

# Consultation on the **Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England** (SASE)

# Foreword

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In *World Class Apprenticeships*, the Government committed itself to expanding and strengthening the Apprenticeship programme. This Consultation on *The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE)* sets out proposals for delivering high quality Apprenticeship programmes, that provide individuals and employers with the skills for future success.

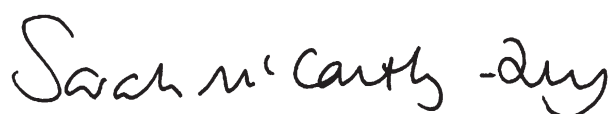
Our economic recovery depends on Government and employers working together to deliver the skills to fight the effects of global recession. The SASE will set out our expectations to ensure that Apprenticeship programmes meet the needs of individuals and employers, and deliver comprehensive programmes of vocational and academic training of the highest quality.

We are introducing legislation which, for the first time, will put the Apprenticeship programme on a statutory basis and bring the SASE into effect. We look forward to working with employers, learners, providers of education and training and others to deliver a world class Apprenticeship programme of which we can all be proud. The Welsh Assembly Government will be consulting separately on the *Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales* and we will be working closely with Ministers in Wales as we take forward these developments.



**Lord Young**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of  
State for Skills and Apprenticeships  
Department for Innovation,  
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Parliamentary Under Secretary of  
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# Introduction

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1. The *Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE)* will set out the requirements with which each recognised Apprenticeship framework in England must comply. The SASE takes forward the commitments made in *World Class Apprenticeships* and will replace the existing non-statutory Apprenticeships 'Blueprint'. The proposals are in line with the clauses on Apprenticeships set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill currently before Parliament.
2. In *World Class Apprenticeships* we called for a revision of the existing Blueprint, published by the LSC in 2005, and made proposals for a number of changes to the minimum requirements for Apprenticeships. These are reflected in this consultation document. We also called for the introduction of an Apprenticeship Agreement between the employer and the apprentice, the details of which are set out in the draft Bill.
3. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 4 February 2009. The Bill takes forward the proposals set out in the Draft Apprenticeships Bill published in July 2008. The Bill includes provisions that place the Apprenticeship programme on a statutory basis, and will allow the Secretary of State\* to bring the SASE into effect.
4. In Annex 1 we present proposals for the *Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England*. After briefly setting out some relevant organisational background, this document highlights and explains the intended effect of the proposals contained in Annex 1, discusses the rationale behind them and points to issues on which views would be particularly welcomed.
5. We look forward to receiving your views and comments. Please respond to this consultation using the online response facility on the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills' consultation website. This will be available shortly after the launch date.

**[www.dius.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations)**

\*In practice this means the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families

# Organisational Background

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## National Apprenticeship Service

6. The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) will become the main organisation responsible for the successful delivery of Apprenticeship provision with a remit to oversee an 'end to end' responsibility for Apprenticeship delivery. It will be launched in April 2009.
7. In the context of the SASE, its primary role will be to provide the funding for Apprenticeships and to ensure that places are available, working with employers and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs), Trades Unions and training providers to support Apprenticeship training at all levels. The NAS will be housed within the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and subsequently will be part of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). It will work with the Young People's Learning Agency, employers, learning providers and Local Authorities to ensure that sufficient Apprenticeship places are available to meet demand.
8. A core part of the NAS role will be to work with employers to provide high quality Apprenticeship places that bring a benefit both to the individual and the employer through a better skilled, more productive employee. The NAS will also maintain the online vacancy matching system to enable employers to advertise Apprenticeship opportunities, and for potential apprentices to apply for such vacancies. The NAS field force will work with a range of stakeholders including union learning representatives and through Connexions, schools, Jobcentre Plus and other advice and guidance organisations to raise awareness of Apprenticeship opportunities.
9. The NAS will keep the delivery of the Apprenticeship system under constant review to ensure that delivery is as efficient as possible. It will support training providers to continue to enhance their offer, and will work with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) to ensure quality provision. In addition, it will continue to work with the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils to ensure that standards are maintained so that Apprenticeship remains a high quality training route for individuals and employers.
10. The NAS will also be responsible for awarding the Apprenticeship certificate at the end of the Apprenticeship as well as recording data on the number of starts and completions by apprentices.

# Sector Skills Councils and Standard Setting Bodies

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11. SSCs/SSBs have a key role to play in developing the provision for Apprenticeships and in supporting Apprenticeship growth. They will have a key role in relation to the content and standards of Apprenticeship frameworks. SSCs/SSBs will:
  - a. Develop frameworks which comply with the SASE, and work with others to ensure that frameworks within the sector comply with SASE;
  - b. Set and monitor standards for the sector which go beyond the minimum requirements of the SASE;
  - c. Issue frameworks and maintain their currency;
  - d. Ensure that there is coherence in the range of Apprenticeship frameworks within their sector.
12. Following implementation of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) the LSC/SFA will only fund qualifications, sitting within an Apprenticeship framework, which have been accredited under the QCF. The SSCs/SSBs will be responsible for approving the qualifications that will form part of an Apprenticeship framework. For qualifications used by 14–19 year olds, the Joint Advisory Committee for Qualifications Approval will have responsibility for confirming the eligibility of these qualifications for public funding. For post 19 provision, all vocational qualifications eligible for public funding will be approved by the SSCs before being entered on the QCF. This will provide a bank of existing qualifications and units that SSCs/SSBs and employers, through their SSC/SSBs, may draw on to develop an Apprenticeship framework.
13. Employers, through their SSC/SSBs, who wish to develop an Apprenticeship framework will submit a short description of their plans, the qualifications and units they wish to use and how they meet the requirements set out in the SASE plus any further important elements that the SSC/SSB considers desirable for the sector. Employers will also be able to use their own qualifications or units, accredited onto the QCF, so that they may tailor their Apprenticeship appropriately. All qualifications within the framework that seek public funding will need to be accredited on the QCF.
14. As discussed later, all Apprenticeship frameworks must show clear progression routes into and from Apprenticeships. In shaping the qualification strategy for sectors, SSCs will be responsible for ensuring that there are appropriate progression routes for apprentices including seeking UCAS tariffs to Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications in Advanced Apprenticeship frameworks and Higher Apprenticeship frameworks. The SSC/SSBs are taking the lead in drawing up the content of Diplomas, and have a key role in the design and content of all vocational programmes and qualifications and so will have a core responsibility to show route maps for learning.
15. The Alliance of Sector Skills Councils will be responsible for promoting continuous improvement and consistency across Apprenticeship frameworks through a process of peer review and support.

# Rationale and Issues for Consultation

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## Apprenticeship Frameworks

16. Proposals for the content of Apprenticeship frameworks are included in Annex 1. Apprenticeship frameworks will be achieved through a combination of requirements made in the SASE, and through directions or guidance where the matter is not a condition which apprentices necessarily have to fulfil for the purposes of certification.

## Qualifications Concerned with the Sector

17. Apprenticeships traditionally consist of both skills and knowledge which, for the majority of existing Apprenticeship frameworks, have had separate ‘competence-based’ and ‘knowledge-based’ qualifications. With the creation of the QCF, there will be increased opportunities for combining units from qualifications which were previously separate, and so the draft SASE expressly allows for the elements to be combined in a single qualification should SSCs and employers want this. The draft SASE defines the former competence-based element as being concerned with a distinct occupation or job role and the knowledge-based element as technical theory relevant to the occupation and knowledge of the industry and its market. These statements in practice denote what are currently known as NVQs and technical certificates, while not confining framework designers to these pre-established qualifications.
18. We propose that where the knowledge and competence elements are combined, they should be separately identified and separately assessed, though they do not need to be accredited as separate qualifications. We believe that it is important to retain this distinctiveness between the two components in order to allow individuals to gain credit towards an Apprenticeship through participation in other programmes (eg Train to Gain which focuses on competence-based qualifications or Diplomas where additional/specialist knowledge may well comprise the theory/knowledge elements of an Apprenticeship).
19. The provisions concerning assessment require independent assessment of the knowledge qualification or units so as to ensure objectivity and rigour.
20. An SSC/SSB may include more than one qualification of each type as alternatives within an Apprenticeship framework. This would allow options for apprentices and providers – for example some knowledge-based qualifications lead more readily to higher-level opportunities while others are more occupationally focused. Different apprentices may be suited to different qualifications, all of which fulfil the basic requirements of relevance to performance in, and relevant knowledge concerning, the occupation.
21. Where there is more than one qualification, the competence-based qualification should be nominated as the ‘principal qualification’\*. This is the qualification which, in most cases, the apprentice needs to be in scope of an Apprenticeship agreement while studying. We consider it important that the principal qualification is, or includes, the competence-based elements as these are the skills which are typically best practised and refined during the course of normal work activities with real pressures, customers and work equipment.

\*See Part 1 Clause 25 of the Bill

22. Where there are two qualifications, both should be accredited at Level 2 for Apprenticeships and Level 3 for Advanced Apprenticeships, though we would be interested in views on whether there is a case for relaxing this requirement in the case of knowledge-based qualifications, as sector knowledge requirements differ considerably.
23. Advanced Apprenticeships should require SSC/SSBs to include as knowledge-based qualifications those which are known to lead to opportunities within higher education, including in particular, foundation degrees. This does not mean that all the knowledge-based qualifications must lead to higher education, but that – where reasonable and relevant to the sector – those knowledge-based qualifications which do lead to higher education should be included in frameworks as an option. This progression route should also be clearly demonstrated by the allocation of UCAS tariffs to qualifications at Levels 3 and 4 within Advanced and Higher Apprenticeship frameworks.
24. We would also welcome views on whether the SASE should be more specific in terms of volume and balance of learning. The credit-based structure of the QCF provides an opportunity to ensure that an apprentice is provided with a balanced and comprehensive programme of learning. The precise content will be shaped according to the sector, the employer's training programme and the individual's aspirations. The core elements would be those needed to develop the sector competence and knowledge and optional units would allow flexibility to tailor the qualification and frameworks to an employer and individual's needs.
25. The minimum threshold level for a full Level 2 is 13 credits and it might be reasonable to suppose that Level 3 credits would be about twice this amount. Due to the nature of an Apprenticeship which will demand both competence and knowledge-based elements, we would clearly expect the level of credits to be significantly higher than the minimum for Level 2 and Level 3. One option would be to leave this to the SSC/SSB or employer. This would have the advantage of enabling those closest to the needs of employers to develop Apprenticeship frameworks that are flexible and minimise bureaucracy. The disadvantage is that this may result in different sectors, or even sub-sectors, having significantly and demonstrably different expectations for the amount of learning to be undertaken by apprentices, something inspectors have drawn attention to in the past.
26. At the other end of the spectrum, we would welcome views on whether the SASE should set a minimum credit level and determine the rules of combination between the key elements. This would have the advantage of ensuring consistency across frameworks and would provide some degree of balance between knowledge and competence-based units. The disadvantage is that this may be seen as prescriptive and bureaucratic.
27. An example of setting standard levels would be to set out in the SASE an expectation that each framework should have a minimum of 37 credits. This would put Apprenticeship frameworks into the same size range as Diplomas within the QCF. The units would be predominantly Level 2 for Apprenticeships and Level 3 for Advanced Apprenticeships although, in line with QCF principles, there would be flexibility to include units at a higher level and to build progression to higher learning; the rules for assigning levels to qualifications state that at least 50% of the credit gained must be from the level of the qualification or above.



28. The parameters might be that Apprenticeship frameworks should consist of a minimum of 37 credits, including at least:

- A minimum of 10 credits from competence based units based on the National Occupational Standards from the employment sector for which the framework is designed;
- A minimum of 10 credits from knowledge-based units providing underpinning theoretical knowledge required by an entrant to the relevant employment sector;
- Units in Functional Skills in English and mathematics (either at Level 1 or 2 dependent on the conclusion of the issues set out below);
- Unit in Employment Rights and Responsibilities (see below also);
- Further units as necessary to make up the total and so as to enable personalisation for the individual and employer. Each framework would set out the number of additional units required to complete the Apprenticeship.

At least one accredited qualification, at Level 2 for Apprenticeships and Level 3 for Advanced Apprenticeships would need to be included in each framework. On this illustration the remainder could, in principle, be made up of units from different qualifications, so as to make up a minimum of 37 credits.

### Question 1

**Is it reasonable to require the knowledge-based qualifications to be at least at Level 2 for Apprenticeships and at Level 3 for Advanced Apprenticeships?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:



## Question 2a

Should the SASE specify a minimum number of credits for an Apprenticeship framework?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

## Question 2b

To what elements of the Apprenticeship framework should the minimum credit levels apply?

Knowledge Element      Yes ☐    No ☐

Competence Element    Yes ☐    No ☐

Functional Skills        Yes ☐    No ☐

ERR                        Yes ☐    No ☐

Other (please specify)

Comments:

## Question 2c

What do you think the minimum credit levels should be?

|                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Knowledge Element      | <input type="text"/> |
| Competence Element     | <input type="text"/> |
| Functional Skills*     | <input type="text"/> |
| ERR                    | <input type="text"/> |
| Other (please specify) | <input type="text"/> |

Comments:

## Functional Skills

29. We propose that apprentices should be required to gain Functional Skills in mathematics and English at a minimum of Level 1 for Apprenticeships, and Level 2 for Advanced Apprenticeships. It is proposed that the parallel Key Skills (together with their acknowledged proxy qualifications) achieved within the previous five years should be able to satisfy this requirement for a transitional period until 2016.
30. We have considered the case for requiring Functional Skill attainment at Level 2 for Apprenticeships. In the 14–19 Qualifications Strategy<sup>†</sup> we proposed that Functional Skills in English and mathematics should be set at the same level as in Higher and Advanced Diplomas. However, this would be at a higher standard than the existing minimum requirements for Apprenticeships and would risk excluding a number of people from being able to complete an Apprenticeship. In addition, a number of sectors have previously noted that they do not require Level 2 in both mathematics and English for particular frameworks. Raising the bar might thus mean that people considered proficient in an industry sector could not gain an Apprenticeship in that sector.
31. Similar arguments apply to the Functional Skill of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), which is of increasing importance in the world of work. We propose that SSCs/SSBs should be encouraged to make Functional Skills in ICT a mandatory element of an apprenticeship framework in their sector where there is evidence that it is necessary for effective performance in their work. However, we are consulting on whether all Apprenticeship frameworks should require at least a minimal level of functional ICT (for example Entry Level 1).

\*The proposal is for whole qualifications in Functional Skills

<sup>†</sup>Promoting Achievement, Valuing Success: A Strategy for 14-19 Qualifications

### Question 3

Should Functional Skills in English and mathematics at Level 2 be required for all Apprenticeship frameworks?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

### Question 4

The ICT Functional Skill qualification can be made a mandatory element of Apprenticeship frameworks for those sectors where there is evidence that it is necessary for effective performance in the work. Should we go further than this and require the ICT Functional Skill qualification in all Apprenticeship frameworks? If yes, what do you think should be the minimum level of attainment in ICT Functional Skill?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

### Employee Rights and Responsibilities (ERR)

32. We propose to make it a requirement for apprentices to learn about their rights and responsibilities as a worker, particularly in the fields of equal opportunities and health and safety.
33. Existing Apprenticeship frameworks are not required to set out how this takes place and there is no mandatory assessment of this element of an Apprenticeship. In *World Class Apprenticeships* we considered there was value in consolidating ERR in the form of a qualification 'so that the apprentice can receive credit for their learning'. We considered that this could be best achieved 'through embedding ERR in the knowledge-based qualification element'.

34. There are arguments for and against introducing a formal, separate credit for ERR. Some may take the view that a requirement for formal assessment as part of a qualification could militate against teaching this element in the very early stages of an Apprenticeship – which most would agree was desirable in the area of health and safety – and that a formal qualification in such subject matter would not materially add to a person’s future prospects in the labour market or further education. Others would argue that it is a fundamental part of an Apprenticeship and should be easily identifiable and accredited.
35. We propose that ERR should be included in a qualification, though we do not specify the form of this qualification, which is left to the SSC/SSB. Frameworks would have to require the formal assessment, and passing, of the ERR material.

### **Question 5a**

**Should the process of ERR assessment be left to each SSC/SSB?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

### **Question 5b**

**Should we encourage formal assessment through inclusion of ERR in a qualification?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

## Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)

36. In *World Class Apprenticeships* we recommended that assessment of PLTS should be integrated with the assessment of the main knowledge and skills of the Apprenticeship, and that they should not be taught through stand-alone units.
37. We propose that while each framework must contain each of the six PLTS, it is for the SSC/SSB to ensure that PLTS can be referenced within the relevant underpinning National Occupational Standards (NOS). SSC/SSBs should determine the extent, level and location of PLTS within the various elements of their frameworks. However SSC/SSBs would be required to account for the presence of PLTs by indicating where, within their frameworks, the learning and demonstration of each PLT would be required.
38. We do not propose to require formal summative assessment of the PLTS although SSC/SSBs may require this if they wish. However, SSC/SSBs must avoid adding unnecessary assessment complexity. We propose at least formative assessment to ensure that apprentices be given feedback about their performance in the PLTS.

### Question 6a

**Do you agree that all six PLTS should be included in Apprenticeship frameworks?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

### Question 6b

**Should SSC/SSBs have flexibility to determine the extent, level and location of PLTS within their Apprenticeship frameworks?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

## Question 7

Do formative assessment arrangements provide a valid and meaningful assessment of PLTS?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

### Minimum Off-Workstation Training

39. In *World Class Apprenticeships* we recommended that the SASE should include a requirement for 'a reasonable absolute minimum for off-workstation learning time.' Ministers have also committed to a minimum of 280 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) per year for all Apprenticeship frameworks.
40. We have considered whether we should simply ask SSC/SSBs to state a minimum 'off workstation learning time' (which might differ in each case) or whether we should set out an absolute minimum for all frameworks. Some might consider that if there is a minimum number of credits (and therefore of typical guided learning hours) as illustrated in paragraphs 27–28, there would be no additional need to specify a national minimum for off-workstation time and that each SSC/SSB could prescribe their own minimum in the light of the particular qualifications they demanded and the traditions and typical facilities of the sector.
41. However we are attracted to setting a national minimum in order to guarantee that all apprentices can benefit from dedicated time for acquiring knowledge, receiving instruction and reflecting on their performance, away from the pressures of work. We should welcome views on what that minimum might be, but, drawing on the illustration in paragraph 28, one might suppose that:
- The knowledge-based qualification or units would undoubtedly require dedicated learning and instruction. At a minimum of 10 credits, this element would typically constitute 100 hours;
  - Similarly, instruction in each Functional Skill, either to Level 1, or – as suggested – a course of training to Level 2, would need to be away from working pressures. At five credits each, these combined would constitute around 100 hours but some learners may take less time than this;
  - Other necessary elements in the Apprenticeship training, such as induction, employee rights and responsibilities (including health and safety), regular time with mentors and assessors, preparing evidence for assessment, and receiving guidance, as well as training in ICT if relevant, would all undoubtedly need to take place away from immediate work and might be expected to constitute a minimum of 50 hours;
  - On this analysis it would seem appropriate to set a minimum threshold of 250 GLH of off-workstation learning. This would be an absolute minimum for the duration of the Apprenticeship, and we would expect SSC/SSBs to go beyond this minimum. The commitment to GLH may need to be reviewed, following implementation of the QCF, to take account of the credits-based system.

42. We suggest a definition of 'off-workstation training' as a period of "instruction or supervised study, conducted at a separate physical location from that in which an apprentice normally works". This could include periods of study which take place in an employer's premises and 'near the job' (for example in a company training room), but it does not include periods of private, unsupervised study. We would expect this training to take place during normal working hours, and this will be made clear in the Apprenticeship Agreement.
43. The draft proposes that the minimum period of off-workstation training for Advanced Apprenticeships is set at the same level as that for Level 2 Apprenticeships. There might be a case for stipulating a higher minimum for Advanced Apprenticeships, though of course SSC/SSBs are free to opt for a higher level if they wish under the proposals as they are set down here.

## Question 8

**Do you agree that 250 hours of off-workstation training (across the duration of the Apprenticeship framework) is an acceptable minimum?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

## Question 9

**Do you agree with the proposed definition of off-workstation training?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:



### Question 10

Should the minimum off-workstation training time be set at a higher level for Advanced Apprenticeships than for Level 2 Apprenticeships?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

### Question 11

Should account be taken of off-workstation training time delivered through relevant qualifications attained prior to commencing an Apprenticeship framework?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

## Minimum Entry Requirements and Progression Routes

44. We would expect all frameworks to give details of clear entry routes into Apprenticeships and progression routes on to further training including higher education. We propose that Apprenticeship frameworks should set out the prior qualifications which are a necessary starting point for the learning expected in an Apprenticeship, including demonstrating how other qualifications such as Diplomas, GCSE and A Levels can lead to routes into an Apprenticeship. To promote progression within the system we would expect SSC/SSBs, in the case of Advanced Apprenticeships, to specify at least one Level 2 Apprenticeship which qualifies a person for entry to the advanced level; there may, of course, be a few cases of Advanced Apprenticeship where there is no relevant Level 2 Apprenticeship.
45. We would expect to include the principal occupations to which each framework led, together with avenues of career progression within the sector via further training and education, and higher education. In the case of Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications in Advanced Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships SSC/SSBs would be expected to seek a tariff rating from UCAS.
46. It is clearly desirable that there should be pathways between Diplomas and Apprenticeships, as young people in education move closer to the world of work. We would also wish to encourage the possibility of young people entering Diplomas after their Apprenticeships, if this made sense to them (for example to undertake more intensive preparation for higher education). The design of additional and specialised learning associated with Diplomas can clearly help, for example through providing a basis for the knowledge elements demanded in an Apprenticeship. We are less clear that any requirements should be made of Apprenticeship frameworks in linking with Diplomas, beyond – as is done in the draft – specifying that available progression routes should be set out.

### Question 12

**In *World Class Apprenticeships* we included a commitment for all Apprenticeship frameworks to seek a UCAS tariff rating. This would apply to Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications in Advanced and Higher Apprenticeship frameworks. Is there a case for exemptions?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

### Question 13

**What requirements could reasonably be made of Apprenticeship frameworks to facilitate flexibility of progression between Apprenticeships and Diplomas?**

Comments:

### Bureaucracy

47. The Government is committed to reducing bureaucracy in the development and delivery of Apprenticeships. We welcome your views on whether these proposals would achieve that aim whilst maintaining high standards of Apprenticeship frameworks. Are there other changes you would wish to see to achieve this objective?

### Question 14

**Do the proposals meet the objective to reduce bureaucracy for the development and delivery of Apprenticeship frameworks?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

## Timing

48. The new Qualification and Credit Framework is intended to come into being in September 2010. As the SASE is drafted to take account of the credit system, we believe that compliance with the SASE should come into force in March 2011. This would allow time for SSCs, SSBs and employers to review their existing frameworks in the context of the QCF and to implement the other changes proposed.

## Question 15

**Is March 2011 a reasonable deadline for Apprenticeship frameworks to comply with SASE?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

## Other

**Please include any other comments.**

Comments:

# Draft Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England

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1. This Annex sets out the proposals for the content of an Apprenticeship framework. It is envisaged that this content will be promulgated under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill.
2. Where certain flexibilities are indicated the term “may” is used, though no attempt is made to indicate the whole range of flexibility permissible. Issuing authorities have the flexibility to increase requirements over and above those set out here either in terms of increasing the level or length of any element, or treating items indicated here as being a matter of guidance as mandatory in their frameworks, either for providers of Apprenticeship or as requirements for attainment by apprentices, or both.

## **Apprenticeship Frameworks: General**

3. An Apprenticeship framework must specify whether it is a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework, a Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship framework or a Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship framework.
4. An Apprenticeship framework must set out the requirements, including standards of attainment, which an apprentice must satisfy to obtain an Apprenticeship certificate. The requirements must, as a minimum, include the following:
  - The competence outcomes (and the relevant qualification(s) and/or unit(s)) which an apprentice must obtain;
  - The knowledge/theory outcomes (and the relevant qualification(s) and/or unit(s)) which an apprentice must obtain;
  - The Functional Skills qualifications (or Key Skills qualifications/approved proxies until 2016) which an apprentice must obtain;
  - The instruction which an apprentice must receive and the understanding the apprentice must demonstrate of employee rights and responsibilities;
  - The instruction and/or practical experience which an apprentice must receive and the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) that they must demonstrate;
  - The number of Guided Learning Hours to be delivered annually;
  - The number of Guided Learning Hours to be delivered off-workstation;
  - The minimum entry conditions which will apply.
5. Further details of the requirements with which an Apprenticeship framework must comply at Levels 2, 3 and 4 are set out below.
6. In addition, an Apprenticeship framework must indicate the progression routes and significant opportunities open to an individual who has completed an Apprenticeship framework. Further details are set out below.

## Level 2 Apprenticeship Frameworks

### Qualifications Concerned with the Sector

7. An Apprenticeship framework must specify the qualification or qualifications which an apprentice must obtain. Any such qualifications specified in an Apprenticeship framework must be accredited by Ofqual, and must be qualifications which represent:
  - The competences required for performance in the particular occupation or job role;
  - The relevant technical theory concerning the occupation or job role, together with appropriate knowledge of the industry or market context.
8. An Apprenticeship framework must satisfy this requirement, either by specifying two qualifications, one concerned with competence, and the other with theory/knowledge, or by specifying a single accredited qualification spanning both elements. If the latter course is taken, an Apprenticeship framework must specify a single qualification that contains distinct units of competence on the one hand and units concerned with theory/knowledge on the other.
9. The method of assessment of the competence qualification (or of units of competence forming part of a composite qualification) will be determined by the relevant issuing authority, subject to accreditation by Ofqual. Assessment of the theory/knowledge qualifications (or of units of theory/knowledge forming part of a composite qualification) must be conducted through independent methods.\*
10. An Apprenticeship framework must designate the competence-based qualification as the 'principal qualification'. Where an Apprenticeship framework contains a single qualification spanning both the elements described in paragraph 1, the Apprenticeship framework must designate this qualification as the 'principal qualification'.
11. An Apprenticeship framework may specify a number of alternative qualifications or units to satisfy the requirements for qualifications concerned with competence and/or qualifications concerned with theory/knowledge.
12. The qualifications specified in the Apprenticeship framework must be qualifications which are accredited by Ofqual to at least Level 2 of the Qualifications and Credits Framework.

### Functional Skills

13. An Apprenticeship framework must specify that an apprentice is to attain Functional Skills qualifications in mathematics and English to at least Level 1. An Apprenticeship framework may require that an apprentice attains Functional Skills qualifications in mathematics and English at Level 2. Exemptions for those with Key Skills qualifications at the equivalent level in Application of Number and Communication (and their approved proxies†) achieved within the previous five years will be allowed for a transition period until 2016.
14. An Apprenticeship framework may require that an apprentice attains at least a Level 1 in the Functional Skill of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) where this Functional Skill is relevant to effective performance in the particular employment sector.

\*Carried out by assessors who do not have a vested interest in the outcome (Ofqual regulatory criteria, QCA 2004)

†The list of approved proxies is available from the QCA website at [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)

## **Employee Rights and Responsibilities (ERR)**

15. An Apprenticeship framework must specify the instruction which an apprentice must receive in the rights and responsibilities of employees in the occupation(s) to which the framework leads. This instruction must include instruction in the rights and responsibilities in the field of equal opportunities and in the field of health and safety, including the risks applying to those who are learning while at work and means of avoiding them.
16. An Apprenticeship framework may require that an apprentice's understanding in ERR must be assessed by means of a qualification. An Apprenticeship framework may integrate assessment and certification of ERR within the theory/knowledge qualification, within a single principal qualification, or provide for certification through a self-standing unit.

## **Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)**

17. An Apprenticeship framework must contain each of the six PLTS.\* The issuing authority must ensure that the level and amount of instruction and/or practice in the PLTS is consistent with the demands of employers in the sector. An Apprenticeship framework must specify how training on each of the six PLTS is to be delivered to the apprentice. Training on PLTS may be delivered by instruction and/or by practical experience, depending on the characteristics of the particular sector, and must be specified in the Apprenticeship framework.
18. An Apprenticeship framework may specify that training in the PLTS is to be included as part of training for the qualifications for competence and theory/knowledge, in the instruction for ERR or in other elements of the framework.
19. An Apprenticeship framework must indicate where the opportunities for learning of PLTS are located and must reference these opportunities to the relevant National Occupational Standards (NOS).
20. An Apprenticeship framework must specify the manner in which an apprentice receives feedback about their performance in the PLTS.
21. An Apprenticeship framework may require that an apprentice's performance in any or all of the PLTS be assessed for the purpose of a qualification or otherwise, and that a certain level of achievement in any or all of the PLTS is demanded for the purposes of the Apprenticeship certificate.

## **Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**

22. An Apprenticeship framework must specify the number of GLH that an apprentice is to receive per year, and this must be at a minimum of 280 GLH per year.

\*Independent enquiry, creative thinking, reflective learning, team working, self-management, and effective participation



## Off-Workstation Training

23. An Apprenticeship framework must specify the number of GLH delivered off-workstation that an apprentice is to receive across the duration of the Apprenticeship framework. This must be at a minimum of [250] guided learning hours , conducted at a separate physical location to that in which an apprentice's work normally takes place. This may include periods of study which take place in an employer's premises (for example in a company training room), but may not include periods of private, unsupervised study.
24. An Apprenticeship framework may provide for particular qualifications to be conducted wholly or mainly through off-workstation study, but the obligation for off-workstation provision need not be satisfied only through study towards a qualification.

## Entry Conditions

25. An Apprenticeship framework must specify any minimum conditions for entry into the apprenticeship. An Apprenticeship framework may state, as entry conditions:
  - those prior qualifications which the issuing authority considers form a necessary basis for achievement in any element of the Apprenticeship framework;
  - any age which an apprentice must have attained and which is required by law for work in significant parts of the employment sector to which the Apprenticeship framework relates.

## Progression Routes

26. An Apprenticeship framework must include a description of the likely progression routes into an Apprenticeship framework in that sector and significant opportunities open to a person who has completed an Apprenticeship framework in that sector, including in particular:
  - The relationship between Diplomas (and units within a Diploma) and Apprenticeships and opportunities for progression from Apprenticeships to Diplomas;
  - The occupations or job roles which that person might reasonably expect to be regarded as qualified to undertake;
  - Advanced Apprenticeship frameworks within the sector which the completion of an Apprenticeship qualifies a person to enter;
  - Avenues of career progression which are recognised within the sector and which are available either through training with sector employers or through further or higher education.

## **Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeships**

### **Qualifications Concerned with the Sector**

27. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework, save that:

- Paragraph 12 does not apply. Instead the qualifications specified in the Advanced Apprenticeship framework must be qualifications which are accredited by Ofqual to at least Level 3 of the QCF;
- Additionally, an Advanced Apprenticeship framework may include as theory/knowledge qualifications, or units, any qualifications which are known to give access to higher education programmes relevant to the sector.

### **Functional Skills**

28. An Advanced Apprenticeship framework must specify that an apprentice is required to attain Functional Skills qualifications in mathematics and English at Level 2. Exemptions for those with Key Skills at the equivalent level in Application of Number and Communication (and their approved proxies\*) achieved within the previous five years will be allowed for a transition period until 2016.
29. An Advanced Apprenticeship framework may require that an apprentice attains at Level 2 in the Functional Skill of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) where this Functional Skill is relevant to the effective performance in the particular employment sector.

### **Employee Rights and Responsibilities (ERR)**

30. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework.

### **Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)**

31. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework.

### **Off-Workstation Training**

32. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework [although we are consulting on whether the minimum requirement for off-workstation training should be set at a higher level for Advanced and Higher Apprenticeship frameworks than for Level 2 Apprenticeship frameworks].

### **Entry Conditions**

33. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework.

### **Progression Routes**

34. Paragraph 26 does not apply. Instead, an Advanced Apprenticeship framework must indicate significant opportunities likely to be open to a person who has completed an Advanced Apprenticeship, including in particular:
- The occupations or job-roles which that person might reasonably expect to be regarded as qualified to undertake;
  - Avenues of career progression which are recognised within the sector and which are available either through training with sector employers or through further or higher education.

\*The list of approved proxies is available from the QCA website

35. An Advanced Apprenticeship framework must specify Level 2 Apprenticeship frameworks which, on completion, allow progression into the Advanced Apprenticeship framework.
36. Where UCAS applies a tariff to qualifications in an Advanced Apprenticeship framework, the Advanced Apprenticeship framework must state how many points UCAS has awarded.

## **Level 4 Higher Apprenticeships**

### **Qualifications Concerned with the Sector**

37. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework, save that:
- Paragraph 12 does not apply. Instead the qualifications specified in the Higher Apprenticeship framework must be qualifications which are accredited by Ofqual to at least Level 4 of the QCF;
  - Additionally, a Higher Apprenticeship framework may include as theory/knowledge qualifications, or units, any qualifications which are known to give access to higher education programmes relevant to the sector.

### **Functional Skills**

38. Requirements are as for a Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship framework.

### **Employee Rights and Responsibilities (ERR)**

39. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework.

### **Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)**

40. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework.

### **Off-Workstation Training**

41. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework [although we are consulting on whether the minimum requirement for off-workstation training should be set at a higher level for Advanced and Higher Apprenticeship frameworks than for Level 2 Apprenticeship frameworks].

### **Entry Conditions**

42. Requirements are as for a Level 2 Apprenticeship framework.

### **Progression Routes**

43. Requirements are as for a Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship framework.

