

# Digital Skills Newsletter

## FLASH UPDATE 13

### Government Decision on assessment

#### The Government statement

“For those qualifications that support progression to further study or employment but that have different characteristics to GCSEs, AS and A levels, exams and assessments should continue where safe to do so, remotely or in-person. Where learners are ready to sit the exams or assessments but are not able to do so, we will permit awarding organisations to issue results to learners using alternative evidence including Teacher Assessed Grades. Where exams and assessments continue, we will permit awarding organisations to continue to make adaptations to assist in mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

This framework will also permit awarding organisations to award results only on the basis of assessments, adapted or otherwise, which have been completed by the learner.”

#### What does this mean?

City & Guilds will need to propose to Ofqual the alternative assessments they will offer for each qualification and how they will ensure this will lead to a robust quality process and offer comparability across methods. Department for Education (DfE) have indicated that no Awarding Organisation will have their alternatives signed off before 15 March. We are taking steps to prepare you for the potential use of Teacher Assessed Grading (TAG), this starts with the information now published for Technicals and will continue with our webinar scheduled for 23 March to talk about Teaching Guidance process preparing for TAG.

<https://bit.ly/CGDigital23Mar>

We would then hope to bring you more details at the webinar on 30 March, though City & Guilds will be sending Email Updates as things happen and providing list of qualifications and their alternative assessment strategies.

### Assessment mitigation 2020-2021

Until we have the confirmation of our proposed alternative assessments, nothing has changed. The current Adaptation documents and their updates will be found using this link.:

<http://bit.ly/CGMitigation20-21>

#### Applying Adaptations

If you need to use the adaptation then you need to inform us that you are going to do so, when you get to the Adaption webpage you will be able to locate the form.

The document you should be download and keep to hand are (for period of: September 2020 – Summer 2021):

- Qualification and Assessment Guidance

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Important guidance

- Updated 26 October – Qualification Adaptation Guidance ▼
- Special Consideration Guidance ▼
- Centre intention form – to apply adaptation ▲

Please complete the 2020/21 Centre Adaptation Intention form if you are intending to apply adaptation to assessments.

🔴 Complete the form ➔

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- 2020 – 2021 Adaptations Digital and IT
- Adaptations for Technical Qualifications (if appropriate)

Please check the Covid-19 pages daily, as we will be updating them as we get information:

[Covid-19 | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19)

Make sure you and colleagues (whatever sector the work in) are signed up to the email updates, this is how we and City & Guilds central operations send messages that you need:

[Email Updates | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/email-updates)

Any issues, please send you enquiries to [adaptation.quality@cityandguilds.com](mailto:adaptation.quality@cityandguilds.com)

## In Other News

### Functional Skills Flexibility in apprenticeships

The DfE have published updated guidance which states that ‘eligible apprentices can now go straight to EPA without attempting Level 2 FSQ’s.

To be eligible, apprentices and providers must have “exhausted all possibilities to access functional skills assessment via face-to-face and remote assessment, and they have confirmed their intent to continue and complete their functional skills within three months of starting their EPA”.

*Main providers should retain evidence if an apprentice did not take the level 2 assessments and add a dated note to the evidence pack for the apprentice explaining that the test was not taken due to revised guidance during coronavirus (COVID-19).*

Confirmation of this must “also be evidenced in the learner file/evidence pack. The rules now state:

1. Level 2/Intermediate apprentices are also usually required to study towards and attempt the functional skills assessments at level 2.

*However, if the apprentice would like to attempt the level 2 functional skills English and maths assessment, they should be allowed to do so. This should not be a barrier to them progressing to EPA, as the (optional) level 2 FSQ assessment can be before, alongside or after EPA.*

2. However, apprentices who are due to take their EPA on or before 31 March 2021 do not have to attempt the level 2 functional skills English and maths assessment and can move through to gateway to sit their EPA. A level 2 apprentice will still require a level 1 functional skills in English and/or maths to complete their apprenticeship.
3. The temporary suspension applies to both apprenticeship standards and frameworks.
4. There will be no requirement for those apprentices who are passed through gateway to go back and take the level 2 functional skills test.
5. Apprentices undertaking a level 3 or higher apprenticeship are still required to hold or achieve an approved level 2 functional skills English and maths qualification before they can successfully complete their apprenticeship.

### Apprenticeship Standards Revision List

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) has published the first [Revisions Status Report](#). This new report will be updated every eight weeks to show which live standards have entered IFATE’s formal [revisions process](#), and the stage they are at in that

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process. The guidance [HERE](#) explains more about the report, and what actions providers and EPAO's should take.

## **T Level Application Portal Open**

ESFA have opened a registration portal to allow providers not currently delivering T Levels to register their intention for the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

Providers will no longer need to meet set criteria to deliver T Levels from 2023. All providers who deliver 16 to 19 study programmes can offer some of the available T Levels. Providers who don't have an Ofsted rating of good or better can only deliver a limited range of T Levels from the 2023 to 2024 academic year but can then expand their delivery beyond this from 2024. Registration portal and guidance can be found [HERE](#).

## **16-18 Traineeship Growth Funding**

ESFA have increased the in-year growth funds (2020-21 academic year) for traineeships delivered by providers with 16-18 contracts.

This means that if providers want to deliver more traineeships, they now have room to do so. ESFA have applied a further cap, which is double the original baseline, i.e. a minimum of 40 students (£200,000 for independent learning providers) and a maximum of 200 students (£1,000,000 for independent learning providers).

Providers don't need to apply for the funding or submit a business case, increased funding will be allocated based on ILR data returns. So, no extra bureaucracy, just deliver more traineeships up to the new baseline growth cap. This is a great opportunity for providers to deliver more of our traineeship offer - [HERE](#)

## **Non-levy Apprenticeship Starts**

Where apprenticeships are funded using the apprenticeship service, funding must be agreed and in place before training starts.

ESFA are aware that some training providers have started apprentices training before this has been done and this means that funding cannot be claimed. In recognition of the transitional phase we are currently in, and of the need for employers to be able to claim the new incentive payment for hiring a new apprentice, ESFA will now provide a time-limited solution, which can be requested by providers.

The solution allows reservations to be set-up or backdated to the beginning of the current funding year which allow training providers to access funding from that date. This process is only available for apprentices that have not already been funded using an ESFA contract.

If providers want to request this solution, they need to contact the apprenticeship support team. Providers will need to provide evidence of agreement by the training provider and employer to the request. Full details and guidance - [HERE](#)

## **ESFA Sub-contracting Announcement**

You may know that the ESFA is reforming the sub-contracting arrangements for providers. The reforms mean that sub-contracting is becoming more challenging. It means that for some providers who access their funds vis sub-contracts only, there are challenges ahead. ESFA already require a rationale and business case for sub-contracting, but from August 2021, they are going further with the reforms:

- lead providers who subcontract 16 to 19 provision must seek prior approval for the delivery of geographically distant 16 to 19 study programme provision, where the delivery location is outside the lead provider's normal recruitment area
- 16 to 19 subcontracted provision delivered at distance should be rarely undertaken but ESFA recognise there will be some limited circumstances where it is appropriate.
- **a staged reduction in the volume of subcontracting across the sector overall** – with work continuing this year to agree a set cap on the volume of provision that can be subcontracted (potentially a limit of 25% but that's not final as yet – ESFA have looked at a limit of 17% but there was a lot of protest).

## Budget Announcements

- Increased incentive for employers hiring apprentices from April 1<sup>st</sup> to end of Sept 21.
- An extra £126million to triple the number of 16-18 traineeships – via growth arrangement
- Supporting apprenticeships across different employers – The government will introduce a £7 million fund from July 2021 to help employers in England set up and expand portable apprenticeships. This will enable people who need to work across multiple projects with different employers to benefit from an apprenticeship. Employers will be invited to bring forward proposals. In particular, the Creative Industries Council will be asked to do so, in recognition of the potential benefits of this new approach for the creative sector.
- Extension of furlough scheme to Sept 2021
- The Government will also pilot new technologies to help people find jobs by investing £1.3 million over 2021/22 and 2022/23 to support individuals to find new job opportunities, which are best suited to their skills and experience.

The full budget document can be found [HERE](#), for any of you who are having trouble sleeping.

## Apprenticeship Standards – revision news

Our Bravo submissions are ready and waiting to be submitted, which will show us on the EPAO register for the revised Standards alongside those we already offer. However, these cannot be sent to IfATE until the Standards are officially published and open for use.

Except for Network Engineer and Cyber Security Technologist, our contacts within the Employer Groups and IfATE have informed us that the rest have yet to be awarded their funding rate. Once this is done it will 56 days before IfATE publish them for use on their website. It now looks like these are not liable to be here until at least the end of May if not the beginning of June.

Our developments are still on track to have registration open shortly after the revisions are published, though Network Engineer that is due end of this month may not see registrations open until beginning of May.

Now we are assured that the revised versions of the Standards are fixed, as well as the new Information Communication Technician, we are starting the commissioning of exemplar material for the new products. This will be a small revision to our guidance on Summative Portfolio and Project work. The Interview advice will remain the same, though be called a Professional Discussion (PD), and we will provide some guidance on the Question & Answer session – though it will be similar to that of the PD

For existing products, new exemplars to be published soon for the IT Technical Sales Person and Unified Communications Technician, and the Apprentice Training Manual for Digital Support Technician will be back for review as a draft by the end of the month.

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## Getting involved with IfATE reviews and staying up-to-date

As discussed in the recent webinar, you can get involved in the Standards reviews or just simply watch what is happening to those being revised or new proposed Standards in progress.

All routes - <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/reviews-and-consultations/route-reviews/>

General status update - <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/developing-new-apprenticeships/revisions-status-report/>

## Princess Royal Training Awards

**How impactful is your training?** – can you or your employers meet the Three Hallmarks

Applications should demonstrate how the organisation's learning and development initiative has resulted in a positive impact on the organisation. It needs to include:

- How the organisation's strategy for improvement is supported by its commitment to training/ learning and development
- How the training programme is effectively managed to match the needs of individuals, and how it is cost effective
- How the initiative has sustainably supported the growth of the organisation and its employee

Submission closes 30 March, to find out more about entry for the PRTAs: <http://bit.ly/CGPRTA>

The Managing Director of the City & Guilds Foundation, who operate the PRTAs, presented a webinar hosted by BCS/Chartered Institute of IT Learning & Development Sub-Group on 23 February, to view the recording of the webinar try this link:

[City & Guilds Foundation - The Princess Royal Training Awards | BCS Learning and Development SG- YouTube](#)

## Essential Digital Skills Qualifications

City & Guilds is planning to launch its EDSQs later this year, for first registration from September. Available at Entry level and Level 1, they will be centre assessed and externally quality assured, and funded through the new Digital Entitlement. We will be providing more information about what they will look like and running webinars for centres in the coming weeks and months.

Details about how to join these webinars and how to get involved will be made available in the via future editions of this newsletter and email alerts.

## Skills Bridges

Many people have seen their employment impacted by Covid-19 and are now looking for alternative opportunities. To help these individuals find the right jobs, we are launching a series of short, online courses called 'Step into'. These are designed to promote sectors which are looking to recruit now and have increased the number of vacancies over the last 12 months.

We have already running the 'Step-into Social Care' and recently launched the Construction programme. The 'Step-into Digital and IT is I development a looking to be here in the next few months. These programmes provide those who are new to the industry and want to find out more about jobs and progression opportunities in, ideal for those career changers or those returning to work.



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Once a person has completed the course, they will receive a digital credential and will be directed to a signposting page where we will display employers and organisations who are looking for talent interested in entering the sector.

You can see our prototype for the signposting page here (the example provided is for social care):

<https://www.cityandguilds.com/what-we-offer/learners/step-into-social-care>

## Reminders

### Traineeships and AEB in Digital and IT Sector

For those working in the digital curriculum area this presents two opportunities: delivery of digital and IT Traineeships or AEB 19 + funded programmes, and delivery of digital skills for other sector teams.

For more information and update on Traineeships: <https://bit.ly/CGTraineeships2020-2021>

### 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 webinars

23 March 2021 (09.30 – 10.30) <https://bit.ly/CGDigital23Mar> (Toward TAG)

30 March 2021 (09.30 – 10.30) <https://bit.ly/CGDigital30March>

20 April 2021 (09.30 – 10.30) <https://bit.ly/CGDigital20April>

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

Ken Gaines [ken.gaines@cityandguilds.com](mailto:ken.gaines@cityandguilds.com)

OR

David Wackett [david.wackett@cityandguilds.com](mailto:david.wackett@cityandguilds.com)

### Note from David and Ken

We always urge you to Stay Alert and Stay Safe. Please make sure you check the Covid-19 webpage.

[www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19](http://www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19)