



Department
for Education

Apprenticeship Accountability Statement

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Overview

One of the Secretary of State's key priorities is to improve the quality of all apprenticeships. New apprenticeship standards across all levels are being designed and driven by employers, creating higher quality training that translates into better long term employability prospects for apprentices and a more productive economy. Apprenticeship standards set out the knowledge, skills and behaviours each apprentice needs to be fully competent in the role, with more off-the-job training and an assessment at the end of the apprenticeship to test full competence.

This document sets out the responsibilities of each organisation with a role in the apprenticeships system in England. It provides an agreed framework within which these bodies are clear about their respective accountabilities in relation to the apprenticeships programme, so that the Government's objectives to raise apprenticeship quality and secure value for money are met. It has been agreed by the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Institute for Apprenticeships ("the Institute" ¹), Ofsted, Ofqual, the Office for Students (OfS) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

This statement may be subject to amendments in line with future policy changes and should be read alongside [the Strategic Guidance to the Institute for Apprenticeships](#) (which provides guidance from the Government on matters to which the Institute must have regard when performing its functions) and the framework document (which sets out the broad framework within which the Institute operates and its relationship with the Department for Education as the sponsor department).

Accountabilities of bodies within scope

This section sets out what each organisation is accountable for. Each of these bodies has a responsibility to ensure value for money when spending public funds. Each body should discharge its duties in line with [Managing Public Money](#) and, where appropriate, the terms set out in its framework document.

The Department for Education, through the ESFA (which is an executive agency of the Department), has overall accountability for the apprenticeship programme and all aspects of apprenticeships policy and strategy. This includes overall programme governance and operational management of the apprenticeship funding system. Specific functions include the Apprenticeship Service, a number of operational functions such as

¹ The Institute for Apprenticeships – referred to as 'the Institute' throughout this document – will be changing its name to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, as set out in Section 1 of the Technical and Further Education Act 2017, once that provision is commenced.

the contracting and audit of training providers, and the operation of the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers and the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations.

With the exception of the non-ministerial departments, Ofsted and Ofqual, the Department for Education is responsible for the funding of each of the bodies whose responsibilities, in relation to apprenticeships, are set out in this document. It is also responsible, where appropriate, for agreeing a separate framework document covering the individual governance arrangements with each of them.

The Institute for Apprenticeships is a crown non-departmental public body. Its functions include ensuring the quality of apprenticeships and providing advice to the Government on future funding provision for apprenticeship training. It is accountable for designing and operating approvals and review processes for standards and assessment plans (having regard to the policy criteria set by the Government), and for advising employers on the policy and process for developing standards and end point assessments. It is also responsible for advising the Government on the funding bands for new and existing standards and ensuring all end point assessments are quality assured - through approving and maintaining a register of external quality assurance providers. This includes providing external quality assurance of end point assessments when the Institute is named in an assessment plan.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. For apprenticeships, Ofsted will inspect the quality of apprenticeship training provision from level 2 to level 5. In the case of Office for Students (OfS) registered apprenticeship providers delivering apprenticeship training provision at level 4 or 5, the OfS will provide Ofsted with relevant information to inform inspection judgements.

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) is accountable for the regulation of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. Where qualifications which are listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications² are also included as part of an apprenticeship, they will be subject to Ofqual regulation. Ofqual is one of four external quality assurance options. Where Ofqual is selected by a trailblazer group to provide external quality assurance for an apprenticeship standard, it will regulate the end point assessments in accordance with its General Conditions of Recognition³. Ofqual will also regulate end point assessments where they are within the scope of an

² [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#)

³ [General Conditions of Recognition](#)

Ofqual recognised awarding organisation and are placed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications.

The Office for Students (OfS) is the independent regulator of higher education in England. The OfS aims to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers. This encompasses apprentices on higher education courses. The OfS's approach to regulation is underpinned by the functions, duties and powers given to it in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA). A provider registered with the OfS is subject to the OfS's regulatory requirements for all of its higher education provision, including apprenticeships. The OfS will work collaboratively with Ofsted to regulate providers delivering apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5 by providing relevant information to Ofsted to inform its inspection judgements.

In performing its quality and standards assessment functions, the OfS seeks advice from the Quality Assurance Agency.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) monitors, and advises on, standards and quality in UK higher education and is the designated quality body to undertake quality and standards assessment functions in England. The QAA provides advice to the OfS about quality and standards in registered providers.

All of the bodies set out above form **the Quality Alliance**. Led by the Institute, the Quality Alliance is a vehicle for collaboration between organisations with responsibilities for aspects of the quality of apprenticeships and the apprenticeship system. The Quality Alliance facilitates effective co-ordination and co-working amongst its membership to improve quality, and deliver improvements in the quality system. The Quality Alliance works collaboratively to deal with quality issues and problems as necessary. Members share intelligence about the quality of the end-to-end apprenticeships programme so that trends can be monitored, areas of concern can be identified and action taken.

Accountabilities in relation to each function

The remainder of this document sets out each quality and funding function in relation to apprenticeships, along with the roles and responsibilities of each of the bodies.

It is intended that each body will be able to share data and information where appropriate with other bodies to facilitate delivery and monitoring of apprenticeship functions, subject to data protection legislation and the legislation governing each body's functions.

The Quality Alliance, and its operational group, should be the main avenue to facilitate the ongoing sharing of intelligence and any concerns about the quality of apprenticeships across the end-to-end programme.

1. Overall accountability for the quality of apprenticeships

A high quality experience for apprentices and employers is a key objective of the Government's apprenticeships programme. Overall accountability for quality rests with the Department for Education and, insofar as it is exercising its statutory duties, the Institute.

In particular, the Institute is responsible for delivery of its functions to support the development of apprenticeship standards and assessment plans, its scrutiny and challenge of them and its ability to decide which are made available for delivery. It is also responsible for ensuring that plans are in place for quality assuring all end point assessments, and for proposing quality criteria for entering the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers and the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations.

2. Standards development, review and approval

The Department for Education (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Overarching apprenticeships policy and the framework which sets out the matters to which the Institute must have regard when performing its functions - through the Strategic Guidance letter and in accordance with the legislation.
- Managing the withdrawal of apprenticeship frameworks by August 2020.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Having regard to overarching standards policy as set by the Department when carrying out its functions, including prioritising standards for development and review so that they reflect the needs of the wider economy and fill key skills gaps, including those identified in the industrial strategy, and ensuring standards maintain relevance and high quality over time.
- Identifying the occupations that populate each of the routes, and publishing these in the format of occupational maps.
- Managing existing occupational routes and proposals for new occupational pathways with the Institute's route panels.
- Ensuring the overall landscape of standards is coherent, high quality and supports progression into sustainable careers.
- Using occupational maps and employer demand to help determine which new standards are approved for development.

- Ensuring standards are developed by trailblazer groups primarily made up of employers.
- Providing support through relationship managers to trailblazer groups to ensure high quality standards are developed.
- Providing advice to the Department on the development of new standards and review of existing standards, the content of the standards, intelligence to inform the withdrawal of frameworks, and intelligence to support effective management of the apprenticeships provider and end point assessment markets.
- Scrutinising draft standards, including through third party challenge, before they are approved/rejected for delivery.
- Advising the Department of any fundamental policy issues or trends emerging through the standards approvals process or the use of standards and plans.
- Regular review of standards in use, making use of occupational maps, to ensure that they remain relevant to employers, are occupationally specific, and reflect the changing needs of skills, knowledge and behaviours in an occupation over time.
- Having regard to affordability and the overall apprenticeship programme budget when carrying out its functions in relation to standards development and approval.
- Providing advice to the Department on funding bands for individual apprenticeship standards, as part of the approvals process (see section 7).

3. Quality of training provision

The Department for Education (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Owning the provider market strategy and creating the policy framework to support a healthy and competitive marketplace of quality providers that can support the overall programme objectives. This includes approving the overall approach to market entry (via the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers) and market exit.
- Overall ownership and administration of the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, including agreeing all final criteria.
- Monitoring provider compliance with the provider contract and funding rules and taking action where there is non-compliance, including sub-contractor compliance.

- Publishing and operating a provider intervention strategy, which makes clear the triggers for intervention (such as quality, financial, safeguarding) and the nature of sanctions that may be applied, including market exit.
- Identifying areas for investigation and intervening to address quality concerns, when they identify issues, or when asked to do so by the Institute, and undertaking intervention activity if necessary. This includes removing or suspending providers from the apprenticeship market.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Proposing the quality criteria applied to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.
- Referring concerns about the quality of training provision to the Department for investigation and intervention as appropriate.

Ofsted is responsible for:

- Inspecting the quality of apprenticeship training provision from level 2 to level 5. In the case of apprenticeship providers delivering higher education as part of an apprenticeship standard, the OfS will provide relevant information to Ofsted to inform inspection judgements.
- Sharing information with the OfS to inform ongoing provider risk assessment.
- Carrying out monitoring visits to all new apprenticeship providers within their remit (level 2-5). Where the concern relates to provision with a higher education qualification, the OfS will provide relevant information to Ofsted to inform inspection judgements.
- Inspecting the quality of apprenticeship training provision at level 6 and/or 7 where this involves teacher and trainer training.

The Office for Students is responsible for:

- Assessing or making arrangements to assess quality and standards for providers seeking registration, including their apprenticeship provision.
- Regulating registered higher education providers to ensure quality and standards are maintained for all students. This includes requiring courses to meet sector-recognised standards as these are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualification at level 4 and above.
- Assessing and monitoring quality and standards for providers that are listed on the OfS's Register, including those that deliver apprenticeships.

- Working with Ofsted to regulate level 4 and 5 apprenticeships where the apprenticeship standard contains a mandatory higher education qualification by providing relevant information to Ofsted to inform its inspection judgements.
- Seeking and considering advice from the QAA, as the designated quality body, as the OfS performs its quality and standards functions.
- Working with the Department to develop arrangements to assess quality and standards for providers that are delivering apprenticeships at level 6 and above, but have not registered with the OfS.

QAA is responsible for:

- Providing advice to the OfS about quality and standards in registered providers, including their apprenticeship provision.

4. Quality and appropriateness of qualifications used in apprenticeships

The Department for Education (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Setting Government policy, including on what basis qualifications should be included as a mandatory part of an apprenticeship.
- Setting policy on which qualifications will be funded by Government and which will not.
- Ensuring coherence across the wider qualification landscape, with support from Ofqual.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Taking decisions when approving standards about whether qualifications can be included in the standard (which has the effect of making them mandatory) based on whether they meet the policy criteria set by the Department.

Ofqual is responsible for:

- Regulation of qualifications where they are listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications and are undertaken as part of an apprenticeship standard.
- Undertaking the reform of qualifications that could be included as a mandatory part of an apprenticeship, if they are regulated by Ofqual.

5. Quality of assessment

The Department for Education (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Setting out assessment policy, including external quality assurance policy, to which the Institute must have regard to as it carries out its assessment functions (including supporting trailblazer groups to develop assessment plans, reviewing and approving the plans, designing its own approach to external quality assurance and its role in ensuring that all end point assessments are quality assured and standardised).
- Establishing policy in relation to end point assessment plans and the end point assessment market, including the funding of assessment, market design and market entry/exit.
- Working with the Institute to establish costing models for designing assessments which are high quality and value for money.
- Working with the Institute to establish an effective and robust system to monitor and review end point assessment plans, and to action reviews in response to market changes or requirements.
- Overall ownership and administration of the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations. This is undertaken within a framework of quality criteria set by the Institute, and the Institute may request the Department to consider particular action with regard to a particular end point assessment organisation.
- Working with the Institute and external quality assurance organisations to monitor the performance of end point assessment organisations.
- Working with the Institute to monitor the market and ensure that assessment market is viable, and take appropriate intervention where there is no assessment organisation approved to deliver the assessment for a particular standard.
- Taking action if it receives evidence that an organisation is delivering poor quality assessments. This may include sanctions applied to the organisation and/or removing the organisation from the Register.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Having regard to assessment policy as set by the Department when carrying out its assessment functions.

- Providing expert advice to trailblazer groups on assessment policy to help with the development of assessment plans – taking into account delivery considerations and cost.
- Scrutinising assessment plans, including ensuring third party challenge, and approving plans for use or returning plans for further work, against the policy criteria set by the Department.
- Regular review of assessment plans to ensure they are delivering high quality, consistent assessment and apprentices that are fully competent, taking on views from end point assessment organisations, employers, apprentices, providers and others, as well as using data to inform the creation of standards and review process. Working with trailblazer groups to make changes if necessary, ensuring assessment plans maintain relevance over time.
- Proposing the overarching quality criteria within which the Department should operate the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations, promoting coherence with other registers where appropriate.
- Agreeing the Department’s operating model for the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations – i.e. how often the register is open for applications.
- Ensuring appropriate assessment organisation coverage for approved standards is available, through working with the Department to encourage appropriate applications to the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations.
- Working with the Department to engage the End Point Assessment Organisation market early with forthcoming standards and assessment plans to ensure that the assessment market is viable.
- Working with the Department to take appropriate intervention where there is no assessment organisation approved to deliver the assessment for a particular standard.
- Escalating significant issues and trends to the Department.
- On matters relating to external quality assurance the Institute is responsible for–
 - Ensuring all end point assessments are quality assured, based on the high level policy set by Government and providing feedback and advice to Government on policy.
 - Approving and maintaining a register of external quality assurance organisations.

- Monitoring the performance of apprentice assessment organisations through external quality assurance organisations and agreeing necessary action on specific cases with the Department where necessary.
- Escalating issues and concerns to Government, and proposing changes to policy including end point assessment organisation capacity and readiness.
- Ensuring all assessment plans have a viable external quality assurance model identified before they are approved, and that any existing plans without an external quality assurance model are revised to include one.
- Being the point of escalation for external quality assurance organisations who cannot resolve issues with assessment organisations and taking action.
- Setting out and then delivering the Institute's external quality assurance model for those assessments where they have been selected by a trailblazer group and are named in the assessment plan.

Ofqual is responsible for:

- Delivering external quality assurance where agreed with trailblazer groups and partnering other external quality assurance organisations where requested. Ofqual provides advice on those assessment plans to ensure that valid end point assessments can be developed. The Institute and Ofqual have published a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) to support effective working arrangements.
- Regulating those end point assessment organisations, which are also Ofqual regulated awarding organisations, where the end point assessments are within the end point assessment organisation's scope of recognition, the end point assessments are on the Register of Regulated Qualifications, and where Ofqual is not the external quality assurance organisation. This could be, for example, through partnerships with employer groups or professional bodies which have been chosen as the external quality assurance organisation.
- Where Ofqual regulates end point assessments, its regulatory framework will apply and it will utilise a range of statutory powers to ensure high quality assessments, such as:
 - requiring that the end point assessment properly assesses against the assessment plan,
 - requiring immediate changes where end point assessments are currently not fit for purpose, and

- having recourse to a wide range of sanctions applicable to those organisations it regulates to resolve issues and promote public confidence.

6. Certification of apprenticeships under standards

The Department for Education (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Overall certification policy.
- Developing and operating a high quality and robust certification system, working within the parameters set by the Institute. This will include:
 - Issuing certificates in a timely manner.
 - Verifying requests from end point assessment organisations for the issue of apprenticeship certificates for privately funded apprentices.
 - Requests for certificate re-prints.
 - Maintaining a register of certified apprentices.
- Monitoring and reviewing requests to issue certificates submitted by end point assessment organisations to identify quality issues or potential fraud.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Working with the Department to ensure quality assured certification of apprenticeships under standards.
- Advising the Secretary of State of the overall integrity and quality of the system for awarding certificates.

7. Development and implementation of funding policy, including the apprenticeship funding operational systems

The Department for Education (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- The overall funding policy framework and affordability of the apprenticeships programme.
- Development and approval of all funding policy, including approval of changes to the funding rules.

- Setting the overall funding band structure and limits and taking the final decision on funding band allocations for apprenticeship frameworks and standards.
- Analysis and reporting to ministers on performance against spending and policy objectives, and reporting the outcomes of the programme through the statistical first release.
- The delivery of apprenticeship funding policy and the Apprenticeship Service, specifically:
 - Producing, publishing and maintaining funding rules and enforcing these rules in the live system to implement DfE policy.
 - Developing funding calculations to pay providers (where applicable using levy funds in digital accounts).
 - Developing validation processes to ensure compliance with funding rules.
 - Contracting and payment to providers (and employers), counter-fraud and compliance
 - Monitoring compliance with the funding rules, covering both employers and providers and identifying areas for investigation/intervention.
 - Maintaining and publishing funding data on the funding for frameworks and standards.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Providing advice to the Department for Education on funding bands for individual apprenticeship standards as part of the approvals and review process, recommending funding bands which support the delivery of high quality training and provide value for money.
- Ensuring that the funding band allocation process takes account of the factors set out in the Institute's strategic guidance, and any further factors the Department may request the Institute have regard to.
- Building insight into the cost of delivering apprenticeship training and assessment, the wider social and economic value of individual apprenticeships, and employer behaviour, to inform advice to the Department on the allocation of apprenticeship standards to funding bands.
- Reviewing existing funding band allocations for standards.

- Managing the relationship with employers throughout the funding band allocation process, including handling of appeals (or other relevant procedure) in relation to the Institute process for recommending a funding band to individual standards.

Annex: Summary of Accountability for Apprenticeships

Accountability for Apprenticeships			
	Technician level (2-3)	Higher Technician level (4-5)	Professional level (6+)
Overall accountability for quality	Department for Education	Department for Education	Department for Education
Standards development, review and approval	Institute	Institute	Institute
Quality of training provision	Ofsted	Ofsted/OfS ^[1]	OfS
Quality of qualifications in Register of Regulated Qualifications	Ofqual	Ofqual	Ofqual
Quality of HE qualifications	Not applicable	OfS	OfS

[1] Ofsted will inspect the quality of apprenticeship training provision from level 2 to level 5. In the case of apprenticeship providers delivering higher education as part of an apprenticeship standard, the Office for Students will provide Ofsted with relevant information to inform inspection judgements.



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