Briefing on Level 2 IAA Immigration Syllabus changes.

October 2026



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IAA Level 2 Immigration syllabus.

The Level 2 Immigration syllabus now covers:

- Immigration Law
- Asylum and Protection
- **Trafficking and modern slavery**
- **Migrant victims of domestic violence**
- Nationality
- **Statelessness**
- Appeals and High Court proceedings
- Detention and Bail
- Offences
- Welfare and Support
- Ethics
- Essential skills and abilities.

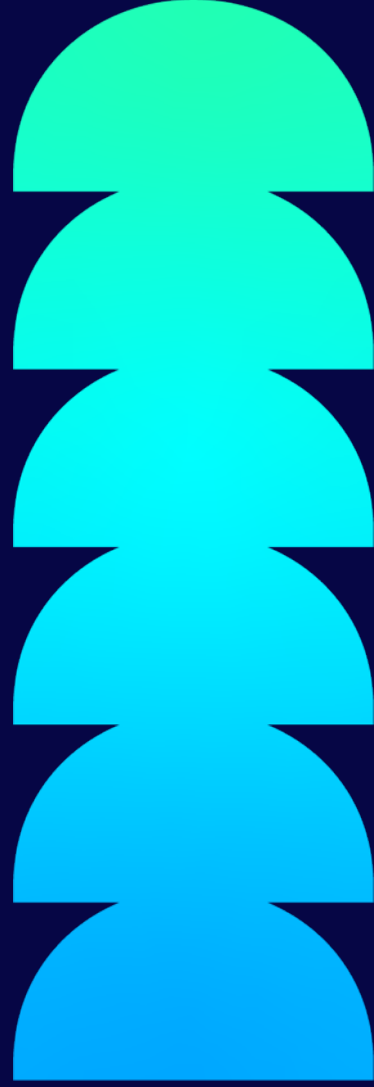
Those highlighted in **blue** are new areas from October 2026.

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- **Detailed knowledge** - An adviser will be familiar with and understand specific information and have the skills, training and experience to know and apply its fullest implication to a client's case.
- **Knowledge** - An adviser will be familiar with and understand information and have the skills to apply it directly to a problem or case. Understanding - An adviser will be able to identify and comprehend information and be able to summarise and apply it to a problem or a case.
- **Awareness** - Knowing general concepts, topics, procedures and methods without needing to be able to apply the information directly. An adviser should be able to identify the limits of their awareness. They should also be able to identify and refer to relevant sources of information for more in-depth knowledge.

So what changed in October 2026?



Details

The Immigration Advice Authority (IAA) is progressing a new contract for its competence assessment service. Assessments are currently paused while the new arrangements are being implemented. To support these changes, new syllabuses have been published, which all future assessments will be based on.

Applicants who have submitted an application to become an immigration adviser must sit tests to demonstrate their competence to the Immigration Advice Authority.

The level 2 immigration syllabus covers these topics:

- immigration law
- asylum and protection
- human rights and humanitarian protection
- nationality
- appeals
- detention and bail
- welfare and support
- ethics
- essential skills and abilities

Screenshot taken from GOV.UK 8 October 2026.

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On the slides 7 to 46:

- the colour **blue** has been used to indicate the additions made in October 2026 AND
- strikethrough has been used to indicate words removed in October 2026.

Immigration Law



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Immigration law	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the structure and sources of immigration law, including the framework of the immigration legislation.	The key principles of immigration control - the right of abode, entry clearance and the relevance of being a visa national, leave to enter and leave to remain.
	Identify legal sources —Accurately identify and distinguish between primary and secondary sources of UK immigration law, including Acts of Parliament, statutory instruments, Immigration Rules, and Home Office policy.
	Interpret legislative framework —Explain how the different components of the immigration legislative framework interact, including hierarchy, legal force, and the role of case law.
	Apply legal sources — Locate, interpret, and apply relevant statutory provisions, Immigration Rules, and policy guidance to a client's circumstances.
	Navigate structural components — Outline the structure of the UK immigration system, including routes, categories, and decision-making bodies, and use this understanding to guide clients appropriately.
	Maintain legal currency — Monitor and incorporate updates to legislation, Rules, and policy into their practice, demonstrating awareness of how changes affect client advice.

Immigration law	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the procedure for making applications under the Immigration rules.	The procedures and processes for making applications under the immigration rules.
	General provisions within part 1 and individual appendixes of the immigration rules.
	Can identify which part/s of the Immigration Rules applies to a client's circumstances, including route-specific requirements, suitability criteria, and evidential rules.
	Can clearly explain the procedural steps for making an application under the Immigration Rules, including online forms, document submission, biometrics, and fee requirements.
	Can clearly explain the procedural steps for making an application under the Immigration Rules, including online forms, document submission, biometrics, and fee requirements.
	Can prepare and submit applications that meet the Rules' validity, eligibility, and suitability requirements, ensuring all mandatory evidence is included.
	Can interpret and apply evidential flexibility provisions, specified evidence rules, and Appendix FM-SE/Appendix documents as relevant.
	Can identify and address procedural risks such as invalid applications, missing evidence, incorrect fees, or timing issues affecting lawful residence.
	Can track and incorporate changes to the Immigration Rules and Home Office processes into their practice.

Immigration law	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the structure and operation of the immigration rules.	Understanding how the immigration rules are amended.
	Effective navigation of the rules to enable determination of which immigration category and which rules are applicable to a client's case.
	The main categories of entry and stay under the immigration rules – visitors, students, points-based immigration system and other work and business visas, partners, children, parents, adult dependent.
	Adult dependent relatives, and the operation of Appendix FM, long residence, Appendix EU and Appendix EU (family permit), Appendix victim of domestic abuse, Appendix statelessness.
	The key concepts within the Immigration rules – validity, eligibility, suitability, financial and English language requirements, accommodation, sponsorship.
	Key definitions in the Introduction of the immigration rules, the definition of public funds, parent, adequately maintained/accommodated, leading an independent life.
	How to identify whether a particular category of entry can lead to settlement, whether switching is permitted, and what period of leave an applicant under a particular rule can anticipate receiving.
	Conditions that will be imposed on grants of leave.
	The mandatory and discretionary general grounds for refusal ~~within part 9 of the immigration rules, and the suitability criteria.~~ within Part Suitability of the immigration rules; identify which suitability grounds apply to the specific route and how they interact with eligibility requirements.
	Ability to identify how to determine the criteria for a grant of leave for a particular category of applicant under the rules, grounds for refusal, administrative removal or deportation.
	The Home Office ~~policies that supplement the immigration rules.~~ policy documents and caseworker guidelines that supplement the immigration rules.

Immigration law	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the appropriate application forms, fees and supporting documentation.	The appropriate application form for each category of entry and stay, fees for immigration applications, and what documentation should be obtained to ensure that the criteria of the Immigration rules are satisfied.
	The consequences of failure to make an application within time or on the appropriate prescribed form.
	The procedures that people who are subject to immigration control who wish to marry in the United Kingdom must follow, including Part 4 of the Immigration Act 2014, and Section 28H and Schedule 3A of the Marriage Act 1949.
	The operation of the statutory extension of leave to remain when an application is made.
	Can ensure that all validity requirements are met (correct form, correct fee, biometrics, required documents), reducing the risk of invalid applications.
	Can clearly explain to clients what forms, fees, and documents are required, including deadlines, risks, and consequences of non-compliance.

Immigration law	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of key UKVI concessionary policies and how to make out of time and discretionary applications.	The concept of leave to remain outside the immigration rules and the residual discretion under section 3 of the Immigration Act 1971.
	Can correctly determine the form of applications outside the rules.
	~~The form of applications outside the rules and representing overstayers.~~
	~~How to~~ Can identify whether there is a policy outside the Immigration rules that is relevant to the facts of a client's case.
	~~Where to locate policies outside the immigration rules.~~
	Can locate and correctly apply policies pertaining to applications outside the immigration rules, including out-of-time applications where para SUI 13.1 does not apply.

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Immigration law	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the personnel and terminology relating to immigration law.	The common terms encountered in immigration practice as they appear in the interpretation section of the Immigration rules or relevant statutory provisions.
	Can identify the roles and functions of key actors in the immigration system, including immigration officers, caseworkers, presenting officers, tribunal judges, and authorised representatives.
	Can explain the responsibilities of bodies such as the Home Office, Immigration Enforcement, the First-tier Tribunal, the Upper Tribunal, and oversight/regulatory authorities.
	Can correctly use core terminology (e.g., “leave to remain”, “entry clearance”, “suitability”, “validity”, “appealable decision”, “administrative review”) in both written and oral communication.
	Can interpret and explain technical legal terms and procedural language to clients in a clear, accessible way.
	Can distinguish between similar or commonly confused terms (e.g., “refusal” vs“ rejection”, “inadmissibility” vs “ineligibility”, “statutory instrument” vs “policy guidance”).
	Can translate specialist terminology into plain language to support client understanding and informed decision-making.

Immigration law	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the types of immigration decision that may be made in an individual's case dependent upon the stage of the entry or expulsion process that they have reached.	Extensions, variations and cancellation of leave, illegal entry, overstaying, administrative removal and removal directions, and deportation orders.
	Grant and revocation of Indefinite leave to remain ~~and the grant of citizenship~~.
	Acquisition and loss of British citizenship and other types of British nationality.
	Can identify the full range of immigration decisions that may be made at each stage of the entry, stay, refusal, removal, and expulsion process (e.g., entry clearance decisions, leave to enter, leave to remain, refusal notices, curtailment, administrative removal decisions, deportation decisions).
	Can explain which decision-making powers the Home Office or Tribunal may exercise at each stage, and how these powers differ between entry, in-country applications, refusal, and enforcement action.
	Can interpret the content, legal effect, and procedural consequences of different types of decision notices, including whether they generate a right of appeal, administrative review, or no remedy.
	Can assess the legal and practical consequences of each decision type, including effects on lawful residence, reporting conditions, removal windows, and eligibility for further applications.
	Can identify and explain the remedies available at each stage (appeal, administrative review, reconsideration, fresh claim) and advise clients on appropriate next steps.
	Can apply understanding of decision types and process stages to provide accurate, timely, and risk-aware advice tailored to the client's current position in the entry or expulsion process.

Immigration law	Detailed learning outcomes
Knowledge of leading cases relating to the application and interpretation of immigration law by the courts.	As set out by the Courts and Tribunals in reported cases from time to time.

Asylum and protection



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Asylum and protection	Detailed learning outcomes
Awareness of the requirements of the Refugee Convention and the principle Articles of the ECHR.	The Refugee Convention.
	The definition of a refugee.
	The basis for exclusion.
	The ability to identify whether Articles 2, 3 and 8 of the ECHR are applicable to the facts of their client's case regarding leave to enter or remain in the UK.

Asylum and protection	Detailed learning outcomes
Awareness of the procedure for making an asylum application and managing those within the system.	The procedure for claiming.
	Safe third country procedures.
	Procedures at Home Office interviews.
	The one stop procedure.
	The existence of asylum guidance and country policy documents.
	Processes for assessing claims by vulnerable people, including minors and those who are mentally incapacitated.
	Applicability of Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 as part of the client's asylum and protection case.
	Availability of asylum support.
	Grants of immigration bail, seeking extension of immigration bail and notifying change of address in the context of the client's asylum and protection case.
	~~Notifying change of address.~~
	~~Seeking extension of immigration bail.~~
	Seeking permission to work while the client's asylum and protection case is pending.

Asylum and protection	Detailed learning outcomes
Awareness of consequences of grant of refugee status.	The immigration rules on family reunion for refugees and those with HP/DL.
	Humanitarian protection and discretionary leave to remain: their length, terms, procedure on expiry, and access to settlement.
	The safe return review process and access to settled status.

Asylum and protection	Detailed learning outcomes
Knowledge of Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR.	Ability to identify whether Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR are applicable to the facts of a client's case both in terms of expulsion from the country and treatment within the UK.
	Arguing an evidence-backed case under Article 3 ECHR including appreciation of the need to show a minimum level of severity for the Article to be engaged.
	The standard of proof for human rights arguments.
	The circumstances in which fresh claims on human rights grounds might be made.
	~~Rights of trafficking victims.~~
	~~Operation of the best interests of the child principle.~~

Asylum and protection	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of Article 8 of the ECHR and Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.	Article 8 ECHR and the right to family and private life.
	The notion of qualified rights and proportionality.
	The consequences of making a successful case on human rights grounds based on Article 8.
	ECHR under and outside the Immigration rules.
	~~Operation of the best interests of the child principle.~~
	Ability to identify whether Section 55 is applicable to the client's case and to build an argument on that basis.

Asylum and protection	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of consequences of grant of leave to remain.	Humanitarian protection and discretionary leave to remain: their length, terms, procedure on expiry, and access to settlement.
	Family reunion and access to travel documents for persons with humanitarian protection and discretionary leave to remain.
Knowledge of leading cases relating to the interpretation of the ECHR and subsidiary protection.	As set out by the Courts and Tribunals in reported cases from time to time.

Trafficking and modern slavery

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Trafficking and modern slavery	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the relevant legislation and the competence in correctly applying it to an individual client case.	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol 2000).
	Modern Slavery Act 2015.
	Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015.
	Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Trafficking and modern slavery	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge and skills to identify, assess, and support potential victims of trafficking and modern slavery within the UK immigration system, ensuring accurate advice, lawful representation, and effective safeguarding.	Competence in understanding who is a victim of slavery, including how to identify relevant indicators.
	Competence in National Referral Mechanism procedures, including Competent Authority Reasonable and Conclusive Grounds decision making.
	Competence in understanding the interplay between NRM decision making and asylum and human rights claims, and other immigration options.
	Confidence in pursuing Discretionary leave for victims of slavery.
	Competence in best practice in working with and representing victims of slavery.
	Competence in understanding the UK government's duties to victims of slavery.
	Knowledge of safeguarding issues relating to victims of slavery.
	Competence in how to represent child victims of slavery.
	Competence in how to draft statements, representations and provide supporting evidence in support of Conclusive Grounds decisions and for grants of Discretionary Leave.
	Competence in how and when to commission expert evidence, including medico-legal and trafficking reports.
	Competence in how to challenge negative Reasonable and Conclusive Grounds decisions by reconsideration and judicial review.

Migrant victims of domestic violence

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Migrant victims of domestic violence	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of how domestic abuse interacts with immigration law, including the Domestic Violence Rule (DVILR) Appendix FM and evidential requirements	Competence to make applications for ILR for victims of domestic abuse
	Competence to make applications for a family member who has retained the right of residence as a victim of domestic violence or abuse under Appendix EU.
	Competence to conduct applications for Administrative Review of Domestic Abuse refusals.
	Competence to conduct Administrative Review and appeals of Domestic Violence or Abuse refusals under Appendix EU.

Migrant victims of domestic violence	Detailed learning outcomes
Knowledge of Most Vulnerable Dependant Adult Claimants (MVDAC)/ Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession	Understands the purpose of the MVDAC — Explains the policy intent, eligibility criteria, and protections available to migrant victims of domestic abuse.
	Identifies immigration categories eligible for MVDAC — Describes which visa holders may apply, including limitations and exclusions. Explains evidential requirements — Outlines acceptable forms of evidence of domestic abuse, financial hardship, and relationship breakdown.
	Understands safeguarding duties — Describes safeguarding principles, risk indicators, and referral pathways for victims of abuse.
	Describes financial support provisions — Summarises the temporary leave, access to public funds, and support entitlements granted under the concession.
	Understands interaction with wider immigration routes — Explains how MVDAC interacts with the domestic violence ILR route, family routes, and other protection pathways.
	Identifies confidentiality and data-sharing rules — Outlines legal and ethical duties around handling sensitive information relating to abuse.

Nationality



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Nationality	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the processes for naturalisation/ registration.	The modes of obtaining nationality – by operation of law, by registration, and naturalisation.
	The structure of UK nationality law: the key provisions under sections 1,2,3 and 6 of the British Nationality Act 1981.
	Awareness of the provisions under sections 4-5 of the British Nationality Act 1981.
	The procedure for making an application for naturalisation and registration as a British citizen.
	The procedure for making an application for registration as a British citizen for children born in the United Kingdom.

Statelessness

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Statelessness	Detailed learning outcomes
Detailed knowledge of the statutory and policy basis for statelessness applications, including the Immigration Rules (Part 14), relevant Home Office guidance, and applicable international instruments (e.g., the 1954 Convention	Understanding of the criteria for establishing statelessness and the evidential standards applied by the Home Office.
	Knowledge of the types of evidence required to demonstrate lack of nationality, attempts to obtain nationality, and barriers to recognition by states.
	Ability to identify indicators of statelessness, assess eligibility, and distinguish statelessness claims from asylum or human rights claims.
	Ability to advise clients on obtaining nationality-related evidence, including correspondence with embassies, civil registries, and other authorities.
	Ability to complete the application form, draft detailed representations, and present a coherent evidential narrative addressing nationality laws of relevant states.
	Understanding of application routes, fees (if any), biometrics, interview processes, and timelines.
	Ability to advise on options following refusal, including administrative review, fresh evidence, or alternative immigration routes.

Appeals and High Court proceedings



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Appeals and High Court proceedings	Detailed learning outcomes
Knowledge of the structure and remedies available in the Tribunal.	The structure of the First tier and Upper Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chambers.
	The consequences of a successful appeal including the possibility of further challenges by the Home Office.
Detailed knowledge of the time limits for appealing.	Identifying the date of service of a decision at first instance and calculating the time limit for any subsequent appeal.
Awareness of the legislative provisions in relation to whether there is a right of appeal and what grounds of appeal might be appropriate.	Which decisions are capable of appeal and the limitations on rights of appeal.
	How to lodge an appeal to the FTTIAC where appropriate with properly identified grounds of appeal.
	Procedure Rules and Practice Directions of the Tribunals.
Awareness of the remedies available before the UT and the High Court.	Awareness of the processes related to judicial review, including the Civil Procedure Rules Chapter 54 and related Practice Directions.

Detention and Bail



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Detention and Bail	Detailed learning outcomes
Knowledge of the circumstances in which detention is thought justified by the immigration authorities and the factors to be taken into account in determining whether detention is the right course of action.	The procedures that accompany detention.
	The reasons for detention and the factors to be taken into account in a detention case.
	The categories of cases where detention will be permissible only in exceptional circumstances.
Knowledge of the main provisions relating to bail.	The procedure for seeking Secretary of State immigration bail and the factors will be taken into account.
	The likely conditions to be set on bail.
	The circumstances in which there will be no power to detain an individual.
Awareness of the remedies before the Upper Tribunal/ High Court.	Judicial review and habeas corpus.

Offences



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Offences	Detailed learning Outcomes
Knowledge of the major offences under the immigration legislation.	Offences under the Immigration Act 1971 – illegal entry, overstaying and breaching conditions (section 24), deception (section 24A(1)-(3)), facilitating (section 25(1), harbouring (section 25(2)), helping asylum seeker to enter UK (section 25A and offences regarding administration of 1971 Act (section 26(1)).
	Offences under sections 2 and 35 of the Immigration and Asylum (Treatment of Claimants Act 2004).
	Offences connected with support under section 105 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
	Offences regarding employment under sections 15, 21 and 25 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006.
	Offences regarding possession of false identity documents under sections 4 and 7 of the Identity Documents Act 2010.

Welfare and support



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Welfare and support.	Detailed learning outcomes.
Awareness of the main provisions relating to benefits/ support for persons subject to immigration control.	The effect of the main provisions on welfare and support is to exclude certain persons subject to immigration control from obtaining certain benefits.
Knowledge of the circumstances in which employment is prohibited for persons subject to immigration control.	The circumstances in which employment is prohibited for persons subject to immigration control.

Ethics



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Ethics	Detailed learning outcomes
Knowledge of professional and ethical practices in the provision of immigration advice and services.	Knowledge of the principles which define IAA Level 2 work and awareness of work that is restricted to advisers registered at a higher level which should be referred or signposted.
	Knowledge of core regulatory documents, – Code of Standards, Guidance on Competence and Complaints Scheme.
	Regulatory Compliance – Applies the Code of Standards practice–system requirements and organisational policies consistently.
	The duty of care owed by a legal representative to clients and to upholding UK law, including issues around conflict of interest and confidentiality, acting in the client's best interests and appropriately and professionally in their dealings with the Home Office, the courts and other legal representatives, as laid down in the IAA Code of Standards.
	Ethical Case Management – Ensures accuracy, avoids misleading submissions and maintains professional communication with third parties.
	Independent Ethical Judgement — Applies the Code to varied, non-routine situations and justifies decisions.
	Professional Boundaries — Maintains appropriate boundaries and avoids conduct that undermines trust or impartiality.
	Vulnerable Clients – Demonstrates trauma-informed culturally competent practice in complex asylum and protection cases.
	Independence and Objectivity - Maintains independence of judgement and resists improper pressure from clients and external actors.

Essential skills and abilities



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Essential skills and abilities	Detailed Learning outcomes
Communication skills	**Ability to identify the need for interpreters and the ability to use them.**
	Ability to communicate effectively to a high standard in written English with the client, Home Office and other agencies so as to be able to: • **Identify to whom an enquiry relates to, establish their wishes and intentions and the relevant facts of the case** • **Communicate advice clearly, giving reasons and explaining options** • **Draft letters and complete application forms clearly and accurately in plain English** • **Produce clear, pertinent and effective written representations** • **Use correct terminology and enclose the appropriate evidence or provide a clear explanation for why it has not been provided.**

Essential skills and abilities	Detailed learning outcomes
Casework skills	Ability to identify if it is appropriate for an application to be made and if so, the appropriate application to be made according to the client's circumstances.
	Ability to identify where referral to other professionals may be appropriate and to instruct relevant experts.
	Ability to obtain clear, detailed instructions, statements and case histories.
	Ability to ask relevant questions, employing different techniques to access necessary information.
	Ability to assess the merits of the case presented.
	Awareness of the cultural, gender and disability issues that may arise in the course of a case and the ability to deal sensitively with these issues.
	Ability to identify vulnerable clients and to make appropriate provisions (including referral).
	Ability to identify the ~~range~~ of evidence ~~needed~~ required to support an application and to evaluate the relative weight of the evidence.
	Ability to identify and use the most up to date and relevant information, including case-law and other specialised subjects in support of cases.
	Ability to identify the salient points in an argument and respond to them effectively.
	Awareness of and a commitment to follow established good practice.
	Ability to act with an appropriate sense of urgency.
	Awareness of the limitations of competence and when to refer cases on to a suitably qualified adviser.

Essential skills and abilities	Detailed learning outcomes
Casework skills continued	Ability to give clear, detailed advice based on relevant laws and policies.
	Ability to explain complex legislation and policies in simple, clear language.
	Ability to make clear, pertinent and effective oral and written representations to UKVI and other agencies on a client's behalf.
	Ability to draft clear, detailed, structured and effective statements in English on behalf of clients.
	Ability to maintain clear, accurate records of UKVI interviews.
	Ability to maintain clear, comprehensive and well organised case files and an organised and accessible file management system.
	Ability to maintain clear, accurate and comprehensive records of contacts with the client or third parties and of other relevant matters

We hope these slides have been helpful.

For more on the OU and HJT immigration courses see https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/short-courses/

For more on HJT training see https://hjt-training.co.uk/

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