Initial Assessment & Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure

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MKC Training

Title	Initial Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning		Ref. No	TQI02
Approved by	R Ingram	Date	25/03/2019	Issue	2

Summary of Changes

Ser	Issue	Date	Summary of changes
1	1	06/02/19	-
2	2	27/03/19	Full review in line with updated ESFA guidance on initial assessment and prior learning
3	2	23/05/21	Review – no changes required
4	2	18/12/23	Review – no change other than to MKC Training logo
5	2	31/12/2024	Review – no changes required

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy identifies how MKC Training Services (MKCTS) will determine a trainee/apprentice's:
- Previous learning and skills gaps
- Potential to complete their learning programme
- Learning support needs

1.2. This information will support us to:
- Review previous learning and experience against the trainee/apprentice's new learning programme
- Make necessary adjustments to learning programmes and funding

entitlements in line with regulatory requirements
- Deliver an individualised training / apprenticeship programme
- Ensure the training / apprenticeship meets the full occupational profile, skills, knowledge and behaviours
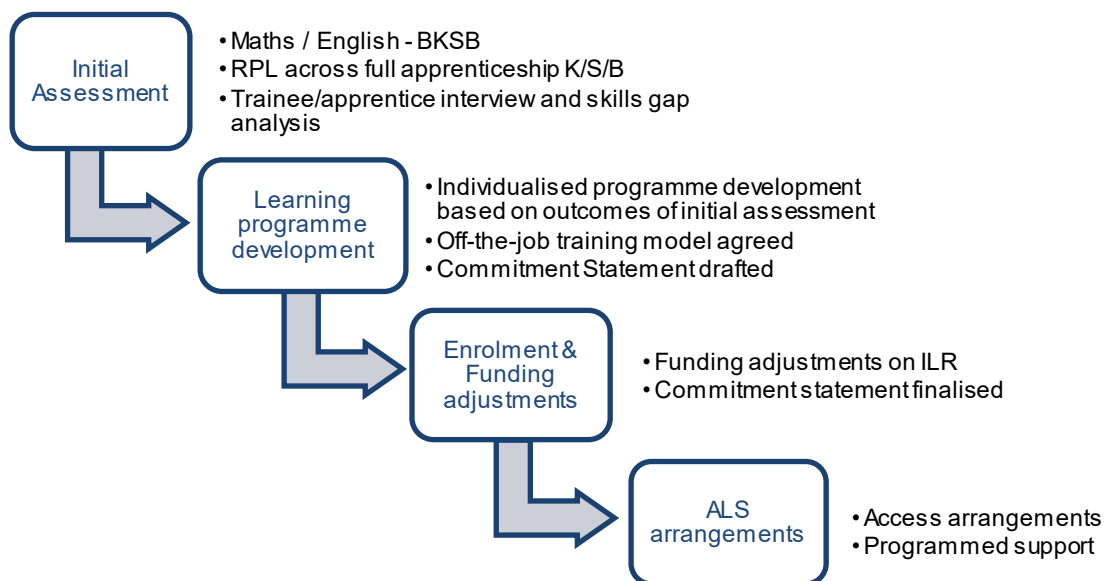
2. Scope of Policy

2.1. This policy applies to all MKCTS training programmes and apprenticeships.

2.2. The process consists of the following stages and is summarised in figure 1:

- **Initial Assessment** – to gather information on the trainee/apprentice, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- **Learning programme development** – applying the outcomes of initial assessment and RPL to plan an individualised training programme to meet the full occupational profile, skills knowledge and behaviours.
- **Enrolment** – confirming the learning programme with the trainee/apprentice and their employer and making any necessary funding adjustments.
- **Additional Learning Support (ALS)** – where initial assessment indicates potential support needs, assessments for Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) are carried out. Access arrangements and on-going support are arranged.

Figure 1 – Summary of MKCTS approach to initial assessment and recognition of prior learning

- Initial Assessment
  - Maths / English - BKSB
  - RPL across full apprenticeship K/S/B
  - Trainee/apprentice interview and skills gap analysis
- Learning programme development
  - Individualised programme development based on outcomes of initial assessment
  - Off-the-job training model agreed
  - Commitment Statement drafted
- Enrolment & Funding adjustments
  - Funding adjustments on ILR
  - Commitment statement finalised
- ALS arrangements
  - Access arrangements
  - Programmed support

3. Initial Assessment

3.1. Through the Commitment Statement, and prior to enrolment, all trainees/apprentices will be made aware that relevant prior learning can count towards their training/apprenticeship.

3.2. All trainees/apprentices will complete an initial assessment process including

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interview(s). The process is used to assess the individual's prior learning to establish the 'starting point', or baseline, of the trainee/apprentice. This informs how much of the training content the individual requires. It checks that the training/apprenticeship is an appropriate programme for the individual.

3.3. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to oversee the initial assessment process.

3.4. The initial assessment will usually include:

- English and maths Initial Assessment, to discover current levels of attainment. If identified, copies of exemption certificates will be retained in the evidence pack and recorded on the Commitment Statement. In the absence of exemptions, the initial assessment will inform the starting place for further appropriate diagnostic assessments. Apprentices will complete assessments using the BKSB application. Further details of MKCTS' approach to maths and English delivery are recorded in TQI10 – English and maths for Apprenticeships.
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment. This covers the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard, framework or other training and will consider the trainee/apprentice's:
    - 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; and
    - Any previous apprenticeship undertaken
- Additional Learning Support (ALS) skills scan, to identify potential learning, assessment and support needs.
- Interview to discuss any wider support needs or concerns.

3.5. It is the responsibility of the Apprenticeship MIS Team to retain evidence of the initial assessment within the evidence pack and summarise key outcomes on the Commitment Statement.

NOTE - 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

4. Recognition of Previous Learning (RPL)

4.1. The relevant apprenticeship framework, standard or assessment criteria will be used as the basis for RPL. The information will be gathered through apprentice and employer interview(s) and a self-assessment or skills scan. These will determine:

- The goal(s) that the trainee/apprentice is trying to achieve
- Where they are currently against this goal
- How much of the content is new to them
- Whether they require significant and sustained new learning

4.2. The Programme Leader will review any prior learning identified during initial assessment and record this on the personal learning record and, for apprentices, the Commitment Statement. This will also include a review of prior learning through the Learning Records Service (LRS).

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4.3. Where RPL is identified, the Apprenticeship MIS team will assess 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) in line with ESFA Funding Guidance.

NOTE - Where this is not the case, the individual is not eligible for an apprenticeship and an alternative programme must be found.

4.4. Where a qualification(s) is offered alongside training / apprenticeships the extended process for RPL is shown in Annex A.

4.5. Military training - RPL may be used to exempt a trainee from formative activities. However, they will be required to achieve all summative assessments to pass.

5. Learning Programme Development

5.1. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to plan the learning programme, based on initial assessment outcomes, to meet the full occupational profile, skills knowledge and behaviours of the qualification, training or apprenticeship.

5.2. The apprenticeship training material will be reviewed against the job role to ensure sufficient opportunities exist for the apprentice to consolidate their learning in the workplace.

5.3. Details of the learning programme will be recorded on the apprentice's Commitment Statement and Individual Learning Plan (ILP). This will include key milestones for the apprentice so their progress can be reviewed regularly.

6. Enrolment and funding adjustments

6.1. In line with ESFA funding rules and guidance, it is the responsibility of the Apprenticeship MIS team to input required initial assessment, RPL and ALS information onto the ILR.

6.2. The Apprenticeship MIS team will adjust the content and duration of the apprenticeship to reflect prior learning. This information will be recorded within the ILR and Commitment Statement.

6.3. Price adjustments will be negotiated with the employer in line with the MKCTS Apprenticeship Contract for Services.

6.4. The learning programme is confirmed with the trainee/apprentice and their employer, and the Apprenticeship Commitment Statement is finalised.

6.5. The trainee/apprentice will be enrolled onto their learning programme or apprenticeship.

6.6. Military training – it is the responsibility of Training Clerks to complete and record any necessary enrolment requirements and adjustments.

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7. Additional Learning Support

7.1. Using the outcomes of initial and diagnostic assessments, the following indicators will be used to determine whether further investigation or SpLD support is required:

- A score of <3 in the English and / or mathematics initial assessment
- Consistent spelling, punctuation and/or grammar difficulties; handwriting that is difficult to read; poorly structured written responses in the free writing task
- Trainee/apprentices who are unable to complete the writing task within time
- A dyslexia checklist/screening score >45
- A declaration of previous dyslexia or learning difficulty assessment
- Low mathematics and English attainment in the BKSB diagnostic assessment

7.2. Where one or more of these indicators are identified, the trainee/apprentice's initial assessment record will be passed to the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Coordinator.

7.3. A learning support specialist will review the evidence and, if the trainee/apprentice agrees, will refer them for the appropriate specialist initial and / or diagnostic assessment:
- Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST) with a specialist adviser (Military trainee/apprentices)
- A Meares Irlen screening with a specialist adviser
- A formal, specific, learning difficulties (SpLD) diagnostic assessment will be undertaken by a level 7 qualified ALS specialist who is approved by the Professional Association for teachers and assessors of students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) (PATOSS).

7.4. Dependent upon the results of this process, the following actions may be taken:

- A programme of specialist learning support will be established throughout the learning programme, tailored to specific support needs, for example, mathematics, English, memory techniques, or communication strategies.
- A package of specialist support resources and software, for example, ReadWriteGold, coloured overlays, reading pens and Dragon Dictate, will be offered where appropriate
- The trainee/apprentice's trainers and assessors will be provided with a support strategy report, offering practical tips and advice on how to best meet the trainee/apprentice's individual needs during teaching, learning and assessment activities.
- Based on the outcomes of the SpLD diagnostic assessment, exam access arrangements will be applied for, in line with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and awarding organisation regulations.

7.5. In some cases, no further support will be required, though the trainee/apprentice's progress will be regularly monitored and support provided if circumstances change.

8. Associated Policies, Procedures and Documentation

- MKCTS Apprenticeship Scheme Contract for Services
- MKCTS Apprenticeship Commitment Statement

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- TQI01 - Quality Assurance and Improvement process
- TQI03 – Additional Learning Support process
- TQI10 – English and maths for Apprenticeships
- TQI11 - Complaints and Appeals policy and procedure
- Awarding Organisation Recognition of Prior Learning: Assessment Policy Guidance Document
- WI14 - Exams Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

9. Policy Validity

9.1. This policy is due for review in February 2021.

10. Policy Owner and Reviewer

10.1. The Senior Manager responsible for this policy is the Teaching & Quality Improvement (TQI) Divisional Manager.

11. Policy Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

11.1. A review of this policy will form part of the annual process of self-assessment for the curriculum function and will involve input from a range of stakeholders including staff, trainee/apprentices, awarding organisations, regulatory bodies and others.

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ANNEX A

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process – where qualifications are delivered during training / apprenticeships

Stage 1 – Awareness, Information and Guidance
- The trainee/apprentice will be informed of the RPL process and support available to them.

- Assessors and IQA staff may be consulted to provide sector specific information and guidance.

Stage 2 – Skills gap assessment, gathering evidence and giving information
- A skills gap assessment will be carried out against the relevant qualification or apprenticeship standard / framework

- The trainee/apprentice will be supported in the collection of evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s). In some cases, the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required.

- Any evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of a unit, that the evidence is being used for.

Stage 3 – Assessment of evidence and delivery of skills-gap training
- Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a trainee/apprentice's prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards.

- The assessor may look at:
  - Work experience records
  - Previous portfolios of evidence
  - Essays and reports

- Assessment must be valid, current and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of credit and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of a unit, that the evidence is being used for. The assessment process will be subject to MKCTS' quality assurance procedures for IQA and Awarding Organisation requirements.

- Evidence gathered through RPL should be clearly referenced and signposted to aid internal assessment and internal and external verification.

- Based on the skills-gap assessment, training will be provided to address knowledge, skills and behaviours not achieved through RPL. This programme of training will be agreed with the trainee/apprentice's employer.

Stage 4 – Claiming Certification
- Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made.

- Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records

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completed, should be retained for the standard three-year period following certification.

- The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are maintained in the usual way.

Stage 5 – Appeal

- As with any assessment decision on procedural grounds, if a trainee/apprentice wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they should follow the MKCTS Complaints and Appeals policy and procedures.