2020

Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

Date: 20 January 2020

Purpose of Policy: Sets out the arrangements for the WEBS process of learner Initial Assessment and how it should feed into the formation of a learning plan.

Approved by: Nick Crowther (Board Chair)

Responsibility for Updates: Lorraine Jameson (Head of Business & Quality Assurance)

Policy applies to: All WEBS Employees, Learners, Employers and Sub-Contractors.

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Version History			
Version	**Date**	**Detail**	**Author**
1	10.12.14	Creation and implementation	Sammy Jones
2	04.03.16	Review	Sammy Jones
3	11.10.17	Review & Update	Sammy Jones
4	23.04.19	Review & Update	Sammy Jones
5	20.01.20	Review & Update	Lorraine Jameson

Links and Dependencies
This policy is part of a suite of support policies defining the learner journey support arrangements and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures • Appeals Procedure • Complaints Procedure • Disability Statement • Equality & Diversity Policy • Functional Skills Strategy • Health and Safety Policy • Information Advice and Guidance Policy • Marking & Feedback Policy • Quality Assurance Policy • Recruitment & Progression Policy • Safeguarding Policy • Staff Resource Handbook

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Purpose

The aim of this policy is to set out guiding principles and standards governing the WEBS process of learner Initial Assessment. WEBS Training Limited is committed to maintaining an Initial Assessment system that is rigorous and consistent to ensure fair assessment and identify support needs for effective learner progression.

Initial Assessment will be undertaken with all learners, irrespective of age.

What is Initial Assessment?

We define Initial Assessment as:

Building up a clear, accurate and relevant picture of an individual's attainment and potential to use as a basis for negotiating an individualised and appropriate programme of learning and assessment opportunities.

Initial Assessment is concerned with both:

- what learners have already achieved – their attainment; and
- what they should realistically be able to achieve in the future – their potential.

Initial Assessment is a crucial part of the learner's learning journey. It provides the information needed to agree and plan a learner's starting point. It is the benchmark from which learners' progress and achievement can be measured.

> *"Initial Assessment needs to be done with learners rather than to them. It should be of benefit to learners and help them feel positive about themselves and their potential to learn."*
> *Green M (2003) Initial Assessment: a learner-centered process. Learning & Skills Development Agency.*

What can we learn from Initial Assessment?

Initial Assessment is the first step in the processes shown below.

- **Negotiating learning**. The key skill in improving own learning and performance is founded on the process of negotiated learning, where trainer and learner meet to identify needs and to plan and agree what they hope to achieve
- **Continuous assessment**. Equally important is the process of reviewing progress at regular intervals, and giving and receiving constructive feedback; again, central to improving own learning and performance
- **Developing a relationship**. Initial Assessment should help trainer and learner to get to know each other and begin to build trust and co-operation.

Why carry out Initial Assessment?

Information about current interests and achievement can provide a strong basis for building an effective learning programme. Initial Assessment checks that the apprenticeship (both the job role and the training) is an appropriate programme for the individual. The outcomes of screening, diagnostic testing and induction tasks and activities can all be used to put

together a detailed picture of the learner as they move through the different stages of the process.

Initial Assessment involves the collection of a wide range of information to form a coherent picture of the individual skills, knowledge, abilities and learning needs. This information should be used to place them on an appropriate pathway which matches their skills, knowledge and abilities and addresses their individual needs thus improving their opportunities for success. Without this, there are only assumptions. It's always possible to make some predictions about learners from an application form or selection test, but it's an insecure basis for planning. Learners themselves bring assumptions about learning based on the past, and some of these may get in the way of looking ahead to a new way of learning.

It is really important to 'Get It Right' in order that the learning and support opportunities offered are the best possible match to their needs. A learner who is on a programme at the right level and has interest and aptitude for the work they do will be more likely succeed in meeting their agreed programme outcomes.

Initial Assessment can therefore help us to identify the learner's:

- current abilities, skills and attributes – what are they bringing with them;
- learning needs – what they need to learn and which aspects they need to improve; and
- support needs – how will they best learn. This involves both ways in which the learner is likely to learn most happily, productively, effectively and the kind of help they will most value.

How do we ensure a robust Initial Assessment process?

A robust Initial Assessment process should be learner centred. This means that it needs to:
- engage learners and be of benefit to them and their learning journey; and
- help learners feel positive about themselves and their potential to learn.

Learners who move into the world of training with modest or limited achievements need to should receive individualised learning at a level that offers personal challenge, which allows them to succeed. They may need support with specific aspects of their learning. It is important that the process is not seen as part of a deficit model that serves to undermine confidence by focusing only on the things that learners cannot do.

It is important that learners need to:
- understand why we want to put together an early and accurate picture of their skills and needs;
- have access to all their learning plans; and
- feel confident about how the learning plans will be used to help them.

Many young people and adults have different levels of reading, writing, numeracy and language skills as well as other strengths and areas for development which may impact upon a learning programme.

A good process is one that:
- is completed early on – in the first few days or weeks of contact with learners;

- is different from selection – though information gained through the selection process should be useful;
- is a process, not a single event;
- uses a range of methods;
- helps Training Officers and employers to find out about learners; and
- helps learners to find out about themselves and their programme (what they will learn and how).

Information that can be considered during Initial Assessment
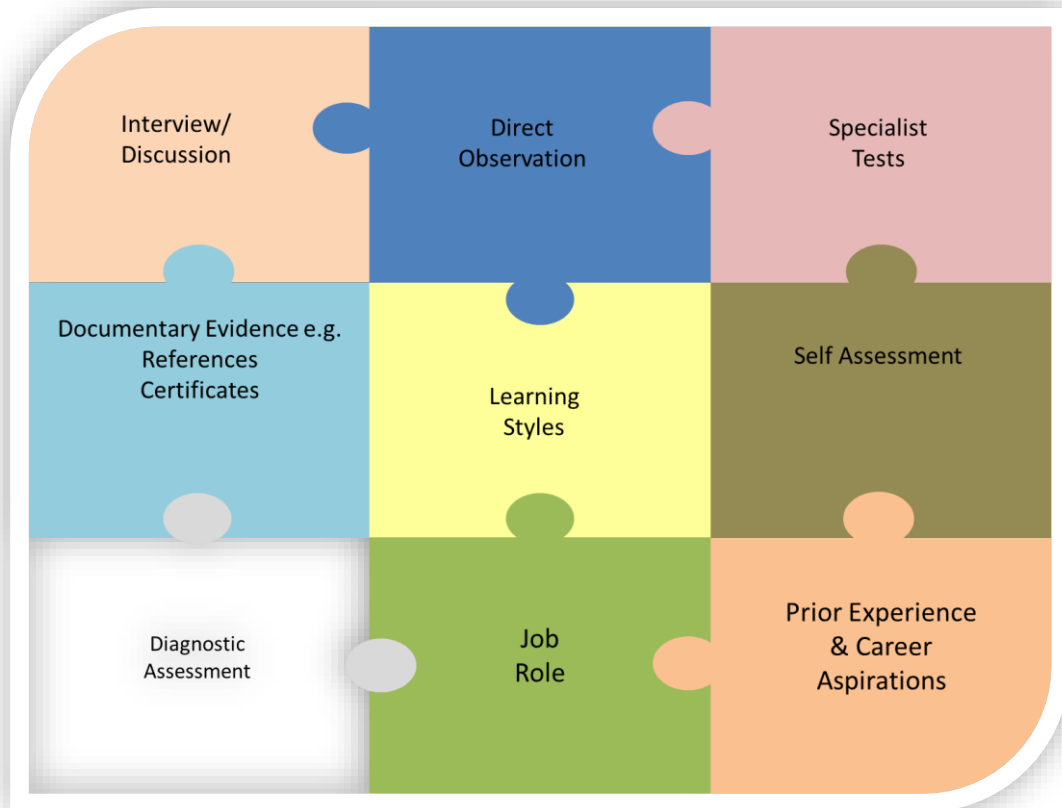
As stated above, information can come from a range of sources:
- the learner;
- other professionals involved with the learner e.g. Job Centre Plus, Youth Offending Team, Schools, Colleges and Employers;
- those involved in the learner's earlier phases of learning;
- the qualifications they have achieved;
- the results of testing; and
- the outcomes of practical tasks and activities.

Assessing English and Maths

It is mandatory that all young people commencing training programmes who have not attained a Grade 9 – 4, or A*- C in English and/or maths should work toward them as part of their learning programmes.

For many, school certificates will provide the learner's current attainment level. However, this is underpinned by using the City & Guilds Dynamic Learning English and math's Initial Assessment for all applicants, which tracks the Functional Skills standards and satisfies the updated core curriculum for English and maths from pre-entry level to level 2. The Initial Assessment tool is dynamic and adjusts the level according to the answers given, allowing the learner to see what level they are currently working at.

The Initial Assessment enables learners to find out their current level in English and maths and informs them which Diagnostic Assessment to take. The Diagnostic Assessment will then identify their strengths and weaknesses and signpost the learner to the specific learning resources they require to support their learning programme and achieve their programme outcomes.

Holding the required level of English and maths on applying for an apprenticeship, does not necessarily mean that applicants have the required level of functional skills to succeed in their apprenticeship. Information from the initial assessment results may indicate weaknesses in particular areas which may require further investigation during Initial Assessment.

The table below gives a general guide to the level of study that learners will undertake based on their GCSE grades and screening results.

Screening Result	GCSE Results	Main Programme	Maths and English
Entry 3	F or G (1)	Level 2	Level 1
Level 1	D and E (2-3)	Level 2	Level 2
Level 2	D and E (2-3)	Level 2	Level 2
Level 2 or above	C or above (4-9)	Level 2/3	Not mandatory

As part of the Adult Education Budget there is an entitlement for every adult learner to have the opportunity to improve their English and maths skills as well as achieving their vocational qualification if they do not hold a level 2 qualification. Improving these underpinning skills will help the learners to achieve their vocational qualifications and generally build confidence levels. More specifically, skills development will help learners to understand the requirements of working towards their qualification and to produce good quality evidence for their portfolio, and help them to learn more effectively.

Prior Learning

Information about a learner's qualifications and achievements can provide an indication of their general level of ability. In recognising prior learning, the following should be considered against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the Apprenticeship 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.

The purpose of establishing a leaner's prior experience and learning is to avoid any duplication of learning in an area for which applicants are already deemed competent; and the impact on the minimum length of time required to complete the apprenticeship. Equally,

learners should not be placed on apprenticeships where their prior skills and understanding do not allow them to access the learning effectively.

Skills Checks

The use of skills checks mapped across to the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements of the new standards are also a good means of identifying prior learning supported by in depth discussion of the results to confirm knowledge and understanding. Past experience would suggest that there may be a tendency, particularly of young people to over score themselves so the skills check in itself should not be the sole indicator of prior learning.

On being invited in for interview, candidates will be asked to complete the skills check relevant to the apprenticeship they are applying for. The results of which will be discussed at interview to ascertain and confirm the level and depth of any prior knowledge, skills or behaviours which will need to be accounted for in length of stay and funding discussions with the employer. A copy of the skills check should be retained in the 'P File' and the original passed to the Training Officer.

Career Aspirations

Consideration should be given as to what the learners overall careers aspirations are and how the learning programme can help them toward achieving this.

Job Role

If the learner is already employed, the duties involved in the job role, whether it be a new job role or an existing job role, should be discussed and identified, to ensure relevance to the qualification/framework being undertaken**.** Consideration should be given as to the knowledge, skills and behaviours that may already have been gained in the job role against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the Apprenticeship Framework/Standard.

Where there is job role progression, a requirement to evidence competency at a lower level would indicate the individual is ready for progression.

Learning Style Inventories

The Learning Styles Inventory is a tool that can help to provide details of different learning preferences, the outcome of which can be used in different ways. Knowledge of learning preferences can help learners exploit opportunities to learn through activities that match well with their preferred style. However there should also be support for learners to learn when teaching/training strategies do not match well with their preferred learning style. For example, a joiner who prefers to learn through hands on activity, and is quick to learn in practical sessions in the workshop, may need to be supported with approaches to theoretical work that are used in off-the-job training.

Documentary Evidence

Documentary information is also a good source of information that can be considered as part of the Initial Assessment process. Applications forms can provide useful information about prior experience and career ambitions. It can also be a useful early indicator in assessing English by the way it is written and whether there are spelling errors. Records of

Achievement, certificates, and references can all be sources of information about the skills and abilities that an individual can bring to their learning.

Interviews/Discussions

A well-managed interview can generate a lot of useful information. Talking to learners, asking them questions and actively listening to what they have to say is an essential part of the Initial Assessment process. The information gathered through discussion can be drawn on to provide a strong indication of interest, aptitude and ability. Conversations with prospective learners are also a good way of involving them in the process and showing them that they are valued and can help to plan their learning programme. All interviews should be structured and consistent although they do not need to be formal, and where the opportunity arises, further probing questions can be asked if required. The key reasons for this are:

- a structured approach is far more likely to elicit more information and ensure that no questions are forgotten; and
- all learners are asked a standard set of questions rather than leaving the questions open to the individuals carrying out the interview.

Face-to-face discussions are also an ideal opportunity for staff and learners to get to know each other.

Observations

Observation is a constructive and useful tool that can support the Initial Assessment process. Observation of how a learner performs within a group or on their own can provide information as to how they demonstrate skills and attributes such as how well they:

- relate well to others;
- they communicate;
- maintain eye contact during communication;
- join in as part of a group activity;
- show leadership skills or lack confidence;
- use and interpret body language;
- cope with paperwork and tests; and
- are dressed for work.

However, staff need to be very careful to ensure that conclusions drawn from observation are indeed valid and reliable so they should not be used in isolation.

Self-Assessment

As part of the application the learner is given the opportunity to think about the skills they might need as part of the job/training through the completion of a self-assessment. This can be expanded upon during the interview process to allow the learner to think about their strengths and weaknesses and where they feel they might need to improve. Remember, the individual's own views should be taken seriously. They are an important dimension in the overall picture, put into perspective by information from other sources.

Information sourced from other referral agencies

Where young people are being referred via other agencies, it may be possible to seek reports/risk assessments, particularly in the case of referrals from the Youth Offending

Teams. These should also be taken into account as part of the assessment process to ensure the necessary support and resources can be given.

Feedback from Assessment

Feedback should be offered as soon as possible after the Initial Assessment process has taken place. Ideally feedback should be used to increase the applicant's self-awareness, build confidence and motivate them to succeed. Where applicants are encouraged to talk about the outcomes of assessment, they will be able to develop a language of learning. This will help them take an active role in making decisions about goals and targets for their individual learning plan.

When providing feedback, the reviewer/interviewer should follow the guidelines below.

- Stress and promote the positives. Always celebrate the applicants' achievements which will support their confident levels.
- Seek applicants' views and value their contribution. This will help them to get better at assessing their own work, which is vital to them becoming independent learners.
- Frame questions carefully and use prompts such as "Would you like to say more about that?"
- Pause for a few seconds after questions have been posed or responses have been given, to encourage applicants to carefully consider and expand on what they have said.
- Be specific. Avoid generalisations such as 'There are a lot of inaccuracies' and instead focus on individual points which you can discuss with the applicants.
- Focus on things applicants can change and avoid overloading them with too much feedback at once.
- Look for ways forward together. Share ideas and explore solutions rather than always putting forward your own suggestions.
- Agree what you will both do as a result. This could include providing interview skills sessions or revamping the CV.

Remember, feedback is not a one-way process. Invite the applicant to comment on what you say as well.

The results of the Initial Assessment process should be used to inform the individualised learning plan where the applicant is successful.

Remember the learning plan should be a key document for the individual learner where it is a 'live' document. It should provide:
- a frequent reference point for progress review;
- recognition of success; and
- a record of targets set, and goals achieved.

For more information refer to the ILP Guidance.

Initial Assessment Implementation Checklist

- Is the assessment introduced to applicants in a positive way?
- Does the applicant understand what will happen during and after the assessment?

- Are the assessments providing the information you need in order to advise and guide the applicant?
- Is the applicant given the opportunity to discuss any feedback on the Initial Assessment process?
- Does the applicant understand who will see the information from the Initial Assessment and how it will be used?
- Has the outcome of the Initial Assessment been mapped over to the ILP?

Remember Steps of Action Planning!
- 1st Step – Results of Initial Assessment are used to inform the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- 2nd Step – If the need for additional support is identified this is identified on the ILP and the Training Officer is informed.
- 3rd Step – All staff dealing with the learner are made aware of any support needs and this is agreed.
- 4th Step - Once support has been addressed, on-going support is provided throughout the learner's time on programme.

Staff CPD

It is important to WEBS that staff involved in the Initial Assessment process hold a wide range of skills and knowledge. They will have at least a minimum understanding of:

- the purpose of Initial Assessment;
- methods of identifying learning and support needs and collecting information;
- the pathways available within WEBS Training and a brief understanding of the qualifications available;
- other providers or agencies who may be best able to support a learner's needs;
- the requirements of employers;
- interviewing and questioning techniques;
- putting applicants at ease;
- equality and diversity and non-discriminatory practices;
- difference in learning styles and ways of learning; and
- data protection policies.

Monitoring

Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy will be through:

- monitoring of achievement targets;
- learner and employer evaluation;
- learner and employer satisfaction surveys ;
- complaints, compliments and the "uum I think" process ;
- the self-assessment process; and the
- annual policy review.

Document Checklist
- Application Form
- One to One Discussion Proforma
- Learning Styles Inventory

- City & Guilds Dynamic Learning Initial Assessment Results
- City & Guilds Dynamic Learning Diagnostic results
- Skills Check
- Certificates/Personal Learning Record (PLR)
- Initial Assessment Summary Form
- Any other documentary evidence received. i.e. Risk Assessment, School reports

Other documents for learner information
- Learner Consent Form
- Learner Feedback Charter
- Privacy Notice

Appendix 1   WEBS Interview Proforma

Applicant Name: …………………………….....   **Age**…....   **Date:** …………………....

Interviewed by: ………………………………………

Assessment Area	Notes
What sort of apprenticeship are you interested in? **Think about favourite subjects at school?** **Note maths and English are requirements of apprenticeship**	
Since leaving school or over the last 12 months what have you been doing?	
What would you like to achieve by doing an apprenticeship/where do you want to be in 5 years time?	
Prior Learning/Experience Identify any trade work experience/ other work experience/previous jobs/previous college course/apprenticeships Discuss results of skills check	
Would you consider yourself a confident person, e.g do you prefer to work on your own or in large groups. Demonstrate a time when been part of a large group/worked on own.	
If I have 5 people what could you bring to an organisation that others couldn't, provide an example of how this has been demonstrated	
What do you like to do in your spare time? **Hobbies/Interests**	
Do you have any medical issues that require additional support/resource e.g. dyslexia and coloured paper. Did you have any extra support at school e.g. readers. **Any other Medical issues that require support**	
Do you have caring responsibilities	
How far are you willing to travel to get to work and what would be your mode of transport?	

Eligibility

Apprentice Name: …………………………………… **Age:** ……………….. **Date:** …………………..

Achievements:

Copies of certificates seen	Yes		No		Or; Personal Learning Record Checked	Yes		No	
Level of Prior Learning	**Level:**				**Refer to Appendix G of ILR**				

BSA Initial Assessment Results			Maths			English			
Grades A-C achieved within the last 5 years?						**Yes**		**No**	
Functional Skills Required (please tick)	**Literacy**		**Numeracy**			**Both**			
Level of Functional skills working toward	**Literacy**	E3 ○	L1 ○	L2 ○	**Numeracy**		E3 ○	L1 ○	L2 ○

Overall comments from Initial Assessment and Interview: - *Inc. assessment of skills knowledge and behaviours, special needs/styles of learning etc e.g. anything that a Training Officer may need to be aware of in developing individual programme and to support funding rationale.*	
Potential companies apprentice is suitable for:- **Inc. Name of company contact**	

Declaration:
I can confirm that the appropriate checks have been made regarding the above Apprentice's eligibility and I am satisfied they comply with the eligibility requirements for funding.

NAME:		POSITION:	
SIGNATURE:		DATE:	

Suitable Programme	Tick	Start Date
Apprenticeship		
Traineeship		
No suitable Programme		
Where no suitable programme, please detail action taken:		

Appendix 2 Staff Guidance for Initial Assessment in Recognising Prior Learning for WEBS Apprenticeships

The purpose of this guidance is to inform those staff assessing young people's suitability for Apprenticeships about the need for, and importance of, initial assessment and recognition of prior learning when commencing an apprenticeship in the Furniture/Business Support sector.

This guidance should be considered alongside the apprenticeship funding rules.

Key points:

- Recognition of prior learning extends beyond English, maths and existing qualifications;
- All the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard should be considered in reviewing the prior learning of the apprentice;
- Recognition of prior learning is part of the learner eligibility assessment;
- Apprenticeships could be poor value for money and unnecessarily long if training covers areas that the apprentice already knows, and public funding, which includes the apprenticeship levy, should not be used for learning which is not new;
- Initial assessment is vital to ensure high-quality apprenticeships and Ofsted inspections look for evidence of a robust initial assessment.

Initial Assessment

WEBS Training has a robust initial assessment process. Before an apprenticeship begins, WEBS 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. In some instances the employer might undertake the initial assessment alongside WEBS prior to making the individual an apprenticeship offer. Whilst these situations may be limited, it is identified as good practice.

The use of skills checks mapped across to the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements of the new standards are also a good means of identifying prior learning supported by in depth discussion of the results to confirm knowledge and understanding. Past experience would suggest that there may be a tendency, particularly of young people to over score themselves so the skills check in itself should not be the sole indicator of prior learning.

On being invited in for interview, candidates will be asked to complete the skills check relevant to the apprenticeship they are applying for. The results of which will be discussed at interview to ascertain and confirm the level and depth of any prior knowledge, skills or behaviours which will need to be accounted for in length of stay and funding discussions with the employer. Apprentices are then reviewed mid-way through the programme to gain an update on the progress of the knowledge skills and behaviours gained and again at the end of the programme showing overall distance travelled. Where gaps exist, these will be addressed through additional training/1-1 support dependent upon the gaps. A copy of the skills check should be retained in the 'P File' and the original passed to the Training Officer.

The initial assessment checks that the apprenticeship is an appropriate training programme for the individual.

For example
Jack is hoping to become a wood machinist and his employer has apprenticeship opportunities available. He has been working as a general labourer in the wood mill for the

last two years. The employer and WEBS consider what knowledge, skills and behaviours from the Wood Machinist apprenticeship standard Jack may already have from his current job role. Evidence can be found in his previous job description, appraisal documents, qualifications, the completed skills check and by having an open discussion with him.

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. We must evidence a robust initial assessment, clear milestones and progress against these.

THINK
- 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?

Eligibility Checks

The initial assessment checks how much of the apprenticeship programme the individual requires to become occupationally competent. Assuming there is some relevant prior learning, WEBS 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.

For example
David has been working as an upholsterer in a small-sized family established furniture company but secures a new job working in a large well-known furniture manufacturer. He will need to undertake some further development and his manager is considering how he might benefit from an apprenticeship. Initial assessment shows that David can evidence most of the high-level knowledge, skills and behaviours in the upholstery apprenticeship standard, but he does need to develop some knowledge and skills which are specific to his work in the large manufacturer. These can be developed through on-the-job mentoring, a short course and some specialist equipment supplier training. The employer and WEBS will need to consider if this meets the 12 month and 20% off the job requirements to ensure that the funding rules are being met.

Assessing Prior Learning

In recognising prior learning, the following should be considered against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard or framework that the individual will be undertaking:
- Work experience

This is particularly important if the apprentice is an existing employee, but also consider where knowledge, skills and behaviours may be transferable from experience gained outside of the furniture/business support sector.

- Prior education, training or associated qualification(s) in a related sector subject area

For example:
Joe is a labourer working for a self-employed kitchen installer and has completed level 2 joinery course three years ago at his local college. An apprenticeship opportunity has arisen in a large national installation company for Kitchen Installers. By undertaking a cross mapping exercise looking at his current job role and his joinery qualification against what is required from the knowledge, skills and behaviour of the installation apprenticeship, there are some transferable skills, particularly in hand & power tools. Following professional discussion to confirm existing knowledge, skills and behaviours, the programme can be reduced from 24 months to 20 months reducing the cost of the apprenticeship.

- Any previous apprenticeship undertaken

For example:
Adam completed a level 2 business administration apprenticeship in his role as a general administrator for internal staff. He has since been promoted to work with the recruitment team as a learner engagement and employer co-ordinator with ambition to become a recruitment advisor. The new Customer Service level 2 standard has been identified as an option which provides Adam with the required underpinning knowledge and skills to support him in succeeding in this role. Whilst on the face of it, there appears to be some transferable skills on the business administration, this has been achieved through portfolio work. Adam will be changing his role completely and liaising with external customers across a variety of job roles including HR managers, parents and potential learners. Adam has no experience of working with external customers and requires significant expansion of his administration skills, confidence building and product knowledge through ongoing practical assessments, presentations and on and off the job supported training. It is therefore deemed that due to the level of knowledge, skills and behaviours required there is no significant overlap in the apprenticeship.

The SFA does not mandate how a provider assesses or determines prior learning, just that it must be done, and the findings taken account of. The knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the apprenticeship should normally be used as the basis for initial assessment.

Assessment of prior learning is carried out and recorded through the interview process. It includes:

- Maths and English initial assessment which is carried out for all individuals applying irrespective of grade. This ensures that an individual starting point is identified for each learner, so even though they may have a Grade C/4 and above learners may still require additional support in order for them to achieve their main aim.

- A skills check against the apprenticeship the learner is applying, to identify existing knowledge, skills and behaviours. The outcome of this will feed into the professional discussion.

- A professional discussion with the individual to discuss knowledge, skills and behaviours gained in previous roles against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship.

- Evidence of competence from current or previous roles, including things like job descriptions, appraisal documents and qualifications, indicating the individual is ready for progression.

- Individual Personal Learning Record provides evidence of prior qualification achievement where no certificates can be produced.

A checklist is provided at the end of this guidance as an aide for staff and employers.

Recording outcomes of Initial Assessment and Prior Learning
The SFA 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. However it is important to note that 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.

How does recognition of prior learning feed into funding negotiations?
The funding band of the apprenticeship is based on an apprentice requiring development to meet all the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined by the apprenticeship. SFA 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 SFA funding rules, the training element within the apprenticeship must have a minimum duration of 12 months with at least 20% off -the-job training.

Where prior learning is established, 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.

The Evidence Folder
It is a requirement of the SFA that we must hold an Evidence Pack to provide assurance that we are using the funding appropriately and to support the funding claim. At WEBS this is known as the learner 'P File'. Once a learner is deemed to have been successful in securing an apprenticeship role, a 'P File' is made up. This should include as a minimum:

- Application form
- Copies of initial assessment and interview records inc. confirmation of eligibility
- Evidence of care leaver, where appropriate
- A copy of a Health & Education Care Plan, where applicable
- A copy of math's and English assessment
- A copy of the PLR where applicable or copies of certificates
- A copy of the apprenticeship agreement
- A signed copy of the commitment statement
- A signed copy of the Employer agreement
- Copies of ongoing reviews

Preparation for Initial Assessment:

Have you selected an apprenticeship standard?	P a g e
Have you made the individual aware that relevant prior learning can count towards the apprenticeship?	
Have you asked the individual to consider what knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) set out in the apprenticeship they may already be able to evidence?	

Initial Assessment:

Have you assessed the individual's work experience, prior education, training or associated qualifications against the KSBs set out in the apprenticeship?	
Have you worked with the main training provider set out the individual's baseline level of competency against the KSBs to determine the remaining content required?	

Eligibility decision point:

Assuming there is some prior learning, have you 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 considered.	

Following Initial Assessment and Confirmation of Eligibility:

Have you documented prior learning in the evidence pack and summarised this in the commitment statement?	
Have you and the employer agreed how the programme will be delivered (including the cost and length of stay) to reflect the apprentice's existing KSBs?	
Have you set out key milestones for the apprentice so their progress can be reviewed against this?	
Have you assessed the apprenticeship training material against the job role to ensure sufficient opportunities for the apprentice to consolidate their learning in the workplace?	