfendale, S. and Wilson, R., [2003] *Special Educational Needs in the Early Years*, Oxon, Routledge.

Policies and additional guidance

Student Policy Documents and Statements are available to download.

This file covers:

- Learning Needs and Support guidance.
- Issue of certificates and withdrawals.
- Plagiarism.
- Malpractice and Maladministration.
- Quality Assurance Review Policy.
- Enquiries and Appeals Policy.
- Access to Fair Assessment Policy.
- Internal Verification Policy.

Form 1- Recommended Submission Schedule

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Student Name:	
Student Contact Details	Email: Telephone:

Date of Enrolment on Open Awards Level 3 – Start Date	
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Module Name	Number of Assignments within the module	Date of submission to Assessor
1 - The Portage Model and Early Years Settings	3	
2 - Understanding Clear Language	3	
3 - Planning for Success	3	
4 - Small Steps Approach	2	
5 - Planning and Recording	2	
6 - Development of Play	1	
7 - Behaviour	3	

Completed and Assessed Portfolio to Internal Verifier	17	
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NPA Accredited Trainer - Mentor	
Mentor contact details	Mobile: Land Line: Email:
NPA Office contact details	Telephone: Telephone: 0121 244 1807 Email: office.manager@portage.org.uk
NPA Assessor Name	
Assessor contact details	Telephone: Email:

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Form 2 - Authenticity Statement

Student Assessment Submission and Declaration

When submitting evidence for assessment, each student must sign a declaration confirming that the work is their own.

Student name:	Assessor name:
Submission date:	Submitted on:
Assignment reference and title:	

Please list the evidence submitted for each task.

Assignment ref.	Evidence submitted	Page numbers or description
Additional comments to the Assessor: Delay in submission agreed with assessor due to having to work from home.		

Student declaration	
I certify that the evidence submitted for this assignment is my own. I have clearly referenced any sources used in the work. I understand that false declaration is a form of malpractice.	
Student signature:	Date:



Form 3 - Feedback Form

ONE INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK FORM IS REQUIRED FOR EACH MODULE OF WORK BEING SUBMITTED/INCLUDED IN THE STUDENT PORTFOLIO

Name of Student:

Module Number:

Name of NPA Mentor:

Date:

NPA Mentor comments :

Student comments:

Signature of NPA Mentor:

Assessor Comments:

Print name of Assessor:

Signature of Assessor:

Date signed off by Assessor:

Assignments Overview and Marking Criteria

	Learning Outcomes	Assessment Overview
1	Understand the Portage Model and its relevance to early years settings	1.1: Describe the Portage Model principles and how they can be used in different settings 1.2: Analyse the importance of working in partnership with families 1.3: Evaluate the importance of Portage in relation to national Special Educational Needs reforms and current initiatives
2	Be able to use clear language when planning for children with special educational needs	2.1: Reflect on the need for clear language when planning for supporting children with special educational needs 2.2: Analyse the importance and benefits of using clear language 2.3: Demonstrate using clear language when writing teaching targets for children with special educational needs
3	Be able to effectively plan for success	3.1: Describe how to complete an holistic assessment for a child in your setting, outlining what tools you use 3.2: Analyse the range of information needed to set appropriate long term goals 3.4: Evaluate a case study of a child
4	Be able to apply a 'small steps' approach to learning	4.1: Demonstrate how to break down tasks to make learning accessible 4.2: Plan a sequence of small steps towards a given long term goal for a child with special educational needs
5	Be able to plan, record and share information	5.1: Critically compare different models for planning, recording and sharing information, including when each should be used 5.2: Use the appropriate model for recording an open-ended activity to plan a play activity for a child with special educational needs based on Portage guidelines 5.3 Produce two outcome focused activity charts to plan targeted activities for a child with special educational needs based on Portage guidelines.
6	Understand how to support the development of play	6.1: Evaluate examples of how children with a range of SEND may need specific support to develop their play
7	Be able to implement positive approaches to children's behaviour	7.1: Analyse 'age appropriateness' of children's emotional self-regulation by identifying the messages being communicated through behaviour 7.2: Demonstrate the use of a behaviour plan to promote positive behaviour 7.3: Reflection of own performance and use of Portage in practice

In order to achieve a pass, the students' evidence must show that they have;

- Met all the requirements defined in the assessment criteria
- Included information from their own practice that is relevant
- Demonstrated awareness that they are using skills in practice