Process for performing initial assessments of apprentices prior learning

Introduction

As specialists in the provision of apprenticeships for the passenger transport industry the majority of our apprentices are over 18 years of age.

We focus on the skills that support an apprentices’ employability. This supports their progression within their employment and sits alongside their employers’ application processes which, for example, may include a medical (a pre-requisite for a Passenger Carrying Vehicle licence).

Purpose of the process for the initial assessment of apprentice prior learning

The purpose of this process is to enable The Development Fund Ltd. to manage and plan the learning for each apprentice, whilst taking account of the apprentices’ starting point in terms of existing knowledge, skills and behaviours. It aids the planning of the apprentices’ learning programme, individual learning plan (ILP) and establishes base data at the start of the apprentice journey.

It helps us to better understand each apprentices’ “learner journey” and to develop a sufficient and detailed understanding of expected progress, meaning that we are in a strong position to quickly take action should apprentices start to fall behind.

The aim of the initial assessment is to ensure that:

- The apprentice journey is planned to meet their needs as individuals and as employees within their employing company
- The full occupational profile and learning of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required is addressed.

The process includes:

- Review of the apprentice’s personal learning record
- Review of the apprentice’s previous qualification(s) against the apprenticeship Standard
- Identification and analysis of skill gaps and how the apprenticeship will address these
- The provision of initial advice and guidance
- Identification of issues or potential issues around welfare, safeguarding and Prevent.

The process is closely linked to the process for delivering English and maths to apprentices and should be read in conjunction with that process.

Process of initial assessment of prior learning

Overview

The process forms part of The Development Fund Ltd. apprentice induction process. Apprenticeships delivered by The Development Fund Ltd. are designed to ensure apprentices receive a personalised learning journey, and that progress and impact of the learning is measured and recorded.

For the past 13 years, we have specialised in providing training for workers in the passenger transport industry, consequently we have a comprehensive understanding of the roles into which apprentices are employed. This means that an assessment of apprentices' current skills, knowledge and behaviours against the requirements of their chosen apprenticeship Standard takes place once the client company has recruited that employee as an apprentice. We then devise a bespoke individual learning plan (ILP), drawn up and agreed between the apprentice trainer, the employer and the apprentice themselves. The learning plan focuses on those areas where the apprentice has the largest gaps against the levels stated in the Standard and ensures that a stretching programme of learning takes place.

**STEP ONE:** Orientation; the apprentice and the apprentice trainer meet for a familiarisation session. During this session the trainer will talk to the apprentice about their education and training experiences, career aspirations, and what their current job entails. We form a picture of their learning style and personal characteristics and of any underpinning skills they require, including communication, literacy, numeracy and language.

**STEP TWO:** Information is gathered to support the creation of the Commitment Statement. We confirm that the apprentice and their employer has selected the best Standard for them.

**STEP THREE:** Analysis of prior attainment and diagnostic tests; this step of the process looks at previous qualifications and experience and relates them to the knowledge, skills and behaviour specified in the Standard. This informs the process...
for delivering English and maths to apprentices. Inconsistencies are investigated to ensure eligibility criteria (where relevant) can be met. For example, where they are claiming exemption from English and maths, we double check that they had passed the GCSE at a high enough grade to be eligible for an exemption from the functional skills. (See process for delivering English and maths to apprentices).

Within three months of the start of their apprenticeship we ensure we have completed the first three steps of the process.

**STEP FOUR:** Analysis of immediate job /role skill needs. This step is informed by the employer who we will ask to identify any immediate or urgent gaps (especially if they appertain to the health, safety and welfare of the apprentice). This enables us to sequence the learning to meet the needs of the employers’ business.

**STEP FIVE:** Diagnostic test results highlight skill gaps and functional skills needs. A report is constructed to feed into the ILP and functional skills achievement plan (or exemptions where this is the case).

**STEP SIX:** Fair access requirements identified, this may relate to our equality and diversity policy. Any measures required to ensure the apprentice has as equal a chance of success as any other apprentice can be built into the individual learning plan.

**STEP SEVEN:** ILP created to ensure the full occupational profile and learning of all of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required is addressed.

**STEP EIGHT:** Milestones are agreed and target achievement levels set for the duration of the apprenticeship programme. Stretch targets are included to encourage apprentices to work at Distinction level (where relevant).

All eight steps above are recorded to provide an audit of activity that feeds into the 20% off the job element of the apprenticeship as well as enabling us to start to track the progress apprentices make and henceforward keep them on target.

**Initial Assessment Provider**

We use ForSkills, to provide initial assessment of prior learning. They have an e-assessment that is sold on a user-based licence which is cost effective for our employer clients. We mainly use BKSB for functional skills. We use both ForSkills and BKSB for the provision of learning modules.

We regularly review the content, approach and functionality of these specialist providers of initial assessment. We look at:

- Accessibility of learning and resources for all apprentices

May 2019

Review Date: May 2020
• The extent to which the provider’s software satisfies ESFA’s funding and Ofsted’s requirements in respect of data to show achievement and progression
• The range of learning resources to meet different learning styles and needs
• Affordability

This activity helps us to identify and agree the purposes of our initial assessment activities and plan how to make improvements.

Responsibility

Responsibility for the Process for performing initial assessments of apprentices prior learning’ rests with the Quality Manager, Sally Smith. Oversight is provided by the Operations Director.

Review

This process is reviewed annually by the Managing Director and senior management team.