

The Future of Apprenticeships in England

**Guidance for Trailblazers – from standards
to starts**

March 2015

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1 Introduction and overview

1. The apprenticeships programme is already successful and provides proven benefits to both employers and apprentices. However, the Richard Review found that there were key areas of the programme where significant improvements could be made to make it more rigorous and responsive to the needs of employers. Our plans for implementing these reforms are set out in *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan*¹, published in October 2013. The key measures aim to:
 - **Increase the quality of apprenticeships.** An apprentice will need to demonstrate their competence through rigorous and synoptic assessment. This will focus on the end of the apprenticeship to ensure that the apprentice is ready to progress.
 - **Put employers in the driving seat.** In future, apprenticeships will be based on standards designed by employers.
 - **Simplify the system.** The new employer-designed standards will be short and easy to understand. They will describe the skills, knowledge and behaviours that an individual needs to be fully competent in an occupation.
 - **Give employers purchasing power.** Putting control of government funding for the external training of apprentices in the hands of employers, to empower businesses to act as customers, driving up the quality and relevance of such training.
2. Employers working together to design the standards and assessment plans for apprenticeships is a key feature of the new system, as it will lead to apprenticeships that are higher quality and more relevant to your industry. By getting involved in developing the standards for occupations in your sector, you will have the opportunity to define the skills, knowledge and behaviours that you require in your future workforce and which training subsidised by government will help to deliver. This, in turn, will mean that apprenticeships can more directly support your business to grow and prosper. In view of the “open policy” approach which we are taking to apprenticeship reform, getting involved in Trailblazers also gives you the opportunity to influence the policy development process.
3. Our ambition is for all apprenticeship starts from the 2017/18 Academic Year to be on new standards and assessments designed by employers. We recognise that this is a stretching goal but we know that many of you are keen to move quickly to improve the

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-richard-review-next-steps>

quality of apprenticeships in your sectors. We are taking a staged approach to delivery as we move towards that goal, and are currently working with four phases of Trailblazers – groups of employers who have come together to be some of the first to design new apprenticeship standards and assessments, helping to define, test and improve the system:

- **Phase 1** Trailblazers began in October 2013 in eight sectors. They initially produced eleven apprenticeship standards in March 2014, and related assessment plans have since been approved for most of these. The first apprentices started training towards some Phase 1 standards in September 2014.
- **Phase 2** Trailblazers began in March 2014 in 29 more sectors. The first approved standards to be produced by this group were published in August 2014, and some had their assessment plans approved in March 2015.
- **Phase 3** Trailblazers were announced in October 2014 initially covering 37 sectors, involving the development of more than 75 standards, many of which were submitted and approved in March 2015.
- **Phase 4** Trailblazers were announced in March 2015 covering 26 groups initially developing 35 standards.

4. The diagram overleaf illustrates the end to end process and this guidance is designed to support groups of employers from bidding to develop a standard right through to the first starts on that standard. It builds on all of the lessons and experience we have gained through Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the Trailblazers, and reflects apprenticeship reform policy and process revisions made since the previous edition of the guidance was published in October 2014.

5. **This means that the policy and processes set out in this edition of the guidance apply to the development of all standards and assessment plans including those currently under development by Trailblazers from earlier phases.**

6. You may also find the following links useful:

- All of the apprenticeship standards and assessment plans that have been produced by employers and agreed by the government are published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>.
- All of the standards that are currently being developed by employer groups are listed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standards-in-development>.
- We will keep our main hub page on apprenticeship reforms updated with all of the latest information. You can find this at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-changes>.

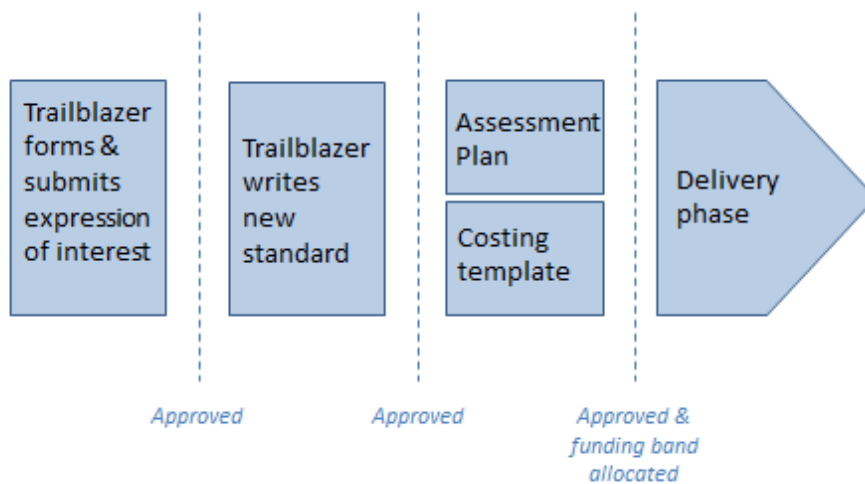


Diagram 1 - the end to end process

- We continue to learn from our experience of working with Trailblazers (as well as from a recently published interim evaluation of early Trailblazers²) and are keen to improve our processes, responding to feedback as each phase progresses. This guidance will therefore be supplemented by FAQs regularly circulated to Trailblazers and will itself be updated periodically. We therefore welcome suggestions for improving it either via your Relationship Manager or sent to apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-trailblazers-evaluation>

2 Applying to develop an apprenticeship standard

8. We welcome your interest in developing an apprenticeship standard for an occupation in your sector or for one that covers a number of sectors. The first thing that you will need to do is check whether other employers are already involved in designing a standard for this occupation, either in your sector or beyond (bearing in mind that the requirements may be very similar). You can find lists of the standards that have been designed and those in development via the links in paragraph 6. If a group already exists and you would like to join them, you can either email the specific Trailblazer contact on the gov.uk site (if listed) or us at apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk and we will pass on your contact details to the Chair of that group.
9. If there is not yet an apprenticeship standard in development for the occupation, then you can work with a group of employers to come forward with an Expression of Interest (EOI) to develop one. When preparing your EOI, if you become aware of another group developing something similar, you should make contact and consider working together in advance of submitting an EOI.
10. The next deadline for submitting EOIs is **5.00pm on Friday 5 June 2015**. Whilst we have previously indicated that the next deadline beyond this one will be Friday 2 October, we are reviewing the process for submitting EOIs (and draft standards and assessment plans) and will confirm future arrangements once that review has been completed.

Application criteria

11. Successful applications need to meet the following criteria to ensure that the occupation will provide apprentices with sufficient transferable skills and that the proposed employer group is representative of the relevant sector or sectors:

Occupational Criteria
a) The proposed occupation is unique and there is not already a standard in development (in which case we can link interested employers into that group).
b) There is not a high degree of overlap between the proposed occupation and another either proposed or in development (in which case we may ask you to collaborate with other employers on the design of related standards).
c) The occupation will require rigorous and substantial training of over a year to achieve full competence with off-the-job training accounting for at least 20% of the apprenticeship (a requirement of all apprenticeship standards).

Occupational Criteria
d) The occupation is at a sufficiently high level to allow the successful apprentice to develop transferable skills that will enable them to perform this role in an employer of any size or relevant sector.
Employer Development Group Criteria
a) You have a wide range of employers (at least ten) committed to being actively involved in the development of your apprenticeship standard.
b) These employers are reflective of those who employ people in this occupation – including in terms of size (your group must include small employers) and sector or sectors.
c) One employer member has been chosen by the group to act as Chair .
d) Any other organisations involved, such as sector or trade bodies, professional bodies, training providers or industry training boards have been invited to support the process by the employer leads and their role is specifically to support the employers.
e) The group is willing to work inclusively and collaboratively with other employers or groups who come forward with an interest in the same or similar occupation(s).
f) Employers involved in the Trailblazer should have the intention of making use of the standard once it is ready for delivery.

Apprenticeship levels

12. When considering bidding to develop apprenticeship standards you should not be driven by educational levels or automatically assume that a 'ladder' of standards at e.g. levels 2, then 3, then 4 etc is necessary.
13. Instead, you should start with the job role / occupation and consider the skills, knowledge and behaviours it requires. Each standard should describe a distinct job role / occupation with different skills, knowledge and behaviours. If several job roles / occupations differ only in terms of the scale of increasing 'experience' (rather than a real increase in both number and depth of competencies) then it is more appropriate to have a single standard at a single level.

Degree Apprenticeships

14. If you are considering bidding to develop a standard which you believe may be at level 6 or 7, there is an opportunity to include a degree in it. Degree Apprenticeships bring together the best of higher and vocational education, and see apprentices achieving a full bachelor's or master's degree as part of their apprenticeship.

15. They will involve employers, universities and professional bodies working in partnership, with apprentices employed throughout, spending part of their time at university (with flexibility as to how this is structured - e.g. via day release or block release) and part with their employer.
16. Apprentices will complete a rigorous end assessment which tests both the wider occupational competence and academic learning required for success in the relevant profession. The degree programme can be structured in one of two ways:
- Employers, universities and professional bodies can come together to co-design a fully-integrated degree course specifically for apprentices, which delivers and tests both academic learning and on-the-job training. We think this will be the preferred approach for many sectors, as the learning is seamless and does not require a separate assessment of occupational competence.
 - Alternatively, sectors may wish to use existing degree programmes to deliver the academic knowledge requirements of that profession, combine this with additional training to meet the full apprenticeship requirements, and have a separate test of full occupational competence at the end of the apprenticeship (e.g. delivered by a relevant professional body).
17. If you wish any level 6 or 7 bids to be considered for the Degree Apprenticeship model, please state this clearly in your EOI.

Estimating likely volume and timing of apprenticeship starts

18. As part of your Expression of Interest, it is important that you set out when you envisage the apprenticeship being ready to deliver starts (assuming the development process runs smoothly) and what the annual take-up is likely to be.

Guidance on naming apprenticeship occupations

19. This guidance has been designed through the Trailblazer process to introduce some consistency to the way that apprenticeship occupations are described in order to make things clearer for employers and apprentices. You should take account of this when submitting an EOI in developing a standard.

General:

- You should aim to make the titles of standards as transparent as possible to allow common understanding across the country, internationally, and for people who are unfamiliar with your industry – for instance, a young person considering starting an apprenticeship.
- You should avoid including unnecessary words in titles.

- Generally the best titles are the shortest – for instance ‘plasterer’.
- For standards which are broadly at level 2, the best descriptions might be ‘operative’, ‘mechanic’ or equivalent.
- For some disciplines and sectors there are already helpful naming conventions (for instance those developed or used by professional bodies) that can help to illustrate the level of the apprenticeship.
- Where the apprenticeship is linked to professional registration, the level / designation of registration obtained could contribute to the title.

Science and Engineering:

- In engineering, occupations at levels 3, 4 and 5 that meet Engineering Technician (EngTech) registration requirements could include ‘technician’ in the title. Higher Apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7 that meet Incorporated or Chartered requirements could include ‘engineer’ in the title.
- In science, occupations at levels 3 and 4 that meet RSci Tech registration requirements could include ‘technician’ in the title. Higher Apprenticeships at levels 5, 6 and 7 that meet Registered or Chartered Scientist requirements could include ‘scientist’ in the title.

Hierarchies:

- ‘Supervisor’ is often used for level 3 roles where there is a significant workforce of operatives. Otherwise it mostly applies from levels 4 and 5. (Note that the role of supervisor should be distinct from the type of work that is being supervised).
- ‘Manager’ is often used for level 4 roles where there are supervisors at level 3 and operatives at level 2. It then goes right up through the hierarchies of work.

Commitment required of Chairs and Trailblazers

20. The benefits of being in at the start of the process to develop apprenticeships geared to the needs of your sector are very significant. However, so is the employer commitment required to make it work.
21. Ensuring that a standard and related assessment plan meet the needs of all types of employers who might employ someone in an occupation is a difficult process and requires considerable time and effort. The whole process from developing a standard

to seeing the first apprentices start to work towards it will take at least a year and, in most cases, longer.

22. Whilst government provides support to advise Trailblazers on policy and process, ultimately the development of the new standards is the responsibility of employers. In view of this, before submitting an application to develop a standard and related assessment plan, you should be confident, both as the Chair of any resulting Trailblazer and as a group as a whole, that you can commit the time and effort needed to see it through.

Application Process

23. You are welcome to submit your application to us at any time at apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk using Template 1 at the back of this document.

24. We will acknowledge receipt of your application and will consider it after the next deadline. In addition to the information that you submit, to help us prioritise the proposals we receive, we will also look at labour market information provided by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills showing the number of people working in the occupation and the level of skills needed.

25. In considering your application, we may contact you for further information or to help you to work together with another employer group.

26. We will aim to notify all applicants of the outcome within four weeks of the deadline date and will then liaise with successful applicants to help them take forward their Trailblazers.

27. If you wish to develop additional standards beyond those you have been given approval to develop, you will need to submit a further EOI.

Checklist for submitting a bid to develop a standard

- Check for relevant pre-existing standards or standards in development.
- Satisfy yourself that the training for the occupation to be covered by the proposed standard requires rigorous and substantial training of at least a year.
- Secure support of 10 employers including small businesses.
- Consider if other organisations (e.g. professional bodies) could be usefully involved in the standard development process.
- Commit to chairing the Trailblazer and ensure that you and the wider group can devote the time and effort needed to see it through.
- Submit application using Template 1.

3 Developing an apprenticeship standard

28. Congratulations on being given agreement to develop an apprenticeship standard. This is your opportunity to work with employers across your sector and beyond to shape the future of training in an occupation.

What is an apprenticeship standard?

29. New apprenticeships are based on standards designed by employers to meet their needs, the needs of their sector and the economy more widely. These standards, (which replace existing frameworks) are short, easy to understand documents that describe the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to undertake a specific occupation well, and to operate confidently within a sector. Standards focus on how an apprentice should demonstrate mastery of an occupation, and meet professional registration requirements in sectors where these exist (for example, in engineering, science and accountancy).

Criteria for apprenticeship standards

30. We set out in *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan*³ the criteria that all Apprenticeship standards must meet:

Apprenticeship standards must be short, concise, accessible documents. They must describe the skill, knowledge and competency required for a specific occupation, and to allow an apprentice to operate confidently within the sector. Any new standard must:

- describe what full competence for a specific occupation means so that, on completion, an apprentice will have the skills, knowledge, behaviours and confidence to perform the role in any part of the sector;
- be publicly recognised by employers (including small businesses), recognised professional or trade bodies and, where appropriate, higher education institutions (HEIs), as fit for purpose;
- be suitable for small businesses to use to train their apprentices, if necessary with external training;
- contain sufficient content and be pitched at such a level, that a new entrant to the occupation would find it stretching and require at least one year of training to meet the standard;

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-richard-review-next-steps>

- include any skills, and any other requirements, for professional registration if such a system exists in the sector or occupation so that, on completion, a successful apprentice can achieve professional registration; and
- specify the level of English and maths achievement required whether this is the minimum level required by government for all apprentices or a level above this minimum set by the Trailblazer.

Any new standard may:

- specify any mandatory qualifications to be achieved by all apprentices as a pre-requisite to taking the end-point assessment.

31. Please see paragraph 63 for suggested evidence for how Trailblazers can demonstrate their standard meets the above criteria.

Support available

32. New Trailblazers are assigned a Relationship Manager from the BIS/DfE Apprenticeships Unit (AU) to work with you and your group as you develop your first apprenticeship standard. Your Relationship Manager will be a single point of contact for you, advising you on policy and process, attending or dialling into meetings of the Trailblazer group and providing feedback on your drafts. They will also act as a 'critical friend' providing constructive challenge and suggestions, including lessons and examples from other employer groups.

33. If you are an existing Trailblazer who has just had standards approved, you will now be allocated a Relationship Manager based in the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to guide you through the development of your assessment plans, as well as any additional standards you are developing.

34. Other government support available includes:

- regular workshops for new Trailblazers at which you can talk to policy officials and other employers designing apprenticeship standards in different sectors; ask questions, share approaches and make links between different occupations; and
- a new online discussion forum accessible solely by Trailblazers, the BIS/DfE Apprenticeships Unit and the SFA to share best practice. If you would like to join, please send a request to apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk, detailing what Trailblazer you are a member of and copying your request to your Trailblazer's Chair.

35. Beyond government, support is available from:

- Gatsby - an independent charitable foundation set up David Sainsbury - now Lord Sainsbury of Turville – which focuses on science and engineering education. Gatsby is providing funding of up to £1.6 million to support the employers and professional bodies that are developing apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches⁴. It worked in partnership with government to support the delivery of the first Trailblazers, and continues to support groups developing standards where they align with its priorities in science and engineering education.
- Training Providers can also be a very valuable source of support for Trailblazer groups, providing feedback and contributing ideas, particularly from a delivery perspective. The Association of Colleges (AoC), Association of Employer and Learning Providers (AELP) and University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) are happy to help employer groups to make contact with providers, and have set up a central email account (trailblazers@aoc.co.uk) through which employer groups can make such requests.

The planning phase

36. One of the first things that your group will need to do is complete a short workplan (Template 2) to help think through and set out how you will develop your apprenticeship standard(s). Please share this with your Relationship Manager as soon as it is ready.

37. As part of this planning process, you will want to put in place practical arrangements for your employer group. You may, for instance, want to agree and set out Terms of Reference including:

- How often to meet - on average groups have found fortnightly meetings most effective during the standard development process and have found it helpful to book meetings at the start of the process for several months ahead.
- How to meet - face to face meetings may be more effective in the early days of the project but, over time, you may want to offer virtual meetings.
- Roles and resources – different members of the group may wish to take responsibility for strands of work and you may wish to ask sector or trade organisations to support your meetings.

⁴ Further information about the funding and how to apply is at:
<http://www.gatsby.org.uk/en/Education/Projects/Supporting-Apprenticeship-Reform.aspx>

- Who else to involve – you will want to consider at what stage and how to involve experts from your professional body or bodies⁵, education and training providers and awarding or assessment organisations. You will also want to inform relevant sector bodies that you are developing a new apprenticeship standard.

38. To ensure you stay on track, you may also find it helpful to set a series of milestones based around your meeting schedule. This will vary from Trailblazer to Trailblazer but could look something like the following:

- First meeting – agree ways of working, any subgroups, additional invitees, complete workplan.
- Next meeting(s) – focus on required knowledge, skills and behaviours and standard structure (e.g. core & options?).
- Next meeting(s) – develop and implement consultation process.
- Next meeting(s) – review consultation results, refine standard and commence submission process requirements (e.g. copyright assignment).
- Final meeting – sign off standard.

The development phase

39. During this phase, you will write your draft apprenticeship standard. You are free to draw on whatever information you would find helpful to support this. Our experience from existing Trailblazers suggests that you might find it helpful to:

- Share examples of how apprenticeships are delivered in different organisations in the group, drawing out the most effective practice from each.
- Look at apprenticeship standards that have been developed by employers in similar occupations to yours to gather ideas and approaches. These are available online.⁶

⁵ We consider a professional body to be a not for profit organisation seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest. Professional bodies set and uphold standards for occupations, operate codes of conduct for professionals and often hold a professional register which individuals can join, subject to meeting specified educational and/or experience requirements.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

- Think about international examples as a benchmark for world-class standards. This might include the WorldSkills competition as well as apprenticeship standards from different countries.

40. You could also look at existing material such as current apprenticeship frameworks to draw on the best of what is already available. However, we would encourage you to think radically and not be constrained in your approach by the current frameworks and qualifications within them. This is your chance to start afresh and describe exactly what you need from future apprenticeships. At the core of a successful apprenticeship standard are two things:

- A short and clear role description setting out the main activities that someone in this occupation would do, in language that can be easily understood by someone without technical knowledge.
- A definitive list of the skills, knowledge and behaviours that you as an employer would expect from someone who is a fully competent professional in the occupation.

41. Your apprenticeship standard should be an electronic document of no more than two sides in length (unless you have been given approval to adopt a core and options approach and your Relationship Manager has agreed that it is impractical to fit all the options onto two pages) and written in clear language that will be easily understood by potential apprentices and their parents as well as by employers and training providers.

42. Based on the work of the Trailblazers, we have developed a template standard (Template 3) to guide you on content. However, whilst there needs to be some uniformity in terms of the content, there are no restrictions on how the information is set out, and a number of different layouts have been used by Trailblazers as can be seen by the standards online⁷.

43. In some cases, there may be a number of related occupations which share some common skills and knowledge and this can be expressed through a single standard with a core and options. If you think this option might work for your occupation(s), please discuss this with your Relationship Manager. You will find a number of examples of this approach among the apprenticeship standards that have been developed and published so far.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

The consultation phase

44. To ensure that your apprenticeship standard has the widest possible support and applicability across your sector, including from large and small employers, you will need to consult widely on your draft standard. This will enable you to gather input from employers who may not have been involved in the core drafting group.

45. You will know best how to reach and engage other employers in your sector and so it is up to you how you approach the consultation phase. Some of the approaches that previous Trailblazers developed and found useful have included:

- Publishing an online survey based on a draft of your standard to raise awareness of its existence and to seek views on its content.
- Using personal contacts in other employers to get an additional perspective on your draft standards.
- Working with partners, such as representative organisations and trade bodies to share draft standards with their members and gather feedback.
- Holding workshops or roundtable discussions as an opportunity for a wider group of employers to meet face to face and provide feedback.

46. You will want to share the results of your consultation and how you have responded to the feedback with your Relationship Manager. You will also need to leave some time to reflect on the comments you receive and build in any changes to your standard as a result of them before it is submitted to the Department.

Assigning the copyright of your standard (and assessment plan)

Why is it needed?

47. You will need to arrange for copyright of your final standard and assessment plan to be assigned to the Crown. This is to enable us to officially publish approved standards on behalf of the Secretary of State, to fund apprenticeships against the standards and to protect the standards and assessment plans from any misuse.

48. Assigning copyright is a necessary formality but does not change the fact that you have led the design of the standard and will see it through to delivery. Standards and assessment plans are covered by the Open Government Licence which enables you to use and publicise them freely.

When is this needed?

49. A completed copyright assignment will be needed at the time when you submit your standard for approval (or when you submit your assessment plan if it was not covered by the copyright assignment for the related standard).
50. Bearing in mind that it can take a while to gather all the necessary signatures, it is worth starting this process within your Trailblazer well in advance of the submission deadline.

What form does the assignment take?

51. A standard document for this purpose is attached at Template 4. The template allows you to assign copyright of both your standard and related assessment plan at the same time, even if you have not yet drafted the latter. This means you will not have to repeat the assignment process when you submit your assessment plan.
52. Also, the assignment covers any modification, adaptation, revision or amendment to the standard or assessment plan, so it will not be necessary to repeat the assignment process if any changes are made to the standard or assessment plan.
53. However, if you need a copyright letter that only refers to the assessment plan because you have already assigned copyright in relation to a standard, please contact your Relationship Manager who can provide you with an alternative template.

Who needs to sign?

54. The assignment needs a signatory from each organisation that has had a significant involvement in developing your standard (as judged by the Chair). For each such organisation, the assignment will need to be signed by a person who has the authority to assign copyright. This will normally be someone of Director level and need not necessarily be the person from that organisation who has been involved in the development of the standard.
55. There is no requirement for Crown bodies to assign copyright because the copyright is already owned by the Crown. A list of Crown bodies can be found online⁸.
56. If you go on to work with additional employers and organisations when you develop your assessment plan, these contributors can add their signatures to the assignment

⁸ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/re-using-public-sector-information/copyright/uk-crown-bodies/>

when you submit the plan. It will not be necessary for contributors who have already assigned their copyright to sign the agreement again.

Signature types

57. Wet and electronic signatures (e-signatures) or a mixture of the two are acceptable on the assignment letter. If you are collecting wet signatures, it is acceptable to have each signature on a separate page (as long as the Assignor order matches the list in the body of the assignment document) thus avoiding the need for a single version of the letter to be circulated around all signatories.

58. An electronic signature will need to be:

- Unique to the signatory.
- Created using means within a signatory's sole control.
- Capable of being linked to the relevant document or data in such a manner that any subsequent changes to that document or data would be detectable.

59. Further guidance can be found at online⁹. Once you have collected all the required signatures, please pull them together into one document and convert it into pdf format so that it cannot be altered.

Submitting your draft standard

60. You will need to submit your draft standard and supporting evidence by email to your Relationship Manager and to Apprenticeship.Trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk. The next deadlines for submission of standards during 2015 are:

For informal feedback	For formal approval
17.00 on Friday 8 May 2015	17.00 on Friday 5 June 2015

61. The “informal feedback” deadline refers to an (optional) opportunity for you to submit your standards informally for feedback from a wider group of AU policy officials and AU/SFA Relationship Managers to help you consider any final revisions prior to formal

⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/356786/bis-14-1072-electronic-signatures-guide.pdf

submission. This process is in addition to feedback you can seek from your Relationship Manager at any time.

62. Whilst we have previously indicated that the next deadline beyond this one will be Friday 2 October, we are reviewing the process for submitting EOIs, draft standards and assessment plans, and will confirm future arrangements once that review has been completed.

Showing that your standard meets the criteria

63. The following table sets out the kind of evidence you will need to provide (where required) to demonstrate clearly that your standard meets the criteria set out earlier in this Section.

Criterion	Explanation and Evidence
A. Short, concise and clear	The apprenticeship standard is short and concise (typically one to two sides of A4) and written in clear and simple language.
B. Full competence in an occupation	<p>The apprenticeship standard describes full competence for a specific occupation. This means that, on completing a standard, the employee will have acquired the skills, knowledge, behaviours and experience to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to fulfil the role in any part of the sector or sectors; and • be able to apply for professional recognition (at that level where it exists).
C. Employer support, including from smaller businesses	<p>A wide range of employers, including smaller businesses, have been involved in development of the standard, recognise it as fit for purpose and have signed up to it.</p> <p><i>You should submit letters of support addressed to the Chair of your group from at least ten employers (including smaller employers) that are representative of the sector or occupation. Each letter should indicate that the employer has been involved in the development of the standard (i.e. has been an active member of the Trailblazer group) and that they support the final draft as meeting their needs as a potential or actual apprentice employer. If a small business, the letter should also confirm this.</i></p> <p><i>Such notifications can either take the form of a signed letter (a scanned version is sufficient) or an email containing relevant employer/employee details (i.e. company logo, name and address and the emailer's name, company position and contact details).</i></p>

Criterion	Explanation and Evidence
	<p><i>When submitting your standard, you should also provide evidence to demonstrate how widely beyond your Trailblazer group you have consulted (including SMEs), in what way and with what results.</i></p>
D. Stretch	<p>The standard contains sufficient content and is pitched at such a level that a new entrant to the occupation will find it stretching and will require at least one year of training to meet the standard.</p>
E. Professional registration	<p>Where professional registration exists for the occupation, the apprenticeship standard provides the individual with the knowledge, skills and experience they need to apply for this.</p> <p><i>Where this applies, you should submit a letter of support from the relevant professional body or bodies confirming that they are content that the apprenticeship standard meets the requirements of professional registration. Such letters can be in the same forms as detailed in Section C above.</i></p>
F. English and maths	<p>The standard includes details of the English and maths requirements, either at the minimum level set by government for all apprentices, or above the minimum level if required by the Trailblazer.</p> <p>For apprentices that have not yet achieved level 2 English and maths, as a minimum they must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For level 2 apprenticeships, achieve level 1 English and maths and take the test for level 2. • For level 3 to 7 apprenticeships, achieve level 2 English and maths.
G. Qualifications	<p>The apprenticeship standard specifies any mandatory qualifications that must be achieved by all apprentices. Where these are specified, they will be a pre-requisite for all apprentices, to taking the end-point assessment.</p> <p>Qualifications included in apprenticeship standards should meet one of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required for professional registration. • Legal or regulatory requirement. • The qualification acts as a licence to practise. • The qualification is used as a hard sift when applying for jobs in the

Criterion	Explanation and Evidence
	<p>occupation related to the standard and, without it, an apprentice would be disadvantaged in the jobs market</p> <p>Also, if you intend to use a qualification in your apprenticeship and have included it on your standard, it must be regulated by Ofqual, QAA or a Professional Body (unless it is a vendor qualification).</p> <p><i>Where you wish to include a qualification in the standard, when submitting your draft standard for approval, you must provide short written evidence to justify which of the above criteria your proposition meets. Whilst not a definitive list, we would expect that such evidence may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Letters of confirmation from the relevant professional bodies.</i> • <i>A written description with references to underpinning legislation or regulations.</i> • <i>Labour market information or data.</i> • <i>Evidence of a significant proportion of job vacancy advertisements in the relevant occupation requiring the qualification as an entry requirement or letters from employers, in line with Tech Levels and Skills Funding Agency business rules, stating that the qualification would give a learner an advantage when applying for related jobs).</i> • <i>Responses from the group’s consultation activity.</i>

Standards approval process

64. An apprenticeship standard forms the basis for apprenticeships in that occupation in England, so it is essential that each standard is properly scrutinized before being published and approved for delivery.

65. If you submit your standard (or assessment plan) in June for approval, it will be shared with a panel of external experts for their advice. This process enables us to gather a range of views and feedback to ensure wide support for the standard. The experts on the panel will include:

- Representatives from employer organisations, such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).

- Academic experts in vocational education and professionals from the vocational education sector.
- Experts in professional registration.
- Experts in assessment, including from the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

66. For the benefit of the Panel, your Relationship Manager will develop a coversheet setting out the process that your Trailblazer has undergone and highlighting anything they think the Panel needs to be aware of (e.g. any link with other standards or why you have opted for a particular structure) and will attend the Panel meeting when your standards are being discussed. In view of this, when submitting you standard, you may wish to consider if there is anything in particular you would want pointed out to the Panel.

67. The final decision to approve a standard is taken by the Minister of State for Skills, taking into account the views provided by the Panel. The decision will either be to approve the standard (possibly with some suggested revisions) or to ask the group to do some further work to address one or more issues before resubmitting the standard by the next deadline. Your Relationship Manager will contact you with the result of the process as soon as possible.

68. If the standard has been approved, you will then need to make any final revisions and provide your Relationship Manager with a final version for publication. The approved standards from each round will then be published online¹⁰, and we will let you know in advance the timing of this so that your group can celebrate this important milestone.

Checklist for submitting a standard for approval

- Consider submitting your draft standard for informal feedback before the final submission date (at this stage, please do not convert it to a pdf file so that providing comments on the actual document is still possible).
- Submit your standard for approval (again, not as a pdf file).
- When submitting your draft standard, where relevant, you will also need to include the following:
 - details of anything in particular you would like highlighted to the Panel via your RM's coversheet;

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

Checklist for submitting a standard for approval

- supporting letters from at least 10 employers including smaller businesses;
- supporting letters from any professional bodies with a professional recognition level to which your standard is aligned;
- your completed copyright assignment letter; and
- evidence justifying the inclusion of any reference to a qualification in your draft standard.

4. Developing an assessment plan

69. Government has introduced a requirement that all apprenticeships must contain an end-point assessment. This is to make sure that apprentices meet the rigorous standard set by employers and are fully competent in the relevant occupation. It will give employers confidence that completing an apprenticeship means an individual is fully job ready. It will also mean that all apprentices following the same standard are assessed consistently, regardless of where they are undertaking their apprenticeship or who they are doing it with.

What is an assessment plan?

70. An assessment plan is an electronic document which describes the end-point assessment for a particular apprenticeship standard. It is the employers' opportunity to explain how to test full occupational competence. Whilst the nature and methods of assessment will differ between occupations, we require all assessment plans to focus on the end-point assessment process and do the following four things:

- Explain **what** will be assessed (i.e. which skills, knowledge and behaviours listed on the standard, giving more detail if needed).
- Explain **how** the apprentice will be assessed (i.e. which method or range of methods will be used at the end of the apprenticeship to judge competency).
- Indicate **who** will carry out the assessment (i.e. who will be the assessor(s) for each aspect of the end-point assessment).
- Propose **quality assurance** arrangements to make sure that assessment is reliable and consistent across different locations, employers and training and assessment organisations.

71. As with the standard, an assessment plan should be a stand-alone document. If you choose to develop additional documents to support delivery, such as an Employer Occupational Brief (see paragraph 122), these documents will need to be freely and readily available to others.

What is an assessment plan used for?

72. Your assessment plan will be approved and published by government, to inform other employers and apprentices which skills, knowledge and behaviours they will be expected to demonstrate at the end of the apprenticeship, and how these will be tested.

73. Once your assessment plan is published, assessment organisations will be able to offer their services against it. The plan should guide those organisations, selected by individual employers, to enable them to deliver the high quality and rigorous end-point

assessment as designed by you, the employers. In order to allow individual employer's choice over who delivers their end-point assessment, plans must not name any specific training or assessment organisations. Individual employers have the freedom to select their own training provider and assessment organisation from the relevant SFA registers (see paragraphs 127-128). Any organisations or individuals who have worked with you to develop your assessment plan do not have an automatic role in the delivery of assessment and will not be guaranteed exclusivity.

74. It is important to bear in mind the intended audience and make your plan as clear as possible. We recommend that the assessment plan is set out in line with Template 5, focusing on the "What", "How", "Who" and "Quality Assurance". This will help you formulate a clearer structure, rather than using the criteria, as this often creates repetition and confusion.
75. In order to free up delivery and grant more flexibility to individual employers, we ask that the assessment plan focusses only on the end-point assessment, rather than on formative assessments taken en route to the end-point. Any formative assessment or training detailed in the plan can only act as a recommendation to other employers (apart from where it relates to a qualification referenced in the standard.)

Who should write the assessment plan and what support is available?

76. You the employers know the best way to judge competence for occupations in your sector(s), and should use this expertise to lead on the preparation of the assessment plan.
77. Your Relationship Manager will continue to support you during this phase, and you will need to decide who else to involve. A lesson learned from previous Trailblazers is that groups often benefit from early engagement with professional bodies, training providers and assessment organisations. Employers often find it helpful to draw on these organisations' expertise to make sure that the standards and assessment plans are designed with a strong focus on deliverability.

When should the assessment plan be developed?

78. Most Trailblazers have focused on developing a standard first and, only once it has been approved, embark on developing the assessment plan. Whilst you are allowed to develop both at the same time and submit them for approval simultaneously, clearly this brings a risk of wasted effort on the assessment plan if the standard on which it is based ends up requiring major revisions after being submitted for approval.

Assessment criteria

79. Just like for standards, government will consider assessment plans against a small number of criteria (listed directly below and see also a shorter quick reference version

at the end of this document). Assessment plans which meet the criteria will be approved and published.

a) Detail a synoptic assessment

80. The end-test must be synoptic and assess skills, knowledge and behaviours in an integrated way at the end of the programme.

81. This does not mean that every skill, knowledge and behaviour needs to be individually assessed – the end-point should assess across the standard to ensure competency. The focus should be on higher order skills, which give assurance of lower level skills without requiring specific assessment. For example, the baker doesn't need to have their ability to use an oven assessed if they can successfully bake a cake.

82. Synoptic assessment should look to test skills and knowledge together, for example, asking someone to demonstrate their ability to accurately build an engine to specification and quality criteria, and asking them to explain what they are doing and why, as they build it.

b) Use a range of assessment methods

83. Your assessments will need to ensure that apprentices can demonstrate their ability across the standard, and will therefore need to test the skills, knowledge and behaviours as set out in the standard. This is likely to require mixed methods of assessment, which may include for example:

- Practical assessments.
- A viva to assess theoretical or technical knowledge or to discuss how the apprentice approached the practical assessment and their reasoning.
- Production of a project.
- A portfolio of work.
- Observational assessment.
- Written and multiple choice tests.
- Virtual assessments, such as online tests or video evidence as appropriate to the content.

c) Grade

84. All apprenticeships should be graded, and should have at least one level above a pass to recognise exceptional performance. For example, pass and distinction or

pass, merit and distinction. A pass grade in any apprenticeship must demonstrate full competency against the standard you have set.

85. How the grade is constructed is for employers to determine as they develop the assessment plan. In the assessment plan you will need to set out what assessments or qualifications will carry a grade and how they will be amalgamated into an overall grade. To do this you will need to consider the relative weighting of each assessment and grade.

86. The grade should be applied to the whole apprenticeship or, as a minimum, should be applied to the end assessment. However, we recognise that grading may not always be appropriate in your occupation and we are willing to review individual cases. See paragraphs 104-105 for more details.

d) Produce consistent and reliable judgements

87. Your assessment plan must ensure 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.

88. Good examples that ensure consistency of the end-point assessment include:

- Having assessors attend regular standardisation events.
- The relevant professional body, where applicable, assessing all or part of the end-point.

e) Deliver accurate (valid) judgements

89. The method of assessment must be appropriate to the content. Assessment plans must therefore provide sufficient detail about *what* will be assessed and *how* it will be assessed to allow us to evaluate the validity of the proposed methods of assessment.

90. The assessment methods will need to ensure that the decisions reached on every apprentice are an accurate reflection of their competence. The skills, knowledge and behaviours listed on the standard should therefore guide how each assessment tool is designed.

91. The length of your end-point assessment should be proportionate to the planned length of the apprenticeship. For example, where programmes run for 3 or 4 years, an end-point assessment including a number of methods over a period of a few months may be appropriate. It is for employers to determine the appropriate length.

f) *Ensure independent assessment*

92. It is vital that all apprentices are assessed in a fair and objective manner. Independence and impartiality are critical to ensure rigorous and high quality assessment and to ensure the standard is maintained over time.
93. Employers have an important role in assessing competency, as nobody is better placed to judge whether or not someone is fully occupationally competent. However, we are clear that there needs to be independence in the end-point assessment, to include a range of perspectives and to ensure that those bodies that make judgements about whether or not an apprentice has passed have nothing to gain from the outcome.
94. There is an expectation that assessments will either be delivered by an independent third party, or in such a way that no party who has been involved in delivery of the apprenticeship can make the sole decision on competence and passing the end-point assessment. The approach must clearly deliver an impartial result.
95. An approach to independence some Trailblazers have taken is to have a panel where multiple assessors carry out the end-point assessment or part of it. If you wish to take this approach as part of your assessment plan, you will need to specify who makes the final decision regarding whether the apprentice has passed the end-point assessment or not. The person who has the 'casting vote' should be independent of the apprentice. An assessor from the employer or the training provider's workforce would not count as being independent.
96. Other strong examples of independence include:
- Having a representative of the relevant Professional Body assess the apprentice, either individually or as part of a panel.
 - Working with an independent third party, such as an assessment organisation or a professional body, to run the assessments for the standard.
 - All work being sent externally for moderation.

g) *Show that affordability has been considered*

97. Your approach should consider how cost effectiveness in assessments will be delivered while still meeting the quality objectives. This may include a consideration of the mix of assessment approaches.
98. You should ensure that the end-point assessment is financially reasonable and not off-putting to other employers.

h) Explain how the assessment is manageable and feasible

99. You will need to set out how the assessment process will be deliverable on the scale required for the number of apprentices expected to be working towards your standard. You may therefore find it helpful to give an indication of expected volumes.
100. For example, are there the centres and assessors necessary to deliver this? Are they readily available across the country? You may wish to consider if it is appropriate or feasible for any components of your end-point assessment to be assessed or moderated virtually.

i) Include professional body recognition (where applicable)

101. Where a professional body or bodies have recognised the standard, our expectation is that they will also recognise the assessment process, as completion of the apprenticeship should ensure the apprentice is ready to secure professional accreditation.

Quality assurance

102. Like the assessments themselves, quality assurance needs to be independent of those who lead on the design and the delivery of assessments. We are open to different approaches to quality assurance, and would welcome proposals for employer-, professional body- and sector-led systems. Alternatively, if standard setters would like their assessments to be regulated by Ofqual or, where applicable, QAA, then they are welcome to do so. You can speak to your Relationship Manager about your preferred approach and they will be able to advise and/or put you in contact with relevant organisations.
103. You will need to be specific about who will quality assure the end-point assessment, how they will do it and your approach to ensuring quality of assessment over time and across different locations.

Grading exemptions

104. If you do not think grading is appropriate in your occupation and cannot grade the end-point assessment, or can only grade it partially, you will need to submit evidence against one of the following criteria:
- a) Where all assessments are aligned with professional registration.
 - b) Where all assessments are aligned with regulation
 - c) Where all assessments are aligned with a license to practice.

105. There is no guarantee that any request for a grading exemption, whether to only grade aspects or to not grade at all, will be granted. If you are granted an exemption, the exemption will only apply to that particular apprenticeship standard. A blanket grading exemption will not be granted to a Trailblazer group, sector or industry.

Making consequential amendments to the related standard

106. We understand that work to develop an assessment plan will sometimes highlight where amendments need to be made to a standard that has already been approved and published. Where this is the case, changes to the published standard can be proposed when the assessment plan is submitted to the formal panel for approval (assuming it wasn't submitted at the same time as the standard).

107. Submission of proposed amendments to a standard at this point will need to include:

- Details of how the standard needs to change (the revised standard should be submitted with the changes from the original version clearly highlighted).
- An explanation of the reasons for the amendment.
- Confirmation from the Chair that the Trailblazer employers, and other parties such as professional bodies, support the changes to the standard (an e-mail will suffice).

108. Where the proposed changes are minor, for example correcting a mistake, removing unnecessary detail, or providing clarifying text, confirmation of employer support is not required.

109. When you become aware that amendments to a published standard are likely, you should discuss this with your Relationship Manager in the first instance, so that they can advise whether confirmation of employer support will be required with your submission.

110. The proposed standard amendments will then be reviewed alongside the draft assessment plan. If the amendment to the standard and the assessment plan are approved, the revised standard will be published on the gov.uk website at the same time as the assessment plan.

Submitting your assessment plan for approval

111. Once you have completed your assessment plan, you should submit it to us in exactly the same way as the standard as detailed in the previous Section. It will be

looked at by the independent panel against the criteria for approval of end-point assessment detailed above.

112. The Panel will provide advice to the Minister of State for Skills, with whom the final decision on approval rests.

113. Your Relationship Manager will share the outcome and any feedback from the process with you. Approved assessment plans will then be published on the gov.uk website. Your assessment plan must have been approved before apprenticeships can be commenced under your new standard.

Checklist for submitting an assessment plan for approval

- Submit your assessment plan for approval (at this stage, please do not convert it to a pdf file so that providing comments on the actual document is still possible)
- When submitting your assessment plan, where relevant, you may also need to include the following:
 - copyright assignment (unless fully covered at the standard submission stage);
 - letter(s) of support from Professional Bodies (where applicable);
 - evidence for grading exemption (where applicable).

5. Preparing for Delivery

114. In addition to developing your assessment plan, the other key actions necessary to prepare for delivery are:

- to provide us with information on the planned costs of delivery so that we can allocate each standard to the appropriate funding cap, giving you and your providers clarity on the amount of government funding available; and
- to work with education and training providers as they develop and adapt their curriculum to meet the requirements of your new standard, so that they are ready to deliver high quality training to your apprentices

Allocating standards to funding caps

115. As part of the wider reforms to apprenticeships, we will give employers control over the funding of apprenticeship training. This will empower employers to assume the role of demanding customers and ensure that your company receives the highest quality service in training apprentices against the standard. We have been trialling a simple funding model for apprenticeships based on standards since the beginning of the 2014 to 2015 academic year (AY14/15) and this will continue during AY15/16. The model may be subject to change in subsequent years in the light of experience gained in the trial, but its key elements are currently:

- A single government co-investment rate for core funding. This means that for every £1 you contribute to the external training and assessment costs of an apprenticeship, government will pay £2.
- This will apply up to a clear cap for your standard – the Core Government Contribution (CGC). There are five caps set at £18,000, £8,000, £6,000, £3,000 and £2,000.
- You will have the opportunity to negotiate the actual price for training and assessment with the provider(s) you are working with. The price will vary depending on the needs of you and your apprentice(s).
- There will be additional payments on top of the CGC for small businesses up to 50 employees (between £500 and £2,700), for taking on a 16-18 year old apprentice (between £600 and £5,400) and for successful completion (between £500 and £2,700).
- Where apprentices need to complete training in English and maths at level 1 or level 2, we will fully fund the training required.

116. The model is summarised in the following table and further information on the funding reforms is available at online¹¹.

Core Government Contribution (CGC) Cap:		Cap 1	Cap 2	Cap 3	Cap 4	Cap 5
£2 for every £1 from employer		£2,000	£3,000	£6,000	£8,000	£18,000
Additional incentive payments	Recruiting a 16-18 year old	£600	£900	£1,800	£2,400	£5,400
	For a small business (<50)	£500	£500	£900	£1,200	£2,700
	For successful completion	£500	£500	£900	£1,200	£2,700
Maximum total Government contribution		£3,600	£4,900	£9,600	£12,800	£28,800

117. The delivery of apprenticeship starts against a standard can only begin once a standard has been allocated to a Core Government Contribution (CGC) cap. At present this takes place when your assessment plan is submitted for final approval. However, we are currently reviewing the process around the allocation of caps, and will provide more information once our review is complete.

Putting control of government funding with employers

118. At present, when an employer uses a new standard, the government funding is routed directly from the SFA to the training provider following the provider-employer price negotiation. However, as recently announced, in future, employer control of the funding will be maximised through the introduction of apprenticeship vouchers.

119. Apprenticeship vouchers offer a simple, burden-free way of controlling apprenticeship funding that will benefit employers of all sizes and learning providers regardless of the number of apprentices they take on. The voucher approach we are introducing assigns an employer a 'discount' on any training purchased. For example, the employer will register their details on a new digital system – the characteristics of the business, the details of the apprentice and the chosen apprenticeship standard. The system will calculate the rate at which the training you are purchasing has been discounted and you will be given a 'discount code' to use when making payments to the learning provider. The provider will then redeem the 'discount code' with the Skills Funding Agency.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-changes>

120. We are involving businesses, providers and their representatives in the design and development of the new system, to ensure it reflects your needs and priorities. It will be fully prototyped and live-tested with Trailblazers to ensure it is simple, secure and easy to use before it is implemented. The initial stages of development are underway and will continue throughout 2015-16, and 2016-17. We expect the new system to be fully operational for AY17/18. If you are interested in contributing to the testing and development work, please contact the SFA at: trailblazerfundingenquiries@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

Working with education and training organisations

121. In preparing for the delivery of your new apprenticeship, you will want to work with a range of training providers to ensure that they understand and are ready to deliver the training content to enable apprentices to meet your standard.

122. Many Trailblazers have found it helpful to engage with Training Providers throughout the development process, but it is particularly important to do so as you get closer to delivery. One way in which some Trailblazer groups have facilitated this is by developing an 'Employer Occupational Brief' (EOB) or Training Specification to set out for providers in more detail what you as employers mean by the competencies in your standard to ensure that the training and assessment meet your needs precisely.

123. This is not a mandatory part of the standard and assessment plan development process, but where it is adopted, it is important that anyone wishing to deliver an apprenticeship in the future has ready access to all the information they need to do so. In view of this, where Trailblazers choose to develop additional documents to support delivery, such as an EOB, they will need to consider how those documents will be made freely and readily available to others.

124. We recommend annexing such documents to your assessment plan, so that they can be published as a package at the same time. However, Trailblazers can choose to make different arrangements, provided that those arrangements are clearly signposted either in the apprenticeship standard or the assessment plan and the document can be accessed free of charge. As an optional part of the process, where EOBs or similar documents are annexed to assessment plans, they will not be scrutinised by the Advisory Panel.

125. Another means of engaging training providers is running workshops, webinars or engagement events in your sector to encourage them to prepare for delivery of your standard and to answer their questions.

126. As already flagged, provider representative organisations including the Association of Colleges (AoC), Association of Employer and Learning Providers (AELP) and University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) are happy to help

employer groups to make contact with providers, and have set up a central email account (trailblazers@aoc.co.uk) through which employer groups can make such requests. As you move towards delivery of the standard, it would also be helpful if you could keep your Relationship Manager informed of which providers you are working with.

127. In order to deliver your apprenticeship standard, providers will need to be on the Skills Funding Agency's register of approved training organisations. If providers you work with would like to apply to join the register, details of how to do so are available online¹².

128. Similarly, any assessment organisation that an employer wishes to work with will need to be on the Skills Funding Agency's register of apprentice assessment organisations, which will be launched at the end of March.

Certification

129. Responsibility for issuing apprenticeship certificates will remain with the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS) to ensure simplicity and consistency. All apprenticeship certificates will have common features to ensure that they can be easily recognised and verified, but FISSS (Mark Froud, email: mark.froud@fisss.org) will be happy to work with your group to design a specific certificate for your apprenticeship, which could include logos of the companies that have been involved in designing the standard.

Off-the-job training

130. For all standards, the amount of off-the-job training mandated is a minimum of 20% or equivalent, and we expect that all apprentices will benefit from genuine training away from their day-to-day job.

Turning off frameworks

131. Once the coverage of an existing apprenticeship framework is covered by a new standard or standards, we would envisage the former being turned off at a point which is reasonably practical. Since standards will not necessarily map onto framework coverage precisely, we are currently considering the best way of implementing this.

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-register-of-training-organisations#how-organisations-can-enter-the-register>

Other delivery issues to consider

132. Once your apprenticeship standard and assessment plan have been approved, published and assigned to a funding cap, we will expect employers and providers to start delivering apprenticeships under your standard. Your Relationship Manager will continue to support you during this process and some of the issues that you will want to consider (if you have not already done so by this point) are:

- How to communicate your standard to employers (including smaller employers) which have not been directly involved in its development to encourage them to offer apprenticeships using the standard.
- How to support education and training providers to develop their curriculum for training apprentices to meet your standard.
- How to approach the process of negotiating the cost of training with education and training providers – this could be done at an individual employer level or more broadly across a number of employers and providers.
- How to work with assessment organisations as they develop the specific tools set out in your assessment plan to ensure that they meet your needs as employers.
- How to work with professional bodies to ensure that, where your standard aligns with professional registration, the process for apprentices seeking registration at the end of the apprenticeship is clear and straightforward.

Process for amending standards after they are ready for delivery

133. As a rule, once an assessment plan is published, there should be no further changes to a published standard before the formal review date, unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example, legal changes.

134. However, to support our Trailblazers at this early stage of delivery, we will initially take a more pragmatic approach as follows, but Trailblazers should not work on the basis that this option will be available longer term.

135. The process for amending a standard as a result of the development of the assessment plan was detailed in the previous Section. Where a Trailblazer determines that an amendment needs to be made to a published standard, for which the assessment plan has already been published, changes can be submitted for consideration by the next deadline (5 June 2015). The submission will need to include:

- a clear explanation of how the standard needs to change along with an explanation of the reasons for that amendment (the revised standard should be submitted with the changes from the original version clearly highlighted);
- details of whether or not the amendment has implications for the assessment plan and if so, whether amendments also need to be made to the assessment plan; and
- letters of support from the Trailblazer employers and professional bodies, where appropriate, in line with the standards approval criteria.

136. The proposed amendment and accompanying paperwork can then be submitted for approval. If approved, the standard (and where necessary the assessment plan) will be revised and re-published.

Template 1 - for an EOI in developing an apprenticeship standard

To: Apprenticeship Trailblazers Team

By email: apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Proposal to develop apprenticeship standard(s) in [x] sector[s]

I am writing as the lead employer for the proposed development group in [sector or sectors]. This is a [new/existing] standard development group. I would chair the group and lead this work.

I am working with the group of employers listed below, all of whom are committed to working together to develop apprenticeship standards and to see these through to delivery.

The occupation(s) that we would like to develop apprenticeship standards for is/are:

- Occupation [please include a brief explanation of the main responsibilities and skills required]

We believe that this occupation will require rigorous and substantial training of over a year to achieve full competence, 20% of which will be off-the-job training [insert evidence supporting this].

We are committed to ensuring that the standard we design provides sufficiently transferable skills to enable a successful apprentice to perform this role in an employer of any size or relevant sector. We are representative of our sector(s) and are willing to work with other employers who come forward with an interest in this occupation and with colleagues from other sectors where our standards are closely related. We will develop the apprenticeship standard(s) and assessment plan(s) in line with the *Guidance for Trailblazers – from standards to starts*.

We fully intend to make use of the standard[s] once [it is/they are] ready for delivery.

[If applicable: We are working with [professional body] who set the professional standards for this sector]

[If applicable: As employers, we have invited representatives from [sector body or bodies] to play a supporting role to the Trailblazer]

[Include details of when you envisage the resulting apprenticeship being ready to deliver starts (assuming the development process runs smoothly) and what the annual take-up is likely to be thereafter].

[Include details of where in England any resulting Trailblazer is likely to meet as this will help us in our process of allocating each Trailblazer a Relationship Manager]

If the standard[s] [is/are] selected for development at this stage, I am happy for my organisation to be publically named as the lead employer and the companies listed below are happy to be named as working together to deliver this.

Yours sincerely,

Members of the employer group:

Organisation Name	Lead Representative	Sector	Job Title	Email Address	Number of employees

Template 2 - for Trailblazer workplans

Occupation(s):
Employer Chair:
Relationship Manager:
1. Managing the Trailblazer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you plan to manage the work of the Trailblazer? How often does the group plan to meet? Who will set the agenda for these discussions and chair the sessions?• Will the whole group consider all issues or will you split the work into specific strands working on different aspects?
2. Key phases and milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you plan to meet the overall goal of submitting a high quality apprenticeship standard?• What are the key milestones along the way? When will you share information and drafts with your Relationship Manager?
Key Milestones:

Occupation(s):	
Employer Chair:	
Relationship Manager:	
3. Plans for involving others	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you plan to involve a wider group of employers, including smaller businesses, in the Trailblazer process to ensure that the standard is widely applicable? • How do you plan to work with the other Trailblazers on any cross-over issues? • What are your plans to involve other organisations and at what stage – e.g. professional bodies, awarding bodies, providers, trade unions? 	
4. Risks and issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key risks and issues for the Trailblazer project at this point and how are you managing them? 	
Risk / Issue	Plans for mitigating/managing
5. Anything else to raise	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything else that you would like to make your Relationship Manager aware of at this stage? 	

Template 3 - for apprenticeship standards

Items that we expect to be covered in all apprenticeship standards appear in black type in the template, whilst those that are optional depending on the occupation and circumstances are in **blue type**. Apprenticeship standards should be short and clear, taking up no more than two sides of A4 unless you have been given approval to adopt a core and options approach and your Relationship Manager has agreed that it is impractical to fit all the options onto two pages.

Whilst there needs to be some uniformity in terms of the content of standards, there are no restrictions on how the information is set out and a number of different layouts have been used by Trailblazers as can be seen online.¹³

1. Occupation(s)

- *List the occupation(s) covered by this apprenticeship standard. It may also be helpful to set out any generic job titles used to describe this occupation within the sector.*
- *If you are using a core and options approach, you should summarise the range of options here.*

2. Occupational profile

- *Describe briefly what someone who is fully competent in this occupation will be expected to be able to do – their main duties and tasks.*

3. Requirements: Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

- *This is the core of the apprenticeship standard. You should list the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are required by employers for full competence in this occupation. If you have approval to develop a core and options approach, you will want to set out separately which knowledge and skills are core and which apply to individual options.*

Knowledge	What is required

Skill	What is required

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

Behaviours	What is required

4. Duration

- *You should give an indication of the likely duration of the apprenticeship (e.g. “typically 24 months”, or “typically 18-24 months”).*
- *This must be at least 12 months.*
- *You should not state a maximum duration.*

5. Qualifications

- *We do not expect you to specify qualifications as part of your apprenticeship standard as the standard is focused on the outcome for the apprentice, not the inputs. However, there are some exceptions to this as detailed in the standards criteria in Section 3.*
- *If a qualification is to be referenced in the standard, the name, type and level of qualification should be stated but not a particular provider or awarding organisation (except where it is offered by only one organisation e.g. vendor and professional qualifications).*
- *This section should also state the English and maths requirements at the end of the apprenticeship. These may either be the minimum required across all apprenticeships (see the criteria relating to standards in Section 3) in which case the standard wording below can be used, or any such requirements that you set above the minimum. The standard wording for level 2 apprenticeships is:*

“Apprentices without level 1 English and maths will need to achieve this level and take the test for level 2 English and maths prior to completion of their Apprenticeship”

...and the standard wording for level 3 and above apprenticeships is:

“Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to completion of their Apprenticeship”.

6. Link to professional registration (where this exists)

- *Apprenticeship standards must link to professional registration where this exists at that level in the occupation. This means that when someone completes an apprenticeship, they have the evidence proving that they have met the level of competence needed to secure professional registration. It is up to the individual whether they choose to become registered.*
- *Where relevant, this section should set out which professional registration the apprenticeship standard is designed to meet and the name of the professional body or bodies responsible for maintaining the professional register.*

7. Level

- *State the proposed level of the apprenticeship standard (levels 2-7)¹⁴*

8. Review date

- *This should generally be “after 3 years” unless there is a particular reason for it to be reviewed earlier (e.g. in cases where technology or processes are developing rapidly).*

¹⁴ Advice is available at <http://ofqual.gov.uk/help-and-advice/comparing-qualifications/> and <http://www.gaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Framework-Higher-Education-Qualifications-08.pdf> (Page 15-22)

Template 4 - for assigning copyright to the Crown

This Assignment is dated [date]

PARTIES

(1) The Assignors are the persons listed in the table below.

Assignor	Full Company Name (incorporated in England and Wales)	Company Number	Registered Office
First			
Second			
Third			
Fourth			
[Continued]			

(2) The Assignee is the Secretary of State.

SCHEDULE

The apprenticeship standards are:

- [Names of standards]

In this Schedule, “apprenticeship standards” means any standard which may be published, with or without revisions, by the Secretary of State in connection with any of the following:

- (1) approved English apprenticeships,
- (2) arrangements known as Trailblazer apprenticeships,

and includes any assessment plan related to that standard.

In this Schedule, an “assessment plan” is any document prepared for the purpose of assisting the Secretary of State, or another person, to decide whether a person has achieved an apprenticeship standard (whether or not the document is annexed to or otherwise forms part of that standard).

BACKGROUND

- The Assignors jointly own the copyright in the Works.
- The Assignor and Assignee acknowledge that the Assignor may create Future Works.
- The Assignor has agreed to assign to the Assignee all copyright in the Works and the Future Works on the terms set out in this agreement.

AGREED TERMS

1. DEFINITIONS

“**Works**” means the works described in the Schedule. (The schedule forms part of this agreement and has effect as if set out in the body of the agreement.)

“**Future Works**” means any modification, adaptation, revision or amendment to any of the Works.

2. ASSIGNMENT

In consideration of the sum of £1.00 (receipt of which the Assignors expressly acknowledge), the Assignors assign to the Assignee absolutely the following rights throughout the world:

the entire copyright and all other rights in the nature of copyright subsisting in the Works and the Future Works; and

all other rights in the Works and the Future Works of whatever nature, whether now known or created in the future, to which the Assignors are now, or at any time after the date of this agreement may be, entitled by virtue of the laws in force in the United Kingdom and in any other part of the world,

in each case for the whole term including any renewals, reversions, revivals and extensions and together with all related rights and powers arising or accrued, including the right to bring, make, oppose, defend, appeal and obtain relief (and to retain any damages recovered) in respect of any infringement, or any other cause of action arising from ownership, of any of these assigned rights, whether occurring before, on, or after the date of this agreement.

3. MORAL RIGHTS

The Assignors waive their moral rights arising under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and, so far as is legally possible, any broadly equivalent rights they may have in any territory of the world.

4. VARIATION

No variation of this agreement shall be effective unless it is in writing and signed by the parties (or their authorised representatives).

5. SEVERANCE

If any provision or part-provision of this agreement is or becomes invalid, illegal or unenforceable, it is to be deemed modified to the minimum extent necessary to make it valid, legal and enforceable. If such modification is not possible, the relevant provision or part-provision is to be deemed deleted. Any modification to or deletion of a provision or part-provision under this clause does not affect the validity and enforceability of the rest of this agreement.

6. GOVERNING LAW

This agreement and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it or its subject matter or formation (including non-contractual disputes or claims) shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the law of England and Wales.

7. JURISDICTION

Each party irrevocably agrees that the courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with this agreement or its subject matter or formation (including non-contractual disputes or claims).

First Assignor

Signed by [NAME OF DIRECTOR]
Director
for and on behalf of [NAME OF ASSIGNOR]

Second Assignor

Signed by [NAME OF DIRECTOR]
Director
for and on behalf of [NAME OF ASSIGNOR]

Third Assignor

Signed by [NAME OF DIRECTOR]
Director
for and on behalf of [NAME OF ASSIGNOR]

Fourth Assignor

Signed by [NAME OF DIRECTOR]
Director
for and on behalf of [NAME OF ASSIGNOR]

[Continued]

Template 5 - for assessment plans

A good assessment plan:

- Explains **what** will be assessed (i.e. which skills, knowledge and behaviours listed on the standard, and giving more detail if needed).
- Explains **how** the apprentice will be assessed (i.e. which method or range of methods will be used at the end of the apprenticeship to judge competency),
- Indicates **who** will carry out the assessment (i.e. who will be the assessor(s) for each aspect of the end-point assessment),
- Proposes **quality assurance** arrangements to make sure that end-point assessments are reliable and consistent across different locations, employers, and training and assessment organisations.

SECTION A -- Summary of assessment

A short (one side) clear explanation of how the end-point assessment will work, describing how an apprentice should expect to be assessed. This should focus on the end-point assessment, but may also include information on any mandatory qualifications listed on the standard or gateways to end-point assessment you wish to implement.

We recommend that you include a diagram here as this can aid understanding of your assessment proposal.

Remember, the focus should be on the end-point assessment; any assessments taken en route to the end-point can be included as recommendations or best practice, but should not be listed as mandatory (except in the case of qualifications listed on the standard, which must be completed before the apprentice takes their end-point assessment).

SECTION B -- Detailed explanation of the end-point assessment

What?

- *What skills, knowledge and behaviours are being assessed?*
- *You might want to link to the published standard and provide further details on the “what”. If you have created an Employer Occupational Brief you may wish to link to this, which should be included as an annex or signal where it can be found.*

How?

- *How will the “what” be assessed?*
- *What does the apprentice have to do exactly?*

- *Where does it take place? (Assessment centre, workplace...)*
- *Is it timed? How long should it take to complete?*

Who?

- *Who will do the assessment?*
- *What is their relationship to the apprentice? What level of independence and impartiality do they have?*
- *If there are multiple assessors, such as in a panel arrangement, who makes the final judgement as to whether or not the apprentice has met the standard and successfully completed their apprenticeship?*
- *Are there any minimum requirements of assessors (sector knowledge, recognised assessor qualification, professional registration etc.)?*

Quality Assurance

- *How will assessments be quality assured to make sure apprentices across the country are assessed equally and fairly over time?*
- *Who will carry out this quality assurance? How will it take place?*
- *How will consistent judgements be made by different assessors?*

SECTION C – Grading

You should make clear how the final grade will be decided; which components will contribute to it; the weighting of each of these; and who decides the grade for each component where these are multiple.

If you have developed or plan to develop grade descriptors or grading criteria, we recommend that you include these in your plan.

As a 'pass' grade means competence against the standard has been achieved, you will want to set out what the grade above pass looks like. How will you determine whether the apprentice has exceeded the standard's requirements?

SECTION D -- Implementation

Your assessment plan will need to set out the following:

- *The likely costs for your proposed assessment plan and what proportion of the overall cost of the apprenticeship is likely to be on assessment.*
- *How the end-point assessment is deliverable across the country and in a variety of businesses.*

Assessment criteria (quick reference version)

Criterion	Explanation
1.SYNOPTIC ASSESSMENT	The end-point assessment must be synoptic and assess the higher order skills, knowledge and behaviours from across the standard in an integrated way at the end of the programme.
2. USING A RANGE OF ASSESSMENT METHODS	Your assessments will need to ensure that apprentices can demonstrate their ability across the standard. This is likely to require mixed methods of assessment.
3.GRADED ASSESSMENTS	All Apprenticeships should be graded, and should have at least one level above a pass. For example, pass and distinction or pass, merit and distinction.
4. DELIVERING CONSISTENT (RELIABLE) JUDGEMENTS	Your assessment strategy and tools must ensure 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.
5. DELIVERING ACCURATE (VALID) JUDGEMENTS	The method of assessment must be appropriate to the content. The assessment methods and tools will need to ensure that the decisions reached on every apprentice are an accurate reflection of their competence.
6. ENSURING INDEPENDENCE	It is vital that all apprentices are assessed in a fair and objective manner. This means assessments will either be delivered by an independent third party, or will be delivered in such a way that no party who has been involved in delivery can make the sole decision on competence. The approach must clearly deliver an impartial result.
7.AFFORDABILITY	Your approach should consider how cost effectiveness in assessments will be delivered while still meeting the quality objectives. You should ensure that the end-point assessment is financially reasonable and not off-putting to other employers.
8. MANAGEABILITY /	You will need to set out how the assessment process will be deliverable on the scale required for the number of apprentices.

Criterion	Explanation
FEASIBILITY	
9. PROFESSIONAL BODY RECOGNITION	Where a professional body or bodies have recognised the standard, our expectation is that they will also recognise the assessment process, as completion of the apprenticeship should ensure the apprentice is ready to secure professional accreditation.



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