

Process for Initial Assessment

SCCU as the main training provider is responsible for:

- Assessing the prior learning of the individual before the apprenticeship can begin;
- Agreeing with the employer how the programme will be delivered to reflect any relevant existing knowledge, skills and behaviours; and
- Recording prior learning in the evidence pack and commitment statement

Before an apprenticeship begins, we carry out an Initial Assessment (IA) with each learner. The purpose of the initial assessment is to assess the individual's prior learning to establish the 'starting point', or baseline, of the apprentice to inform how much of the apprenticeship training content the individual requires. We check that the apprenticeship is an appropriate training programme for the individual. All the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the framework/standard are considered in reviewing the prior learning of the apprentice; recognition of prior learning extends beyond English, maths and existing qualifications.

Assessments are carried out before the apprentice enrolls on a programme at the employers premises at a time to suit the employee.

The assessor will spend roughly 2-3 hours with each apprentice checking their learning record for any prior learning. The apprentice will also undertake an on-line assessment using BKSB tools to assess their level in English and Maths and digital skills.

In preparing for initial assessment we make sure that the employer has specified an appropriate standard or framework for the individual. We make sure that the learner is aware that any prior learning can count towards the apprenticeship and we ask the learner to consider relevant information against the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) as set out in the apprenticeship.

Understanding the importance of an initial assessment

We recognise that apprenticeships could be poor value for money and unnecessarily long if training covers areas that the apprentice already knows, and public funding should not be used for learning which is not new. Apprentices should not be spending paid time doing training they do not need, and the apprentice will not have a good experience if they are repeating training. Apprenticeship funding, therefore, is not used to pay for, or accredit existing knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Without knowing the starting point of an apprentice, we cannot correctly assess the distance traveled and the quality of the apprenticeship training that has been delivered. We, therefore, understand the importance of evidencing a robust initial assessment, clear milestones and progress against these. The initial assessment is vital to ensure high-quality apprenticeships and used to check that the apprenticeship (both the job role and the training) is an appropriate programme for the individual

Using IA to check the eligibility of the individual for an apprenticeship

Recognition of prior learning is part of the learner eligibility assessment. At the initial assessment, we will review the individual's personal learning record to determine any previous qualifications and learning undertaken recorded. The initial assessment checks how much of the apprenticeship programme the individual requires to reach occupational competency. If there is some relevant prior learning, we will assess whether the individual still needs an apprenticeship with a minimum duration of 12 months with at least 20% off-the-job training. We will do this by reviewing the individual's relevant previous education, training, qualification(s) and work experience against the apprenticeship framework or standard.

If it is found that this amount of training will not be necessary for the individual the learner is ineligible for the apprenticeship programme and an alternative is considered such as a higher level apprenticeship or vocational qualification.

Prior Learning

In recognising prior learning, the following are considered against the KSBs set out in the standard or framework:

- Work experience (important if the apprentice is an existing employee);
- Prior education, training or associated qualification(s) in a related sector subject area (this goes beyond just English and maths); and
- Any previous apprenticeship undertaken

Assessing prior learning



In assessing prior learning a professional discussion takes place between the assessor and the apprentice to discuss KSBs gained in previous roles against the KSBs set out in the apprenticeship; and we need to see evidence of competency at a lower level, indicating the individual is ready for progression

The relevant apprenticeship framework or standard is used as the basis for initial assessment, i.e.:

- What is the goal and what is the apprentice trying to achieve?
- Where are they currently against this goal?
- How much of the content is new to them?
- Do they require significant and sustained new learning?

We ensure that at the initial assessment, we identify and analyse skill gaps and how the apprenticeship framework or standard will address these. We also ensure the full occupational profile and learning all of the skills, knowledge, and behaviours required is addressed

Recording prior learning

The initial assessment is documented in the evidence pack (learner file including Individual Learning Plan, and IAG form) and described on the commitment statement plan of training.

Prior Learning and funding negotiations

The funding of the apprenticeship is based on an apprentice requiring the full content of the apprenticeship, and in the case of standards this means all the listed KSBs. This is in line with the recommended funding band as specified by The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Prior learning is factored into the price that is negotiated between us and the employer: we do not use apprenticeship funding to pay for, or certify, the delivery of existing KSBs.

We carry out internal audit checks to ensure, where appropriate, a price reduction has been made to account for any prior learning and any subsequently reduced training content required. We ensure we meet ESFA funding rules by ensuring that the training



element within the apprenticeship has a minimum duration of 12 months with at least 20% off-the-job training.

Where there is prior learning, the content and duration of the apprenticeship is reduced to reflect this. The new (reduced) duration still meets the minimum threshold of 12 months. At least 20% of the paid hours for the new (reduced) duration is spent on off-the-job training.

Following Initial Assessment and on determining that the learner is eligible for apprenticeship:

1. We ensure that prior learning is documented in the evidence pack and summarised in the commitment statement
2. We agree with the employer how the programme will be delivered (including the cost) to reflect the learner's existing KSBs
3. We set out key milestones for the apprentice so their progress can be reviewed against this
4. We assess the apprenticeship training material against the job role to ensure sufficient opportunities for the apprentice to consolidate their learning in the workplace