

Assessment and Apprenticeship standards

Resources for employers

November 2014

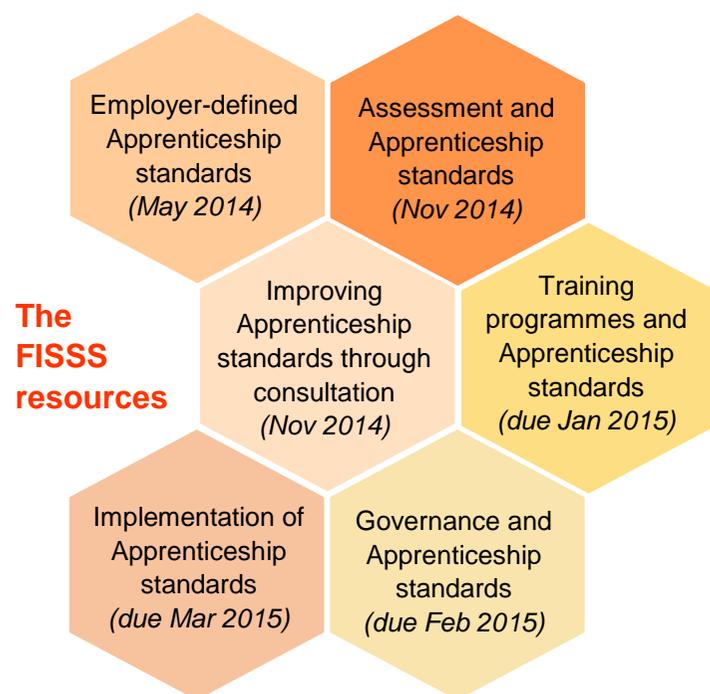


The FISSS resources

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

Development of an Apprenticeship standard takes place over two stages – an initial drafting stage of the standard followed (after approval from BIS) by an implementation stage that plans the detailed delivery, assessment and long-term governance processes for the standard.

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



Employer-defined Apprenticeship standards: A guide for employers and facilitators (May 2014): Part 1 of a general guide and toolkit to support stage 1 work – creating a new Apprenticeship standard and indicative assessment approach.

Improving Apprenticeship standards through consultation: A guide and toolkit for employers (Nov 2014): Focused guidance and tools to support effective consultation that will establish buy-in from employers and other stakeholders.

Assessment and Apprenticeship standards: Resources for employers (Nov 2014): Resources to support employers as they determine how assessment of the Apprenticeship standard is best carried out.

Training programmes and Apprenticeship standards: Resources for employers (due Jan 2015): Resources to support employers as they develop the training programme that apprentices will need to follow to achieve the standard.

Governance and Apprenticeship standards: Resources for employers (due Feb 2015): Resources to support employers as they establish their long-term processes that will maintain quality and update the standard.

Implementation of Apprenticeship standards: A guide for employers and facilitators (due Mar 2015): Part 2 of a general guide and toolkit to support stage 2 work – planning for implementation and delivery.

All resources are available through the FISSS website at <http://fiss.org/apprenticeship-standard-resources>.

The FISSS resources to support assessment within Apprenticeship standards

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 assessment approaches that would best 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'.

An Apprenticeship assessment strategy must rigorously test whether the apprentice has achieved full occupational competence, (i.e. the apprentice has met all of the skills, knowledge and behaviours set out in the Apprenticeship standard). To achieve this, your assessment strategy must:

- use an appropriate range of methods appropriate to the content of the standard that allows an apprentice to demonstrate ability and competence;
- be widely recognised across your sector to ensure transferability;
- demonstrate independence and impartiality to ensure that all apprentices are assessed in a fair and objective manner and that the standard is maintained over time;
- deliver consistent and reliable judgements so that employers can have confidence that apprentices assessed in different parts of the country, at different times, by different assessors have been judged in the same way and have therefore reached the same standard of occupational competence;
- be synoptic (particularly at the end point assessment), requiring the apprentice to identify and use an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from across their training in an integrated way;
- include graded assessments, and a grade applied to the whole programme;
- be cost effective for all types and sizes of employer while still meeting the quality objectives. This may include a consideration of the mix of assessment approaches;
- be manageable and feasible in terms of deliverability and resourcing for the scale required for the anticipated number of apprentices.

Designing assessment – from the standard to implementation

These resources are designed to support the two stages of assessment development work.

Stage 1: Determine an indicative assessment approach

Stage 1 activity takes place during development of the standard and involves the lead employer group establishing an initial understanding around the range of assessment methods and opportunities that will be appropriate for assessing an apprentice against the standard.

The resulting indicative assessment approach will vary with the needs of each sector and will be closely linked to the contents of the Apprenticeship standard.

The tools offered for stage 1 work will facilitate your review of existing assessment processes and support your early mapping of appropriate assessment methods to the standard to form the your indicative assessment approach.

Stage 2: Planning assessment implementation

Stage 2 begins once the Apprenticeship standard has been approved by BIS. This stage of development work focuses on building the implementation detail for the assessment approach. This work will be closely linked to the development of the associated Apprenticeship training programme and to the necessary governance arrangements that, together, allow the Apprenticeship to go live.

The tools offered for stage 2 will help you identify partners to support this development work (or outsource, if appropriate), to move the standard forward into a competency scaffold, and to build a detailed and valid assessment approach that is compatible with the needs of your sector's employers.

Other FISSS resources that may prove useful

Improving Apprenticeship standards through consultation: A guide and toolkit for employers (Nov 2014)

Training programmes and Apprenticeship standards: Resources for employers (due Jan 2015)

Governance and Apprenticeship standards: Resources for employers (due Feb 2015)

<http://fiss.org/apprenticeship-standard-resources>

For these resources, we have presented the design of assessment as consisting of four key strands of activity. These four strands provide an underpinning foundation for phases 1 and 2. They are illustrated in the diagram overleaf and outlined below.

1. The Apprenticeship standard – *what is to be assessed*

A standard contains elements of skills, knowledge, and (optionally) behaviours that are written as statements of competency that will be turned into assessable components. A standard should also take account of:

- any prior skills an apprentice might bring to the programme
- the knowledge, skills and behaviours developed on-programme to meet the final standard criteria
- additional elements, such as maths, English and regulatory or mandatory requirements
- any role-specific competencies or requirements.

2. How training is delivered – *the training programme*

The next strand is concerned with interpreting the standard to form a training programme that will support an apprentice's skills development and knowledge understanding.

Each apprentice should normally undergo some initial diagnostic testing to ascertain their starting point and this will need specifying as well as the processes for reviewing/recording progress and role-specific support.

3. How assessment is undertaken – *the assessment approach*

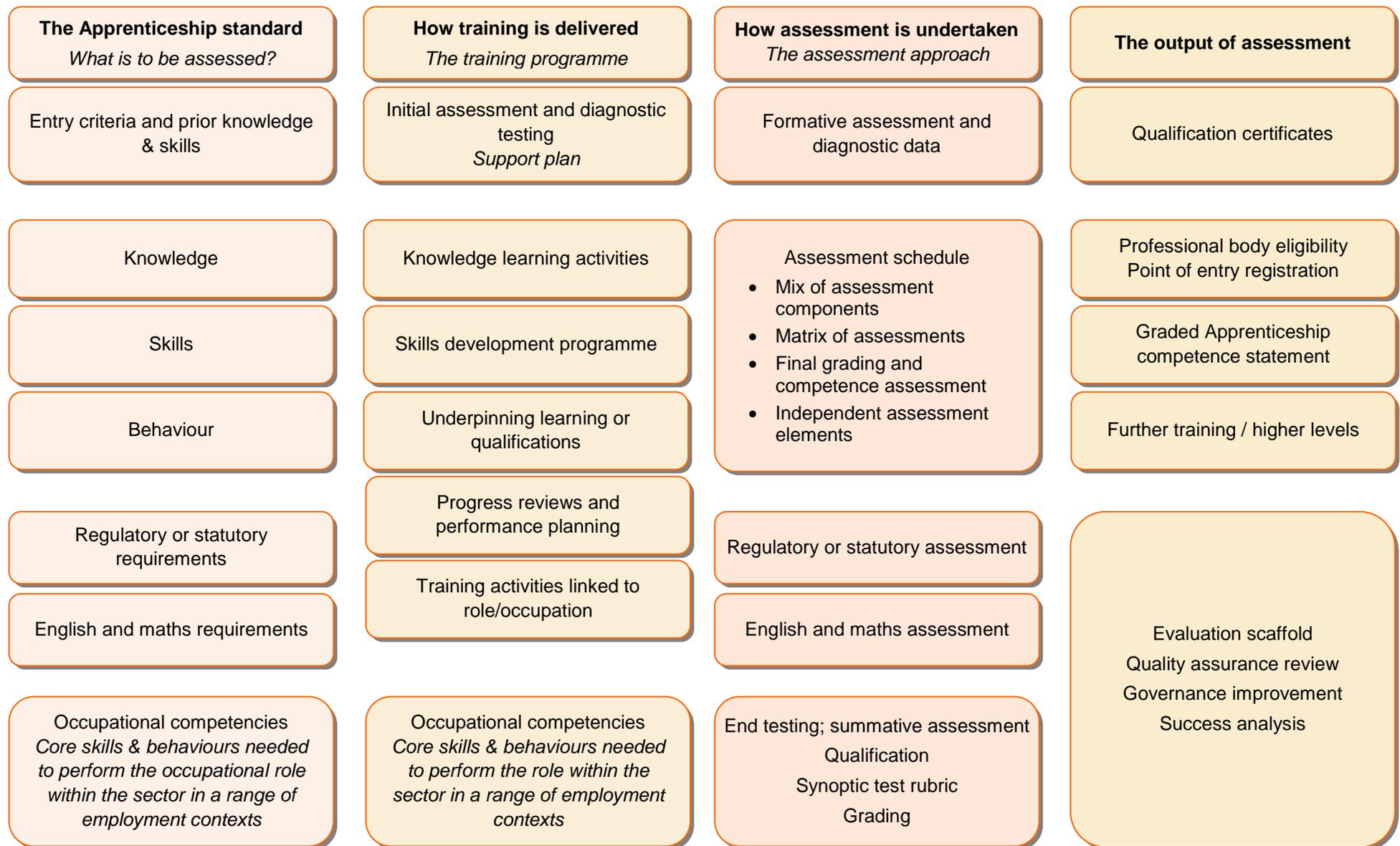
This strand is concerned primarily with how to select and utilise a variety of assessment methods to ensure that evidence from a range of sources is used to assess apprentices in ways that are valid, reliable, fair and robust, as well as meeting the regulations for certification and end-testing. The assessment approach also describes the end-test and any contributory synoptic testing. The only specified element of assessment is the end-test, which should cover a substantial breadth of the knowledge and skills needed to be competent.

This strand will also need to determine the formative assessments needed, the diagnostic data required and the assessment schedule.

4. The output of assessment

This section maps what apprentices achieve at the end of their Apprenticeship programme. This might include a mix of qualifications (specified in the standard and/or mapped in the assessment approach), professional registration information, grading outcome, and any progression planned.

Designing assessment – from the standard to implementation



Using these resources

These resources are aimed at employer groups who are drafting an indicative assessment approach to meet the assessment needs of the draft standard (stage 1) and those assessment sub-groups who convene to develop the subsequent detailed assessment strategy (stage 2). These resources will also be useful for employer group facilitators and support organisations.

The resources aim to complement, rather than replicate, the extensive guidance more generally available on assessment and offers a range of tools for both stage 1 and stage 2.

Employer groups will have different levels of experience of assessment. Groups that have little experience of developing assessment will benefit from an early reading of the document *Understanding assessment in Apprenticeships* which provides an introduction to key terms and concepts, while more experienced groups may prefer to dip in and out of the resources as needed.

Important: These resources should be used in conjunction with the latest guidance issued by [BIS and the Skills Funding Agency](#).

If you have any questions about these resources or need further support, contact info@fisss.org.

Toolkit map

Resource	Description
Reference documents used throughout the assessment resources	
Assessment resources: An introduction	A short introduction that outlines the context behind these assessment resources.
Case study: The Initial Police Learning and Development Programme	This short, non-Apprenticeship case study looks at one approach to assessing skills, knowledge, and behaviours has value in its own right and is used to inform some of the worked examples offered in some of the tools.
Case study: Private Pilot Licence	This short, non-Apprenticeship case study looks at an end-test approach to assessing skills, knowledge, and behaviours has value in its own right and is used to inform some of the worked examples offered in some of the tools.
Compendium of assessment delivery arrangements	Describes a range of assessment delivery arrangements – the methodologies employed, cost considerations, level of independence/impartiality, and procurement and quality issues.
Compendium of assessment methods	Describes a range of assessment methods – how the method works, what the challenges are and the issues to be addressed when using that type of assessment.
Understanding assessment in Apprenticeships	This short introduction to the key terminology and concepts of assessment is aimed at employers who are new to developing assessment.

Resource	Description
Stage 1 Tools: Developing an indicative assessment approach	
TOOL 1: Where are we now?	Before you start any development work on the assessment approach for an Apprenticeship standard, you need an initial understanding of existing assessment practice in the sector. This tool offers two ways of achieving this understanding.
TOOL 2: Choosing your assessment methods	This provides an insight into the strengths and weaknesses of different assessment methods. It is a key tool to inform choices and decision taking about assessment methods. Use as a formative stimulus for discussions by an expert group.
TOOL 3: A development template for an indicative assessment approach	This tool will help you map the components that make up an indicative assessment approach for your standard, to check that the chosen approach is sufficiently comprehensive, and to ensure that there are no gaps in coverage of the standard.
TOOL 4: Checklist for the indicative assessment approach	A short checklist to help you ensure the completeness of your chosen indicative assessment approach.
Stage 2 Tools: Planning assessment implementation	
TOOL 5: Initial questions for stage 2 development work on assessment	An agenda-building tool that helps you look ahead and plan the development work that needs to be undertaken during this stage.
TOOL 6: Commissioning an assessment service	Guidance, initial questions, and a checklist to help you commission an assessment service where you find that you are unable to undertake all of the detailed development work for the assessment strategy yourself.
TOOL 7: Stakeholder mapping	This tool can be used at any stage of the development work (including stage 1) to identify the key partners that you might work with.
TOOL 8: Building a competency scaffold	Before the detail of the assessment approach can be undertaken, each element of the standard will need to be broken down into a competency scaffold that can generate the questions that must be asked so that measurable judgments of competence can be made to judge and record progress. This tool will help you do this.
TOOL 9: Building the assessment approach	This spreadsheet-based tool matches the competency statements from your Apprenticeship standard with the most appropriate assessment method.
TOOL 10: Fitness check for end-testing	This spreadsheet-based tool will help you achieve a balanced alignment between the assessment methods used on-programme and the end-test.
TOOL 11: Developing an assessment specification to procure assessment design partners	This tool will help you turn your assessment plans and strategy into a 'specification' that can be put out to tender for assessment providers.
TOOL 12: Completing the assessment approach	Provides a guide on what needs to go into the final assessment approach, drawing the outputs from all the stage 2 tools. The completed approach will require support from employers across the sector and sign-off by BIS.

Published by the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards

© Copyright November 2014

Registered Office: 101 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3ES
Company number SC175918