

Initial Assessment Policy

Document Title:	Initial Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
Originator:	Director
Date of Approval:	August 2024
Responsible Person:	Centre Manager
Policy due for renewal:	July 2025
Version	11.2.0

Initial Assessment Policy

Introduction

Ginger Nut Training is committed to ensuring that all learners are working towards clearly defined goals that have been identified through an initial assessment process. This is to ensure that individual learner needs are identified in establishing a planned programme of learning. This includes any learning difficulties and disabilities but also the identification of prior learning that may impact the planned programme including both accredited and experiential learning. For Apprenticeship programmes this would also include identification of suitable apprenticeship standards for the given job role with the objective that any learning programme is suitable, suitably challenging and is sufficiently motivational so we can deliver an experience that meets or exceeds expectations.

Where prior learning does exist, we will make adjustments to the planned learning programme and this will be reflected in the content, training price and duration of the programme. In apprenticeships this is through review of existing knowledge, skills and behaviours against the planned apprenticeship standard and in other programmes against the modular or unitized content.

Ginger Nut Training will ensure fair assessment and identification of support needs to enable effective progression in line with our policy of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.

From a funding perspective Ginger Nut Training will carry out initial assessments for all learners, in line with the latest requirements of the funding body and this includes learners that have been inherited from other providers and also includes learners that may change jobs with the employer or move to a new employer.



Procedure

Employer engagement

When we work with employers it is the Ginger Nut Account Manager's responsibility to liaise with the employer to ensure a mutual understanding of:

- The government's Apprenticeship Service and fee structures relating to levy or non-levy funded employers /non-levy requirements
- Commitment to our programmes required by employers and learners (apprentices)
- Programme content including the mandatory requirements of a minimum of 6 hours per week or 20% off the job training, minimum duration and the rules regarding eligibility
- The suitability of job roles to appropriate programmes of learning, for example in apprenticeship the requirements of the given apprenticeship standard
- Our expectations of mentoring, shadowing and support to be given by employers to learners
- Progression opportunities available to learners

Identification of Prior Learning

Apprenticeships

For apprentices that will be funded by the ESFA via a levy or non-levy employer account we must establish that the individual is eligible for an apprenticeship. This includes a right to work in England but also that there is sufficient learning need of at least one year's study and that there would be a minimum of 6 hours or 20% (where less than 30 hours per week are worked) off the job training across that timeframe based upon the individual's contracted working hours. The apprenticeship must be suitable for the job role and the employer must provide appropriate support to embed the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard into that job role.

Before enrolling onto the apprenticeship Ginger Nut will carry out an initial assessment to ensure that the learner is on the correct apprenticeship and is eligible to receive the training and training price that would apply for the programme. This is done by carrying out a detailed skills scan against the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the planned



apprenticeship, reviewing the applicants CV (where available), personal learning record and asking for additional supporting information on a Handover document.

The objective is to establish the entry point of the individual to the programme and whether there are any modules of the programme that would not be necessary based upon that entry point.

Skills Scans

The skills scan process is one of learner self-assessment followed, where required, by a discussion and review with a programme tutor. The tutor would be someone with relevant subject knowledge to moderate the self-assessment answers and identify where prior learning does exist at a level deemed to be competent.

The skills scan is carried out by sending the potential apprentice a link to an online questionnaire that contains detailed questioning to allow them to self-assess their level of knowledge, skills and behaviours in the context of the apprenticeship and role that they will be doing.

The skills scan also questions the applicant about previous working experience in the role and any related roles as well as any previous, related, qualifications.

Learners would score themselves on a 1-10 basis against each knowledge, skill and behaviour criteria. The initial scoring is to establish entry point and those areas where prior learning may exist.

Each knowledge, skill and behaviour question is aligned to the relevant programme module that delivers the underpinning development programme in that area. As a result, we are able to accurately translate the presence of knowledge, skills and behaviours to the actual curriculum planned. Where content is not required due to prior learning we cannot claim funding for this or include development time in that content area as off the job training so we use this process to determine whether a module is required or not.

Each module has off the job hours associated with it and a given training price. The method used is to identify hours not required and the reduction in content and price as a result. Where the price of training is reduced the percentage reduction will reflect at least 50% of the reduction in training required and any negotiation on price will be from this, adjusted, price.

When the Skills Scan has been completed and returned, the self-assessed scores are reviewed to identify any areas where the learner has identified that they are either competent or are close to competence. Where areas of potential competence are identified



a call is arranged between the applicant, their Line Manager and a tutor to review the scores.

The Scoring Ratio & Competence

We would expect someone brand new to a knowledge, skill or behavioural concept to have less than 10% knowledge/skill/behaviour of the subject area, so the learner would record a number of 1. Someone with a basic level of understanding would likely score 2 or 3, someone with a moderate level of understanding between 4 and 6. Someone who has a good understanding would score 7 or 8 and someone with what they consider to be the fullest knowledge of a subject area, which would have to be a detailed level of understanding would record over 9 indicating fully competent in this criteria of the standard.

In addition to the scoring against individual criteria, the learner is asked to self assess their overall level against the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours out of 5 and their overall opinion of the benefit they will receive from the apprenticeship.

When reviewing the scores given the previous experience and learning of the applicant will be taken into account, especially with regard to behaviours and skills which are reviewed in the context of the standard and role linked to the apprenticeship.

The results of the skills scan are then reviewed against the following criteria to assess the need for an additional review:

- Knowledge
 - Average score of above 5.0
 - Any criteria at 7 or above
 - Learner overall summary above 4
- Skills
 - Average score of above 5.0
 - Any criteria at 7 or above where there is context in previous experience
 - Learner overall summary above 4
- Behaviours
 - Due to the nature of behaviours these are reviewed in the context of the prior work experience of the learner, based on their CV and educational background. Where there is no context for the behaviour and the scores in other areas are low the learner does not require further review. Where there is context to the behaviours then they would be reviewed in the same way as the other areas:
 - Average score of above 5.0
 - Any criteria at 7 or above

- Learner overall summary above 4
- Overall
 - Overall score of above 5.0
 - Learner states that they do not need more than 12 months of training or would not benefit from the apprenticeship.

Tutor Review

Where the skills scan, CV or PLR flag any areas for further review a further conversation will be arranged between the learner, their line manager (where they are in role) and a tutor to review scores. Where the line manager is not available, another experienced member of staff who knows the learner should be included.

The tutor will then discuss the question scoring with the learner and the manager and can adjust scores based on their understanding of the standard and the competence criteria. Where possible these interviews should be recorded for quality assessment and evidence purposes.

Scoring decisions should be based upon knowledge explanations by the learner and where necessary supplying relevant evidence to support their explanation. If a question requires the attainment of a given qualification for example, a competent score cannot be recorded if that qualification is not held. A score close to competence could however be given if the tutor believes that the apprentice's explanation is sufficiently confident and authentic.

For any awarding organisation unit, you must be satisfied that the learner could present relevant evidence for a competent score to be agreed upon.

When the tutor review is complete, they will have updated the scoring and it will be seen which criteria are not required. The tutor will then review the modules required for the standard and either remove the module or, where there are other learning criteria that are still required, identify and register appropriate stretch goals for the learner.

The learner has the right of appeal of their revised scoring where required. This would be reviewed by a director and, if approved, reassessment would take place with an alternative, competent tutor.

Each module has a given price and when it is not required the training price is recalculated. The off the job hours required are updated automatically with the need for the module driving the calculation. If a module is not required, the planned off the job hours are deducted from the planned programme.

Where required content falls below the one year, 6 hours per week off the job requirement, the learner would not be fundable using government funds.

The tutor must record in the tutor summary section of the skills analysis their confirmation of the following:

- That they believe the apprenticeship is or is not an appropriate training programme (based upon the need of sufficient learning to meet off the job and minimum duration rules)
- That they believe the job role is or is not appropriate to implement all of the skills and knowledge required to be competent
- That they believe the learner needs or does not need an apprenticeship with a minimum duration of at least 12 months and 6 hours of off the job training across the practical period of learning
- Or if the answer to any of the above is negative, that the individual would only be suitable for commercial based funding.

If competent in a module area, the learner's employer may choose to privately fund any module(s) where prior learning exists, or an apprentice may choose to refresh or extend their knowledge, skills or behaviours however we would not claim government funding or include this planned content within our evidence pack for funding purposes.

Awarding Recognition of Prior Learning

All apprenticeship standards contain knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) that the apprentice needs to be able to attain and demonstrate to complete the apprenticeship. Delivery plans are created that map these KSBs to a given module which will contain teaching and learning around core topics and outcomes.

Where a learner is identified, via the skills scan process, to already have competence in the areas covered by a module this will be removed from their individual learning plan, along with the related time needed and cost for delivery.

We would use the best practice methodology of assessment in that to be competent the learner would have to be able to present valid, authentic and sufficient evidence in a fair, reliable and safe manner. This may be gathered on programme but if not obtainable through the above means the decision to award prior learning may be rescinded.

If a learner is identified as already having some, but not all, knowledge, skills or behaviours related to that module there will be adjustments to the delivery to focus on stretch goals and areas with less understanding, but the module will still be delivered.

Once the adjusted learning plan has been created, it will be reviewed to ensure that the selected standard is appropriate for the learner based on their understanding of the KSBs covered and their job role. It will also be confirmed there is sufficient learning required for

the apprentice to require at least 365 days of training, based on spending 6 hours per week, or 20% of hours where not working 30+ hours per week, in Off the Job training.

The adjusted plan and costs will then be approved by the apprentice and employer before the First Day of Learning.

Non-Apprenticeships

In other programmes the above will also take place, however knowledge, skills and behaviours would be replaced by the learning outcomes of the relevant units or modules of the planned programmes.

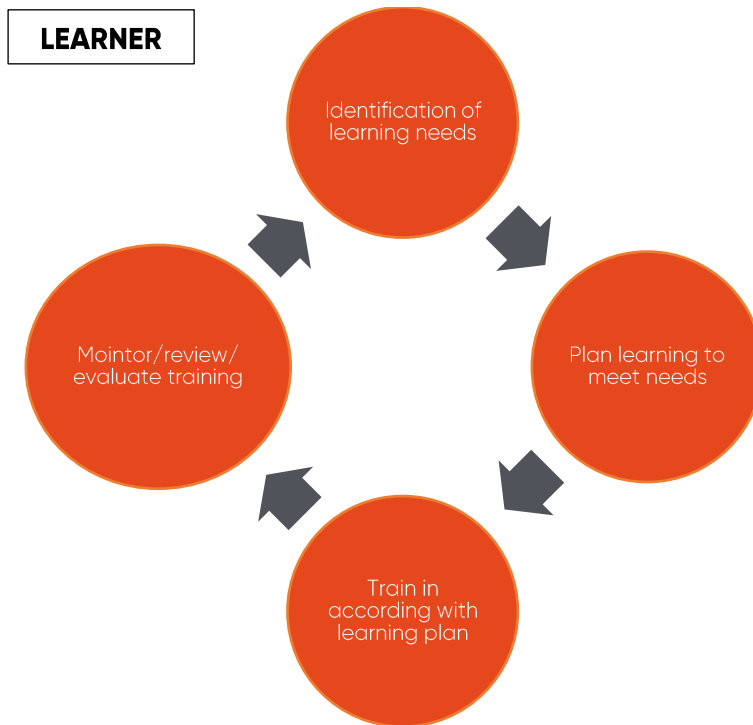


Establishing Prior Learning

Introduction

Initial Assessment is the process of identifying an individual's learning and support needs in order to build an individual learning plan which provides structure to their learning.

Learning needs includes skills, knowledge and behaviours that the learner needs during the course of their programme. Support needs are the additional resources/help to enable them to address any barriers which may prevent them from fulfilling their programme.



Sources of Learner information

Ginger Nut Training will consider the following areas at initial assessment:
 Academic and professional qualifications and achievements

- Experiential learning
- Learning difficulties and disabilities
- Job role
- Personal effectiveness
- Learning style
- Personal circumstances
- Cognitive abilities

This information is gathered using the below data/resources which formulates the learning plan and provides information on key funding requirements (funded routes) on how much we draw down for each individual learner, based on information gathered.

	Applicat ion	CV/ Certs	Induction	Learner Record Service – Prior Record Check	Skills Scan & Tutor Review	Cognassist	BKSB
Qualifications / Achievements	•	•	•	•			
Aptitude			•		•		•
Prior learning and experience	•	•	•	•	•		•
Functional skills and Digital Skills	•	•	•	•	•		•
Learning difficulties and or disabilities	•	•	•		•	•	•
Learning styles			•		•	•	
Job Role	•	•	•		•		
Personal circumstances	•		•		•		
Personal effectiveness			•		•		

Apprenticeship standards skills scan			.		.		
--------------------------------------	--	--	---	--	---	--	--

For apprenticeship programmes the skills scan will determine the existence of potential subject based prior learning and is described in previous pages. However additional funding may be sourced for functional skills maths and English (up to level 2) based upon prior qualifications and diagnostic results through the BKSB assessment platform. Further funding may be sourced for learners with learning difficulties and / or other disabilities to provide reasonable adjustments as required under the Equality Act.

All exemptions and certificates being presented to apply prior learning must be original certificates authenticated by the apprenticeship support tutor.

For functional skills the learner’s Personal Learning Record is also used to support APL against units, English, Maths and digital qualifications and the need for funding for these components.

The above selection process will determine if the learner is on the right course and the correct funding to be drawn down will be agreed by the responsible Director or another qualified individual within the team.

If the learner is not suitable for the programme applied for the apprenticeship support tutor will signpost the student to an alternative Ginger Nut programme or to an alternative provider. Ginger Nut Training will work with external agencies such as the National Career Service to provide the learner with independent Information, advice and guidance.

Eligibility for funding, for all learners, is scrutinised by the Funding Submission Officer in association with Directors and external consultants who will adjust funding to reflect current funding requirements.

Functional Skills exemptions

Where learners have previously achieved Functional Skills at any level, they will still undertake the BKSB assessment and diagnosis to identify any areas for improvement and establish a development plan to ensure they have not lapsed below level 2. This will then be included in their learning plan. Ginger Nut Training will not apply for funding where exemptions are in place.



Apprentice standards

Learners will be assessed prior to enrolment (as stated in the section above) to identify any part of our curriculum for the standard where they may have existing skills/experience/qualifications or prior learning.

Where the learner is able to fully meet any criteria, this will be reflected in the learning plan, however, the tutor will identify if the learner's knowledge and skills/competency are up to date before any adjustments are made the individual learning plan and length/cost of apprenticeship.

All adjustments will be made against delivery plan for that standard and will be saved down against the learner record with cost adjustments automatically calculated against the built-in formula. Any adjustments will then be tracked against the learner Handover/RFS and Training Plan.

Employer/Learner Engagement

Ginger Nut Training liaise with the learner and the employer to ensure that both are aware of the requirements and commitment to successful completion of the standard. Employers are made aware of the requirements for Off The Job training, the minimum duration and the processes of preparing the learner to successfully achieve, such as the end point assessment criteria.

Identifying Neurodiversity and Additional Support Needs

As part of their enrolment all learners are asked to complete a cognitive assessment on Cognassist. The results of this assessment are reviewed by the tutor to identify strategies for teaching and learning that will best benefit the learner. Where areas of neurodiversity are identified the learner will be set additional tasks to support them in developing strategies to help in their work and learning and these will be reviewed with the tutor each month.

Currently Ginger Nut Training provide support to learners without drawing down learning support funding. Moving forward, Ginger Nut Training will be analysing the support that has been provided and benchmarking this against funding rule definitions to draw down funding and make the appropriate application.



Transfers from other providers

Where other providers are not able to continue to support their learners, Ginger Nut Training may assist learners to continue with their programme.

Before moving forward with any learner transfers Ginger Nut Training will re-assess the learners to ensure they are on the right programme, and in the case of the apprenticeships the right job role and are able to meet the requirements for successful completion of the apprenticeship.

This will use the same skills scan system as explained previously and will result in an accurate identification of the required amount of learning and training price. This may not however mirror the remaining funding available and we reserve the right to re-negotiate a price with the employer that is mutually satisfactory.

Where prior learning exists, we would expect all evidence of learning to be downloaded from the learners current learning platform and mapped and uploaded to OneFile before being assessed by a qualified tutor. At this point and in conjunction with the skills scan a judgement can be made on remaining learning required and an updated planned end date can be put in place for their remaining practical period.

After this has been completed the remaining funding can be assessed and a decision on whether to proceed can be made.