## STAGE 1 - TOOL 1: Where are we now?

Before you start any development work on the assessment approach for an Apprenticeship standard, you need to understand existing assessment practice in the sector to consider what aspects, if any, are relevant, desirable, or central to the development of an indicative assessment approach for your new standard. A good time to gain this initial understanding is during the development of the standard itself. It would also be worth getting feedback from the wider sector on your initial ideas on assessment as part of your consultation on the standard before submission to BIS.

This tool will help you build early understanding and clarity around assessment of the standard. It is split into two sections:

* **TOOL 1A: Initial questions for stage 1 development work on assessment consideration:** This will provide a quick audit of existing assessment practice.
* **TOOL 1B: Existing assessment practice – a stock-taking exercise:** This tool explores the same issues from a different standpoint and offers a recording template to capture the operational conduct of assessment.

Once you have completed both parts of the tool, you should have an idea of the existing purpose of assessment, what is assessed and the current mix of assessments. You can then look again at the questions and check whether the current assessment process is still appropriate under the new standards. If not, what are the core issues?

Then move on to *Tool 2: Choosing your assessment methods* to help you to refine your mix and have a first attempt at a new mix of assessment components.

**TOOL 1A: Initial questions for stage 1 development work on assessment**

The following assessment questions will provide a quick audit of current assessment practice within your sector.

**How to use this tool**

1. Within your sector, ask yourselves the opening questions and complete the tool responses for the position as it is now, prior to developing the assessment approach.
2. Consider whether there are gaps or areas where innovation will improve quality and cost-effectiveness.

**After using the tool**

Put the responses to one side for use in the design of the detailed assessment approach (stage 2). The desirable elements can be incorporated into the final mix and areas for refinement can be explored.

| **Questions** | **Your notes** |
| --- | --- |
| What method(s) of assessment would be most appropriate for the skills, knowledge, and behaviours identified within the Apprenticeship standard? |  |
| Are there key points in an apprentice’s learning journey where it would be appropriate to build in formal checks on performance?  *For example, after induction or during a probationary period* |  |
| How does assessment of performance currently take place? Are there aspects of existing assessment practice that work well and that should be retained?  *See Tool 1B: Existing assessment practice – a stock-taking exercise* |  |
| Would employers like to see an assessment approach that isn’t in place currently? |  |
| Are there ways to simplify assessment? |  |
| Could assessment be used to stretch apprentices? |  |
| What role in assessment is expected of employers? |  |
| How can we ensure transferability –sector-wide recognition, endorsement and trust of the assessment approach? |  |
| How can we ensure the impartiality and independence of assessment across the sector? |  |
| What aspects of assessment are needed to align with professional registration requirements for the occupation? |  |
| How can we make sure that the assessment approach is both practicable and cost-effective for all employer types and sizes (particularly SMEs)? |  |
| What form of grading would be most appropriate for this occupation/role?  *For example*   * *three-tier grading (Pass, Merit or Distinction)* * *two-tier grading (Pass and one additional grade)* * *binary grading (Pass/Fail equating to 'competent' / 'not competent')* * *no grading (needs a detailed rationale to justify this option to the Minister)* |  |
| How do we achieve consistent grading across different contexts and settings without an over-reliance on assessment methods that use a marking scheme (such as written tests)? |  |
| Do we have the necessary expertise to determine an industry-appropriate assessment approach?  *If not, are there assessment experts that could support us, such as training providers or awarding organisations?* |  |

**TOOL 1B: Existing assessment practice – a stocktaking exercise**

This tool will help you quickly capture how assessment is currently implemented for the existing Apprenticeship framework (if one exists) and identify which elements should be retained and where innovation or alternative approaches may be preferable.

**How to use the tool**

1. In column 1 of the mapping template overleaf, list the different assessment activities that are used within the existing Apprenticeship framework. For each assessment activity, complete the remainder of the row using the suggest drop-down options in each column:
2. In column 2, briefly identify what competencies (these might be skills, knowledge and/or behaviour) are assessed by each assessment activity – this will help you map assessment activities across to the new standard and identify potential gaps.
3. In column 3, identify the assessment method used. For explanations of the different assessment methods listed, see the *Compendium of assessment methods*.
4. In column 4, identify who administers the assessment – this will give you an indication of governance issues
5. In columns 5 and 6, identify when and where assessment takes place – this will indicate where changes may have to be made to accommodate the new requirements for synoptic end testing
6. In column 7, identify how judging decisions are taken – this will inform grading decisions for the new standard.
7. In the final column, identify which existing assessment practices you wish to retain for the new standard
8. Review the matrix to identify assessment gaps and weaknesses that will impact on the assessment of the Apprenticeship standard and make brief notes on any aspects that will need to be done differently.

**After using the tool**

1. If time permits, it may be useful to hold a short consultation to confirm that the assessment practices you wish to retain and your ideas for changes/additions to current assessment practice are in line with the needs of wider sector employers and other stakeholders (such as training providers and assessment bodies).
2. Consider where you might have governance or development issues. For example, if the majority of assessment is administered by an awarding body, then you may need to develop new partnerships to maintain an effective assessment programme. Or, if most assessment is practically based, then consider how you might develop the synoptic element of assessment.

**Existing assessment practice: mapping template**

*(Insert additional rows as required)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment activity** | **Competencies assessed** | **Assessment method** | **Who administers this assessment?** | **When does this assessment take place?** | **Where is this assessment carried out?** | **How is this assessment judged?** | **Retain this activity?** |
|  |  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  |  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
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|  |  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |

**What aspect of assessment do you need to do differently?**