

## **Certifying Authority for England**

### **Issuing Apprenticeship Certificates**

#### **Information to learning providers via AELP and AoC**

- **Apprentice authorisation**
  
- **When should an apprentice authorise a learning provider to facilitate the application for the issue of a certificate**

#### **Purpose of this note**

1. The purpose of this note is to provide learning providers with clarification on why, how and when an apprentice can authorise a learning provider to facilitate the application for the issue of an Apprenticeship completion certificate.
  
2. Geoff Russell, the Chief Executive of Skills Funding Agency (SFA) agreed to delegate his statutory responsibilities to the Alliance to be the Certifying Authority for England, but he remains the Accountable Officer.

#### **Why**

3. Since 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011 the ASCL Act requires that apprentices must apply for their own certificates.
  
4. This means that the person who has completed the Apprenticeship framework must apply for the certificate by
  - providing the necessary information and evidence
  - paying a standard fee, which is currently set at a maximum of £25. This is a maximum fee and is all inclusive. In other words it includes VAT (if appropriate), post and packing, and all other charges.
  
5. However, the application for a certificate may be undertaken or facilitated by a third party such as the organisation that holds the SFA contract, which could include a learning provider or employer who will act on behalf of the apprentice. However, when this happens they must do so only at the request of the apprentice. A learning provider or employer must not request an Apprenticeship certificate without the agreement of the apprentice who authorises them to act on his or her behalf. Please see paragraph 6 below. Therefore, the Certifying Authority will need to be assured that the apprentice requested the Apprenticeship certificate, but not until all the components of the framework have been completed and there must be an audit trail back to the request.

## **How**

6. The most straight forward way for an apprentice to authorise a learning provider to act on their behalf is to sign the certificate request form. When this is not possible, the learning provider could for example, requests the apprentice to sign a disclosure form or send an email, which they keep as part of a written audit trail. The Certifying Authority regards disclosure forms and emails as written evidence. The 21 SSCs and four sector bodies, who act on behalf of the Certifying Authority, are free to accept any form of evidence that confirms the agreement of the apprentice.

## **When**

7. Apprentices can only authorise a learning provider to act on their behalf when the final component of the framework is completed - though a learning provider may still have to wait for an awarding organisation to issue a certificate. From an apprentices perspective they will believe this is the time they have completed all the elements of the framework. It should not matter that it still takes more time to assemble the evidence needed to request the Apprenticeship certificate.
8. As far as apprentices are concerned this is the date when they completed all the components of the framework. Please see the timeline at Annex One.

## **Good practice**

9. Authorising learning providers to act on their behalf offers a formal opportunity to conclude the period of training and positively recognises the achievement for the apprentices and acknowledges the contribution of the learning provider and employer. Exit Interviews are often used as best practice to assess and review the learning experience of the apprentice and to reflect on the programme and distance travelled from commencement to end. Learning Providers will often use exit or final interview to clarify the achievements and seek the sign off authority from the apprentice to submit the completion certificate application. The interview wherever possible should be face to face, however a on-line correspondence or e-mail can offer a trail of evidence that all parties are happy to confirm their understanding of achievements including timeliness and expected receipt of the final certificates.

Timeline

Apprentice starts programme	Apprentice does the programme	Apprentice believes the framework is completed	Evidence is gathered and AOs issue final component certificates	Provider requests certificates	The provider believes the framework is completed	SSC/SB judges evidence	The SSC/SB confirms the framework is completed	SSC/SB issues certificate with ten working days
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This is the time for apprentices to authorise the provider to act on their behalf