



Short guide for employers  
Initial Assessments to  
recognise prior learning and  
Experience

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## **The importance of recognising prior learning and experience**

Apprentices should not receive training on the knowledge, skills and behaviours they have already acquired through prior qualifications, training or work experience.

The apprenticeship should be about learning new capabilities which support them to become competent in their job.

The benefits to employers when the prior learning and experience of their apprentices is correctly recognised, include:

**Shortened or accelerated apprenticeships** – This could mean a reduction in time spent by the apprentice away from their ‘day job’ and the time taken to become occupationally competent.

The apprenticeship must still meet the minimum duration (12 months 1 day) and off the job training requirements (6 hours per week) after prior learning and experience has been applied.

**Supports progression** – from other skills offers, such as

- T Level’s
- Occupational Traineeships and Skills Bootcamps

Details of potential progression pathways –

<https://occupational-maps.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>

**Motivated and engaged apprentices** - By having a tailored training plan that gives them the most effect and direct route to occupational competency.

**Make the most of apprenticeship funding** – By reducing the price (from the funding band maximum) to reflect the cost of the omitted training content.

The employer can still negotiate a further reduction to the price at this point e.g. where they have a large cohort of apprentices on the same training programme.

## **Prior learning and experience’s impact on eligibility for apprentices**

To be eligible for funding there must be the equivalent of at least 6 hours per week of off the job training once any unnecessary training content has been removed from the training plan.

There must also be a minimum of 12 months duration remaining.

Employers, with the help of the provider can support apprentices in circumstances where they are ineligible for funding.

There may be a higher-level apprenticeship they could complete or a different programme that is better suited to their skills and career aspirations.

### **Reducing the cost of the apprenticeship due to prior learning and experience.**

The outcome of the assessment of prior learning and experience provides a baseline for the provider, with input from the employer, to create a tailored plan for the apprentice.

Where the content and the duration of the training plan has been reduced, providers must reduce the price of the apprenticeship from the funding bands maximum of that standard, using the calculation in the funding rules:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>

This calculation reflects the delivery costs of the hours removed from the training plan

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-recognition-of-prior-learning>

### **Supporting apprentices to prepare for initial assessment**

Employers should make sure the apprentice:

Understands the requirement of the occupational standard they will work towards

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

Is aware that their relevant prior learning and experience can reduce the training they need, with the potential to become occupationally competent more quickly.

Is aware of the Guide for Apprentices: Initial Assessment to Recognise Prior Learning

Is ready to undertake a skills scan, provide evidence of prior qualifications and or training and have a follow-up discussion with the training provider about their prior learning and experience and how they meet, or partially meet, the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the occupational standard.

## **Employers' involvement in the recognition of prior learning process**

The provider conducts the assessment of prior learning and experience, documents the findings in the training plan, and uses the assessment to develop the apprentices tailored training programme.

However, the employer and the apprentice must play active roles in ensuring assessment accurately reflects the apprentices prior learning and experience that the training programme is adjusted accordingly and that this is recorded in the training plan.

Employers should:

- Read and understand the provider's initial assessment and recognition of prior learning policy and process
- Involve the right people in their organisation; those responsible for recruitment or induction may now know more about the apprentice's background, knowledge and skills, particularly if they are an existing employee
- Discuss and agree with the provider that the assessment is accurate and how prior learning will be reflected in the delivery model and the apprentice's training plan
- Agree the reduction in price (from the funding band maximum) where unnecessary training has been identified.

## **What employers should do following initial assessment.**

Employers should:

- Agree with the provider what prior learning and experience is relevant and how much of the training content the apprentice requires, which should be documented following a discussion with the provider.
- Check that the apprentice continues to meet the eligibility criteria for the apprenticeship, after taking account of their prior learning and experience.
- Agree the planned volume, content, start and end dates for the programme.
- Agree a price for the apprenticeship that is reduced in proportion with the training that will not be delivered. Your provider must use the calculation in the funding rules.
- Agree a schedule for delivery of training that works for the business; for example whether the training will be delivered one day per week, in a block or front-loaded at the start of the programme.
- Agree how they, the provider and the apprentice will support the achievement of the apprenticeship.
- Verify and sign the training plan, which is a record of what has been agreed between the employer, the provider and their apprentice.
- Work with the provider to identify alternative options for the apprentice if they are not eligible for apprenticeship funding because they have too much or too little prior learning.