

Smart Awards Level 3 in SA040 Telecommunications Supervisor Fundamentals

Specification

Version Number	Date	Purpose of Change	Classification	Sign Off
V1.0	01/11/2026	New qualification release	Public	Marc Henson

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Introduction

This qualification provides learners with the fundamental knowledge and skills required to supervise field-based operations within the telecommunications industry. It is designed for existing and aspiring supervisors responsible for overseeing teams and activities across civils, underground and overhead telecommunications operations.

- The qualification supports learners in understanding the responsibilities of the supervisor, including health and safety leadership, operational compliance, planning and coordination of work, monitoring quality and performance, effective communication, auditing and inspection, and appropriate intervention and escalation.
- Learners will develop the knowledge and skills required to monitor work activities, identify hazards and non-compliance, challenge unsafe or unacceptable working practices, communicate requirements effectively and take appropriate action within the scope of their supervisory responsibilities.
- The qualification has been developed to provide a consistent foundation for telecommunications supervision that can be applied across different employers, contracts and network environments.

Key Information	
Name	Smart Awards Level 3 in SA040 Telecommunications Supervisor Fundamentals
Accreditation	This qualification is regulated by Ofqual. Ofqual qualification number: 610/8238/7
Level	3
Duration	1.5 days
Guided Learning Hours (Ofqual)	10
Ofqual Total Qualification	12 hours
RQF – Ofqual Credit. Credit value represents the size of a unit which is determined by the learning time. One credit = 10 hours of notional learning	1
Age	This qualification is available to anyone aged 18 or over who can reach the required standard.
Qualification type	Vocationally Related Qualification
Smart Awards product area	Safety Qualifications
Sector subject area	5.2 – Building and Construction
Certification	This qualification is valid for three (3) years from the certificate issue date. To maintain certification, learners are required to requalify before the expiry date by completing the full qualification again. It is the responsibility of the learner and/or their employer to ensure that requalification is undertaken in a timely manner to maintain certification.

Network Operative Passport Scheme (NOPS)	This qualification is fully aligned with the requirements of the Network Operative Passport Scheme (NOPS). Successful completion of this qualification is recorded within the NOPS system, ensuring operatives are visible and verifiable to employers and site access systems across the industry.
Prerequisites and entry requirements	Smart Awards will not restrict access on the grounds of prior academic attainment, employment, geographic location, or any other characteristic. There are no barriers that restrict access or progression, thereby promoting equality of opportunity. Learners should be working within the telecommunications industry or have sufficient relevant knowledge and experience to undertake the qualification at Level 3. Learners should have sufficient literacy and communication skills to understand the qualification content and complete the required theory test and practical assessment. Individuals undertaking or supervising work on the highway must hold the appropriate Street Works qualifications and authorisations for their role and activities, where required. Employers are responsible for ensuring that suitably qualified and competent personnel are available to supervise works and verify that arrangements for footways, traffic lanes and safety zones comply with the requirements of the site location, relevant legislation and approved procedures. Some organisations may have additional requirements regarding the number of qualified individuals required on site.
Mandatory units and optional routes to completion	Learners must complete the SA040 Telecommunications Supervisor Fundamentals unit in full. There are no optional units or routes.
Additional requirements to achieve this qualification	None.
Methods of assessment	This qualification is assessed through an invigilated online multiple-choice theory test and a practical assessment. Both components must be passed. Assessment guidance and supporting documents are available to approved centres via Quartz.
Theory test	Learners must complete a 45-question online multiple-choice theory test within 70 minutes. A pass requires at least 80% (36 correct answers). The test must be invigilated.
Practical assessment	Learners undertake an individual supervisory inspection or audit of a simulated telecommunications worksite, identifying hazards, defects and non-compliance across six categories, recording findings and delivering a toolbox talk to present findings and corrective actions. Maximum assessment time: 60 minutes. Assessor-to-learner ratio: 1:1.
Grading	Learners will be graded on an achievement or non-achievement basis. The final grade will be determined by collective performance in the two assessment tools (theory test and practical assessment). Learners are required to achieve both the theory test and practical assessments to achieve the qualification.

	Theory: • The learner will have 1 hour 10 minutes to answer 45 questions • To achieve a pass, 80% or more is required Practical: • If one major fault is given the learner will automatically fail • If three or more minor faults are given the learner fails. • To pass, no major faults and no more than two minor faults are permitted If there are major health and safety failures due to learners' actions or understanding, the assessment **must** be stopped. The learner should be taken to a suitable area to be explained the reason for stopping the assessment and that their assessment is deemed as failed.
Reasonable adjustments and special considerations	Smart Awards approved centres that have learners with specific requirements should refer to the Smart Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedure. This document outlines the support available to ensure fair access to assessments. It can be found on the Smart Awards website at www.smartawards.co.uk
Recognition of Prior Learning	Smart Awards is committed to supporting Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and has established a dedicated policy and set of procedures to guide and assist approved centres in its implementation. The full policy is available on the Smart Awards website at www.smartawards.co.uk
Required resources and site requirements for delivering this qualification	A suitable controlled or simulated telecommunications work area must be available, with signing and guarding, representative tools, equipment, materials and components, appropriate personal protective equipment, risk assessments, method statements and work instructions. The site must allow inspection of civils, underground and overhead telecommunications activities, site safety, tools/materials and documentation. A minimum of two faults or non-compliant conditions must be introduced in each of the six categories. Conditions must be varied between learners, recorded by the assessor and introduced without creating actual hazards. The assessor-to-learner ratio is 1:8 during training and 1:1 for the practical assessment.

Qualification Structure

The Level 3 Telecommunications Supervisor Fundamentals qualification consists of one mandatory unit. Learners must achieve the theory and practical assessment requirements to achieve the qualification.

Smart Awards Level 3 in SA040 Telecommunications Supervisor Fundamentals Ofqual qualification number: 610/8238/7								
Minimum TQT = 12 hours Minimum number of credits = 1 Minimum number of units = 1			Minimum GLH = 10 hours Assessment time: 2 hours Other learning time = 2 hours					
Unit Number	Unit title	Level	M/O	GLH	ASS	OTHER LEARNING	TQT	CREDITS
D/652/4281	Telecommunications Supervisor Fundamentals	3	M	10	2	2	12	1

Learner Support and Assessment Conditions

Learners will have access to support throughout the training period via their trainer. Trainers must ensure that each learner is adequately prepared before assessment.
No support or assistance may be given to the learner during either the theory or practical assessments, to maintain the integrity and validity of the qualification.

The theory test is a multiple-choice online test. An invigilator must be used for the theory part of the assessment (An assessor can act as the invigilator). The invigilator is responsible for ensuring that the examination room meets the following:

- You must pay attention to the level of outside noise
- Desks/tables must be provided that have sufficient room for learners to work comfortably
- Learners must be seated sufficiently far apart to ensure they cannot see each other's work
- Display material must not be visible in the examination room
- A reliable clock must be visible to each learner in the examination room
- You must create a seating plan that is in keeping with an examination room
- Please refer to Smart Awards invigilation guide

The practical assessment must be conducted in a controlled environment that simulates real-world working conditions. It must not be undertaken in a live situation without prior Smart Awards approval. The work area must contain a minimum of two faults in each of the six inspection categories; faults must be varied between learners and recorded. The practical assessment must be completed individually, without assistance, within 60 minutes. All assessment records must be retained for quality assurance. The theory test may be taken before or after the practical assessment.

This qualification is delivered and assessed in English only. Assessments are not available in other languages.

Qualification Objectives and Requirements

This qualification confirms that the learner has demonstrated the knowledge and practical supervisory inspection skills required by the learning outcomes and assessment criteria below.

Unit Title:	Telecommunications Supervisor Fundamentals
Unit Reference Number:	D/652/4281
Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Know the roles and responsibilities of a telecommunications supervisor.	1.1. Outline the roles and responsibilities of a supervisor within telecommunications operations. 1.2. Describe the supervisor's responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of operatives and others affected by work activities. 1.3. Identify the factors to consider when allocating work to operatives, including competence and authorisation. 1.4. Outline the supervisor's responsibilities for monitoring work against organisational, legislative and industry requirements. 1.5. Determine when intervention or stopping work is required in response to unsafe or non-compliant working practices. 1.6. Determine when issues should be reported or escalated beyond the supervisor's level of responsibility. 1.7. Describe the importance of keeping up to date with changes to relevant legislation, industry standards, specifications and organisational requirements.

	1.8. Describe the importance of verifying operative competence, qualifications and authorisations, and the methods used to confirm these remain valid and appropriate for the work being undertaken.
2. Know how to plan and coordinate telecommunications work activities.	2.1. Identify the information required to plan telecommunications work activities. 2.2. Identify the relevant information within work documentation required to plan telecommunications activities. 2.3. Determine the resources required to complete planned work activities. 2.4. Describe how work activities should be coordinated with other operatives, teams and relevant parties. 2.5. Determine the actions required when changes or issues affect planned work activities. 2.6. Describe the importance of communicating work requirements and changes to those affected.
3. Know how to supervise health and safety within telecommunications operations.	3.1. Outline the legislative and industry requirements relevant to supervising telecommunications work activities. 3.2. Identify the relevant information contained within risk assessments and method statements for telecommunications work activities. 3.3. Determine whether appropriate control measures are in place for planned work activities. 3.4. Identify changes in site conditions or work activities that may require risk controls to be reviewed. 3.5. Describe the supervisor's responsibilities for monitoring the use of personal protective equipment, tools, plant and equipment. 3.6. Outline the requirements for reporting and recording health, safety and compliance issues. 3.7. Identify the requirements for the safe handling, storage and disposal of hazardous waste arising from telecommunications work activities.
4. Know how to manage the supervisory response to workplace incidents and medical emergencies.	4.1. Identify the actions required to manage the supervisory response to workplace incidents and medical emergencies within telecommunications operations. 4.2. Describe the supervisor's responsibilities when a workplace incident or medical emergency occurs. 4.3. Determine the immediate actions required to make the work area safe and prevent further harm. 4.4. Describe how appropriate first aid and emergency assistance should be obtained. 4.5. Determine the appropriate supervisory actions where a casualty requires immediate assistance. 4.6. Describe how information should be communicated to first aiders, emergency services and other relevant parties. 4.7. Outline the importance of acting within the limits of an individual's training, competence and authority. 4.8. Describe the requirements for escalating, reporting and recording workplace incidents and medical emergencies.
5. Know how to supervise civils, underground and overhead telecommunications activities.	5.1. Identify hazards and safe working practices associated with telecommunications civils activities, including excavation safety, cable avoidance techniques and ground conditions. 5.2. Identify the hazards, working practices and infrastructure/site conditions that should be monitored when supervising underground telecommunications activities.

	5.3. Identify hazards, safe working practices and site conditions associated with overhead telecommunications activities, including overhead power lines, joint user poles and working at height. 5.4. Determine whether work areas are suitably established and controlled for the activities being undertaken. 5.5. Identify locations and work activities requiring additional safety controls, access permissions or authorisations, and describe the requirements that may apply. 5.6. Identify hazards and safe working practices associated with telecommunications activities in the highway, including the presence of underground utilities, traffic management and pedestrian safety. 5.7. Identify hazards and safe working practices associated with working at height during telecommunications activities, including the use of ladders, mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) and working on flat roofs.
6. Know how to monitor quality and workmanship within telecommunications operations.	6.1. Recognise defects and poor workmanship in civils telecommunications activities. 6.2. Recognise defects and poor workmanship in underground telecommunications activities. 6.3. Recognise defects and poor workmanship in overhead telecommunications activities. 6.4. Determine the potential consequences of identified defects and poor workmanship. 6.5. Determine the actions required when defects or poor workmanship are identified. 6.6. Describe the supervisor's responsibilities for ensuring defects and remedial actions are appropriately recorded and followed through.
7. Be able to carry out a supervisory inspection or audit.	7.1. Carry out a systematic inspection of a telecommunications work area. 7.2. Identify defects, hazards and non-compliant working practices present within the work area. 7.3. Determine the actions required in response to identified findings. 7.4. Record the findings and required actions accurately. 7.5. Present identified findings and describe the actions required to rectify or address them.