

University of Suffolk

APPRENTICE INITIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Introduction

In accordance with the University's [Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework](#), an Initial Needs Assessment (INA) should be undertaken as part of the process for determining eligibility for admission to the apprenticeship programme. This will:

- provide assurance to the University and the employer that the apprenticeship is an appropriate programme for the individual, enabling them to acquire new knowledge, skills and behaviours as required for occupational competency in accordance with the relevant apprenticeship standard
- enable relevant prior learning and any gaps in knowledge, skills or experience to be identified, and an individual learning plan (ILP) to be developed to address these as part of the overarching Commitment Statement
- confirm the need for English and Maths as part of the apprenticeship programme
- enable support to be provided in terms of any additional learning needs.

Timescales and documentation requirements

The INA is normally conducted following the completion of recruitment processes to shortlist candidates for the apprenticeship programme. Once shortlisted, a designated member of University staff (usually the Course Leader) will be prompted by the Apprenticeships Hub to contact the candidate in order to complete the INA, ideally in conjunction with their employer. The outcomes of the assessment must be recorded on an INA form and passed (with any supporting evidence) to the Apprenticeships Hub for uploading to the apprentice's individual learner evidence folder in a timely manner. Once uploaded, the Admissions team will send the applicant a link to the application form and process the offer of a place. In all instances the INA must be completed prior to the apprenticeship start date. The process is summarised in the flowchart in Appendix A.

The template INA form is available at: <https://www.uos.ac.uk/sites/default/files/INA-template.docx>. This should be contextualised by the course team by adding the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) required as part of the relevant Apprenticeship Standard into Section A2 and outlining how these are addressed within the apprenticeship programme. The contextualised template should be provided as part of the initial course validation documentation, and should be updated in the event of any subsequent course modifications.

Apprenticeship Standards can be found at:

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

Initial needs assessment process

Arrangements for conducting the INA may vary by programme, but should include the Course Leader (or nominee) meeting with the apprentice, and ideally their employer, to complete the relevant sections of the INA form as summarised below.

- **Section A1: Apprentice details**

Please ask the apprentice to provide basic information on their employment context and contact details.

- **Section A2: Prior qualifications and learning**

Please review the candidate's prior education, training and qualifications. All qualifications fully or partly achieved should be recorded in this section of the INA form, including an overview of content to inform the subsequent assessment process.

As part of this, please determine whether the candidate has obtained Level 2 functional skills or GCSE grade A* to C / 9 to 4 in English and Maths, and whether they have brought the associated certificates to the INA meeting to evidence this. Where the qualification submitted needs to be checked for equivalence, this can be undertaken by the University's Admissions team

Note: If the candidate does not satisfy functional skills Level 2 requirements, or cannot produce the required certificates to verify this as part of the INA process, they will be required to undertake a [BKSB initial assessment and diagnostic assessment](#) to determine their skill level (see Section B2 below). Once a definitive list of apprentices requiring functional skills assessment has been generated, the Head of Learning Information and Environments will upload the list to BKSB. A template email will then be sent to each apprentice asking them to log onto BKSB and complete the initial assessment and diagnostic assessment within 10 working days. This will generate a functional skills learning plan including the modules that the apprentice is required to complete, which will be shared with the apprentice via an email from Learning Services. This email will flag additional support available, including anything relating to Learning Support Funding. One-to-one support for functional skills will be provided by Learning Services via Skype, phone and email, and this will be recorded in the Individual Learning Plan in the student's file in the Apprenticeship hub.

- **Section A3: Assessment of prior knowledge, skills and behaviours**

Please undertake an assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the candidate against those required to demonstrate full competency in accordance with the Apprenticeship Standard. This should include identification of gaps in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours that require significant and sustained new learning, and consideration of how these gaps will be addressed through the apprenticeship programme. Discussion should also include consideration of the extent to which the candidate's job role provides sufficient opportunities for them to consolidate their learning in the workplace.

- **Section A4: Additional learning needs and/or disabilities**

Please determine whether the candidate has any additional learning needs, including learning difficulties and/or disabilities that affect their ability to engage in and complete their apprenticeship. Where available, include reference to evidence of their learning difficulty and/or disability (e.g. formal diagnostic assessment).

Where additional learning needs and / or disabilities are disclosed, please discuss any reasonable adjustments and/or support plans that are in place or are planned by the employer to support the apprentice's learning in the workplace.

Note: Where additional learning needs and/or disabilities are identified, a copy of the form will be passed to Student Services by the Apprenticeships Hub in order to initiate a full assessment of the apprentice's learning needs and the development of a reasonable adjustment agreement and/or support plan (see Section B3 below).

- **Section B1: Recognition of prior learning**

Where any prior learning has been identified in Section A3 that aligns with knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the Apprenticeship Standard, this should be summarised in this section of the INA form, with associated evidence attached to the form. Decisions on recognition of prior learning (RPL) should be undertaken by the Course Leader (or nominee) in accordance with the University's [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#). The module(s) that the apprentice will be exempt from studying as a result of this RPL should be listed on the INA form, including their level and credit value.

Any limits placed on RPL by relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) should be taken into consideration when assessing prior learning (for example for courses regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council there is a maximum RPL limit of 50%).

As stipulated in the ESFA funding rules for apprenticeships, where relevant prior learning is identified, the content, duration and price of the apprenticeship should be adjusted accordingly prior to the start of the programme. The price reduction should be agreed with the Dean of School, the Finance team and the employer, with details of the reduction recorded in Section B1 of the INA form. Any reduced duration must still meet the minimum threshold of 12 months and the 20% off-the-job training requirement, with the INA form recording any adjustments made to off-the-job training requirements.

Once the above sections of the INA form have been completed and any RPL has been approved by the Course Leader (or nominee), the INA form should be passed to the Apprenticeships Hub for onward submission to Learning Services and/or Student Services (as necessary for completion of remaining sections) and the Student Records team (for processing of any RPL).

- **Section B2: Functional skills** *(for completion by Learning Services)*

Where the candidate does not satisfy functional skills Level 2 requirements, or cannot produce the required certificates to verify this, please confirm that the functional skills initial assessment and diagnostic assessment has been completed and summarise the assessment outcomes and the resulting learning plan. Copies of relevant supporting documents should be stored centrally in the individual learner evidence folder contained in the Apprenticeships folder on Sharepoint.

- **Section B3: Additional learning needs and/or disabilities** *(for completion by Student Services)*

Please summarise the outcome of Student Services' assessment of any additional learning needs and/or disabilities and outline any reasonable adjustment agreement and/or support plan put in place by the University to support the apprentice's learning needs. Copies of relevant supporting documents (including where relevant JCQ form 8 for profiling learning difficulties) should be stored centrally in the individual learner evidence folder contained in the Apprenticeships folder on Sharepoint.

Additional Learning Support Funding (LSF) may be available from the ESFA to meet the costs of putting in place reasonable adjustments for apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability (including costs associated with meeting identified needs in End Point Assessment, where applicable). If the apprentice is eligible for LSF, please note this.

Once completed, the INA form should be returned to the Apprenticeships Hub so that the information can be included in the Commitment Statement and shared with relevant parties (including Finance, the ILR and Funding Manager and the employer).

A copy of the completed form and supporting evidence should be stored in the apprentice's individual learner evidence folder in the Apprenticeships folder on Sharepoint.

**University of Suffolk Apprenticeship
Initial Needs Assessment (INA) flowchart**

