

AfC's process for performing initial assessments of apprentices' prior learning

1. Purpose and Context

AfC must assess the individual's prior learning to establish the 'starting point', or baseline, of the apprentice. This informs how much of the apprenticeship training content the individual requires. It checks that the apprenticeship is an appropriate training programme for the individual.

Initial assessment checks that the apprenticeship (both the job role and the training) is an appropriate programme for the individual. Apprentices should not be spending paid time doing training they do not need, and the apprentice will not have a positive experience if they are repeating training. Apprenticeship funding should not be used to pay for, or accredit, existing knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Ofsted inspectors consider the 'distance travelled' by the apprentice in determining the value added by the training programme. Without knowing the starting point of an apprentice, inspectors cannot correctly assess the distance travelled and the quality of the apprenticeship training that has been delivered. Training providers must evidence a robust initial assessment, clear milestones and progress against these.

The initial assessment checks how much of the apprenticeship programme the individual requires to reach occupational competency. Assuming there is some relevant prior learning, the training provider must assess whether the individual still needs an apprenticeship with a minimum duration of 12 months with at least 20% off-the-job training. In some circumstances, this amount of training will not be necessary for the individual so the learner is ineligible for the apprenticeship programme and an alternative should be considered.

2. What constitutes prior learning?

In recognising prior learning, the following should be considered against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard or framework:

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

3. How is prior learning assessed?

To assess prior learning, AfC staff must consider the following:

- What is the learners' goal and what are they trying to achieve?
- Is the framework or standard relevant and does their job role support this?
- Where are they currently against this goal?
- How much of the content is new to them?
- Do they require significant and sustained new learning?
- Prior English and maths attainment and the result of the Functional Skills initial assessment

4. AfC Model of assessing prior learning and attainment

Models for assessing prior learning vary, but AfC must use the following model to assess prior learning and academic attainment for each apprentice:

- Before the learner commences their apprenticeship framework or standard a check must be carried out to review their Personal Learning Record (PLR). This will outline prior academic achievements and allow AfC staff to review the individual's previous qualification(s) against their chosen apprenticeship.
- Learners must complete a Functional Skill initial assessment in English and maths using the BKSb platform. The results will indicate their level of ability and indicates additional learning needs.
- Where appropriate, learners will then carry out diagnostic assessments in English and maths using the BKSb platform to identify specific subject areas requiring support.
- Each framework and standard has its own skills scan. This document must be completed by the learner and their manager prior to starting the course. The skills scan looks specifically at the knowledge, skills and behaviours of their chosen apprenticeship, and should be used to assess course suitability as well as being a tool used to make reductions where appropriate in the level of funding for each apprenticeship. The scan will identify any skills gaps which must also be considered and addressed by the AfC assessor/trainer.
- The trainer should carry out a professional discussion with the apprentice and line manager to discuss their knowledge, skills and behaviours gained in their current or previous roles against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship. The completed skills scan should be referred to and the ILP (Individual Learning Plan) updated accordingly.
- Once the PLR, skills scan and professional discussion have all been completed, a final decision must be presented to the AfC Manager where the assessment will be agreed and a decision made against the appropriate level of funding and study.