



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales (SASW)

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Guidance

Contents

Framework guidance for Issuing Authorities	01
Introduction	01
Apprenticeship frameworks – general	02
Naming conventions for an apprenticeship framework	03
Qualifications – competence and knowledge	03
Essential Skills	05
Essential Employability Skills	06
Employee Rights and Responsibilities	06
Welsh language	07
Equality and Diversity	08
On- and off-the-job training	08
Additional Occupational Requirements	09

Framework guidance for Issuing Authorities

This guidance is issued under section 18 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (ASCLA). Issuing authorities must have regard to this guidance when exercising their function of issuing Welsh apprenticeship frameworks. This guidance is intended to provide amplification and clarification for Issuing Authorities who, pursuant to Section 19 of the ASCLA, must be satisfied that frameworks meet the requirements contained in the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales (SASW). Framework developers should also refer to the Guidance to ensure that frameworks submitted to the Issuing Authorities are not rejected for non-compliance.

This guidance replaces the guidance contained in parts 2 and 3 of the SASW issued in May 2013¹

		Section Reference
Introduction		
G1.	By an Order made under The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (ASCLA) the <i>Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales (SASW)</i> was modified. SASW sets out the minimum statutory requirements to be included in a recognised Welsh apprenticeship framework.	Section 29 and Section 31
G2.	The Issuing Authorities designated by the Welsh Ministers, are responsible for ensuring that only those frameworks which comply with the SASW are issued and thereby recognised Welsh frameworks. Welsh issuing authorities should have regard to the SASW Guidance in reaching a decision on whether a framework submission complies with the SASW.	Sections 18 and 19
G3.	Modifications have been made to the original SASW to, amongst other things, allow “proxy” qualifications as a recognised alternative to Essential Skills, see G27 for further details. SASW has also been modified to allow greater flexibility in obtaining occupational competence by allowing learning to be underpinned by National Occupational Standard (NOS) where they exist, or industry-wide standards or professional standards where they do not. The final modification to SASW is to Employer Rights and Responsibilities (ERR) which are no longer compulsory in SASW frameworks see G33 for more details. Other consequential changes have also been made as well as some reordering. All the changes detailed above will come into effect on the 14th October 2016.	Section 29

¹ Guidance document no:105/2013

Apprenticeship Frameworks – General

<p>G4. An apprenticeship framework is the high level curriculum of learning and qualifications in a specific skill, trade or occupation that should be achieved by an apprentice in order to qualify for an apprenticeship certificate. An apprenticeship framework contains qualifications from the CQFW (The credit and qualification framework for Wales).</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
<p>G5. An apprenticeship is characterised by the acquisition of skills, understanding and experience gained through a workplace setting (on-the-job training) and learning which takes place away from the normal working environment (off-the-job training): i.e. learning that leads to the attainment of full competence. For this reason, the competencies qualification should include the majority of its assessment through evidence gathered from a workplace</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
<p>G6. An apprenticeship framework should specify any legal restrictions that may limit entry to the apprenticeship.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
<p>G7. An apprenticeship framework contains qualifications offered and quality assured by awarding bodies recognised by one of the statutory qualifications Regulators such as Qualifications Wales, OFQUAL, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, CCEA and Higher Education Institutions. Higher Apprenticeship frameworks may contain qualifications offered or quality assured by professional bodies. A framework should reflect the volume of learning required for an apprentice to achieve full competency in the skill, trade or occupation to which it relates. The size of a framework should ensure that it contains the volume of learning and transferable skills required, which on attainment, qualifies the apprentice to work in a range of situations.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
<p>G8. A framework should have a minimum of the equivalent of 37 CQFW Credits in size although many will be larger than this. As a guide, one credit is equal to around ten learning hours. 37 Credits equates to approximately 370 hours of total learning time using other qualification sizing systems such as Total Qualification Time (RQF) used in England</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
<p>G9. The level of a framework is determined by the level of the occupational competencies qualification it contains. For example, a Foundation Apprenticeship framework contains a competencies qualification at Level 2.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
<p>G10. Standard practice should be to review frameworks periodically to ensure they remain current. As a minimum, a framework should be reviewed at least every five years.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>

A framework may be reviewed and updated more frequently, should the skill, trade or occupation require it.	
G11. A framework should be developed and issued using the Apprenticeships Frameworks Online (AFO) database. It can be found at: http://www.afo.sscalliance.org/	Section 31 (2)
G12. Higher Apprenticeships should be developed in partnership with the relevant professional body or bodies (where they exist) where successful completion of such an apprenticeship is a recognised pathway to professional registration.	Section 31 (2)

Naming conventions for an apprenticeship framework

G13. Where a skill, trade or occupational area covers both Level 2 and Level 3, these levels should be combined together into one framework document. The framework should be given a title that reflects the occupational area and be identified by a 2 digit SOC Code (Standard Occupational Classification). Separate framework documents covering individual levels within the same skill, trade or occupational area should not be issued.	Section 31 (2)
G14. Higher Apprenticeship frameworks at Levels 4, 5, 6 or 7 may be issued separately. However, where progression routes are clear and overt, the levels should normally be combined together in one framework. Each framework should be identified by a 2 digit SOC Code.	Section 31
G15. A framework may include different 'pathways' that differentiate the range of different job roles available within the occupation. Each pathway should be identified by its 3 or 4 Digit SOC Code. Duplicate frameworks covering the same occupational area at the two digit SOC Code level should not be issued.	Section 31 (2)
G16. A framework title should not include the words "Foundation Apprenticeship", "Apprenticeship" or "Higher Apprenticeship".	Section 31
G17. Where a Higher Apprenticeship framework has been endorsed / recognised for entry by a professional body, the title of the framework may reflect terminology recognised by the sector.	Section 31 (2)

Qualifications – competence and knowledge

G18. Section 31 of ASCLA defines relevant occupational competencies as the competencies required to perform the skill, trade or occupation to which the framework relates at the level required in the framework. National	Section 31 (2)
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<p>Occupational Standard (NOS) where they exist, or industry-wide standards or professional standards where they do not should be used to underpin all vocational qualifications contained in an apprenticeship framework at any level (i.e. between levels 2 and 7). National Occupational Standards (NOS) where they exist, or industry-wide/ professional standards where they do not are employer-led specifications of competent performance, required in different sectors across the UK, which provide the technical requirements of an occupation as well as the necessary performance criteria. The relevant technical knowledge means the technical knowledge required to perform the skill, trade or occupation to which the framework relates at the level required in the framework</p>	
<p>G19. Where the knowledge and competence elements are combined and recognised as a single integrated qualification, the two elements should be separately identified and separately assessed. It is important to retain this distinction between the two elements to ensure apprentices not only demonstrate the competence to do the job, but also develop the underpinning technical skills, knowledge and understanding. This distinction between competence and knowledge allows individuals to gain credit towards an Apprenticeship through prior participation in other learning programmes.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
<p>G20. Where an apprenticeship framework includes separate competence and technical knowledge qualifications, the competence qualification should be nominated as the 'Competencies Qualification'. Where there is an integrated qualification, this will be the 'Competencies Qualification'. Under the standard completion conditions of the ASCLA, this is the qualification which should be completed while the apprentice is working under an Apprenticeship Agreement. However, the certifying authority has discretion to issue a certificate to apprentices who have completed the 'competencies qualification' prior to the apprenticeship. It is important that the 'competencies qualification' is, or includes, the competence elements as these are the skills which are practised and refined during the course of normal work duties, on employers' premises, using their tools and with real pressures and customers.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p> <p>Section 2</p> <p>Section 7 and 8</p>
<p>G21. An apprenticeship framework may allow for a choice of qualification by including a range of occupational competence, knowledge and integrated qualifications. Different apprentices may be suited to different types of qualifications, all of which should fulfil the requirements set out in the previous paragraphs. Only those qualifications specified by title may be recognised for the issue of an</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>

apprenticeship certificate. Alternative or similar qualifications that are not specified in a framework cannot be substituted.	
G22. Unless the knowledge requirements are specified through a Higher Education or professional qualification an apprenticeship framework should specify that the method of assessment of the competence and knowledge qualifications (or of the integrated competence/knowledge qualification) will be subject to any regulation by qualification regulators. Assessment of the knowledge qualification or element should be externally verified.	Section 31 (2)
G23. Vocational Degrees, Foundation Degrees, or HNDs and HNCs may be used to satisfy the relevant technical knowledge requirements for Higher Apprenticeship frameworks. They may also be used as a combined knowledge and competencies qualification provided the assessment methods satisfy the minimum requirements for work-based evidence are met.	Section 31 (2)
G24. A Higher Apprenticeship may specify a professional qualification as recognised by the sector.	Section 31 (2)
G25. A Higher Apprenticeship framework which contains a Higher Education degree should either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the specific qualification(s) by title and the name of the awarding organisation(s); or • The educational institution(s) offering the qualification(s); or • Clearly specify where the list of higher education qualifications recognised for apprenticeship certification can be found. 	Section 31 (2)

Essential Skills	
G26. As best practice all frameworks should specify the expected achievement levels of essential skills required for the relevant skill, trade or occupation.	Section 31 (2)
G27. An Apprenticeship framework should specify that an apprentice should achieve or have achieved one of the recognised “proxy” qualifications for the appropriate apprenticeship level, as detailed in the current published SASW. These attainments should be accepted as an alternative qualification for apprenticeship certification to satisfy the relevant Essential Skills component.	Section 31 (2)
G28. The issuing authority may at their discretion specify in a framework the acceptance of regulated qualifications that are equivalent or at a higher level to the proxies listed in	Section 31 (2)

SASW for Essential Skills in Communication and Application of Number. Any such qualifications must evidence completion of the competencies being assessed in the Essential Skills qualifications in communication and number.	
G29. ESW achieved in the context of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) can be accepted, provided the specific certification of the title(s) and level(s) of those ESW qualifications is provided. The WBQ certificate itself does not provide this specific evidence.	Section 31 (2)

Essential Employability Skills

G30. Learning outcomes in Essential Employability Skills may be included as an additional occupational requirement. Where Essential Employability Skills are included as a requirement for Welsh apprenticeship certification, then the achievement of all the Wider Key Skills qualifications in Improving Own Learning and Performance, Problem Solving or Working with Others at the level specified may be accepted as a proxy achievement.	Section 31 (2)
G31. An apprenticeship framework may specify as a Welsh Certificate requirement that Essential Employability Skills are required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To at least level 1 in a Foundation level framework; • To at least level 2 in an Apprenticeship framework; • To at least level 2 or above in a Higher Apprenticeship framework at level 4. 	Section 31 (2)
G32. As good practice a framework developer, in consultation with employers in the sector and other relevant partners, may determine whether Essential Employability Skills are directly relevant to effective performance in the particular skill, trade or occupation or the sector.	Section 31 (2)
G33. As good practice the framework may contain reasons why Essential Employability Skills have not been specified or may specify where the achievement of Essential Employability Skills is located, either within a qualification or elsewhere, if appropriate.	Section 31 (2)

Employee Rights and Responsibilities

G34. Previous versions of SASW contained in Part 1 requirements regarding ‘Employee Rights and Responsibilities’ (ERR). These aspects of apprenticeship training delivery are no longer required for mandatory inclusion in a framework however framework developers may as best practice include ERR in a framework where	Section 31 (2)
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the skill, trade or occupation has a specific need of them.	
<p>G35. If ERR is undertaken as part of an apprentice framework the apprentice should demonstrate that he/she:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows and understands the range of employer and employee statutory rights and responsibilities under Employment Law. This should cover the apprentice’s rights and responsibilities under the Employment Rights Act 1996, Equality Act 2010 and Health & Safety legislation, together with the responsibilities and duties of employers; • Knows and understands the procedures and documentation in their organisation which recognises and protects their relationship with their employer. Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity training should be an integral part of the apprentice’s learning programme; • Knows and understands the range of sources of information and advice available to them on their employment rights and responsibilities. Details of Access to Work and Additional Learning Support should be included in the programme; • Understands the role played by their occupation within their organisation and industry; • Has an informed view of the types of career pathways that are open to them; • Knows the types of representative bodies and understands their relevance to their skill, trade or occupation, and their main roles and responsibilities; • Knows where and how to get information and advice on their industry, occupation, training and career; • Can describe and work within their organisation’s principles and codes of practice; and • Recognises and can form a view on issues of public concern that affect their organisation and industry. 	Section 31 (2)

Welsh Language		
<p>G36. The needs of Welsh speaking apprentices should be considered and opportunities to learn through the medium of the Welsh language should be promoted. A Good Practice Guide for sector and standard setting bodies has been published by the Welsh Government to assist in determining the demand for Welsh language skills, Welsh translations of national occupational standards and vocational qualifications through the medium of Welsh. The Guide can be found on the Welsh Government website at:</p>	Section 31 (2)	

Equality and Diversity

<p>G37. It is important that apprenticeship frameworks are inclusive and can demonstrate an active approach to identifying and removing barriers to entry and progression. Frameworks should advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those persons who do not. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Apprenticeship frameworks should promote equality of access for those with a learning difficulty.</p> <p>Specifically, a framework should include a statement setting out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether and where there is under-representation within the occupational area; • The barriers to entry and progression for individuals within these groups; and • What action has been taken to remove these barriers or to justify them objectively for the skill, trade or occupation. 	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
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On- and off-the-job training

<p>G38. The balance of on-and off-the-job training will vary depending on the nature of the framework. All on-and off-the-job training specified in the framework and carried out whilst working under an apprenticeship agreement should be delivered within contracted working hours.</p> <p>The balance of on- and off-the-job training for individual apprentices will vary depending on the previous experience and attainment of the learner.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>
<p>G39. An apprenticeship framework should specify that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-the-job and off-the-job learning hours are both planned, reviewed and evaluated jointly between the apprentice and: a tutor, or teacher; their workplace supervisor or manager; or their coach or mentor; • On-the-job and off-the-job training support via a tutor, teacher, supervisor, manager, coach or mentor is made available when required by the apprentice; • On-the-job and off-the-job learning hours are delivered through one or more of the following methods: individual and group teaching; e-learning; distance learning; coaching; mentoring; 	<p>Section 31 (2)</p>

<p>observation, feedback & assessment; collaborative/networked learning with peers; guided study;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-the-job learning is characterised by formal or planned taught sessions delivered predominantly by qualified training staff; • On-the-job learning hours are those which enable the apprentice to demonstrate practical job-related skills and to practice and apply these in the context of the job. This type of learning will be delivered in the workplace. 	
Additional Occupational Requirements	
<p>G40. A framework may specify other programmes of learning to meet specific occupational requirements. These programmes should specify the high level learning outcomes to be attained. The learning outcomes may be specified as a formal qualification or be capable of independent assessment where attainment is not verified by means of a qualification.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2) (a)</p>
<p>G41. Where a skill, trade or occupation requires a recognised 'Licence to Practise' for a person to be deemed competent (for example, Gas Boiler Fitting), then this requirement may be included as mandatory in an apprenticeship (Level 3) framework or above.</p>	<p>Section 31 (2) (a)</p>