

# faster & better

A preview of the  
changes to come



Over the past eight months, the Institute has opened offices, appointed staff, initiated and refined processes and procedures, selected Route Panels and approved hundreds of standards for delivery.

We've always recognised some of the systems, policies and processes we inherited needed improving. Institute staff have been listening, consulting and planning improvements to make the process faster and better. The following initiatives we plan to launch fully early in 2018.

## Refreshed high level policy

We're agreeing changes with the Department for Education to:

- bring forward occupation criteria and approve at proposal stage
- align this with the Quality Statement, to make it easier to test against it
- simplify standards criteria so they are only concerned with drafting
- introduce a comprehensive occupational profile setting out key occupational activity, and derive knowledge, skills and behaviours from this
- operate to the criteria and abolish many of the second order rules which we use.

## Clarified qualifications criteria

Apprenticeship standards assume that the apprenticeship itself is the 'qualification'. But standards can contain mandated qualifications as well, if the qualification meets certain criteria. This policy is applied to all types of qualification, whether the qualification acts against or helps with the fundamental design principle above. This has led to some unpredictable results. Revised policies in this area will improve quality, and enhance flexibility for employers.

**Revised funding calculations** Apprenticeship funding needs to be set at a level which allows high-quality delivery, while supporting as many apprentices as possible. We're developing a quicker and more transparent system for making funding band recommendations. We'll align this to the approvals process for standards and assessment plans, to cut out unnecessary stages and make sure new apprenticeships are ready as quickly as possible.

**Intuitive templates for submissions** We're undertaking the development of fixed templates for drafting proposals, standards and end-point assessment plans. These will include guidance, best practice examples and drop down menus all intended to make it easier for trailblazer groups to develop 'policy compliant' submissions at each stage of the process, and prepare us for a digital end-to-end service later in 2018.

**A simple, effective process for reviewing standards** Standards need reviewing and revising to ensure they continue to meet changing needs. We're developing a two-stage Review process, starting with a Route Review (a review of occupations in a route and their relationship to one another), and then progressing to the more detailed scrutiny of a Pathway Review. More detail is to follow, and employers will be actively involved.

**Strong upfront support for trailblazers** We want to anticipate trailblazers' needs and the challenges they may face as early as possible. We'll introduce a trailblazer launch pack, including a 'support and expectations' agreement. There will also be updated and revamped written guidance, as well as the use of face-to-face events, webinars and videos by way of support. A handbook will be developed for Relationship Managers to better ensure consistency of support across all routes, and additional training on assessment policy and how to present it.

**Communicating shared expectations** Trailblazer groups want to understand the support on offer from the Institute, and to get a better sense of what the expectations are of their work. We've drafted an informal 'support and expectations' agreement that will provide a clear outline of what both parties can do to work best together. We're supporting that with enhanced communications channels to promote where support is available.

**Faster standards development** Everyone wants standards to be ready as fast as possible, and we are working hard to shorten the process. Starting in the New Year, trailblazer groups will be able to access intensive two-day workshops to complete the writing of standards or assessment plans from start to finish, saving about a third of the usual time. We'll also be working closely with trailblazer groups to enable standards and EPA plans can be submitted and approved in parallel, saving about six weeks from the end-to-end process.

**Digital and comms** We recognise our stakeholders want to know more about the steps we are taking to refine and improve our processes. Our new website is among the ways in which we're providing more information about what's happening at the Institute, and will be the portal for many digital initiatives in the coming months.

The initiatives described above will be implemented early in 2018, and Relationship Managers will guide trailblazer groups through the transition. For all areas other than the revised funding calculations, there will be a transitional period during which trailblazer groups may make submissions based on outgoing or incoming policy and processes.

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