

Mandatory Qualifications Criteria

Introduction

This document sets out the criteria for mandating qualifications in apprenticeships.

A mandated qualification is a qualification which, in IfATE's opinion, meets the criteria set out below in relation to an occupation.

Where a qualification is mandated, it must be undertaken by all apprentices on a specific apprenticeship programme.

This document comes into effect for all new apprenticeships on 6 July 2023. It comes into effect for existing apprenticeships, and those currently undergoing revision, in line with the arrangements set out in the accompanying guidance.

The Criteria

1 Overview

- 1.1 A mandated qualification must fulfil one of the following three requirements:
 - a) Regulatory or legal requirement
 - b) Professional body requirement
 - c) Labour market requirement

2 Regulatory or legal requirement

- 2.1 The regulatory or legal requirement is fulfilled when a qualification is required by a regulator or other body with legal oversight of an occupation, often to confer a formal licence to practice the occupation.
- 2.2 Evidence must be submitted to demonstrate the regulatory or legal requirement. This must include the specific regulation or legal requirement which refers to the qualification(s).

3 Professional body requirement

- 3.1 The professional body requirement is fulfilled when a qualification is required by a professional body for professional registration.
- 3.2 The following evidence must be submitted to demonstrate eligibility as a professional body requirement:
 - 3.2.1 Evidence that the named qualifications included in the

mandate are an essential requirement for professional registration. This should explicitly reference the qualifications required to meet the professional body's requirements.

- 3.2.2 Evidence of the value and necessity of professional body registration at the appropriate level, when entering a given occupation
- 3.2.3 Evidence that the professional body has worked with Trailblazers to develop the occupational standard to align the apprenticeship with the body's professional standards for recognition.
- 3.2.4 Evidence that an apprentice would be eligible for registration, and an indication of the level of membership where applicable.

4 Labour market requirement

- 4.1 The labour market requirement is fulfilled when a qualification is required by employers in the labour market on such a widespread basis that an apprentice would be at a significant disadvantage without it.
- 4.2 An evidence pack must be submitted to demonstrate:
 - 4.2.1 The requirement for the specific qualification in recruitment practices in the given occupation
 - 4.2.2 How employers have been engaged, and continue to be engaged, in the design and development of the qualification to ensure it continues to meet their needs
- 4.3 A rationale must be submitted which references the evidence supplied and explains how that evidence demonstrates employer requirement for the qualification, and any disadvantage that an apprentice would be subject to without the qualification.

5 Qualification mandates

- 5.1 Where multiple qualifications can fulfil a qualification mandate, each individual qualification must be identified and submitted to IfATE.
- 5.2 Trailblazers must provide:
 - 5.2.1 A high-level description of the qualifications for inclusion, specifying the qualification level and a concise indication of the content of the qualification.

- 5.2.2 A list of each qualification that fulfils this description.
- 5.3 For each qualification identified in 5.2.2, Trailblazers must supply the following information:
 - 5.3.1 The full qualification title
 - 5.3.2 The level of the qualification
 - 5.3.3 The name of the awarding body
 - 5.3.4 The hours of guided learning assigned to the qualification
 - 5.3.5 The Ofqual qualification number (QN), where applicable
 - 5.3.6 The sector subject area (SSA), where applicable

6 Equivalent qualifications

- 6.1 Where a qualification is mandated, the suitability and subsequent inclusion of any equivalent approved Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ), approved level 2 or level 3 qualification, or any other future approved qualification, must be considered.
- 6.2 Where a comparable approved qualification exists, it must be reviewed by the Trailblazer to consider its suitability for inclusion in the qualification's mandate.
- 6.3 Where the approved qualification is found to be unsuitable, the Trailblazer must advise IfATE of this view by providing a rationale for IfATE to take into consideration.

7 Content of the mandated qualification

- 7.1 The content of a mandated qualification must be set at the same level as the apprenticeship, or at a lower level than the apprenticeship.
- 7.2 The content of a mandated qualification must align to the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship's occupational standard.
- 7.3 Where a qualification delivers content which goes beyond the knowledge, skills and behaviours currently set out in the occupational standard, the Trailblazer must either:
 - 7.3.1 Revise the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements in the standard to describe the qualification's additional content, where that content is determined to be essential

- 7.3.2 Work with awarding bodies to ensure the mandated qualification does not deliver content to apprentices which goes beyond the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the occupational standard
- 7.3.3 In exceptional circumstances, provide a rationale to IfATE, with supporting evidence, explaining why the qualification's content is essential, but cannot be incorporated into the occupational standard

8 Integration of the mandated qualification and the End-Point Assessment (EPA)

- 8.1 Where it is possible to do so, mandated qualification assessment(s) must be integrated with the apprenticeship end-point assessment.
- 8.2 Integration here means designing the assessment of apprentices across both the mandated qualification and the end-point assessment in such a way that:
 - 8.2.1 The award or certification of both the qualification and the apprenticeship are aligned and take place within the same period
 - 8.2.2 The award or certification of both the qualification and the apprenticeship is contingent upon the apprentice being awarded a passing grade for at least one shared assessment
 - 8.2.3 All reasonable steps are taken to remove duplicated assessment across the integrated qualification and the EPA
- 8.3 Where multiple qualifications fulfil a single mandate and those qualifications are integrated, all qualifications fulfilling the single mandate must be integrated.
- 8.4 Where multiple qualifications fulfil a single mandate and those qualifications are integrated, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure the design of the integrated assessment(s) is comparable.
- 8.5 Where multiple qualifications fulfil a single mandate and those qualifications are integrated, each qualification assessment(s) that is integrated must assess the same subset of the knowledge skills and behaviours set out in the occupational standard.
- 8.6 Only one subset of the occupational standard's knowledge, skills and behaviours must be identified for integrated assessment.

- 8.7 The defined subset must not be assessed through a combination of multiple, small, independently awarded qualifications, offered either by the same awarding body or across multiple awarding bodies.
- 8.8 The defined subset may be assessed through more than one qualification unit's assessment.
- 8.9 The defined subset may be assessed through either one single assessment or multiple assessments.

9 Setting, invigilation and assessment judgements of integrated assessments

- 9.1 All integrated assessments must be set by the qualification's awarding body.
- 9.2 Integrated assessments must not be adapted, other than to provide a reasonable adjustment or in order to comply with the awarding body's policy for making reasonable adjustments and special consideration.
- 9.3 For integrated or parts of integrated written and onscreen assessments, assessments must not be invigilated solely by a person who has delivered the assessment's content to the apprentice(s).
- 9.4 Integrated or parts of the integrated assessment must be administered by a person suitably qualified but who has not delivered the assessed content to the apprentice nor has a vested interest in the apprentice's assessment outcomes.
- 9.5 Where this is not possible, by exception a person who has delivered the assessed content may administer the assessment, providing they are not the sole assessor.
- 9.6 The assessment judgements of all integrated assessments, whether written, on-screen, practical, or by any other means, must be made by:
 - a) The awarding body
 - b) Independent persons appointed by the awarding body
 - c) Centre staff, by exception and in line with the expectations set out in the guidance that accompanies these criteria
 - d) A combination of the above