

## Assistant Practitioner (Health) Apprenticeship: An Employer's Brief on the new Standard at level 5



### Introduction

New Apprenticeship Standards are being developed in England which will, ultimately, replace the apprenticeship frameworks. An independent review of Apprenticeships by Doug Richard in 2012 sought to develop a world class Apprenticeship system in England, offering young people a real alternative to University, and employers a 'job ready' pipeline of workers. The final report resulted in a series of recommendations designed to make Apprenticeships more rigorous and more responsive; notably putting you, the employers, in control.

A series of groups, known as 'Trailblazers,' were set up to develop the new Apprenticeship Standards. A Standard is a short document describing the knowledge, skills and behaviours that an apprentice should achieve by the end of their apprenticeship. The government requires that all apprenticeships contain an independent end-point assessment. Each Standard is accompanied by an assessment plan which sets out the requirements for this holistic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship. Read more in the [guidance for trailblazers](#).

The Healthcare Trailblazer developed the Apprenticeship for Assistant Practitioners as part of a two year project, also developing Apprenticeships for Healthcare Support Workers and Senior Healthcare Support Workers. The Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard is at level 5.

**The occupational profile for Assistant Practitioners** is outlined in the Standard as follows:

Assistant Practitioners work as part of the wider health and social care team and have direct contact with patients, service users or clients providing high quality and compassionate care. Assistant Practitioners work at a level above that of Healthcare Support Workers and have a more in-depth understanding about factors that influence health and ill-health (e.g. anatomy and physiology). Assistant Practitioner is a job title applied to a very wide variety of roles that have been developed locally by employers to meet individual service need. Upon successful completion of this standard, individuals will have obtained the core skills, knowledge and values/behaviours to become an Assistant Practitioner. Examples of common work activities include assisting in total patient assessment, coordination of care (including referrals to other practitioners) and higher clinical skills such as catheterisation, wound care and discharge planning. Assistant Practitioners can be found working in a range of areas such as Cancer Services, Physiotherapy, Genito- Urinary Medicine, Orthopaedics, Hospice Care, Mental Health, Social Care, Community, Occupational Therapy, Learning Disabilities as well as hybrid roles that cross traditional occupational areas. Assistant Practitioners will therefore develop additional skills and knowledge based on their employer's requirements depending on the clinical or professional area within which they are working.

A range of employers representing NHS Trusts, General Practice, independent providers and hospices have been leading the way in designing the Apprenticeship, facilitated by Skills for Health and in partnership with Health Education England. Unions and professional bodies have also been part of the development group.

These employers are involved in providing primary, secondary and tertiary care in acute and community settings delivering physical and mental health services to children, young people and adults. The Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship is therefore applicable to a wide range of contexts.

The Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard is a short document that provides a high level description of the skills, knowledge, values and behaviours required of the Assistant Practitioner. The assessment plan describes how the apprentice is assessed at the end of their Apprenticeship and by whom.

**The Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan can be downloaded [here](#).**

The Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship has been approved for delivery by the Government. This means that the employers can work with training providers and organisations which provide apprentice end point assessment to prepare for delivery. The Skills Funding Agency hold registers for approved training providers and approved end point assessment organisations.

On completion of this level 5 Apprenticeship the apprentice will be a job-ready Assistant Practitioner.

### **How does it work?**

During the Apprenticeship, the employer must ensure that the apprentice is given education and training opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours described in the Assistant Practitioner

Apprenticeship Standard. The time taken to complete the Apprenticeship will vary but it must last for a *minimum of 18 months*. The government requires that a minimum of 20% of the apprentice's time must be protected and away from the immediate demands of the job in order to develop the required knowledge and skills but it is for employers to design how this is delivered.

Assistant Practitioner Apprentices must achieve the mandatory accredited level 5 occupational competence qualifications such as a Foundation Degree, other Level 5 Diploma of Higher Education or the Level 5 Diploma for Assistant Practitioners in Healthcare.

When the employer, the training provider and the apprentice are confident that the apprentice is competent the apprentice reaches the gateway to the end-point assessment. An assessor from the end point assessment organisation who has not been involved in the delivery of the Apprenticeship will then independently assess the apprentice. The end-point assessment conducted by the end-point organisation assessor is made up of three parts:

1. A multiple choice and short answer test which assesses the apprentice's knowledge from across the Standard.
2. An observation of practice which allows the apprentice to demonstrate their skills and behaviours.
3. A final interview and a reflective journal which allow the apprentice to showcase their knowledge, skills, behaviours and values from across the Standard.

The flow diagram at the end of this brief sets out the end to end journey of the Assistant Practitioner apprentice.

## **Funding**

Below is a very brief overview of funding arrangements. Individual enquiries should be addressed to [nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk)

Employers and the government will co-invest in apprenticeships. The employer contribution will become available through the Apprenticeship levy. All employers with a payroll over £3million will be subject to the levy from April 2017. They will pay a 0.5% tax on payroll which they will only be able to claim back as digital 'vouchers' for Apprenticeships.

Levy funding can only be used to pay for recognised training providers to deliver training, education and assessment required to deliver the Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship. Funding pays for training and assessment only, not salary costs. The employer is able to negotiate with the training provider to determine the exact cost of training and assessment, however if the cost exceeds the funding band allocated by the Skills Funding Agency, the employer will be required to pay the additional amount. Employers may also need to carry out a tendering process in relation to this.

The funding band allocation for the Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship is band 10 (max £12,000).

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-changes> for more details about the levy and funding arrangements.

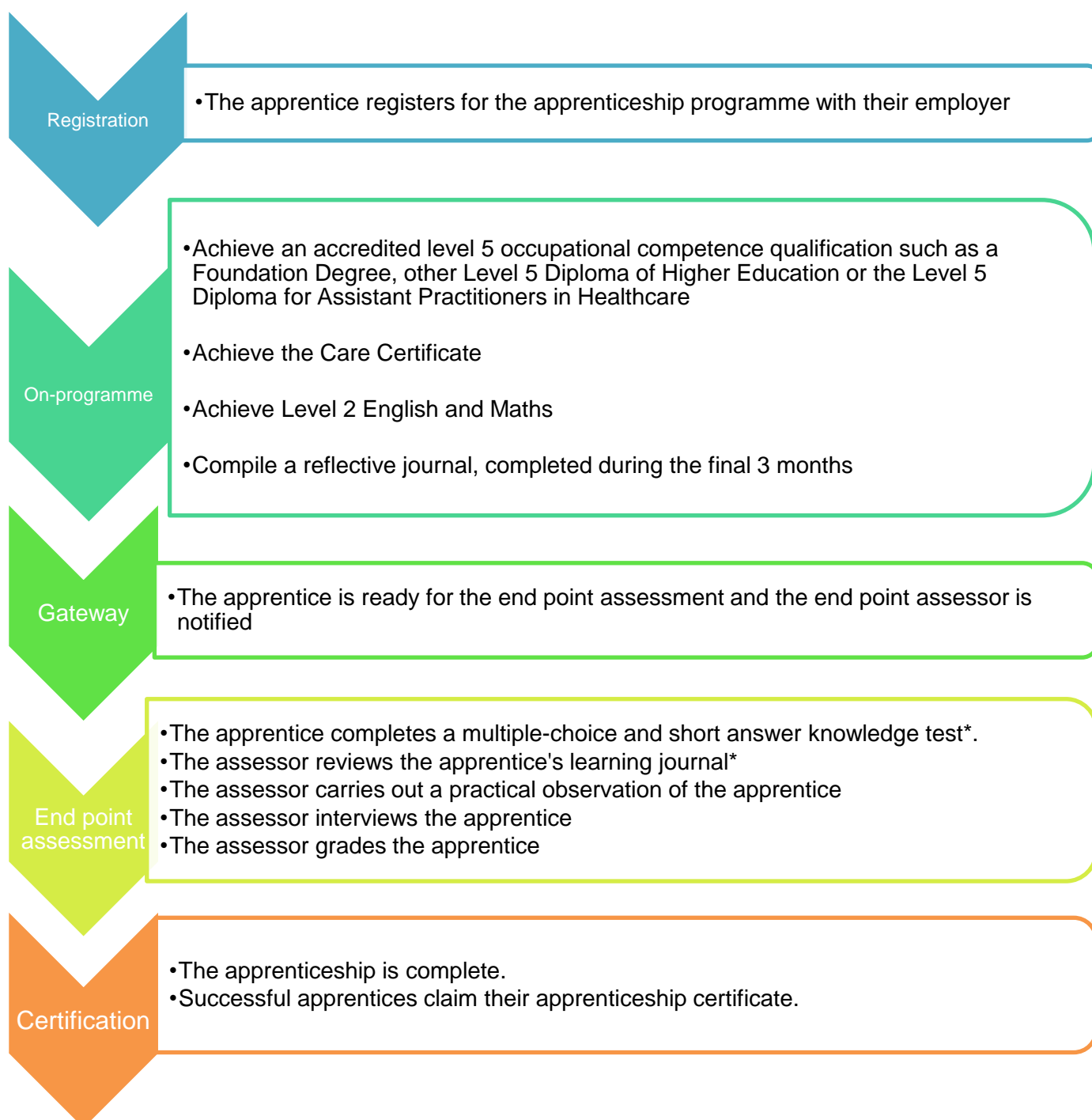
### Getting started

As the Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard and the Assessment Plan have been approved for delivery by the government, employers, training providers and end point assessment organisations can begin to work together to prepare for implementation. There will not be a national launch and there will be no 'go live' date. The pace and time taken to get ready for delivery of the Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship will vary according to local conditions. You can be preparing to use the new Apprenticeship now and can start Assistant Practitioner apprentices whenever you, your training provider and your end point assessment organisation are ready

### Top tips for employers in getting started:

- **Get familiar** with the Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan.
- **Start talking** in your organisation about how the Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship fits with your workforce plans
- Talk with training providers – **remember you are the customer** and you should be negotiating with providers on what you want delivered and how much you will pay.
- **Think about how you will provide pastoral support** and confidence building to prepare the candidate.
- **Think about end point assessment.** You will be able to choose (from an approved Skills Funding Agency list) which organisation you want do your apprentice end point assessment
- **Set a realistic start date** for your organisation to start apprentices on the Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship. You might decide to start with a small pilot cohort. If you are used to using Apprenticeship Frameworks this should mark your transition date from 'Frameworks' to 'Apprenticeship Standards'.
- **Recognise** that current frameworks are being switched off. For the latest status/final start dates see *here*: <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/standards/item/211-apprenticeship-frameworks-england>

## End-to-end journey of the Assistant Practitioner apprentice



\*The sequencing of these events may vary according to local arrangements.