

**Reducing
Administration in
Apprenticeships**
Effective Practice Guide

April 2006

Of interest to professionals and stakeholders
working in the work-based learning sector

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Foreword

Apprenticeships have a long and successful history. Many skilled craftsmen and women owe their success to the willingness of craftsmen and women to pass on their skills and knowledge. Through Apprenticeships, skills are not only passed on but are also enhanced and developed, with technological advances improving levels of skill and broadening the range of employment sectors covered.

There has always been a need for administration. I recall with pride the day that I, my father and my employer signed my own Indentures of Apprenticeship. With government funding subsidising the Apprenticeship programme and each Sector Skills Council requiring assurance that every successful apprentice has attained the standards required for that sector, this remains a necessary part of Apprenticeships. But times change and today more than ever it is vitally important that administration is kept to the very minimum and technologically advanced communication is used as part of audit and quality assurance processes.

This is why we have produced this Guide. I want to ensure the maximum effort goes into providing high quality learning and the minimum on paperwork. This Guide will help all of those involved in delivering Apprenticeships to achieve this.

It is only a first stage and with your help we will do more. We are already actively exploring the complex issue of electronic storage of documents and digital signatures. Through agenda for change we are simplifying the funding mechanism and streamlining data collections. I therefore look forward to the next stages in what should be a continuous process of challenge and reduction.

Stephen Gardner
Director of Apprenticeships
Learning and Skills Council

As Chair of the Bureaucracy Reduction Group I am delighted to endorse this Guide. To reduce bureaucracy we must be passionate about challenging every administrative requirement and acting when it is unnecessary or can be more effective. The Guide has been produced by working closely with those who deliver Apprenticeships. They have challenged every single administrative requirement and the LSC has responded, removing them wherever possible, clarifying them where they really are essential and identifying best practice.

I believe that the result will enable you to simplify your own processes for supporting Apprenticeships and to save money. **The challenge is now over to you:**

The Guide is a practical interactive web-based tool to reduce your administration costs. It will only work if you use it and are as committed as I am about reducing bureaucracy. Use it and let us know the result. By hearing of your experiences the LSC can make further improvements.

We have set up a central point to receive your ideas:
LSCBureaucracyBusting@lsc.gov.uk

We especially want to receive your completed checklists and details of how you have used the Guide to save money on administration

Bureaucracy busting starts here!

Caroline Lewis
Chair of the Bureaucracy Reduction Group

Acknowledgments

We would like to take this opportunity to thank formally all associated staff at the organisations visited for the co-operation and goodwill we received during the course of the Apprenticeship fieldwork which helped contribute to the production of this guide. PricewaterHouseCoopers LLP has assisted the Learning and Skills Council in the delivery of this document and the associated fieldwork that supports it. The LSC would like to thank them for their contribution.

The providers and employers visited as part of the apprenticeship review

- Aylesbury Training Group
- British Gas plc
- JHP Training
- JTL Ltd
- Kettering Borough Council
- ReMIT Scotland
- Royal Air Force
- Scottish Enterprise
- Solihull College
- Total People Ltd

Disclaimer

The Learning and Skills Council, with assistance from PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, have produced this guide as effective practice. It is not intended to be a substitute for *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People*, as well as any subsequent funding guidance/other mandatory guidance which is issued by the Learning and Skills Council in relation to work-based learning. In producing this guide the Learning and Skills Council and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP accept no responsibility for providers failing to meet funding requirements as a result of non-compliance with the requirements of mandatory guidance.

Introduction

Background

This Effective Practice Guide follows an end-to-end review of the amount of administration within Apprenticeships. The review was conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers and included site visits to a number of training providers and employers (collectively referred to in this document as “providers”) and focused on identifying possible areas of duplication, inconsistencies and any areas of good practice.

One of the main criticisms received from providers was that the amount of administration required for Apprenticeships detracts from the task of improving the quality of the training. This effective practice guide has been produced to help providers to find ways to reduce the levels of bureaucracy and administration in Apprenticeships.

Introduction

The guide aims to help providers to assess where efficiencies can be made and allow them to challenge their existing systems and procedures. In this way, providers can ensure that they are neither over-administering nor using people and materials that could be deployed more effectively elsewhere.

In addition, this guide will help you to develop high-quality processes and systems which should comply with audit requirements. Although the guide does not primarily focus on audit, it will assist you to enhance and streamline existing processes while delivering a high-quality training programme which will still meet all the current requirements of audit and inspection. This guide does not replace formal contracts or funding agreements, nor is it a substitute for them.

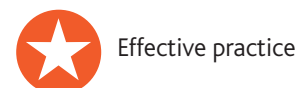
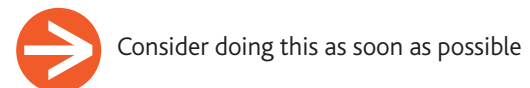
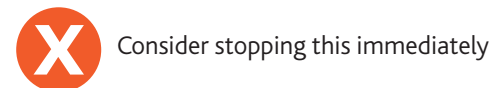
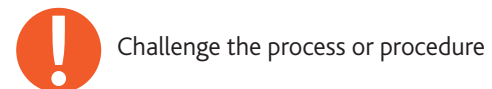
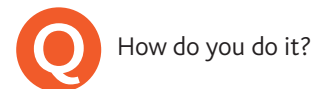
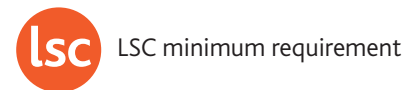
Some of the tangible outcomes of using this guide may include:

- reducing the number of pieces of paper per learner
- reducing the amount of time taken to process certain aspects of Apprenticeships
- reducing the number of times you record and write things down
- reducing the costs of administration
- reducing the amount of paper in storage.

We recognise that there are some restrictions on where improvements can be made because of the nature of some of the documents, for example the individualised learner record (ILR). However, we urge you to challenge all your current ways of working to see whether you can gain efficiencies and reduce the administrative burden while still meeting all LSC funding requirements and without compromising on quality.

Challenge signs

In this guide we have used a number of “challenge signs” for you to consider any actions that may need to be taken within your organisation. The signs are as follows:





The Navigation wheel

To navigate this document, select the section you wish to view by clicking on the relevant segment of the navigation wheel above. This will automatically take you to the beginning of the selected section.

Click the **'back'** button at the end of each section to return this page and make your new selection.

Key stages of the administration process

This effective practice guide signposts seven key stages of the administration process for you to challenge, as follows:

- induction
- initial assessment
- Individual learning record (ILR)
- Individual learning plan (ILP)
- reviews
- achievement
- training provider statement.

The sections are presented in this order in the guide, consistent with the key administration stages of the learner experience.

There is also a final section which highlights leadership and management challenges, encouraging you to stand back from your detailed systems and processes to take a broader view. These are some of the key questions that managers should be asking in relation to this "bigger picture".

- Is the paperwork driving the process or is the process determining the paperwork?
- Are you getting the best from your systems?
- Do any new documents introduced add value and improve the quality of what is being delivered?
- Are you doing this just for audits?

This section also presents some ideas about which areas could be benchmarked to monitor how progress has been made.

Self-assessment checklists

At the end of each section we have provided a self-assessment checklist. This is intended to be an interactive document which can be used to work through each of the key stages of administration for Apprenticeships. We have left some blank rows within the checklist to allow you to record your own further ideas specific to your organisation.

Annexes

At the end of this guide we have included some tools to help you to perform benchmarking, evaluate the awarding bodies and review the costs and resources relating to administration.

Forms used in this guide are available in electronic format on the LSC website for you to use.

Link to Provider Financial Assurance audit

This guide does not specifically deal with the expectations of a Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) audit; however, in each section we have outlined the LSC's requirements of providers who receive LSC funding. For a detailed list of audit evidence requirements, we advise you to refer to Annex I of the *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People*.

Audit is an important aspect of any government funding programme and we believe that if providers have good processes and strong systems that meet these LSC requirements for funding, they should also, by default, meet the requirements of audit and inspection. Alongside this guide, you may also wish to consider cross-checks to the Business Environment Questionnaire (BEQ) and Provider Control Risk Assessment (PCRA), which form part of the PFA audit process. You can download both these documents from the LSC website and you can use them as self-audit tools. At a provider level, these documents should give you additional comfort.

Most importantly, audit should not drive the process. We encourage you to discuss any recommendations made by the LSC auditors to ensure that added value is being achieved. We also encourage you to seek advice from the auditors on controls and the LSC's requirements.

Wherever they can, LSC auditors will seek to rely on documents which are naturally generated by the learning and business processes, rather than advocating forms purely for LSC audit use. Auditors are less concerned about the format of your paperwork; what is key is that you capture and evidence the required information. We cover this further in Section 8.

Finally, this guide has been written with the Apprenticeship programme in mind. However, you can also apply the general principles and approaches to other similar programmes, provided you ensure that the appropriate funding rules and requirements are applied.

Improved efficiency starts here.

Section 1: Induction



What the LSC requires

The requirements for induction are outlined in paragraph 180 of the LSC's *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People*. Each learner should receive an appropriate level of induction at the commencement of their training and/or employment. All learners must receive an induction that covers, as a minimum, the following:

- programme content and delivery assessment arrangements
- equal opportunities
- health and safety – the safe learner principles
- disciplinary and grievance procedures
- terms and conditions of learning.

The LSC does not specify what documents should be maintained to support the induction process, as it intends to allow providers flexibility.

You should ensure that each learner has an agreement signed by the employer, learner and provider. You can find the requirements for this in paragraph 129 of the LSC's *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People*. The learning agreement represents a formal agreement of the responsibilities of each of the parties concerned. It need not be an additional document.

How do you do it?

Effective practice

Most of the providers visited as part of the end-to-end review of administration processes maintained a separate one-page document which covered the induction elements. The detail of the induction elements captured varied from provider to provider. The document includes a signed declaration from the learner that he or she has received an appropriate induction. This will also be signed by the provider and, where appropriate, the organisation employing the learner.



We encourage you to review the processes in this area to see where you could reduce administration even further. Here are some examples.

- Where information such as details of the training programme already exists in other documents, such as the ILP or ILR, you do not need to record this information again elsewhere.
- You could include details of the induction on the ILP. This will mean that the learner only has to sign one document and no additional paperwork is maintained.
- If there is insufficient space on the ILP to include information relating to the elements of induction, then a "tick-box" stating "Induction completed" on the ILP would suffice, supported by a central one-page statement setting out the induction process within the organisation and what is covered.

- There may be no need to create additional paperwork to meet the requirements of the learning agreement. You may already have such an agreement in place within the current terms and conditions or similar documents. Remember, the paperwork should be supporting the process rather than the other way round.
- Consider cross-referencing any other documents that may constitute the activities of induction, for example learners being shown the awarding body requirements at a later stage.
- Existing terms and conditions and employer contracts could be used as evidence of a learning agreement.

The LSC appreciates that, for certain industries or employers, more comprehensive induction may be required. In such cases, the current processes should still be challenged to consider where additional paperwork can be reduced.

Self-assessment checklist

		✓	✘	Record action to be taken
1. Review your current processes and procedures for induction.	!			
2. Where your induction process or paperwork is over and above what is required by the LSC, challenge whether this additional information is adding value.	!			
3. Are you completing more than one document for induction? If so, how many? Can the number be reduced?	X			
4. Where more than one document is being completed and/or signed, can these documents be combined?	!			
5. Are you recording the induction details on more than one source of information?	X			
6. Is it possible to include the induction as part of the ILP?	➔			
7. How much does it cost to induct a learner and can you make any savings?	Q			
8. How long does it take to complete the induction process? Can the time taken be reduced?	Q			

Your ideas

	✓	✘	Record action to be taken

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Section 2: Initial Assessment



What the LSC requires

Paragraph 175 of the LSC's *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People* states that all learners must be assessed before or immediately upon entry to work-based learning for their suitability, exact starting point and future development needs. Initial assessment should therefore determine as a minimum:

- the objectives of the learner and of the programme
- current abilities, attitudes and aptitudes
- support and development needs
- the most appropriate teaching and learning styles and methodologies.

There is no requirement from the LSC to maintain documents in relation to initial assessments additional to those generated by the process. However, you must summarise the findings and reflect how these will influence the programme that is carried over onto the ILP.

How do you do it?

Effective practice

Our visits identified some possible duplication in this area. You should review your current procedures for initial assessment and ensure that the outcomes of the initial assessment are not duplicated elsewhere.

Remember, there is no requirement for the learner or the provider to sign anything to confirm that the initial assessment has taken place, only to summarise the results of the initial assessment.

You may want to consider one of the following best practice examples to reduce administration in this area.

- Where you choose to keep detailed records outside the ILP for initial assessment, the ILP could just include a tick-box indicating that the learner has received an appropriate initial assessment and that detailed records are kept independently. There is no need to duplicate any information via the ILP which is already recorded on the initial assessment records. A cross-reference of the relevant information should be sufficient. It is more important that you demonstrate how the initial assessment influences the programme.
- Where you choose to include elements of the initial assessment as part of the application form or interview record, again the ILP could just include a tick-box referring back to the application form.
- There may be instances where a number of learner assessments or tests have to be completed for other funding bodies or to satisfy your own internal requirements. Where this is the case you could review the content of these existing assessments and tests to see if there is any overlap with the LSC's requirements (so that you can rely on these processes and results). To avoid additional administration, consult with the LSC to see if what you already provide is also sufficient for LSC purposes.

- Where learners have had to re-sit assessments, collectively can all the assessments be used for initial assessment?
- Could you rely more on the progress file?
- How many fields for information are on the initial assessment documents? Are they all necessary? Could the number be reduced?

It is important that the learner's eligibility for work-based learning is determined at the outset, prior to the initial assessment process. Detailed guidance on eligibility is included in Section 4 of the LSC's *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People*.

Self-assessment checklist

		✓	✘	Record action to be taken
1. Review your current procedures and processes for initial assessment and ensure they meet the requirements of the LSC guidance.	!			
2. How much paperwork is currently used for initial assessment? Can this be reduced?	!			
3. Is any of the information on the ILP duplicated with the initial assessment paperwork?	X			
4. Can you cross-refer the initial assessment paperwork to the ILP?	!			
5. If you already have a robust initial assessment process within your organisation, check if there are any areas of what you already do which would meet the requirements of the LSC, to avoid duplication.	➔			
6. How much does the initial assessment process cost for each learner and are there any savings to be made?	Q			
7. How many pieces of paper are produced as a result of your initial assessment process? Can this number be reduced?	!			
8. Have other assessments already taken place? Can the information from the results of the assessment be used?	Q			
9. Do you use screening information rather than the full tests?	Q			
10. Do you fully use the information already provided on the application form?	!			

Your ideas

	✓	✗	Record action to be taken

Section 3:

Individualised Learner Record



What the LSC requires

Each learner requires a completed ILR to record all the funding data for the learner. Once a learner has commenced learning, you should complete an ILR. This must be updated throughout the learner's programme and on leaving.

How do you do it?

Effective practice

The ILR is a detailed, comprehensive document which includes all the information relating to the learner and their training programme. The ILR is one of the main areas of frustration for providers and the LSC acknowledges this. However, the information is required to generate funding for the learner.










There are many ways to reduce administration in the area. Have you considered the following?

- Are you recording any duplicate information unnecessarily and could you cross-reference this information back to the ILR?
- Are you keeping duplicate paperwork elsewhere?
- Are you capturing all the learner information at source to prevent you from having to chase up learners and staff to fill in the gaps later?

- Do your systems allow you direct data input onto your system or onto the Provider Online system to reduce the need for completing ILRs manually? Is this a viable option for your organisation? For example, could laptops or data pens be used?
- Have you considered producing a quick reference guide for staff completing the ILR which covers only the particular aspects and qualifications that are applicable to your programmes? This would avoid the need for all staff to be up to date with areas of the funding guidance that are not applicable to their area of expertise.
- Do you use the Data Self-assessment Toolkit (DSAT)* reports to reduce the risk of erroneous data? Where errors are identified, do you correct them promptly?

A combined application form could be introduced to collect all the data required for the ILR. This would save you requesting the same information more than once and reduce the amount of paperwork the learner needs to complete.

Self-assessment checklist

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken
1. Are you recording information elsewhere unnecessarily and could you cross-reference back to the ILR?				
2. Are you capturing all the information from source to prevent you from having to fill in the gaps later?				
3. Do you have quick reference guides for staff completing the ILR specific to your programmes and organisation?				
4. Do your systems allow direct data input onto your systems or the Provider Online system?				
5. Do you use the DSAT reports to reduce the risk of erroneous data? Where errors are identified, are they corrected promptly?				
6. What is your data error rate? Are the same errors being repeated? How can the number of errors be reduced?				
7. Introduce a combined application form which collects all the data required for the ILR.				
8. How much does it cost to complete an ILR and what savings can be made?				
9. How long does it take to complete an ILR? Could it be done more quickly?				

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Section 4: Individual Learning Plan



What the LSC requires

Paragraph 183 of the LSC's *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People* states that a written ILP should be produced for each learner. It should contain:

- the details of what will be delivered
- how it will be delivered, for example by group work, workbooks and so on
- the way it will be delivered in light of the learner's learning styles and abilities
- the outcomes of initial assessment
- the learning objectives of the programme they are following
- how the learning objectives will be achieved
- the content of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), Apprenticeship or Entry to Employment frameworks
- any additional learning needs and/or additional support needs and the learner's support arrangements
- the skills, knowledge and competence required and the timescale over which they have to be achieved
- the training the learner is to receive, where it is delivered and how it is scheduled, who is delivering it and what support is being provided
- the methods that will be used to deliver training (including on- and off-the-job training)
- how on- and off-the-job training will be coordinated
- the learner's assessment and review arrangements.

The purpose of the ILP is to provide the learner with a clear indication of what they will be doing, and when and how. The ILP is meant to be a key part of the learning experience and to reflect all changes in respect of agreed targets and support needs.

The format and content of the ILP are at the discretion of the provider. It is, therefore, your opportunity to ensure that the ILP does not duplicate any information that is recorded elsewhere.

The ILP does not need to be continually updated. Routine changes can be made through the review process. Only major changes such as a change of qualification should be amended on the ILP, and therefore most changes need only be recorded once.



In paragraph 4 of Annex F of the LSC's *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People* it states that for full-time learners "it is anticipated that learners will usually attend for a minimum of 30 hours for employed Apprentices a week". Although there is a requirement to monitor continued structured learning, PFA auditors will not be looking for attendance records to prove 30 hours for employed learners. Providers are required to confirm that attendance has been satisfactory and meets the minimum requirement. However, there is no requirement to maintain attendance records which are too detailed, such as weekly attendance records with more than four entries per day.

How do you do it?

Effective practice

The ILP is intended to be more than just an additional document to satisfy the LSC's requirements. The ILP should be the main focus of the learning programme and you should challenge the need to maintain any similar or duplicate documents.

From working with the LSC and providers, we have identified a few good practice examples of ILPs.

- A one-page, A3, triplicate-copy document which contains all the required information. This eliminates the need to photocopy the ILP. Any changes that need to be made to update the ILP need to be recorded once only and these are copied automatically onto the other sheets.
- The use of tick boxes rather than writing the information in full.
- Pre-printing standard information on the ILP, where possible. However, this should not detract from the ILP being specific to the individual.
- The ILP should not be a duplication of the ILR.
- Attendance for employed apprentices can be monitored through a single, simple declaration by the employer, or, by exception reporting, the review can confirm continued structured learning
- Detailed attendance records are however required for those receiving Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)*.

As well as the above good practice examples, providers may wish to consider the benefits of implementing electronic ILPs. This could reduce the level of paper retained for each learner. You would have to consider the overall benefits to the organisation, the technological infrastructure required, the costs, and the added value to the learner experience before considering such an investment. The requirement for a learner signature would mean that, subject to LSC approval, digital signatures would be necessary or key documents could be printed and signed. We acknowledge that this is a more viable option for larger providers.

We also reinforce the following.

- Changes to the ILP can be made via the review process.
- Changes to the ILP need be recorded once only.
- Attendance records may not need to be detailed, especially for employed learners.

Self-assessment checklist

		✓	✘	Record action to be taken
1. Review the format of the current ILP and challenge whether it is presented in the most effective way.	✘			
2. Does the ILP record any information that is duplicated elsewhere, for example on the ILR? This is unnecessary.	!			
3. How many fields on the ILP are duplicated?	✘			
4. Does the learner take ownership of the ILP? If not, why not? Is there confusion because it is not promoted sufficiently or because other documents are maintained?	➔			
5. Could the format or layout of the ILP be changed to reduce the amount of paper generated?	!			
6. Are there other viable methods that could be used to make the ILP a more "real-time" or electronic document that would benefit the organisation and the learner?	✘			
7. Are there elements of the ILP that could be pre-printed or carbonised to reduce the time it takes to complete?	!			
8. How much does it cost to complete or maintain an ILP and are there any savings to be made?	Q			
9. How long does it take to complete or maintain an ILP? Could the time taken be reduced?	Q			

Self-assessment checklist (continued)

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken
10. How many entries do you have on the ILP? Are they over and above the minimum requirement? Are there too many?	Q			
11. Are your attendance records too detailed? Do learners spend too long on EMA resulting in excessive periods of detailed attendance records?	X			

Your ideas

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken

Section 5: Reviews



What the LSC requires

Paragraph 181 of the LSC's *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People* outlines the requirements for reviews. It states that learners must be reviewed at least every 12 weeks and that reviews must be recorded and documents signed by the learner and the reviewer. Reviews should:

- identify progress made to date
- reflect on progress towards the learning goals
- identify any changes to the ILP
- set realistic, challenging and measurable targets to be achieved before the next review
- involve the employer.

How do you do it?

Effective practice

You should adjust the frequency of reviews to reflect the risks of the learner leaving or not achieving.

The LSC is not prescriptive about what documents you should use. The content of the reviews is what is important.

The review process is necessary in order to track the development of the learner towards completing the Apprenticeship, not just the individual NVQ or learning aim. You need to determine if your current review processes do this. If not, you should review them.

You should also review all the documents that you keep to record learner progress and consider whether there is any duplication between any of the documents maintained.

- Where providers maintain detailed NVQ module assessment records which may also contain details of the learner's progress against the NVQ, these records could be used to support the review process and be cross-referenced to eliminate the need for duplication.
- Where duplication of information is identified, the documents should be either revised or eliminated altogether.
- Providers should not re-create other documents for the purpose of review where the information already exists. For example, where the learner already has one-to-one discussion with the training officer, this process could be used as evidence of reviews.
- Is the balance between set sections (for example, tick boxes) and text appropriate?
- Where the employer is also the provider, the employer's own appraisal process could be evidence for reviews.

Self-assessment checklist

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken
1. Consider the documents maintained for learner reviews and check whether there are any areas of duplication.	!			
2. Is the information relating to the learner's progress being captured more than once or is it being captured elsewhere as well (for example, through one-to-one reviews)? If yes, check if this is necessary.	X			
3. Can any of the documents be cross-referenced to eliminate duplication?	!			
4. How much does it cost to administer reviews and are there any savings to be made?	Q			
5. How long does it take to administer reviews? Could the time taken be reduced?	Q			
6. How many pieces of paper are produced for reviews and what percentage of them are pre-printed?	Q			
7. How many fields for information are there on the forms? Are they all necessary? Can some be eliminated?	Q			
8. Could an existing process be used as a review?	X			
9. Does your review paperwork confirm continued structured learning?	➔			

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Section 6: Achievement



What the LSC requires

Paragraph 17 of Annex I of the LSC's *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People* outlines the evidence requirements for claiming payment for achievement of qualifications.

For each qualification claimed, the provider must have evidence that:

- the qualification is current and approved
- the learner has registered with the awarding body for the qualification before the last Qualifications and Curriculum Authority entry date.

Providers that have been approved for direct claims status by the awarding body need evidence **from the internal verifier** that the qualification has been achieved. Providers that have not been approved for direct claim status need evidence **from the awarding body** that the qualification has been achieved.

In addition, for the Apprenticeship achievement the provider must also hold the completed application for the completion certificate with supporting evidence.

The LSC is continuing to work with the NVQ awarding bodies to reduce bureaucracy and administration within the Apprenticeship programme.

How do you do it? Effective practice

It is recognised that the complexity and level of administration required may increase where you are dealing with a greater number of awarding bodies. This is due to the different requirements for registration, assessment, verification and approval of each qualification.

Recording the achievement of the NVQ on both the ILP and the ILR is not necessary and is a duplication of administration. The achievement of the qualification only needs to be recorded on the ILR for funding purposes.

Recording achievements is an area which typically generates significant paperwork and you could aim to identify areas where this could be retained electronically to reduce paper and duplication of information wherever possible.

For example from the information gathered during visits, we found that in some cases providers retain at least three copies of the NVQ certificate. This is unnecessary. Although it is necessary to retain one copy for audit purposes, you should challenge your own internal processes to consider the costs and benefits of retaining more than one copy of the NVQ certificate.

You may also want to stand back and look at your current provision and consider whether dealing with so many awarding bodies (where applicable) is cost-effective and efficient. For example, it may be appropriate for you to consider the cost of administering each qualification compared with the success rates for those qualifications. It may also be worth considering the benefit of working with awarding bodies that offer online registration facilities. Annex B provides some tools which can be used to evaluate NVQ awarding bodies.

Are you keeping too much paperwork for the awarding body? The LSC does not require any coursework to be kept; you should request a list from awarding bodies of exactly what they require.

Self-assessment checklist

		✓	✘	Record action to be taken
1. Consider the number of awarding bodies you currently work with. Could they be rationalised or reduced to decrease the level of administration?	➔			
2. Can any of the paperwork be retained electronically? For example, could documents be scanned?	✘			
3. You should not retain more than one copy of the NVQ certificate.	!			
4. Where appropriate to your organisation, are you making the best use of technology by using the awarding bodies with online registration facilities?	!			
5. How much does it cost to administer each NVQ and are there any savings to be made?	Q			
6. How long does it take to administer each NVQ? Could the time taken be reduced?	Q			
7. Make a list of the awarding bodies you currently use and their changes and record how much it costs for each qualification.	Q			
8. How much does it cost in staff time for each awarding body external verification visit?	Q			
9. Evaluate which awarding body takes the most time to administer.	Q			
10. How much does it cost to internally verify a portfolio for each awarding body?	Q			

Self-assessment checklist (continued)

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken
11. Consider whether there is a set of core data that you can keep for all awarding bodies. Question whether one system would be sufficient for all.	Q			
12. Will the awarding bodies allow customisation of portfolios to reduce the number of systems currently used?	Q			
13. Are you keeping too much paperwork for your awarding bodies?	Q			
14. Have you requested a list of exactly what the awarding body expects you to retain and for how long and in what format (can it be electronic)?	➔			
15. Do you know your awarding bodies policy on electronic storage and digital signatures?	Q			
16. Do your awarding bodies accept electronic portfolios? If not do other awarding bodies?	Q			

Your ideas

	✓	✗	Record action to be taken

Section 7: The Training Provider Statement



What the LSC requires

The training provider statement (TPS) is the mechanism used to notify the LSC of actual data and expenditure incurred which is not captured on the ILR. The submission of the TPS is made online. You must print out a copy of the submission of the TPS, sign it and retain it for audit purposes. You must also hold evidence to support the amounts claimed on the TPS.

- Where you have identified any areas of duplication for preparing the TPS, you should eliminate them.
- How many steps are there in your processes to prepare the TPS? Do you need them all?
- Could macros be used to automate the process?









How do you do it?

Effective practice

A TPS must be completed each period, which is not burdensome in itself; however, we understand that the TPS is viewed as a time-consuming document to prepare. Consider reviewing your own administrative procedures and processes for preparing the TPS. These are some areas to consider.

- How often do you prepare your TPS? Have you considered whether the frequency of completion is relative to the volume of transactions? Where TPS claims include a large number of transactions it may be less time-consuming to prepare the supporting information for the TPS on a daily or weekly basis or, if of a low value, quarterly.
- Where regular transaction claims are made, do you use a standard template to reduce the time taken for manual recording?
- For more complex claims, do you use spreadsheets with preset formulas? This could reduce the risk of errors and the need for manual calculations.

Self-assessment checklist

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken
1. Have you identified any areas of duplication that should be eliminated?				
2. Can you develop an electronic template (for example, a Word document or spreadsheet) to reduce manual administration and potential errors?				
3. Consider the number of transactions required for each TPS and whether it is more efficient for data to be collated daily, weekly or for each period.				
4. How much does it cost to administer the TPS and are there any savings to be made?				
5. How long does it take to administer the TPS and could the time taken be reduced?				
6. How many steps are there in the process to prepare the TPS? Do you need them all?				
7. How often do you prepare the TPS?				
8. Could macros be used to automate the process?				

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Section 8: Leadership and Management Challenges



Introduction

Now that you have looked at each of the individual requirements, it is strongly recommended that you take this exercise one stage further and take an overall view of the broader issues that may affect the way you do things. The areas to consider are:

- management
- document management
- IT solutions
- audit
- a bureaucracy gatekeeper
- costs and resources.

Management

There are some aspects of managing an effective process that you should consider.

- Roles and responsibilities – are the key roles of those involved in the process clearly defined? For example, who decides how things are done? Who takes responsibility for streamlining the system? Who implements key changes? Who stores and protects the paperwork or information?
- Culture – is the culture of the organisation such that producing paper is encouraged? When new paperwork is introduced to a system, does it add value to the process?
- Bureaucracy – does a bureaucracy gatekeeper challenge the introduction of new paperwork or changes to the system and processes?

Document management

Document management is an important aspect of maintaining efficient systems. Each provider should ensure that they have controls in place for the safe storage and retrieval of key documents. Also, to prevent the unnecessary storage of obsolete documents, managers should tell staff how long they should keep documents. This is currently 6 years after the end of the contract year, for work-based learning documents (an LSC requirement) and until 31st December 2014 for documents relating to European Social Fund (ESF) co-financing (a European funding requirement).

It is important that documents are not retained just because they are historical and/or provide comfort to those using the system. If you are confident that your systems work, are secure and are effective, there should be no need for others to maintain duplicate information. Examples of this are where a provider retains more than one copy of the NVQ certificate or learner files and the retention of copies of portfolios.

Currently all auditable documents must be held in original, signed hard copy. All other documents can be held electronically. Requirements for portfolios etc should be checked with awarding bodies.

IT solutions

It is recognised that providers use various IT software packages to help administer Apprenticeships. A key consideration for managers should be to look at their current

IT systems and assess whether any add-ons and special features offered by the software provider genuinely add value by either improving efficiency or reducing paperwork. Similarly, more IT solutions could be considered where processes and procedures could be streamlined as a result.

Audit

Meeting the LSC's requirements outlined in the *Requirements for Funding Work-based Learning for Young People* is essential to ensuring a successful audit. Any recommendations made by auditors should contribute to the control environment, improve the delivery of the programme, represent efficient and effective use of the documents or add value. Where you do not feel this to be the case we urge you to ensure that auditors can demonstrate how a proposed recommendation can add value. You may also consult the Regional Audit Manager if necessary.

Bureaucracy gatekeeper

In the current environment, where it is increasingly important to do things efficiently and effectively, we recommend that you have, within your organisation, an individual who is responsible for reviewing any new systems, procedures and processes to ensure they are implemented in the most efficient way. Amongst other things, the role of the bureaucracy gatekeeper could include:

- completing the self-assessment checklist and benchmarking information
- reviewing the actions taken against any recommended actions
- quantifying the costs and benefits
- challenging managers and the LSC on changes to the current system, whilst ensuring that the LSC funding requirements and wider control environment are not compromised.

Costs and resources (see Annex C)

A tangible way of assessing where improvements have been made, either as a result of reducing costs or increasing efficiency, is to determine the cost relating to a specific activity and review the change in cost at a later date. At Annex C we have provided some questions which will enable you to consider the costs of administering Apprenticeships in your organisation.

It is important to remember that cost is not the only factor. The purpose of this guide is to reduce bureaucracy and make your processes more efficient and maintain quality, which may not necessarily result in a reduction in costs.

Managers also need to consider whether they are using internal resources efficiently and making sure that staff are fully occupied in the right roles. Managers should look at options to improve efficiency by, for example, creating dual roles for staff where possible. Thus, when they are not fully occupied in one role, they can assist in administering Apprenticeships.

Process mapping

You should map the processes of each activity to identify each stage clearly: what the inputs and outputs are, the time taken to perform each activity, and the number of people involved in the process. This will identify whether your processes are too complicated and/or illogical and where certain activities may be superfluous.

Final challenges

This final section is to encourage you to look at every aspect of the administration cycle within your Apprenticeship programme. Here are some of the key questions that you need to ask.

Key questions

Are you recording any piece of information more than once?	Where? Why?
Are you keeping more than one copy of anything?	Why? Where? Does it add value?
Have you made instructions as straight forward as possible for your administration staff?	
Which elements of the administration cycle are taking longest?	Which areas? How long? Why?
Is there anything in addition to the LSC core requirements that you are capturing?	Is it adding value to your organisation? Can you justify it?



Consider assigning the role of bureaucracy gatekeeper to an individual who would be responsible for challenging the implementation of new documents, reviewing progress against the self-assessment checklists, action plans and benchmarks.

Benchmarking (see Annex A)

Benchmarking is used to compare performance either internally (that is, measuring performance improvements within a business unit or function) or externally (against other comparable organisations).

In the context of this effective practice guide, you may find it useful to measure where there has been a resulting reduction in the administration burden, duplication of documents, and so on.

The form on the following pages includes some examples of possible benchmark criteria and measurable targets, together with clear actions and timetables for improvement. This form is very much a starting point and it is expected that providers will be able to add further benchmark criteria specific to their organisation or operations.

Self-assessment checklist

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken
1. Are key roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process clearly defined?	!			
2. When new paperwork is introduced to a system, does it add value to the process? If not, do you challenge this?	!			
3. Do managers challenge the suggestion of implementing new documents?	!			
4. Do you have a bureaucracy gatekeeper? Do you think this would be a useful role within your organisation?	!			
5. Do you have an effective document management system in place?	Q			
6. Do staff understand the requirements for the retention of documents?	Q			
7. Do managers challenge the LSC on recommendations which they believe do not add value to the process?	!			
8. Do your IT systems include any unnecessary features that increase the administrative burden on your organisation?	!			
9. Can you draw your processes in a straight line? How many stages are there in each activity?	Q			

Self-assessment checklist (continued)

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken
10. How many people are involved in each activity? Where can the number be reduced? Can people be used elsewhere?	Q			
11. Do you know how much each activity costs?	Q			

Your ideas

		✓	✗	Record action to be taken

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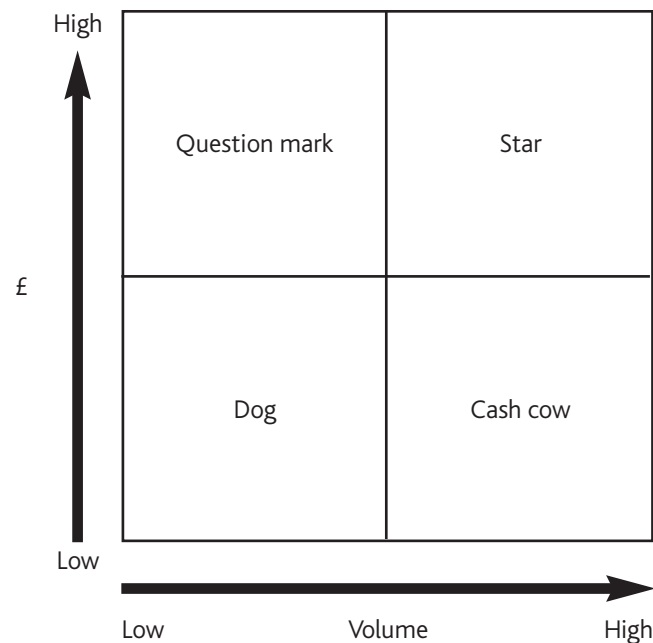
Annex A: Benchmarking

Benchmarking criteria	Where are you now?	Where do you want to be?	How are you going to get there?	Measures of success	Indicators
1. Number of pieces of paper per learner for each of the following processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • induction • initial assessment • ILP • reviews • achievement • TPS 					
2. Overhead expenditure as a percentage of turnover spent on the administration of Apprenticeships.					
3. Actual cost of administering the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • induction • initial assessment • ILP • ILR • reviews • achievement • TPS 					

Annex A: Benchmarking (continued)

Benchmarking criteria	Where are you now?	Where do you want to be?	How are you going to get there?	Measures of success	Indicators
4. Percentage of expenditure on total administration costs in each of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● induction ● initial assessment ● ILP ● ILR ● reviews ● achievement ● TPS 					
5. Time taken to process each of the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● induction ● initial assessment ● ILP ● ILR ● reviews ● achievement 					

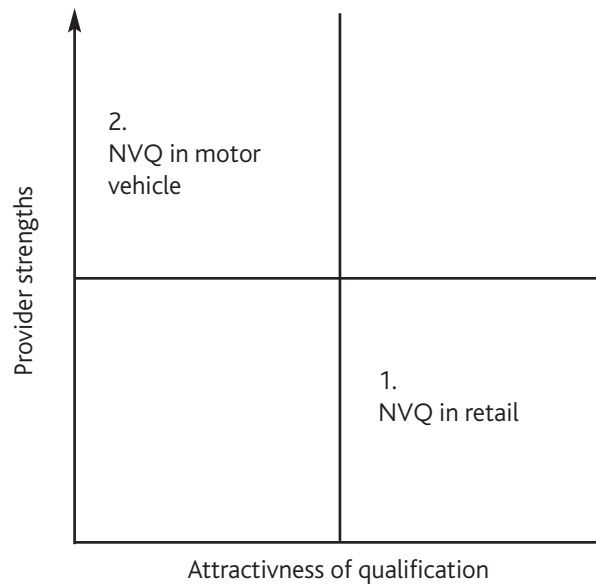
Annex B: Tools for Evaluating National Vocational Qualification Awarding Bodies



The Boston Matrix is traditionally used to analyse products and businesses by market share and market growth. However, in the context of this guide it can also be used to classify awarding bodies in order to evaluate their value to you, the provider. Each awarding body will need to be considered in respect of volume of learners and success rates for each NVQ and costs associated with each NVQ. For example, depending on the outcome, each of the awarding bodies can be categorised in the following ways.

- **Stars** – for example, where you are delivering a high volume of NVQs which have a high success rate. The costs may be high; they may require expenditure in excess of the cash they generate in order to maintain and meet the demand, but they may promise high returns in the future.
- **Cash cows** – for example, these may have lower costs and require a lower level of expenditure, but you deliver a significant volume, therefore generating a high level of return overall.

- **Question marks** – for example, where the NVQ has high costs but there is a low volume of delivery and/or poor success rates. A decision has to be made as to whether the high level of expenditure is justified or whether you should deliver these NVQs at all.
- **Dogs** – for example, NVQs which have a low volume and/or poor success rates and there is little or no opportunity for future growth. Although the costs may be reasonable, they may be tying up funds that would be better used elsewhere.



The following model can also be used to evaluate the NVQ awarding bodies currently used by plotting where they are in terms of strengths of the provider and the attractiveness of the qualification.

You would have to determine what criteria would be used against your strengths and the attractiveness of the qualification for each awarding body. For example, the criteria might include the following.

Strengths of the provider

- Provider resources
- Learner satisfaction
- Market share or coverage
- Skills of provider staff or assessors
- Opportunities for future growth
- Infrastructure for delivery
- Retention rates

Attractiveness of the qualification

- LSC needs
- Attractiveness to the learner
- Attractiveness to the skills market
- Reputation of the awarding body
- Future resource requirements
- Requirement for future capital expenditure
- Success rates

For example, the diagram opposite shows where a provider may deliver qualifications in completely different sectors but their particular strength is in the motor vehicle industry. They have a well-established infrastructure to deliver motor vehicle NVQs and good success rates. However, they also deliver NVQs in retail, which do not have such a good retention or success rate but are still attractive to the marketplace.

Annex C:

Costs and Resources Questionnaire

You can use the questions below to consider the costs and resources relating to your organisation for administration. We recognise that historically some of this information may not be readily available. In future, you may want to collect this information so that you can demonstrate any reductions in costs or improvements in efficiency as a result of using this guide.

Questions relating to costs	Response now	Response in 6 months time
1. What is the total cost of administration as a percentage of turnover?		
2. What is the percentage of the total expenditure directly attributable to administering the Apprenticeship programme against overall total expenditure on administration?		
3. Can you clearly identify the costs attributable to administering the Apprenticeship programme?		
4. What is the cost of administration for each learner?		
5. What is the profit or surplus generated for each learner (revenue for each learner less costs per learner)?		
6. What is the cost of performing each of these activities for each learner (calculated by using staff time multiplied by the hourly rate of pay)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial assessment of a learner • Inducting a learner • Completing an ILR for a learner • Completing an ILP for a learner • Undertaking reviews • Processing the achievement information including registration with the awarding body to achievement of the qualification • Processing the TPS • Any other activities 		
7. What are the staff costs relating to people involved in administering and delivering Apprenticeships?		

Questions relating to resources	Response	Response in 6 months time
1. What is the total number of administration staff as a percentage of the organisation headcount?		
2. What is the total number of administration staff directly relating to Apprenticeships as a percentage of the administration headcount?		
3. What is the time taken to perform each of these activities for each learner in hours? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initial assessment of a learner ● Inducting a learner ● Completing an ILR for a learner ● Completing an ILP for a learner ● Undertaking reviews ● Processing the achievement information including registration with the awarding body to achievement of the qualification ● Processing the TPS ● Any other activities 		
4. What is the administration staff utilisation rate for each month (number of hours performing administrative tasks divided by the number of hours available)?		
5. Do any other appropriate staff elsewhere in the organisation have any periods of downtime that could be used to administer Apprenticeships?		
6. What proportion of Trainers/Assessors time is spent on Administration?		
7. What are assessors case loads?		

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