

Digital Skills Newsletter - 17

Keep in Touch

Digital and IT Apprenticeship Standards

Current apprenticeships

Don't forget the ILR closes on **31 July 2021** for registering apprentices on any of the following digital programmes

- Infrastructure Technician v1
ST0125/AP02 (9648-73/75)
- Unified Communications Technician v1
ST0130/AP01 (9790-71)
- Network Engineer v1
ST0127/AP03 (9648-72/77)
- Software Developer v1
ST0116/AP04 (9648-71)
- Cyber Security Technologist v1
ST0124/AP02 (9660-12/13)

City & Guilds will keep these products open on our systems for at least 18 months or registrations/EPA bookings with us cease, whichever comes first.

Change in resit grading

As many apprenticeship Standards are to be transferred to Ofqual for EQA, changes are likely to be made in terms of resit grade capping. This has already happened with the new Information Communication Technician:

First sit of EPA : Fail/Pass/Merit/Distinction
Resit of EPA : Fail/Pass

The resit grading will apply, regardless of an apprentice getting a Distinction in one of the Assessment Methods and failing the other.

The other revised Standards will continue as currently, with Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction be available for first sit of EPA and resit.

New home for current on-programme qualifications

Because we have seen some use of the 9628 and 3660 on-programme qualifications outside the apprenticeship, and with their removal as mandatory for the new/revised Standards, we have taken the decision to provide these products with their own web page.

All Knowledge qualifications for Infrastructure Technician, Digital Marketer, Network Engineer and Software Developer can now be found on **9628** webpages. The Cyber Security Technologist Knowledge qualifications will be moved to **3660** over the next few weeks.

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13 July 2021

Brief on Apprenticeship funding rules and employer support

A number of updates and changes have been in respect of the apprenticeship funding and how employers will have to interact with any issues on funding. A full details have been covered in a webinar by our Funding and Policy Manager and the recording can be found **here**.

The highlights - Apprenticeship Service Support for Employers:

- Since 1 April 2021, all new apprenticeships are managed and funded using the apprenticeship service, and all employers hiring apprentices need to have an [apprenticeship service account](#). This means you may find yourself working with employers who are using the apprenticeship service for the first time.
- ESFA have [created a range of resources](#) to support using the apprenticeship service that you can point your employers to for further help

The highlights - Applications for Increased Apprenticeship Incentive Payments

- The application portal for the increased apprenticeship incentive payments is now open. Employers with apprentices who have an employment start date between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021 and who also have a practical period (training) start date between 1 April 2021 and 30 November 2021 may be eligible for an incentive payment.
 - Employers will receive £3,000 for new apprentices of any age.
 - Employers must apply for these apprentices by the end of 30 November 2021 via the Apprenticeship Service.
 - Guidance available - [HERE](#)

Adult Skills

Over 22 million workers feel they lack skills needed for future opportunities - HRreview

Reskilling, upskilling and career development activities are now more important than ever, the pandemic has brought into sharp focus areas that need to increase their workforce and our sector, of digital and ICT, is one that is clearly under resourced and is vital to the digital infrastructure we have come to rely on.

For details on what can be done within Adult Skills, please check out the webinar recording for Adult Skills for Business and Digital Skills **here**

We have previously mentioned the Restart programme and have been asked who are the Primes holding the money, which you will find the list with the regions and expected starts below. It should be noted, as the money funding this initiative comes from the Department for Works and Pension (DWP), any qualifications that are used may be funded through AEB to supplement payments from the Prime.

Restart is not just about skills development, it is a full support package that also looks to cover employability, mental health, housing/debt management, and possible issues of addiction. It is set for 365 per person put forward by JobCentre Plus, with 2 distinct outcomes to finish:

1. The 365 days of the programme are completed, further action would rest with the individual
2. The person has got a job and is in post for at least 6 months (this will release a final payment to the Prime). This could be an apprenticeship that takes them beyond the end of the 365 days and is classed as anything from 16 hours or above employment, including self-employment.

Contract Package Area (CPA)	CPA Area Coverage	Contract Prime Provider	Estimated Starts
West Central	Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, West Midlands	Serco Limited	126,100
East Central	Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire (except North and North East), Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, North Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury Vale)	Jobs 22 Limited	111,200
North East and Humberside	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Teesside, North Yorkshire, East Yorkshire, North and North East Lincolnshire	Reed in Partnership Limited	108,500
South & West Yorks, Derbyshire and Nott'shire	West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire	Maximus UK Services Limited	145,900
North West	Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire	G4S Facilities Management (UK) Limited	108,800
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester	Ingeus UK Limited	86,200
South West	Gloucestershire, Bristol, Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall	Seetec Pluss Limited	106,100
South Central	Oxfordshire, South Bucks (Wycombe, Chiltern, South Bucks and Slough), Berks, Surrey, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, West Sussex, Brighton and Hove	Fedcap Employment Limited	112,000
Central and West London	West London, Central London	Ingeus UK Limited	174,300
South and East London	East London, South London	Maximus UK Services Limited	116,900
Home Counties	Rutland, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, East Sussex	Reed in Partnership Limited	166,100
Wales	Wales	Serco Limited	71,000

In terms of AEB funding, this is what a typically programme may include, the need for English and Maths will vary from person to person.

Maths and English

Functional Skills in mathematics and English	66 TQT per subject
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OR

Maths and English Skills (single unit or themed awards)	20 TQT – single unit 60 TQT per award
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OR

ESOL skills for life award in reading, writing or speaking and listening	110-120 TQT per award
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Work-Ready-Skills

Level 1 Award in Employability Skills	60 TQT
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Vocational taster

Level 2 Certificate in ICT systems support	270 TQT
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19+ Funding

English functional skills	£724
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Maths functional skills	£724
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Level 1 Award in Employability Skills	£300
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Optional vocational element:

Example: Level 2 Certificate in Systems Support	£1,265
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Addition: Digital skills – IT user units (Level 2) <i>Local Flex units from Level 2 qualifications also</i>	£168 per unit
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Potential funding (plus any additional IT user units selected)	£3,013
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Cisco Talent Bridge

The Networking Academy Talent Bridge connects Cisco and partner employers with world-class NetAcad talent for the digital economy workforce of the future. Its features are:

- A new Matching Engine that automates and systematizes the linkage between supply and demand to accelerate hiring
- Offers qualified students and graduates employment connections based on achievement, geographic location, and job roles
- Connects students to job opportunities with Cisco and Cisco partners globally

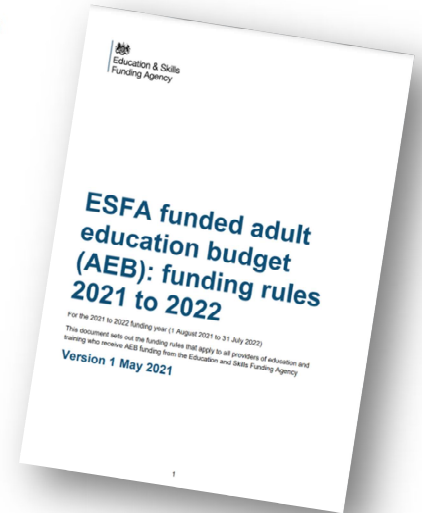
Any apprentice or learner that has completed a Cisco programme as is certificated through the NetAcademy system can be found, but employers can also become associated with it and post jobs. For more information:

<https://www.netacad.com/careers/talent-bridge>

AEB Funding rules

Major changes to AEB funding, especially over access based on **residency** and **eligibility** to reflect BREXIT requirements. Other highlights:

- Updated prior learning section – providers must have a RPL policy and take note of awarding organisation RPL requirements for individual qualifications, must not reduce funding for English and maths up to L2.
- The Register of Training Organisations is being formally decommissioned on 31 July 2021.
- Sub-contracting reforms
- Unemployed earning thresholds updated to
 - Earns less than £345 a month - learner is sole adult benefit claimant
 - Earns less than £552 a month for learners on a joint benefit claim.
- Expansion of new flexibilities for 19-24 traineeships continue throughout the 2021-22 academic year.



Qualification Reforms and ILR Changes

ESFA have done their usual round of qualification reform and have removed a number of products from funding. All Awarding Organisations (AO) are presented with a **Low** and **No** list that indicates where there has been low number of registrations for a qualification or no registrations for at least 12 months. The expectation is that we will close these products for registration at the earliest opportunity.

We are unable to appeal anything that has appeared on the **No** list but have appealed several on the **Low**. Also, we do have products still have products open that have appeared on the **No** list (3667 cabling qualifications) as ESFA can only see funding data and we have – across sectors – been able to show a large demand from our own and Ofqual data.

Also, there is the additional complexity of Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) being able to have devolved AEB money for use specifically in their area. Please be aware of these 2 funding codes:

- Category Code 48 - National Skills Funding, level 3 entitlement only – quals may not be available for other adult skills/AEB entitlements or loans.
- Category Code 41 - Many of the MCA's have requested additional qualifications be added or reactivated for funding validity that are no longer funded as part of the ESFA entitlement, or may only be available via FE loans. Those quals can only be used with a postcode and source of funding in an MCA.

Covid-19 restriction easing – Step 4 policy

As per the announcement from Government, from 19 July 2021 we should be looking to be as back to normal as possible. Their guidance to the FE sector has changed, as there is now the feeling that normal Face-to-Face delivery should be back in place. The new guidance can be found here.

Of course, we urge you all to ensure that proper risk assessments have been carried out, as this virus has not gone away. Managing work placements for apprenticeships and traineeships in our area also has its own guidance that can be found here.

Change to EPA Pro – the Planning meeting becomes optional

Some changes have been made to EPA Pro based on the feedback from our training providers, the first of these in the removal of the Preferred Planning Meeting Dates and/or Preferred Assessment Dates form. These have been replaced by a series of questions, so as you go through Gateway in the normal way, uploading your evidence, then after the evidence upload stage you'll see a 4th stage which contains some questions that we do need you to answer.

These leads to the second major change that now makes the Planning Meeting optional, once through Gateway you will be provided with:

- Option 1) Planning Meeting
 - Planning meetings for standards where the assessment plan states they need to happen or where it is found to be best practice. Gateway specifications amended to make it clear where standards always require a planning meeting
- Option 2) Assessment Booking for One Apprentice
 - Use when you don't wish to hold a planning meeting and simply want to provide us with dates
 - The following day after your apprentices Gateway has been accepted you will be able to place an Assessment Booking and select the exact dates/times you want
 - Under the Planning tab use the Assessment Booking feature in EPA Pro to submit your dates
- Option 3) Assessment Booking for 1: many

Funding for Specialist Support for teaching

Following a successful application to ESFA, the following qualification has been approved for National Funding for 19 +:

City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools

- QAN : 5011394X
- City & Guilds No. : 5329-33

Supporting curriculum delivery in other sectors

Exemplar material now available – in SmartScreen and EPA Pro

- ILM Level 6 Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (9310-12)
- ILM Level 7 Senior Leader Master's Degree Apprenticeship (9311-12) (version 1 – AP02)
- ILM Level 7 Senior Leader Apprenticeship (9311-22) (version 2 – AP03) – EPA Pro Only

Apprenticeship training manual

- Level 3 Business Administrator - SmartScreen

Please pass on the information to colleagues who may not have received an email alert or are not signed up for them.

13 July 2021

Updates and webinars – and more

Are you still a bit unsure as to how some of the things around Apprenticeship Standards work or just want a reminder of some of the things we have discussed at events and on webinars? Then, please visit our Updates and Webinars page.

<http://bit.ly/CGDigitalUpdate>

Please check out the information held there as this may answer many of the questions you have.

Next Digital and IT Skills webinars

24 August 2021 (14.00 – 15.00)

<https://bit.ly/CGDigi24Aug>

14 September 2021 (09.30 – 10.30)

<https://bit.ly/CGDigi17Sep>

If you have any specific topics you would like discussed at these events, please forward your suggestions to:

Ken Gaines ken.gaines@cityandguilds.com

OR

David Wackett david.wackett@cityandguilds.com

Other webinars

Supporting blended maths and English delivery:

14 July 2021

14 September 2021

On the registration form, use the drop down to select the date.

Note from David and Ken

As always urge you to Stay Alert and Stay Safe. Please make sure you check the Covid-19 webpage. www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19