



Department
for Education

Strategic Guidance to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

**Presented to Parliament pursuant to
section ZA2(9)(b) of the Apprenticeships,
Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009**

April 2022



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Contents

Letter from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Skills)	4
Annex A: Priorities for 2022-23	7
1. Clear progression paths for career-led learning	7
2. Up-to-date occupationally specific skills the economy needs to build back better	8
3. Technical education products that provide reliable assessment and certification and are valued by learners and employers	13
Annex B: Legal basis for the guidance	19

Letter from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Skills)



Alex Burghart MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Skills)

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13th April 2022

Dear Jennifer,

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE TO THE INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION 2022-2023

I am pleased to issue you with strategic guidance for the financial year 2022-2023. The guidance sets out government priorities for the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's (the Institute) role in apprenticeships and technical education reform.

To support the department's strategic ambition for skills over the next three years, the guidance provides an indication of what the Institute is expected to achieve by 2024-2025, so you can build that mid-term view into your strategic planning and resourcing profile.

The Institute continued to make impressive progress during 2021-2022, ensuring that apprenticeships, T Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications are high quality products, and preparing to approve a wider range of technical qualifications. This was made more challenging by the global pandemic and I welcome the steps you have taken to enable apprentices to complete their apprenticeships.

The Institute remains central to the government's reforms to ensure that skills provision is employer-centred, of high quality and reflects the needs of a modern and competitive economy. The Institute's work on apprenticeships and technical education means that it is well placed to help build an integrated skills system that is based on standards set by employers and that supports skill acquisition, progression, productivity and levelling up.

As we build back better, it will be important that your business plan for 2022-2023 is aligned to our priorities for a high employment economy and the net zero strategy, and that these inform the Institute's work with employers to develop and revise occupational standards. I would like to ask the Institute to consider how it prioritises and streamlines this process, to ensure standards can be updated to reflect evolving employer needs in a way that is flexible and timely. It will also be important for the Institute to consider any needs identified in Local Skills Improvement Plans by employer representative bodies, as defined in the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, to build on our shared aims to develop and/or review employer driven qualifications and standards. At the same time, the department will keep the Institute informed of its priorities for levelling-up.

To ensure standards and technical qualifications meet future needs, I am delighted that the Institute will be working with the department to develop its role on forecasting, promoting and diffusing emerging skills, as part of the establishment of the Unit of Future Skills. I am confident that the Institute will give its full cooperation to the department on this matter. I would also like to invite the Institute to work with the department to play an increased role in the presentation of the technical education system to employers.

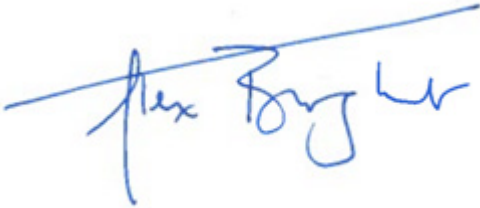
The department is aiming to increase participation by young people in all levels of apprenticeships. I would like the Institute to support the department with this, including in its work on mapping progression routes. The Institute should also continue working in a collaborative nature with the department and other bodies such as Ofqual, Ofsted and the Office for Students, including through a strengthened Quality Alliance, to ensure that apprentices and learners receive a high-quality experience and are supported to achieve their apprenticeship or technical qualifications and to progress.

I welcome the work that the Institute has led to develop the new funding banding methodology for apprenticeships. The Institute should continue its robust work to contribute to the affordability of the apprenticeships and technical education programmes by ensuring that occupational standards and technical qualifications maximise value for money.

As set out in previous versions of the Strategic Guidance by my predecessors, the Institute must have regard to the matters set out in this document when performing its functions (the legal basis for the guidance is at annex B). I expect the Institute to include this guidance as part of its business planning process and objective-setting. I look forward to receiving updates on progress through our regular conversations. The department will also monitor progress through your quarterly performance reviews, as well as through the apprenticeships and technical education reform programme boards.

I look forward to continuing to work with you as you deliver against these important priorities.

Yours sincerely,



Alex Burghart MP
Minister for Skills

Annex A: Priorities for 2022-23

1. Clear progression paths for career-led learning

1.1 In 2022-23 the Institute is asked to continue to create a strong foundation for apprenticeships and the technical education system by developing a comprehensive set of high quality, employer-owned standards that encourage take-up and enable progression and the adoption of emerging skills needs. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Develop and review occupational standards so they reflect the occupational requirements of employers of all sizes and are of appropriate quality that can be used as the basis for multiple technical education products. Progression pathways between standards should support learners and apprentices to identify potential progression routes throughout their careers.
- Ensure the ongoing relevance and quality of apprenticeships, including by using robust estimates to establish projected starts before approving the development of a standard, prioritising those that have high demand and developing low volume standards only where the skills need, or shortage, is demonstrated.
- Use market insight, data sources and feedback from employers to monitor whether apprenticeships are recognised by employers, apprentices and students as a high quality and transferable mark of occupational competence. Advise the department of barriers to meeting these aims and work with the department to remove them.
- Identify opportunities to align with and support the department's focus on increasing apprenticeship starts by young people. Through the ongoing work of trailblazers and standards reviews, identify any potential accessibility issues and work with the department to remove them.
- Review availability of level 2 and level 3 standards and consider whether the current offer meets the needs of career starters across all sectors. Explore and make proposals to the department on how some standards might be flagged as particularly suitable for career starters, so that young people, employers and providers are much clearer about their potential.

By 2024-25 the Institute is expected to deliver standards that are:

- Widely used and recognised by employers of all sizes.
- Maintained to protect quality.
- Available in all identified occupations which reflect the current and emerging requirements of employers (through a responsive review process).
- Contain elements which are transferable to other routes and can reflect emerging and cutting-edge practices within an occupation.

1.2 In 2022-23, the Institute is asked to finalise revisions to the occupational maps, so they embrace all occupational standards, technical education qualifications and apprenticeships approved by the Institute. Occupational maps should be routinely updated to respond to changes in the options available and be clear, useful and accessible for employers and individuals. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Publish revised occupational maps so they provide information that would be useful to individuals and employers seeking information about skilled occupations and associated technical education options.
- Investigate the effectiveness of approaches to representing on the occupational maps the level of competence learners can achieve through the products it approves
- Consider how the maps can reflect routes from apprenticeships and technical qualifications into employment, both directly and progression routes through further study.
- Actively promote the occupational maps amongst employers and other users and encourage stakeholder input to their ongoing development, relevance and value for users.
- Ensure that ongoing work on occupational maps is aligned with the commitment to developing a single source of government-assured careers information.
- Consider how other technical education provision, such as Skills Bootcamps, can be reflected on the occupational maps.

By 2024-25 the Institute is expected to work with the department to:

- Publish occupational maps which provide a coherent picture of the technical education landscape, the options that relate to individual occupations and associated progression pathways including accelerated apprenticeships. The Institute should have processes in place to ensure that the maps are updated on a regular basis and that they are continuing to meet users' needs.

2.Up-to-date occupationally specific skills the economy needs to build back better

2.1 In 2022-23 the Institute is asked to prioritise the development, review and revision of standards that support economic recovery and meet the future skills needs of the country, including supporting Government priorities such as net zero

and digital, paying particular attention to standards with high employer demands¹.

To achieve this the Institute will:

- Work with government-industry partnership groups to understand where insufficient access to skills is preventing employers from filling vacancies – for example in construction, manufacturing or haulage and logistics – and identify opportunities to develop new or revise existing standards accordingly.
- When developing new standards or revising existing standards, incorporate emerging skills and/or future occupations (for example, where cutting-edge technology has the potential to drive the net zero transition or accelerate growth in AI or other tech sectors), convening trailblazers where necessary. Consideration should be given to how foresighting can support this process (see 2.2).
- Embed the new revisions and reviews processes ensuring that they prioritise occupations or sectors with the greatest demand or emergent skills needs and ensure that standards remain relevant and are valued by employers. Revisions should recognise that standards are the basis for wider technical education.
- Where take-up or completion of an apprenticeship or qualification linked to a standard is unexpectedly low, or remains low for a period of time, work with the department to identify the reasons for this and remove barriers or agree a process for managing these out of the market, where appropriate, in order to protect and maintain quality.

By 2024-25, the Institute is expected to:

- Accelerate the development and publication of high-volume standards that meet the needs and growth priorities of employers, the Government and the economy, including for digital skills.
- Accelerate the development and publication of high-volume standards that meet the needs and priorities of employers, the Government and the economy.

2.2 In 2022-23, the Institute is asked to work with the department to scope how it could take a leading role in future years in foresighting, promoting and diffusing emerging skills, including digital skills. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Work with policy teams across the department, other government departments and agencies to understand work in this area, develop partnerships and agree the Institute's future role.

¹ *Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth* describes sectors expected to be most crucial for driving future growth and productivity, including in areas such as life sciences, creative industries, digital and net zero.

- Develop a strong working relationship with the Unit for Future Skills and work with the Unit on how to embed research and analysis on future skills within the Institute's work with employers on occupational standards.
- Consider the role it could take in commissioning further foresighting activity, trialling how emerging skills needs and intelligence can be reflected in occupational standards and promoted with wider stakeholders. This should take account of the work of the Unit for Future Skills, and subject to this could include considering and testing how the foresighting tool developed in the Emerging Skills pilots could be used in Institute processes.
- Work with employers and other stakeholders to gain consensus on the validity of foresighting intelligence and testing how it can be fed into the development or revision of occupational standards (and other technical education products) on up to 3 specific routes as determined by the Institute.
- Develop and agree with the department an implementation plan to start delivery from 2023-24, subject to resources available in future years.

By 2024-25, the Institute is expected to:

- Have developed and implemented processes that enable the Institute to work proactively with employers, and other relevant organisations, to revise existing standards and incorporate new technologies and skills.

2.3 In 2022-23 the Institute is asked to support skills-led recovery in high employment growth sectors by supporting, where appropriate, the development of Traineeships and some Skills Bootcamps employer-led initiatives. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Provide support and guidance to the department on content for sector-specific traineeship development. This will focus on ensuring traineeship content is stretching and appropriate and supports transition to an apprenticeship.
- Continue to provide support to the department in the development of Skills Bootcamps policy and design, with a focus on ensuring they are aligned to the relevant employer-led standard. In particular, to build on work on potential progression pathways as the Skills Bootcamp Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeship model is tested throughout 2022-23.

By 2024-25, the Institute is expected to have:

- Assisted with developing effective and proven arrangements for aligning pre-apprenticeship provision with standards.
- Assisted the department in developing sector-specific traineeship models in multiple sectors that are focused on building a pipeline to apprenticeships, accelerated apprenticeships, and employment at levels 2 to 4.

- Provided advice and assistance on future development and assessment of Skills Bootcamps, including published guidance for future bidders on best practice for aligning provision to the relevant employer-led standard.

2.4 In 2022-23, the Institute is asked to continue to contribute to the development and promotion of more flexible models of apprenticeship delivery. This should include systematic ways to identify and structure apprenticeship standard content whilst protecting and maintaining quality. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Encourage employers and providers to deliver more apprenticeships which are tailored to the needs of individual apprentices and sectors.
- Support the department in aligning apprenticeship content to that of other skills programmes so people can progress between them without duplicating training, and to enable the expansion of accelerated apprenticeships.
- Support the department in its work to develop systems and processes that enable apprentice progress on flexi-job apprenticeships to be appropriately tracked and recorded.
- Work with the department to explore structuring the content of standards, including those featuring in the pilot of portable flexi-job apprenticeships, to facilitate delivery of training in discrete episodes and effective progress tracking.

By 2024-25, the Institute is expected to have:

- Assisted the department's aim to increase the take-up of flexibilities in apprenticeships, so that employers, providers and apprentices are informed and able to tailor apprenticeships to meet their needs.
- Demonstrated clear progression routes through the Institute's technical education products, joining up the skills landscape and taking into account prior learning.

2.5 In 2022-23, the Institute is asked to pilot its new agreed apprenticeship funding band recommendations methodology to support uptake and completion of high-quality apprenticeships and transparently assesses eligible costs and provides value for money for the taxpayer. Building on its work so far, the Institute should monitor and evaluate the pilot, ahead of full rollout of the methodology in 2023. To achieve this the Institute will deliver:

- A high-quality evidence base developed on the actual costs of delivery of training and end-point assessment, along with a clear plan for maintaining and enhancing this evidence base over time.
- An improved new methodology implemented through a clear transition plan which manages market impact to support stability and to avoid unacceptable disruption to the availability of work-based training, especially during economic recovery from the pandemic. The recommendations process and any associated changes should be well understood by stakeholders.

- An agile and responsive review process that enables a risk-based approach, ensuring standards receive timely funding band reviews informed by market intelligence on delivery. This process prioritises funding reviews where there is evidence available that uptake of a standard may help to address skills shortages. The impact on starts of all funding band changes will be actively monitored, working closely with the department to support required interventions.

By 2024-25, the Institute is expected to have:

- All standards receiving risk-based, timely funding band reviews, prioritised to support uptake and value for money. A process that continues to include channels for early review based on market and department feedback.
- Evidence, from baselining and monitoring, that its new funding band recommendations methodology is supporting improved transparency, consistency, and value for money.

2.6 [Subject to the passage of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill,] in 2022-23 the Institute is asked to develop its new oversight function, supporting the balance and coherence of the technical education and training offer across routes. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Develop and prepare to implement an approach to keeping under review the technical education and training within its remit.
- Develop and prepare to implement an approach to supporting an appropriate range and availability of technical education and training within each technical route, ensuring the needs of learners and employers are met, including fore-sighting areas of future need.
- Embed the collaborative principle set out in the Bill in relation to technical qualifications and its operational relationship with Ofqual, and consider how it will work together with other relevant bodies to ensure the effective implementation of its oversight function across the technical education and training in its remit.

By 2024-25, [subject to the passage of the Bill], the Institute is expected to have:

- Established and embedded processes for maintaining oversight that are employer-led, collaborative and responsive to the changing skills needs of the labour market, including emergent skills where demand is expected in future.
- Reported to the Secretary of State on matters arising from its ongoing review where appropriate.

3. Technical education products that provide reliable assessment and certification and are valued by learners and employers

3.1 In 2022-23, the Institute is asked to support and commence implementation of the post-16 qualifications review and Skills for Jobs white paper to ensure a streamlined, high-quality level 2 and level 3 skills offer for ages 16-19 and adults. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Continue to advise and support the department in developing policy and plans around the level 3 and below qualifications review based on the outcomes of the October 2020 consultation. In particular, by providing input on implementation considerations and resource requirements to shape delivery plans and ensuring the needs of employers are sufficiently accounted for within those plans.
- Take forward agreed qualifications review plans and processes, with regard to Wave 1 and 2 T Levels, to support the withdrawal of public funding approval for overlapping technical qualifications for 16-19 and approve relevant reformed qualifications for the 2024-25 academic year, based on the objectives set out in the July 2021 consultation response and any future legislation.
- Continue to advise and support the department in finalising the policy position for level 2 technical qualifications (and any others for which the Institute will play a role) post-consultation.
- Develop robust, streamlined and effective approvals processes and plans for the approval of level 3 and level 2 technical qualifications. This should reflect the importance of employer involvement in the approval of such qualifications, working closely with the department and Ofqual to ensure that this process aligns with the outcomes of government consultation and subsequent policy decisions, and that approvals criteria and processes are clear and understood by AOs.
- [Subject to the passage of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill]:
 - Develop an approach to the periodic review of approved technical qualifications to ensure they continue to meet the criteria against which they were approved and retain currency with employers.
 - Develop an approach to exercising its power to introduce and end a moratorium on the approval of technical qualifications, should this be needed in targeted areas to manage the risk of proliferation.
 - Work with the department in developing a policy on approval fees, based on the evidence of the initial phases of reform, should the Secretary of State determine it is appropriate to introduce fees in future.

By 2024-25, the Institute is expected to have:

- Based on the outcomes of the October 2020 consultation, reviewed the maximum possible number of relevant level 3 technical qualifications and, where they meet

the set requirements, approve them ahead of the Department considering them for funding for the 2025-26 academic year.

- Developed and played a role in an appeals process for proposed qualifications that are not approved, to be completed by 2024-25.
- Started to implement the review process for level 3 technical qualifications as part of the funding process for the 2026-27 academic year.
- Agreed a process for the review of level 2 and below technical qualifications (and any others for which the Institute will play a role) in line with the agreed policy position post-consultation and, subject to consultation, implemented the process for reformed qualifications in scope for first teaching from 2024 and 2025.
- [Subject to the passage of the Bill], published information on its approach to the periodic review of approved qualifications and its moratorium function.

3.2 In 2022-23, the Institute is asked to ensure that T Levels are developed in accordance with the overarching technical education programme and are of a consistently high quality, where the content and performance standards meet employers' needs and provide a strong progression pathway for learners. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Consider how T Level components (e.g., the assessment of Technical Qualification content through the Industry Placement) can collectively be used to ensure students attain as many of the outcomes in the standard(s) as possible.
- Undertake the procurement, development and delivery of high-quality T Level Technical Qualifications (TQs) to timescales agreed with the department. This includes ensuring that TQs have been tested with employers and providers and have valid, reliable and manageable assessments.
- Manage contracts with Awarding Organisations (AOs) closely to ensure all contractual obligations are met, and the quality of T Levels is maintained across all waves. The contractual arrangements with AOs should be regularly reviewed for improvements.
- Working with Ofqual, set and maintain T Level Guide and Grade Standards of attainment. This includes ensuring the guide and grade standards are validated by employers, and that, in attaining the T Level, the learner has obtained as many of the outcomes in the relevant occupational standard(s) as can be reasonably expected within a course of education. Guide Standard Exemplification Materials should be available to providers well in advance for first teach, and the Guide and Grade Standard Exemplification Material should also be used to demonstrate the value of T Level outcomes to employers and stakeholders more widely.
- Ensure T Levels support clear progression pathways and keep pace with the changing skills needs of employers. This includes embedding a routine process for testing the feasibility of new/revised standards for inclusion in T Levels, working with the department to agree where new occupational specialisms or T Level pathways should be developed, and working with the department to ensure any necessary changes to T Level content required to support progression are made.

- To timescales agreed with the department, develop and publish progression profiles for T Levels to employment, apprenticeships, higher technical qualifications and other higher education, ensuring there is efficiency for learners in routes through the technical education system as the occupational maps evolve.
- Work with the department to support the piloting of adaptations of T Levels for adults, subject to funding.
- Support the department and interested Devolved Administrations/non-UK nations in understanding the steps that would need to be taken in order to make T Levels available in countries outside England.

By 2024-25, the Institute is expected to have:

- With AOs, developed high quality TQs for T Levels which are approved with sufficient time for providers to prepare for delivery. Approval of wave 4 TQs is expected by autumn 2022 (and Legal Services in early 2023).
- Undertaken a review of wave 1-4 T Levels to assess the extent to which they are meeting their original purpose², and considered, with the department, whether changes are required to arrangements for TQ design, development and delivery.
- For each assessment series, ensured that Guide and Grade Standard Exemplification Materials for Occupational Specialisms are validated by employers and therefore support public confidence in T Level results.
- Where the Secretary of State has agreed that new T Levels should be developed, development of high quality TQs for these is underway.
- Commenced the procurement for second generation T Level contracts for Wave 1 and 2 T Levels.
- Ensured that, before the first cohorts of each wave complete their T Levels, the T Level TQs are regarded by employers and other stakeholders as fit for purpose and, alongside the T Level Industry Placement, enable progression directly into skilled employment in relevant occupations, higher apprenticeships or onto further study as appropriate. This is expected by the end of 2022 for wave 1 cohorts.
- Developed indicative progression profiles for T Levels wave 2 T Levels by Summer 2022, for wave 3 T Levels by Winter 2022, for wave 4 T Levels by Summer 2023, and in a timely manner for any future T Levels to support student decision-making ahead of first teach.

3.3 In 2022-23, the Institute is asked to ensure that at levels 4-5, it continues to roll out, manage, and refine Institute approval of HTQs and establishes a list of approved qualifications. To achieve this the Institute will:

² This refers to the purpose as defined in the 'Implementation of T Levels Programmes: Technical Annex' (2018): [Implementation of T Level programmes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/681447/Implementation_of_T_Level_programmes_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

- Approve the second cycle of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) in Digital, Construction and Health & Science by June 2022.
- Close applications for the third cycle of HTQs by December 2022.
- Evaluate gaps in applications against standards in order to effectively target AB engagement in future cycles.
- Work with the department to further develop HTQs policy, and in line with wider government policy such as the Skills for Jobs white paper. This will include, for example, work to consider approval of higher technical modules and small qualifications, ensuring alignment with technical education (TE) reforms, Institute occupational map review and progression pathways.
- Work with the department to ensure communications around HTQs are aligned and complementary.

By 2024-25 the Institute is expected to have reached a position where:

- Four cycles, covering the 15 occupational routes, have been launched.
- A streamlined, sustainable approvals process is established, refined in light of lessons learned from previous cycles and with the aim of increasing the agility and in-year flexibility of HTQ approvals.
- A list of approved qualifications is published no later than June following the closing of the relevant approvals process cycle.
- Providers are able to select, develop and market HTQs that meet employer needs. These should include a range of qualifications approved against the majority of occupational standards across all routes included in cycles 1-3.
- The annual process for HTQ approvals meets key delivery tests, as set out in the statutory notice issued to the Institute in July 2020 and delivers against agreed success measures, including meeting a target for applications of 70% coverage of standards within scope within each route.

3.4 In 2022-23, the Institute is asked to assure and raise the quality of assessments for apprenticeships and of occupational standards for apprenticeships and technical qualifications. To achieve this the Institute will:

- Work closely with Ofqual, the Office for Students (OfS), the department, and other partners to further develop and implement a streamlined, effective approvals process as part of the long-term assurance of technical qualifications. The proposed single submission gateway should reflect the continuous collaboration with Ofqual, OfS and the department to develop and operationalise cooperative long-term assurance of technical qualifications.
- Make sure every apprenticeship end-point assessment (EPA) plan remains relevant and robust over time. The model should cover aspects including but not limited to:
 - availability of assessment plans;
 - review of process and timescales;

- consistency of assessor requirements including qualifications;
 - suitability of assessment methods and the use of digital solutions by default where this does not reduce quality; and
 - impact and outputs from the flexible apprenticeships pilot programme from April 2022.
- Work collaboratively with the department, Ofqual and OfS to ensure the agreed transition arrangements for External Quality Assurance (EQA) of apprenticeships to Ofqual and OfS are implemented efficiently and effectively by the amended end date of December 2022.
 - Lead a strengthened Quality Alliance, alongside the department, to identify and address barriers to apprentices completing their programme and achieving their end-point assessment, as part of efforts to drive up quality more generally across apprenticeships and the wider technical education system, promoting quality in technical education.

By 2024-25 the Institute is expected to have reached a position where:

- Long-term assurance for technical qualifications is fully operationalised to support implementation of the qualifications review.
- The Institute has established oversight of a simplified and credible apprenticeship EQA system, with Ofqual and OfS and a small number of regulated bodies in delivery, and the employer and apprenticeship voice is prevalent in the system.
- All apprenticeship assessment plans are fit for purpose and consistently quality assured.
- The Institute has addressed issues within the scope of its remit regarding occupational standards associated with high levels of withdrawals or non-compliance with the minimum requirement of 20% off-the-job training; and has successfully worked with the Department and the Quality Alliance to identify and support the improvement of achievement rates across the range of levers collectively available.
- Through its joint leadership of the Quality Alliance with the Department, the Institute has worked with organisations across the sector to raise the quality of the apprentice experience and ensured that the employer voice has remained central to the programme.
- Apprenticeship assessment plans have been formally reviewed to incorporate flexibilities and improvements, with older plans brought up to date as needed.
- Lessons learned from ongoing reviews, the assurance model and Covid-19 are identified and applied to the development of new apprenticeship assessment plans. There are plans for innovation and ongoing development of assessment methodology and delivery, aimed at improving quality of assessment, apprentice experience and value to the employer, developed and implemented.
- Each regulated profession has integrated apprenticeship assessment plans in place and end-point assessment organisations are fully engaged in the transition.

- The proposed and implemented model for degree apprenticeships has apprenticeship assessment plans in place and end-point assessment organisations are fully engaged in the transition, in line with the outcomes of the consultation.

Annex B: Legal basis for the guidance

The strategic guidance is a 'statutory notice' to which the Institute must have regard and is given by the Secretary of State under section ZA2(2) to the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). Under ZA2(9) of the 2009 Act, a copy of this notice will be laid before Parliament and published on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>. The Institute is legally obliged to report to the Secretary of State on its activities once a year through its Annual Report.

Strategic guidance enables government to give the Institute steers and advice about elements of policy that it considers fundamental to which the Institute must have regard. The Institute is an independent organisation, able to choose how to operationalise that advice.

The Secretary of State is able to update and reissue this guidance at any time, usually only when further clarity or policy changes are required. Where possible, changes will be made once a year.

The Institute has a number of core functions set through legislation:

- setting quality criteria for the development of all standards and apprenticeship assessment plans, irrespective of level for occupations which the Institute considers appropriate;
- reviewing, rejecting or approving (and publishing) standards and apprenticeship assessment plans;
- for each standard, describing the occupation and the outcomes which a person will be expected to attain to successfully achieve the standard;
- maintaining and publishing occupational maps in relation to the 15 occupational routes;
- ensuring all apprenticeship assessments are quality assured;
- developing and approving technical qualifications based on occupational standards, maintaining their content and quality where there is an approved technical qualification, and determining additional steps towards occupational competence;
- operating the procurement process; and
- awarding and managing the contracts which will involve Awarding Organisations delivering the technical qualification within T Levels.

In addition, the Institute will provide advice and assistance to the Secretary of State in relation to:

- funding provision for apprenticeship training;
- technical education funding (in particular, the allocation of T Levels to funding bands) and policy;
- the T Level transition framework; and

- the introduction of T Levels (including the sequencing of those to be taught from 2022 onwards)
- technical education components of the qualifications review; and
- higher technical education.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill was introduced in Parliament on 18 May 2021.

Subject to parliamentary passage and Royal Assent, the Bill will provide the Institute with:

- an oversight duty in relation to the technical education and training within the Institute's remit;
- an expanded remit that includes other technical education and training which supports entry to occupations and
- additional functions in relation to technical education qualifications, including a new approval scheme and a duty to regularly review the qualifications it approves.



Department
for Education

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