

Initial Assessment Policy and Procedure

Aims and Objectives of the Policy

Aims

Achieve Training is committed to ensuring that learners are assessed prior to commencement of their apprenticeship to ensure suitability.

Objectives

- To assess learners' prior learning, Function Skills and understanding to ensure eligibility for the chosen apprenticeship.
- To carry out initial assessment to ensure that learners are on the most appropriate programme and therefore gather information to support the learners' experience.
- To identify the most appropriate referral for any individuals that has been identified as not suitable for an apprenticeship.
- To use the most appropriate methods of assessment based on the individual circumstances and targeted training course.
- To fully understand the individuals' personal circumstances in key areas.
- To keep the individual fully informed throughout the initial assessment.
- To ensure learner and employers are able to offer skills development in relevant areas.

Range and scope of the policy

The range of the policy covers all apprenticeship related courses offered within Achieve Training but may well apply to other vocationally related courses should they become a part of the curriculum in future.

Procedure

Initial assessment focuses on key areas to ensure that we can provide the most appropriate training for the learner. The learner shall discuss with their employer and Trainer Assessor to determine their individual requirements and also undertake assessment to their literacy and numeracy levels, cognitive function and career aspirations. The results of the initial assessment shall be recorded and discussed with the learner to ensure they understand the process and outcomes.

The key areas of assessment:-

| Careers Preferences and Suitability | Qualifications, Prior learning and Experience | Aptitude and Potential | Prior Learning |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Induction book • Skillscan • Career development plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Induction book • Skillscan • Certificates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • ForSkills • CognAssist • Skillscan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Induction book • Skillscan • Employer confirmation • Certificates |

| Learning Style | Basic/Key Skills | Learning Difficulties |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ForSkills • CognAssist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • ForSkills • CognAssist • Certificates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • ForSkills • CognAssist • Education and Health Care Plan |

| Occupational and Personal Interest | Personal Effectiveness and Commitment | Personal Circumstances |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career development plan • Discussion • Induction book | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Induction book | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Induction book |

*Each of the key areas of initial assessment identifies elements that must be considered when determining an individual's suitability/ability for learning.

Discussion:- this will take place with the learner to establish information about a learner's prior qualifications and achievements this can provide an indication of their general level of ability and strengths in certain subject areas may inform their choice of career. Alongside the initial assessment results this can help in deciding which programme is most appropriate and whether the level of the planned programme and qualifications are appropriate. Information of existing qualifications may indicate weaknesses in particular areas. For example, the absence of or low grades in GCSE maths and English, may suggest basic skills needs which require further investigation during initial assessment. The purpose of establishing a learner's prior experience and learning is to ensure that he or she does not waste time in repeating learning in an area which they are already competent.

Some learners have personal problems which could be addressed during this initial discussion. Homelessness, behavioural difficulties, medical conditions etc. need to be identified at the earliest opportunity so ways can be jointly found to either overcome the problem or find alternative solutions.

Skillscan:- this document is used in discussion with the learners and employers who are undertaking frameworks.

This outlines the Mandatory and Optional units for a particular occupational sector. The Skillscan lists all of the units, the level and the credit value. During the discussion with the learner and the learners manager, completing the Skillscan will identify whether new learning will need to take place or Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA) or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) could be used. The units chosen will identify new learning and anything that is specific to the learner's new/current role.

Induction Book (Standards):- During sign up the employer, learner and trainer assessor all complete an induction booklet. It is at this stage that the learning preferences of the learner are identified, highlighting how they like to learn and any potential barriers they may have to learning. They also discuss their overall career goal and each element of the qualification to ensure that this is right for them. They also explore the Maths, English and IT elements covered within the qualification (not functional skills) in terms of what is expected of them and levels required to complete the qualification. Under each element of the qualification the employer is asked to confirm that the learner will be allowed the opportunity to experience each of the knowledge, skills and behaviour required. In addition, the learner must score against each element of the Standard to confirm their levels of prior knowledge and current skills and ability to tailor their training programme to meet their individual needs. All elements of the standard are discussed and any components that make up the qualification established in terms of development need. Inclusive of functional skills or mandated qualifications. Upon completion of the induction booklet the learner, employer and trainer assessor all confirm their commitment and can explore any other areas of personal development that could be incorporated into the training.

ForSkills:- ForSkills is an online assessment tool which all learners undertake to assess current levels of literacy and numeracy skills, whilst identifying any possible additional learning needs in this area. Whilst this assessment tool is a starting point for all learners, it also creates a journey of learning specifically targeting areas of development to support each learner to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. It provides an indication for the learner if they have the correct levels to complete their desired apprenticeship or support to sign post to alternative provision to support with these elements. Their ForSkills account will remain with them whilst they are a learner at Achieve Training so the full journey can be tracked.

Cognassist:-By identifying and supporting neurodiversity, we will ensure that neurodiverse apprentices have the opportunity to achieve the same success as their peers. CognAssist works by quickly and easily identifying learners with hidden additional learning needs, assessing those needs and providing a robust report evidencing those needs. The first objective is to determine the needs of the individual. This allows us to filter learners and discover who needs support and who doesn't. All learners will complete an assessment and questionnaire. In just five minutes, we identify whether the individual is likely to require support for additional learning needs or not. If the likelihood is above average, they'll take an assessment. The assessment takes 30 minutes and investigates eight cognitive domains, which affect thinking and learning. Once complete the software crunches the data and identifies if the individual has an additional learning need within any of the Domains which are:

1. Verbal Memory
2. Non-Verbal Memory
3. Literacy
4. Numeracy
5. Visual information processing speed
6. Executive Function
7. Verbal Reasoning
8. Non-Verbal Reasoning

Following the assessment, a bespoke learning library is populated for all individuals identified as having an additional learning support. This library will be tailored to their specific needs. Learners have access to this learning library, through a portal which provides interactive delivery sessions to support them with any needs identified following the initial assessment. This will be completed throughout their programme of learning.

On-Programme Learning and Progress:

The measurement of progress within apprenticeship delivery is continuous and individualised throughout – each qualification has a specification that provides the trainer/assessor with an assessment plan

This list of criteria for each Apprenticeship is then added to Quals Direct – each trainer/assessor then uses a '3-tick' approach (taught/shown learning/reinforced) to determine whether an apprentice has met the criteria and is competent. The trainer/assessor will use a range of assessment methods and evidence tasks (i.e. observations, reviews, Q&A's, witness testimonies, projects) in order to make this decision.

With the removal of qualifications in a number of apprenticeships additional progress indicators have been introduced to the on-programme delivery to measure and record progress and achievement against the knowledge, skills and behaviour criteria (plus any qualification criteria if this is relevant) at key times during the apprentice journey, to ensure that the full occupational profile and learning required is achieved.

Whilst the frequency and use of the indicators will vary by standard and by apprentice, they will include:

- **Progress Reviews** – three-way reviews that happen every 3 months that provide an overall picture of the apprentices progress;
- **Trainer/Assessor Observations** –planned and graded formal observations to assess the competence levels of the apprentice’s skills and behaviours against the standard criteria. This is repeated a number of times during the on-programme journey to record and measure an apprentices progression;
- **Employer Observations or Witness Testimonies** –observations by the employer to assess the competence levels of the apprentice’s skills and behaviours. Again this is repeated a number of times during the on-programme journey to record and measure an apprentices progression;
- **Milestone Checks & Analysis Tools** – reflections points scheduled by the trainer/assessor to review the apprentices’ readiness towards the gateway and end point assessment. This is supplemented by the use of analysis tools such as SWOT, PESTLE, 360 degree feedback to inform the apprentices PDP;
- **Self-Assessment** – following the induction, this is then repeated in the middle of the on-programme delivery and again towards the end. The apprentice will again rate themselves with agreement from their employer and the trainer/assessor on a scale of 1-10 as to how confident they are that they meet the knowledge, skills and behaviour criteria.
- **Off The Job Learning** – an agreed plan before the start of the programme as to how the 20% will be covered, the type of activity that the apprentice will be involved in, and the role that the employer and trainer/assessor will take;
- **Additional learning** – any additional training requests from the apprentice and/or employer (i.e. CSCS, first aid, ICT)