

## Performing Initial Assessment of Apprentices' Prior Learning

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this process is to outline our approach to initially assessing an apprentice's eligibility. It is our aim that this process outlines how we effectively provide Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) to potential apprentices on their eligibility and enroll them on to the right apprenticeship for their career objective. This procedure follows the eligibility requirements of the Education, Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and is in line with employer contract of service. The eligibility of an apprentice can affect an employer's recruitment and training practices, so this procedure is important to provide clarity to employers and apprentices.

### Responsibility

Our Apprenticeship Management Team is responsible for this process, ensuring that it complies with ESFA Funding Rules. It is reviewed annually, or as and when Funding Rules are revised.

### Initial Assessment

1. The initial assessment will only be conducted by appropriately trained and qualified staff who are competent to fulfil this role.
2. The initial assessment of a potential apprentice will be completed prior to them starting their apprenticeship. The initial assessment for each prospective apprentice will be conducted by an Induction Tutor. The initial assessment procedure is in place to ensure we accurately identify each apprentices' learning goals and aspirations.
3. The initial assessment gathers a range of information on each apprentice to ensure that the apprentice is following the most appropriate learning programme, the assessment aims to assess the apprentices existing skills, knowledge and behaviours. Outlined below are the initial assessment activities we conduct:
  - a. **Competence Evaluator:**
    - i. All learners will be required to take a competency assessment. Scoring themselves out of 10 for the knowledge, skills and behaviour that are associated with the apprenticeship standard they have indicated they are interested in. Any learner who scores 6 to 10 will be required to provide evidence to support their claim.
    - ii. Where evidence indicates prior learning we will reduce or fully exempt the learner from those relevant areas of our curriculum and reduce the price and

duration accordingly.

- iii. Prior qualification attainment:
- iv. All learners are required to confirm their prior academic/qualification attainment level during application and whether they are currently on a programme of learning.

**b. Review of prior learning and qualification:**

- i. This is assessed by an apprentice declaration of prior learning where they list qualifications they have achieved previously. Additionally, the Induction Tutor will review the apprentices Personal Learning Record (PLR). In reviewing an apprentice's prior qualifications, we are looking to assess if they have any qualification that would duplicate learning and if they hold a qualification at the same or higher level of the apprenticeship they wish to undertake. This assessment is in place to determine if there is a need for the apprentice to undertake their chosen apprenticeship.
- ii. Where an apprentice has a comparable qualification, it must be identified that there is a significant need for skills, knowledge and behaviour development to be eligible for their chosen apprenticeship. A full initial assessment / prior learning assessment report must outline the position of eligibility and or reduction.
- iii. The apprentice is asked if they have previously undertaken an apprenticeship and details of this.

**c. Review the job description:**

- i. This is to identify that the apprenticeship programme selected meets with the job role of the apprentices which enables them to complete the apprenticeship.

**d. Completion of English and maths assessments:**

- i. This will identify current level of learning and skills gaps within the area. It is the expectation that throughout the apprenticeship we continue to develop an apprentices English and maths ability even if they are exempt from undertaking the English and/or maths qualification. Therefore, the initial assessment of English and maths will be used to develop learning objectives and will help form the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The English and maths qualification the apprentice is required to undertake will depend on the apprentice's evidence of previous attainment. English and maths qualifications will be checked on the PLR and apprentice declaration, where it is not noted on the PLR certificated evidence must be provided by the apprentice. (Please see process for delivering English and Maths to apprentices for further details).

**e. Identify further learning needs and career objectives:**

- i. This will ensure we identify the correct apprenticeship programme for the individual whilst also creating an ILP that supports the apprentices learning

needs.

4. The skills and knowledge gap analysis assesses the apprentice's current skills, knowledge and behaviour against the apprenticeship standard / framework. The assessment aims to identify the apprentice's gaps in the required skills, knowledge and behaviours of the apprenticeship. The assessment highlights the strengths in their abilities but also their required development needs. Apprentices will only be able to enrol on to their apprenticeship if they can demonstrate they require substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours. The assessment will provide a judgement on a potential apprentice's status:
  - a. Limited skills and knowledge demonstrated (suggesting eligible for the apprenticeship);
  - b. Moderate skills and knowledge demonstrated (suggesting eligible for the apprenticeship but may need a prior learning reduction);
  - c. Good skills and knowledge demonstrated (suggesting the apprentice is ineligible for the programme due to already having the skills and knowledge required to complete the apprenticeship).
5. The results of the initial assessment are reviewed by the Induction Tutor to:
  - a. Determine eligibility to undertake the chosen apprenticeship;
  - b. Identify if a funding reduction is required;
  - c. Identify the level of study of English and maths;
  - d. Create an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which looks to address the learning objectives to develop the apprentice's skills, knowledge and behaviours.
6. The Apprenticeship Management Team will also review the apprentices PLR and store the reviewed copy on the MI system to form part of the apprentice's evidence pack.
7. The Induction Tutor will provide an outcome of the initial assessment it will be either 1) eligible with no reduction to funding, 2), eligible with reduction to funding and 3), ineligible. The initial assessment report will highlight the outcome, where there is a need for a reduction or ineligible outcome the Induction Tutor will refer this to their line manager to assess the decision before completing the prior learning assessment report to go to the employer.

### **Assessment of Funding Adjustment for Prior Learning**

8. Where the apprentice has a prior qualification at the same level or higher of the apprenticeship, they are going to undertake there must be a written justification outlining their eligibility or reduction to learning in accordance with ESFA funding rules. It is generally the case in most instances that the qualification is not relevant and does not duplicate any learning to the apprenticeship. However, where there is duplication of learning for example the apprentice has a level 3 BTEC in business administration and wants to undertake level 3 business administration apprenticeship there must be a full review of eligibility and also

required reduction as there is a higher probability of the need to reduce the cost and time on programme. There must be evidence that the learning the apprentice is undertaking is materially different and will significantly advance their skills, knowledge and behaviours.

9. Where it is deemed that the apprentice requires a reduction to funding due to prior learning and or qualification, we must agree a new apprenticeship delivery fee. The apprenticeship fee should detail the negotiated price and outlined reduction.
10. As part of the recognition of prior learning adjustment there may also be a need to make an adjustment to the length of apprenticeship duration for an apprentice, however it is important to note that the reduction must meet the minimum apprenticeship duration. Please note if the reduction means the minimum apprenticeship duration is not met the apprentice is not eligible for the apprenticeship programme and should be provided with IAG to signpost to alternative training.
11. Prior learning assessment report will include:
  - a. The qualification held by the apprentice e.g. degree in politics;
  - b. Reason for required reduction e.g. duplicated learning accounted for;
  - c. Skills, knowledge and or behaviour already obtained due to prior experience;
  - d. % reduction required and current proportion of prior learning already attained;
  - e. Amount of time required to be reduced from overall apprenticeship programme;
  - f. New overall apprenticeship negotiated price with outlined costs for the apprenticeship;
  - g. Signed and dated by a member of the Apprenticeship Management Team;
  - h. Signed and dated by employer.
12. Once the prior learning assessment report is agreed the apprentice will be eligible to undertake their induction. Where an apprentice is ineligible for an apprenticeship a detailed report must be created to outline the reasons why and the funding rules which are not met.
13. The Apprenticeship Management Team will detail the negotiated fees and any duration adjustments within the Individual Learning Record (ILR) for each individual apprentice. The ILR will be updated once the initial assessment and prior learning assessment records are submitted to the Apprenticeship Management Team.
14. Initial assessment, negotiated costs and induction documentation must be retained for ESFA audit purposes and forms part of the apprentice's evidence pack.

### **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**

15. On completion of the initial assessments and on agreement to enrol the apprentice an ILP is created by the Induction Tutor, apprentices and employer. The ILP will set out learning aims and objectives including timeframes for achievement. The ILP will detail the skills, knowledge and behaviours to be developed and how these will be achieved.

16. The ILP will be reviewed as part of the apprenticeship review process. The review is completed at agreed stages throughout the apprenticeship programme with the Tutor, apprentice and employer to ensure the individual learning needs are being met. The review focuses on learning that has taken place, developing new learning objectives and agreeing measurable targets to continue the development of the apprentice. As part of the review there will be a focus on the apprentices starting point and current progress in line with their initial skill and knowledge gap analysis, detailed analysis will be undertaken to determine the required learning still required to continue to progress the advancement of the apprentice's skills, knowledge and behaviours. The employer will be expected to contribute to the apprentices learning programme and agree to set objectives and provide the learning time required to ensure the apprentice can achieve their learning goals.
17. Each apprentice will have a learning portfolio that will capture the learning journey and provide a fully view of the apprentice's occupation skills, knowledge and behaviour developments. The portfolio will include the ILP, reviews, learning records, off the job learning log, evidence of skills, knowledge and behaviour assessments and forms to support EPA.

## Quality Assurance

18. The initial assessment process will be quality assured by:
  - a. Checking apprentice evidence packs (sampling to identify best practice and areas for development);
  - b. Sampling and giving feedback on prior learning assessment reports (ensuring signed and dated prior to apprentice start date);
  - c. Observation of Induction Tutors carrying out initial assessments;
  - d. Audit check by use of PDSAT identifying correct negotiated costs and testing planned end date;
  - e. Gathering feedback from apprentices and employers;
19. Any findings will be reviewed as part of the quality assurance practices and feedback provided to the Apprenticeship Management Team. Any actions agreed to improve this process will be incorporated into the quality improvement plan (QIP) and procedure updated accordingly.