



AELP Webinar: Future Apprenticeships: Frameworks to Standards – what you need to know
Questions and Answers

Webinar Chair: Mike Cox, AELP

Guest speakers: Benita Notley, Head of Apprenticeship Reform and Standards, Skills Funding Agency and David Gaughan, Director of Apprenticeships at Leeds City College

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Details of the introduction of the Institute of Apprenticeships can be found in the 2020 vision document:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482754/BIS-15-604-english-apprenticeships-our-2020-vision.pdf

Q: What do you think the critical success factors will be for providers?

A: Discussed on live webinar. The changes affect a whole organisation so in tune with best practice for change management the whole organisation must be involved in bringing success.

Q: Just interested in how micro businesses are going to cope with these changes.

A: Providers will need to continue to help employers understand the system.

Q: How will this effect and Benefit SME's?

A: The changes from frameworks to standards should be putting employers of all sizes in the driving seat. The positive affect should be that the new standards are closer to the jobs that SMEs want to fill. There will be challenges around cash flow and administrative burdens to work through. I feel the positive or negative impact of the reforms will only become clear in the years to come.

Q: Currently we are not an apprenticeship provider. We would like to learn about how to implement an apprenticeship framework from scratch?

A: Existing apprenticeship providers should be able to give valuable advice.

There are lots of useful resources on the Apprenticeship Staff Support Programme website:

<http://www.apprenticeship-staff-support.co.uk/>

Q: Can a Training provider (organisation) also be an assessment organization if the end point assessor has not been involved in delivery?

A: Employers will select end-point assessment organisations and these must be chosen from the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations and approved to deliver the particular standard. There is an expectation that assessments will either be delivered by an independent third party, or in such a way that no party who has been involved in the management or training of the apprentice can make the sole decision on competence and passing the end-point assessment. Individual assessment plans will provide details on the arrangements for each standard and any organisation seeking to become an end-point assessment must be familiar with the specific requirements of the standard and the assessment plan.

Q: Are the expected employer contributions for large employers coming from the levy or are they in addition to the levy? Have SME employer contributions been agreed? What is the criteria for end point assessment organisations?

A: The apprenticeship standards funding model which will support the apprenticeship levy to be introduced in April 2017 and the apprenticeship funding model for non-levy paying employers has to be confirmed.

The standards funding rules for 15/16 and 16/17 are available on direct.gov.

The criteria for becoming an end-point assessment organisation is available on the SFA website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-apprentice-assessment-organisations>

Q: How do you become an End assessment Centre?

A: See response above.

Q: Who can become an assessing body under these new standards?

A: All types of organisation can apply to the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations providing they meet the criteria set out in the application process. Currently a range of organisations are approved to deliver end-point assessment, these include awarding organisations, colleges and other training providers and professional bodies.

Q: Apart from occupational competency, what is required by an organisation undertaking end point assessment eg assessment qualifications etc?

A: Full details of the criteria used to assessment applications to the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations is available on gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-apprentice-assessment-organisations>

End-point assessment plans will also outline requirements for assessment organisations.

Q: What about regulation of end point assessors?

A: There are likely to be a range of approaches to external regulation of end-point assessment; Trailblazers are currently developing models. This may include asking Ofqual to oversee external quality assurance.

Q: Will there be any standardisation between assessments centres for the same standard?

A: Guidance for Trailblazers, December 2015 includes the requirement to identify external quality

assurance covering all of the assessment organisations delivering a particular standard. This is to ensure consistency of quality and approach to assessment across a standard, regardless of which assessment organisation has delivered the assessment and where and when the end-point assessment is carried out.

Q: Will the end assessment centre be part of independent Ofsted inspection?

A: From 2020 Vision Doc – “We will continue to rely on Ofsted to inspect and report on apprenticeship training provision up to level 3 and on Ofqual to regulate any qualifications included in apprenticeships. We continue to talk to both Ofsted and Ofqual about the impact of the reforms on their inspection and regulation frameworks, to ensure these remain fit for purpose in this context.”

Q: How will the reliability and validity of end assessments be assured?

A: See responses above.

Q: Is there a minimum quality standard providers will need to meet to qualify to register on the DAS?

A: The criteria for becoming an end-point assessment organisation is available on direct.gov. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-apprentice-assessment-organisations>
End-point assessment plans will also outline requirements for assessment organisations.

Q: Is it correct that funding for the current SASE frameworks will not be withdrawn 2017/18.

A: There is a commitment to switch over to standards over life of parliament, with majority by 2017/18. Funding for some frameworks may be switched off ahead of 17/18 – suitable notice will be given where this is the case.

Q: Will the SASE frameworks and current funding still be available?

A: See response above.

Q: Isn't it the case that employers have been in the driving seat regarding apprenticeship design through the sector skills councils?

A: The reform process aims to further strengthen employer ownership.

Q: The same could be said of the SASE frameworks. Some don't meet employer needs but many do.

A: Standards should build on existing good practice.

Q: Is grading correct and fair? Would I as an employer or customer want a third rate (pass) student or tradesperson?

A: Grading was introduced to apprenticeships to recognise exemplary achievement. A pass in any apprenticeship must demonstrate full competency against the standard.

Q: In addition to what's required to become an independent centre, is there any guidance yet for organisations that are looking to practice?

A: Providers can access support through the Future Apprenticeships Support Programme.
<http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/future-apprenticeships/>

Q: Will employer and provider staff be adequately trained for the new system? Will there be sufficient numbers of independent assessors to implement the new system?

A: Providers can access support through the Future Apprenticeships Support Programme.

As the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations develops and more standards come into scope, the SFA is monitoring the Register to ensure that all standards have end-point assessment organisations. It is the responsibility of the end-point organisations to ensure they have an appropriate number of staff to undertake end-point assessment. But again, this is also something we will monitor.

Q: Given that up to 80% of training can be on-programme and on-the-job, will employers be able to draw down funding for their own training costs? Or put themselves forward as paid sub-contractors to Lead Provider?

A: Providers should refer to the current funding rules.

Q: Does this mean that there is no longer a role for the awarding bodies?

A: The role of Awarding Organisations in relation to qualifications delivered within apprenticeships remains the same. Awarding Organisations may also apply to become Assessment Organisations.

Q: Does the cap band include the E&M funding and ALS funding or are they paid out on top?

A: English and maths up to level 2 is fully funded in 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017 funding years and not part of the co-payment element, as is learning support. If an apprenticeship standard requires English and maths to be taken at level 3 and above this will be included in the co-payment arrangements between the employer and the provider.

Q: How will providers access the E&M funding and what will the rates be?

A: Providers should refer to the funding rules.

Q: As a business we offer a free recruitment service for 16-18s and 'persuade' small businesses to create those opportunities. We feel that most if not all will not pay their contribution at the start of the recruitment process. Has the impact on 16-18 recruitment been understood with these proposed changes? Many providers may decide that they cannot run a free service and risk then losing the apprenticeship to a provider who bids lower and 'poaches' the learner as they have not incurred the recruitment costs.

A: Co-payment **cannot** be used for recruitment services. Providers should refer to the funding rules.

Q: Will small businesses therefore have £15k to spend on apprenticeships as a given allowance? Will this cover just their 1/3 or the whole amount?

A: Employers have an allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment. It is only used to calculate their annual levy payment. It works just like the personal allowance in normal personal taxation to offset eligibility for the tax. It is not collected and does not pass into the DAS, the levy payments do.

The funding model to support the apprenticeship levy paying and non-levy paying employers has to be confirmed. – Levy to be introduced 2017.

Q: If an employer is looking to recruit multiple apprentices do they have to go through the process individually or can they create a multiple application which involves engaging one provider with delivery?

A: The Digital Apprenticeship service is being developed taking into account the different recruitment needs of employers.

Q: Did I get that right - employers with a turnover at £3m plus pay the levy?

A: No, employers with a payroll of £3M plus will pay 0.5% of their total payroll to the HMRC as levy – it is not linked to turnover.

Q: What about where no trailblazer has replaced an existing framework?

A: SFA and BIS are looking to ensure that there will be a standard for EVERY framework. The current list is here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

Employers are encouraged to develop standards, see the guidance for more details on the process <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-guidance-for-trailblazers>

Q: What role do you see for the College in delivering synoptic assessments in the new trailblazers?

A: Colleges can apply to become end-point assessment organisations however, they would need to meet the requirements – see above. Providers should ensure that their learners are ready for the assessment, ‘mock’ assessment processes may be a useful tool gauge their readiness. Providers will also be able to advise employers on which assessment organisation offers the best service.

Q: What will Levy money be used for? What happens with employers who pay the levy but don’t have apprentices?

A: All employers who pay the Levy will be encouraged to take on apprentices to cover their spend on the levy. The levy is ring fenced for apprenticeship delivery.

Q: Trailblazers are driven by large employers in sectors and what research has been done to suggest that SME's will engage AT ALL with the new funding model and the lack of an accredited qualification?

A: Trailblazers should be representative of the industry and must include or consult with small employers where they exist.

Q: Is there any guidance yet on how Ofsted fits into this delivery model?

A: See response above.

Q: Can you explain the QA arrangements for independent assessment? Is there a danger that

without a robust QA framework quality will actually go into decline?

A: See responses above.

Q: Would large employers include colleges who have a paybill over £3mill?

A: Colleges with a paybill of over £3M will be required to pay the levy.

Q: Is there potential for a conflict of interest if the End assessment centre is within an FE environment?

A: See responses above.

Q: Who will quality assure the work of colleges as providers of independent assessment?

A: See responses above.

Q: Will these reforms improve accessibility and funding to the above 25 age bracket? Surely part of the strategy to meet the growing skills gap in the UK is to get people on low incomes/income support retrained into higher skilled/demand jobs.

A: We hope that the reforms will increase the number of people over 25 who are benefiting from an apprenticeship.

Q: How will English and Maths be treated within trailblazer standards?

A: Standards include details of the English and maths requirements, either at the minimum level set by government for all apprentices, or above the minimum level if required by the Trailblazer. The former are as follows and apply to all apprentices following standards unless already achieved:

- 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

Q: Will learners with NVQs now be able to do an apprenticeship assuming there is no NVQ to be delivered under Standards?

A: All learners should have an initial assessment before being enrolled to ensure that the apprenticeship they are doing is at an appropriate level. Funding will only be available where the individual requires at least a year of training (before the end-point assessment), with off-the-job training accounting for a least 20% of the apprenticeship.

Q: If large employers funding amount is dictated by their levy - could this potentially motivate them to recruit FEWER apprentices?

A: Employers who pay the levy and are committed to apprenticeship training will be able to get out more than they pay in.

Q: Do you envisage Awarding body organisations becoming Assessment centres?

A: See response above.

Q: Will colleges who offer end assessment be subject to regulation from Ofqual or another

regulator?

A: See response above

Q: How can existing subcontractors without a direct SFA contract begin to pilot trailblazer apprenticeships?

A: This should be through an agreement between them and their lead provider.

Q: How many trailblazer standards do you envisage there will be in total?

A: There is not a pre-determined number of standards that will be developed.

Q: One of the answers just suggested that maths and English are optional. My understanding is that they are mandatory. Some of the early standards don't specifically say this because the early guidance said you didn't need to if not requiring more than the minimum. They are mandatory for all apprentices.

A: See response above – Minimum English and maths requirements apply to all standards.

Q: Will a lead provider be able to become an Assessment centre for its subcontractors?

A: See responses above.

Q: How have the estimated costs for end assessment been determined?

A: BIS/SFA officials allocate funding caps to each apprenticeship standard before apprentices can be started on an apprenticeship. The funding cap is the maximum government contribution towards on programme delivery and end point assessment of the apprenticeship standard. Funding caps are allocated using the nearest current SASE framework and a set of economic indicators to determine the cap. The actual cost for both on programme costs and end point assessment will be subject to negotiation between the employer and their lead provider. The employer must contribute £1 for every £2 of government contribution towards the agreed cost of the apprenticeship. Government will contribute up to the funding cap.

Q: Employers will need more 16-18yr olds to end up cash positive - what is being done to promote apprenticeships in schools?

A: There is considerable work being done to improve IAG in schools and there is currently a Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy - Careers advice, information and guidance - <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-skills-and-economy/news-parliament-2015/career-advice-evidence-15-16/> that I would encourage you to respond to.

Q: Sometimes there is a disconnect between vacancies that employers have and the jobs young people want to do. How will an employer-led system take account of that?

A. I am not sure that any system will be able to meet the aspirations that some young people have on what careers they want.

Q: Are these models suitable for companies to upskill existing staff in addition to employing new apprentices?

A. Yes, if they require significant learning.

Q: In our sector a group of employers have created a trailblazer and are now in the process of creating themselves as an entity, can employers become the assessors?

A. A group of employers could apply to the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations see above.

Q: What implications do these changes have on apprenticeships in Wales?

A. Individual nations will need to confirm whether they will fund a standard. The Levy is UK wide.

Q: What is an SME - number of employees in this context?

A: An SME is generally an organisation with less than 250 employees. To note, the levy is determined by payroll rather than size.

Q: Given SME reluctance to pay for training, wont engaging SME with employees e.g. aged 25+ be a huge risk?

A: Providers should be clear about the requirements for payment before entering into an agreement.

Q: Do you have to be an employer provider- i.e. have an SFA contract to become an assessment centre?

A: An employer-provider could apply to the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations see above.

Q: Is there criteria for the individuals completing the end point assessment? How do we know if our staff have the skills/competency/expertise to conduct this?

A: See responses above

Q: Are TPs paid if they become end point assessment centres?

A: The cost of end-point assessment is subject to negotiation between the employer and end-point assessment organisation. Assessment organisations must be on the SFA Register of Assessment Organisations and approved to deliver a particular standard.

Q: What's the approval process for the organisations wanting to deliver the On Programme training (and assessment)?

A: The current checks and processes will still apply to providers under the new standards, but they will of course also need to get agreement from an employer. Where qualifications are included in the standards, organisations will still need to have centre and qualification approval from the awarding organisation.

Q: If two companies - provider and assessor - make reciprocal agreements surely this would no longer be independent. Who monitors the independence?

A: See responses above regarding external quality assurance of end-point assessment.

Q: Who 'chooses' the end point assessment organisation for a specific Apprentice (an individual), who pays and is this from the overall 'pot' of funding?

A: The assessment organisation is chosen by the employer however, the provider could advise.

Q: Will vocational qualifications linked with apprenticeship frameworks all need to be re-written?

A: Not all standards have qualifications as part of them, but where they do many are being revised to better fit the requirements of the standards.

Q: What about moving from level 2 to level 3?

A: Progression is encouraged. Each standard covers a distinct occupation and will be set at the level for the occupation, therefore in some cases there may not be lower levels of standards.

Q: How do we find out about all the training going on all the standards? We cover so many areas?

A: The Future Apprenticeships programme includes provider reference groups. Each provider reference group will publish a report on the things to know about the delivery to assessment. These will be available on the Future Apprenticeship website which will go live in March.

As part of the Future Apprenticeships programme there is some more generic training available:

<http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/future-apprenticeships/>

Q: What is the layout (family tree) now of a lead provider, an assessment provider, is there any verification process?

A: Under the 15/16 and 16/17 funding rules, the employer must nominate a lead provider who will sub-contract with other providers where required and the end-point assessment organisation. An employer may choose more than one provider to deliver separate parts of an apprenticeship standard.

Q: Will there be support for WBL to survive through the financial changes?

A: There is no transitional financial support for providers.