

# ‘How to’ guide for trailblazers



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# 1. Introduction

This guide takes you through the development of a new apprenticeship stage by stage. It begins with an overview of the process as a whole. This will be most useful to people who haven't previously developed an apprenticeship with the Institute for Apprenticeships (the Institute), but we hope that it will also serve as a useful reference tool for those with more experience.

The first 3 sections of the document describe the various stages of the process in detail. A section then deals with the assigning of funding. We have put in links to other documents where we think this would be helpful.

People who are new to the process will be able to draw on the knowledge and experience of an Institute relationship manager as they develop their apprenticeship. He or she will be able to help you with issues which are not covered in this guide, or anything which is unclear, as well as acting as your general adviser throughout the process. If you're not yet involved in a trailblazer, but have queries now, please contact:

[apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk)

## 1.1. WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP? – THE BASICS

An apprenticeship is a job with training. It enables someone to develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to perform effectively in a particular occupation. The occupation is defined in the apprenticeship standard.

Apprentices have a contract of employment, and are employees of the company which take them on. They must be paid at least the appropriate rate of the minimum wage for the duration of their apprenticeship, although many employers pay more.

At the outset, both apprentice and employer sign an apprenticeship agreement. This identifies the skill, trade or occupation for which the apprentice is being trained, and confirms the particular standard that the apprentice is following.

**Apprenticeships must last a minimum of 12 months**, with 20% structured off-the-job training, before the end-point assessment, to develop competence in an occupation. Off-the-job training is learning which is undertaken outside the normal day-to-day working environment and contributes towards the achievement of the apprenticeship. Although this can include training that is delivered at the apprentice's normal place of work, it must not be delivered as part of their normal working duties. The off-the-job training must be directly relevant to the apprenticeship.

The government wants employers to be at the centre of the process for designing and delivering apprenticeships. This is why apprenticeship standards are designed by groups of employers, known as trailblazers, to meet their own skills needs, those of their broader sector and of the economy more widely.

## 1.2. GETTING STARTED – WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide is primarily aimed at employers who want to develop a new apprenticeship. You can find a [list of existing apprenticeship standards](#) and you should check whether there's already an apprenticeship which is the same as or close to the one you're thinking about before setting off on the process.

Apprenticeships are developed by trailblazer groups. These are groups which:

- Have a wide range of employers who are committed to working actively on the development of a new apprenticeship standard, and intend to use the apprenticeship standard once it's been approved for delivery (see the overview section later in this introduction).
- Have at least 10 different employers as members (in addition to any professional bodies, trade associations, who want to be involved).
- Reflect the range of companies which employ people in this occupation – including size, geographical spread and sector. Any trailblazer group should normally include at least 2 employers with fewer than 50 employees.

Trailblazer groups should be open to new members, and prepared to consider carefully how the standards they're working on relate to the needs of other sectors.

**It is not permissible** to set a charge for membership of a trailblazer group.

More detailed guidance on trailblazer groups is on page 7.

## 2. Overview of the process

Once a trailblazer group has come together, the development of a new apprenticeship standard consists of 3 parts as follows.

### 2.1. Development of a proposal for a new apprenticeship standard

This is covered in Section 1 of this guide. The key task in this phase is the definition of an occupation to be covered by the standard. Section 1 takes you through the process of identifying and defining the occupation and the criteria the Institute will take into account when deciding whether to accept a proposal. In particular, the Institute will look carefully at

- whether a new proposal overlaps with an existing apprenticeship standard
- whether the proposed standard has a clear title, which allows people to understand what the apprentice will be able to do
- where the proposed standard fits into the government's system of occupational routes
- at what level the apprenticeship will be pitched (particularly where you are planning to develop a degree apprenticeship)

Section 1 also gives some examples of good practice, and has a link to the form you need to complete in order to submit a proposal to the Institute for consideration, and guidance on how to complete it.

### 2.2. Development of the apprenticeship standard itself

Once a proposal has been accepted, the next stage is to draft the standard itself, including its key knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs).

The standard needs to be short, concise and clear, but also needs to meet some key criteria if the Institute is to accept it. As well as the definition of the occupation and the clear title and level discussed above, you will need to:

- Demonstrate that you have consulted a range of employers, including small businesses, and that the standard has their support.
- Show that the standard has enough content and is pitched at such a level that a new entrant will find it stretching, and that delivery will require at least one year of employment, with a minimum of 20% off-the-job training. **English and maths must meet** at least the minimum standard the government requires. The 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
- Align with any professional registration systems which are relevant.
- Include mandatory qualifications only under certain clearly specified circumstances.

You will also need to have considered how much the apprenticeship will cost to deliver, as you will have to tell us this as part of the approval of the standard. Section 2 gives details of the timescales and processes involved in developing a successful apprenticeship standard.

### 2.3. Development of the end-point assessment plan (EPA plan).

Feedback from a wide range of employers and apprentices has told us that the apprentice should be thoroughly tested against the criteria in the standard before they complete their apprenticeship. To ensure that the testing is fair and rigorous, it must be done by an independent third party that has not been involved in the employment or training of the apprentice. These issues are covered in the EPA plan, discussed in Section 3.

You should develop your EPA plan in parallel with the apprenticeship standard, since it is vital that the two fit seamlessly together, and that the assessment fully tests the KSB specified in the standard. Key issues you need to consider include:

- The EPA must be sufficiently robust to confirm that an apprentice is fully competent in the occupation.
- The assessment methods must be appropriate to the occupation (for example, an assessment based mainly on theory tests is unlikely to be appropriate for an apprentice welder).
- There must be at least 2 distinct methods of assessment – these could include practical assessment; an interview or viva; a project; observational assessment; written and multiple-choice tests; and virtual assessment. Each method of assessment must be clearly linked to specific KSBs.
- The EPA cannot simply be a review or amalgamation of on-programme assessment.
- The criteria used to grade performance against the standard.
- The ways in which the independence of the assessment will be ensured.
- Where relevant, how the alignment between the EPA and any professional recognition will be managed.
- How arrangements for internal and external quality assurance will be managed and who will undertake the external quality assurance.

Although the basic process for developing degree apprenticeships is similar to that set out here, there are some additional steps and detailed differences. These are described in full in each of the first three sections.

Section 4 describes the process for submitting the standard and EPA plan, including timescales and checklists.

Section 5 describes how apprenticeships will be funded.

Section 6 considers how to promote awareness of the new standard and EPA plan to training providers, assessment organisations and employers, both as they are developed and when they are complete.

This guide is intended to give you an insight into the process of developing and approving a new apprenticeship standard and EPA plan. Once you've embarked on this, you may well

encounter detailed issues which can't be covered here in enough detail. Your relationship manager will help to guide you through the process when these arise – see section 1.2.



## Section 1 – Development of a proposal for a new apprenticeship standard

- 1.1 The first stage in the development of a new apprenticeship is developing and submitting a proposal for a new apprenticeship standard. This is led by a trailblazer group. This section gives you guidance on putting together a fully representative trailblazer group which meets the Institute's criteria. It describes briefly what a standard is and does, and how to define an occupation which can form the basis of a standard. It then takes you through the process of developing and submitting your proposal.
- 1.2 In addition to the information in this document, we are keen to support you before you formally submit a proposal to develop an apprenticeship standard. To maximise the chances of your proposal being approved, you must show the proposal to your relationship manager before you submit it. For trailblazers this will be your existing relationship manager. New employer groups should email [apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk) with brief details of the occupation you're considering, and a relationship manager covering the most relevant route will contact you.

### Bringing together the trailblazer group

- 1.3 As we said in the introduction, a trailblazer group has to meet these basic criteria:
  - The membership covers a wide range of employers – at least 10. Professional bodies and trade associations can also be members, but do not count towards the total of employers.
  - The members must be committed to getting actively involved in the development of an apprenticeship standard, and should intend to use it themselves when it is ready.
  - Membership of the group should reflect the type of organisations which employ people in this occupation. This should include size – a group should normally include at least 2 employers with fewer than 50 employees – geographical spread and sector.

The trailblazer group isn't allowed to set a charge for admission or fee for membership.

- 1.4 Once the group has come together, it should choose an employer member to act as Chair. This cannot be someone from a trade body or other representative organisation. If the group wishes to have co-chairs, this is acceptable, but they must be employers.
- 1.5 Although they shouldn't lead the process, other organisations with an interest, such as sector or trade bodies, professional bodies, training providers, industry training boards or potential assessment organisations should be invited to provide their support and encouraged to contribute to the development of the apprenticeship standard.
- 1.6 As the trailblazer group is taking its work forward, it may find that other employers or groups are interested in developing standards for the same or similar occupations. Wherever possible, it should work inclusively and collaboratively with them, rather than seeing them as rivals or competitors. They should also be open to approaches from employers in other sectors who think the group's standard is potentially useful for them too.

- 1.7 Once you have approval to develop a standard, you should make a start on it right away. You shouldn't 'stockpile' approvals for future development or start on another proposal instead of developing one which has previously been approved.
- 1.8 You and the other employers on the trailblazer group should commit yourselves to making use of the apprenticeship standard once it has been developed, and each member must commit at an early stage to a specific number of apprenticeship starts.
- 1.9 Trailblazer groups can propose to develop more than one standard, but there must be a commitment to develop and support each individual standard from at least 10 members of the group.
- 1.10 Once the proposal for a standard has been accepted and the development work on the standard itself and its EPA plan are complete, you and the other members of the trailblazer group should then take the lead in promoting and marketing the apprenticeship standard. All of you should be committed from the outset to doing this.
- 1.11 Where a trailblazer group is interested in developing a degree apprenticeship (discussed in more detail at paragraph 1.28 below), its proposal should have the active support of at least 2 named Higher Education institutions.

### **What is a standard?**

- 1.12 Standards describe the occupational profile linked to the **KSBs** that bring full competence in a particular occupation. They describe how an apprentice can demonstrate mastery of this occupation by the end of the apprenticeship.
- 1.13 Some standards have a core and options. They define some core KSBs which are required by everyone in the occupation. Options then relate to specific knowledge and skills required for a particular specialism within the overall occupation. This approach is intended to avoid the need to develop a large number of very similar standards, one for each specialism. It can also help transferability across occupations and sectors – for example where an 'installation electrician' and 'maintenance electrician' have very similar basic KSBs. The particular option a person has taken is specified on his or her apprenticeship certificate of completion.
- 1.14 Generally speaking, apprenticeship standards should not incorporate qualifications. Apprentices can only be required to achieve particular qualifications in certain specific circumstances. These issues are discussed more fully at paragraph 2.3.
- 1.15 As a matter of policy, all apprentices must achieve English and maths at the minimum level specified by the government.
- 1.16 Before submitting a standard for approval (see Section 2), but not necessarily at the proposal stage, you should set the level you want to propose for it. This should relate to the relative difficulty of achieving it in full. Standards can be at any [level from 2 to 8](#). Those at levels 2 and 3 are called foundation and advanced apprenticeships respectively. Higher apprenticeships are those at level 4 and above that don't contain a full degree.
- 1.17 Degree apprenticeships contain a full bachelor's degree or master's degree. Specific policy and guidance applies to these, and the differences are identified at **paragraph 1.28 and later in this guide.**

## What is an occupation?

1.18 People often use the words 'job' and 'occupation' interchangeably. In defining an occupation for an apprenticeship standard, you should consider it in its widest form. An occupation is an all-encompassing term for the role a person is able to perform across a range of employers and workplaces. The concept of an occupation will usually also involve opportunities for progression, both to higher levels within the same occupation but importantly also to occupations with similar skill requirements.

More specifically, an apprenticeship occupation must:

- Cover a recognised stand-alone occupation, for which there is a genuine demand in the job market.
- Be one for which someone can achieve full competence without the need for further training beyond the apprenticeship.
- Require rigorous and substantial training of at least a year (or longer if the apprenticeship is undertaken on a part-time basis) before the end-point assessment to achieve full competence, with off-the-job training accounting for a least 20% of this.
- Be unique. It should not overlap significantly with an occupation covered by an apprenticeship standard which has already been approved or is in development.
- Require sufficient breadth and depth of skills 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.
- Fit with one of the Apprenticeship and Technical Education routes - you must identify which of the 15 routes your standard aligns to. The proposed routes are described on pages 22-23 of the government's [Post-16 skills plan](#).

1.19 In addition, it must relate to an occupation where the apprentice will be employed, have a contract of employment and be paid at least the appropriate minimum wage. Proposals which involve the apprentice being self-employed will not be approved.

1.20 The Institute also provides detailed guidance on how apprenticeship standards should be described and named. This is intended to ensure that the system is easy to understand and use for employers and apprentices. This guidance is in Annex A.

## Developing your proposal

1.21 You should start by defining the occupation you want the apprenticeship to cover. You should then use this to consider the full range of KSBs it will require.

1.22 When you are deciding whether an occupation is appropriate for an apprenticeship, and not drawn too narrowly or too broadly, you should take the following factors into account:

- Each apprenticeship standard must lead to full competence in a recognised, standalone occupation. It is not enough for it to be just a stepping-stone to the real occupation at a higher level, and a proposal along these lines **will not** be accepted.

- Where you are thinking about proposing related standards at different levels, you should consider carefully the extent to which they differ. If the only real difference is the level of experience, scope and line management responsibility, or if someone who is already competent at the lower level could advance to the higher through Continuing Professional Development, then it is unlikely that they are sufficiently distinct to justify having separate apprenticeships.
- You should also test whether the definition is too wide. If related occupations in the same field clearly differ in the breadth and depth of KSBs they require (particularly if each would separately need a minimum of 12 months' worth of training to develop full competence) it may be appropriate to consider developing more than one standard, and to look carefully at the right levels for those standards.
- Proposals for the development of multiple standards should clearly set out the distinctions between the occupations involved, and demonstrate how each will individually meet the apprenticeship occupation policy.

### Checking for overlap

- 1.23 Proposals for developing a new apprenticeship standard won't be approved if something similar already exists or is currently in development. To avoid wasted effort, you should check that there isn't a standard for the occupation you have in mind either in your sector or beyond, bearing in mind that the KSBs may be very similar across sectors.
- 1.24 You can find details of [apprenticeship standards](#) that have been approved for delivery and those in development here. This is an excel document. You can use the search facility to see if there are apprenticeship standards with titles that contain key words relevant to your proposal.
- 1.25 Where a standard already exists, you should consider working with the relevant trailblazer group to ensure the apprenticeship meets wider needs as far as possible.
- 1.26 If you become aware of another group which is developing something similar to your proposal, or intending to, you should make contact and consider working together on something that meets both your needs. If you would like to join an existing group, you should email the trailblazer contact listed through a link on this page. If a contact is not listed email us at [apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk) and we will pass on your contact details to the chair or facilitator of that group.

### Degree apprenticeships

- 1.27 Where you are considering apprenticeship standards at level 6 or above, you will want to decide whether to include a degree at the appropriate level as part of the apprenticeship. Someone who completes one of these apprenticeships is also awarded a degree as well. They will involve employers, Higher Education providers and (if relevant) professional bodies working in partnership, with apprentices employed throughout, spending part of their time at an HE provider (with flexibility as to how this is structured – for example through day release or block release) and part with their employer. You need to indicate in your proposal if you plan to develop a degree apprenticeship.
- 1.28 Degree apprenticeships can be structured in one of 2 ways:

- Employers, HE providers and professional bodies can come together to co-design a fully integrated degree course, designed specifically for apprentices. This would deliver and test both academic learning and on-the-job training. This model does not remove the requirement for an EPA, but it does not need a separate external assessment.
- Alternatively, you may wish to use existing degree programmes, where they meet the standard, to deliver the academic knowledge requirements of that occupation. This would be combined with additional training to meet the full apprenticeship requirements. There would be a separate test of full occupational competence at the end of the apprenticeship.

### **Identifying which route the apprenticeship standard fits in**

- 1.29 As set out in its Post-16 Skills Plan the government intends to streamline the current technical education system (including apprenticeships) by creating a common framework of 15 occupational groupings – known as routes. Route panels aligned to these groupings and comprised of industry experts will review and approve proposals in their areas.
- 1.30 As part of your proposal you must identify which of the 15 routes the apprenticeship will sit in. If this is not clear, you should try to identify occupations which are likely to have common KSB as a guide to where it will fit. Your relationship manager will help with this process.

### **Submission process for proposals**

- 1.31 You are free to submit a proposal to us at any time using the online form appropriate to the submission month you have chosen. Deadlines for submission will be midnight on the last Wednesday of each month from July 2017 (in April, May and June 2017 it will be midday on the last Thursday). This will prompt you to provide all the necessary information. An example of a typical form is at Annex B. This will give you an idea of the sort of information we need. We recommend you start completing the form well in advance of your chosen deadline, and make sure you have gathered all the required evidence and information before you submit it. You can save a part-completed form and return to it later.
- 1.32 Successful proposals need to meet the policy criteria we have described above to ensure that the occupation is suitable for the development of an apprenticeship standard (see paragraph 1.23) and that the employer group is representative of the relevant sector or sectors (paragraph 1.4) and their geographical spread. Above all we need a clear description of the occupation involved, including typical roles and responsibilities and the main competencies required. If you are proposing a core and options standard (paragraph 1.14), you should set out all the occupational roles it will cover.
- 1.33 It is important that you provide as much information as possible to support the assessment of your proposal. You must have discussed your proposals with your relationship manager (see paragraph 4.3). If you haven't done this, the submission will be returned to you, and we'll give you contact details for the relevant relationship manager if you haven't previously been in touch.

- 1.34 Shortly after the submission deadline, we will put new proposals online for a short period. This allows any interested parties to comment on it and provide further evidence of the potential support – and demand – for the proposed standard. This survey may also help you to identify potential new group members. We will also forward the link to the proposal to you so that you can advertise it across your sector, although we do not need you or members of the trailblazer group to comment further on it themselves.
- 1.35 In considering your proposal, we may contact you for further information. If there is significant work to be done on your proposal before it is ready for the Route Panel to consider, we may ask you to do some further work with your relationship manager on the proposal and submit it again at a later date.
- 1.36 The Institute Route Panel will then review all the information and evidence it has received through this process, and will make a recommendation to the Institute Board. The Board will make a final decision on each individual standard proposed, and we aim to notify all applicants of the outcome within 6 weeks of the original submission deadline. If we decide not to approve the proposal, we will give you the full reasons for this.
- 1.37 If your application is successful, we will work with you to develop the standard itself (Section 2) and its EPA plan (Section 3). However, even if you get approval to develop a standard, this does not necessarily mean that the final standard will be approved – it will need to meet the policy criteria set out in the following sections.
- 1.38 If your trailblazer group wants to go on to develop further standards, these will need to go through the approval process separately.

## CHECKLIST FOR SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A STANDARD

- Make sure that you have fully discussed your submission with the relevant Route relationship manager, as explained in paragraph 1.2, before you put it in.
- Check for pre-existing standards or standards in development that your proposal might replicate, and speak to the relevant trailblazer groups to confirm that your proposal is distinct
- Complete the online proposal form which will ask you to:
  - confirm that you have read this guidance, and that your proposed standard(s) meets all the occupational and trailblazer group criteria
  - provide a clear description of what the occupation(s) involves, and details of any potential overlap in content with other standards
  - provide other relevant information against the criteria, including full details of the proposed trailblazer group and projected starts both by employer group members and more widely
  - provide details of any coverage of the occupation in an existing apprenticeship
  - ask you to commit to taking forward the development of the standard and EPA plan, and that the Chair and wider trailblazer group can devote the time and effort needed to see it through

**If you have any problems submitting your proposal, please contact your relationship manager (see paragraph 4.3) or email**

[apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk)

## Section 2 – Developing an apprenticeship standard

2.1 This section sets out the key elements of an apprenticeship standard, and good practice in developing one. Standards are developed by trailblazer groups (see section 1 paragraph 1.3). Before developing the standard, you must have submitted a proposal for a standard and had this approved by the Institute. If you haven't done this, you should follow the procedure set out in Section 1 of this guide.

### Key elements of a standard

2.2 To do its job, a standard must:

- Be short, concise and clear.
- Set out the full competence needed in an occupation. On completing the apprenticeship, someone should be able to carry out the role in any size of employer and in any relevant sector.
- Contain a clear occupational profile setting out the responsibilities of the occupation and linked to the **knowledge, skills and behaviours** which will be applied in the workplace.
- Have the support of employers, including smaller businesses. This means that a wide range of employers must be involved in development of the standard, recognise it as fit for purpose and have signed up to use it.
- Contain sufficient breadth and depth and be pitched at such a level that a new entrant to the occupation will find it stretching. It should require at least **one year of training** (before the end-point assessment) with at least 20% of the employment being off-the-job training.
- Align with professional registration where it exists. Where there is professional registration, the apprenticeship standard should provide someone with the knowledge, skills and experience they need to be eligible to apply for this.
- Contain minimum English and maths requirements and any digital skills required; either at the minimum level set by government for all apprentices, or above the minimum level if the trailblazer group thinks this is appropriate. The 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 8** apprenticeships, achieve level 2 English and maths prior to taking their end-point assessment
- Only include mandatory qualifications under certain circumstances. These circumstances are set out more fully in the next paragraph. Degree apprenticeships are not covered by this rule, since the qualification is an integral element of the apprenticeship.

### Including a qualification in the standard

2.3 Unless you are developing a degree apprenticeship, you can only mandate qualifications in the standard if they meet one of the criteria below:



- holding a qualification is a legal or statutory requirement (often referred to as a 'licence to practise')
- the qualification is required for professional registration
- the qualification is widely used as a hard sift when applying for jobs in the occupation involved and without it, an apprentice would be at a significant disadvantage as they try to progress in their career

**These are discussed in turn below**

- 2.4 A qualification as a legal or statutory requirement covers occupations where it is a legal requirement for everyone to obtain a licence or hold a qualification which confirms that they meet prescribed standards of competence. Examples are licences to work in the security industry or to operate dangerous machinery.
- 2.5 You should note that off-the-job training through an externally-contracted provider or evidenced costs for employer-provider delivery can be funded, and this could include some or all of the training aspects of a license to practice. The apprentice or employer will need to fund any registration and examination (including certification) costs associated with a licence to practise. This applies even when a licence is specified in the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan.
- 2.6 Where you believe your apprenticeship standard falls into this category, you will need to provide a written description of the legal requirement, including references to the legislation or regulations involved, or a letter from the relevant regulator confirming that the qualification is mandatory for working in that role.
- 2.7 In the case of professional registration, you will need to provide a letter from a recognised or chartered professional body confirming that a specific qualification is required by them for registration, certification or accreditation. This will need to specify what the qualification is.
- 2.8 To demonstrate that a qualification forms part of a hard sift, you will need to provide copies of at least 10 recent job vacancy advertisements from a range of employers in the relevant occupation, including SMEs, specifying that the qualification is an entry requirement. You will also need to show that your consultations showed that employers overwhelmingly supported inclusion of the qualification in the standard, and wouldn't be likely to employ anyone who did not have it.
- 2.9 Up to now, we have allowed the 'hard sift' criterion to be used to allow the inclusion of qualifications which are being developed specifically for a standard if:
  - all trailblazer employers confirm via their letters of support that they intend to use it (that is on the basis that it will, in future, meet the 'hard sift' criterion)
  - responses from the group's consultation activity overwhelmingly support the inclusion of the proposed qualification

However, we do not believe it is reasonable to argue that an apprentice could be disadvantaged in the job market by not being allowed to acquire a qualification which does not yet exist. Because of this, after the **29 June 2017** deadline for submissions,

you will no longer be able to submit a standard for approval which contains a reference to a qualification in development. This does not apply to integrated degree apprenticeships.

- 2.10 In all these cases, the qualifications you mandate must be either:
- regulated by Ofqual or QAA and of the same level as the standard itself
  - a professional or vendor qualification
- 2.11 When submitting standards for approval, you must confirm the full title and level of the proposed mandated qualification. However, in the case of a regulated qualification, you should not specify a particular awarding organisation, as you could otherwise prevent another awarding organisation from developing a qualification for the standard.
- 2.12 Where qualifications are mandated, passing them will be a prerequisite to taking the EPA for all apprentices, except in the case of integrated degree apprenticeships where the EPA is part of the degree.

### **Degree apprenticeships**

- 2.13 Where you are developing an apprenticeship standard at level 6 or above which incorporates a degree you must submit at least two letters of support addressed to the Chair of your group from HEIs - a university or specialist college – clearly stating that each HEI:
- has been involved in the development of the standard, recognises it as fit for purpose and agrees that it is at the required level
  - is committed to delivering the standard once approved
- 2.14 These can either take the form of a signed letter (a scanned version is sufficient) or an email containing relevant HE provider details (that is logo, name and address and the emailer's name, position and contact details).

### **What should a standard include?**

- 2.15 Your standard must be no more than 3 sides of A4 and in size 12 font. If necessary, core and options standards may go beyond this limit, but a combination of the core and each of the individual options should meet this size requirement.
- 2.16 **The standard** must be written in clear and simple language that will be easily understood by potential apprentices and their support network, as well as by employers, training providers and assessment organisations.
- 2.17 The standard should be presented in terms of what the fully competent individual will be able to do upon successful completion of the apprenticeship. The only exceptions to this are sections which deal with entry requirements or mandatory requirements such as English and maths.
- 2.18 You must give it a clear title, based on that in your proposal. It must not contain any company or organisation logos.
- 2.19 You must set out the [level of the apprenticeship](#).

- 2.20 Where another closely-related standard already exists or is in development, your standard will need to demonstrate that it relates to a separate and distinct occupation. The issue of overlapping and related standards is discussed at paragraph 1.24 and should have been considered when you were developing your proposal for a standard.
- 2.21 It must include an indication of the likely duration of the apprenticeship: for example, 'typically 24 months' or 'typically 18 to 24 months'. If a range is given, it must not span more than 6 months. You must not state a minimum or maximum duration.
- 2.22 You should not include entry requirements in a standard unless they are statutory or regulatory ones. As a general rule, apprenticeship standards should be open to all over the age of 16. Where you believe that there are legitimate reasons why a standard should not be accessible to all over-16s – for example safety or statutory requirements which prevent 16 to 18 year olds fulfilling the role – these must be clearly identified in the standard as entry requirements.
- 2.23 With a core and options approach, the core of the occupation must be clear and relevant to each option, and represent the majority of the KSB. You need to set out separately which knowledge and skills are core and which apply to individual options. Each option needs to lead to the same level and require similar stretch and breadth of training. Each individual option or combination of options must still meet all policy requirements and the standard must specify a defined number of options that need to be selected. You should not include optional 'add-ons' to the standard.
- 2.24 You must consult widely on the standard to enable you to gather input from employers and other relevant organisations who have not been involved in the trailblazer group. You must submit letters of support addressed to the Chair of your group from at least 10 employer members of your trailblazer group (normally including at least 2 with fewer than 50 employees) that are representative of the sector or occupation. Each letter should clearly state that the employer has been involved in the development of the standard and that they support the final draft as meeting their needs as a potential or actual apprentice employer. These can either be a signed letter (a scanned version is sufficient) or an email containing relevant employer/employee details (that is company logo, name and address and the emailer's name, company position and contact details).
- 2.25 You must submit a letter of support from any relevant professional body or bodies confirming that the apprenticeship standard meets their requirements of professional registration. The standard should not require an individual apprentice to become registered.

### **Working on the standard – good practice**

- 2.26 These good practice guidelines are based on the experience of trailblazer groups which have already developed apprenticeship standards.
- 2.27 At the outset, you should set out a plan for designing and finalising your apprenticeship standard and EPA plan within a year. Although we look at the 2 processes in separate sections of this guide, they are closely linked and need to be taken forward together.

- 2.28 You may want to agree and set out terms of reference for your trailblazer group, including:
- how often you will meet and where
  - roles and resources
  - who else to involve, at what stage and how
- 2.29 Regular meetings or conference calls help to ensure momentum and keep the group motivated. Booking meetings at the start of the process for several months ahead can help to maximise attendance and make it easier for the relationship manager to be there or dial in. Some groups have found it useful to meet for a couple of consecutive days to speed up the process. Face-to-face meetings are often more effective. Virtual meetings can be useful, however, for example to gain sign-off of documents.
- 2.30 Members of the group may wish to take responsibility for different strands of work. Forming smaller 'task and finish groups' to work on the detail of wording can be effective way of working.
- 2.31 There are lots of resources that you can use to help inform the standard and EPA content, including:
- trailblazer members' views on what KSB are required in the occupation in different settings
  - job descriptions
  - world-class standards, including apprenticeship standards from different countries
  - [WorldSkills competition](#)
  - Professional body standards and application requirements, particularly important in ensuring alignment of the apprenticeship
  - regulatory frameworks
  - standards and EPA plans that have recently been approved
  - apprenticeship frameworks and qualifications
- 2.32 However, don't be constrained in your approach by the current frameworks and qualifications within them. This is your chance to start afresh and describe exactly what you need from someone in the occupation.
- 2.33 Your relationship manager (see paragraph 4.3 for more details) will use his or her professional judgement to advise you on the best point to move onto the design of your EPA plan (see Section 3). This might be after you have received Institute approval of your standard, but it might also be before that if the relationship manager feels that you are ready to do this. Most groups have tended to develop and seek approval for the standard, before working on the EPA plan. However, working on the EPA plan before finalising the standard can be useful, as you may identify revisions that are required as you work on the assessment approach. You can submit both documents for approval at the same time.

## Consultation

- 2.34 You must consult widely on the standard. You may also want to consult on your EPA plan at the same time, although you are not required to. You should make sure you give employers and other relevant organisations who have not been directly involved in the trailblazer an opportunity to make an input.
- 2.35 It is up to you how you carry out the consultation. Approaches include:
- publishing an online survey
  - using personal contacts in other employers to get an additional perspective
  - working with partners, such as representative organisations, trade bodies, sector bodies and professional bodies to share a draft documents with their members
  - asking training providers and assessment organisations that deliver in the sector to share with employers they work with
  - holding workshops or roundtable discussions
  - attending training provider network meetings
- 2.36 You will need to leave some time to reflect on the comments you receive and build in any changes you then want to make to your standard before it is submitted for approval. During the approvals process, we take into account evidence from your consultation. In your submission you need to include details of who you have consulted, how you have consulted them, what the results were and how you have amended the draft documents as a result.

## Assigning the copyright of the apprenticeship standard

- 2.37 Copyright in your final standard and **EPA plan** will be assigned to the Institute under section A21 of the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#). This is to enable the Institute to officially publish approved standards, to fund apprenticeships against the standards and to protect the standards and assessment plans from any misuse.
- 2.38 The assignment of copyright to the Institute does not change the fact that you have led the design of the standard and will see it through to delivery. Standards and **EPA plans** are covered by the Open Government Licence which enables you to use and publicise them freely.

## Unique referencing system for apprenticeship standards

- 2.39 Each apprenticeship standard is assigned a unique reference number when it is approved for development. This unique identifier will be retained for the 'life' of the apprenticeship and added to the published standard and the EPA plan documents on approval. As a standard or **EPA plan** is updated, version tracking references will ensure that it is always possible to identify which version of the standard or EPA plan an apprentice is working towards.

A template for an apprenticeship standard is at Annex E. You do not have to use this, but may find it helpful for structuring your approach.

Section 4 of this document tells you how to submit a standard and an EPA plan and the timings involved.

## Section 3 – Developing an end-point assessment plan

- 3.1 Rigorous and robust end-point assessment (EPA) is essential to give employers confidence that apprentices completing an apprenticeship have achieved the occupational competence set out in the standard.
- 3.2 Your approach to EPA should be set out in an **EPA plan**. It will be published online and assessment organisations will then use it to develop and deliver EPA tools. These can include tests, a bank of case study scenarios, controlled observation checklists, professional discussion questions, sample materials and guidance. Because of this, your **EPA plan** needs to be written clearly and comprehensive enough that any assessment organisation can use it to design EPA tools that are reliable and consistent, with no room for misinterpretation. This is important as it ensures that all apprentices are judged robustly and fairly to the same level and against the same criteria.
- 3.3 Your EPA plan must lead to an assessment which:
  - Provides a robust and holistic assessment across the standard, undertaken at the end of the programme. At least one assessment method must assess **KSBs** – this is often referred to as synoptic assessment.
  - Uses a range of appropriate assessment methods, so apprentices can demonstrate their occupational competence across the KSBs. It is not necessary to test every KSB listed in your standard. Your focus should be on higher order knowledge and skills, particularly those which give assurance of lower level knowledge and skills without requiring specific assessment.
  - Includes an approach to grading, and should have at least one level above a pass for each assessment method and for the apprenticeship as a whole (unless we have agreed to an exemption).
  - Produces consistent and reliable judgements – employers must have confidence that apprentices assessed in different parts of the country, at different times, by different assessors and assessment organisations have been judged fairly and consistently.
  - Delivers valid and accurate judgements – the method of assessment must be appropriate and must assess what it claims to assess. 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.
  - Is appropriate to the level and proportionate to the planned length of the apprenticeship.
  - Is independent – 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 (trainer or employer) can make the decision on competence at end-point assessment stage.
  - Is organisation neutral – it must not name any specific training or assessment organisations (unless the assessment organisation is a chartered professional body, which meets the criteria in paragraph 3.31).

- Is affordable – the plan should take into account the balance between cost effectiveness and quality. The EPA should not usually exceed 20% of the funding band maximum. Individual employers should negotiate with their apprenticeship assessment organisation to secure the best price.
  - Is manageable and feasible for employers of all sizes – EPA plan must explain how the assessment process will be deliverable on the scale required, taking into consideration the predicted number of apprenticeship starts each year and the location of these apprentices. Will there be sufficient availability of assessors who meet the criteria you have outlined?
  - Includes 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/membership of a professional body.
  - Has internal 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. This may include assessor experience and qualifications, training and checks.
  - Have measures for external quality assurance by one of the following models:
    - Employer-led
    - Professional bodies
    - Ofqual
    - Institute for Apprenticeships
- 3.4 The remainder of this chapter sets out these aspects of EPA in more detail and gives you guidance on what to include in your plan. This will ensure that it can be used by assessment organisations, employers, training providers and apprentices to understand how a particular standard will be assessed.
- 3.5 The EPA should take place at the end of the apprenticeship, once the employer is confident that the apprentice is occupationally competent and ready to undertake EPA. The employer may seek input from the training provider in making this decision. The EPA plan should set out any requirements that should be completed before an apprentice can undertake EPA (known as Gateway requirements). This section of your plan might cover for example:
- English and maths requirements
  - mandatory qualifications approved and detailed in the standard (see paragraph 2.4)
  - any requirements or outputs that underpin an EPA method – for example, a portfolio demonstrating particular aspects of the standard
  - confirmation that the employer has decided that the apprentice is ready for EPA



- 3.6 The plan must only mandate or reference qualifications that have been approved for inclusion in the standard (see paragraph 2.4). It must not include any learning that isn't covered in the standard.

### Assessment methods

- 3.7 The EPA you specify in the plan must include at least 2 distinct methods of assessment.

These can include:

- practical assessments conducted in a workplace or simulated environment (the assessor will observe how the apprentice undertakes one or more tasks)
  - a viva or professional discussion to assess theoretical or technical knowledge or to discuss how the apprentice approached the practical assessment and their reasoning
  - a project report created after the gateway
  - written and multiple choice tests
  - virtual assessments, such as online tests or video evidence as appropriate to the content
- 3.8 You should think carefully about the fitness of different assessment methods to the occupational area and the specific KSBs to be assessed. You may want to combine assessment methods to improve their effectiveness – for example a practical test followed by a professional discussion will allow the candidate to demonstrate a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours. You should also consider the use of technology – on-line tests, video conferencing and e-portfolios can all be very effective and reduce the time and cost involved. You also need to think about practicality and accessibility, to ensure that assessment methods are equally accessible to large and small employers and apprentices with specific needs. Offering a paper alternative to an online test or vice versa may help to increase accessibility.
- 3.9 The use of portfolios in EPA needs specific consideration. As a general rule anything that is assessed at the end-point must have been completed after the apprentice has passed the gateway review. Therefore, neither a portfolio of work nor a showcase completed during the apprenticeship can be used as assessment methods by themselves, and so cannot be individually weighted or contribute to the overall grade. However, they can be included in conjunction with another method of assessment, for example an interview about the portfolio. It is the interview only that will be assessed. In this scenario, the portfolio or showcase can be collected at any point during the apprenticeship but should not have been formally assessed at that time. Where you want to do this, it must be included in the EPA plan as a mandatory element of the on-programme phase of the apprenticeship and be detailed as a gateway requirement to ensure that all apprentices complete it.
- 3.10 Your assessment plan must contain sufficient information on each assessment method to ensure that different assessment organisations have a clear and consistent understanding of what they are expected to deliver. You must set out the parameters for each assessment method. This should include:

- the specific KSBs that each method is designed to assess
  - the minimum and maximum duration for each method
  - the location/format for each assessment or conditions that must apply, for example guidance on the word count
  - whether alternative formats can be offered
  - whether assessments need to be taken in any particular order
  - the assessment tools that will be used and
  - who will set the questions or banks of topics/tasks for each assessment method.
- 3.11 Where EPA plans include tests, you must also specify whether they will be completed on paper and/or virtually, how many questions will be set, whether the questions are multiple choice or open questions, and number of options in multiple choice questions. Sample questions could be provided.
- 3.12 You should decide whether you want the employer, apprentice or assessment organisation to know whether the apprentice has passed one assessment method before moving on to the next stage of the EPA. If so, you will need to consider any implications for the order in which the assessments should be taken.
- 3.13 You need to think about cost when you are choosing the number of assessment methods and setting the requirements. For example, multi-choice tests tend to be more efficient to deliver than open answer questions and observations in the workplace usually involve assessor time and travel costs. If you decide to use an expensive assessment method, this should be because it is the only one which will reliably do the job.
- 3.14 You should also consider whether the EPA can be conducted in the workplace or at an assessment centre. In making these decisions you will need to think about feasibility for small employers and whether test centres will be readily available across the country.
- 3.15 You should think about whether any parts of the EPA could be assessed or moderated remotely using IT. Jisc is the FE/HE's not-for-profit organisation for digital services and solutions and can advise you and your assessment organisations on this. You can contact Jisc at:
- E: [customerservices@jisc.ac.uk](mailto:customerservices@jisc.ac.uk)
  - T: 0203 006 6077
- 3.16 For a core and options standard, the EPA plan must use the same assessment methods and approach to grading across all the options. For example, where there is a core with 3 options - for example hair, make-up and massage – then all 3 options must use the same assessment methods (for example, for illustration only, all must use observation or all must use a written test).

## END-POINT ASSESSMENT METHODS – THINGS TO CONSIDER

- What KSB should the EPA cover to confirm that the apprentice is occupationally competent?
- Which are the critical KSBs?
- What assessment methods already work well in your sector; would they work as components of the EPA?
- What could you learn from EPA models used by other trailblazers?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of different potential models?
- On balance, what mix of assessment components would work best and why?

### **Project:**

- What is the scope of the project?
- What does the project involve? **Have** you included illustrative examples?
- How long will apprentices have to complete the project and when would they be expected to finish it?
- Is there a word limit?
- What supervision arrangements need to be in place?
- In what format will the evidence be required?

### **Viva/interview/professional discussion:**

- What format will it take? For example, will it include scenarios requiring problem solving? If so, are illustrative examples of the scenarios included?
- What will it assess? For example, will it assess theoretical or technical knowledge? Will there be follow up questions?
- How long will it take?
- Who will conduct and assess the interview?
- Where will it take place? Can video conferencing be used?
- Will it be used as part of another assessment method or standalone?

### **Tests/examinations:**

- What format will it take? Multiple choice or written? Online or paper-based?
- How many questions?
- What is the duration of the test?
- Who will devise the questions and mark the tests? If this is an assessment organisation how will you ensure consistency across different assessment organisations?

- Under what conditions will they be taken, for example will they be timed and done in a controlled environment?
- What invigilation requirements will there be?

## Grading

- 3.17 All apprenticeship standards should be graded, with at least one level above a pass to recognise exceptional performance in each assessment method and across the standard as a whole. For example, pass and distinction or pass, merit and distinction. A pass must represent full occupational competence in the occupation, with higher grades representing achievement over and above the standard.
- 3.18 You must include clear grading descriptors in your assessment plan. These set out what is required of an apprentice to achieve each grade you specify. Even where we have granted a grading exemption, a clear descriptor must set out what apprentices must demonstrate in order to achieve a pass. When setting out the grading criteria check that they are sufficiently detailed to ensure consistent interpretation. Avoid using words such as 'good', 'excellent' or 'in-depth' without examples of what this means.
- 3.19 The grades from each assessment method must be aggregated to obtain an apprentice's overall grade. The overall grade needs to take into account the way different assessment methods have been graded and whether the apprentice needs to pass each method in order to pass the EPA overall.
- 3.20 If you do not think grading is appropriate in your occupation and cannot grade the entire EPA, or a particular method within it, beyond pass/fail, you will need to submit a grading exemption request. Your request must be supported by written evidence, including links to the relevant legislation or professional registration requirements, confirming that assessments are aligned with one of the following:
- professional registration
  - regulation, which could include health and safety requirements
  - a licence to practise
- 3.21 There is no guarantee that a grading exemption request will be granted. Each exemption will only apply to that particular apprenticeship standard. Requests should be made when you submit your EPA plan for approval.

## Re-sits and re-takes

- 3.22 Apprentices who pass the EPA cannot re-sit/re-take it simply to achieve a higher grade. but you can stipulate conditions for re-takes or re-sits if they are fair and justified.
- 3.23 You should outline any re-sit/re-take requirements you have **in the plan**. A re-take involves a need for further learning before an assessment is taken, while a re-sit doesn't **Funding of re-sits/re-takes is detailed in the ESFA funding rules:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sfa-funding-rules>
- 3.24 You should consider whether it is appropriate to cap an apprentice's grade at 'pass' where they are **re-sitting** or **re-taking** an assessment, particularly if they failed due to

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reasons beyond their control. You should also consider whether you want to specify timescales for re-sits or re-takes.

#### **Grading - things to consider**

- What type of grading scale will be used (for example pass/distinction, pass/merit/distinction)?
- How will grades be awarded for each method? What specific criteria will be used?
- Have you developed clear and detailed grading descriptors for each assessment method?
- How will the overall grade for the apprenticeship be determined? Will each method's mark be aggregated or weighted? If the latter, how - taking account of the breadth and/or criticality of the knowledges they cover?
- How will you ensure grading is accurately and consistently applied and monitored over time?
- How will you approach grading exemptions if the sector requires this?

### **Professional body recognition**

3.25 If the apprenticeship aligns with professional recognition, you must explain how this is achieved in the EPA plan.

#### **Professional body recognition - things to consider:**

- Have you involved relevant professional bodies/regulators in the development of your plan?
- If there is more than one professional body/regulator for a particular standard in your sector how will you manage this?
- What role are you proposing for the professional bodies/regulators in the end-point assessment, bearing in mind that your plan must be organisation neutral? For example, will they be involved in any vivas, or develop assessment criteria?
- How will the involvement of professional bodies/regulators benefit apprentices on programme and once they complete their apprenticeship?
- Have you got letters of support from professional bodies/regulators?
- Is the EPA likely to meet the expectations of professional bodies or regulators - where it offers progression to professional accreditation?
- Could a professional body play a role in delivering the EQA for your standard?

### **Independent assessment**

3.26 EPA must be conducted by independent assessment organisations. An assessment organisation wishing to fulfil this role must apply to be on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO) held by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). To get on the register, organisations need to show that they

have the occupational understanding, assessment skills and infrastructure to be able to conduct high quality assessment against the standard.

- 3.27 Your EPA plan must detail the knowledge and skills that you expect assessors to have. This information will form part of the evaluation of applications to the RoAAO. Although it is important that these requirements are robust, they should not have the effect of limiting the market to a specific assessment organisation or make delivery of the EPA practically unfeasible.
- 3.28 Your assessment regime must be designed so that no organisation or individual who has been involved in the management or training of the apprentice can conduct an assessment without the independent assessor being present, or can make the sole decision on competence and passing the EPA. The independent end-point assessor must not be employed by the same organisation as the apprentice or their training provider. The approach you describe in your EPA plan must clearly deliver an impartial result. You must clearly describe how independence will be achieved for all employers, regardless of their size.
- 3.29 Because employers have an important role in assessing competency, if you wish you can develop a model in which the employer has a supporting role in determining whether apprentices are occupationally competent. This could, for example, be as a member of an assessor panel. But if you wish to have multiple assessors or a panel, you will need to clearly specify who makes the final decision on whether the apprentice has passed the EPA or not. This person must be independent of the apprentice and employer.
- 3.30 Where the standard is aligned with professional recognition, the professional body can play a specific role within the assessment - for example, having the final say on competence and moderation. In this instance, the EPA plan should refer to 'a professional body' rather than naming the body specifically, unless the body has a specific regulatory role (see the next paragraph).
- 3.31 There may be a small number of situations where only one body is able to award professional status because, for example, they have a legal responsibility or act as the regulator for that profession or there is some other statutory requirement (for example, the role of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency in the case of Able Seafarer). In these cases, it may be possible for this body to be named in the plan (subject to the specific wording of its Royal Charter). Even if an organisation is named in this way, it will still also need to apply to be on the RoAAO once the EPA plan has been published.
- 3.32 In some sectors, the EPA needs to be conducted by someone who is a member of a professional body or by an organisation accredited by the professional body. You should make these requirements clear in the EPA plan, and will also need to provide a letter of support from the relevant professional body, confirming that they require this for professional registration.
- 3.33 **Degree apprenticeships must still include a rigorous EPA.** For integrated degree apprenticeships, where the EPA is part of the degree the university delivering the degree will also be the assessment organisation and must be on the RoAAO. The EPA

must still deliver an impartial result – the assessor must come from a third party organisation or must not have been involved in the on-programme delivery.

### Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

3.34 This is carried out by the assessment organisation. It involves making sure that it is undertaking individual assessments correctly and is assuring others (including funding bodies and employers) that it is running, marking, standardising and reporting the outcome of the assessments properly. You must set out the specific type of Internal Quality Assurance **you require** all assessment organisations to follow. You should bear in mind that the application process to the RoAAO also involves checking that organisations have robust IQA processes and policies.

3.35 Robust Internal Quality Assurance measures to ensure the EPA is applied consistently might include:

- specifying levels of moderation that must be applied
- stipulating essential occupational and assessment knowledge, skills and experience you would expect an independent assessor to have; and any continued professional development requirements
- giving the minimum frequency at which assessors should meet to standardise assessment practices within their individual assessment organisations
- specifying the tools, materials or techniques to be used in the assessment
- describing the processes for benchmarking performance, moderating assessments and reviewing standards over time and across different location.

### External Quality Assurance (EQA)

3.36 This is undertaken by an external body and covers all of the assessment organisations delivering against a particular standard. It is needed to ensure that there is consistency of quality and approach to assessment across a standard, regardless of which assessment organisation has delivered the assessment and where and when the EPA is carried out.

3.37 You will need to be specific about who will externally quality assure the EPA and **confirm that they are willing and able to provide this service.** External Quality Assurance needs to be independent of those who lead on the design and the delivery of assessments and training. The EQA organization you choose will subsequently have to set out an external quality assurance approach including how they will do it and their approach to ensuring quality of assessment over time and across different locations.

3.38 The 4 possible approaches to EQA are:

- **Employer-led:** Arrangements here involve an employer led body and usually include governance set up by the employers often covering a group of standards, although the EQA approach needs to be approved in each individual plan.

- **Professional body:** We consider a professional body to be a not for profit organisation seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest. Professional bodies set and uphold standards for occupations, operate codes of conduct for professionals and often hold a professional register that individuals can join, subject to meeting specified educational and/or experience requirements. This approach also usually includes a specific arrangement for governance.
- **Ofqual regulation:** Ofqual regulates awarding bodies whose Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) arrangements are extensive and must comply with Ofqual's requirements.
- **The Institute for Apprenticeships' EQA Service** which is available where none of the other options are suitable and where a service is needed to step in where an EQA structure for a specific standard has failed or is withdrawn.

3.39 For integrated degree apprenticeships and the degree within non-integrated degree apprenticeships, the normal HEFCE and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) processes will apply, although the Department for Education (DfE) is currently discussing with QAA whether it can deliver the EQA for integrated degree apprenticeships. For non-integrated degree apprenticeships the EPA of occupational competence will usually be overseen by a professional body and so comes within the second approach listed in 3.38.

3.40 Detailed guidance on the EQA process is at Annex F.

### **Affordability and costings**

3.41 You must provide a guide to employers of the anticipated cost of the EPA, expressed as a percentage of the funding band for the apprenticeship, and explain how this figure has been arrived at. As part of this, you will also need to include the cost of External Quality Assurance, which falls within the costs of EPA. If you expect the cost of the EPA to exceed the threshold of 20%, you will need to request an exemption and explain the reasons for this.

#### **Affordability - things to consider:**

- What is the estimated cost of end-point assessment for each apprentice?
- Did you consider affordability when comparing different end-point assessment models? If so, how did this model compare to others that you considered?
- Are there any components that are especially costly? If yes, how can they be justified or their costs reduced?
- How many assessors are required for each method?
- What facilities/equipment might be needed for your assessment methods?
- Can technology help to reduce the cost for some assessment methods?
- Have employers been consulted on potential costs? If yes, what were their views?



## Manageability and feasibility

3.42 You will need to set out an EPA that will be deliverable on the scale required for the number of apprentices expected to be working towards the apprenticeship standard. In order to determine feasibility, you must include how many starts are expected in the first year and once the apprenticeship is fully established. Other information may also be helpful, for example geographical spread or availability of assessors.

### **Manageability and feasibility - things to consider:**

- How many apprentices do you expect to enrol in each of the first 3 years?
- Will apprentices need to be assessed as individuals or in groups?
- Is there likely to be any significant differences in the volume of apprentices in different regions?
- What kind of assessment tools will assessment organisations need to develop to deliver the EPA?
- How many assessors, moderators, assessment centres etc. will be needed to support the anticipated volume of apprentices? Are there sufficient individuals and organisations across the country that could readily take on these roles?
- Are there opportunities to undertake assessment virtually? If so, has this been considered?
- Are there likely to be any developments in the foreseeable future that could impact on the manageability or feasibility of the EPA?
- Did you consider manageability and feasibility when comparing different EPA models? If so, how did this model compare to others that you considered?

## Other issues

3.43 Some groups have developed training specifications (sometimes referred to as Employer Occupational Briefs), including recommendations for on-programme training or assessment. Any recommendations for training or curriculum specification or assessment must not be included in the EPA plan. They should be included in a separate document. It is not mandatory to produce such documents but, if you do, they must be freely and readily available. Your EPA plan can link to these documents but, if you make other arrangements, information on how to access the documents must be clearly signposted in the standard or EPA plan. These documents will not be scrutinised as part of the approvals process. However, it must be clear that they are recommendations and are not mandatory for employers.

## Good practice in producing your EPA plan

3.44 There are no restrictions on how you present your EPA plan. However, we have provided a template that we encourage you to use at Annex G.

3.45 You should aim for your plan to be no more than 15 pages long.

3.46 Your EPA plan title should be the same as your standard, and should include the level. For example:

***End-point assessment plan for [name of standard]***

***Level [number]***

- 3.47** All key information relating to the EPA should be included in the plan itself. You should not put important information in annexes or elsewhere.
- 3.48** Hyperlinks to other additional documents can be included in the EPA plan. However, any additional documents should be freely available from the date on which the EPA plan is published.

**Finally...**

- 3.49** Once you have finalised:
- Check the plan against the standard to make sure the 2 documents are suitably aligned and that the EPA will enable competence, as described in the standard, to be measured comprehensively and reliably.
  - Review the EPA plan carefully against the policy criteria given at the start of this section that they have all been met in full.

## Section 4 – Support for developing a standard and EPA plan, and submitting them for approval

### Support

4.1 The Institute will provide a tailored package of support for you, including examples of well written and fully compliant standards and EPA plans and, over time, the opportunity to talk to Trailblazer chairs who have experience of going through the Institute's approvals process.

4.2 In the meantime, this 'How-to' Guide is intended to provide you with:

- a step-by-step guide to the various stages of the process
- suggested templates for standards and EPA plans
- tips on good practice, including advice on how employer groups can run effective apprenticeship standard development sessions

### 4.3 Relationship managers

The Institute's relationship managers will focus their support on trailblazer groups which need it most, particularly those who are new to the development of apprenticeship standards.

Relationship managers:

- are experts on the process and criteria for developing standards and EPA plans
- can provide advice on policy and process to support the Chair and the group to design the standard and EPA plan
- can support your strategies for engaging with training providers and assessment organisations and promoting starts
- are your main point of contact with the Institute
- will provide feedback on your draft standards and EPA plans
- act as a 'critical friend', providing constructive challenge and suggestions, including lessons learned and examples from other employer groups
- are aligned to specific Routes that will help them to develop greater sector knowledge and identify potential overlaps between standards
- will draw on industry expertise from the Route Panels to help them resolve sector related issues that arise
- offer trailblazers the option of spending half a day shadowing on site with you at the outset to help understand your occupation
- are your gatekeeper to submitting standards and EPA plans for approval

4.4 Relationship managers will use their professional judgement to advise you on the best point to move on to the design of your EPA plan.

4.5 Within the Institute, the relationship manager role is purely one of support for the

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trailblazer group – they will not have any role in approving their group standards or EPA plans. However, you must involve your relationship manager fully in the development process. Any standard or EPA plan which is submitted for approval without your relationship manager's confirmation that it is ready for submission will not be put forward for Route Panel consideration.

### **Access to assessment specialists**

4.6 While employers are best placed to set the KSB required for their occupation, feedback from trailblazers shows that they do not always have the expertise to design a robust EPA to sit alongside it. We will offer in-house assessment support for trailblazers, with those that are developing their first EPA plan having priority.

4.7 **Other support** available includes:

- opportunities to ask questions, share approaches and make links between different occupations
- webinars on particular issues or stages in the process as needed
- weekly email updates on key issues and information relating to trailblazers and wider apprenticeship policy

### **Trailblazer small business travel fund**

4.8 We have a fund to support small businesses with their reasonable travel costs in relation to attendance at trailblazer meetings. Guidance on this fund and a claim form is included at Annex H.

### **Submission**

4.9 It is important that trailblazers and their relationship managers are confident that their draft standards and EPA plans are well written and fully meet all the criteria we have set out in sections 2 and 3 before submitting them. The Institute will not put standards and EPA plans forward to Route Panels which do not meet these criteria, and we may ask you to do further work with your relationship managers before they are considered.

### **Scrutiny**

4.10 By summer 2017, a number of independent, third-party reviewers will support Route Panels by providing expert feedback on standards and EPA plans. The model will follow the established peer review approach, used within academia, for assuring the quality of research proposals and research outputs. The Route Panel will review the feedback from the peer reviewer before making a recommendation to the Institute's Board.

4.11 While we are putting the peer review system in place, any draft standard submitted for approval will be placed online for a short period for comment and feedback. This interim arrangement will enable trailblazers to benefit from wider feedback from other organisations and should not replace your own consultation. We do not expect

trailblazer members to complete the approvals survey themselves, but you may wish to make any relevant organisations aware of it.

- 4.11 Following the survey, a summary of the comments will be shared with you by your relationship manager for you to consider and respond to as appropriate. A summary of feedback will then be reviewed by the Route Panel before making a recommendation to the Institute's Board.
- 4.12 Following recommendations made by the Route Panel, a final decision on whether a standard can be approved as it is, should have some amendments or needs further work and resubmission will be taken by the Institute Board. Your relationship manager will contact you with the result of the process as soon as possible. We aim to let you know within 6 weeks of the original submission deadline. If the standard and/or EPA has been approved, you will then need to make any final revisions requested and provide your relationship manager with a revised version for publication. As explained in more detail in Section 5, your standard will then be allocated an indicative funding band.
- 4.13 The approved standards and **EPA plans will then be published online** and we will let you know in advance the timing of this so that your group can celebrate and advertise this important milestone. Your EPA plan must have been approved and allocated a final funding cap before apprenticeships can commence under your new standard

#### **Submitting a previously rejected standard for approval**

- 4.14 If you are submitting a standard or EPA plan for approval that was previously rejected, you should do so via the online submission process. You will be asked to make it clear that you are re-submitting your standard or EPA plan. In this case we do not normally require you to upload 10 letters of support again. Instead, once we have received your form we will contact you to ask you for an email from the Chair, copied to the trailblazer group and any other relevant parties (such as professional bodies), to confirm that they support whatever revisions have been made. You should check with your relationship manager whether additional information (for example evidence of wider support for the amendments) is also required.

### **CHECKLIST FOR SUBMITTING A STANDARD FOR APPROVAL**

- Ensure your relationship manager has confirmed that, in their view, your draft is ready for submission.
- Complete the online submission form using the relevant link on the [Trailblazer Guidance](#) webpage which will ask you to:
  - confirm that you have read the policy criteria and this guidance, and that your proposed standard(s) meets all the occupational and employer development group criteria
  - provide some brief details relating to your submission, including whether this is a revision to an existing standard and an updated estimate of annual starts

- summarise who and how you consulted beyond your group and the impact of this on the final draft standard
- (where relevant) provide the required evidence justifying the inclusion of any qualification in your draft standard
- include details of anything else you would like to be taken into consideration alongside the draft standard (e.g. whether the apprenticeship covered by the standard is unlikely to be suitable for a particular age group)
- The form will also ask you to upload:
  - letters from at least 10 employer trailblazer members (normally including at least 2 with fewer than 50 employees) confirming that they have been actively involved in the development of each of the standards being submitted and that they support the final products (Annex D)
  - letters from any professional bodies with a professional recognition level to which your standard aligns explicitly confirming the alignment (Annex C)
  - in the case of degree apprenticeships, supporting letters from at least two HEIs
- A completed costing proposal form to aid the accurate allocation of your standard (if approved) to a funding band.
- If you are submitting your draft EPA plan at the same time as the draft standard, you can do so using the same online form.

If you have any problems submitting your proposal, please contact your relationship manager or [apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk)

## CHECKLIST FOR SUBMITTING AN EPA PLAN FOR APPROVAL

- Ensure your relationship manager has confirmed that, in their view, your draft is ready for submission.
- Complete the online submission form using the relevant link on the [Trailblazer Guidance](#) webpage which will ask you to:
  - confirm that you have read the policy criteria and guidance, and that your proposed EPA plan(s) meets all the EPA plan policy criteria (see section 3)
  - provide evidence for grading exemption (where applicable)
  - where you have asked Ofqual or the relevant professional body to undertake your EQA, you will need to include a letter from them confirming that they have agreed to do this
  - upload letter(s) of support from professional bodies, where applicable (Annex C)
  - indicate if you are challenging an indicative funding band that was allocated when your standard was approved and if so, upload an updated costing proposal form with additional evidence as necessary (see section 5)
- If you are submitting your draft EPA plan at the same time as the draft standard, you can do so using the same form.

### **Process for amending standards/EPA plans after they have been approved for delivery to apprentices**

4.15 Once both the standard and EPA plan are published, there should be no further changes to them before the formal review date. However, the Institute will take a flexible approach where there are exceptional circumstances. Where a trailblazer group believes that an amendment is needed, changes can be submitted for consideration by one of the monthly deadlines detailed on [our website](#). The proposed amendments to the standard and/or EPA plan should be submitted with the changes from the original version clearly highlighted and with accompanying material providing the justification for making the change. If approved, the standard and/or EPA plan will be revised and re-published.

### **Making consequential amendments to the related standard**

4.16 In some cases, work on developing an EPA plan will make it clear that amendments need to be made to a standard that has already been approved and published. If this happens, changes to the published standard can be proposed when the EPA plan is submitted for approval.

4.17 You can submit these amendments using the online submissions form. You should make clear that you are submitting a revision to a standard which has been previously published, and will need to include:

- details of how the standard needs to change (the revised standard should be submitted with the changes from the original version clearly highlighted so that we can easily review them)
- an explanation of the reasons for the amendment(s)

4.18 The amendments will then be reviewed alongside the draft EPA plan. If the changes are significant (for example the proposed introduction of a new qualification, or an additional occupational option) the revised standard will follow the scrutiny process set out in paragraph 4.10. **A revised costing template will also need to be submitted to reflect any significant changes, and the funding band for the standard will be reconsidered.** If the amendment to the standard and the EPA plan are approved, the revised standard will be published at the same time as the EPA plan.

### **Appeals process**

4.19 The Institute will make decisions to approve or reject your proposal to develop a standard, your standard and your EPA plan. Where a proposal to develop a new standard, a standard or EPA plan has been rejected you will be provided with feedback setting out the reasons for the decision. If you want to provide new evidence that you think might have altered the decision, you can re-submit to the next round of approvals.

4.20 If you disagree with a decision the Institute has taken but you don't have new evidence to present, then it may be treated as an appeal. We will allow an appeal on the grounds of procedural irregularity if it means that the legitimacy of the decision is called into question; or that there is material that was in existence at the time the decision was made that, had it been made available, would have influenced the decision of the Institute and there is a good reason it was not submitted. The Institute

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will publish its appeals procedure and review it after 6 months of operation. The Institute will not accept appeals on the basis of simple disagreement with a decision it has taken.



## Section 5 – Assigning funding bands

- 5.1 After an apprenticeship standard and EPA plan has been approved, each apprenticeship standard is allocated to one of 15 funding bands already set by the DfE. The upper limit of each funding band will cap the maximum amount of digital funds an employer who pays the levy can use towards an individual apprenticeship. The upper limit of the funding bands will also cap the maximum price that government will 'co- invest' towards an individual apprenticeship, where an employer does not pay the levy or has insufficient digital funds and is eligible for extra government support.
- 5.2 The Institute works with the ESFA to make recommendations to the DfE on the allocation of each apprenticeship standard a funding band based on:
- the evidence presented by a trailblazer employer group on the estimated costs of training, taking into account only those costs which are eligible for public funding according to the existing [funding rules](#)
  - the cost of equivalent frameworks
  - the level and nature of the training/assessment, and consistency across similar types of apprenticeship standard
- 5.3 One funding band will be allocated to each standard. A single funding band will be allocated even where there are a number of routes within a standard, or where there is a core and options approach, rather than per option. Where options have different costs associated with them, the funding band will be assigned based on the lowest cost option to achieve the apprenticeship standard. Training for any options taken beyond a 'minimum' would be outside of the apprenticeship and not supported by government funding.
- 5.4 To enable the Institute to recommend a funding band for an apprenticeship standard, from now on, you will need to submit a costing proposal form. The costing proposal form is available as an excel document on the guidance webpage (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-develop-an-apprenticeship-standard-guide-for-trailblazers>). This form asks for detail about:
- whether the new standard is partially or fully replacing an existing apprenticeship framework
  - typical duration of the apprenticeship, and how many starts per year are expected
  - the expected costs associated with off-the-job training, on-programme assessment, and end-point assessment, including quotes from providers and assessment organisations
- 5.5 It is important to provide as much information as you are able on the costing proposal to ensure that the decision about the funding band is made on a robust basis. If we have to request further information on costings to help make a funding decision, this may delay the allocation of a funding band, and therefore delay apprenticeship starts against your apprenticeship standard.
- 5.6 Allocating a funding band can be a 2-stage or single-stage process. If you submit your standard and EPAAt plan together, you will only receive a final funding band recommendation. If you submit only the standard in the first instance, you will

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receive an indicative funding band recommendation, followed by a final funding band recommendation after you submit your **EPA plan**. The process to identify the correct funding band will run concurrently with the Institute's consideration of your standard and **EPA plan**.

- 5.7 We expect to provide a recommended funding band allocation in 12 weeks. Where you have submitted a standard and **EPA plan** together, this will be a final recommended funding band. Where you submit only the standard, an indicative recommended funding band will be allocated, followed by a final recommended funding band after you submit your **EPA plan**. We will share with the trailblazer group the final recommendation that the Institute makes to the DfE. The Secretary of State for Education will then take the final decision.
- 5.8 In the longer term, the Institute intends to review how funding bands are allocated and how funding helps to achieve the government's priorities. We will consult before making any significant changes to how funding bands are allocated to apprenticeship standards, and will make sure all partners are kept informed about any upcoming changes through relationship managers.

### **Challenging the recommended funding band**

- 5.9 There is a single appeals process for all parts of the approval process, as set out in paragraphs 4.19 to 4.20. All trailblazer groups will have the opportunity to appeal the final recommended funding band allocation before this is submitted to the DfE.
- 5.10 Trailblazer groups are not able to appeal against an indicative funding band. If you receive an indicative funding band, you will be given the opportunity to accept or reject this band. If the indicative funding band is rejected, trailblazer groups will be expected to provide further evidence at the point of submitting the **EPA plan** to enable to team to reconsider the final recommended funding band.
- 5.11 There will not be an opportunity to appeal against a final decision taken by the Secretary of State for Education. The funding bands of all apprenticeship standards will be kept under ongoing review.

## Section 6 – Promoting awareness of the standard and EPA plan to training providers, assessment organisations and employers

- 6.1 Once the apprenticeship standard is approved for delivery – that means the standard and EPA plan have been approved, published and assigned to a funding band – we would expect members of the trailblazer group to be at the forefront of delivery. This includes members of the trailblazer group delivering their individual projected annual starts (set out in your proposal), making sure there are training providers ready to deliver against your **apprenticeship standard**, assessment organisations on the register and a host of employers aware of the new **apprenticeship standard**.
- 6.2 There are 3 key areas for consideration when preparing for the launch of your apprenticeship standard:
- training provider readiness
  - assessment organisation readiness
  - employer awareness

### Training provider readiness

- 6.3 The providers who deliver the training supporting an apprenticeship must be on the [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](#) (RoATP).
- 6.4 It is important that you engage with training providers throughout the standard and EPA plan development process. Training providers, in most cases, will deliver the on-programme off-the-job training element of the apprenticeship and any mandatory qualifications it includes. Delivering a new apprenticeship standard is a challenging process for training providers, and they need to prepare well in advance to ensure they can meet employer demand and expectations.
- 6.5 Training providers can also be an expert source of input and feedback during the development stage and can help with promotion to employers.
- 6.6 The Association of Colleges (AoC) and Association of Employer and Learning Providers (AELP) are happy to help trailblazer groups make contact with training providers in their networks. They have set up a central email account through which you can make such requests: [trailblazers@aoc.co.uk](mailto:trailblazers@aoc.co.uk)
- Trailblazers wishing to seek support from Universities/HEIs can contact the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC): [uvac@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:uvac@bolton.ac.uk)
- 6.7 In developing your plans to engage with training providers, you may want to consider the following questions:
- Are training providers aware of the new apprenticeship standard you're developing, especially those who have previously delivered apprenticeship frameworks or training to the sector?
  - Are training providers you are engaging with on the RoATP?

- Do you need to provide additional written guidance for training providers beyond the standard and EPA plan to ensure different training providers interpret the standard consistently?
- Do you have plans in place to promote the standard to training providers and answer questions they may have via provider network meetings, webinars, workshops, online materials?

6.8 Training provider regional network meetings and conferences help trailblazer groups to engage with providers and assessment organisations. For example, the AELP operates 12 [sectoral fora](#) that meet quarterly with regular inputs from trailblazer groups on apprenticeship standards.

6.9 In addition, the [Education and Training Foundation](#) (ETF) run the Future Apprenticeships Support Programme for potential training providers and assessment organisations. This focuses on developing the skills of staff to deliver new apprenticeship standards, building new and developing existing relationships with employers, and putting in place the systems and processes for delivering high quality apprenticeships.

### **Assessment organisation (AO) readiness**

6.10 End Point Assessment is a key element of apprenticeships, and is mandatory. It must be delivered effectively when the apprentices have completed their on-programme training, and careful preparation is needed for this. The [Future Apprenticeship Programme](#) includes a strand aimed at AOs, which may be useful to organisations considering this role.

6.11 All EPAs must be conducted by an independent assessment organisation on the [Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations](#) (RoAAO).

6.12 Some questions you should consider here are:

- Are you communicating and consulting with a wide range of potential AOs?
- Are your EQA arrangements, outlined in your EPA plan, in place yet? (see Section 3)
- Are potential AOs on the RoAAO or planning to apply?
- Do AOs need your support to develop assessment tools?
- Have you engaged with AOs to discuss any other support you can give them to ensure they are ready to deliver end-point assessments?

### **Employer awareness**

6.13 Employers need to be aware of the new apprenticeship standard and how they can expect to benefit from it. Only then will they start to promote it enthusiastically to potential apprentices. As the designers of the apprenticeship standard, your trailblazer group is best placed to do this. Greater employer awareness of the standard should also help with engaging training providers and assessment organisations.

6.14 Some questions you should consider here are:

- Have you considered developing a marketing strategy to increase awareness, and ways of reaching the widest range of employers? For example, the Media trailblazer group developed a video to raise awareness of the journalism apprenticeship. It features contributions from apprentices, training providers and employers from the newspaper, magazine, broadcast and online sectors.
- Are you keeping interested employers up to date on progress with developing the standard and EPA plan?
- Are there trade associations or sector groups that can help with promoting your apprenticeship standard?
- Are there trade journals/magazines that you can access to promote it?
- Could you arrange press releases and news stories for significant milestones e.g. your apprenticeship standard being approved for delivery, or your first starts on the standard?
- Have you considered developing tools or guidance for employers who might not know as much as you about the new standard?
- Are the members of the trailblazer group itself ready to make speedy enrolments on your standard once it is approved for delivery? For example, have they selected training providers?

6.15 These questions and areas of focus are purely to inform your thinking, and you shouldn't limit yourself to this list. If there are other actions your trailblazer could be taking to ensure the sector is ready to deliver your apprenticeship standard, we encourage you to undertake them.

## Annex A: Naming apprenticeship occupations

This guidance has been designed to introduce some consistency to the way that apprenticeship standards are described in order to make things clearer for employers and apprentices. You should take account of this when submitting a proposal to develop and developing a standard.

### General:

- Aim to make the titles of standards as transparent as possible to allow common understanding across the country, internationally, and for people who are unfamiliar with your industry – for instance, a young person considering starting an apprenticeship.
- Ensure that the same title is used on the proposal, standard and EPA plan documents and that, if a change in the title is required during the development phase, you highlight this when you submit it for approval.
- Do not include the word 'trailblazer', as this term is used to describe the employer group developing the standard, not the standard itself.
- Avoid including unnecessary words in titles.
- Generally, the best titles are the shortest – for instance 'plasterer'.
- For standards which are broadly at level 2, the best descriptions might be 'operative', 'mechanic' or equivalent.
- For some occupations there are already helpful naming conventions (for instance those developed or used by professional bodies) that can help to illustrate the level of occupational competency.
- Where the apprenticeship is linked to professional registration, the level/designation of registration obtained could contribute to the title.

### Engineering:

- Occupations at levels 3, 4 and 5 that meet Engineering Technician (EngTech) registration requirements could include 'technician' in the title; at levels 6 and above that meet Incorporated or Chartered requirements they could include 'engineer' in the title.

### Science:

- Occupations at levels 3 and 4 that meet RSci Tech registration requirements could include 'technician' in the title; at levels 5 and above that meet Registered or Chartered Scientist requirements they could include 'scientist' in the title.

### Supervision/management:

- 'Supervisor' is often used for level 3 roles where there is a significant workforce of operatives; otherwise it mostly applies from levels 4 and 5.
- 'Manager' is usually used for level 4 and upwards.

However, please see the guidance regarding occupations above to determine whether a proposal for a supervision/management occupation is viable, particularly if standards for related occupations at other levels are also being proposed or exist already.

**Degree apprenticeships:**

- Where the apprenticeship contains a full Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree the title must contain the word 'degree,' for example: Degree apprenticeship standard for #name#.

Where the EPA is an integrated model, 'integrated' must also appear in the title, for example: Integrated Degree apprenticeship standard for Power Engineer.

## Annex B: Proposal to develop a new apprenticeship standard

Below is text of the online portal template. This version is for reference only.

Q1. Please confirm that you have read the 'How to' guide for trailblazers on gov.uk, that you are content that this proposal meets all the criteria for final approval set out within it and that you have discussed the proposal with a relevant relationship manager within the Institute (Please specify who).

Q2. Name of proposed trailblazer group.

Q3. Are you an existing trailblazer group already with approval to develop other standard(s)? If yes or partly, please provide full details.

Q4 Name of proposed apprenticeship standard. (s)

Q5. Is this a proposed core and options standard? If yes, please give the titles for each of the options.

Q6. How many standards are you proposing to develop? Please be aware that commitment from at least 10 employer members for each proposed standard is required.

Q7. Will there be a requirement for additional new standards to be developed in the future? If so, please provide brief details of what these will be.



**Q8. Have you submitted a proposal for an apprenticeship standard in this role(s) before? If yes, please give details below including comments from the (pre April 2017) DfE approvals panel or the Institute.**

**Q9. Please insert details about each proposed standard below.**

	Name of occupation	Proposed level of the standard	Proposed as a degree apprenticeship?	Intended to replace/partly replace an existing apprenticeship Framework? [if so please give details]	Do you expect any age restrictions to apply to this standard?	Estimated annual take-up across <u>entire</u> relevant sector(s) (This is separate to the number of apprentices that each individual employer group member will take on)	When do you estimate this apprenticeship would be ready to deliver starts?
1			-	-	-	-	-
2	-		-	-	-	-	-
3	-		-	-	-	-	-
4	-		-	-	-	-	-
5	-		-	-	-	-	-
6	-		-	-	-	-	-

**Q10. Please provide any relevant information below regarding potential overlap with other Trailblazer standards published or in development. It is important that you review your proposal against all other apprenticeships published and in development to confirm there is no significant overlap, in overall occupation or in the content of potential skills/knowledge/behaviours.**

Where there is potential of any overlap, we ask that you contact the existing trailblazer(s) before submitting a new proposal to discuss whether the existing standards would cover your needs (or email [apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk)).

Please then provide below full details of any possible overlap identified, interaction with relevant trailblazers, and any relevant further detail explaining why this occupational role is sufficiently unique to still justify separate apprenticeship standard.

Q11. Please provide a full description below of what the occupational role involved (or roles in the case of a proposed core and options standard).

The information you provide here is crucial to our assessment of whether the occupational role is suitable for an apprenticeship, so please be as comprehensive as possible, and always refer to the criteria and guidance set out in the 'How to' guide for trailblazers. In particular, the information should include: Main duties and responsibilities - please set out clearly what someone in this occupation will actually be doing; the range of environments/sectors/industries in which someone in this occupation could work; a summary of key competencies/skills required for full occupational competence; how the occupational role typically fits within the wider work hierarchy; who would they be working with, and what is the usual relationship between the roles.

Q12. Please provide an overview of the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for these roles.

Q13. How will the apprenticeship allow the individual to develop transferrable skills to perform the role in a business of any size or relevant sector?

Q14 Will the occupation require rigorous and substantial training of at least 12 months prior to the end-point assessment to achieve full competence, with off-the-job training accounting for at least 20% of the apprenticeship?

Q15. What will the duration of the apprenticeship be?

Q16. Please provide details below of all the employers who make up the proposed trailblazer group and who are committed to be actively involved in the development of the standard (please note you must have at least 10 employers on the group and all of them should provide projected starts for the standard). The group should include both large and small to medium sized employers.

	Organisation Name	Lead Representative	Sector	Job Title	Projected annual starts for each standard (listed individually)	Number of employees in the organization
1 (lead employer)						

Q16. Please provide details below of all the employers who make up the proposed trailblazer group and who are committed to be actively involved in the development of the standard (please note you must have at least 10 employers on the group and all of them should provide projected starts for the standard). The group should include both large and small to medium sized employers.

2.						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

Q17. Please provide details below of any other employers or supporting organisations (for example training providers, professional bodies) who are supporting your proposal, but who are not part of the main trailblazer development group.

Q18. Please provide details below of any professional body recognition of this standard. This should include information on what this will be.

Q19. We are committed to ensuring that the standard we design provides sufficiently transferable skills to enable a successful apprentice to perform this role in an employer of any size and in any relevant sector. We are collectively representative of our sector(s) and are willing to work with other employers who come forward with an interest in this occupation and with colleagues from other sectors where our standards are closely related. We will develop the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan in line with the latest edition of the Institute's 'How to' Guide for trailblazers, will aim to complete this process within a year and are committed to working with relevant sector organisations to promote the use of the resulting standard once it is ready for delivery.

Q20. Name and email address of proposed trailblazer chair (we will not pass this information on to third parties without your permission). The trailblazer must be an employer.

**Name of the chair of the proposed trailblazer group**

Q20. Name and email address of proposed trailblazer chair (we will not pass this information on to third parties without your permission). The trailblazer must be an employer.

**Name of the chair's organization**

**Chair's email address (we will not pass this information to third parties without your permission)**

Q21. I am happy for my organisation to be publicly named as the lead employer and the companies listed above are happy to be named as working together to deliver this is the standard is approved for development.

Q22. Name and email address of contact we can use publicly on the gov.uk website (and Institute website when ready) as a contact point for any enquiries relating to the trailblazer. (By filling out this box you consent to the publication of these details. If you wish to opt out please leave this box blank.)

**Name**

**Email Address**

Q23. Email address of any other individuals to be copied into correspondence

**Email 1**

**Email 2 -**

Q24. Do you have a copy of the draft standard? If so, please include it with your submission.

Q25. In future, Technical Education will be arranged around the common framework of 15 technical education routes identified in the Sainsbury Review. These encompass all employment-based and college-based activity. The aim of these new routes is to facilitate the progress of young people from compulsory schooling into skilled employment and the highest levels of technical competence. A technical route could be followed either through an apprenticeship or in a college where the training would be supported by a substantial work placement, with both programmes being based on employer-designed occupational standards. In light of this, we have introduced a new criterion requiring any standard approved for development to align with one of the 15 technical routes. Details of the 15 routes can be found on page 22 of the Government [Skills Plan](#). Please detail which of the 15 Sainsbury Technical Education Routes your standard(s) aligns to. Also, if an occupational map is available for this route, there will be a link to it on the 'How to' Guide for trailblazers webpage. Please refer to this and specify which occupation detailed in the route map your proposed standard covers.

	<b>Proposed Standard (s)</b>
<b>Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care</b>	-
<b>Business and Administrative</b>	-
<b>Catering and Hospitality</b>	-
<b>Childcare and Education</b>	-
<b>Construction</b>	-
<b>Creative and Design</b>	-
<b>Digital</b>	-
<b>Engineering and Manufacturing</b>	-
<b>Hair and Beauty</b>	-
<b>Health and Science</b>	-
<b>Legal, Finance and Accounting</b>	-
<b>Protective Services</b>	-
<b>Sales, Marketing and Procurement</b>	-
<b>Social Care</b>	-
<b>Transport and Logistics</b>	-

## **Annex C: Template for a professional body letter confirming standard alignment with professional recognition** (word version available on guidance webpage)

For standards where professional recognition applies, such letters are to be submitted via the chair when draft standards are being submitted for approval. Such notifications can either take the form of a signed letter (a scanned version will do) or an email containing relevant employer/employee details (company logo, name and address and the emailer's name, company position and contact details)

FAO – The Institute for Apprenticeships

I/we *[insert name of PB]* confirm that we have worked with the group of employers developing the *[insert name of standard]* to align the apprenticeship with our professional standards for recognition.

Based on the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for full occupational competence, as set out in the above mentioned draft standard, we confirm that an apprentice successfully completing the apprenticeship would be eligible for recognition at *[insert level of membership]* of our organisation.

*[If relevant]*

I/we can also confirm that *[insert name of qualification]* is an absolute requirement for professional registration / certification / accreditation with *[insert name of PB]* at *[insert level of membership if relevant]*

*[If relevant]*

I/we also confirm that we are the only organisation able to award professional status for *[insert name of occupation]*. Please see the supporting evidence attached *[include evidence demonstrating Chartered Status]*.

Yours sincerely

*[Name of individual confirming alignment and the name of the PB]*

## **Annex D: Template for a Trailblazer employer support letter** (word version available on guidance webpage)

To be submitted via the Chair when draft standards are being submitted for approval. Such notifications can either take the form of a signed letter (a scanned version will do) or an email containing relevant employer/employee details (company logo, name and address and the emailer's name, company position and contact details).

Address to the Trailblazer Chair:

I confirm that I have been an active member of the [insert name] Trailblazer group, that I have been involved in developing the standard(s) [insert name(s) of standard(s)] being submitted and that I approve of the final draft(s).

I believe that the standard(s) fully meet the needs of the [insert name] sector in relation to the occupations covered by them and offer(s) good value for money for end-users.

[Only if applicable a qualification that has yet to be developed is being mandated in the standard being submitted up to June 2017.] I confirm that my employer supports the development of the 'yet to be developed' qualification(s) listed in the draft standard and intends to use the standard on the basis that the qualification will, in future, meet the 'hard sift' criterion.

The company that I represent on the Trailblazer group employs approximately [insert number] people.

## Annex E: Template for an apprenticeship standard (word version available on guidance webpage)

Apprenticeship standards should be short and clear, taking up no more than three sides of A4 (in size 12 font) unless you are taking a core and options approach in which case please discuss this with your relationship manager. Whilst there needs to be some uniformity in terms of the content of standards, there are no restrictions on how the information is set out and a number of different layouts have been used by trailblazers as can be seen [online](#).

The standard should not generally refer to 'the apprentice', other than in sections relating to entry requirements or in relation to mandatory on-programme requirements such as English and maths. This is because the standard needs to be presented in terms of what the fully competent individual will be able to do upon successful completion of the apprenticeship.

**Title – Apprenticeship standard for** *[insert occupation title – don't refer to "trailblazer"]*

### 1. Occupational Profile

- Set out the responsibilities of the occupation linked to the skills, knowledge and behaviours which will be applied in the workplace. This should set out how it is a standalone occupation and should not refer to progress on to other occupations. Describe briefly what someone who is fully competent in this occupation will be expected to be able to do – their main duties and tasks.
- It is often helpful to provide additional context by explaining where the occupation fits within the wider sector(s) and hierarchy, the type and scale of (if appropriate) projects that the qualified person might work on and the types of organisations they might be working for.
- List any generic job titles used to describe the occupation within the sector.
- If you are using a core and options approach to cover more than one occupation, you should summarise the range of options here.

### 2. Entry Requirements *(only if needed)*

- In order to avoid creating barriers to entry, it is not permissible to include entry requirements in a standard unless they are statutory or regulatory requirements (which should be included here). However, some trailblazers have chosen to include wording such as 'Whilst any entry requirements will be a matter for individual employers, typically an apprentice might be expected to have already achieved x, y, and z on entry.'
- Also, if there is any reason why undertaking this apprenticeship would not be appropriate for a particular age group please state it here.

### 3. Requirements: knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs)

- This is the core of the apprenticeship standard. You should list the KSBs that are required by employers for full competence in this occupation (what they should be demonstrating when they are fully job-ready). If you have approval to develop a core and options approach, you will want to set out separately which knowledge and skills are core and which apply to individual options.



<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>What is required for occupational competence</b>
<b>Skills</b>	<b>What is required for occupational competence</b>
<b>Behaviours</b>	<b>What is required for occupational competence</b>

- When completing the KSB sections, you may find it helpful to start with a phrase like “The [occupation title] will require a comprehensive understanding of....” so that you do not need to start every knowledge bullet with “an understanding of..”
- Your consideration of what KSBs are needed should include consideration of whether any digital skills are required.

#### 4. Duration

- You should give an indication of the likely duration of the apprenticeship (for example, ‘typically 24 months’, or ‘typically 18-24 months’. If the latter, the range given should not generally span more than 6 months).
- This must be at least 12 months prior to taking the EPA.
- You should not state a maximum duration.

## 5. Qualifications

- Employers need to be free to determine how their apprentices develop towards full competence and, as anything included in a standard becomes mandatory, we do not want employers constrained by the inclusion of qualifications. However, there are some exceptions to this relating to regulatory or professional body requirements, or where the apprentice would be disadvantaged by not having the qualification.
- If a qualification fits the above criterion and needs to be referenced in the standard, the name, type and level of qualification should be stated but not a particular provider or awarding organisation (except where it is offered by only one organisation e.g. vendor and professional qualifications).
- This section should also state the English and maths levels of attainment required prior to the EPA. These may either be the minimum required across all apprenticeships in which case the standard wording below can be used, or any such requirements that you set above the minimum.
- The standard wording for level 2 apprenticeships is:

'Apprentices without level 1 English and maths will need to achieve this level and take the test for level 2 English and maths prior to taking the end-point assessment'

- The standard wording for level 3 and above apprenticeships is:

'Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the end-point assessment'.

## 6. Link to professional registration (only include where professional registration exists)

- Apprenticeship standards must link to professional registration where this exists at that level in the occupation. This means that when someone completes an apprenticeship, they have the evidence proving that they have met the level of competence needed to secure professional registration. It is up to the individual whether they choose to then register.
- Where relevant, this section should set out which professional registration the apprenticeship standard is designed to meet and the name of the professional body responsible for maintaining the professional register. Where there is more than one relevant professional body, the trailblazer should discuss alignment with all such bodies.

## 7. Level

- State the proposed [level of the apprenticeship](#) standard (level 2 upwards)

## 8. Review date

- This should generally be 'after 3 years' unless there is a particular reason for it to be reviewed earlier (for example, in cases where technology or processes are developing rapidly).

# Annex F: Framework and guidance for External Quality Assurance of End Point Assessment

## 1. Introduction

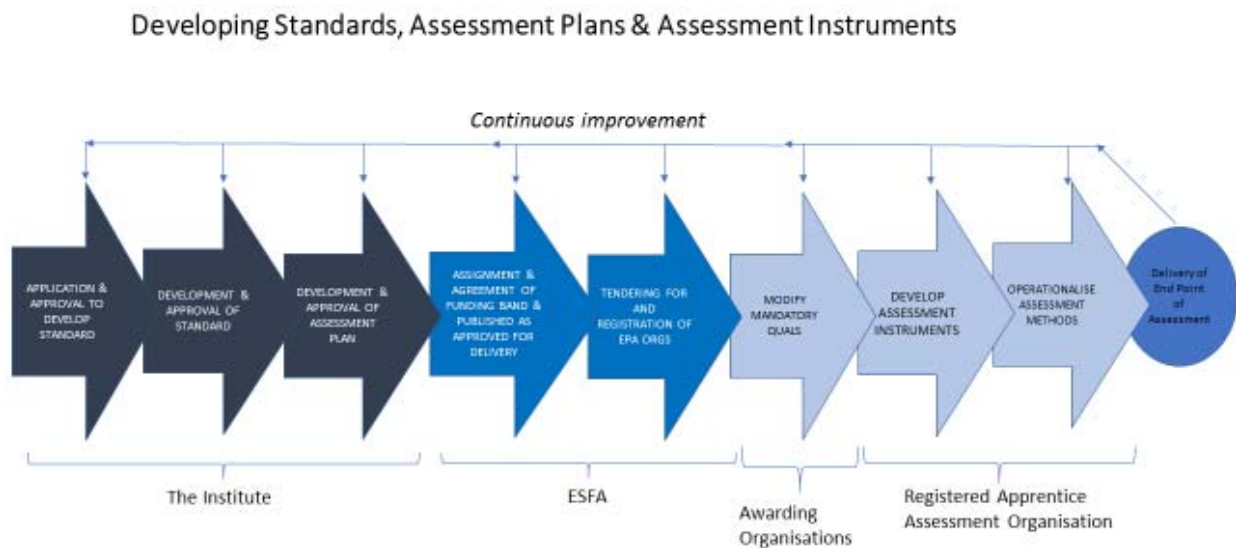
New **apprenticeship standards** must include a specification for end-point assessment (EPA) which is a critical feature of reformed apprenticeships. The [Richard Review of Apprenticeships](#) recommended this approach because employers felt that many apprenticeship qualifications lacked credibility and apprentices were successfully achieving without full competence to perform the occupation. Continuous assessment of qualifications was seen to be effective for accrediting each skill in isolation but not for demonstrating rounded and holistic occupational competence. Continuous assessment in the workplace, by visiting assessors, also carried high costs in training provider/college staff time, which could be better used in delivering and supporting training and learning. Therefore, EPA became a core feature of each new apprenticeship standard in order to achieve:

- holistically competent apprentices more able to apply a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours autonomously in the workplace
- greater credibility for apprenticeships (when combined with other measures, especially setting standards)
- lower costs for assessment with provider staff able to focus on training and learning
- greater involvement of employers in the process

EPA is delivered by apprentice assessment organisations, chosen by each employer from amongst those who have successfully applied to the [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#) (ESFA) to be entered onto the [Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations](#) (RoAAO) for each standard. Registered apprenticeship assessment organisations (assessment organisations) in turn develop the assessment instruments and delivery arrangements for each apprenticeship standard based on the specific requirements set out in the relevant EPA plan.

The diagram below illustrates the 8 steps of the development process. The first 3 (approval of occupations, standards and assessment plans) are now the responsibility of the Institute. The operation of the RoAAO is the responsibility of the ESFA. The Institute is tasked with providing advice on funding to the Secretary of State for Education and is responsible for the requirements which are built into the RoAAO. The last steps (developing assessment instruments and the operational arrangements for assessment) are the responsibility of the assessment organisations. Where there is a mandatory qualification any modification will be the responsibility of the awarding organisation.

Diagram 1



Each of the steps above represents an opportunity to ensure high quality in the resulting apprenticeship. The Institute's primary mission is to secure quality apprenticeships and will therefore aim to ensure that:

- standards are based on recognised, stand-alone occupations with sufficient skill and breadth to constitute a credible apprenticeship
- standards are written in a way which leads to a clear description of the occupation and the full range of skills, knowledge and behaviours required for occupational competence
- **EPA plans** are produced which prescribe assessment methods that are fit for purpose (valid), holistic, reliable, deliverable, cost-effective and independent
- EPA is delivered by suitable and independent assessment organisations in full control of assessment delivery and with the capacity and capability to develop and deliver the assessment instruments required
- employers make the choice of assessment organisation and determine the readiness of apprentices for EPA
- assessment instruments developed for EPA produce valid, holistic and reliable assessments of occupational competence as defined by the standard and the **EPA plan**
- EPA is delivered by independent assessors who are highly competent occupationally and skilled in assessment
- the assessment organisation effectively and efficiently delivers valid, holistic, reliable, cost-effective, independent and accessible assessments in accordance with the requirements set out in the relevant assessment plan

Quality is about setting the right standards, maintaining an effective approvals process and following through by quality assuring delivery, leading to continuous improvement in all of the points listed above. The Institute's approach to External Quality Assurance (EQA) is therefore designed to monitor delivery of assessment in order to inform continuous improvement in all of the areas above. We will also carry out formal reviews of each apprenticeship standard every three years. Assessment organisations are required to operate arrangements for internal quality assurance in accordance with the requirements set out in the relevant **EPA plan**. The Institute will establish an overall system of EQA based on its statutory duties and responsibilities.

EPA is not a new concept but its implementation across such a large number and range of occupations is a challenge for all those involved in development and delivery. The Institute is clear that quality comes first in this endeavour and the overall Framework for EQA has been designed to establish and continuously improve standards and delivery.

## 2. The Institute's responsibilities

The [Enterprise Act 2016](#), which established the Institute, sets out its duties and responsibilities in relation to the quality of apprenticeship standards, **EPA plans** and assessments as follows:

- The Institute must operate arrangements for approval of employer groups which develop standards and **EPA plans** and of the standards and **EPA plans** themselves. Standards and **EPA plans** approved by the Secretary of State for Education prior to the establishment of the Institute are deemed to be Institute approved initially.
- **EPA plans** must include satisfactory arrangements for evaluating the quality of assessment (that is, internal and external quality assurance).
- The Institute must ensure that the quality of assessment is monitored and evaluated.
- If monitoring and evaluation leads to concerns that **EPA** assessments could be, or may become, unsatisfactory then the Institute may review the assessment arrangements.
- If the review leads to the conclusion that the assessments are or may become unsatisfactory then the Institute can make arrangements for improvement.
- In addition to improvement action, the Institute can make a report with recommendations for action to the Secretary of State for Education and/or to the ESFA (or to anyone else) and this report may be published.
- The Institute must also make arrangements for the regular review of standards and **EPA plans** with a view to deciding whether they should continue, be modified, or be withdrawn. A formal review can take place at any time where there are concerns.
- Before approval, new standards and **EPA plans** must be peer reviewed. Revised standards and **EPA plans** may be peer reviewed. The Institute must take account of any peer review. New or revised standards and **EPA plans** can be rejected without peer review.

The Institute is able to carry out some of the responsibilities above either directly or via third parties.

The Department for Education (DfE) is responsible for setting overall assessment policy, including EQA policy, and the Institute will have regard to this as it carries out its assessment functions, including supporting employer groups to develop **EPA plans**, reviewing and approving the plans, designing its own approach to EQA and its role in ensuring that all end point assessments are quality assured and standardised. The DfE is also responsible for setting the options available for External Quality Assurance.

### 3. The External Quality Assurance approaches and implementation

The Institute is committed to operating EQA via the 4 approaches set out in the [Strategic Guidance](#) to the Institute. In each of these methods the Institute must ensure that the requirements set out in section 2 above are delivered. These four possible approaches are:

- 1) **Employer-led:** Arrangements here involve an employer-led body and usually include governance set up by the employers often covering a group of standards, although the EQA approach needs to be approved in each individual plan.
- 2) **Professional body:** Also usually including a specific arrangement for governance.
- 3) **The Institute for Apprenticeships' EQA Service** which is available where none of the other options are suitable and where a service is needed to step in where an EQA structure for a specific standard has failed or is withdrawn.
- 4) **Ofqual regulation** of awarding bodies acting as apprenticeship assessment organisations where EPA will be treated as a qualification: Ofqual regulates awarding bodies whose internal quality assurance arrangements are extensive and must comply with Ofqual's requirements. These IQA arrangements involve a similar set of functions to the EQA which will be operated in 1 to 3 above.

Ofqual is also exploring the benefits of entering into partnership arrangements to provide quality assurance, working with the named EQA provider. This might operate under options 1 or 2 above. For Ofqual to undertake this role they would require any assessment organisations delivering EPA to become Ofqual-recognised. In these circumstances, the Institute will continue to work with the EQA body to deal with and improve quality. Where this is proposed it must be approved by the Institute and should be identified in the **EPA plan**. Where an assessment plan has already been approved, trailblazer groups should include this in their proposals for EQA when they are submitted under the timetable below.

For integrated degree apprenticeships and the degree within non-integrated degree apprenticeships, the normal HEFCE and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) processes will apply, although the DfE is currently engaging QAA to determine whether it can deliver the EQA for integrated degree apprenticeships. For non-integrated degree apprenticeships the end point assessment of occupational competence will usually be overseen by a professional body and so comes within approach 2 above.

During the early phases of trailblazer development there were no specific requirements or options for EQA. From May 2015 trailblazers were asked to include a statement as to their approach and the trailblazer guidance of December 2015 then provided for 3 of the options below (1, 2 and 4). Later, the fourth (Institute) option was added as a further option and legislation has been introduced to allow the Institute to charge for this function. In its operational plan, the Institute has said that it only intends to deliver EQA if no other options

are suitable. Trailblazers have been required to state which of the options they have decided upon and name the body to deliver EQA.

Arrangements for EQA are therefore at a variable level of development across apprenticeship standards. Some have made extensive development and have virtually completed the development work and some are still deciding upon their approach. The Institute has therefore developed this framework and guidance to set out its requirements and provide support to trailblazers and EQA bodies.

The Institute has a leading role to play in ensuring the quality of apprenticeships and all of the above methods of providing EQA. However, the Institute also offers a direct EQA Service of last resort (3 above) for those trailblazer groups which need it and cannot use one of the other 3 methods. This leaves the Institute with a potential conflict of interest because it oversees all of the approaches to EQA but operates one of them itself.

The Institute therefore intends to contract this out and to ensure that all reports of reviews go to the Institute's Quality Assurance Committee for decision. We will also ensure that the contractor reports to a 'neutral' contract management point within the Institute's staff under different line management from the assessment team.

We intend to ensure implementation of these arrangements as follows:

- From 1 June 2017 all EPA plans for new standards will be required to identify which of the four approaches they will be using and where applicable the contact details of the named individual within the body that will be responsible for undertaking the EQA on that apprenticeship standard.
- The Institute will then contact the named individual in the nominated EQA provider and ask that they set out the intended EQA process.
- Our assessment team will work with nominated external quality assurance bodies to support the development of EQA with priority given to those with apprentices due to reach EPA by December 2017.
- Trailblazer groups which have not yet named an approach/body have been asked to do so by the end of April 2017. The Institute will then contact the named individual and ask that they set out the intended EQA process, how it meets this guidance and the date by which it will be in place by the end of September 2017. For those trailblazers with apprentices in training who will reach EPA before this date, we will expect to receive proposals earlier at an appropriate date agreed with our relationship managers.
- EQA approaches will be signed off by the Institute.
- The Institute issued the specification for its own option in May 2017 and expects to have the service in place during the summer. There are a small number of standards where EPA is expected before this date. The Institute's assessment team will provide EQA for these standards up to the point that the contractor(s) are in place.
- The contractor(s) will implement EQA for those Trailblazers which have nominated the Institute approach.

Proposals from trailblazers should follow the guidance in this document and should cover:

- the approach chosen from the options above (if this is the Institute approach then they

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should explain why the other options are not appropriate)

- the EQA body **and contact details for a nominated officer (see below)**

**The EQA body should agree with the Institute an approach to:**

- monitoring and evaluation
- the proposed methods to be used to ensure validity, reliability, comparability and independence
- evaluation of assessor competence
- delivery of EQA as a service
- **reporting**
- costs

#### **4. EQA Bodies**

It is essential that trailblazers and the Institute establish robust and fit-for-purpose organisational arrangements for EQA and for governance of each standard or group of standards.

EQA bodies will need to:

- be suitable as an organisation (that is, the legal entity involved)
- be independent from delivery of end point assessment and training
- have in their employment a suitable senior nominated officer (who need not be full time on this work) responsible for the EQA contract
- have the capacity and capability to deliver the EQA service
- use effective EQA approaches and processes which deliver the processes described in their proposal
- operate cost-effectively and transparently including the requirement not to profit from EQA arrangements
- **Report findings to the Institute with evidence**

#### **5. Accountability and quality improvement**

The ESFA holds and operates the RoAAO. The Institute is responsible for agreeing the operating model for the RoAAO and for proposing the overarching quality criteria within which the ESFA should operate the RoAAO. The ESFA and the Institute will work closely together and will establish a formal two-way communication and action mechanism which allows the Institute to carry out its responsibilities under Section 2 above. DfE retains overall ownership of the Register, including agreeing all final criteria.

For options 1 and 2 the Institute will establish a relationship with the EQA structure by issuing a letter (which could be withdrawn if necessary) recognising the EQA body and referring to this guidance. For option 3 contract(s) will be in place. For option 4 the Institute will work in partnership with Ofqual. We also need to work out how the Institute will work with and receive information from Ofqual in order to take decisions and action on continuous improvement of standards and assessment plans and to instigate reviews.



For options 1, 2 and 3, we expect the EQA arrangements for continuous improvement, sanctions and action to operate as follows:

- Monitoring and evaluation: Access to assessment organisations will be secured via the ESFA Registration. Monitoring will be carried out in three ways:
  - i. EQA monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement processes carried out by the EQA body
  - ii. ESFA monitoring using data gathered about individuals, their EPA and Certification
  - iii. information gathered from apprentices and employers involved in EPA

The Institute will evaluate these sources of information and build them into a single risk and continuous improvement tool which will be used to determine next steps. This may result in either advice and agreed action plans with the assessment organisation or a more formal review.

The EQA body will act directly to continuously improve assessment delivery and assessment instruments.

Reviews carried out by the Institute may include further investigation, could involve peer review and could lead to:

- formal advisory improvements in delivery of assessment and/or
- requirements to improve delivery of assessment and/or
- changes to standards, EPA plans and/or assessment instruments and/or
- reports to the Secretary of State for Education with recommendations which could include withdrawal of the assessment organisation from the RoAAO, withdrawal of the standard and/or the EPA plan

Review reports will be considered by the Institute's Quality Assurance Committee for decision. The Committee may also consult the relevant Route Panel and the Institute may also decide to instigate peer review.

An EQA body can report a concern to the Institute at any time but the Institute will also hold regular review meetings with them in relation to the standards they cover. At these meetings the agenda will include a report of EQA activities of the past period, actions it has taken and decisions around actions needed.

## **6. External Quality Assurance body monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement processes**

EPA plans must all contain proposals for internal quality assurance. New apprenticeship standards vary from those involving many thousands of apprentices and a number of assessment organisations to those which will involve only a couple of hundred apprentices per year and one assessment organisation only. There is bound to be a large variation in what is internal versus external quality assurance and so a judgement will be required as to where a given quality assurance process best sits. We want trailblazers to propose and operate arrangements for EQA which are fit-for-purpose and proportionate. For example, a standard which had a built in position of a single assessment organisation would not need to provide EQA which used methods needed for cross-assessment organisation quality assurance.

The EQA process set out by the trailblazer should aim to provide assurance that:

1. Internal quality assurance processes prescribed in the assessment plan are being carried out, operating effectively and achieving the desired outcomes.
2. Assessors are fully occupationally competent, up to date and meet the requirements prescribed in the assessment plan.
3. All requirements of the standard in terms of achievement of gateways, qualifications and maths and English are achieved prior to sign off by the employer for EPA.
4. The Assessment Plan is valid and cost-effective in practice. This will include:
  - validity of the assessment methods used to assess occupational competence and perform the occupation in a range of real work settings in employers of any size in any relevant sector
  - coverage of the whole occupation by the assessment methods
  - holistic and synoptic assessment
  - use of a suitable range of assessment methods
5. Assessment instruments and assessments are valid across a range of real work settings and for employers of any size and in any sector. Assessment methods should be clearly aligned to the application of specific **knowledge, skills and behaviours.**
6. Assessment is carried out as far as is practicable synoptically and that this applies to at least one method of assessment of **knowledge, skills and behaviours.**
7. Assessments are reliable and comparable across different assessment organisations, employers, places, times and assessors.
8. Assessment is carried out independently in practice. This means that both the organisation and the individual assessors are independent of the delivery of training.
9. Access to assessment is fair.

The most important aspect of assessment is validity as covered in the fourth and fifth points above. The EQA body should be using their processes to focus on any evidence which informs them as to whether apprentices who have undergone EPA successfully are seen as fully occupationally competent by their own employer, other occupationally competent co-workers and recruiting employers.

EQA bodies should use a mix of methods to deal with validity, reliability and comparability. These will vary by occupational content, assessment methods chosen, volumes of apprentices and number of assessment organisations. Possible methods include:

- support for and co-ordination of assessment organisations as they develop assessment instruments
- sign-off of assessment instruments by the EQA body
- standardisation where for example assessors share their findings, observe and/or peer review each other's assessments
- moderation where an external assessor carries out some assessments across different assessment organisations
- observing a sample of assessments
- checking and/or sampling of quality records and evidence

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- training and briefing of assessors

Trailblazers/EQA bodies will need to set out how they propose to carry out EQA in their submission to the Institute.

**Once the assessment instruments are developed the Institute expects them to be signed off by the EQA body.**

The purpose of the change to EPA is to ensure that apprentices are holistically occupationally competent at the end of their apprenticeship. This relies fundamentally on the definition of the occupation, the quality of writing of the standard as well as the validity of the **EPA plan** and assessment instruments. We do not expect the EQA body to determine the position here but expect that part of their EQA process will be to gather information and to pass it to the Institute in review meetings and reports covering the acceptability of the occupation and standard in practice:

- recognition as a standalone occupation of sufficient skill and breadth which aligns with an occupation within the occupational map once that is available
- transferability of occupational competence to employers of any size in any relevant sector
- overlap with any other occupation
- securing professional recognition

It will be particularly useful to gather the views of apprentices, employers and individual assessors on these sorts of issues as EQA goes forward.

The Institute can then act on a risk-based approach to investigate further, take any necessary action and, where necessary, institute a formal review of the standard outside of the normal timetable for regular reviews.

The delivery of EPA is a customer-focused service. The operational aspects of delivery are therefore critical to quality. EQA bodies should operate a clear approach to monitoring this for each of the assessment organisations covered. The EQA organisation should monitor that:

- assessment organisations arrangements for and feedback from apprentices and employers on EPA and the standard
- assessment organisations and assessors remain independent from training delivery
- choice of assessment organisation is clearly made by the employers
- employers are signing off apprentices as ready for EPA
- the EPA organisation is in control of the end assessment processes and especially the assessors whilst they deliver EPA
- availability, occupational competence and assessment competence of assessors is acceptable and meets the assessment plan requirements
- information provided and fees charged are clear and transparent
- retakes, resits, appeals and complaints handling are operated effectively
- delivery of EPA by the assessment organisations is efficient and effective including:
  - fair access to assessment
  - booking and management of assessment

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- marking/remote assessment
  - resources for assessment
  - evidence gathering
  - issue of results and feedback
  - confidentiality
- certification including its timeliness and sign off of all requirements for entry to EPA

## 7. ESFA Monitoring

Assessment organisations must apply to be placed on the RoAAO operated by the ESFA for the **apprenticeship standards** they wish to assess. This process includes comprehensive criteria related to the organisation and for quality (which in future will be proposed by the Institute, considered by the DfE and operated by the ESFA).

The Institute is committed to working closely with Ofqual and the ESFA to develop ways of avoiding duplication of work by applicants to the RoAAO.

The ESFA will monitor assessment organisations as set out below:

- suitability of the assessment organisation including:
  - criminality or illegality of the organisation and its senior officers
  - control and changes of control of the legal entity, mergers, consortia etc
  - financial viability, bankruptcy, administration
  - independence from training delivery
  - the single responsible officer for EPA quality
- standards for which each assessment organisation is licensed to deliver EPA
- geographical coverage of each assessment organisation
- volumes of EPAs delivered
- apprentice certificates claimed/issued
- profile of assessment organisations engaged by employers
- assessment organisations which have not been engaged
- assessment organisations offering/delivering on programme support

- trends in packaging and costs of EPA
- conversion rates from employer sign-off to EPAs undertaken to successful assessment
- use of subcontractors

A data-sharing agreement will be put in place between the ESFA and the Institute. We will also look to extend this to EQA bodies so that information can be shared between the ESFA, the Institute and EQA bodies.

## **8. Information gathered from apprentices and employers involved in End Point Assessment**

The ESFA will also require assessment organisations to gather feedback from apprentices and employers on EPA. Section 6 gives EQA bodies a responsibility to check this.

It is also intended to establish a process of asking apprentices and employers for views on EPA as a part of the 2017 to 2018 (Learner and Employer) Satisfaction Surveys. The questions used will focus on:

- the quality and delivery of EPA
- the tools used for assessment
- the occupation and standard
- future prospects of the apprentice

# Annex G: Template for an end-point assessment (EPA) plan (word version available on guidance webpage)

A good EPA plan will concisely:

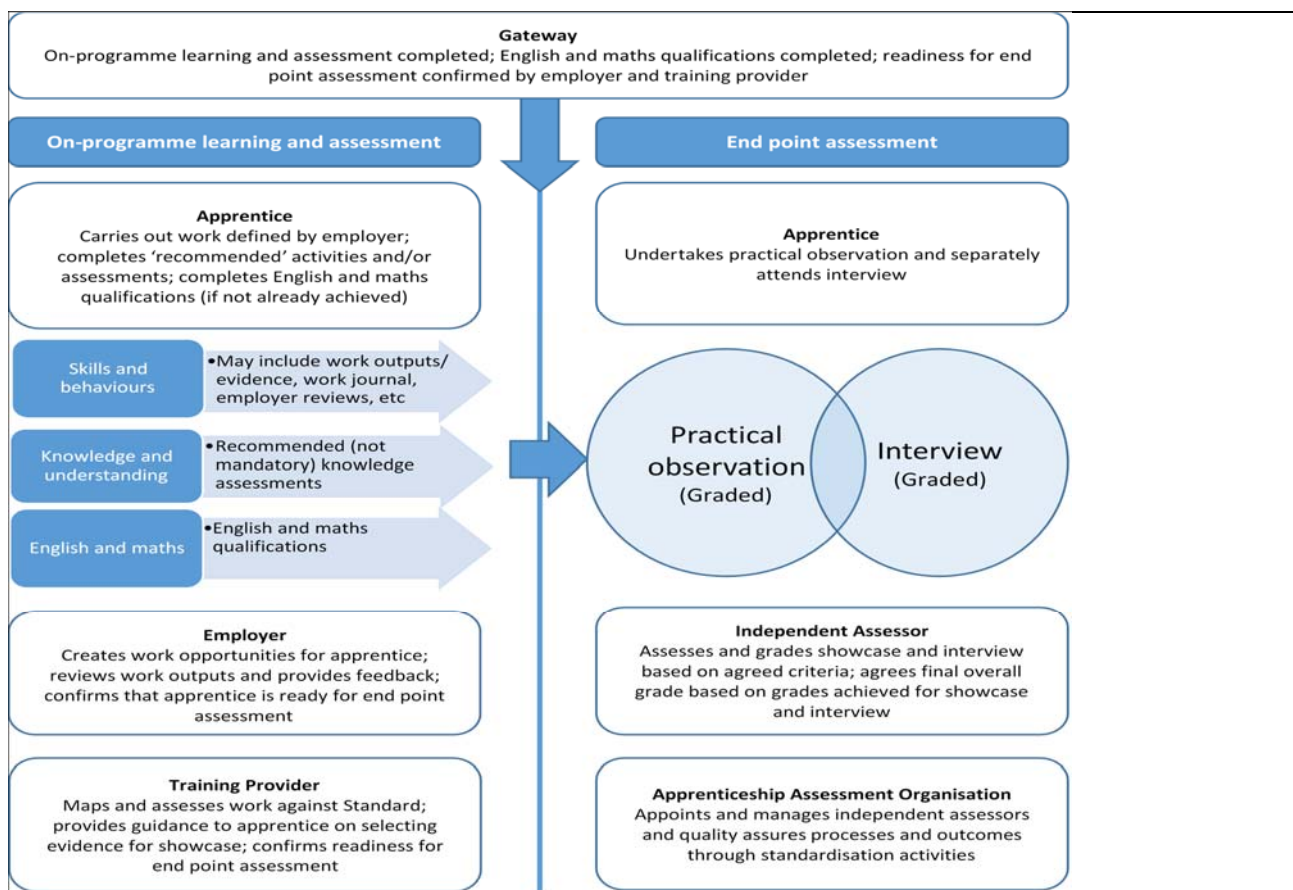
- Explain what will be assessed (which **knowledge, skills and behaviours** listed on the standard, and giving more detail if needed) by each assessment method
- Explain how the apprentice will be assessed (which methods will be used at the end of the apprenticeship to judge competency)
- Indicate who will carry out the end-point assessment (who will be the assessor(s) for each aspect of the EPA)
- Propose internal and external quality assurance arrangements to make sure that EPAs are reliable and consistent across different locations, employers, and training and assessment organisations

The template below has been provided to help you include the detail behind the above points. You should aim for your EPA plan to be no more than 10 pages long.

**EPA PLAN FOR [name of standard including level]**

**Summary of assessment**

*Provide a short introduction and a clear paragraph explaining how the EPA will work. It is also often useful to include a suggested timeline/flowchart/diagram for the apprenticeship in this section (see illustrative examples below and overleaf), so the apprentice has an understanding of when the EPA phase of the apprenticeship will begin.*



*It should be noted that on-programme learning and assessment cannot be mandated unless specified in the standard.*

*The table below sets out the key areas to highlight in the plan.*

**EPA overview** [set out key assessment information]

Assessment Method	Area Assessed	Assessed by	Grading	Weighting <i>(please delete column if not needed)</i>
<i>e.g. Online test</i>	<i>What skills / knowledge / behaviours are being assessed?</i>	<i>Independent Assessment Organisation</i>	<i>Fail/Pass/Merit/Distinction</i>	<i>65%</i>
<i>e.g. Professional Discussion</i>	<i>What skills / knowledge / behaviours are being assessed?</i>	<i>Independent Assessment organisation</i>	<i>Fail/Pass/Merit/Distinction</i>	<i>35%</i>

**On-programme Assessment** *[if applicable]*

- Include a brief description of any mandatory qualifications that must be undertaken as a pre-requisite to taking the EPA. Any mandated qualifications included here must also appear on the corresponding standard. Any recommendations for on-programme assessment should be

included in a separate document and not in the EPA plan. You may include a hyperlink to such a document which must be freely available to all employers.

### **Assessment gateway**

- What will trigger the apprentice being put forward for the EPA?
- Who will make the judgement?
- Include meeting the relevant English and maths requirements as part of the gateway

### **End-point assessment**

#### ***What***

- What is each method assessing – please be explicit about which knowledge, skills and/or behaviours in the published standard each method is testing?
- Who sets the parameters for each assessment method – will this be individual assessment organisations or are the parameters set in the EPA plan itself?

#### ***How***

- How will the ‘what’ be assessed? What methods will be used, over what time period will the end-point assessment take place, and what is the duration of each assessment method? For example, assessment over one day or one week?
- What assessment tools will be used?
- What will the apprentice have to do exactly?
- Where will the assessment take place?
- How will the assessment be undertaken by all employers; regardless of their size (e.g. can some methods be undertaken remotely?)

#### ***Who***

- Who will carry out the assessment, and how will they demonstrate independence from those conducting the training.
- If there are a number of assessors, such as in a panel arrangement, explain how they will work together and who has the casting vote.
- Are there any minimum requirements for assessors? e.g. sector knowledge, assessor qualification, experience?
- Is all of this information set out clearly so it can be evaluated as part of the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO) application process.

### **End-point – final judgement**

- *Who makes the final decision about whether the apprentice has passed? Which organisation/s will sit on the RoAAO?*



## Independence

- Who is providing the independent EPA?
- What is their relationship to the apprentice? What level of independence and impartiality do they have?
- How is this deliverable for all employers?
- How will this work in niche sectors with a potentially limited pool of assessors?

## End-point – grading

- How will the grade be decided and is each assessment weighted (if not equally)?
- Who decides the grade?
- Ensure there are clear grading criteria, which differentiate the requirements for pass, merit and/or distinction to ensure a consistent approach to determining how to grade an apprentice. For instance, what do the grades above pass look like and how are they determined?
- Avoid simply using words such as 'good', 'excellent', 'in-depth' performance without examples of what this means, as they are otherwise open to interpretation.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to cap an apprentice's grade at 'pass' if they have to do a re-sit or re-take, as the apprentice may have failed for reasons beyond their control
- Consider whether it is helpful for all parties to know the outcome of one assessment method before the apprentice moves on to the next assessment method if the apprentice is required to pass all elements in order to pass the EPA overall.

## Professional body recognition

At what level will the apprentice be recognised by the Professional Body upon completion of the apprenticeship? Have the relevant professional bodies confirmed that the EPA plan will lead to this level of professional status?

## End-point – summary of roles and responsibilities (set out the role of each organisation/person involved in assessment)

Assessor	Role
<i>e.g. Employer</i>	
<i>e.g. Training Provider</i>	
<i>e.g. Assessment Organisation</i>	

## Internal Quality Assurance

- How should an assessment organisation internally provide quality assurance? This could include your approach to internal sample checking or moderation meetings between assessors.
- What essential skills, knowledge and experience must competent assessors hold?

## External quality assurance (EQA)

- Flag that EQA must be conducted on a non-profit basis.
- How will quality be assured between assessment organisations?
- Which one of the four options will you select?
- If adopting an employer-led approach, set out exactly what will be covered by your EQA process such as readiness for EPA, assessment materials, internal quality assurance, data and compliance, how membership will be decided (confirming that there will be SME representation) and your approach to sampling.
- If your preference is for Ofqual to oversee your EQA, you will need to provide a letter from them, confirming that they have agreed to do this.
- If your preference is for a professional body to oversee your EQA, you will need to provide a letter from them, confirming that they have agreed to do this.
- We would expect the Institute to be named as the EQA organisation only in instances where none of the above alternatives are viable.

## Implementation

- **Affordability:** What are the likely costs for EPA and what percentage of the overall fundable cost of the apprenticeship is likely to be on assessment? (The total cost for EPA should not exceed 20%). This should include the cost of EQA.
- **Consistency:** How is the EPA deliverable across the country and in a variety of businesses to the same standard of competence?
- **Volumes:** How many starts on your apprenticeship are expected in the first year, and once the apprenticeship is fully established?

## Annex

- Please only include information essential to the EPA. Hyperlinks can be used but all additional documents should be freely available from the point at which the EPA plan is published. Information in the annex should be supplementary for the EPA and should not contain information on any suggested on-programme curriculum.

## **Annex H: Trailblazer small business travel fund - guidance for claimants** (word version available on [guidance webpage](#))

The purpose of this fund is to support the involvement of small businesses in the work of apprenticeship trailblazers.

The Institute expects all parties travelling as part of the scheme to take appropriate and justifiable spending decisions, weighing up the balance between value for money and business benefit. No one should either benefit or be out of pocket as a result of undertaking business travel as part of this scheme. As such, all travel and subsistence claims should be based on receipted costs incurred as a result of travel between your home or office and an eligible meeting (defined below).

The fund is open to small employer trailblazer members (that is with under 50 employees) to claim for travel in instances where:

- attendance at the meeting is critical
- the meeting will cover discussion of apprenticeship standards (or their related end-point assessment plans and implementation)
- options for conducting the meeting remotely have been fully explored

As the fund is small, and in order to ensure robust management of public money, eligibility will be kept under review by the Institute. If you are unsure about whether an expense is eligible under the scheme, in the first instance, you should check with your relationship manager, ideally before the expenditure is incurred. As a guide, claims will be paid for a maximum of two attendees per employer at each meeting. The Institute expects all expenditure to be supported via original itemised receipts, which should be forwarded to the address below, together with a completed claim form, within 28 days of the expense being incurred:

Standards Development Team  
Institute for Apprenticeships  
151 Buckingham Palace Road  
London SW1W 9SZ

Claims will be processed at the beginning of each month and we reserve the right to refuse unreasonable claims for expenses which fall outside the criteria defined below.

### **Rail travel entitlements**

The Institute will pay for any actual costs incurred for rail travel, on the basis that:

- tickets are purchased as far in advance as possible and for the least cost possible;
- first Class rail travel will not be covered by the Institute in full or in part unless doing so would constitute a 'reasonable adjustment' under the Equality Act (for example due to injury or pregnancy).

## Mileage entitlements

If you use your own car (or another suitable vehicle such as a motorcycle) for a trailblazer meeting, you can claim motor mileage allowance.

The Institute pays the maximum rates allowable under the HM Revenue and Customs Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) scheme.

Cars and Vans	Standard rate for the first 10,000 miles in the tax year	45p per mile
	Lower standard rate for each additional mile over 10,000 miles	25p per mile
Motorcycles		24p per mile
Bicycles		20p per mile

The standard rate of motor mileage allowance is paid if:

- you are driving your own car
- you are using the car for a journey where it is reasonable and cost effective to travel by car
- you have suitable comprehensive insurance which allows for business use
- you have not exceeded the current 10,000 mile per tax year threshold

The lower standard rate of motor mileage allowance is paid if:

- you have exceeded the 10,000-mile threshold at standard rate, or
- you have only third party insurance cover which allows for business use, or
- you are using the car for a journey where it was not cost-effective or reasonable to do so, or where there are suitable and convenient public transport alternatives.

The Institute reserves the right to reject a mileage claim, where there is clear evidence that other forms of transport offer better value for money and represent better use of public money. If you are unsure whether this applies to your claim, please speak to your relationship manager.

## Insurance

When you use your vehicle for business, you must have adequate insurance cover which allows business use. When claiming mileage allowance, you must declare that you understand the insurance requirements and that you have adequate cover.

The Institute does not accept or have any liability in the event of any accident, damage, injury or death, beyond that which would exist if the car had not been used. Any additional liability that arises as a result of an individual using their own car has to be insured by the individual.

### **Garage expenses, tolls and ferries.**

If you use a car on trailblazer business you can claim the cost of garaging and parking fees, Congestion Zone charges, tolls and ferry charges. The rules vary depending on the motor mileage allowance payable, as follows:

- for journeys which attract standard rate, full cost may be reimbursed. Receipts should be produced (but not for parking meter charges which will be reimbursed without receipts);
- in other cases, the full cost may be met only if the total of the mileage allowance and the other charges does not exceed the cost of the journey by public transport.

### **Domestic Flight entitlements**

The Institute is committed to spending taxpayers' money wisely. As such, the most economical method of travel must always be considered. Approval for the use of a domestic flight must be sought from your relationship manager prior to travel, should only be used for journeys greater than 250 miles and selected on the basis of:

- value for money
- convenience
- the absence of more practical or cheaper forms of transport

### **Further queries**

If you have any further queries, please email them to:  
[apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@education.gov.uk)

## **Institute for Apprenticeships – Travel claim form for trailblazer small business travel fund**

### **Section 1 – Claimant’s Details**

<b>Full Name</b>	
<b>Company Name</b>	
<b>Trailblazer</b>	
<b>Office Address</b>	
<b>VAT Number (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Telephone Number</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	

### **Section 2 – Travel Expenses**

Method of Travel:

Train     Own Motor Vehicle     Flight     Other

<b>Date</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	<b>Sub Total (£)</b>
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
<b>Total</b>				

### Section 3 – Use of Private Motor Vehicle

<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	
<b>Date of Travel</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<b>Miles Travelled</b>	
<b>Rate (please refer to guidance for current rates)</b>	
<b>Sub Total (mileage x rate)</b>	£
<b>Carp Parking Expenses</b>	£
<b>Total (mileage + carp parking)</b>	£

#### Additional Vehicle Details

<b>Cumulative Total Mileage claimed at full rate this year</b>	
<b>Engine Capacity (cc)</b>	

### Section 4 – Method of Payment

<b>Bank/Building Society Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Account Holder</b>	
<b>Sort Code</b>	
<b>Account Number</b>	

### Section 5 – Declaration

I declare that the expenses detailed above are correct in accordance with the trailblazer small business travel fund expense policy and were actually and necessarily incurred by me on trailblazer business. I have not previously claimed for any item on this claim. Any mileage allowance claimed is in respect of a vehicle I know to be adequately insured for official business use and I have a current driving licence and up to date MOT for the vehicle.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send your completed claim form and original receipts to:**

Standards Development Team  
Institute for Apprenticeships  
151 Buckingham Palace Road  
London SW1W 9SZ

INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

151 Buckingham Palace Rd,  
London SW1W 9SZ

Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Rd,  
Coventry CV1 2WT