



Department  
for Education

# **Strategic Guidance to the Institute for Apprenticeships**

**April 2017**

# Contents

Strategic Guidance for the Institute for Apprenticeships – 2017/18	3
Introduction	3
Putting Employers at the Centre of Apprenticeship Quality	4
Role of the Institute for Apprenticeships	4
The Strategic Guidance	5
Annex A – Government Policy Framework	15

# Strategic Guidance for the Institute for Apprenticeships – 2017/18

1. The Government has set out a long-term programme of reform to raise the quality and quantity of apprenticeships, giving employers more control over their content and assessment. To underpin these reforms, the Enterprise Act 2016 establishes the Institute for Apprenticeship as a publically funded, independent body to support the integrity of the reformed apprenticeships system, with a mandate to assure quality and to provide objective, independent advice to Government on future funding provision for apprenticeship training. We recognise that transitioning functions from the existing system to the Institute will be challenging but are clear that an independent organisation led by employers will deliver the best results.

## Introduction

2. Under the legislation which establishes the Institute, the Secretary of State is able to issue advice and guidance to it once a year. We propose to publish an annual 'strategic guidance' document which will outline the policy parameters within which the Institute should operate and exercise its functions. It is a 'statutory notice' which the Institute must have regard to and is given to the Institute for Apprenticeships by the Secretary of State under section ZA2(2) to the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, as amended by Schedule 4 of the Enterprise Act 2016. As per section ZA2(9) of the 2009 Act, a copy of this notice will be laid before Parliament on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017. It has been published on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>.

3. The Institute is legally obliged to report on its activities once a year through its Annual Report, which must include a description of what it has done that year and how it has responded to the Strategic Guidance.

4. The guidance is intended to enable Government to give the Institute steers and advice – at a high level - about elements of the reforms that it considers to be fundamental. The detail about how the Institute chooses to implement and deliver against that advice is for it to decide as an independent organisation, and it will be for the Institute to provide detailed information publically about how it will deliver its functions.

## Putting Employers at the Centre of Apprenticeship Quality

5. The Richard Review into apprenticeships and the subsequent reform programme has emphasised the importance of employers, both large and small, playing a major role in improving the quality of apprenticeships. The Secretary of State believes this remains essential to the success of the programme – ensuring that employers are able to shape the apprenticeships that their employees will undertake to make sure that their apprentices are occupationally competent. The Secretary of State has ensured that the majority of the Institute's Board are employers, or representatives of employers, to help support this aim by bringing the right expertise to lead the organisation. She also expects the Institute to consult employers as it continues to develop its functions, and ensure that it is accessible.

## Role of the Institute for Apprenticeships

6. The benefits of apprenticeships are becoming increasingly broad – beyond providing a solid basis for moving into work but also promoting social mobility, progressing careers and plugging key skills gaps. We will only realise these benefits if we can ensure high quality apprenticeships that work for employers and apprentices. The Institute has been established to help ensure the quality of reformed apprenticeships, alongside a number of organisations (for example, Ofqual, Ofsted, HEFCE and QAA). It will need to build strong working relationships with these key partners to ensure that their aims and approaches complement each other.

7. The Institute has a number of core functions set through legislation:

- setting quality criteria for the development of all apprenticeship standards and assessment plans, irrespective of level
- reviewing, approving or rejecting these
- ensuring all end-point assessments are quality assured, including quality assuring some itself.

8. In addition, the Institute will advise on the maximum level of Government funding available for individual standards.

9. The role of the Institute is significant, but Government recognises that it is a new organisation and that it will change and evolve over the next two years as it takes on the technical education functions set out in the skills plan. However, it will need to begin by ensuring it can deliver its core, essential services first. It will of course be up to the Institute to prioritise its work.

# The Strategic Guidance

## Overarching Steers

### Operating within a broader context

10. The Institute will need to operate within a wider Apprenticeship and Government context. Its primary objective is to support the development and delivery of high quality apprenticeships, but it must do this in the context of the Government's aim to deliver three million apprenticeship starts by 2020 within a defined budget.

11. Government has accepted all the recommendations made to it by the Independent Panel on Technical Education, and has set out how they will be achieved in the Post-16 Skills Plan. The recommendations include expanding the remit of the Institute beyond apprenticeships to include all technical education. Government expects this change to be made from April 2018. The Institute should ensure that it is making preparations during 2017/18 to assume this additional role and for all technical education – whether work-based or classroom-based – to sit within to the framework of 15 routes to skilled employment. We expect the Institute to work with Government to ensure that its plans remain aligned with the work that Government is doing to ensure a smooth transition, and to ensure that collectively we build a single, fully integrated system of technical education. As with any new organisation we expect the Institute to learn from its first years' experience, and use this to evaluate and improve how it operates.

12. Government has emphasised the importance of a new industrial strategy to support and promote UK productivity. Ensuring the workforce and skills are in place to deliver against the strategy will be essential to its success. Apprenticeships will be an important part of this and we would expect the Institute to prioritise the development of standards in sectors where Government, the Institute and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have evidence of skills gaps and that are priorities for the industrial strategy.

13. Supporting greater social mobility is also a clear Government priority. The Institute for Apprenticeships can play a key role in helping to deliver it by contributing to the development of a ladder of opportunity based on quality apprenticeships, including for ordinary working people across the country. Our intention is for this ladder to ensure that no matter where you are born, or who your parents are, if you work hard and apply yourself, you can get ahead and succeed. We expect the Institute to mirror where ever possible any changes to the Apprenticeship Programme that are designed to enhance social mobility or implement the recommendations made by the Maynard review,

including, for example, any changes to the minimum requirements for English and maths.

14. The industrial strategy confirmed that we will publish a comprehensive careers strategy for all ages later this year. High quality careers advice is critical to the success of the apprenticeship reform programme and to opening up opportunities and jobs for people from all backgrounds. Alongside the Careers & Enterprise Company, the National Careers Service and others, the Institute's work in developing high quality apprenticeship standards will help to inspire people to take up apprenticeships at all levels.

## Wider Institute Role

15. The Institute has certain core functions in law, as set out above, which position it as the lead organisation in ensuring apprenticeship quality. The Secretary of State therefore wishes it to play a broad role, promoting the core principles set out below and acting as a convenor of other organisations involved.

## Core Principles

16. There are a number of core principles that have driven the apprenticeship reforms which we would expect the Institute to continue to operate within. An apprenticeship:

- Is a job in a skilled occupation
- Is a recognised way of proving occupational competence
- Requires substantial and sustained training, and should last a minimum of 12 months and involve at least 20% off the job training (training which is outside of the normal day-to-day working environment, this can include training that is delivered at the apprentice's normal place of work but must not be delivered as part of their normal working duties)
- Develops transferable skills, and maths and English, to progress careers
- Leads to full competency and capability in an occupation, demonstrated by the achievement of an apprenticeship standard
- Trains the apprentice to the level required to apply for professional recognition where that recognition exists (although at Levels 6 and 7, it might not always be possible for a standard to fully align with the requirements for professional recognition).
- Is designed by employers to meet their needs and the needs of their organisations
- Is assessed through a single end point assessment after the apprentice has completed their training.

17. Specific principles for end point assessment have been developed, which we would also expect the Institute to reflect:

- The assessment should give assurance that the apprentice possesses the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be fully competent in the occupation
- The assessment should include a minimum of two different assessment methods
- Assessment should be undertaken by an independent third party who has had not been involved in the training or line management of the apprentice, and who is on the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations. There may be a small number of cases where the Institute considers it necessary to make an exception; in these cases it will need to justify its decision. However, we do not expect the Institute to apply any discretion on this in relation to training providers, as a training provider must not train and assess the same apprentice in any circumstances.
- The end point assessment for integrated degree apprenticeships is embedded within the degree qualification because the curriculum is based on the standard, which is designed to achieve occupational competence. This applies to bachelor's and master's degrees specifically.

## **Specific guidance on carrying out its core functions**

18. In some areas the legislation does not include specifics about how functions should be executed. This was intentional to give the Institute the flexibility to decide itself how best to carry them out. However, there are some steers that the Secretary of State would like the Institute to have regard to, based on the core principles above and the importance of real employers maintaining a leading role, alongside consultation with others, including expert organisations and providers. There is also an expectation that the Institute makes good use of evidence when carry out its functions.

19. The Institute also needs to be conscious of the changing apprenticeships landscape when carrying out its functions. Until recently the majority of apprenticeships have been at levels two and three, but there is now significant interest from employers in higher and degree apprenticeships and growing numbers of standards are being developed at these levels. The Institute needs to ensure that this is reflected in how it operates, including being aware of and engaging with structures and organisations that are part of the development, delivery and quality assurance of apprenticeships at these higher levels.

## **Standard and assessment plan development and approval**

### **Preparation of apprenticeship standards and assessment plans**

20. The legislation states that the preparation of standards and plans should be carried out by a 'group of persons' but does not define this. Under the 'trailblazer' model, the 'group of persons' has been led primarily by employers, with input from a wide range of other individuals and organisations with relevant knowledge and experience, for example professional bodies, other sector experts and bodies, providers and assessment organisations. This model has proved successful, with more than 140 new apprenticeship standards approved for delivery. We would expect to see this approach, including the principle of employers playing a leading role in standards development, continue. It will be important for the Institute to ensure that the full range of employers with an interest in each standard are represented, including SMEs. We ask the Institute to ensure as swift a process for approving standards as possible, without compromising quality. As per the legislation, the Institute will need to take on Government's current role of quality assurance of standards.

21. When considering expressions of interest for standards to be developed, in addition to employer demand the Institute should consider the fit with the current, relevant occupational map to avoid a proliferation of overlapping standards, as well as looking forward to future skills needs.

22. Given the increasing interest in higher and degree apprenticeships, the Institute should ensure that the wide range of organisations who play a role in their development and delivery are engaged effectively so they can make a positive contribution.

### **Examination by independent third parties**

23. The legislation requires the Institute to ensure that standards and assessment plans have been examined by 'an independent third party' before they can be approved. It is up to the Institute to decide how to carry out this function and choose who the 'independent third party' is in each case, but it will need to ensure public confidence in the standards and plans it approves and wide credibility in the system as a whole. To do this, we would expect it to ensure the involvement of relevant employers, employer representative bodies, professional bodies, sector bodies and others with expertise, including assessment expertise, in the third party scrutiny for each standard.

### **Providing support for the development of standards and assessment plans**

24. Government has provided support to employers who are developing standards and assessment plans through a number of relationship managers, as well as



workshops, written guidance and templates. To ensure that employers continue to get the advice and guidance they need to be able to develop standards and plans quickly we would expect the provision of similar, proactive support to be a priority for the Institute. Some employer groups have found it difficult to develop assessment plans, and we would expect the Institute to consider how it can provide specialist assessment advice to ensure high quality, deliverable plans are developed.

## **Planning for Technical Education**

25. We expect the institute to take into account the Department for Education's development of technical education routes to allow for a smooth transition when the functions formally move across to the Institute. This should include using the occupational maps developed by DfE when approving new employer groups and standards, ensuring there is no duplication.

## **Assessment**

26. The Department will retain responsibility for setting policy in relation to the assessment market, and the Institute should have regard to this when carrying out their functions.

## **External quality assurance (EQA)**

27. Four options for external quality assurance (EQA) (a process to check quality and consistency of assessments offered by different assessment organisations against the same standard) have been available to employer groups developing assessment plans. These are: 1) processes developed by employer groups, 2) a Professional Body, 3) Ofqual, 4) the Institute). Government is responsible for setting these options.

28. An EQA option must be included in each assessment plan, selected by the employer group, before it can be approved, and the Institute should provide support to groups considering offering EQA. Previously many employer groups have found it difficult to use one of the other three options so the Institute was added as an option which should be applicable to all to avoid assessment plans, and therefore starts, being held up. The Enterprise Act (2016) formally sets out powers for the Institute to undertake EQA of end-point assessment.

29. EQA is a direct lever that the Institute can use to exercise its primary function to help ensure the quality of the reformed apprenticeship system. It is up to the Institute to decide what form its EQA takes. We would expect the Institute to be named as the EQA organisation only in instances where alternatives are not viable.

30. The Institute should consider how best to ensure that effective and high-quality EQA processes are available and are applied to all end-point assessments. It will need to satisfy itself that all options will ensure consistent, valid assessment and require a high standard from all apprentices. It will need to ensure appropriate separation between this overarching role, and any delivery of its own EQA, and make public how it will manage this.

## Certification

31. From January 2017 the Skills Funding Agency - from April 2017 the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) - has been acting on behalf of the Secretary of State to manage the operational delivery of certificates for standards, working with employers and assessment organisations. Government has overall responsibility for certification and for ensuring the process is of good quality. From April 2017 we expect the Institute to assist in this oversight role, setting the parameters for the ESFA to operate within, designing the certificate and working with the ESFA to ensure the overall integrity and quality of the system. We will write to the Institute separately on the specific tasks we would like it to carry out in relation to certification.

## Funding

32. The Secretary of State intends to request advice and assistance from the Institute on apprenticeship funding. From April 2017 this will include advice on:

- allocating individual apprenticeship standards to funding bands, both for new standards and in the context of Technical Education route reviews;
- the current allocation of existing frameworks to funding bands and the effectiveness of additional support payments, such as those for younger apprentices; and
- how the allocation of apprenticeship standards to funding bands might be undertaken in the future.

33. In giving this advice we will ask the Institute to have regard to:

- affordability within the context of the overall budget for the apprenticeship programme in England;
- securing growth in apprenticeships towards the overall commitment to 3 million apprenticeship starts;
- improving the quality of apprenticeships and encouraging progression;
- improving the take up among disadvantaged groups and widening participation more generally;

- Government's desire to encourage the transition from the use of frameworks to standards; and
- that employers and providers will need time to adjust to the new funding system and the initial period will be a period of learning and transition.

## **Other functions and responsibilities**

### **Annual reporting and success criteria**

34. Each year the Institute will need to report to the Secretary of State on how it has carried out its core functions, and how it has had regard to the contents of the relevant strategic guidance. It should also explain how the Institute has ensured value for money with its spending. The report will be published and laid before Parliament. As part of this reporting, we would welcome the Institute's judgment on the operation of the quality system as a whole and any recommendations for how it could function more effectively.

35. The Institute must set out their key objectives and success criteria to help them measure their progress, and the progress of the system overall, which should be supported by data and evidence, and included in the annual report. These could include measures to demonstrate how its work continues to represent the needs of employers and other with an interest, how it has contributed to the delivery of wider Government policy (for example, the Industrial Strategy, promoting social mobility and ensuring apprenticeships work for minority and underrepresented groups), and how it has ensured value for money.

36. In addition to the formal annual report, it will also report regularly to the Department against a set of agreed success measures so Government and Ministers can assess its performance.

### **Review of Apprenticeship standards**

37. All standards include a timeframe in which they must be reviewed to ensure they remain relevant for employers and up to date. As part of the annual report the Institute will need to include details of the reviews that have taken place that year. While there is flexibility and it is up to Institute to decide how it carries out these reviews, we would expect them, where appropriate, to work with the employer groups that originally developed them and for the reviews to be comprehensive, including details of completions, destinations and progression, wage uplift and feedback from providers, apprentices, assessment organisations and employers in particular, as well as others with an interest. We would also expect that they check how the standard fits with the latest version of the relevant occupational map. The Institute should also consider how well the system as a whole is delivering successful apprenticeships which respond to the skills needs outlined in the industrial strategy and wider Government priorities like

social mobility, and whether there are any unintended consequences of the implementation of the reforms.

38. While it is up to the Institute how they plan and timetable these reviews, they will need to be pro-active and prioritise some areas which need reviewing before others to ensure the standards remain relevant.

39. The Secretary of State is aware of the need to ensure that the landscape of apprenticeship standards as a whole is, and remains, comprehensive, concise and coherent. We expect the Institute to take responsibility for achieving this, and that regular reviews to identify any gaps or duplication, as well as proactive work with employers to address these, will form an important part of this.

### **Quality oversight of the registers of training providers and assessment organisations**

40. The Secretary of State has given the Institute responsibility for assisting with certain elements of the Register of Apprenticeships Training Organisations and the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations. For example, it is intended that the Institute will propose the key quality criteria for both the Registers from autumn 2017, when we expect the registers to be refreshed.

41. While the Secretary of State, via the ESFA, will retain responsibility for the registers overall, and their administration and operation, the Institute has been given the ability to require the ESFA to investigate in particular circumstances in relation to both Registers, under the oversight of the Secretary of State. The detail of this arrangement is set out in an MoU between the Secretary of State and the Institute. As now, the Secretary of State would retain overall responsibility for the actions of the ESFA. The Institute will need to work closely with the ESFA and the Department when carrying out functions in relation to the Registers to ensure their work is aligned and to avoid adverse, unintended consequences.

### **Working with key partners and beyond**

42. There are many different organisations involved in assuring various different aspects of the quality of apprenticeships – including Ofsted, Ofqual, the ESFA, HEFCE and QAA and, in future, the Office for Students. It is essential that all of these organisations work collaboratively towards the common goal of high quality apprenticeships and occupationally competent individuals. Their roles are largely set out in legislation or through mandate letters from the Secretary of State. It is intended that the Technical and Further Education Bill will give the Institute data and information-sharing powers with Ofqual, Ofsted and the Office for Students.

43. While the Institute does not have an explicit statutory role which gives it any precedence over any of these partner organisations in relation to their functions, we would expect it to assume a leadership role in the context of apprenticeships, given the functions that it does have in relation to standards, assessment plans and EQA, whilst bearing in mind their own statutory functions. We recommend that it establishes a 'Quality Partnership' between all key organisations to ensure consistency of approach and objectives. Government can take part in this group as and when is necessary.

44. Government has published an 'Accountability Statement' which sets out the roles and responsibilities of each of the organisations involved in the delivery of core apprenticeship functions. It has been agreed by all of the organisations and will be reviewed and updated to reflect future changes in the system.

45. We would also expect the Institute to work with the devolved administrations to ensure the needs of employers who work across borders are considered when standards are developed.

46. While it will be essential for the Institute to work closely with those named above to ensure a system which is coherent and minimises burden, it will also be just as important for them to engage with other organisations, who do not have a statutory role in the system but represent groups with significant involvement or interest, such as providers and assessment organisations.

## **Engaging Apprentices**

47. We want to ensure that Apprentices have an opportunity to have their say about the education and training they receive during their apprenticeships, and the chance to improve the experience of those who come after them. We strongly encourage the Institute to establish mechanisms for them to be able to do this, and are pleased that they have committed to establishing an 'Apprenticeship Panel' which reports directly to the Institute Board. We expect them to ensure that the panel is representative of the wide mix of people who undertake apprenticeships. They should also consider other mechanisms for all apprentices to feed in, to enable the views of the full range of individuals that undertake an apprenticeship to be heard.

## **Overseeing a fair and open system**

48. There are some behaviours which a few organisations involved in the development and delivery of reformed apprenticeships have displayed which we have made efforts to discourage. These are largely around trying to generate income from offering certain services which are not a necessary part of the system, or trying to secure a particular role for themselves without fair competition. We would expect the

Institute to continue to discourage behaviour seeking to make a profit by delivering services that are not necessary and do not add value, and work to ensure the system as a whole is fair and consistent with the principles of the reforms.

## **Operating within the Government Policy Framework**

49. Government and the Institute has agreed that the Institute will operate within the high level policy framework set out by Government for expressions of interest to develop new standards , and the development of standards and assessment plans themselves. This framework is set out an Annex A.

# Annex A – Government Policy Framework

## Expression of Interest Policy

To ensure that the occupation is suitable for the development of an apprenticeship standard, and that the employer group is representative of the relevant sector or sectors, all Expressions of Interest must meet the following criteria:

- Cover a **recognised standalone occupation** for which there is a genuine demand in the job market and full competence in it can be achieved without the need for further training beyond the apprenticeship.
- The occupation to be covered is **unique and does not significantly overlap** with occupations covered by any approved standards or standards in development.
- The occupation will require **rigorous and substantial training of at least a year** (or longer if the apprenticeship is undertaken on a part time basis) prior to the end-point assessment to achieve full competence, with **off-the-job training accounting for at least 20%** of the apprenticeship.
- The occupation is at a **sufficiently high level** to allow the successful apprentice to develop **transferable skills** that will enable them to perform this role in a business of any size in any relevant sector.
- Demonstrate how the standard will fit with the **Apprenticeship and Technical Education Routes** system - identifying which of the 15 routes your standard aligns to.
- Have a **wide range of employers**, meaning at least 10 (in addition to any participating professional bodies, trade associations etc.) committed to being actively involved in the development of your apprenticeship standard.
- The employers involved are **reflective of those who employ people in this occupation** – including in terms of size (your group should normally include at least two employers with fewer than 50 employees), geographical spread and sector/s.
- One **employer member** has been chosen by the group to act as **Chair** (this cannot be someone from a trade body or other representative organisation). Co-Chair would be acceptable if necessary.

- Any other organisations involved, such as sector or trade bodies, professional bodies, training providers, industry training boards or potential assessment organisations have been **invited to support the process by the employers** rather than to lead the process themselves.
- Where a proposal is for a **degree apprenticeship** (i.e. an apprenticeship at level 6 or above including a degree), the names of at least two Higher Education (HE) providers actively supporting the proposal need to be included.
- The group is willing to **work inclusively and collaboratively** with other employers or groups who come forward with an interest in the same or similar occupation(s).
- The group is **committed to developing all standards approved for development immediately** and to aiming to have their standard(s) approved for delivery within a year of the proposal being approved. Stockpiling of successful proposals is not permitted as this prevents other groups from developing similar standards and stalls the availability of apprenticeships in these occupations. Any lack of progress may result in the approval to develop a standard being withdrawn.
- Employers involved in the Trailblazer should have the intention of making use of the standard once it is approved for delivery and **commit individually to a specific number of starts**. If a group is bidding to develop more than one standard, the proposal needs to detail such a commitment from at least 10 members **for each proposed standard**.
- Employers are expected to work with other organisations **to promote and market the standard**. This is particularly important where an occupation is prevalent across a range of sectors.



## Standards Policy

To ensure every standard is high quality there are seven criteria that all apprenticeship standards must meet:

- **Be short, concise and clear.**
- **Full competence in an occupation** – it set out the full competence needed in an occupation, so that, on completion, the apprentice is able to carry out the role in any size of employer across any relevant sector.
- **Employer Support** – the standard has the support of employers including smaller businesses. This means that a wide range of employers have been involved in development of the standard, recognise it as fit for purpose and have signed up to it.
- **Stretch** - the standard contains sufficient content and is pitched at such a level that a new entrant to the occupation will find it stretching and that it will require at least a year of training (before the end-point assessment) with off-the-job training accounting for at least 20% of the apprenticeship.
- **Professional Recognition** - align with professional registration where it exists. Where professional registration exists for the occupation, the apprenticeship standard provides the individual with the knowledge, skills and experience they need to be eligible to apply for this. At Levels 6 and 7, it might not always be possible for standards to fully align with the requirements for professional registration. Where this is the case, the standard should set out the additional experience that is required before an individual can acquire professional status.
- **Contain minimum English and maths requirements and any digital skills required.** The standard needs to include details of the English and maths requirements, either at the minimum level set by government for all apprentices, or above the minimum level if required by the Trailblazer; and having regard to the Government's commitment to implement measures to improve access for to apprenticeships for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, including any minimum requirements relating to English and maths that the government might set. Current minimum Government English and maths requirements are:
  - For level 2 apprenticeships, achieve level 1 English and maths and take the test for level 2 prior to taking their end-point assessment.
  - For level 3 to 7 apprenticeships, achieve level 2 English and maths prior to taking their end-point assessment.

**Only include mandatory qualifications<sup>1</sup> under certain circumstances.** As the EPA will provide definitive evidence of whether the apprentice has acquired full competence, qualifications should not generally need to be included within an apprenticeship standard. Qualifications can be included if they are: a) a regulatory/mandatory requirement in the occupational area to which the standard relates; b) required for professional registration; or c) is used as a hard sift when applying for jobs in the occupation related to the standard.

## Assessment Policy

To ensure every assessment plan is robust and of high quality, they must meet the following criteria:

- **Include a detailed, holistic assessment** - the EPA must be synoptic, which means that it must holistically assess the higher order knowledge, Skills and Behaviours from across the standard in an integrated way at the end of the programme.
- **Use a range of assessment methods**- assessments will need to ensure that apprentices can demonstrate their ability across the standard. This will require mixed methods of assessment.
- **Include a grade** - all apprenticeships should be graded (unless an exemption has been granted), and should have at least one level above a pass for each assessment method and for the apprenticeship as a whole.
- **Produce consistent and reliable judgements** - assessment strategy and tools must ensure that employers can have confidence that apprentices assessed in different parts of the country, at different times, by different assessors have been judged in the same way and have therefore reached the same standard of occupational competence.
- **Deliver accurate (valid) judgements** - the method of assessment must be appropriate to the content. The assessment methods and tools will need to ensure that the decisions reached on every apprentice are an accurate and valid reflection of their competence.

---

<sup>1</sup> The exception is Degree Apprenticeships at Bachelor's and Master's Level where the qualification is an integral element of the apprenticeship

- **Ensure independent assessment** - it is vital that all apprentices are assessed in a fair and objective manner. This means assessments will either be delivered by an independent third party, or will be delivered in such a way that no individual or organisation who has been involved in delivery can make the sole decision on competence<sup>2</sup>.
- **Show that affordability has been considered** - the approach should consider how cost effectiveness in assessments will be delivered while still meeting the quality objectives. Trailblazers should ensure that the EPA is financially reasonable and not off-putting to other employers. EPA should therefore cost *no more than 20%* of the funding band maximum for the apprenticeship.
- **Explain how the assessment is manageable and feasible** - trailblazers need to set out how the assessment process will be deliverable on the scale required for the number of apprentices.
- **Include professional body recognition (where applicable)** - where a professional body or bodies have recognised the standard, our expectation is that they will also recognise the assessment process, as completion of the apprenticeship should ensure the apprentice is ready to secure professional accreditation.
- **Quality Assurance** - each EPA plan should set out measures for internal quality assurance which each assessment organisation will need to undertake to ensure quality and consistency.

Measures for external quality assurance should also be identified in the plan and should follow one of the following models:

- Ofqual;
- Professional Bodies;
- Employer-led Model;
- Institute for Apprenticeships, as last resort.

The Department for Education will retain responsibility for the apprenticeship assessment market and ensuring an assessment organisation is available for each approved standard.

---

<sup>2</sup> The exception is for integrated degree apprenticeships, where it is permissible for the same HEI to both deliver the training and assessment. The HEI must be on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO) if it wishes to deliver the end-point assessment.

## Degree Apprenticeships and Assessment

Where Trailblazers submit standards at level 6 or 7, there is an opportunity to include a Bachelor's or Master's degree as part of the apprenticeship. Degree Apprenticeships bring together the best of higher and professional and technical education. They involve employers, Higher Education providers and professional bodies working in partnership, with apprentices employed throughout, spending part of their time at an HE provider and part with their employer.

Apprentices complete an end-point assessment which tests both the wider occupational competence and academic learning required for success in the relevant profession.

Degree apprenticeship programmes can be structured in one of two ways:

- Employers, HE providers and professional bodies can come together to co-design a fully-integrated degree course, designed specifically for apprentices, which delivers and tests both academic learning and on-the-job training. This model does not remove the requirement for an end-point assessment, but it does not need a separate external assessment of occupational competence. These are known as integrated degree apprenticeships.
- Alternatively, Trailblazers may wish to use existing degree programmes, where they meet the standard, to deliver the academic knowledge requirements of that occupation, combine this with additional training to meet the full apprenticeship requirements, and have a separate test of full occupational competence at the end of the apprenticeship. These are known as non-integrated degree apprenticeships.



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2017

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)

download [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Reference: DFE-00107-2017



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)