

Apprenticeship standards

A guide for facilitators and employer groups

May 2015



Foreword

Two years into the journey of developing new Apprenticeship standards, it is impressive how many employers have taken time away from the 'day job' to get behind the reform of Apprenticeships. It is an indicator of how much employers value the concept, how much it adds value to their businesses and organisations, and to what extent they consider it a powerful part of preparing young people for successful working life.

The message behind such a huge collaborative effort should not be underestimated; employers want this reform, together with many of the key underpinning policy principles embodied within it.

The number of Apprenticeship standards, both approved and in development, is increasing very quickly. This guide aims to help those who work alongside employer groups to assist them with the development process.

FISSS has been proud to champion the employer perspective in creating this and other support resources (see [Resources to support the development of Apprenticeship Standards](#)). In a fast moving development process, these resources will naturally have a limited shelf life but, hopefully, one long enough to be of assistance in guiding employer-led partnerships and those who assist them in the creation of high quality standards for Apprenticeships in their sector.

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Introduction

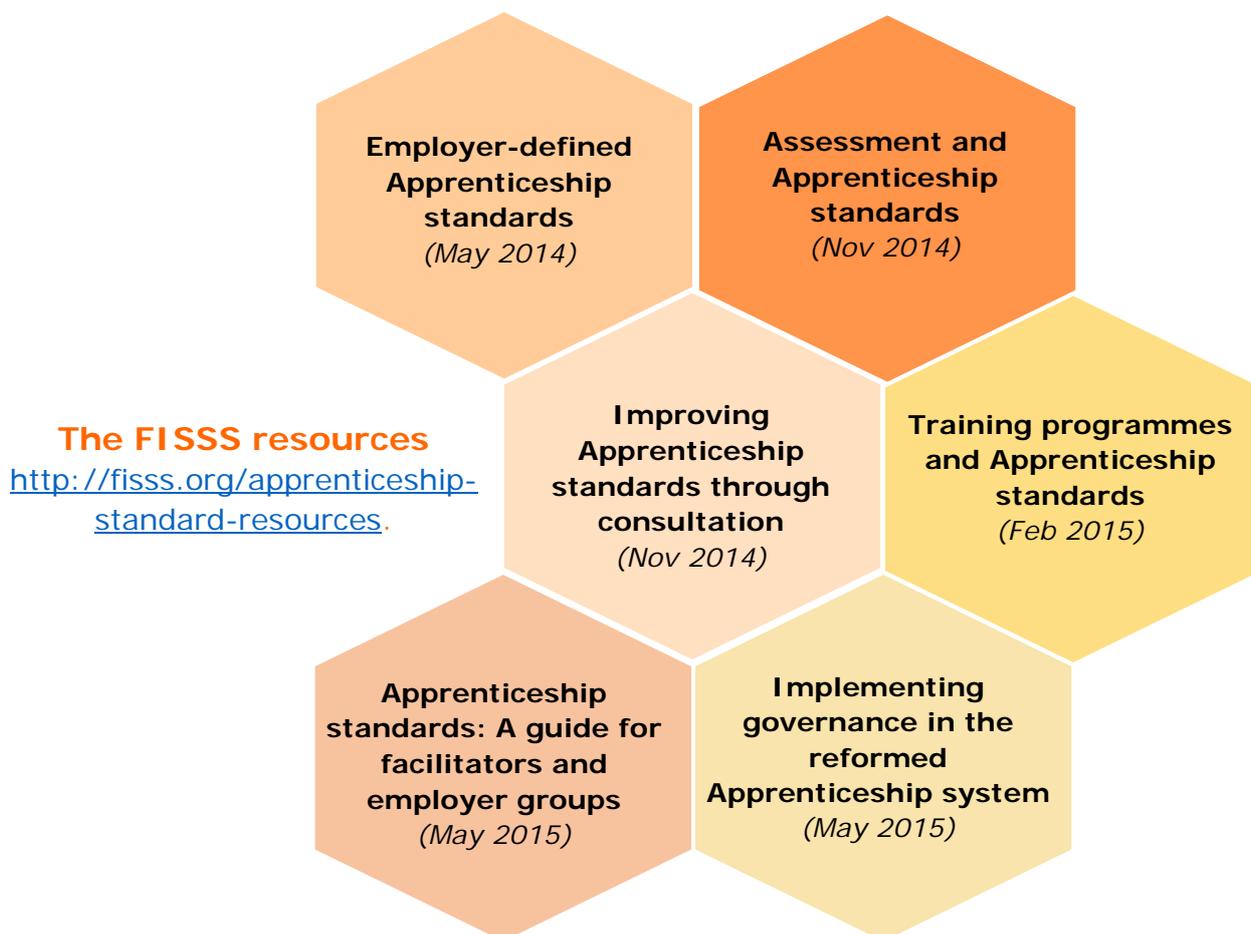
Background

In *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan*, published in October 2013, BIS stated a commitment to an Apprenticeship reform programme built on a fundamental desire to put employers in the driving seat of developing new Apprenticeship standards. Employers would have a high degree of freedom to develop these standards and the assessment approaches that sit alongside them to meet the needs of their occupations and sectors while ensuring that Apprenticeships are seen to be 'high quality, with sufficient content and transferability to justify public investment'.

The FISSS resources

At the time of writing, the reform of Apprenticeships in England is well under way. An increasing number of new Apprenticeship standards have been government approved. Employers lead the development work from start to finish, often supported by sector skills councils, industrial partnerships, professional bodies, training providers and others.

The Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS) have been a part of the Apprenticeship development reforms from the beginning. By following the experiences of the early Trailblazers, FISSS have developed a number of resources to assist employers with some of the key development areas. These are set out below.



About this guide

This guide is aimed at employer groups working on the development of new Apprenticeship standards, associated assessment plans, and the arrangements for their implementation, and those supporting and facilitating such groups,

Facilitators are often sector skills councils, but may also be industrial partnerships, professional bodies, training organisations, or a project manager/facilitator appointed by the employer group.

This guide will be most useful to those who understand the development process, the outputs required by BIS as well as those identified by employers, the deadlines, and the stakeholders involved. It provides a top-level summary of the key tasks and signposts additional resources that can be drawn on as required,

Note: The development process is subject to change and more guidance, at the national level, can be expected throughout 2015-17.

Demands on time, budget and complexity

Employers embark on the process of developing a new Apprenticeship standard aware of the need to invest their time but evidence shows that many underestimate the extent of the commitment required to complete the task. The table below gives an indication of the cost, complexity, and demand on employer time required by the main development stages.

	The design of an Apprenticeship standard	The design and planning of assessment	The preparation for delivery
Employer time	3	4 (for specialists; less for other employers)	3
Expenditure/cost	2	4	3
Complexity	2	5	3

Key: Number rating 1= low, 5 = high

Colour code: Green=low, Amber=medium. Red=high

Demands on **employer time** include discussion, debate, and decision-taking; direct development work; achieving consensus, advocacy and persuasion of peers; leadership and management; negotiations with BIS. To alleviate these demands, employer groups must recognise the value in sharing out the burden of responsibility, in engaging external interest and experience where appropriate, and recognising that individual employers may withdraw and join in as the task progresses.

Costs include bringing in project management and administration; engaging specialist expertise; communications costs (e.g. website, social media); consultation activities; document publication.

Complexity is conditioned by the number of variables that have to be dealt with; the wide variety of different views and ideas on the proposed development work; the scale of change proposed; gaining the support and commitment of others.

As a rough indicator of the typical overall time needed to develop and implement a standard, it took early Trailblazers around 18 months of development work before they were ready to start their first apprentices under a standard.

To assist with planning, an estimate of the likely time required to complete key tasks is provided in the following sections. Some tasks are strictly sequential while others may allow for overlap; timings can vary significantly from standard to standard.

Section 1: The design of an Apprenticeship standard

This section guides you through how employers might begin the task of leading the development of a new Apprenticeship standard, from making a case for the standard, getting BIS support and endorsement, to creating a viable employer steering group and developing the standard.

The experience of the early Trailblazers underlines the importance of understanding the full journey before you begin. While the activities are presented sequentially here, it is worth anticipating the later stages when planning where possible and sensible to do so.

Employers are well placed to lead these activities effectively, perhaps with minimal involvement from other stakeholders so that employers have confidence that the Apprenticeship standard is created, developed, and owned by them.

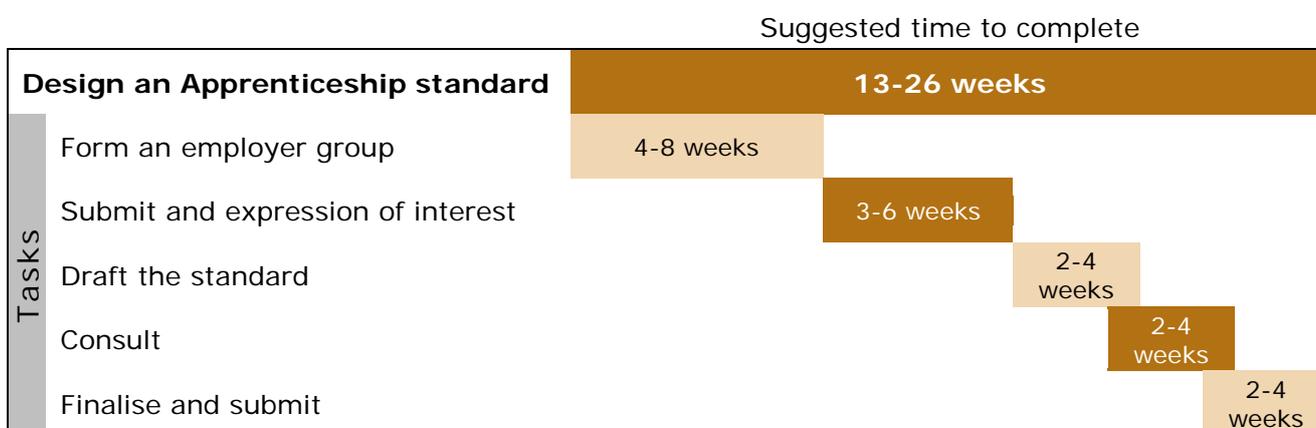
Outputs

- Employer group established
- BIS-approved expression of interest
- An Apprenticeship standard approved by the Minister of State for Skills

Scope

- Identify potential demand and gather support for a new Apprenticeship from employers in the sector
- Submit an expression of interest to BIS
- Draft, refine and finalise the Apprenticeship standard through consultation with the industry
- Secure approval for the standard from the Minister of State for Skills

Timeline



1

Form employer group

Activity	Resources
<p>Constitution and setup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At least ten employers; differing sizes (at least one must be a small employer); reflecting make-up of the industry ■ Select a lead employer as chair ■ Involvement of sector, professional or trade bodies ■ A project manager or facilitator to coordinate and ensure the process stays on track ■ Establish terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cover the objectives and tasks (comply with current BIS guidance) ○ Process for monitoring development and to sign-off key steps ○ Consider and mitigate for potential conflict in objectives ■ Identify other key stakeholders and their potential for involvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employers and apprentices ○ Professional bodies and sector/trade organisations ○ Awarding organisations and training providers ○ FISSS and other-sector SSCs (where collaborating on core and options for cross-sector standard) ○ BIS/SFA will allocate a relationship manager once the expression of interest is accepted <p>Member skills and knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project management ■ Meeting organisation, administration and cost management ■ Recording/mapping development (including document/version control) ■ Negotiation, consultation and communication with stakeholders <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inform BIS of intent to develop a standard and connect with others on their advice ■ Fully brief on the process/scope of task and relevant policy/systems, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Approval process for the standard ○ Funding reforms ■ Identify resource costs (time, admin, venue and communications) at outset ■ Develop a communications plan to create/maintain industry-wide interest in the development work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for employers (FISSS) • Future of apprenticeships in England: guidance for trailblazers (BIS) • Terms of Reference example (annex A5) • Stakeholders in the development of a standard (annex A2) • Stakeholder mapping tool (FISSS) • Levels of employer commitment and participation (annex A3) • Employer groups: roles and responsibilities (annex A4) <p>• SSCs may offer supporting skills and experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future of apprenticeships in England: guidance for trailblazers (BIS) • Apprenticeship standards (SFA) • An overview of the new Apprenticeships (annex A1) • Template 3: Apprenticeship standard (BIS, Mar 2015) • Employer groups: roles and responsibilities (annex A4) • Communication plan outline (annex A6)

	Activity	Resources
2 Submit expression of interest	<p>Selected occupation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The occupation must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ fit in the ‘big picture’ of current/future jobs needs within the industry ○ be unique and avoid overlap with other standards in the sector ○ require rigorous and substantial training of over a year to achieve full competence <p>Expression of interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make a case for the standard to support expression of interest submitted to BIS ■ Include a provisional estimate of likely demand by employers and learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting occupations for Apprenticeship development (annex A7) • Apprenticeship standards, approved & in development (SFA) • Digital Industries case study (FISSS) • Applying to develop an Apprenticeship standard (BIS, Mar 2015) • Template 1: for an EOI (BIS, Mar 2015)
3 Draft the standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Produce a work plan ■ Draft the standard, focusing on core requirements ■ Consider training and assessment implications ■ Utilise the support of BIS/SFA relationship manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template 2: Trailblazer work plans (BIS, Mar 2015) • Develop an Apprenticeship standard (BIS, Mar 2015) • Template 3: for an Apprenticeship standard (BIS, Mar 2015) • Early considerations for the standard (annex A8) • Assessment and Apprenticeship standards: (FISSS) • Training programmes and Apprenticeship standards (FISSS) • KSB software tool to assist with selecting statements for a standard (FISSS, due soon)
4 Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To gather feedback and support from employers in wider sector, consult on aspects such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft aspects of the standard ○ The rationale for the inclusion of any qualifications ○ Initial ideas for assessment ■ Update stakeholders on progress, feedback and proposed refinements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Apprenticeship standards through consultation (FISSS) • Consultation survey tools (FISSS) • Stakeholder communication channels offered by SSCs
5 Finalise and submit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Refine the standard based on feedback ■ Gather evidence from employers and professional bodies to submit with the standard ■ Assign copyright of the standard to the Crown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing your standard meets the criteria (BIS, Mar 2015) • Standards approval process (BIS, Mar 2015) • Template 4: assigning copyright to the Crown (BIS, Mar 2015)

Section 2: The design and planning of assessment

This section guides you through how an employer group might tackle the task of designing the assessment approach for a new Apprenticeship standard and all that this entails.

Designing and creating a plan for Apprenticeship assessment represents a significant challenge for most employer groups and, in some ways, this part of the process is the most difficult. Effective assessment strategies for learners have to be weighed carefully against delivery logistics, unit costs, and volumes.

Almost all of the early Trailblazers drew on technical expertise to help them think through the issues to be addressed when formulating an assessment plan and employer groups are advised to draw in advice and support wherever appropriate to do so

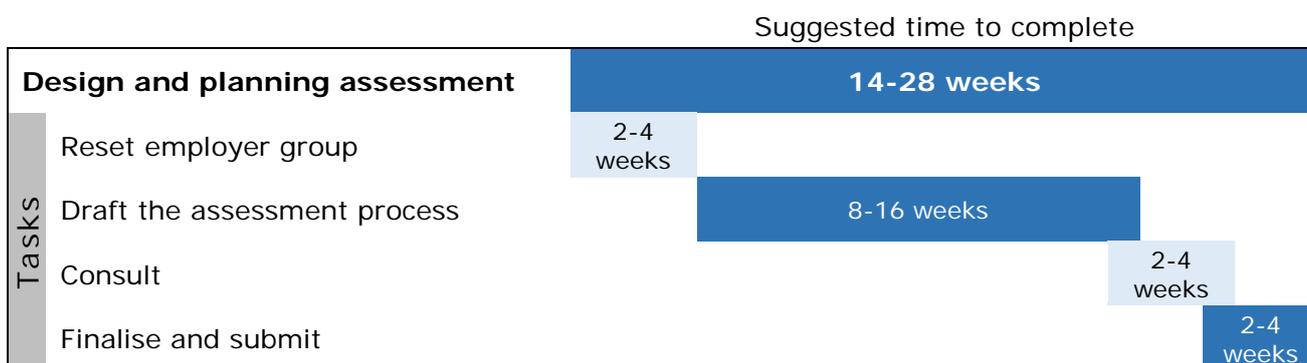
Outputs

- Strategic assessment plan approved by the Minister of State for Skills
- A suite of assessment techniques applicable to the standard

Scope

- Understand the economics, practicalities and sector restrictions in relation to assessment of the standard
- Design an appropriate assessment approach for the standard
- Refine and finalise the assessment approach through consultation with the industry
- Consider the training that will be needed to produce assessment-ready apprentices
- Secure approval for the assessment plan from the Minister of State for Skills

Timeline



1

Reset employer group

Activity	Resources
<p>Constitution and setup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review employer group operation, membership and remit in relation to design and delivery of assessment arrangements ■ Consider whether a specialist assessment sub-group might be more effective ■ Update terms of reference to reflect key activities, decisions and deadlines ■ Bring in relevant expertise, if needed ■ Engage a project manager ■ Determine other key stakeholders and their potential for involvement – training providers and awarding organisations can offer expertise ■ BIS/SFA relationship managers will provide support <p>Member skills and knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project management ■ Knowledge of assessment principles and qualifications ■ Knowledge of assessment and training delivery within industry ■ Knowledge of the sector provider base, supplier chains, quality assurance, contracting arrangements ■ Ability to make informed judgements about assessment components ■ Communication/consultation capabilities <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult latest national guidance to clarify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Approval process for the assessment plan ○ Funding reforms ○ Administration/recording of assessment ○ Independence/impartiality of assessment ○ Sign-off and certification ○ Internal and external quality assurance ■ Understand the purpose of assessment ■ Review published assessment plans ■ Identify resource costs (time, admin, venue and communications) at outset ■ Establish project plan outlining how the assessment design will be created and formalised ■ Develop a communication plan to create/maintain industry-wide interest in the development work ■ Utilise assessment expertise early on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future of apprenticeships in England: guidance for trailblazers (BIS) • Assessment and Apprenticeship standards: (FISSS) • Implementing governance in the reformed Apprenticeships system (FISSS) • Stakeholders in the development of a standard (annex A2) • Stakeholder mapping tool (FISSS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCs may offer supporting skills & experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future of apprenticeships in England: guidance for trailblazers (BIS) • Apprenticeship standards (SFA) • Assessment and Apprenticeship standards (FISSS) • Training programmes and Apprenticeship standards (FISSS) • Communication plan outline (annex A6)

2 Draft the assessment process

Activity	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify/retain existing good and/or employer-preferred assessment and training practice ■ Choose mix of assessment methods (focus on end-assessment) to meet requirements of the standard ■ Explore practical implementation issues, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial modelling to ensure the assessment specification is affordable/cost-effective ○ Potential impact on training requirements ○ Quality assurance arrangements for assessment providers ■ Talk to assessment providers to determine key requirements of assessment delivery, procurement and quality assurance ■ Finalise the assessment process for the Apprenticeship standard ensuring that arrangements are practical, easy-to-understand, and cost-effective for all sizes of employers ■ Plan the steps needed for implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an assessment plan (BIS, Mar 2015) • Template 5: for assessment plans (BIS, Mar 2015) • Assessment criteria - quick reference (BIS, Mar 2015) • Trailblazer apprenticeship funding 2014 to 2015 requirements for employers (BIS) • Published assessment plans (SFA) • Assessment and Apprenticeship standards (FISSS) • Training programmes and Apprenticeship standards (FISSS)
<h2>3 Consult</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult experts, wider sector employers and other stakeholders on the planned assessment process, the content, and the impact on potential training requirements ■ Update stakeholders on progress, feedback and proposed refinements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Apprenticeship standards through consultation (FISSS) • Consultation survey tools (FISSS) • Stakeholder communication channels offered by SSCs
<h2>4 Finalise and submit</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Refine and finalise assessment plan based on feedback ■ Consider likely costs for the proposed assessment plan and what proportion this will be of the overall cost of the Apprenticeship ■ Confirm and finalise arrangements with BIS/SFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template 5: for assessment plans (BIS, Mar 2015) • Apprenticeship cost: spreadsheet template (BIS relationship managers) • Submitting your assessment plan for approval (BIS, Mar 2015)

Section 3: Establishing steady-state delivery

Based on the experience of the early Trailblazers, employer groups will want to continue to lead through the implementation of their Apprenticeship standards, assessment plans and the systems for procurement and delivery of training services to ensure that these best meets their sector's needs. This section will assist employers with that task.

At the time of writing (April 2015), employers have not been asked by BIS to lead on any aspect of implementation delivery of their Apprenticeship standards and few Trailblazers have started apprentices on training programmes under the new standards. Current BIS guidance offers no advice to employers about procurement or quality assurance arrangements for the new system, but suggests "*delivery issues to consider*".

Much work is needed to identify and resolve the practical, detailed processes that will contribute to a volume delivery system. Many employer groups will have a vested interest in being involved in addressing issues such as the procurement of training and assessment delivery, and the provision of information advice and guidance supplied to young people. Closely linked to these are the governance arrangements that will support legal processes, monitoring and quality assurance and the communicating the new standards to wider sector employers and advocating their take-up.

The Trailblazer Apprenticeship system is conceived around a single employer procuring training and assessment for their apprentice on an individual basis, negotiating the price and product and contributing in cash in order to draw down matched government funding. BIS are currently reviewing the funding model and arrangements – see the [SFA funding website](#) for the latest guidance.

It will be important for groups of employers to think about group purchasing arrangements where this appetite exists, to get the best price and to drive the quality of the training providers. Group Training Agencies (GTAs), Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs) and employer-led partnerships such as sector skills bodies are well placed to support such procurement activities.

FISSS encourages sector skills councils to support employer groups to review and discuss arrangements for implementation of their standards.

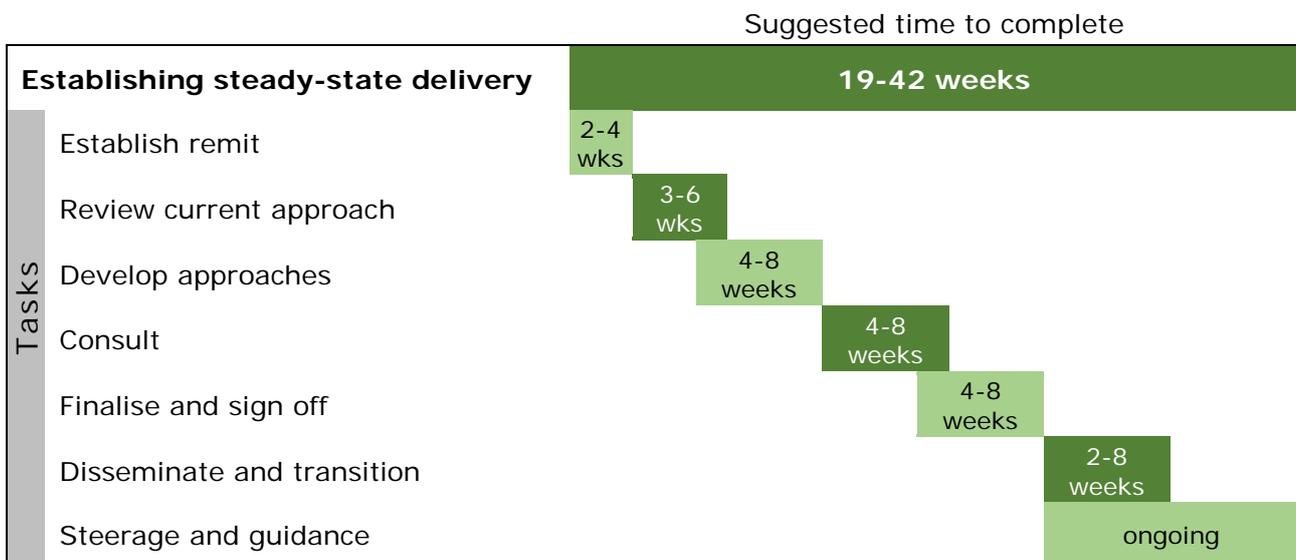
Outputs

- Systems for the quality assurance of the end-point assessment
- Systems and processes for procurement of assessment and training services and their ongoing quality assurance, signed off by the employer steering group
- Long-term governance arrangements for the standard and its delivery
- Sector guidance and advice for employers on optional and recommended arrangements for training and assessing apprentices

Scope

- Identify and develop models and options for:
 - Quality assurance of end-point assessment over time and in different locations
 - Procurement and funding of both training and assessment
 - Training and assessment planning for individual and groups of apprentices
- Identify requirements for guidance and advice for sector employers and potential apprentices, such as:
 - Training and assessment procurement models and options
 - Process for Apprenticeship certification
 - Progression routes to professional membership, higher-level skills and employment
- Support early adopters with:
 - Apprenticeship starts and scaling up
 - Transition arrangements to produce assessment-ready apprentices
 - New assessment arrangements
- Plan transition arrangements for scaling up to produce assessment-ready apprentices that result in job-ready employees with transferable skills and knowledge
- Set out plans for long-term governance arrangements for the standard including an industry-accepted approach to the quality assurance of assessment and training
- Communicate with employers across the industry:
 - To inform them of new arrangements and progress with implementation
 - To maintain the profile of, and progression for, Apprenticeships across the industry including celebrating success

Timeline



1 Establish remit

Activity	Resources
<p>Setup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agree who will be involved and how they will work together. Establish a remit and build a mandate for their activity ■ Agree the scope of issues to be tackled in preparation for delivery ■ Determine other stakeholders and their potential involvement – sector bodies, assessment organisations and training providers may offer expertise <p>Member skills and knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partnership building ■ Project management and administration ■ Knowledge of current arrangements ■ Knowledge of the approved Apprenticeship standard and assessment plan and how they were developed ■ System research, development and design ■ Communications and consultation <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Produce an overall development project plan ■ Develop a communication plan to create/maintain industry-wide interest in the development work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for delivery (BIS, Mar 2015) • Implementing governance in the reformed Apprenticeships system (FISSS.) • Stakeholder mapping tool (FISSS) • SSCs may offer supporting skills & experience • Communication plan outline (annex A6)
<p>2 Review current approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understand current arrangements relating to the scope of the project, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providers currently offering training to the industry ○ Funding models ○ Registration of apprentices, providers, employers ○ Approaches to training and assessment procurement and contracting in the industry including provider licensing and group purchasing ○ Information, advice and guidance for potential apprentices and employers across the industry ○ Training and assessment planning ○ Certification ○ Progression ○ Celebrating success in the industry ○ Quality assurance of the end-point assessment ○ Quality assurance and governance of existing Apprenticeship frameworks ■ Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Apprenticeship standard and its assessment plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for delivery (BIS, Mar 2015) • Register of training organisations (SFA) • Register of apprentice assessment organisations (SFA) • Information/research published by sector/national employer bodies, professional bodies, provider networks and other stakeholders • FISSS (certification systems)

	Activity	Resources
3 Develop approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Investigate opportunities and possibilities relating to the scope of the project ■ Develop models and approaches for consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and Apprenticeship standards (FISSS) • Training programmes and Apprenticeship standards (FISSS) • Implementing governance in the reformed Apprenticeships system (FISSS.) • National Apprenticeship Week 2015 • World Skills
4 Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult experts, and other stakeholders on proposed models and approaches to confirm that these fit with national arrangements and requirements ■ Ascertain employer appetite for collective delivery arrangements for all/some areas of assessment/training ■ Create a specification for required areas and invite expressions of interest from providers ■ Consult widely with the industry, with training and assessment providers and with BIS/SFA ■ Update employers and stakeholders on progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future of apprenticeships in England: guidance for trailblazers (BIS) • Apprenticeship standards (SFA) • Improving Apprenticeship standards through consultation (FISSS) • Consultation survey tools (FISSS)
5 Finalise and sign off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Refine arrangements based on feedback ■ Identify opportunities for employers/apprentices across the industry to share experiences and communicate ■ Sign-off by employer steering group ■ Create/issue invitation to tender for assessment delivery ■ Contract with assessment (and training) providers ■ Provide advice for employers on the new arrangements for assessment and training 	
6 Disseminate and transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify and work with early-adopter employers to recruit, train and assess the first apprentices ■ Test arrangements with the early adopters ■ Refine and finalise arrangements based on feedback ■ Devise and issue quality assurance plans and contract compliance arrangements ■ Plan and implement transition to scale up across the industry, including the transition from steering group to steady-state governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE data library: Apprenticeship starts and achievements (SFA)

Challenges to achieving steady-state delivery

Employers will need to find ways to monitor, influence, and guide steady-state delivery arrangements to maintain up-to-date, relevant Apprenticeship standards that meet their needs and those of the wider economy, and that will attract young people to work towards achieving them.

Steady-state delivery arrangements will most probably include:

- Established governance structures for every standard that have strong, active employer representation and that reflect the diversity of sectors, occupations, and trends in the national industrial structure. Employers must be well placed to keep standards fit-for-purpose.
- Clear and engaging information and guidance for young people and adults about Apprenticeship opportunities and career prospects, including:
 - Expert advice and guidance available on hand to support the entry pathway
 - Progression routes set out for young people from entry (including Traineeships) through Apprenticeship to higher and degree Apprenticeships.
- Delivery arrangements that operate smoothly for employers of all sizes and for all industry areas. Employers must be able to choose their delivery providers and the extent to which they invest in providing their own training. Providers must deliver the quality and quantity as set out by employers.
- An agreed system to facilitate the effective resolution of disputes about delivery and quality and that sits under a governance framework in which employers are directly represented.

Future developments

Below are some areas currently being worked on as part of the Trailblazer system.

- The approval and submission process for an Apprenticeship standard and its respective assessment plan will be subject to change and refinement. This may include the process for development, the structure of the submission, the detail required for assessment and the timescales for administration of the submission.
- The time commitment for employers getting involved is a significant barrier in some sectors. Most employers are not assessment experts and yet they are called upon to create an effective assessment plan. Employers feel ill equipped for the task and have few resources to support them. While early adopters may achieve it, latecomers are likely to struggle.
- Assessment regulation aims to keep standards high. However, there are few guidelines on how this might be achieved. Currently, each assessment plan has tackled this in its own way. It is likely that the government will build in stronger measures to ensure rigor and consistency.
- The independence of assessors from involvement in the direct delivery of training is required. It remains to be seen how effectively such measures operate and the extent to which this will be monitored and policed. This may be a significant challenge for many providers, as they may have to choose whether they supply assessment or training delivery services.
- Avoiding monopolistic practices is a concern, as employers set out the requirements for assessment and training providers before they can deliver assessment or training services. BIS has ruled that employers may not create a single assessment centre for their occupation.
- Individual employers will continue to face difficulties in identifying and selecting training providers that will deliver to their exact requirements. The current system is predominately qualification led. It is not clear how employers might purchase training aligned to the precise skills, behaviours and knowledge set out in the Apprenticeship standard.

Future developments timetable

Dec 2015	Funding rules published for 2016/17 Apprenticeship starts using standards
2016	Employer-routed funding mechanism introduced
2015/16 2016/17	Increasing numbers of approved standards and associated Apprenticeship starts. Existing frameworks closed as new standards are developed.
July 2017	Standards developed for all occupations where Apprenticeships should be available. All Apprenticeship starts use Apprenticeship standards

Annex of additional resources

These resources were developed by Trailblazers or by the sector skills councils or other facilitators who worked alongside them.

They support practical action, particularly in establishing the employer steering group and understanding and defining the group's remit.

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A1: An overview of the new Apprenticeships

Current Apprenticeships

- Qualification-based framework, informed by employer feedback
- Extensive SASE-defined requirements
- Jargon-heavy NOS structure
- ERR and PLTS requirements
- Portfolio and qualification-dependent assessment methods
- Continuous on-programme assessment
- Knowledge and competence elements separately assessed
- Apprenticeship completion on achievement of qualifications
- Not always linked to professional registration requirements
- Government funding direct to training provider

New Apprenticeships

- Outcome-based, employer-defined standard and assessment
- Small number of government criteria
- Plain English standard
- No ERR or PLTS requirements
- Employer-specified assessment approach
- End-point assessment
- Synoptic assessment
- Graded Apprenticeship achieved if fully competent at end of training
- Must meet professional registration requirements
- Government funding direct to employer¹

New definition of an Apprenticeship

An Apprenticeship is a job that requires substantial and sustained training, leading to the achievement of an Apprenticeship standard and the development of transferable skills.

This definition is underpinned by four principles of future Apprenticeships:

1. An Apprenticeship is a job, in a skilled occupation.
2. An Apprenticeship requires substantial and sustained training, lasting a minimum of 12 months and including off-the-job training.
3. An Apprenticeship leads to full competency in an occupation, demonstrated by the achievement of an Apprenticeship standard that is defined by employers.
4. An Apprenticeship develops transferable skills, including English and maths, to progress careers.

In future, these principles will be used by employers, potential apprentices, and education and training providers to determine when an Apprenticeship is, or is not, appropriate. Only programmes that adhere to these principles will be recognised as Apprenticeships and be eligible for government support.

¹ Funding for English and maths will continue to be paid direct to the training provider.

Key features of the new Apprenticeships and the underpinning standards

Apprenticeship

- Aimed at those aged 16 and above
- Available to new and existing employees, but only appropriate where substantial training is required to achieve competency²
- Provides a stretching programme leading to genuine skills gain, rather than the accreditation of existing skills, and will work towards standards that enable them to perform a skilled role effectively
- Duration is a minimum of 12 months
- Offers a minimum of 20% off-the-job training (may be on or off site)
- Provides **English and maths training** focused around the achievement of Level 2
- Subject to **rigorous, independent assessment** against the standard
- **Graded**
- Links to professional registration where applicable

Apprenticeship standard

- **Short** (approx. 2 x A4 pages, excluding assessment annex), **concise, easy to understand** document
- Relates to a **single occupation** identified by employers as requiring apprentices
- Describes the **skill, knowledge, and competency** required to achieve mastery³ of a specific occupation and to operate confidently in any part of the sector
- **Set by employers of all sizes (including small businesses)** to meet their needs, the needs of the sector and the needs of the economy
- Meets professional registration requirements where these exist
- Specifies any English and maths requirements above the minimum
- Indicates **duration** and **level**

Assessment approach

- Describes a **synoptic**⁴ **end-point assessment** appropriate to the content of the standard and assessing across the whole standard
- Assessment incorporates both theoretical and practical elements
- Grading outline

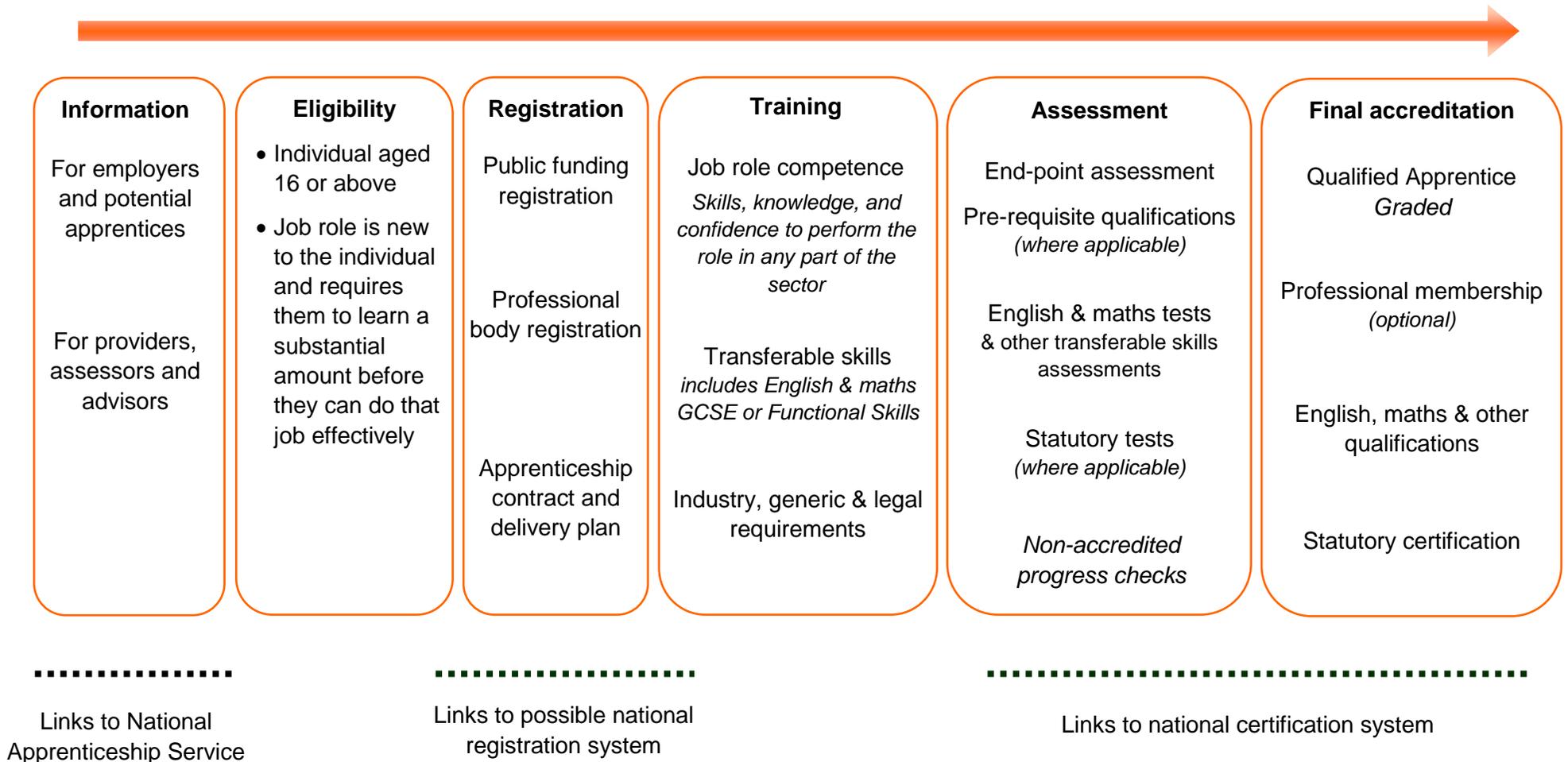
Must meet a small number of government-set criteria to ensure rigour and value

² Competence is about applying skills (and knowledge) to achieve a work function

³ Mastery of an occupation means that the skills learnt by an apprentice must be sufficiently transferable for them to adapt quickly to undertaking the same occupation in another company in the same sector, functioning effectively after minimal instruction on new equipment, or working practices.

⁴ Synoptic assessment combines assessment across the breadth of the standard, requiring apprentices to integrate and apply skills, knowledge and understanding

The new Apprenticeship journey



A2: Stakeholders in the development of a standard

Stakeholder / Role	Employers	Professional bodies	Sector & trade bodies	Training providers, HEIs, awarding bodies
Lead development and implementation	✓	✓		✓
Identification of suitable occupations and roles	✓	✓	✓	
Develop standard and high-level assessment approach	✓	✓	✓	
Develop assessment details and grading criteria	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outline processes for apprentice registration and certification	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure opportunities for professional registration of apprentices	✓	✓		
Outline awareness and supporting information	✓		✓	✓
Apprenticeship delivery, recruitment, training	✓	✓		✓
Managing purchasing, reporting, public funds	✓			
On-going quality monitoring and review	✓	✓	✓	

A3: Levels of employer commitment and participation

	Leadership <i>Small number of employers; deeply engaged throughout development and implementation</i>	Contribution <i>Small-medium number of employers; medium engagement; detailed input to key stages</i>	Consultation <i>Large number of employers; low or occasional engagement; wider feedback on development</i>
Why?	To drive the development and implementation of the standard using the accepted industry vision and strategy for Apprenticeships	To ensure industry-wide fitness for purpose by providing detailed input to shape the development and implementation of the standard	To maximise communication; to inform and to allow feedback, and to confirm industry-wide recognition and ownership of the standard
Who?	Employers who reflect the makeup (geography, type, size) and have the confidence of the sector and who will bring industry expertise to the table Professional/trade/sector bodies and/or industry regulators will be other key members of the group	Wider cross-section of the sector's employers (again, reflecting the makeup of the sector in geography, type and size) Representative selection of stakeholders such as training providers and/or awarding organisations	The wider employer base All stakeholder organisations
How?	Via an active, employer-led steering group who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are formally responsible for drafting the standard • liaise and communicate with the government • project manage development and implementation of the standard • engage and work with other key stakeholders (including other sectors when necessary) • strive for industry-wide consensus on all aspects of design and implementation • agree parameters (scope and timing) for wider employer contribution and consultation to ensure industry ownership • facilitate public support and recognition; perhaps via a well-respected employer champion 	Via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing or convened employer working groups • roundtable and/or webinar discussions • telephone/email interviews 	Via widely advertised and easily accessible communication tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inform via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – dedicated telephone/email information lines – updates in professional, trade and sector websites/publications and via employer and stakeholder networks • consult via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – online survey tools; provide paper-based versions for use at meetings of established employer networks; – telephone/email surveys - for short, open-question types of consultation
When?	Necessary to initiate development Required throughout process to keep development and implementation on track Heavy demand on employer time and staff	Required prior to embarking on design, for initial research around requirements Necessary during early drafting and development work to provide detailed input Medium-heavy demand on employer time and staff	Required intermittently, e.g. once drafting work for a key stage has been completed Light demand on employer time and staff

A4: Employer groups: roles and responsibilities

The employer steering group

Creation of a standard cannot go forward until the proposed occupation and employer steering group are approved by the government.

An effective and active employer-led steering group – usually supported by employer working groups – is the key to mobilising and maintaining the momentum of the standard development process. The right membership and an early definition and agreement of terms of reference will speed up the steering group's cohesion so that it realises a quality output with minimum conflict and maximum collaboration.

Key questions for an incipient employer steering group

Briefing the sector and engaging employer commitment

- How will early, sector-wide understanding and buy-in for the new Apprenticeship system be established amongst employers? *Key features include a competence-based standard, end-point assessment, grading, employer management of public funds to purchase training and independent assessment services etc.*
- Will employers recognise that it is in their interest to participate in the shaping of an Apprenticeship standard? *It is an opportunity to influence workforce training and skills development in their sector and to raise the profile of their organisation.*
- How will the wider sector be kept informed throughout the development cycle and how will employer queries be managed? *An online FAQ supported by a dedicated email address and/or phone line (perhaps manned through a sector or professional body) is one way to manage enquiries.*

Membership

- How will the right employer leaders for the steering group be targeted and recruited? What criteria will be used? *The employer steering group should be led by employers who have the confidence of the sector, bring industry expertise to the table, and represent the views of smaller employers.*
- How will membership of the steering group be managed if it is over-subscribed? *Employer steering groups are expected to consist of 7-10 employers; higher numbers may undermine effective operation and decision-making. Overflow should be redirected into employer working groups, but it will need careful handling to retain the engagement of those employers not accepted into the steering group.*
- How will a wider group of employers, including smaller businesses, be recruited to working groups that can contribute to the development of the standard to ensure that it is widely applicable to the sector? *Trailblazers recognised this as a challenge as most SMEs struggle to resource the level of commitment required and may also lack the confidence to engage.*
- Are the employer members of both the steering and working groups reflective of the sector, particularly with regard to smaller employers? *How do they know?*
- Is there a formal sign-up process for membership of the groups?

- Are prospective members of the groups required to declare additional/conflicting interests? *For example, are there employers who are also training providers?*
- What criteria will inform the election of the Chair (and co-chairs) for the steering group? *The Chair must be an employer with good leadership skills and respected by the industry.*
- Has each member of the steering group prepared a paragraph explaining who they are? *This information is needed to establish the group with the government, to brief the sector, for press releases, and to help establish the group's credibility.*
- Are professional bodies and/or industry regulators in place as development partners to the steering group to ensure alignment of the standard with any professional requirements for the sector?
- When and how will the expertise of other organisations or advisors be invited into the steering group and/or working groups? *For example, trade and sector bodies, training providers, awarding bodies, relationship managers or other consultants.*

The Digital Industries Trailblazer steering group originated from the existing Industrial Partnership, which has a wider brief than Apprenticeship reform. The group's membership was developed further to ensure it was representative of the sector (particularly SME representation). The steering group divided the development work between two working groups, each focused on one of the two occupational areas.

Scope of operation

- Does the steering group understand the breadth of activity required to develop and implement a standard? *Review the latest BIS guidance.*
- Are the group members prepared to commit the necessary resources (e.g. time and staff) to manage the group's operational tasks effectively? *See box overleaf for examples of operational tasks. The group must recognise the significant resource commitment that will be required.*
- Will the development work for the standard be undertaken by the steering group or will the work be split amongst working groups?
- Does the steering group recognise that once the standard is government approved, they may need to review their terms of reference and/or their membership before proceeding with developing the assessment approach and other implementation details? *There is a very different type of expertise and employer involvement and required for the activities that contribute to these later phases of development.*

Working protocols

- Have formal protocols or ground rules been agreed (and signed up to) that will encourage the sharing of information and viewpoints, support decision-making and consensus, and manage and resolve conflict? *E.g. confidentiality clauses, the Chatham House Rule, giving the Chair final authority*

Roles and responsibilities

- Who will provide the administrative and clerical support to the group? *This includes arranging meetings, setting agendas, producing and distributing paperwork.*
- Who will provide the 'public face' for the group and liaise and communicate with the government, the press, and other external entities? *This is often the responsibility of the Chair or of a designated Employer Champion.*
- Is there a project management plan in place for the overall goal of submitting a high-quality standard and assessment approach by the required deadlines? *The project plan should cover who will do what and when, key milestones, progress monitoring, mitigating perceived risks and issues, and quality assurance.*
- Who will define, manage, and take responsibility for any underpinning research requirements? *Examples are collating labour market information, reviewing related/international standards and frameworks, and collecting sector views.*
- Who will coordinate and report on wider employer and stakeholder contributions, consultations and feedback?
- How will potential occupational crossover with other Trailblazer groups be recognised and managed? *Examples of such roles that are already appearing are maintenance engineer and supervisor/manager.*

Resourcing

- Are the members of the steering group (and the working groups) fully aware of the significant commitment of staff and time required from them?
- Has a source of funding and/or a budget been found to support the capacity of these groups (and particularly SME members) to engage fully with the development work? *This will be a particularly significant issue after the Trailblazer period when sectors must complete the development of all required standards in time to support new Apprenticeship starts from 2017/18.*

Capturing effective practice

- Is there a process for capturing and evaluating development practice to determine what worked well and the lessons learned, and to share this with future employer groups? *This is important. Membership of the steering and working groups is likely to be different when developing the standards for other occupations.*

Suggested agenda items for early meetings of the steering group

- Define the terms of reference for the group
- Develop an outline project plan including key milestones
- Determine a sector/project communication plan
- Commission working/focus sub-group(s)

Employer working groups

Employer working groups are an effective vehicle for capturing detailed employer input, undertaking underpinning research as well as the detailed drafting work for the standard.

- Working groups are convened by, and are accountable to, the steering group.
- Many of the key questions for an incipient Trailblazer steering group apply to newly formed working groups.
- Each working group should have their own terms of reference?
- Working groups must be prepared to commit the required (and often significant) time/staff resources to achieve their key tasks?

Key tasks for employer working groups

1. Review (and agree) sector occupations and the associated job roles and identify which require an Apprenticeship standard.
2. Research existing UK and international standards and frameworks to inform the development of a world-class competency definition for the selected occupation.
3. Draft the written standard in clear, simple language. Tasks include:
 - Develop and agree the skill, knowledge, and behaviour statement that define full competence in the selected occupation or job role(s).
 - Identify any core and option or shared components for the occupation.
 - Specify the level of English and maths achievement required and whether this will be above the national minimum requirements for all apprentices.
 - Ensure professional registration requirements for the occupation are accommodated within the standard.
 - Define the level, duration, entry requirements, and progression opportunities for the Apprenticeship.
4. Work with employer groups from other sectors if required for joint development of core elements for a common standard.
5. Request and consider inputs from experts where necessary to support the development of the standard and the assessment approach.
6. Undertake wider consultation with sector employers and stakeholders
7. Respond to feedback to ensure industry-wide consensus and finalise the standard.
8. Report progress, decisions and outputs to the steering group as required by steering group protocols.

A5: Defining Terms of Reference for an employer group

Establishing terms of reference for an employer group will set a clear expectation of what is required from those involved and outline how the standard development process will operate.

Terms of reference: suggested content headings

Name of group: [group name]

Date: [date agreed]

Scope

Statement of the group's purpose

Timeframe

General project timeframe

Membership

List the contact details for each member of the group

Organisation	Lead representative	Email address	Telephone numbers
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This section may outline how and when members are invited and confirmed

Elected Chair (and co-chairs)

Working protocols

For example, confidentiality agreements, conflict resolution protocols

Accountability

For the steering group, overall accountability is to the Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise

For sub-groups, accountability is to the steering group

State any other accountability for the group as a whole or for individual members

Resourcing

Outline of resources required for successful operation of the group and potential sources of support or funding and who is responsible for resource management and financial control

Operating roles and responsibilities

Key operational roles and who has overarching responsibility for each

Meeting schedule

Date	Time	Venue	Chair	Main objectives or agenda items
------	------	-------	-------	---------------------------------

Meetings may be physical or electronic. The initial schedule may need to change to complete objectives and meet project milestones

Signatures and dates

Annexes

Project plan

Communication plan

The Science Industrial Partnership published their [Trailblazer terms of reference](#). An further example, adapted from the Food and Drink Trailblazer is shown overleaf.

Employer Steering Group: Terms of Reference

Roles and responsibilities

Purpose of the groups

The overall purpose of the group is to inform and oversee the development of Apprenticeships ensuring that it reflects the needs of all businesses in the industry.

This includes the production of an industry standard, any associated qualification or programme development, the assessment plan and, where relevant, programme kite mark criteria.

Key responsibilities

- The group will have a nominated Chair who will be responsible for:
 - a) Representing the views of the employer steering group and for official correspondence to BIS/SFA representatives
 - b) Co-ordinating steering group meetings in a way which facilitates maximum input from employer members and ensures that meetings run to time
 - c) Nominating Chairs of any associated sub groups and ensure that sub groups have a mechanism for reporting back on activity
 - d) Chairing the meetings
 - e) Linking to any Industry Skills Partnership sub-sector or cross-sector group reviewing all areas of provision
- The group will have a Vice Chair who will support the Chair in the activities detailed above and who may have specific tasks related to the leadership of sub groups
- Each group will receive secretariat support from [] which will be responsible for:
 - a) The co-ordination of any meetings and ensuing papers, including the production of minutes and action logs
 - b) Discussions with the Chair prior to the meetings and ensuring the Chair is fully briefed for the meetings
 - c) The drafting of any official papers on behalf of the Chair and wider group.
 - d) The co-ordination of input into the design of the standards, associated qualifications/programmes, assessment methodologies and programme kite mark criteria
 - e) Liaison with awarding organisations and training providers to facilitate development and delivery of the Apprenticeship
- Group members will be responsible for:
 - a) Representing the views of their employers in shaping the design of the Apprenticeship
 - b) Making an active contribution to the design of the industry standard, associated qualifications/programmes, assessment plans and programme kite mark criteria

- c) Supporting areas regarding the delivery of the Apprenticeship (e.g. through providing indicative take up rates or by assisting with the identification of providers)
- d) Participating in sub groups involved in the writing of standards or programmes where appropriate
- e) Working constructively to resolve any areas of industry disagreement such that the quality and integrity of the Apprenticeship standard is not compromised but it has sufficient relevancy for the industry

Group structure

The group will comprise of volunteers from businesses representing the key areas of the Trailblazer occupational group, including representation from relevant trade associations and industry bodies. Sub groups will be formed as appropriate. Identification of what sub groups will be necessary will be discussed at the first steering group meeting.

Membership

Membership will be open to all employers in the occupational area and all employers in England should have an interest. Ideally, members will be a mix of technical and HR staff.

A minimum of six representatives will be required at each meeting to ensure that the meeting is quorate to underpin critical decisions.

Reporting

An agenda is agreed by the Chair and circulated to all attendees in advance of the meeting along with all relevant papers.

Minutes will be circulated within 7 days.

Meeting frequency

Meetings will be held quarterly or more frequently if required.



A6: Communication plan outline

Time frame: *[dates]*

Overall responsibility: *[Name]*

Overarching strategy

Objectives	Target audience	Channels	Key messages

Tactics

	When	Who	Cost	Details	Status	Action points
Advertising						
Advocacy						
Digital, online and social media						
Face-to-face events and meetings						

Monthly schedule of activities

[Month 1]	[Month 2]	[Month 3]

Based on Trailblazer practice

A7: Selecting occupations for Apprenticeship development

One of the first actions for a newly formed employer steering group – perhaps with the support of an employer working group – is to identify the discrete occupation for which they want to develop an Apprenticeship standard.

Key questions to consider when selecting the occupation

- Can the group articulate their understanding of the difference between an occupation and a job? *See box below*

Difference between an occupation and a job

There is some debate on the difference in meaning between an occupation and a job. As yet, there is no accepted definition. However, the following may help:

Occupation

- A general, all-encompassing term for employment
- Not restricted to a particular employer or workplace
- Equates to the idea of vocation
- Encompasses different ranks or hierarchy of 'jobs' from crafts to professions

Job

- A more limited term as it is connected to a particular sub-set of duties/tasks
- Linked to a particular employer, workplace or employment contract

- Is the choice of occupation(s) based on an industry-accepted, holistic, and up-to-date occupational understanding of the sector rather than a reaction to perceived immediate sector pressures? *Knowing how each occupation fits into the industry, and its relationship with other occupations, will aid completeness and maximise the currency and transferability of any standards developed. A good occupational map is essential (see box below).*

Information provided by an occupational map

- The size and profile of the sector – and what is in or out of scope for the sector
- Key trends, developments and drivers within the sector including anticipated changes in employment patterns that signpost future needs or potential gaps
- Occupations within the sector and the roles within those occupations (titles and descriptions)
- Links between sector occupations and those in other sectors
- Typical career or progression routes including Apprenticeship pathways

- Where will the group find the expertise they need to support their understanding of the wider sector? *Sector skills councils and professional bodies have extensive knowledge of this type of work and the best source of existing occupational maps.*

- Are there potential pan-sector links for the occupations for which they intend to develop an Apprenticeship standard? *Pan-sector collaboration to develop a single standard that meets the requirements of all sectors for such occupations will maximise transferability of competence from one sector to another as well as preventing a proliferation of standards.*
- Is the group able to define the occupations requiring an Apprenticeship standard at a sufficiently high level that they encompass a range of job roles? *This will contribute to the desired simplification of the Apprenticeship system by keeping the number of Apprenticeship standards to a minimum.*

The standards developed by the Digital Industries Trailblazer for the occupations of Software Developer and Network Engineer each encompass a range of job roles.

The Trailblazer group recognised the challenges in defining occupational requirements during wider consultations to inform the detailed development of their standards, for example, the significant differences in the wider brief undertaken by jobholders in smaller businesses compared to those in corporate organisations.

Building a picture of sector occupations, job roles and pan sector links

1 Occupations	
Why?	To build an up-to-date and accepted understanding of sector occupational areas and the relationship between them: To establish which occupational areas do, or could, benefit from an Apprenticeship standard
How?	Analysis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing occupational maps (developed by SSCs or other industry bodies) new/emerging occupations and potential gaps differences in breadth of role across contexts and employer size occupational influences such as legislation, regulation and use of technology labour market information feedback from sector employers indicating levels of Apprenticeship buy-in government statistics on apprentice participation and achievement predictive data from UKCES and sector skills council indicating future demand

Outcome: A shortlist of unique, discrete occupations that require an Apprenticeship standard

Occupations should not be too generally defined, as this will make it difficult to agree a standard; nor too specifically, as this may limit the standard's transferability across different sizes of employer, sector areas, and job roles

2 Job roles	
Why?	To agree sector-wide definitions for the job roles encompassed by each occupation To reduce the number of standards by combining related job roles under a single standard
How?	Analysis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> job adverts, titles and descriptions and person specifications from across sizes/types of employer to understand how the breadth of a role can differ UK/international standards and frameworks including Gold Standards areas of specialisation; levels of performance etc. professional registration requirements feedback from sector employers

Outcome: Each short-listed occupation encompasses one or more job roles for which there are common and accepted titles and role descriptions

Keep job titles/roles sufficiently high level to allow fit across a range of employer contexts and sizes

3 Pan-sector links	
Why?	To identify other sectors that have similar occupations/job roles and ascertain the potential for developing a single, common standard, thereby: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> limiting the proliferation of standards maximising the applicability and transferability of competence
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish pan-sector communication channels e.g. via BIS or sector/professional bodies Agree process for pan-sector, collaborative development

Outcome: Agreed mechanism for pan-sector collaboration on standard development (covering pan-sector communication, agreement, sign-off, and quality assurance)

Summary mapping template for occupations needing an Apprenticeship standard

Occupational or sector area	Current Apprenticeship status <i>'New' OR expiration date of existing framework</i>	Delivery year for standard	No. of pathways	No. of job roles	Job role titles	Training level <i>FE / HE</i>	Pan-sector links	Notes	Priority

Based on Trailblazer practice

A8: Early considerations for the standard

- **New versus old:** Are employers reasonably happy with the existing NOS and Apprenticeship framework? *If so, they may choose to rework these to create the standard. However, there may be more value in starting afresh.*

Many of the first Trailblazers based their respective standards primarily on the existing framework, as it already met employer requirements.

Development work for the Life and Industrial Sciences Trailblazer was informed by existing 'Gold Standards' – industry-endorsed competency framework developed by their sector skills council.

In contrast, employers from the Energy Utilities sector had lost confidence in their current framework, which is seen as obscure and not reflective of employer needs, so this Trailblazer developed a new standard from first principles.

- **Wider influences:** Are related UK and international occupational standards being researched and evaluated? *These can inform and benchmark the development of the standard, even if they are not directly transferable.*

Aerospace was one of the Trailblazers that undertook a detailed review of international standards and historic developments to identify world-class practice that informed the duration of their Apprenticeship and the training it would offer. They intend two phases of training – a 1-year foundation phase involving intensive off the job training focused on developing the apprentice's core competency and a 2-year on-the-job development phase. These will be followed by employer endorsement and final assessment.

- **Functional elements:** How are the key functional elements of the occupational competence – professional skills, knowledge, and (optionally) behaviours – identified and agreed? *Functional analysis is the recognised approach.*
- Does the group need support with the functional analysis of the occupation or job role to draw out the relevant skills, knowledge, and behaviour that demonstrate competency? *Professional bodies and sector skills councils have extensive technical knowledge of standard development.*
- **Stretch:** How is stretch built into the standard? *This might be achieved within the competence statements or as part of the grading approach.*
- **Shared content:** Could some functional elements apply to more than one occupation (e.g. knowledge of health and safety at work, or the behavioural skill of communicating well with customers) and could these be standardised for use in several standards? *Such shared content can help make an apprentice employable across many occupations (or even sectors).*

- **Core and options:** Does the occupation encompass:
 - multiple job roles, whether these are within a sector or pan-sector, e.g. manager or maintenance engineer;
 - areas of specialisation, e.g. hydraulic or water engineer.

Would a core and options approach (see box) be way of building a single, coherent standard? *A standard that offers a core and options allows for transferability of the core skills across roles (and/or sectors) and opportunities for the common delivery, training and assessment of the related Apprenticeships.*

Core and option approach

This approach maps occupational requirements into a matrix to identify:

- a core of functional elements and other requirements that apply to the occupation as a whole and to all pathways – the core must be small enough to be suitable for small businesses to train and assess their apprentices
- optional elements and requirements that relate to one or more of the pathways and that allow an apprentice to focus on a particular aspect of a role.

- **Qualifications:** Do employers require apprentices to achieve particular vocational or technical qualifications to check progress or to train and certify particular aspects of skill or knowledge as a pre-requisite to the end-point assessment? *These should be ones that are well respected or that link to professional registration. Employers may also choose to develop new qualifications to meet industry requirements.*
- **Level:** Are employers able to assign an appropriate level to the standard? *Assigning a level should come at the end of the development process and apply to the occupation as a whole– there should not be different levels within one occupation standard. Ofqual guidance on assigning levels can be found in [Annex E of the Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Frameworks](#).*

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