

IAG, INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND INDUCTION POLICY

All learners applying for a programme of learning with JS Consult have an entitlement to impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) at every stage of their learning journey.

Information, Advice and Guidance is provided:

- **Before entry to learning** – choosing a programme with JS Consult that is most suited to the learners needs particularly in terms of location, content, level, delivery style, costs, qualification, entry requirements, support available, etc. If not, they are signposted to another provider or college.
- **At induction** – key information and advice related to programme, learning contract, options for course change if required, complaints procedure, etc. Ensuring that they eligible to be funded and to participate on their relevant course. All learners complete the BKSb online-paper based initial assessment to identify correct level of entry and programme.
- **On programme** – advice on learner support available, possible progression/ employment routes. This is particularly important during all Learner Progress Reviews.
- **On exit** – further learning or employment information, etc. Progression to other courses with JS Consult, other providers-college or work.
- **At any time** – referral to the relevant partner - College or any another organisation for advice on careers, work and learning that may be outside the scope of what JS Consult is able to provide.

We are committed to providing high quality IAG to existing and potential learners. We will also recognize our own limitations and refer enquirers to our partner Colleges and/or other external agencies and services when the required IAG cannot be provided by us. All JS Consult staff are expected to adhere to the highest professional standards in the provision of IAG and embrace the principles of the Code of Ethics.

- Monitor the effectiveness and improve the quality of IAG via:
- Customer; staff and employer feedback
- Partner - College feedback
- Analysis of referral information
- Analysis of Initial Learner Profiles, ILP's, career aspirations and Learner Progress Reviews
- Analysis of outcomes for learners
- Annual review, renewal & update of information materials

Embed IAG in quality assurance, staff development and training and the performance review/appraisal processes.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT (IA) AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

The purpose of this process is to inform employers and apprentices about the need for, and importance of, initial assessment (IA) and recognition of prior learning (RPL) - specifically:

Key points:

1. Recognition of prior learning extends beyond English, Maths and existing qualifications;
2. All the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard should be considered in reviewing the prior learning of the apprentice;

3. Recognition of prior learning is part of the learner eligibility assessment;
4. Apprenticeships could be poor value for money and unnecessarily long if training covers areas that the apprentice already knows, and public funding should not be used for learning which is not new;
5. Initial assessment is vital to ensure high-quality apprenticeships and Ofsted inspections look for evidence of a robust initial assessment.

This process provides additional information to support initial assessment of prior learning in accordance with the policy intent and the apprenticeship funding rules.

WHAT IS AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT?

Before an apprenticeship begins, JS Consult will 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.

WHY IS INITIAL ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT?

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 good 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. JS Consult must evidence a robust initial assessment, clear milestones and progress against these.

ELIGIBILITY CHECKS

The initial assessment checks how much of the apprenticeship programme the individual requires to reach occupational competency. Assuming there is some relevant prior learning, JS Consult 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.

WHAT COUNTS AS 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

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT?

JS Consult is responsible for:

- Assessing the prior learning of the individual before the apprenticeship can begin;

- Agreeing with the employer how the programme will be delivered to reflect any relevant existing knowledge, skills and behaviours; and
- Recording prior learning in the evidence pack and commitment statement

HOW IS PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSED?

The ESFA does not mandate how JS Consult assesses or determines prior learning, just that it must be done, and the findings taken account of. The relevant apprenticeship framework or standard should normally be used as the basis for initial assessment, i.e.:

- What is the goal and what is the apprentice trying to achieve?
- Where are they currently against this goal?
- How much of the content is new to them?
- Do they require significant and sustained new learning?

Models for assessing prior learning vary, but some good examples could include:

- A professional discussion with the apprentice to discuss knowledge, skills and behaviours gained in previous roles against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship; and
- Evidence of competency at a lower level, indicating the individual is ready for progression.

HOW SHOULD PRIOR LEARNING BE RECORDED?

The ESFA does not mandate how prior learning should be recorded, only that the initial assessment must be documented in the evidence pack and summarised on the commitment statement. Initial assessment is subject to audit checks and funds may be recovered where initial assessment has not taken place, has not been evidenced or a price reduction has not been made to reflect the prior learning.

FUNDING NEGOTIATIONS

The funding band of the apprenticeship is based on an apprentice requiring the full content of the apprenticeship, and in the case of standards this means all the listed knowledge, skills and behaviours.

The ESFA funding rules state that the apprenticeship content, duration and price must be reduced where the individual has relevant prior learning. Prior learning must be factored into the price that is negotiated between the provider and the employer: apprenticeship funding must not be used to pay for, or certify, the delivery of existing knowledge, skills and behaviours as this represents poor value for money.

There are audit checks to ensure a price reduction has been made to account for prior learning and the reduced training content required. To meet the ESFA funding rules, the training element within the apprenticeship must have a minimum duration of 12 months with at least 20% off-the-job training.

LINK TO A 12 MONTH MINIMUM DURATION AND OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING?

Where there is prior learning, the content and duration of the apprenticeship must be reduced to reflect this. The new (reduced) duration must still meet the minimum threshold of 12 months. At least 20% of the paid hours for the new (reduced) duration must be spent on off-the-job training.

APPLYING TO BE ON THE REGISTER OF APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROVIDERS?

The ESFA apprenticeship funding rules require main training providers and employer providers to take account of prior learning. As part of the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) application processes, main providers and employer providers must submit their policy on how they will perform initial assessments of apprentice' prior learning.

SUMMARY

Preparation for Initial Assessment:

1. Has the employer specified an apprenticeship standard for the individual?
2. Has JS Consult made the learner aware that relevant prior learning can count towards the apprenticeship and asked the learner to consider relevant information against the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) set out in the apprenticeship?

Initial Assessment:

1. Has JS Consult assessed the individual's work experience, prior education, training or associated qualifications in a related sector subject area against the KSBs set out in the apprenticeship?
2. Has JS Consult set out the individual's baseline level of competency against the KSBs to determine the remaining content required?

Decision required at Initial Assessment

1. Assuming some existing prior learning, has JS Consult assessed whether the individual still meets the eligibility criteria of requiring significant and sustained new training (a minimum duration of 12 months with at least 20% off-the-job training)?

If not, the individual is not eligible for an apprenticeship and an alternative programme should be found.

Following Initial Assessment and a decision that the learner is eligible for apprenticeship:

1. Has JS Consult documented prior learning in the evidence pack and summarised this in the commitment statement?
2. Has JS Consult and the employer agreed how the programme will be delivered (including the cost) to reflect the learner's existing KSBs?
3. Has JS Consult set out key milestones for the apprentice so their progress can be reviewed against this?
4. Has JS Consult assessed the apprenticeship training material against the job role to ensure sufficient opportunities for the apprentice to consolidate their learning in the workplace?

INTRODUCTION

Inductions onto any of our training programmes are vital in giving the learner the best start, as it is this induction that sets the 'tone' of the whole journey that they will undertake with JS Consult. From the Information Advice and Guidance provided at all stages, through to the Additional Learning Support they may require in order to achieve their goals and progress at the desired pace.

APPROVED STAFF

Only staff approved by the Director and Compliance & Operations Manager may carry out inductions to JS Consult learners using the approved presentation and paperwork. This will ensure that every learner receives the same quality information in order for them to make an informed decision as to the appropriateness of the training proposed.

PROCESS

The potential learner is identified either by us during a recruitment drive or by external partners such as the Job Centre. For some programmes pre-screening will be required e.g. for drug and alcohol use and/or a criminal records check, as this is required by the industry. The time, date and venue of the induction is communicated by our administrative staff to the potential learners and they are informed of any supporting documentation that they are required to bring to the induction, so that the correct information about funding can be provided. Only learners invited, pre-screened and provided with a ULN will be inducted. Then the member of JS Consult staff will undertake the Initial Assessment for Literacy and Numeracy. It is this IA along with any additional information provided about learning difficulties or disabilities that will inform JS Consult as to the suitability of the potential learner to their chosen programme and will identify if additional learning support is required.

Under no circumstance is the learner to be left unsupervised whilst they are carrying out the initial assessment, and it must be administered as a formal test/exam would be. This is essential to get an accurate score to enable JS Consult to do our very best for the learner. Due to the nature of some of the qualifications offered by JS Consult, we have to have a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy. Their supplied documentation is copied by our staff and it is included with the induction paperwork so that eligibility can be checked prior to them being offered a start position on our training programme.

Under no circumstance is any learner to start a programme of training with JS Consult until they have undertaken an approved induction and their needs assessed.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following changes to Government updates and statutory guidance in relation to Covid-19 and company risk assessment policies and processes.