

# **The Future of Apprenticeships in England**

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

**December 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. For apprentices, it can equip them with the skills needed for a successful career and be a genuine alternative to going to University or even an opportunity to combine an apprenticeship with higher education. For employers, it can provide a highly efficient and effective means of developing the skills of their workforce. All in all, adult apprenticeships at level 2 and level 3 deliver £26 and £28 of economic benefits respectively for each pound of Government investment<sup>1</sup>.
2. We therefore want to grow the number of apprenticeships available, reaching 3 million starts in 2020, and we have set out how we will do this in “English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision”<sup>2</sup>.
3. 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 which would, in turn, help to drive growth in the number of apprenticeships. Our plans for implementing these reforms were originally set out in *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan*<sup>3</sup>, published in October 2013. The key measures aim to:
  - **Put employers in the driving seat.** Apprenticeships will be based on standards designed by employers, making them more relevant and therefore more attractive to existing and new employers.
  - **Increase the quality of apprenticeships.** An apprentice will need to demonstrate their competence through rigorous and holistic assessment. This will focus on the end of the apprenticeship to ensure that the apprentice is ready to progress.
  - **Simplify the system.** The new employer-designed standards will be short and easy to understand. They will describe the knowledge, skills and behaviour (KSBs) 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.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-measuring-the-net-present-value-in-england>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-in-england-vision-for-2020>

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

4. Employers working together to design the standards<sup>4</sup> and assessment plans for apprenticeships is a key feature of the new system, as it leads to apprenticeships that are higher quality and more relevant to your industry.
5. This process has been underway since October 2013 when the first eight "Trailblazers" were launched, and we now have over 140 Trailblazers that have collectively delivered - or are in the process of delivering - over 350 standards<sup>5</sup>.
6. Whilst we have previously aimed for all new apprenticeship starts to be on standards from 2017/18<sup>6</sup>, as stated in the 2020 Vision, we think that the recent announcement of the apprenticeship levy warrants giving employers longer to consider which occupations they will require apprenticeships for, and to develop high quality standards for these.
7. To allow for this, **we envision a migration from apprenticeship frameworks to standards over the course of the Parliament, with as much of this to take place by 2017/18 as possible.** This timetable is still tight and means that we are keen to receive bids to develop apprenticeships in relation to any occupations not yet covered by standards that employers believe would address their skills needs and could meet our criteria. These could be for occupations currently covered by frameworks<sup>7</sup> (which will be phased out – see paragraph 175) or for occupations not yet associated with apprenticeships.
8. By getting involved in developing the standards for occupations in your sector, you will have the opportunity to define the KSBs you require in your future workforce, and which training (supported by government) will help to deliver this. In turn, this will mean that apprenticeships more directly support your business to grow and prosper.
9. The diagram overleaf illustrates the end to end process that Trailblazers need to undertake for each standard they develop and this is explained in greater detail in the remaining sections of this guidance.

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<sup>4</sup> The standards referred to in this Guidance are approved English apprenticeship standards within the meaning of Chapter A1 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as inserted by the Deregulation Act 2015).

<sup>5</sup> The status of all Trailblazer standards is set out at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standards-list-of-occupations-available>.

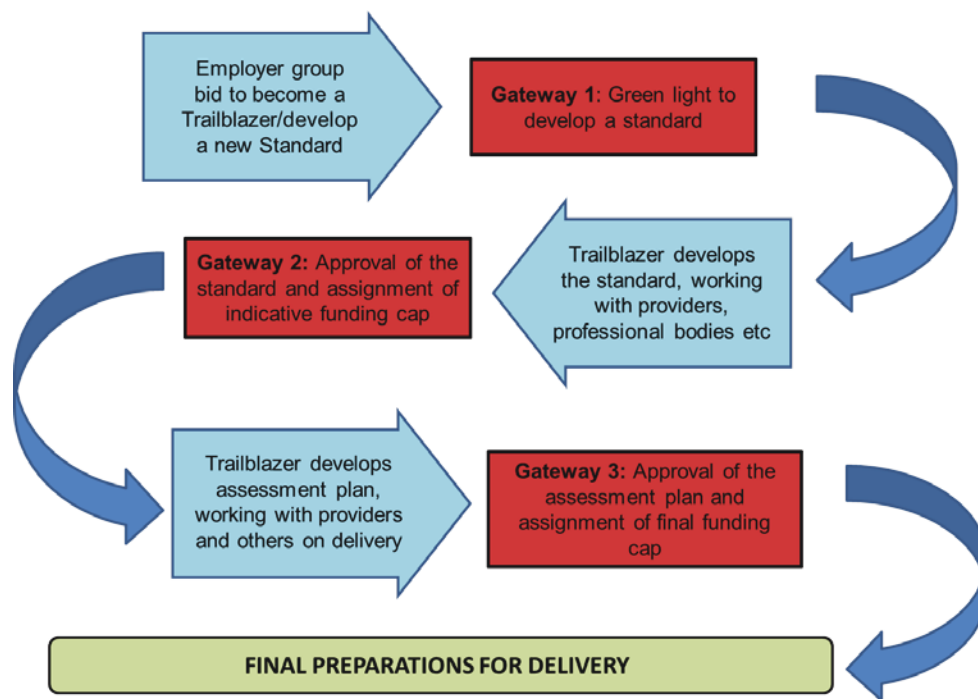
Further details including Trailblazer contacts, lists of Trailblazer members, copies of approved standards and assessment plans and funding cap allocations for standards that are ready for delivery are available at:

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

The above and other apprenticeship reform documents are available via our main apprenticeship reform hub page at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-changes>.

<sup>6</sup> The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan, October 2013

<sup>7</sup> Details of all apprenticeship frameworks in operation in England are available on FISS's Apprenticeship Frameworks Online database: <http://www.afo.sscalliance.org/frameworks-library/index.cfm>



*Diagram 1 – the end to end process*

10. The 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, employers and other participants have gained through the Trailblazer process so far. Although it is separated into stages of the process, **we strongly recommend that you read all sections at the outset so that you are familiar with the whole process before starting and because the stages are inevitably interlinked.**

### Key updates in this version of the Guidance

11. **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 and existing standards and assessment plans as and when they come up for review<sup>8</sup>. In view of this, it is particularly important that existing Trailblazers note and act upon the updates contained in this edition.**

12. This version of the Guidance includes all policy and process updates that have been made since the previous version was published in July 2015. Existing Trailblazers have been made aware of many of these updates over the past six months, but all

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<sup>8</sup> Whilst standards and assessment plans are generally referred to in the singular in the following sections, clearly many Trailblazers will be developing a number of such documents simultaneously. Please note, however, that any requirement listed for either a standard or assessment plan must be satisfied for each individual standard or assessment plan.

are included in this guidance for completeness and for the benefit of new and potential Trailblazers.

#### *Policy updates/clarifications*

- As most Trailblazers do already, we now expect you to promote the standards you develop to your sectors to help to generate starts, working with other employers and stakeholders as appropriate (employer development group criterion (g) at paragraph 21 and paragraph 28).
- Clarification that the need to involve small businesses in the process should normally mean at least two employers with fewer than 50 employees (employer development group criterion (b) at paragraph 21).
- Further clarification of when multiple standards in related occupations may and may not be appropriate (paragraph 22).
- Clarification that the minimum 12 month duration relates to the period before the end-point assessment (EPA) (criterion D at paragraph 85).
- Clarification that the appropriate English and maths qualifications need to be taken/achieved prior to taking the EPA to bring this into line with the requirement for other mandated on-programme qualifications (criterion F at paragraph 85 and Annex 4).
- The English and maths criterion has been extended to cover digital skills, to the extent that Trailblazers are now required to consider whether digital skills should be built into the standard(s) they are developing (criterion F at paragraph 85).
- Additional information on the detail of the external quality assurance arrangement we expect to see in assessment plans, including guidelines for employers, if they wish to develop their own approach (paragraph 138).
- Clarification that a clear description of the proposed assessment methods should be included in assessment plans in order to ensure the assessment organisation can use it to develop tools and methods (paragraph 111).
- Clarification that the apprenticeship grade should be applied to the EPA only (paragraph 116).
- Updates are also included on related policies including the plan to create the Institute for Apprenticeships (paragraph 13), the apprenticeship levy and the Digital Apprenticeship Service (paragraph 163) and certification (paragraph 168).

### *Process updates*

- Revised timetable for having all starts on standards: over the course of the Parliament, with as much of this to take place by 2017/18 as possible (paragraph 7).
- New deadlines for the submission of EOIs, draft standards and draft assessment plans during the first six months of 2016 (paragraph 19) and confirmation that the new approvals process that has been applied to Expressions of Interest (EOIs) and standards over recent months is now also applying to assessment plans (paragraph 86).
- The introduction of an expectation that, under normal circumstances, all Trailblazers should be able to get an approved EOI through to an approved assessment plan within a year. In future, we will also reserve the right to withdraw a Trailblazer's right to develop standards if no demonstrable progress is being made (paragraphs 37-39).
- Clarification of the evidence required to support draft standards for Degree Apprenticeship (criteria C and G at paragraph 85).
- Clarification of the evidence required to support the inclusion of existing or in-development qualifications in standards (criterion G at paragraph 85).
- The introduction of revised timings for the allocation of funding caps. For standards submitted to the January 2016 deadline onwards, indicative funding caps will be allocated when a standard is approved. The final cap will be confirmed alongside approval of the assessment plan. For any standard that has already been approved but which is not yet ready for delivery, a cap will be allocated when the related assessment plan is approved, as before (paragraph 158).
- Clarification of the evidence required when submitting revisions to standards and assessment plans at various stages (paragraphs 91, 150-152 and 176-178).
- Introduction of a unique reference systems for standards (paragraph 179).

### *New/revised tools*

- The Trailblazer small business fund to support the travel costs of small businesses attending Trailblazer meetings has now been set up and the criteria and claim form are detailed at Annex 2.
- Updated templates for EOIs, standards, employer support letters, assessment plans and training and assessment activity (Annexes 1, 4, 6, 7, and 9 respectively) to ensure all necessary content is included.



## Institute for Apprenticeships

13. As detailed in the 2020 Vision, we plan to establish a new independent body – the Institute for Apprenticeships – led by employers, to regulate the quality of apprenticeships. An independent Chair will lead a small Board made up primarily of employers and business leaders to ensure employers continue to drive up apprenticeship quality to the highest level.
14. Building on the current Trailblazer processes, the Institute for Apprenticeships will put in place transparent mechanisms for the approval of apprenticeship standards and assessment plans, and maintain clear quality criteria so that only standards that are valued by employers will be approved and funded.
15. It is the intention that the Institute will be fully operational by April 2017, but it is likely to take on functions sooner than that in a phased approach during 2016. We will inform employer groups well in advance of any transition of functions to the Institute. In the meantime, the BIS/DfE Apprenticeships Directorate (AD) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) will continue to support Trailblazers and run the processes associated with the development and approval of EOIs, standards and assessment plans. Employer groups should therefore continue to follow the processes and guidance set out in this document and liaise with their Relationship Manager in the usual way.
16. We remain keen to learn from our experience of working with Trailblazers (as well as from a recently published evaluation of early Trailblazers<sup>9</sup>) and improve our processes, responding to feedback as the Trailblazer programme progresses. We therefore welcome suggestions for improving it either via your Relationship Manager or sent to [apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk), and will publish further updates of the guidance as required.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-trailblazers-evaluation-final-report>

## 2 Applying to develop an apprenticeship standard

17. 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 designing a standard for this occupation, either in your sector or beyond (bearing in mind that the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour (KSBs) may be very similar across sectors). You can find details of the standards that have been designed and those in development via the links in footnote 5 on page 5. If a group already exists and you would like to join them, you can either email the specific Trailblazer contact on the gov.uk website (if listed) or us at [apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk) and we will pass on your contact details to the Chair of that group.

18. If there is not yet an apprenticeship standard in development for the occupation, 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.

19. In the summer of 2015, we moved to monthly deadlines for submitting EOIs, draft standards and draft assessment plans (except for months with major holidays). These are midday on the last Thursday of each month, meaning that the next deadlines are:

- midday on Thursday 28 January 2016
- midday on Thursday 25 February 2016
- midday on Thursday 31 March 2016
- midday on Thursday 28 April 2016
- midday on Thursday 26 May 2016
- midday on Thursday 30 June 2016

20. Moving to monthly opportunities to submit EOIs means that employers can put in bids at any time with the assurance that they will be reviewed more regularly. However, you should still ensure that your bid fully meets all the criteria listed below before submitting.

### Application criteria

21. Successful applications need to meet the following criteria to ensure that the occupation is suitable for the development of an apprenticeship standard, and that the proposed employer group is representative of the relevant sector or sectors. To help evidence the occupational criteria below, we require a short description of the occupation as part of the application, including typical roles and responsibilities and

an indication of the main competencies required, as well as any other supporting information you would like to include.

<b>Occupational Criteria for Expression of Interest (EOI)</b>
a) The proposed occupation is <b>unique</b> and there is not already a similar standard in development by another group (in which case we can link interested employers into that group) or your own group (see paragraph 22 on developing multiple standards on this point).
b) There is not a <b>high degree of potential overlap</b> between the content of the proposed standard and another in development, which could be addressed by, for example, expanding the sector coverage of the latter rather than creating a new standard (in which case we may ask you to collaborate with the existing Trailblazer).
c) The occupation will require <b>rigorous and substantial training of at least a year prior to the end-point assessment</b> to achieve full competence, with off-the-job training accounting for at least 20% of the apprenticeship.
d) The occupation is at a <b>sufficiently high level</b> to allow the successful apprentice to develop <b>transferable skills</b> that will enable them to perform this role in a business of any size or relevant sector.
<b>Employer Development Group Criteria</b>
a) You have a <b>wide range of employers</b> , meaning at least 10 (in addition to any participating professional bodies, trade associations etc.) committed to being actively involved in the development of your apprenticeship standard.
b) These employers are <b>reflective of those who employ people in this occupation</b> – including in terms of size (your group should normally include at least two employers with fewer than 50 employees) and sector or sectors.
c) One <u>employer member</u> has been chosen by the group to act as <b>Chair</b> (this cannot be someone from a trade body or other representative organisation).
d) Any other organisations involved, such as sector or trade bodies, professional bodies, training providers or industry training boards have been <b>invited to support the process by the employer leads</b> rather than leading the process themselves.
e) The group is willing to <b>work inclusively and collaboratively</b> 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 and <b>commit individually to a specific number of starts</b> .

- g) Employers are expected to work with other organisations **to promote and market the standard**. This is particularly important where an occupation is prevalent across a range of sectors.

## Proposals to develop standards at multiple levels

22. When considering bidding to develop an apprenticeship standard, you should start with the occupation and consider the full range of KSBs it requires. Each standard needs to cover a distinct occupation with different KSBs. If two occupations differ only in terms of the scale of increasing 'experience' (rather than a real difference in both breadth and depth of competencies) then it is likely that they are not occupationally distinct enough to qualify for separate apprenticeship standards. In this case, it is more appropriate to put forward a single standard for development.
23. However, where there are occupations in the same field that reflect a clear distinction in the breadth and depth of competence, and with each one independently requiring a minimum of 12 months' worth of training to develop full competence, it may be appropriate to develop more than one standard (which may or may not be at more than one level). Applications that propose the development of multiple standards should clearly set out the distinctions between the occupations, and demonstrate how each will meet the criteria set out above. If you are considering submitting an application to develop multiple standards but are not sure whether it meets the criteria, email [apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk) and we will be able to advise you.

## Degree Apprenticeships

24. 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 professional and technical education, and see apprentices achieving a full bachelor's or master's degree as part of their apprenticeship<sup>10</sup>.
25. 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.
26. Apprentices will complete a rigorous end-point assessment (EPA) which tests both the wider occupational competence and academic learning required for success in

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<sup>10</sup> These are approved English apprenticeships which lead to a degree as well

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.

27. If you wish any level 6 or 7 bids to be considered for the Degree Apprenticeship model, please state this clearly in your EOI.

### **Committing to starts and promoting them more widely**

28. As part of your EOI, 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. We expect each Trailblazer employer to commit individually to taking on a particular number of starts and for this to be detailed in your EOI, and once a Trailblazer has standards ready for delivery, we will expect you to work with other employers and stakeholders to promote their use, as most Trailblazers with ready for delivery standards already do.

### **Guidance on naming apprenticeship occupations**

29. 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 to develop 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 ensure that the same title is used on the EOI, standard and assessment plan documents and that, if a change in the title is proposed during the development phase, this is agreed with your Relationship Manager.
- 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<sup>11</sup> 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.

### **Age appropriateness of standards**

30. It is our expectation that nearly all apprenticeship standards are open to all. However, in some cases there will be legitimate reasons why a standard should not be accessible to all age groups. For example, there may be existing safety legislation or other legal or statutory requirements which prevent 16-18 years fulfilling roles, or

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<sup>11</sup> This and other references to Higher Apprenticeships mean approved English apprenticeships

questions about the overall appropriateness of the standard and the context in which it will be delivered to this age group.

31. In view of this, when submitting an EOI, please indicate whether there might be any circumstances which would mean the eligibility for undertaking an apprenticeship based on a standard would be limited to certain age groups. Providing this information will not have any bearing on whether or not your EOI is approved.

### **Eligibility for funding and ensuring standards represent good value for money**

32. The KSBs set out in any standard must be sufficient to ensure full competence in the relevant occupation is acquired. However, it is also important that the standard represents good value for money, as it needs to be accessible to all types of employer that might want to use it. In view of this, when bidding to develop a standard, you should be aware of the fact that, if your bid is approved, the resulting Trailblazer process may involve making compromises on content along the way.

33. When developing your standard, you should bear in mind that government co-payment can be used only to fund the direct training, education and assessment required to attain the outcomes specified in the apprenticeship standard and or assessment plan. This generally includes training delivery, any ongoing assessment of the apprentice in gaining the apprenticeship standard and formal EPA.

34. However, there are certain things government will not pay for which are set out in more detail in the funding guidance published separately<sup>12</sup>. These include curriculum development costs, or other one-off costs that will not be part of mainstream business as usual delivery, and statutory requirements on employers, including qualifications that are deemed to be a 'licence to practise'. Your Relationship Manager will be able to help you understand what activities we will not fund

### **Commitment required of Chairs and Trailblazers**

35. The benefits of being involved at the start of the process to develop apprenticeship standards geared to the needs of your sector are very significant. However, so is the employer commitment required to make it work.

36. Ensuring that a standard and related assessment plan meet the needs of all types of employer that might employ someone in an occupation is a difficult process and requires considerable time and effort.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-rules-2015-to-2016> - this is a link to the SFA Funding Rules 2015 to 2016 homepage through which the funding rules for Trailblazer apprenticeships can be accessed.

37. Whilst government provides support to advise Trailblazers on policy and process, ultimately the development of the new standards is the responsibility of employers and we expect Trailblazers to complete the process in as short a time as is practicable for each standard that they are approved to develop. In most cases it should be possible for a Trailblazer to develop and secure approval for a standard and related assessment plan within a year. We also expect Trailblazers to be open to new members and charging for membership is not permitted.
38. In addition, you and the employers on the group are also best placed to work with relevant organisations, including professional bodies, to market and promote the standard to other employers and training providers and encourage employers to start training against the standard. We expect you to do this.
39. 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. If a Trailblazer fails to deliver or makes little or no demonstrable progress, we reserve the right to withdraw our approval for them to develop a standard and, if there is another group willing to take it forward, re-allocate responsibility for it to them.

### **Replacing Apprenticeship Frameworks**

40. In order to help us determine when apprenticeship frameworks can be turned off (see paragraph 175), if your proposed standard relates to an occupation currently covered by a framework or a pathway within a framework and so will effectively replace it when the standard is ready to deliver (assuming your bid and subsequent standard is approved), please name the framework(s) / pathway(s) in your EOI.

### **Application Process**

41. You are welcome to submit your application to us at any time at [apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk) using the template at Annex 1.
42. We will acknowledge receipt of your application and, shortly after the relevant deadline, we will put all new EOIs online for a two week period in order to give any potential interested parties that have not been involved in its development the opportunity to comment on it, and provide further evidence of the potential support - and demand - for the proposed standard. This process may also elicit potential new group members (which we will alert you to if the application is successful). We will forward you the link to the survey so that you can advertise it to relevant colleagues,



though we do not require the proposed Trailblazer group to complete the survey themselves.<sup>13</sup>

43. In addition to the information that you submit and feedback from putting the EOI online, we will also look at labour market information showing the number of people working in the occupation and the level of skills needed. This will help us prioritise the proposals we receive.
44. In considering your application, we may contact you for further information or to ask you to work together with another employer group either from the same sector or another sector if the occupations they are considering appear to require similar core KSBs.
45. The Apprenticeships Directorate (AD)/Skills Funding Agency (SFA) will review all information and evidence received through this process before making a recommendation to the Minister for Skills on whether an EOI can be approved. The Minister will make a final decision on each individual application. We aim to notify all applicants of the outcome within six weeks of the original submission deadline, including the reasons behind any decision not to approve an EOI.
46. We will then liaise with successful applicants to help them take forward their Trailblazers. However, it should be noted that securing approval to develop a standard is not a guarantee of eventually securing approval for a standard. If, for example, it turns out that the content of a draft standard does not have sufficient stretch to justify being an apprenticeship (despite this having been asserted in the original EOI), the draft standard would not be approved.
47. If you subsequently 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 an Expression of Interest to develop a standard**

- Check for pre-existing standards or standards in development that your bid might replicate.
- Satisfy yourself that your proposed standard meets all the occupational criteria at paragraph 21 and that you have provided relevant information in the application to demonstrate this as detailed in the template at Annex 1.

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<sup>13</sup> Further information on the recent changes to the approvals process, including the online survey, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standards-changes-to-the-process-for-approvals>

- Satisfy yourself that your proposed Trailblazer meets all the employer development group criteria (paragraph 21) and that you have provided the relevant information in the application to demonstrate this as detailed in the template at Annex 1.
- 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 the template at Annex 1 (**as a word rather than pdf document** to enable easier uploading to our survey).

### **3 Developing an apprenticeship standard**

48. Congratulations on being given approval 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?**

49. New apprenticeships are based on standards designed by employers to meet their needs, the needs of their sector(s) and the economy more widely. These standards are short, easy to understand documents that describe the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour (KSBs) 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**

50. To ensure every standard is high quality there are seven criteria that all apprenticeship standards must meet. These, together with the kind of evidence needed to demonstrate compliance with the criteria, are set out fully at paragraph 85 but, in summary, a standard must:

- A. Be short, concise and clear.
- B. Set out the full competence needed in an occupation, so that, on completion, the apprentice is able to carry out the role in any size of employer across any relevant sector.
- C. Have the support of employers including smaller businesses.
- D. Be sufficiently stretching so that it will require at least a year of training (before the end-point assessment) with off-the-job training accounting for at least 20% of the apprenticeship.
- E. Align with professional registration where it exists.
- F. Contain minimum English and maths requirements and any digital skills required.
- G. Only include mandatory qualifications under certain circumstances.

51. You may also wish to see the Trailblazer Quality Statement<sup>14</sup> which sets out the existing and new quality measures that apply to apprenticeship standards.

### Support available

52. New Trailblazers are assigned a Relationship Manager (RM) either from the BIS/DfE Apprenticeships Directorate (AD) or the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to work with you and your group as you develop your apprenticeship standard and assessment plan, and your strategies for engaging with providers and promoting starts. Your RM 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 learned and examples from other employer groups.

53. Other government support available includes:

- workshops for 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;
- webinars on particular issues relating to the development process as needed;
- an online discussion forum accessible solely by Trailblazers and Relationship Managers to share best practice. If you would like to join, please send a request to [apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk), detailing which Trailblazer you are a member of and copying your request to your Trailblazer's Chair; and
- a Trailblazer Small Business Travel Fund to support small businesses with their reasonable travel costs in relation to attendance at Trailblazer meetings. Guidance on this and a claim form is included at Annex 2.

54. Beyond government, support is available from:

- Gatsby - an independent charitable foundation set up by 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 approaches<sup>15</sup>. It worked in partnership with government to support the delivery of

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<sup>14</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-trailblazer-quality-statement](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-trailblazer-quality-statement)

<sup>15</sup> Further information about the funding and how to apply is at: <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/en/Education/Projects/Supporting-Apprenticeship-Reform.aspx>

the first Trailblazers, and may be able to support groups developing standards where they align with its priorities in science and engineering education.

- Standards that have already been approved - whilst many of the knowledge and skills needed to become competent in the occupation covered by your standard will be specific to that particular occupation, others may not be, and wording covering them may well already have been set out in approved standards. Approved cross-sector standards such as Business Administration, Customer Service, Leadership and Management and Management Consultancy may prove to be particularly useful sources of content. In view of this, if appropriate to your needs, you may wish to review such standards in the process of developing your own<sup>16</sup>.

## The planning phase

### *Workplan*

55. One of the first things that your group will need to do is complete a short workplan (template at Annex 3) to help think through and set out how you will develop and finalise your apprenticeship standard and related assessment plan within a year. Please share this with your Relationship Manager as soon as it is ready.

56. 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:

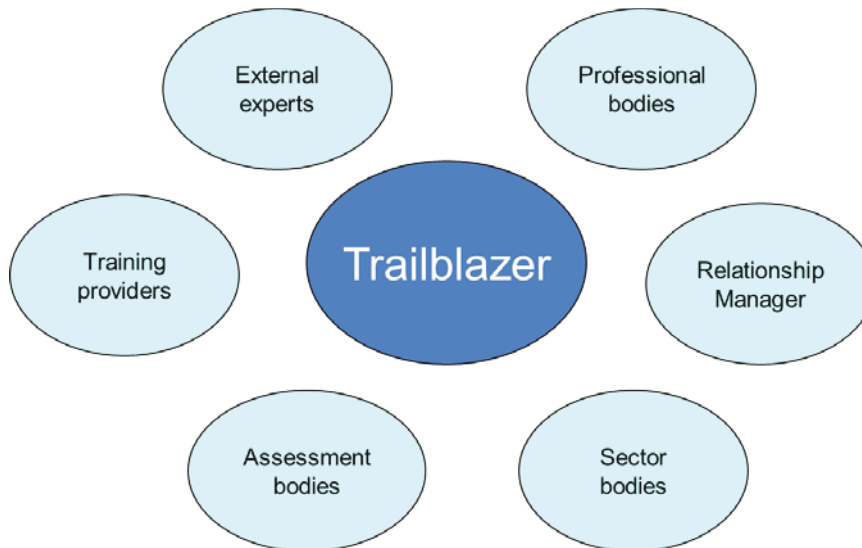
- How often to meet - on average groups have found fortnightly meetings or conference calls most effective during the standard development process and have found it helpful to book meetings at the start of the process for several months ahead.
- How to meet - face to face meetings may be more effective 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 or professional bodies to support your meetings.
- Who else to involve? You will want to consider at what stage and how to involve experts from your professional body or bodies<sup>17</sup>, education and training

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<sup>16</sup> All approved standards are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

<sup>17</sup> 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

providers and awarding or assessment organisations. 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](mailto:trailblazers@aoc.co.uk)) through which employer groups can make such requests. You will also want to inform relevant sector bodies that you are developing a new apprenticeship standard.



*Diagram 2: other parties that Trailblazers might want to involve*

### *Development timetable*

57. 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 KSBs and standard structure (e.g. core & options).
- Next meeting(s) – develop and implement consultation process.

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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.

- 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

### *Making use of best practice*

58. 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, and 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.

59. 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 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 KSBs that you as an employer would expect from someone who is a fully competent professional in the occupation.

### *Format and Content*

60. Your apprenticeship standard should be an electronic document of no more than two sides in length (unless you have decided 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), in size 12 font, and written in clear language that will be easily understood by potential apprentices and their parents, as well as by employers and training providers.

61. Based on the work of current Trailblazers, we have developed a template standard (Annex 4) 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.

## *Core and Options*

62. 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. This potentially prevents a proliferation of very similar standards and can also help transferability across occupations and sectors. However, with a core and options approach, any single standard still needs to lead to the same level and breadth of competence being achieved irrespective of which option is taken. A standard with a core and options approach will also still only receive a single funding cap rather than a different cap per option. In view of this, in taking such an approach you would need to consider the following factors:

- Any combination of options permissible within a standard must broadly lead to the same level of competence, albeit in different areas.
- You must specify a defined number of options that need to be selected. Stating only a minimum number is not permissible as any options beyond that number would lead to a breadth of competence beyond that required for the apprenticeship. Training for any options taken beyond a “minimum” would be outside of the apprenticeship and not supported by government funding. As each standard is allocated to a single funding cap all options must be similar in terms of training and assessment required.
- Including optional “add-ons” in the standard is not permissible as this would lead to a two-tier breadth of the competence within a single standard. However, in the case of this point and the previous one, clearly there is nothing to stop the employer from overtraining at their own cost.

63. If you think a core and options approach 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.

## **The consultation phase**

64. To ensure that your apprenticeship standard has the widest possible support and applicability across your sector(s), and represents good value for money for all potential end-users whatever the size of their company, you will need to consult widely on it. This will enable you to gather input from employers and other relevant organisations who have not been involved in the drafting of it.

65. 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, but please discuss this with your Relationship Manager if you would like further advice. 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 standard.
- Working with partners, such as representative organisations and trade bodies, to share a draft standard 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.

66. Training providers and assessment organisations are also key partners who should be included in your consultation. You can also ask training providers to promote your consultation to employers they work with, expanding its reach.

67. You will 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 for approval. This is something we review during the approvals process, so please share the details of your consultation with your RM, including who you have consulted, how you have consulted them, what the results were and how you have amended the draft standard as a result. You should also include these details as part of the formal submission to the Department.

### **Assigning the copyright of your standard (and assessment plan)**

#### *Why is it needed?*

68. 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.

69. 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?*

70. 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, as was the case with the first standards developed by Trailblazers).

71. 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?*

72. A standard template for this purpose is attached at Annex 5 (and a word version is available from your RM). 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 as long as those involved in the development process are the same for each stage.

73. 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.

74. However, if you need a copyright letter that only refers to the assessment plan because you have already assigned copyright just in relation to the standard, please contact your Relationship Manager who can provide you with an alternative template.

*Who needs to sign?*

75. The assignment needs a signatory from each organisation that has had a significant involvement in developing your standard and/or assessment plan. In view of the separate requirement for letters or emails from at least 10 Trailblazer employers confirming that they have been actively involved in the development of each standard (see criterion C at paragraph 85), we would expect this to mean that all such employers would have been sufficiently involved to also need to sign over copyright to the Crown. However, ultimately this will be the judgement of the Chair and individual employers themselves. If an employer believes that their involvement in the Trailblazer, whilst active, has nonetheless been insufficient for their company to have any ownership of the Trailblazer's work (and hence would not need to sign the copyright assignment), they will need to state this in their supporting letter (see the standard wording in the employer letter template at Annex 6).

76. Within each affected 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.

77. 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 online<sup>18</sup>.

78. 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 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*

79. 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.

80. 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.

81. Further guidance can be found online<sup>19</sup>. 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 for approval**

82. You will need to submit your draft standard and supporting evidence by email to your RM and to [Apprenticeship.Trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Apprenticeship.Trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk). Outside of major holiday period there are now monthly deadlines for submitting EOIs, standards and assessment plans and these are detailed in paragraph 19. The more frequent opportunities for Trailblazers to submit revised standards (and assessment plans) for approval are aimed at removing previous bottlenecks in the development process.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/re-using-public-sector-information/copyright/uk-crown-bodies/>

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/356786/bis-14-1072-electronic-signatures-guide.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/356786/bis-14-1072-electronic-signatures-guide.pdf)

83. In order to maximise the efficiency of the approvals process both for government and Trailblazers, it is important that Trailblazers are confident that their draft standards are well written and fully meet all the criteria before submitting. It is therefore recommended that you work very closely with your RM in the run up to submitting them.

84. If, having had your standard approved, you find you need to make subsequent revisions to it as a result of the assessment plan development process, there is an opportunity to resubmit your standard for approval when you submit your assessment plan. This process is detailed further at paragraphs 150-152.

### Showing that your standard meets the criteria

85. The following table sets out the criteria for standards and the evidence (*in italics*) you will need to provide to demonstrate clearly that your standard meets the criteria. These build on the criteria that you signed up to when you submitted your EOI and apply to each standard that you submit for approval.

Criterion	Explanation and Evidence
A. Short, concise and clear	<p>The apprenticeship standard is short and concise - no more than two sides of A4 (unless a core and options approach is being used) in size 12 font and written in clear and simple language.</p> <p>The title of the apprenticeship is clear and degree apprenticeships are explicitly referenced in their title, for example 'Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship'</p>
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 KSBs and experience to be able to fulfil the role in any part of the sector or sectors; for any size of employer.</p>
C. Employer support, including from smaller businesses	<p>A wide range of employers, normally including at least two with fewer than 50 employees, have been involved in development of the standard, recognise it as fit for purpose and have signed up to it. This means that all sizes of employer agree that it meets their needs and will lead to full competence in the occupation.</p> <p><i>You should submit letters of support addressed to the Chair of your group from at least ten employer members of your Trailblazer (normally including at least 2 with fewer than 50 employees) that are representative of the sector or occupation. Each letter should indicate that the employer has been involved in the development of the standard 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. The template at Annex 6 covers this requirement.</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</i></p>

Criterion	Explanation and Evidence
	<p><i>logo, name and address and the emailer's name, company position and contact details).</i></p> <p><i>When submitting your standard, you should also provide evidence to demonstrate how widely beyond your Trailblazer group you have consulted (including with SMEs), in what way and with what results.</i></p> <p><b>Higher Education Institute (HEI) support for Level 6+7 degree apprenticeships only:</b></p> <p><i>You should submit <b>at least one</b> letter of support addressed to the Chair of your group from a HEI (e.g. a university or specialist college) which endorses the standard and is committed to delivering it once approved. Each letter should indicate that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• The HEI has been involved in the development of the standard, recognises it as fit for purpose and agrees that it is at the required level (either Level 6 or 7).</i></li> <li><i>• The HEI is committed to delivering the standard once approved.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>As above, such notifications can either take the form of a signed letter (a scanned version is sufficient) or an email containing relevant HEI details (i.e. HEI logo, name and address and the emailer's name, position and contact details).</i></p> <p><i>This requirement is <b>not</b> applicable to other types of higher apprenticeships (Levels 4+5) which may also contain elements of a degree and require HEIs to be involved with delivery.</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 prior to taking the end-point assessment (EPA). The standard should set out the level of the apprenticeship and, where a standard exists for an occupation in the same area at a higher or lower level, the new standard will need to demonstrate that it relates to a separate and distinct occupation.</p> <p>The standard should also demonstrate a breadth and depth of competency that is different to other standards in development or which have previously been published.</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 be eligible 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 submitted in the same ways as detailed in criterion C above.</i></p>
F. English, maths	English and maths skills are a critical part of communication and basic numeracy

Criterion	Explanation and Evidence
and digital skills	<p>which underpin a wide range of other competencies. 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. The former are as follows and apply to all apprentices following standards unless already achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For level 2 apprenticeships, achieve level 1 English and maths and take the test for level 2 prior to taking their end-point assessment.</li> <li>• For level 3 to 7 apprenticeships, achieve level 2 English and maths prior to taking their end-point assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst the latter requirement applies to degree apprenticeship standards, we recognise that those undertaking these types of apprenticeships are likely to have already met the minimum level of English and maths set by the government.</p> <p>It is also important to recognise that there are means of acquiring English and maths skills beyond specific qualifications and you will want to bear this in mind when developing the KSBs for your standard.</p> <p>As a key underpinning skill set, you should also consider whether any digital skills<sup>20</sup> are required to achieve full competence in the occupation, and include them in the standard if appropriate.</p>
G. Qualifications	<p>As the EPA will provide definitive evidence of whether the apprentice has acquired full competence, qualifications should not generally need to be included within an apprenticeship. In view of this, you can only specify qualifications in the standard if they meet one of the criteria below.</p> <p>Where qualifications are specified, passing them will be a pre-requisite for all apprentices to taking the EPA (except in the case of integrated degree apprenticeships where the degree constitutes the EPA).</p> <p>If you intend to use a qualification in your apprenticeship and have included it on your standard, it <b>must</b> be regulated by Ofqual, QAA or a Professional Body (unless it is a vendor qualification), and whilst the qualification must be named specifically, the standard should not name awarding organisations.</p> <p>When submitting your draft standard for approval, you must confirm the full title and level of the qualification and provide short written evidence to justify which of the following criteria your proposition meets (the evidence required is detailed directly</p>

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<sup>20</sup> In this context, “digital” encompasses the very broad set of skills that individuals need in order to understand, use or create the software and services we all access through devices such as computers, tablets and ‘smart’ phones.

Criterion	Explanation and Evidence
	<p>below each criterion):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The qualification is a <b>mandatory requirement set by the regulator in the occupational area</b> to which the standard relates (this includes qualifications which are recognised as a legal requirement i.e. as a licence to practise). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A written description with references to underpinning legislation or regulations or, in the case of a licence to practise, a letter from the relevant regulator/s confirming that the qualification is a mandatory requirement set by them for that occupational role.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>2) The qualification is <b>required for professional registration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Letter of confirmation from the relevant professional body that the qualification is a requirement for professional registration.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>3) The qualification is used as a hard sift when applying for jobs in the occupation related to the standard and, <b>without it, an apprentice would be at a significant disadvantage</b> as they try to progress in their career. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <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); and</i></li> <li>• <i>Responses from the group’s consultation activity overwhelmingly supporting the inclusion of the qualification.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>The “hard sift” criterion could be used to include a yet to be developed qualification if it is being developed specifically for the standard if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All Trailblazer employers confirm via their letters of support that they intend to use it (i.e. on the basis that it will, in future, meet the “hard sift criterion); and</i></li> <li>• <i>Responses from the group’s consultation activity overwhelmingly support the inclusion of the proposed qualification.</i></li> </ul> <p>If you intend to develop a qualification for the standard, you must also state how far into the qualification development process you currently are (for example, has your qualification already been approved by a regulator) and when you expect it to be ready for delivery (using indicative timescales).</p>

## Standards approvals process

86. An apprenticeship standard and its related assessment plan form the basis for apprenticeships in that occupation in England, so it is essential that each are properly scrutinized before being published and approved for delivery.

87. In view of this, shortly after each submission deadline, any draft standard submitted for approval is placed online for a two week period for comment and feedback. This is **not** designed to replace the Trailblazer's own consultation, but to increase transparency and scrutiny, ensuring that all interested parties have a final chance to comment and that approval recommendations are supported by feedback and evidence from a wide range of organisations. We do not expect Trailblazer members to complete the approvals survey themselves, but you may wish to make any relevant organisations that did not have a chance to participate in your own consultation aware of it.
88. Following the survey, a summary of any substantive comments received will be shared with you by your RM for you to consider and respond to as appropriate. All feedback received will then be reviewed by the AD/SFA Approvals Group before making a recommendation to the Minister for Skills<sup>21</sup>.
89. A final decision on whether the standard can be approved (possibly subject to some amendments) or needs more substantive further work and resubmission will be taken by the Minister for Skills. Your RM will contact you with the result of the process as soon as possible. We aim to let you know within six weeks of the original submission deadline. If the standard has been approved, you will then need to make any final revisions requested and provide your RM with a revised version for publication. As explained in more detail at paragraph 158, your standard will then be allocated an indicative funding cap.
90. The approved standards from each round will then be published online<sup>22</sup>, and we will let you know in advance the timing of this so that your group can celebrate and advertise this important milestone.
91. If you are submitting a standard for approval that was previously rejected, rather than requiring 10 employer support letters again, an email from Chair, copied to their Trailblazer employers and other relevant parties such as professional bodies will normally suffice. This will need to confirm that these parties support whatever revisions have been made to the resubmitted standard and include evidence that the changes meet the criteria set out at paragraph 85. However, please check with your Relationship Manager who can advise whether the extent of the amendments means that additional information (e.g. evidence of wider support for the amendments) is required.

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<sup>21</sup> Further information on the recent changes to the Approvals process is set out at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standards-changes-to-the-process-for-approvals>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>



92. We will accept any copyright letter previously submitted relating to the standard as still being valid unless the details within it (e.g. the title of the standard or signatories) require revision.

### Checklist for submitting a standard for approval

- Please submit your standard for approval (**as a word rather than pdf document** to enable easier loading onto our survey and subsequent annotation), ensuring that it meets all the criteria set out at paragraph 85.
- When submitting your draft standard, you will need to include a covering email or letter:
  - summarising who and how you consulted beyond your group and the impact of this on the final draft standard;
  - (where relevant) evidence justifying the inclusion of any reference to a qualification in your draft standard; and
  - details of anything else you would like to be taken into consideration alongside the draft standard (e.g. whether the apprenticeship covered by the standard is unlikely to be suitable for a particular age group);
- You will also need to enclose:
  - letters from at least 10 employer Trailblazer members (normally including at least 2 with fewer than 50 employees) confirming that they have been actively involved in the development of each of the standards being submitted and that they support the final products (see Annex 6);
  - supporting letters from any professional bodies with a professional recognition level to which your standard is aligned and (in the case of degree apprenticeships) a supporting letter from at least one HEI; and
  - your completed copyright assignment letter signed by those who have had a significant involvement in the development of the standard (see paragraph 68 and Annex 5).

## 4 Developing an assessment plan

93. Government has introduced a requirement that all apprenticeships must contain an end-point assessment (EPA) which is a holistic assessment of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour (KSBs) that have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship. 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?

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

- Explain **what** will be assessed (i.e. which KSBs 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 EPA) and who will make the final decision on competency and grading.
- Propose internal and external **quality assurance** arrangements to make sure that the assessment is reliable and consistent across different locations, employers and training and assessment organisations.

95. As with the standard, an assessment plan should be a stand-alone document which can be easily understood by other employers, training organisations, assessment organisations, the apprentice and their parents.

### What is an assessment plan used for?

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

97. Once your assessment plan is published, assessment organisations will be able to offer their services against it through making an application to sit on the Register of

Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO). The plan should guide those organisations, which will be selected by individual employers, to enable them to deliver the high quality and rigorous EPA as designed by the Trailblazer group. In order to allow individual employers choice over who delivers their EPA, a plan must be organisation neutral, which means that it 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 107 and 130). 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.

98. 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 the template at Annex 7 and should be no more than 10 pages long. The plan should focus on the EPA and contain only essential information related to undertaking the EPA. This will help you formulate a clearer structure, rather than using the criteria, as this often creates repetition and confusion. Any mandatory on-programme assessment included on the standard can be referred to in the assessment plan. However, any recommendations for training or curriculum specification should be included in a separate document (see paragraph 104).
99. 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.

### **Working with training providers and assessment organisations**

100. Your Relationship Manager will support you in developing your assessment plan 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 consistent and manageable.
101. We strongly encourage you to engage with training providers throughout the development process, but it is particularly important to do so as you get closer to delivery. This means during the assessment plan development process at the latest so that such organisations are ready to support delivery as soon as your assessment plan is approved. Such engagement can take an number of forms.

### *Identifying organisations to input to the development stage*

102. Consider if different types of training provider need to be involved e.g. colleges, universities, third sector providers, direct grant employers and private training providers. You may want to ensure training providers currently delivering high volumes of apprenticeships in relevant occupations are included (see also the final bullet at paragraph 56)
103. One of the things you will want them to do is provide quotes for on-programme delivery and EPA to inform whether your planned approach is affordable. They will also be able to identify what development work may need to be undertaken, giving you an indication of how quickly apprentices can start on the standard – valuable information for the implementation section of your assessment plan.

### *Producing additional written guidance*

104. Consider whether training providers and assessment organisations require further information on the content of your standard. Some groups have developed training specifications (some Trailblazers have referred to these as Employer Occupational Briefs), including recommendations for on-programme training or assessment. It is not mandatory to produce such documents but, if you do, they must be freely and readily available. Your assessment plan can link to these documents but, if you make other arrangements, information on how to access the documents must be clearly signposted in the standard or assessment plan. These documents will not be scrutinised as part of the approvals process. However, it must be clear that they are recommendations and are not mandatory for employers.

### *Holding briefing sessions*

105. Briefing sessions provide a great opportunity to explain the delivery ambition for your standard, answer questions and develop enthusiasm for delivery. You may want to run specific events or webinars or access provider network events/groups e.g. conferences, regional network meetings, sector forum groups and provider readiness groups.
106. You may also want to ask providers that the group has engaged with in the development phase or early adopters to help with briefing the wider sector. On-line presentations are another potential approach. Consider holding briefings during the development stage, as well as when the standard is ready for delivery, to help preparation.

### *Ensuring organisations in your employer group have selected training providers to enable speedy enrolments on your standard once it is ready for delivery*

107. The National Apprenticeship Service can help employers find training providers (<http://findatrainingorganisation.nas.apprenticeships.org.uk/>) and, if you wish to

access funding for the training supporting your apprenticeships, the training providers you use must be on the SFA's Register of Training Organisations (RoTO)<sup>23</sup>, or be an approved subcontractor of an organisation on RoTO. Similarly, assessment organisations must be on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO)<sup>24</sup>.

## Assessment criteria

108. As with apprenticeship standards, government will consider assessment plans against a small number of criteria (listed directly below and see also a shorter quick reference version at Annex 8) before they are approved by the Minister for Skills. Assessment plans which meet the criteria will be published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>.

109. To ensure every assessment plan is robust and of high quality, they must meet the following criteria:

*a) Detail a holistic assessment*

110. A high quality apprenticeship will ensure that the apprentice is fully competent in their job role. To assess occupational competence it is not necessary to test every element of the KSBs listed on the standard but the EPA should ensure that the assessment confirms full competence, testing across the apprenticeship from start to finish.

111. The description of the assessment methods used should be clear as to which aspects of the standard will be assessed in the EPA. A clear description of what will be assessed and how it will be assessed will ensure the EPA is synoptic. It is also important to note that at least one element of the EPA must assess skills and knowledge in an integrated way. The EPA should test across the standard and should not include any new learning.

112. This does not mean that every KSB needs to be individually assessed – the EPA should assess across the standard to ensure competence. The focus should be on higher order skills, which give assurance of lower level skills without requiring specific assessment.

113. Holistic assessment should look to test KSBs 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. Multiple methods may be used to fully assess KSBs.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-register-of-training-organisations#how-organisations-can-enter-the-register>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-apprentice-assessment-organisations>

*b) Use a range of assessment methods*

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

- 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 is not a method in itself but can be included in conjunction with another method of assessment such as an interview about the portfolio. The portfolio can be collected during the apprenticeship but should not have been formally assessed on-programme.
- Observational assessment.
- Written and multiple choice tests.
- Virtual assessments, such as online tests or video evidence as appropriate to the content.

*c) Grade*

115. Grading was introduced to apprenticeships to recognise that a pass represented full occupational competence in that particular job role but goes further to recognise exemplary achievement. All apprenticeships should therefore 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.

116. How the grade is constructed is for employers to determine as they develop the assessment plan. The grade for the apprenticeship, determined during the EPA, will be included on the certificate of completion. In the assessment plan, you will need to set out the assessment methods, their weighting and contribution to the overall grade. Any mandatory on-programme assessment must be completed prior to the apprentice attempting the EPA. Employers should satisfy themselves that the apprentice has acquired the full set of KSBs along with any mandatory qualifications and this can be included in the assessment plan as a gateway to the EPA.

117. *Grading exemptions* - If you do not think grading is appropriate in your occupation and you cannot grade the EPA, 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 licence to practise.

118. 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.

119. If you wish to submit a request for a grading exemption, please include this when submitting the draft assessment plan for approval. Requests will need to clearly identify the criterion which applies and provide evidence of how that criterion has been met.

*d) Produce consistent and reliable judgements*

120. 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.

121. Good examples that ensure consistency of the EPA include:

- Having assessors attend regular internal standardisation events.
- The relevant professional body, where applicable, playing a part in the end-point.

104. The assessment plan should apply to employers of all sizes and should account for small employers to ensure consistency.

*e) Deliver accurate (valid) judgements*

122. The methods of assessment must be appropriate to the content of the standard. 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.

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

124. The length of your EPA should be proportionate to the planned length of the apprenticeship. For example, where programmes run for three or four years, an EPA 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*

125. An independent EPA ensures that those making a decision on the competency of the apprentice have nothing to gain from the outcome of the assessment. To ensure high quality apprenticeships, it is vital that all apprentices are assessed in a fair and objective manner. Independence and impartiality are critical to ensuring rigorous and high quality assessment and that the standard is maintained over time.

126. 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 EPA, 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.

127. 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 the management or training of the apprentice can make the sole decision on competence and passing the EPA. The approach described in the assessment plan must clearly deliver an impartial result. The plan should therefore clearly describe how independence will be achieved for all employers, regardless of their size.

128. An approach to independence that some Trailblazers have taken is to have a panel where multiple assessors carry out the EPA, or part of it. If you wish to take this approach as part of your assessment plan, you will need to clearly specify who makes the final decision regarding whether the apprentice has passed the EPA or not. The person who has the 'casting vote' should be independent of the apprentice. An assessor from the training provider's workforce would not count as being independent.

129. 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.

130. Working with a fully independent assessment organisation ensures that the apprentice will be assessed in an impartial, objective way. An assessment



organisation wishing to fulfil this role must apply for inclusion on the RoAAO held by the SFA. Successful application to the register includes meeting several criteria designed to ensure that an assessment organisation has the right skills and infrastructure to conduct high quality assessment. Your assessment plan should include the knowledge and skills that an assessor should have, to be eligible to undertake your EPA.

*g) Show that affordability has been considered*

131. 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.

132. You should ensure that the EPA is financially reasonable and not off-putting to other employers. To provide a guide to employers, the anticipated cost of the EPA should be included and expressed as a percentage of the overall cost of delivering the apprenticeship.

*h) Explain how the assessment is manageable and feasible*

133. 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. In order to determine feasibility, please include an indication of expected annual volumes, updated as necessary from the figure included in your EOI.

134. To test whether the proposed assessment approach is manageable and feasible, you will need to consider in the plan factors such as whether the assessment can be conducted in-house and, if an assessment centre is required, how this will apply to small employers and whether they will be readily available across the country? You may wish to consider if it is appropriate or feasible for any components of your EPA to be assessed or moderated virtually.

*i) Include professional body recognition (where applicable)*

135. In developing your assessment plan, you may wish to consider if your sector professional bodies will have a role in the EPA. If your standard aligns with professional recognition, the assessment plan should explain how this is achieved. Where the standard is aligned with professional recognition, the professional body can play a specific role within the assessment - for example, having the final say on competence and moderation. In this instance, and in keeping with the need to keep assessment plans organisation-neutral, the assessment plan should refer to 'a professional body' rather than naming the body specifically. Depending on the role the professional body undertakes, they may also need to be on the RoAAO.

136. There may be a small number of situations where the professional body is the only body able to award professional status because, for example, they may have a legal

responsibility or act as the regulator for that profession. In these cases, it may be possible for the professional/regulatory body to be named in the plan. If you think this applies to your sector, please speak to your Relationship Manager who will confirm whether or not this is the case.

137. In some sectors the EPA needs to be conducted by someone who is a member of a professional body or by an organisation accredited by the professional body. You should make these requirements clear in the plan, and will also need to provide a letter of support from the relevant professional body, confirming they would allow professional registration under these circumstances.

## **Quality assurance**

138. The best way to ensure the quality of training, assessment and quality assurance services in the apprenticeship reforms is to enable all employers to choose the best arrangements for them. Any proposals that seek to create a monopoly within the system will remove that freedom of choice from employers and so won't be approved.

139. We maintain a principle of open and fair access to apprenticeship standards, and so are also keen to stamp out 'toll-booths' in the apprenticeship system. This is where organisations attempt to generate an income stream by artificially inserting gateways to becoming a training, assessment or quality assurance provider, beyond the requirements set out in this guidance.

140. The types of activities we wish to avoid are those where organisations build the following into the apprenticeships funding system: charging to register apprentices; charging organisations to get on an approved list; or charging for kite marking.

141. We recognise that some employers want to limit the market to help improve quality. It is perfectly acceptable for employers to choose to use a preferred organisation, but not to stop others from choosing something different if they wish. Where employers want to operate a kite-marking system, they are free to engage a third party to run one, but this is not fundable through the apprenticeships funding system. If employers wish to use this type of service, they would need to be paid for it directly under separate contract with the third party.

142. More details on quality assurance criteria are set out below.

### *Quality assurance criteria*

143. There are two different types of quality assurance we expect to be covered in your assessment plan – internal and external quality assurance.

144. Internal quality assurance is carried out by, or on behalf of the assessment organisations themselves. It involves making sure that individual assessments are run correctly and assuring others (including funding bodies and employers) that it is running, marking, standardising and reporting the outcome of the assessments properly.

145. External quality assurance is undertaken by an external body and covers all of the assessment organisations delivering against a particular standard. This is there to ensure that there is consistency of quality and approach to assessment across a standard, regardless of which assessment organisation has delivered the assessment and where and when the EPA is carried out.

146. Like the assessments themselves, external quality assurance needs to be independent of those who lead on the design and the delivery of assessments<sup>25</sup>. In setting out your external quality assurance approach you will need to be specific about who will quality assure the EPA, how they will do it and your approach to ensuring quality of assessment over time and across different locations. There are three different approaches you could take:

- You could propose your own approach but, in line with our quality assurance principles, you would need to ensure that:
  - It does not mean some assessment organisations or training providers are being pre-selected – all employers must be able to select freely from the SFA's Registers of Apprentice Assessment Organisations and Training Providers. Assessment plans should not make any reference to charging Assessment Organisations and Training Providers to gain access to other 'approved' lists or to be kite-marked.
  - No one involved in the process should be able to make profit from carrying out these functions.
  - Proposals must not give some employers 'control' over others in the sector, for example, if they give certain roles to some employers there must be opportunities for others to take on those roles in future.
  - Proposals need to ensure SMEs are properly represented including individual, smaller employers.

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<sup>25</sup> Degree apprenticeships are subject to the quality assurance requirements of QAA.

- You could ask Professional Bodies to carry out this role, but similar caveats to those above apply – they must not be able to make profit and they should not be able to have more ‘control’ over the sector than other Professional Bodies.
- You could ask Ofqual to oversee your external quality assurance by regulating your EPA; this does not mean your EPA will become a qualification. You would need to confirm when submitting your assessment plan that you have asked them to do this. All assessment organisations would then have to ensure that they and their EPAs could comply with Ofqual’s rules, the General Conditions of Recognition<sup>26</sup>. The Conditions cover a range of requirements, many of which focus on securing the validity of assessments – i.e. that the assessment assesses what it is intended to assess. If there was a conflict between your requirements and Ofqual’s, Ofqual would have to require compliance with its Conditions.

147. Any organisation that wants to offer an EPA quality assured/regulated by Ofqual will need to become a recognised awarding organisation (assuming it is not already recognised), by demonstrating to Ofqual that it meets their recognition criteria<sup>27</sup>. If you would like to find out more about Ofqual regulation please contact Ofqual ([apprenticeships@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@ofqual.gov.uk)).

148. 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.

149. You will need to be specific about who will quality assure the EPA, how they will do it and your approach to ensuring quality of assessment over time and across different locations.

### **Making consequential amendments to the related standard**

150. 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 for approval (assuming it wasn’t submitted at the same time as the standard).

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

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criteria-for-recognition>

- 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(s).
- Where the proposed changes are minor (e.g. correcting a mistake or removing unnecessary detail) an email from the Chair (copied to group members and other relevant parties such as professional bodies) confirming that such parties support the changes along with evidence that the changes meet the criteria set out at paragraph 85 will suffice. However, please check with your Relationship Manager who can advise whether the extent of the amendments means that additional information (e.g. evidence of wider support for the amendments) is required.

152. The proposed standard amendments will then be reviewed alongside the draft assessment plan. If the changes are substantive (e.g. the proposed introduction of a new qualification, or an additional occupational option) the revised standard will also be included as part of that month's online approvals survey for wider comment and feedback, and will follow the process as set out in paragraphs 87-90. You should check with your Relationship Manager if you are not sure whether your revised standard will be included in the survey. 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**

153. Once you have completed your assessment plan, you should submit it to your RM and to [Apprenticeship.Trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Apprenticeship.Trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk). It will be put online for two weeks, as per the process for standards, and be reviewed by the Apprenticeship Directorate and Skills Funding Agency against the criteria for approval of EPA detailed above before the Minister for Skills makes the final decision.

154. Your Relationship Manager will share the outcome and any feedback from the process with you. As for EOs and standards, we aim to do this within six weeks of the original submission. Approved assessment plans will then be published on the gov.uk website. Your assessment plan must have been approved and allocated a final funding cap before apprenticeships can commence under your new standard. If your assessment plan is not approved, your Relationship Manager will provide feedback as to why this was the case, and will work with you to enable the feedback to be addressed prior to resubmission. The process for this is the same as for resubmitting standards that have been rejected (see paragraph 91) as long as you also ensure that the revised version aligns with the assessment plan guidance in this chapter.

## Checklist for submitting an assessment plan for approval

- Submit your assessment plan for approval **as a word rather than pdf document** to enable easier loading onto our survey and subsequent annotation.
- 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).
  - If you have a qualification which is still in development please include, with your draft assessment plan, an overview of the qualification and when it is expected to be completed and ready for delivery.
  - If your standard was not allocated an indicative funding cap when it was approved, or if it was but you believe it was wrong and would like to challenge it, you should also submit your completed activity summary template (Annex 9) and training delivery and EPA quotes at this time (see paragraphs 158-162)
  - Evidence to support your external quality assurance proposal.

## 5 Funding and Preparing for Delivery

### The funding trial

155. As part of the wider reforms to apprenticeships, we are giving employers control over the funding of apprenticeship training. This is empowering employers to assume the role of demanding customers and ensures 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 is continuing during AY15/16. Its key elements are currently:

- A single government co-investment rate for core funding. This means that, for every £1 the employer contributes 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 currently five caps set at £18,000, £8,000, £6,000, £3,000 and £2,000.
- The employer will have the opportunity to negotiate the actual price for training and assessment with the provider(s) it is working with. The price will vary depending on the needs of the employer and its apprentice(s) but it is important that the price negotiated represents good value for money.
- There are additional incentive payments made to an apprenticeship employer 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, the government will fully fund the training required.

156. We expect this trial approach to continue with minimal change until a new funding model is introduced alongside the levy. Where we can, we will make small improvements which reflect feedback on current limitations of the trial and will give employers and training providers the flexibility to encourage growth. Guidance on funding both frameworks and standards for the 2016/17 academic year will be issued at the end of January 2016.

157. In the meantime, the current model is summarised in the table below and further information on the funding reforms is available online<sup>28</sup>. The information at this link will be updated to reflect any changes made after publication of this guidance.

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

### Allocating standards to funding caps

158. The delivery of apprenticeship starts against a standard can only begin once a standard has been allocated to a Core Government Contribution (CGC) funding cap.

#### *Standards submitted by the 26 November 2015 deadline*

159. If your standard was or is approved as a result of having been submitted by the 26 November 2015 deadline (i.e. including to earlier deadlines) but hasn't yet had its related assessment plan approved (and hence hasn't yet been allocated to a funding cap), the allocation of the funding cap will be made upon approval of the related assessment plan as has been the case up to now. For such standards, on submission of your draft assessment plan, you will need to provide evidence on costs associated with training and assessment delivery using the template at Annex 9.

#### *Standards submitted to deadlines in 2016*

160. For all standards submitted to the 28 January 2016 deadline onwards, an indicative funding cap will be allocated earlier in the development process. This will happen at the time the standard is approved and will give Trailblazers greater clarity about the likely funding available as they commence the development of their assessment plan. You will **not** need to complete the template at Annex 9.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-changes>



161. When the assessment plan is approved, the final cap allocation will be confirmed. This will be the same as the indicative cap, unless there is a request from the Trailblazer to review the cap and evidence shows that it should be allocated a different cap. If you believe that the indicative funding cap is wrong then you will need to challenge the allocation by providing evidence using the template at Annex 9.
162. Your standard cannot be delivered by training providers until it is published as ready for delivery. Following the approval of the assessment plan and the allocation of the final funding cap, there will be a short period before the standard and details of the funding become available on the SFA systems, allowing training providers to register apprentices.

### **Apprenticeship Levy and the Digital Apprenticeship Service**

163. As announced in the Summer 2015 Budget, a UK wide apprenticeship levy is being introduced. It will be introduced in 2017 to help fund the increase in quantity and quality of apprenticeship training and give employers greater control of apprenticeships.
164. As part of the Spending Review announcements, the Chancellor confirmed that the levy will be collected from eligible employers across the UK, through the PAYE system administered by HMRC, and will apply to both the public and private sectors. The rate will be set at 0.5% of an employer's paybill and will be collected via PAYE. Each employer will receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment. The levy will only be paid on any paybill in excess of £3 million. In England, employers who pay the levy and are committed to apprenticeship training will be able to get out more than they pay into the levy by training sufficient numbers of apprentices. All employers who do not pay the levy will be able to access government support for apprenticeships.
165. 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, in future, employer control of the funding will be maximised by the Digital Apprenticeship Service, through which employers will choose and pay for the apprenticeship training and assessment they want. All employers will have access to the Digital Apprenticeship Service whether they have contributed to the levy or not.
166. We will continue to engage with employers and providers in England between now and the implementation of the levy to design how this will work. If you would like to be involved in the development of the Digital Apprenticeship Service, you can register your interest by e-mailing: [DAS@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:DAS@bis.gsi.gov.uk).

## Delivering starts

167. Once your apprenticeship standard and assessment plan have been approved, published and assigned to a funding cap, we would expect members of the Trailblazer to be at the forefront of delivery and to deliver the projected annual volumes stated in their EOI at the start of the process. At the same time, we expect employers and providers to start delivering apprenticeships under your standard within the wider sector. Your RM 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:

- Communicating 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.
- Communicating your standard through your member organisations, trade associations, journals etc.
- Continuing to work with AOC, AELP and UVAC to promote your standard to the training provider base.
- Holding launch/briefing events to promote the standard.
- Considering 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.
- Working with assessment organisations as they develop the specific tools set out in your assessment plan to ensure that they meet your needs as employers.
- Working 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.

## Certification

168. We are finalising long term arrangements for certification in the context of the new Institute for Apprenticeships. In the interim, the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS) will develop and deliver the certification service for standards until December 2016.

169. FISSS will also continue to issue certificates for apprenticeship completions under frameworks via the Apprenticeship Certificates England (ACE) database until the close of that system.

170. Apprenticeship completion certificates for standards will confirm that the apprentice has passed the EPA, has demonstrated full competency across the standard and is job-ready.
171. The certificate will detail the name of the apprentice, the name of the standard, the occupation, the sector to which it applies and the grade achieved, if appropriate. Details of mandatory qualifications achieved will not be included on the certificate but their attainment is recognised in their own right, where they are a pre-requisite to the EPA. It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure and check that all mandatory qualifications have been achieved before the apprentice undertakes the EPA.
172. It is the responsibility of the body that undertakes the end-point assessment (EPA) and is registered on the SFA's Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations to apply and pay for the apprenticeship certificate.
173. We are in the process of developing procedures with FISSS and will confirm details as soon as possible. In the meantime, if you are due to have apprenticeship completions in 2016 and have any questions please contact Mark Froud at FISSS ([Mark.froud@fisss.org](mailto:Mark.froud@fisss.org)).

### **Off-the-job training**

174. For all standards, the amount of off-the-job training mandated is a minimum of 20% or equivalent. We expect that all apprentices will benefit from genuine training away from their day-to-day job, but this does not necessarily need to take place away from the employer's premises.

### **Turning off frameworks**

175. As already indicated, we envisage a migration from apprenticeship frameworks to standards over the course of the Parliament, with as much of this to take place by 2017/18 as possible. We will stagger the withdrawal of public funding for new starts on framework apprenticeships as employers take on apprentices on the new standards, and give reasonable prior notice to training providers of this so that they can review their training offer.

### **Process for amending standards and assessment plans after they are ready for delivery**

176. As a rule, once an assessment plan is published, there should be no further changes to a published standard or assessment plan before the formal review date, unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. legal changes).
177. However, to support Trailblazers at this stage of delivery, we will initially take a more flexible approach. So, where a Trailblazer determines that an amendment is needed to a "ready for delivery" standard (or assessment plan), changes can be submitted for consideration by one of the monthly deadlines detailed in paragraph

19. The information and evidence required when submitting an amended standard and/or assessment plan at this time is the same as that detailed at paragraphs 150-152.

178. The proposed amendments and accompanying paperwork can then be submitted for approval. If approved, the standard and/or assessment plan will be revised and re-published.

### **Unique referencing system for standards**

179. Each standard is now assigned a unique reference number when it is approved for development. This unique identifier will be retained for the 'life' of the standard and added to the published standard and the associated assessment plan documents on approval. As a standard is updated, version tracking references will ensure that it is always possible to identify which version of the standard an apprentice is working towards.

## Annex 1: Template for an Expression of Interest (EOI) to develop a standard

(see Section 2)

**To: Apprenticeship Trailblazers Team** by email:

[apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

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

*[the template assumes you are bidding to develop a single standard but if your bid is for more than one, please provide the information below in relation to each standard]*

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

*[if you have previously submitted an EOI to develop these standards please state this and indicate how your new EOI differs from your previous one]*

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 that we would like to develop an apprenticeship standard for is:

- Occupation *[please provide a short description of the occupation including typical roles and responsibilities and an indication of main competencies required. If you are proposing the development of more than one standard, please set out clearly how they are distinct from each other in terms of role responsibilities and competencies needed]*

We believe that this occupation will require rigorous and substantial training of around [x] months *[NB must be at least 12 months training prior to the end-point assessment]* 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 and in any relevant sector. We are collectively 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 and assessment plan in line with the latest edition of the “Guidance for Trailblazers – from standards to starts, December 2015”, will aim to complete this process within a year and will ensure that the resulting standard represents good value for money for the end-users.

We have reviewed the standards that have already been developed and those in development and are satisfied that there is no duplication with our bid *[also include any reference to related Trailblazers and any discussions you have had with them to ensure they are content that your bid does not duplicate their activity]*

My company and all the employers listed below as supporters of this bid fully intend to make use of the standard once it is ready for delivery. Projected annual starts for the standard we are bidding to develop by each group member are detailed in the table overleaf.

*[If applicable:*

- We are working with *[professional body]* who set the professional standards for this sector.
- As employers, we have invited representatives from *[sector body or bodies]* to play a supporting role to the Trailblazer.
- We have invited representatives from *[training providers]* to play a supporting role to the Trailblazer.
- The standard we propose to develop will be inappropriate for [x] age group for the following reasons... *(see paragraph 30).*
- *The occupation covered by our proposed standard is currently covered by [x] framework / pathway and we envisage that it will effectively replace the need for the latter once the standard is ready to deliver.]*

Assuming the development process runs smoothly, we envisage the resulting apprenticeship being ready to deliver starts from *[insert date]* with an annual take-up of *[insert projected number of annual starts - i.e. in total across the sector(s) rather than just starts across the group's members]*.

We envisage most Trailblazer meetings taking place in *[insert geographical location as this will help us allocate an appropriately located RM if your EOI is approved]*.

If the standard is 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.
- I am content for *[insert name and email address of appropriate contact which doesn't necessarily need to be the chair]* to be used on the gov.uk website as the contact point for enquiries in relation to the Trailblazer; and

- I commit the Group to working with relevant sector organisations to promote the use of the resulting standard once it is ready for delivery.

Yours sincerely,

[insert name]

*[Please submit this as a word document rather than a pdf to enable easier uploading to our survey)]*

**Members of the employer group:**

Organisation Name	Lead Representative	Sector	Job Title	Projected annual starts for each standard (listed individually)	Number of employees in the organisation

## Annex 2: Trailblazer Small Business Travel Fund - guidance for claimants

The purpose of this fund is to support the involvement of small businesses in the work of apprenticeship trailblazers.

BIS expect all parties travelling as part of the scheme to take appropriate and justifiable spending decisions, weighing up the balance between value for money and business benefit. No one should either benefit or be out of pocket as a result of undertaking business travel as part of this scheme. As such, all travel and subsistence claims should be based on receipted costs incurred as a result of travel between your home or office and an eligible meeting [defined below].

The fund is open to small employer Trailblazer members (i.e. with under 50 employees) to claim for travel in instances where:

- Attendance at the meeting is critical;
- The meeting will cover discussion of apprenticeship standards (or their related assessment plans and implementation);
- Options for conducting the meeting remotely have been fully explored.

As the fund is small, and in order to ensure robust management of public money, eligibility will be kept under review by the Department. If you are unsure about whether an expense is eligible under the scheme, in the first instance, you should check with your BIS/SFA Relationship Manager, ideally before the expenditure is incurred. As a guide, claims will be paid for a maximum of two attendees per employer at each meeting. **The Department expects all expenditure to be supported via original itemised receipts**, which should be forwarded to the address below, together with a completed claim form, within 28 days of the expense being incurred:

Yeolanda Lopes  
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills,  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1P 0EH

Claims will be processed at the beginning of each month and we reserve the right to refuse unreasonable claims for expenses which fall outside the criteria defined below.

### **Rail travel entitlements**

The Department will pay for any actual costs incurred for rail travel, on the basis that:



- Tickets are purchased in as far advance as possible and for the least cost possible;
- First Class rail travel will **not** be covered by the Department **in full or in part** unless doing so would constitute a “reasonable adjustment” under the Equality Act (e.g. due to injury or pregnancy).

## Mileage entitlements

If you use your own car (or another suitable vehicle such as a motorcycle) for a Trailblazer meeting, you can claim motor mileage allowance.

The Department pays the maximum rates allowable under the HM Revenue and Customs Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) scheme.

Cars and Vans	Standard rate for the first 10,000 miles in the tax year	45p per mile
	Lower standard rate for each additional mile over 10,000 miles	25p per mile
Motorcycles		24p per mile
Bicycles		20p per mile

The standard rate of motor mileage allowance is paid if:

- you are driving your own car, and
- you are using the car for a journey where it is reasonable and cost effective to travel by car, and
- you have suitable comprehensive insurance which allows for business use, and
- you have not exceeded the current 10,000 mile per tax year threshold.

The lower standard rate of motor mileage allowance is paid if:

- you have exceeded the 10,000 mile threshold at standard rate, or
- you have only third party insurance cover which allows for business use, or
- you are using the car for a journey where it was not cost-effective or reasonable to do so, or where there are suitable and convenient public transport alternatives.

The Department reserves the right to reject a mileage claim, where there is clear evidence that other forms of transport offer better value for money and represent better use of public money. If you are unsure whether this applies to your claim, please speak to your Relationship Manager.

## **Insurance**

When you use your vehicle for business, you must have adequate insurance cover which allows business use. When claiming mileage allowance, you must declare that you understand the insurance requirements and that you have adequate cover.

The Department does not accept or have any liability in the event of any accident, damage, injury or death, beyond that which would exist if the car had not been used. Any additional liability that arises as a result of an individual using their own car has to be insured by the individual.

## **Garage expenses, tolls and ferries.**

If you use a car on Trailblazer business you can claim the cost of garaging and parking fees, Congestion Zone charges, tolls and ferry charges. The rules vary depending on the motor mileage allowance payable, as follows.

- For journeys which attract standard rate, full cost may be reimbursed. Receipts should be produced (but not for parking meter charges which will be reimbursed without receipts).
- In other cases, the full cost may be met only if the total of the mileage allowance and the other charges does not exceed the cost of the journey by public transport.

## **Domestic Flight entitlements**

The Department is committed to spending taxpayers' money wisely. As such, the most economical method of travel must always be considered. Approval for the use of a domestic flight must be sought from your Relationship Manager prior to travel, should only be used for journeys greater than 250 miles and selected on the basis of:

- value for money
- convenience
- the absence of more practical or cheaper forms of transport

## **Further queries**

If you have any further queries, please email them to:

[apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

**Department for Business, Innovation and Skills - Travel Claim**  
**Form for Trailblazer Small Business Travel Fund**

**Section 1 – Claimant’s Details**

<b>Full Name</b>	
<b>Company Name</b>	
<b>Trailblazer</b>	
<b>Office Address</b>	
<b>VAT Number (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Telephone Number</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	

**Section 2 – Travel Expenses**

Method of Travel:

Train       Own Motor Vehicle       Flight       Other

<b>Date</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	<b>Sub Total (£)</b>
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
Click here to enter a date.				
<b>Total</b>				

**Section 3 – Use of Private Motor Vehicle**

<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	
<b>Date of Travel</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<b>Miles Travelled</b>	
<b>Rate (please refer to guidance for current rates)</b>	
<b>Sub Total (mileage x rate)</b>	£
<b>Cark Parking Expenses</b>	£
<b>Total (mileage + carp parking)</b>	£

Additional Vehicle Details

<b>Cumulative Total Mileage claimed at full rate this year</b>	
<b>Engine Capacity (cc)</b>	

**Section 4 – Method of Payment**

<b>Bank/Building Society Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Account Holder</b>	
<b>Sort Code</b>	
<b>Account Number</b>	

**Section 5 – Declaration**

I declare that the expenses detailed above are correct in accordance with the Trailblazer Small Business Travel Fund Expense Policy and were actually and necessarily incurred by me on Trailblazer business. I have not previously claimed for any item on this claim. Any mileage allowance claimed is in respect of a vehicle I know to be adequately insured for official business use and I have a current driving licence and up to date MOT for the vehicle.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send your completed claim form and original receipts to:**

**Yeolanda Lopes,  
The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills,  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1P 0EH**

**Annex 3: Template for a Trailblazer workplan**  
(see paragraph 55)

<b>Occupation(s):</b> <b>Employer Chair:</b> <b>Relationship Manager:</b>
<b>1. Managing the Trailblazer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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?</li><li>• Will the whole group consider all issues or will you split the work into specific strands working on different aspects?</li></ul>
<b>2. Key phases and milestones</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do you plan to meet the overall goal of submitting a high quality apprenticeship standard?</li><li>• What are the key milestones along the way? When will you share information and drafts with your Relationship Manager?</li></ul>
<b>Key Milestones:</b>
<b>3. Plans for involving others</b>

- 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 and will have take up from across the sector or sectors?
- 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. training providers, professional bodies, awarding bodies, trade unions? If you are not planning to engage with training providers early on in the process, how will you ensure your standard is appropriate for delivery?

**4. Risks and issues**

- 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**

- Is there anything else that you would like to make your Relationship Manager aware of at this stage?

## Annex 4: Template for an apprenticeship standard

(see Section 3)

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 (in size 12 font) 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<sup>29</sup>.

The standard should not generally refer to ‘the apprentice’, other than in sections relating to entry requirements or in relation to mandatory on-programme requirements such as English and maths. This is because the standard needs to be presented in terms of what the fully competent individual will be able to do.

**Title – Apprenticeship standard for [insert occupation title – don’t refer to “Trailblazer”]**

### 1. Occupation(s)

- *List the occupation(s) covered by this apprenticeship standard including any generic job titles used to describe this occupation within the sector. It will also be helpful to provide context by explaining where the occupation fits within the wider sector(s).*
- *If you are using a core and options approach, you should summarise the range of options here.*
- *Describe briefly what someone who is fully competent in this occupation will be expected to be able to do – their main duties and tasks.*

### 2. Entry Requirements (only if needed)

*In order to avoid creating barriers to entry, it is not permissible to include entry requirements in a standard unless they are statutory or regulatory requirements. However, some Trailblazers have chosen to include wording such as “Whilst any entry requirements will be a matter for individual employers, typically an apprentice might be expected to have already achieved x, y, and z on entry.”*

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

Also, if there is any reason why undertaking this apprenticeships would not be appropriate for a particular age group (see paragraphs 30-31) please state it here.

### 3. Requirements: Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour (KSBs)

- This is the core of the apprenticeship standard. You should list the KSBs 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

Behaviour	What is required

- When completing the KSB sections, you may find it helpful to start with a phrase like “The [occupation title] will require a comprehensive understanding of....” so that you do not need to start every Knowledge bullet with “an understanding of..”
- Your consideration of what KSBs are needed should include consideration of whether any digital skills are 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”. If the latter, the range given should not generally span more than 6 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 criterion “G” in the table at paragraph 85.*
- *If a qualification is to be referenced in the standard, the name, type and level of qualification should be stated (or an indication of this if the qualification is still in development) 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 criterion “F” in the table at paragraph 85) 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 taking the end-point assessment”*

*...and the standard wording for level 3 to 7 apprenticeships is:*

*“Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the end-point assessment”.*

## **6. Link to professional registration** *(only include where professional registration 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)<sup>30</sup>*

## **8. Review date**

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<sup>30</sup> Advice is available at <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean> and <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Framework-Higher-Education-Qualifications-08.pdf> (page 15-22)

- *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). NB - on approval of your assessment plan, we will insert a specific review date into your standard.*

## Annex 5: Template for assigning copyright to the Crown

(see paragraphs 68-81)

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 works are the following apprenticeship standards:

- [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 approved English 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]

## **Annex 6: Template for a Trailblazer employer support letter**

(see Criterion “C” in the table at paragraph 85)

*To be submitted via the Chair when draft standards are being submitted for approval. Such notifications can either take the form of a signed letter (a scanned version will do) 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)*

*Address to the Trailblazer Chair:*

I confirm that I have been an active member of the *[insert name]* Trailblazer group, that I have been involved in developing the standard(s) *[insert name(s) of standard(s)]* being submitted and that I approve of the final draft(s).

I believe that the standard(s) fully meet the needs of the *[insert name]* sector in relation to the occupations covered by them and offer(s) good value for money for end-users.

*[Only if applicable - see paragraph 75]* Whilst I have had an active involvement in the Trailblazer, I have not expended sufficient skill and labour to be classed as an author and neither I nor my employer are entitled to the copyright in any of the works produced by the Trailblazer. In view of this, my company has not signed the assignment to transfer copyright of the standard(s) to the Crown.

*[Only if applicable - see criterion “G” in the table at paragraph 85]* I confirm that my employer supports the development of the “yet to be developed” qualification(s) listed in the draft standard and intends to use the standard on this basis.

The company that I represent on the Trailblazer group employs approximately *[insert number]* people.

## Annex 7: Template for an assessment plan

(see Section 4)

A good assessment plan will concisely:

- Explain **what** will be assessed (i.e. which skills, knowledge and behaviour listed on the standard, and 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 (EPA)),
- Propose internal and external **quality assurance** arrangements to make sure that EPAs are reliable and consistent across different locations, employers, and training and assessment organisations.

The template below has been provided to help you include the detail behind the above points. You should aim for your Assessment Plan to be no more than 10 pages long.

Summary of Assessment				
Provide an introduction, a clear explanation of how the EPA will work and a description of how an apprentice should expect to be assessed.				
Assessment Overview [set out key assessment information]				
Assessment Method	Area Assessed	Assessed by	Grading	Weighting
e.g. Online test	What Skills / Knowledge / Behaviour are being assessed?	Independent Assessment Organisation	Fail/Pass / Distinction	65%
e.g. Professional Discussion	What Skills / Knowledge / Behaviour are being assessed?	Professional Body	Fail / Pass / Merit / Distinction	35%
On-programme Assessment [if applicable]				

- *Include a brief description of any mandatory qualifications on the standard that must be undertaken as a pre-requisite to taking the EPA. Any recommendations for on-programme assessment should be included in a separate document and not in the assessment plan (see paragraph 104). You may use a hyperlink to such a document which must be freely available to all employers.*

**Assessment Gateway**

- *What will trigger the apprentice being put forward for the EPA?*
- *Who will make the judgement?*

**End-point - Assessment**

**What**

- *What skills/knowledge/behaviour are being assessed? This should link to the published standard*

**How**

- *How will the ‘what’ be assessed?*
- *What will the apprentice have to do exactly?*
- *Where will the assessment take place?*
- *How will the assessment be undertaken by all employers; regardless of their size*

**Who**

- *Who will carry out the assessment and who will be on the Register?*
- *If there are a number of assessors, such as in a panel arrangement, explain how they will work together and who has the casting vote*
- *Are there any minimum requirements for assessors? e.g. sector knowledge, assessor qualification, experience?*

**End-point – final judgement**

- *Who makes the final decision about whether the apprentice has passed? Who is on the RoAAO?*

**Independence**

- *Who is providing the independent EPA?*
- *What is their relationship to the apprentice? What level of independence and impartiality do they have?*
- *How is this deliverable for all employers?*

**End-point – Summary of roles and responsibilities [set out the role of each organisation/person involved in assessment]**

Assessor	Role
----------	------



e.g. Employer	
e.g. Training Provider	
e.g. Assessment Organisation	
<b>Quality Assurance – internal</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How should an Assessment Organisation internally provide quality assurance? This could include internal sample checking or moderation meetings between assessors.</li> </ul>	
<b>Quality Assurance – external</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will quality be assured between Assessment Organisations? Who has a role in this assurance?</li> </ul>	
<b>End-point - Grading</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will the grade be decided and is each assessment equally weighted?</li> <li>Who decides the grade?</li> <li>Are there grading criteria?</li> <li>What does the grade above pass look like and how is it determined?</li> </ul>	
<b>Implementation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Affordability:</i> What are the likely costs for EPA and what proportion of the overall cost of the apprenticeship is likely to be on assessment?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Professional Body recognition:</i> How will the apprentice be recognised by the professional body? Will they be ready to apply for accreditation upon completion?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Consistent:</i> How is the EPA deliverable across the country and in a variety of businesses to the same standard of competence?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Volumes:</i> How many starts on your apprenticeship are expected each year?</li> </ul>	
<b>Annex</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please include any additional documents or resources, or links to these documents where they can be freely obtained. Information in the annex should be supplementary for the EPA and should not contain information around on the on-programme curriculum.</li> </ul>	

## Annex 8: Assessment criteria

(quick reference version)

Criterion	Explanation
<b>1.SYNOPTIC ASSESSMENT</b>	The end-point assessment (EPA) must be synoptic, which means that it must holistically assess the higher order KSBs from across the standard in an integrated way at the end of the programme.
<b>2. USING A RANGE OF ASSESSMENT METHODS</b>	Your assessments will need to ensure that apprentices can demonstrate their ability across the standard. This is likely to require mixed methods of assessment.
<b>3.GRADED ASSESSMENTS</b>	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.
<b>4. DELIVERING CONSISTENT (RELIABLE) JUDGEMENTS</b>	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.
<b>5. DELIVERING ACCURATE (VALID) JUDGEMENTS</b>	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.
<b>6. ENSURING INDEPENDENCE</b>	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.
<b>7.AFFORDABILITY</b>	Your approach should consider how cost effectiveness in assessments will be delivered while still meeting the quality objectives. You should ensure that the EPA is financially reasonable and not off-putting to other employers.
<b>8. MANAGEABILITY / FEASIBILITY</b>	You will need to set out how the assessment process will be deliverable on the scale required for the number of apprentices.
<b>9. PROFESSIONAL BODY RECOGNITION</b>	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.

## Annex 9: Trailblazer standard activity summary template

(this version is for reference only and is subject to change – the latest excel version for completion is available from your Relationship Manager)

Trailblazer Standard: Activity Summary Template - Dec 20					
<b>1 Standard title</b>		<b>2 Standard Reference</b>			
<b>3 Main industry sector (s) supported by the Standard</b>		<b>4 Occupation (s) Supported</b>			
<b>5 Sector Subject Area (select from the list)</b>					
<b>6 Typical Apprenticeship Duration</b>		<b>7 End Level</b>		<b>8 Does this standard replace existing framework or pathway(s)? ( Y or N)</b>	
<b>8a If yes, please list the name, level and/or pathways of any frameworks being replaced (please add rows as required):</b>					
	Framework Titles	Pathway (if relevant)	Level	Full or Part Replacement	% Shared Content
<b>9 Please list any entry requirements for your standard (excluding English and Maths)</b>					
<b>10 Does the standard include English and maths above level 2? (select Y or N)</b>					
<b>10a If yes, to which level? (select from the drop down</b>		<b>English</b>			

list)		<b>Maths</b>	
<b>11</b> When are you expecting the first starts on the standard? (dd/mm/yy)			
<b>12</b> How many starts are you expecting?	<b>16-18</b>	<b>19+</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>
<b>12a</b> In the first academic year (Aug 2015 to July 2016)?			
<b>12b</b> In the second academic year (Aug 2016 to July 2017)?			
<b>13</b> How many starts per year are you expecting once fully established?			
<b>14</b> Please provide a breakdown of all key elements of training and assessment for a typical apprentice ( add rows as required )			<b>Cost £ EXCLUDING VAT</b>
<b>15</b> Please provide a breakdown of key elements of end point assessment for a typical apprentice ( add rows as required )			<b>Cost £ EXCLUDING VAT</b>
<b>16</b> Total training costs (per apprentice) - this will automatically calculate	<b>A</b>		<b>£</b>

17	Total end point assessment costs (per apprentice) - this will automatically calculate	B	£		
18	Grand Total per apprentice training and end point assessment (A+B=C) - this will automatically calculate	C	£		
19	End Point Assessment Costs as a percentage of total cost - this will automatically calculate	D	£		
20	Please provide three provider quotes for training delivery	Name of training provider	Total price of quote		
			£		
			£		
			£		
21	Please provide one assessment organisation quote for end point assessment	Name of assessment organisation	Total price of quote		
			£		
22	Does the standard include qualifications? (select Y or N)				
23	Are any of these qualifications mandatory for all apprentices? (select Y or N)				
24	If responding "Yes" to Q22 please list the qualifications below- include those listed as mandatory or recommended in the assessment plan and indicate if any are new or in development.	Awarding Organisation or Body / Product Owner	Learning Aim Reference - if applicable (e.g. 600/0000/01)	Is this mandatory for all apprentices?	Level
25	Please add any further information needed to support the entries elsewhere in this form (press Alt+Return to go to start of new line)				

## Annex 10: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Apprenticeships Directorate (AD)	The team within both the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) and the Department for Education (DfE) responsible for developing apprenticeship policy and reporting to the Minister for Skills.
Digital Apprenticeship Service	The online end-to-end service for employers. It will enable employers to find an apprentice candidate, choose a training provider and pay for apprenticeship training and assessment.
Employer Occupational Brief	Term used by some Trailblazers to mean additional documents they have created to provide more detail on the expected training and curriculum that will support the apprentice towards developing the KSBs against which they will be assessed in the EPA.
EOI	Expression of Interest: a bid by a group of employers to develop one or more apprenticeship standard.
EPA	End-point Assessment: the assessment undertaken at the end of an apprenticeship to test full occupational competence.
KSBs	The Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour required to achieve full competence in an occupation as detailed in an apprenticeship standard.
Off-the-job training	On or off-site learning which is undertaken outside of the normal day to day working environment and contributes towards the achievement of the apprenticeship.
On-programme assessment	Any assessment undertaken during the apprenticeship (i.e. prior to the end-point assessment) used to check progress towards developing full competence.
Open Policy Development	Refining policy in the light of experience and stakeholder feedback derived from early implementation.
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.
RM	Relationship Manager - a named individual either in the AD or SFA whose role is to advise individual Trailblazers on policy and processes relating to the development of standards and assessment plans.
RoAAO	Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations.
RoTO	Register of Training Organisations.
SFA	Skills Funding Agency.
Synoptic or holistic assessment	An assessment of the skills, knowledge and behaviour in an integrated way at the end of the programme.
Standard	A short, easy to understand document developed by employers that describes the KSBs required to undertake a specific occupation well, and to operate confidently within a sector.
Trailblazer	A group of employers approved by government to develop one or more apprenticeship standard and related assessment plan for occupations in their sector(s).
Viva	Oral examination - question and answer test between the apprentice and the examiner.



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