



Pearson

Apprenticeships 101

A really simple guide to
Apprenticeship Reform



101 Factsheet for Reform of the Apprenticeship system



Who is this guide for?

Employers, especially HR Managers and Apprenticeship Managers

Myth Buster

- ▶ **Myth:** Apprenticeship levy money can only be used to pay for new-style standards apprenticeships.
- ▶ **Fact:** Not true. Apprenticeship levy money can be reclaimed against any framework or standard approved for use in England. Even if a new standard isn't available, you can start training an Apprentice today using the equivalent framework.

- ▶ **Myth:** I can't use both SASE frameworks and new standards in my organisation's apprenticeship programme.
- ▶ **Fact:** Wrong. Provided the programmes are approved for use, you can select whichever combination best matches your organisation's needs, whether that's just standards, just frameworks or a combination.

- ▶ **Myth:** Apprenticeships are one size fits all qualifications that have little relevance to my business.
- ▶ **Fact:** Definitely not the case. Apprenticeships are flexible programmes that are co-designed with employers and industry experts. More than 1300 employers are involved in designing the new apprenticeships standards.

The Really Simple Guide to reform of the apprenticeship system

▶ Why was reform necessary?

In a nutshell, apprenticeship reform was needed as a key measure to address the changing skills landscape. The annual CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey (began in 2008) tracks the shift away from low-skilled jobs towards high-skilled jobs (managerial, professional and associate professional roles) as well as the difficulties faced by employers needing to recruit staff with STEM skills and knowledge. Over the decade, the number of firms reporting difficulty recruiting STEM skills has remained consistently around

the 40-45% mark, while the overall figure of businesses not confident there will be enough people available in the future with the skills to fill their high-skilled jobs reached a new high (69%) in 2016.

Combined with this, the Richard Review of Apprenticeships in 2012 made a number of recommendations about what apprenticeships should look like in the future, and how they can meet the needs of the changing economy. The recommendations contributed greatly to the reforms that were to follow.

► **From frameworks to standards:**

The most critical and far-reaching of the reforms was to put employers in 'the driving seat' in the development of new apprenticeship syllabuses and assessment criteria - now known as 'standards' and 'assessment plans' as opposed to the gradually outgoing 'SASE frameworks'. Where students may once have elected certain pathways within a framework to specialise within a more general career, now there will be a single standard per occupation.

► **Trailblazers:**

New standards are created by volunteer groups of at least 10 different employers from within a sector. These groups, known as Trailblazers, together decide upon the core knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) needed for mastery of a particular occupation and design an 'end point assessment' that will demonstrate that mastery has been achieved. The resulting standard is a simple list of KSBs that should not ideally go beyond a single page in length.

See guidance for trailblazers here:

https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/1033/how_to_guide_for_trailblazers_-_v2.pdf

► **From qualifications to End-point assessment:**

End-point assessment will vary from standard to standard but will share common features. It will be carried out by an independent, government-approved assessment organisation and must use a range of appropriate assessment methods (exams, written coursework, observation, interview) for a robust and holistic assessment of the requisite knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs). It will also lead to professional accreditation/membership of a professional body where a professional body or bodies have recognised the standard.

► **Funding:**

In order to achieve an ambitious target of 3 million new apprenticeship positions by 2020, the Government introduced a Levy on big business from April 2017, effectively obliging them to take on apprentices or lose the money. Levy payers receive a 10% top-up from the government to help fund their apprenticeship programmes.

For SMEs, this proportion is inverse. Employers contribute 10% of the cost of funding, and the government will top up the remaining 90% up to the funding band maximum.

Small employers with fewer than 50 employees will be entitled to full funding for 19-24 year-old apprentices.

► **What do the funding changes mean?**

What this means is that most apprentice employers now have more of a financial stake in the training of the apprentice, allowing them to have high expectations of their chosen training partner. It also means that basic funding is no longer linked to age - so will remain the same whether you hire a school leaver or use your funds to develop established staff. (Though some additional funding is available for the 16-18 bracket and the most disadvantaged 18-21 year olds).

► **From youth scheme to quality professional development:**

While many will argue that apprenticeships have never only been for young school-leavers with a technical focus, the reform of the system requires a change in mindset about the scope and scale of apprenticeships. With employers driving much of the funding for apprenticeships through the levy, the demand for apprenticeships at higher levels has risen with an increasing from Level 2 to a Level 7, they are equally available for low-skill and high-skill occupations, with an increasing number of degree-level apprenticeships making inroads into traditionally Higher Education territory. This makes them a great tool to develop in-house talent pipelines as well as entry level workers.

► **Training and assessment provision:**

In order to safeguard the quality of apprenticeships, the government has created two separate registers for training providers and End Point Assessment Providers - the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers and Register of End Point Assessment Organisations respectively. You can only work with Training Providers (FE Colleges, Universities and Independent Training Providers) and EPAOs that have been approved.

The new funding rules also state that apprentices must spend a minimum of 20% of their contracted hours in 'off-the-job' training, which may differ from previous apprenticeships depending on sector and occupation.

► **Should you choose a standard or framework for your apprentice?**

There's no doubt that standards will replace frameworks over time. While there is a cross-over period with the new standards you should opt for a standard where one is available or potentially look at creating your own with a Trailblazer group. However, where no standard yet exists you can use your Levy or government funding to pay for a SASE framework.

Where can I go for more information?

qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/apprenticeships

