



# Initial Assessment Policy and RPL Process

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## Introduction

Prior to an apprenticeship commencing, as a training provider, the University of Westminster must conduct an Initial Assessment to establish if the learner and programme are eligible for funding. We will assess an individual's prior learning to establish a 'starting point', or baseline, for the apprentice. This assessment informs how much of the apprenticeship training content the apprentice requires. It checks that the apprenticeship is an appropriate training programme for the individual. The assessment establishes the eligibility of the remaining content in the context of the minimum requirements for off-the-job training and duration. Assessment of an apprentice's current competence, through recognition of prior learning and experience, forms part of our Initial Assessment process.

This process establishes guidelines for conducting an Initial Assessment and determining deductions in price or duration of an apprenticeship programme and competence in the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs) of the relevant apprenticeship standard. The process ensures that adjustments are made fairly and documented through the approval and sign-off by the apprentice, employer, and university. This process applies to all apprenticeship programmes offered by University of Westminster.

This process has been developed in accordance with the Initial Assessment requirements of the 24/25 ESFA Funding Rules which are available [here](#) and the further guidance on Initial Assessment which is available [here](#).

## What is an Initial Assessment?

An Initial Assessment compares apprentices existing Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours with those required in the relevant apprenticeship standard to achieve occupational competence. This results in a reduction of course duration and/or cost that accounts for relevant prior learning. An Initial Assessment establishes that an individual is eligible for an apprenticeship by meeting the minimum requirements for off-the-job training and duration, as defined by the ESFA funding rules.

## How we conduct an Initial Assessment

The Initial Assessment is undertaken on the Student Record System (SRS) (paperless) and in Aptem in Stages 1 and 2 of the onboarding process. Once the Initial Assessment has been completed, all three parties (apprentice, employer and university) agree on the outcome of the Initial Assessment so that all parties have a shared understanding of the programme and their roles and responsibilities. This outcome is documented in Outcome of the Initial Assessment form in Aptem.

## Process for approval of the Initial Assessment

### By the University, apprentice and employer

For learners who have a straightforward outcome of the Initial Assessment, the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form will be completed and signed online by all parties in Aptem.

The University will conduct Teams meetings with learners:

1. Who do not have relevant qualifications to be granted advanced entry but have scored highly on the skills scan and have provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate competency;
2. Where there is a query about their job description which cannot be resolved over emails;
3. Who require L2 English and/or Maths.

The apprentice and employer will be invited to attend this meeting and the outcomes will be document, and signed, in Aptem.

## Reductions of duration and price

Where the University identifies relevant prior learning and/or experience through the Initial Assessment process, this results in a reduction in the apprenticeship programme's content, duration, and/or price. If there is insufficient content remaining (i.e. less than 12 months), the individual will be ineligible for apprenticeship funding.

Reductions in the price or duration of the apprenticeship programme may be considered based on the following factors:

- a) Qualifications: If the apprentice holds qualifications aligned with the apprenticeship programme and apprenticeship standards, deductions may be applied. The specific amount of deduction will be determined based on the Initial Assessment findings.
- b) Competence in KSBs: If the apprentice demonstrates competence in the identified KSBs during the Initial Assessment, deductions may be considered. The level of competence will be assessed against the expected proficiency for the apprenticeship programme.

The section below outlines circumstances when reductions in price and/or duration may be made by the University.

### **Reductions based on prior qualifications**

1. Learners who meet the entry conditions listed on westminster.ac.uk for the programme may undertake the full duration of the apprenticeship and the full price will apply with the exception of those learners who have a 3,4 or 5 outcome of the skills scan and provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate competency.
2. As determined by the University's Recognition of Prior Learning Regulations, the duration and/price of the apprenticeship may be reduced based on relevant prior qualifications (credit transfers) such as HNCs/HNDs and/or transfer of credits from other institutions.
3. If an applicant holds a qualification at the same or higher level than the apprenticeship that they are applying for, they can join the programme if:
  - a. they will be developing substantive new Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs)
  - b. the content of the training is materially different from any prior qualification or previous apprenticeship.
  - c. the Standard is linked to regulated professions (e.g. the nursing associate standard) and requires that prior learning, including experience in the workplace, is formally accredited. Where training needs to be repeated to meet the accreditation requirements of a regulated profession, then this is eligible learning; this will be documented as part of the assessment.
  - d. where relevant, the University will use the information gained from the Initial Assessment to justify an apprenticeship at the same or lower level than a qualification the apprentice already holds (for example, the Personal Learning Record and the skills scan should provide evidence that such a programme will lead to substantive new skills and that the learning is materially different).

### **Reductions based on the outcomes of the Skills Scan**

1. The skills scan will assess the applicant's competence against each Knowledge, Skill, and Behaviour (KSB) to determine the duration and price of the apprenticeship.
2. Applicants will self-assess their competency on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates not yet developed and 5 indicates full competence.
3. The University delivers modules which are mapped to the KSBs. Each module may be mapped to one or more KSBs and each KSB may be mapped to one or more modules. All learners from the same cohort attend classes together. Therefore, the University does not reduce the duration of the apprenticeship based on the outcome of the skills scan alone. Irrespective of their competence in the KSB (Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours), the apprentice must still complete the module learning and assessment. The duration of the apprenticeship can only be reduced based on relevant prior qualifications (credit transfers) or equivalent professional experience (as assessed by the Course Leader).
4. However, applicants who do not hold relevant prior qualifications (credit transfers), may be granted a reduced price if the skills scan outcome demonstrates they are already occupationally competent and evidence is provided to support this outcome.
5. If an applicant scores 1-2 on the skills scan across the range of KSBs, they are required to develop substantive new knowledge and will be charged the full price.

6. If an applicant scores 3, 4 or 5 on the skills scan, they need to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate occupational competence for the relevant KSBs. This evidence should include examples of how they have developed relevant knowledge, skill or behaviour in the workplace, which should also include a confirmation from the employer and their views on the level the apprentice is working at.
7. The learners who have scored highly on the skills scan (3, 4 and 5s) and have provided sufficient evidence to support this, have demonstrated that they only need to develop some or no new knowledge in that area.
8. The evidence provided by the applicant will be discussed in the 'Outcome of the Initial Assessment' meeting between the employer, apprentice, and university.
9. If the evidence is deemed sufficient, the price of the apprenticeship will be reduced accordingly.
10. The reduced price based on the outcome of the skills scan is recommended by the Apprenticeship Team and approved by the Head of School. The agreed price is then confirmed on the ILR record, Training Agreement and on the Apprenticeship Service.

### **Approval of reductions in duration and/or price**

The Apprenticeships Team will propose the deduction and ensure the coordination of the deductions process. If the deduction is based on prior qualification, the prices as confirmed in the 24/25 apprenticeship fees document will be used. If the price is reduced based on the skills scan outcome, the Apprenticeship Team will propose a price that will be approved by the Head of School.

The programme duration will only be reduced if the applicant is eligible for advanced entry. The Course Leader or nominee will validate the Initial Assessment results, deductions, and provide necessary input regarding the programme's content and learning outcomes. All learners are enrolled on open courses which means that the programme content and learning outcomes do not change.

### **Documentation and Approval**

To formalise deductions in price or duration, the following approvals are required:

- a. Apprentice: The apprentice will review and acknowledge the adjusted price or duration of the apprenticeship programme by signing an approval form (Outcome of the Initial Assessment in Aptem).
- b. Employer: The employer will review and agree to the adjusted terms by signing the approval form (Outcome of the Initial Assessment in Aptem)
- c. University: The university delivering will review and confirm the deductions based on the Initial Assessment outcomes by signing the approval form (Outcome of the Initial Assessment in Aptem)

## Record Keeping

All documentation related to the Initial Assessment, deductions, and approvals, including the approval form or agreement, will be securely stored in the apprentice's records.

Records will be maintained for audit purposes, ensuring transparency and compliance with relevant regulations.

## How do we comply with the requirements for the Initial Assessment

The tables below outline how the University complies with the different requirements of Initial Assessment as outlined in the 2024/25 ESFA Funding Rules.

The Initial Assessment includes an assessment of:

- Learner eligibility
- Programme eligibility, after accounting for all relevant prior learning and experience
- Learning support
- English and maths support

The outcome of the Initial Assessment is recorded and shared with the learner and their employer.

### Learner eligibility

Learner eligibility is checked in Aptem during onboarding in Stage 1 of Aptem. Evidence is available in the 'Extended ILR form' which is completed by the learner and in the 'Employer Information Request form' which is completed by the employer. Both forms are reviewed by the Apprenticeships Team (AT) and if the learner meets the eligibility criteria, a declaration is signed by the AT and the application progresses to Stage 2.

<b>Evidence requirement</b>	<b>Where is the relevant evidence stored?</b>
Confirmation that the provider has seen the learner's identity documents or immigration permission to verify their residency eligibility in line with Annex A.	Passports/photo IDs are checked during onboarding and at enrolment.  Extended ILR (Aptem Stage 1)
Confirmation of the apprentice's date of birth.	
Confirmation that the provider is satisfied the learner is eligible for funding and (where necessary) where a learner's permission to stay has expired, they must hold evidence that an application to remain has been made	Extended ILR (Aptem Stage 1)

<p>Evidence that the apprentice will spend at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship including time spent on off-the-job training. Where the business footprint is larger than England this could include a roster for a typical month for the apprentice along with written confirmation from the employer.</p>	<p>Employer Information Request form )</p>
<p>Evidence of employment to confirm that the apprentice is employed by that employer or a connected company or charity as defined by HMRC. This can be a relevant extract from a contract of employment, or it could be a signed declaration by the employer.</p>	<p>Employer Information Request form and employment contract attached to the learner's profile in Aptem</p>
<p>Confirmation that the apprentice is not:</p> <p>Enrolled on another apprenticeship.</p> <p>Enrolled on a Department for Education (DfE) funded Higher Education (HE) / Further Education (FE) programme (excluding Adult Education Budget) where that programme is more than 4 weeks from completion.</p> <p>Enrolled on an AEB funded programme where that programme does not comply with rules 23.11. The provider must confirm the type of evidence they have seen to satisfy that</p>	<p>Extended ILR (Aptem Stage 1) and Employer Information Request form</p>

## Programme eligibility (Recognition of prior learning and experience)

*After accounting for all relevant prior learning and experience*

*The confirmation of programme eligibility is carried out by the University, after the apprentice and employer have provided all the required information and evidence. This information is provided during the application for a place on the apprenticeship (on our Student Records System) and then in Aptem Stages 1 and 2.*

Evidence requirement	Where is the relevant evidence stored?
<p>The University has had a discussion with the learner about the likelihood of relevant prior learning against the proposed apprenticeship standard.</p> <p>Checked the individual's personal learning record. Where this information is unavailable or an apprentice is unable to provide evidence of prior attainment, please refer to guidance get a replacement exam certificate <a href="#">here</a>. Evidence of proof of equivalency from UK European Network of Information Centres in the European Region (ENIC) can be used where an individual has an international qualification.</p>	<p>Prior qualifications are discussed on Business Development calls with applicants and employers.</p> <p>Qualifications are checked and stored on the Student Record System; if a learner meets the academic entry requirements as published on <a href="http://www.westminster.ac.uk">www.westminster.ac.uk</a>, their application is progressed to Stage 1 in Aptem.</p> <p>Personal Learning Records (PLR) are checked during Stage 2 in Aptem (Aptem is linked to the PLR database)</p>
<p>Conducted a skills scan against the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the proposed apprenticeship standard and where relevant, has supplemented this with additional diagnostic testing, of either occupational competence or of English and Maths prior attainment.</p>	<p>Skills Scan and Basic Key Skills Builder (BKSB) English and Maths Initial and Diagnostic Assessments (Aptem Stage 2)</p>
<p>Where relevant prior learning and experience does not exist, the provider has recorded this and the reason for this assessment. This has been agreed with the employer.</p> <p>Summarised the impact of the prior learning assessment, including whether, and by how much, the apprenticeship content and duration has been reduced. This summary confirms that the resulting apprenticeship meets the funding rules in relation to the minimum duration and off-the-job training.</p>	<p>Summary statement on the 'Outcome of the Initial Assessment' form: this will be added for all learners and will include information on their prior qualifications, RP(E)L process if applicable and on the outcome of the skills scan. The Apprenticeship's university qualification component will require adherence to the University's RP(E)L process. Supporting evidence for those who ranked 3, 4 or 5 on the skills scan will also be saved on the learner's record. (Aptem).</p> <p>This summary statement is also added to the Training Plan.</p>



Where content is to be omitted from the training plan, this has been shown as a volume of off-the-job training hours.	Training Plan
Where the standard is linked to a regulated profession, and this impacts the reduction, this has been documented.	N/A
Calculated the reduction in price by following the example set out in paragraph 28.2 and has split the outcome over fields TNP1 and TNP2 in the ILR.	Pricelist for Apprenticeships

### Learning support

Evidence requirement	Where is the relevant evidence stored
Where the provider has identified a learning difficulty or disability, they must (1) evidence that an assessment has been carried out and hold a copy of the assessment results which identifies the apprentice's learning difficulty or disability; (2) evidence/details of the reasonable adjustments that are necessary to enable the apprentice to complete the apprenticeship on which they are enrolled; and (3) include a description of how progress towards the completion of the apprenticeship would be directly impacted if the reasonable adjustments listed were not put in place for the apprentice.	Learners self-declare if they have a disability on the 'extended ILR' (Aptem Stage 1)  All learners who self-declare are then referred to the University Disability Support Service (DLS). Learners complete registration with DLS post-enrolment DLS will evaluate the apprentice's circumstances and provide a form for reasonable adjustments to assist with their studies.

<p>The provider has documented evidence of how they plan to deliver the necessary reasonable adjustments throughout the apprenticeship. This plan has been agreed and signed-off by the apprentice, prior to a claim for learning support funding being made, and where the apprentice has given consent this information has been shared with their employer.</p>	<p>All learners who self-declare are then referred to the University Disability Support Service (DLS). Learners complete registration with the DLS post-enrolment.</p> <p>During the discussions on the outcome of the Initial Assessment (Aptem Stage 3) the university will discuss the DLS process and options with the apprentice and their employer, should the apprentice provide consent.</p> <p>The University does not claim for learning support funding from the ESFA for apprentices.</p>
<p>For the months where learning support funding is claimed, the provider has evidence and documented details of the necessary reasonable adjustments that have been delivered in that period. Learning support funding will only be paid in months where the reasonable adjustments are required and are being delivered. Where costs exceed £150 per month the provider must provide invoices to evidence the actual costs incurred (claimed via the Earnings Adjustment Statement).</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>The University does not claim for learning support funding from the ESFA for apprentices.</p>
<p>The provider has documented evidence of reviews being undertaken, at least every 3 calendar months, throughout the apprenticeship to ensure that reasonable adjustments are still necessary and appropriate (for the apprenticeship). This evidence confirms the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments and how these have been adapted where necessary – evidence should also confirm the month(s), where claims have been made, are accurate. Where amendments to the original plan are</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>The University does not claim for learning support funding from the ESFA for apprentices.</p>

required, these will need to be documented, signed-off by the apprentice and evidenced accordingly.	
Where exceptional learning support (ELS) is claimed for an apprentice, the provider has the application and supporting evidence for this claim. This includes details of the reasonable adjustments and the actual costs incurred.	N/A  The University does not claim for learning support funding from the ESFA for apprentices.

### English and Maths Support

Evidence requirement	Where is the relevant evidence stored?
Details of how English and Maths will be delivered, including a plan of delivery and evidence of delivery taking place against that plan.	Training Plan
All Initial Assessments for English and Maths, including evidence of prior attainment. Please also refer to the evidence requirements for recognition of prior learning and experience	BKSB Assessment (Aptem Stage 2)  Level 2 qualifications are stored in SRS and Aptem  Communicate BKSB results to Course Leader and Skills Coach / Reviewer (if Level 1 or if they don't have L2 qualifications)

<p>Additional information where the apprentice is assessed as exempt from the normal English and Maths requirements. In these circumstances the provider must also include:</p> <p>A copy of the authorisation by an appropriate professional, for example the head of special education needs (SEN) or student support; or Evidence of how the apprentice’s learning difficulty or disability affects their English and / or Maths abilities;  The apprentice’s recommended learning plan to achieve entry level 3 in English and / or Maths (as appropriate); and  The apprentice’s education, health and care (EHC) plan (or one of the legacy equivalents: a statement of special educational need (SEN) or learning difficulty assessment (LDA)).</p>	<p>N/A</p>

**Outcome of the Initial Assessment**

Evidence requirement	Where is the relevant evidence stored?
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<p>Confirmation, after completing the initial assessment, that both the individual and the programme are eligible for funding. The initial assessment and its outcome have been discussed face to face or virtually with the employer and apprentice, has been agreed / shared via email or by embedding it in the signed training plan. There is evidence that the employer agrees with the information provided (this could be in the form of an email or a signed training plan which has incorporated the initial assessment information).</p>	<p>All employers and apprentices will be required to review and sign the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and the Training Plan.</p> <p>All employers will have a chance to give feedback and contribute to the Outcome of the Initial Assessment (Aptem)</p>
<p>Taken account of relevant prior learning and experience, and relevant learning difficulties and / or disabilities, in the design and proposed delivery of the apprenticeship and has explained to the employer and apprentice how this information has informed a tailored training plan.</p>	<p>The Outcome of the Initial Assessment form and Training Plan.</p>

The provider must also discuss and agree with the employer:

<b>Evidence requirement</b>	<b>Where is the relevant evidence stored?</b>
<p>That an apprenticeship is the most appropriate training programme for the individual;</p>	<p>Statement with employer's confirmation on the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem)</p>
<p>That all relevant prior learning and experience has been identified and properly accounted for in the design of the training plan, which has been adjusted accordingly;</p>	<p>Statement with employer's confirmation on the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem)</p>

That the training plan aligns with an approved apprenticeship standard, at the most appropriate level;	Statement with employer's confirmation on the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem)
That the individual's job role has a productive purpose and there is a direct link between the selected apprenticeship standard and the individual's job role;	Statement with employer's confirmation on the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem)
How all parties will work together to achieve the apprenticeship (i.e. roles and responsibilities of the provider, employer and apprentice).	Roles and responsibilities for all parties are included in the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form that all parties sign (Aptem )
The price of the apprenticeship (see paragraph 134). It must be clear to the employer from the outset how much they will need to contribute (if applicable).	The price is confirmed in the Training Agreement which is issued before the apprentice starts the programme.
Provide the individual with the appropriate support and supervision to carry out both their job role and their apprenticeship (including the endpoint assessment);	Statement with employer's confirmation on the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and Training Plan
Release the apprentice for off-the-job training (and English and Maths training if required), as documented in the training plan;	Statement with employer's confirmation on the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and Training Plan
Provide the apprentice with the opportunity and support to embed and consolidate the knowledge, skills and behaviours, gained through off the-job training, into the workplace; and	Statement with employer's confirmation on the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and Training Plan
Take part or provide input into progress reviews.	Statement with employer's confirmation on the Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and Training Plan

<p>Confirmed, after completing the Initial Assessment (as outlined in paragraph 16), that both the individual and the programme are eligible for funding. The Initial Assessment and its outcome has been documented and has been agreed with the employer and apprentice. Where the employer is not able to attend the discussion, there must be evidence that they were given the opportunity to contribute (this can be an email from the provider to the employer) and that they have been sent the relevant information after the discussion, for their review and signature.</p>	<p>Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and Training Plan</p>
<p>Taken account of relevant prior learning and experience, and relevant learning difficulties and / or disabilities, in the design and proposed delivery of the apprenticeship and has explained to the employer and apprentice how this information has informed a tailored training plan.</p>	<p>Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and Training Plan</p> <p>Further information on the University's support available to learners with disabilities is available <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>Additional Needs do not impact on the duration of the programme not price reduction. The delivery of the apprenticeship may be adjusted to reflect learning difficulties and/or disabilities following registration with the University's Disability Learning Support (DLS) service – for example, learners may be given extra-time to complete assessments as outlined in the Reasonable Adjustments form.</p>
<p>Agreed with the employer the conditions listed in paragraph 49</p>	<p>Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and Training Plan</p>
<p>The employer has: Agreed to the conditions listed in paragraph 50</p>	<p>Outcome of the Initial Assessment form (Aptem) and Training Plan</p>

## Relevant Supporting Guidance

- [ESFA Funding rules ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules](#)
- [University Admissions Policy](#)
- [Recognition of Prior Certified Learning \(RPCL\) and/or Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning \(RPEL\) processes](#)
- [RPL regulations](#)

## Process Review

The next review is due in June 2025.

This process will be reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with any changes in regulations or programme requirements. Any revisions or updates to this policy/process will be communicated to the relevant stakeholders in a timely manner and changes will be approved by the Apprenticeships Board.