



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

**SPECIFICATION OF
APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS
FOR ENGLAND (SASE)**

GUIDANCE

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Skills Funding
Agency



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for Education



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Introduction

1. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act introduced the *Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE)*. The SASE sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised English Apprenticeship framework.
2. The *SASE-Guidance* includes guidance on meeting the SASE requirements. English Issuing Authorities must have regard to the SASE-Guidance in reaching a decision on whether a framework submission complies with the SASE.
3. The changes to requirements for English and maths (and ICT where appropriate) will come into effect on 6 April 2015 and will only apply to new starts on Apprenticeship frameworks from this date.

Intermediate and Advanced Level Apprenticeship Frameworks

ASCL Reference	
<p>4. The SASE specifies that an Apprenticeship framework must consist of a minimum of 37 credits on the QCF (except where a framework specifies a Foundation degree or HND or HNC for which there is no QCF credit value). The framework developer will decide the balance of credits between competence and knowledge. However, there must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence of a minimum of 10 credits achieved through a competence qualification or competence element of an integrated qualification at the level of the framework, which specifically relates to the occupation or job role, and is based on the National Occupational Standards (NOS) from the employment sector for which the framework is designed; and • Clear evidence of a minimum of 10 credits from a knowledge-based qualification or knowledge-based element of an integrated qualification, at least at the level of the framework, and which provides the technical skills and knowledge/understanding of the theoretical concepts specifically relating to the occupation or job role. This element must equip the apprentice with knowledge and understanding of the industry and its market. 	Section 27 (2)

Higher Apprenticeship Frameworks

	ASCL Reference
<p>5. The SASE specifies that a Higher Apprenticeship framework at Level 4 and Level 5 must have a minimum credit value of 90 credits and that a Higher Apprenticeship framework at Level 6 and Level 7 must have a minimum credit value of 120 credits on the QCF and / or through the award of a FHEQ qualification and / or professional qualification.</p> <p>6. Higher Apprenticeships should be developed in partnership with the relevant professional body or bodies (where they exist) and that successful completion of such an Apprenticeship is a recognised pathway to professional registration.</p>	Section 27 (2)

Qualifications – Competence and Knowledge

Intermediate and Advanced Level Apprenticeships

	ASCL Reference
<p>7. Apprenticeships consist of a competence element and a knowledge element which, for the majority of existing Apprenticeship frameworks, have had separate 'competence' and 'knowledge' qualifications. Whilst historically these were known as NVQs and technical certificates, framework developers are not confined to these qualifications. Furthermore, the QCF has brought increased opportunity for combining units from qualifications which were previously separate. The SASE allows for the elements to be combined in a single integrated qualification. The SASE defines the competence element as the practical competencies required for a specific occupation or job role. The knowledge element is defined as the technical skills and theory specifically relating to the occupation or job role, together with the knowledge and understanding</p>	Section 27 (2)

ASCL Reference	
of the industry and its market.	
<p>8. Where the knowledge and competence elements are combined and accredited as a single integrated qualification, the two elements must be separately identified and separately assessed. It is important to retain this distinctiveness between the two elements to ensure that apprentices not only demonstrate the competence to do the job, but also develop the underpinning technical skills, knowledge and understanding of the wider industry and market. This distinction between the competence and knowledge elements allows for individuals to gain credit towards an Apprenticeship through prior participation in other programmes.</p>	Section 27 (2)
<p>9. Where an Apprenticeship framework includes separate competence and knowledge qualifications, the competence qualification must be nominated as the 'Competencies Qualification'. Where there is an integrated qualification, this will be the 'Competencies Qualification'. Under the standard completion conditions of the ASCL Act, this is the qualification which must be completed while the apprentice is undertaking the Apprenticeship. However, the certifying authority has discretion to issue a certificate to apprentices who have completed the 'Competencies Qualification' prior to the Apprenticeship. It is important that the 'Competencies Qualification' is, or includes, the competence elements as these are the skills which are practised and refined during the course of normal work activities, on employers' premises, using their tools and with real pressures and customers.</p>	Section 27 (2)
<p>10. An Apprenticeship framework may offer a choice of qualifications by including a range of different competence, knowledge and integrated qualifications that may be chosen. Different apprentices may be suited to different types of qualifications, all of which must fulfil the</p>	Section 27 (2)

ASCL Reference	
requirements set out in the previous paragraphs.	

Higher Apprenticeships

<p>11. Higher Apprenticeships consist of a competence element and a knowledge element which can be separate ‘competence’ and ‘knowledge’ qualifications or an integrated qualification. These can be qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and/or Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and/or a professional qualification as recognised by the sector.</p> <p>12. Not all Professional Qualifications have a credit value. Arrangements, however, exist whereby a Professional Body must seek to have the credit level and credit value of a qualification authenticated or accredited by a Higher Education Institution (HEI). Partnerships can also be developed with Awarding Organisations.</p>	Section 27 (2) (a)
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Functional Skills / GCSE / Other Alternatives

	ASCL Reference
13. This applies to Intermediate and Advanced Level Apprenticeships only.	Section 27 (1)
14. Functional Skills qualifications, GCSE qualifications and other alternatives provide young people and adults with the transferable skills in English, maths and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to help them adapt and learn throughout their working life and in a changing economy. A framework developer may opt to allow qualifications achieved prior to the Apprenticeship to meet the requirements for English, maths or ICT. These qualifications and the timeframes in which they must have been achieved are set out in the <i>SASE</i> . Developers of Intermediate Level frameworks can choose whether to set the requirement for Functional Skills at Level 1 or Level 2, and GCSEs at minimum grade E or minimum grade C. The framework developer should be proactive in considering the scope to set the threshold at Level 2 or minimum grade C. Issuing Authorities should consider with the framework developer whether there is scope to set the threshold for an Intermediate Level framework at Level 2 or minimum grade C.	Section 27 (1)
15. The framework developer, in consultation with employers in the sector and other relevant partners, should determine whether ICT is directly relevant to effective performance in either the particular occupation or the sector specified in the framework. Where ICT is directly relevant to effective performance in either the occupation or the sector, the Apprenticeship framework must specify achievement of an ICT qualification in line with <i>SASE</i> . Where the framework developer has not included ICT in the framework, the Issuing Authority should be proactive in challenging the framework	Section 27 (1)

ASCL Reference	
developer on the rationale for non-inclusion.	
16. To promote progression, where an individual has achieved a qualification at Level 1 or equivalent in either mathematics, English or ICT (if the framework requires this), the apprentice should study for a GCSE or Functional Skills qualification at Level 2 as part of an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship. Under current funding arrangements apprentices can be funded to achieve either GCSE qualifications or Functional Skills qualifications at Level 2 in English, mathematics and ICT.	Section 27 (1)

Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)

ASCL Reference	
17. This applies to Intermediate and Advanced Level Apprenticeships only.	Section 27 (1)
<p>18. Frameworks must specify the outcomes which an apprentice is to achieve in the six PLTS listed below and how they are to be evidenced. Achievement of PLTS must be based on evidence that is subject to quality assurance. The six PLTS and their outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent enquiry - apprentices can process and evaluate information in their investigations, planning what to do and how to go about it. They take informed and well-reasoned decisions, recognising that others have different beliefs and attitudes; • Creative thinking – apprentices think creatively by generating and exploring ideas, making original connections. They try different ways to tackle a problem, working with others to find imaginative solutions and outcomes that are of 	Section 27 (1)

ASCL Reference	
<p>value;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective learning – apprentices evaluate their strengths and limitations, setting themselves realistic goals with criteria for success. They monitor their own performance and progress, inviting feedback from others and making changes to further their learning; • Team working – apprentices work confidently with others, adapting to different contexts and taking responsibility for their own part. They listen to and take account of different views. They form collaborative relationships, resolving issues to reach agreed outcomes; • Self management – apprentices organise themselves, showing personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise with a commitment to learning and self-improvement. They actively embrace change, responding positively to new priorities, coping with challenges and looking for opportunities; • Effective participation - apprentices actively engage with issues that affect them and those around them. They play a full part in the life of their school, college, workplace or wider community by taking responsible action to bring improvements for others as well as themselves. 	
<p>19. PLTS must be formally assessed. However, there is flexibility for the framework developer to determine the method of delivery and assessment, how and where PLTS will be located in the framework and whether PLTS should be accredited. The location of PLTS within an Apprenticeship framework must explicitly identified and clearly signposted. The framework developer, in consultation with employers in the sector and other relevant partners, will determine the extent, level and location of PLTS within frameworks. Where PLTS are referenced to NOS, maximum flexibility must be allowed in the interpretation of the NOS to avoid discrimination against those</p>	<p>Section 27 (1)</p>

ASCL Reference	
<p>with a learning difficulty. For example, care should be taken to ensure that interpretation of references to “speaking and listening” are inclusive, as far as possible, of those with speech and hearing difficulties.</p>	
<p>20. Assessment of PLTS may be through formative assessment and/or through formal summative assessment. Whichever method(s) is chosen, assessment and recognition of PLTS should be in line with the principles set out below:</p> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the PLTS assessment must be manageable for apprentices and training providers; • Formative assessment may be used to provide feedback on an apprentice’s performance in the PLTS; • Summative assessment must be used to determine achievement of PLTS within component accredited qualifications; • Any particular and/or additional sector requirements for assessing PLTS should be developed as part of the process for planning and designing Apprenticeship frameworks. <p>Recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLTS achievement should be formally recognised. How best to recognise PLTS achievement should be part of the Apprenticeship planning process and parameters identified and agreed between the SSC, employers, SSBs, other relevant sector bodies and, where appropriate, Awarding Organisations; • The recognition process should be relevant and meaningful to the apprentice; 	<p>Section 27 (1)</p>

ASCL Reference	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of PLTS should be based on evidence that is subject to quality assurance. 	

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

ASCL Reference	
21. This applies to Intermediate and Advanced Level Apprenticeships only.	Section 27 (1)
22. To comply with the Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA), Apprenticeship frameworks must include a minimum of 280 GLH per year. All GLH specified in the framework must be delivered within contracted working hours. The framework should be flexible enough to allow apprentices with mental or physical health conditions, and who may not have a standard working pattern, to complete the required number of GLH within contracted working hours.	Section 27 (1)
23. The framework will also include guided learning which encourages and enables the apprentice to demonstrate practical job-related skills and to practise and apply these skills in the context of the job. This type of learning will be delivered in the workplace and through practical experience of doing the job. It is referred to in the <i>SASE</i> as “on-the-job” guided learning.	Section 27 (1)
24. The framework will also include guided learning which encourages and enables the apprentice to demonstrate practical job-related skills and to practise and apply these skills in the context of the job. This type of learning will be delivered in the workplace and through practical experience of doing the job. It is referred to in the <i>SASE</i> as “on-the-job” guided learning.	Section 27 (1)

ASCL Reference	
<p>25. An Apprenticeship framework must specify that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLH achieve clear and specific outcomes which contribute directly to the successful achievement of the framework and that this may include accredited and non-accredited elements of the framework; • GLH are planned, reviewed and evaluated jointly between the apprentice and a tutor, teacher, mentor or manager; • GLH allows access as and when required by the apprentice either to a tutor, teacher, mentor or manager; • GLH are delivered during contracted working hours; • GLH are delivered through one or more of the following methods: individual and group teaching; e-learning; distance learning; coaching; mentoring; feedback & assessment; collaborative/networked learning with peers; guided study. 	Section 27 (1)
<p>26. An Apprenticeship framework must specify that, for the purposes of issuing a completion certificate GLH must be completed while undertaking <i>apprenticeship training</i> as defined in the ASCL Act in respect of an Apprenticeship Framework. However, GLH completed in relation to accredited components of the framework achieved prior to that <i>apprenticeship training</i> may count towards the GLH requirement for the framework.</p>	Section 27 (1)

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 5000

If you require this publication in an alternative format, email enquiries@bis.gsi.gov.uk, or call 020 7215 5000.

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