



Apprenticeship Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact

A Step-by-Step Guide

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Introduction

The introduction of Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF) in September 2019 has significantly emphasised the curriculum within apprenticeship training providers. This guide will walk you through the essential components of the apprenticeship curriculum, focusing on Intent, Implementation, and Impact (the three I's). By the end of this guide, you will clearly understand how to develop, implement, and evaluate an apprenticeship curriculum that meets the new standards and effectively supports apprentices in their learning journey.

OfSTED's definition of a curriculum is:

*The curriculum is a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and skills to be gained at each stage (**intent**); for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within an institutional context (**implementation**) and for evaluating what knowledge and skills learners have gained against expectations (**impact/achievement**).*

Understanding Curriculum Intent

Curriculum intent refers to the planning stage of the curriculum. It involves setting out what apprentices are expected to learn and achieve by the end of their programme. This stage defines the learning goals, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) apprentices must develop.



Key Elements of Curriculum Intent

- **Defining Learning Outcomes:** Clearly state what you intend learners to learn. This includes the specific knowledge, skills, and behaviours required for their job roles. A well-defined outcome provides a clear direction for both learners and educators.
- **Alignment with KSBs:** Ensure that the curriculum intent aligns with the KSBs outlined in the apprenticeship standards. This alignment guarantees that the curriculum meets industry standards and expectations.
- **Sequencing Learning:** Sequence the curriculum to build on previous learning, ensuring a progressive development of knowledge and skills. This means structuring the curriculum so that each new piece of learning builds on what has been previously learned.
- **Customisation:** Tailor the curriculum to meet the specific needs of employers and apprentices, including the off-the-job training requirement. Customisation helps in making the curriculum relevant and practical to real-world job roles.

- **Incorporating Organisational Values:** Integrate the core values of your organisation and the sector into the curriculum intent. This ensures that the training focuses on technical skills and the ethical and professional standards expected in the workplace.

Developing Your Curriculum Intent

To develop an effective curriculum intent, follow these steps:

- **Identify Learning Goals:** Start by identifying the broad learning goals. What should apprentices know and be able to do by the end of the programme?
- **Consult Stakeholders:** Engage with employers, industry experts, and former apprentices to ensure the curriculum meets the job market's needs.
- **Define Specific Outcomes:** Break down the broad goals into specific, measurable outcomes. For example, instead of stating that apprentices should understand customer service, specify that they should be able to handle customer inquiries and resolve complaints effectively.
- **Create a Learning Journey:** Map out the learning journey, detailing how each module or unit will contribute to achieving the overall outcomes. Ensure that there is a logical progression from one module to the next.
- **Integrate Feedback Mechanisms:** Plan for regular feedback from apprentices and employers to continually refine and improve the curriculum.

Outcome Measurement

For each KSB, the provider should identify outcome measures, detailing what the learner needs to know, why it is essential, and how it will be measured. This approach ensures that learning is goal-oriented and measurable.

Steps for Measuring Outcomes

Knowledge

- **What:** Learners should demonstrate an understanding of key theoretical concepts relevant to their job roles.
- **Why:** Knowledge is foundational for applying skills and making informed decisions in the workplace.
- **How:** Measure through written tests, quizzes, and oral assessments.

Skills

- **What:** Learners should develop specific skills to perform their roles effectively.
- **Why:** Skills are necessary for practical application and efficient performance of job tasks.
- **How:** Measure through practical assessments, portfolio evidence, and observations.

Behaviours

- **What:** Learners should exhibit professional behaviours and attitudes that align with workplace expectations.
- **Why:** Behaviours are critical for workplace integration and career advancement.
- **How:** Measure through self-assessments, peer reviews, and employer feedback.

Example of Outcome Measurement

Knowledge Outcome

- **Topic:** Customer Service Principles
- **Measure:** Written-test with multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
- **Why:** To ensure learners understand customer service principles and can apply them in real-world scenarios.

Skill Outcome

- **Topic:** Handling Customer Inquiries
- **Measure:** Practical assessment where learners handle simulated customer inquiries.
- **Why:** To assess the learners' ability to apply customer service principles in practical situations.

Behaviour Outcome

- **Topic:** Professional Communication
- **Measure:** Observation during role-playing exercises and peer feedback.

By following these guidelines, training providers can establish a clear and effective curriculum intent that sets the foundation for successful implementation and meaningful impact on apprentices' careers.

Implementing the Curriculum

Curriculum implementation is the practical stage where the curriculum intent is implemented. This involves delivering the planned curriculum in a personalised and effective way for each learner. Effective implementation ensures that the theoretical plans are translated into meaningful educational experiences that support the learners' development and meet their individual needs.



Steps for Effective Implementation

Initial Assessment

Conducting a thorough initial assessment is essential to understand each learner's starting point. This includes assessing their existing knowledge, skills, and behaviours, as well as their strengths and areas for improvement.

- **Skills and Knowledge Baseline:** Evaluate learners' existing skills and knowledge related to the apprenticeship standards.
- **Personal Circumstances:** Consider personal circumstances that might affect learning, such as work schedules, personal responsibilities, and prior educational experiences.
- **Learning Styles and Preferences:** Identify preferred learning styles to tailor instructional methods accordingly.

Personalised Learning Plans

Develop personalised learning plans that stretch and challenge learners, addressing their needs and goals. These plans should outline each learner's specific steps to achieve the desired outcomes.

- **Goal Setting:** Set clear, achievable goals for each learner based on their initial assessment.
- **Learning Pathways:** Create customised learning pathways that incorporate a mix of on-the-job training, classroom instruction, and independent study.
- **Support Systems:** Identify additional support learners might need, such as tutoring, mentoring, or counselling services.

Expert Instruction

Ensure that trainers and coaches have expert sector knowledge and can deliver the curriculum effectively. This includes ongoing professional development for educators to stay current with industry trends and best practices.

- **Industry Expertise:** Trainers should have up-to-date knowledge and practical experience in the industry.
- **Pedagogical Skills:** Trainers should be skilled in various teaching methods and able to adapt their instruction to different learning styles.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Encourage trainers to engage in continuous professional development to enhance their teaching skills and subject matter expertise.

Active Learning

Use teaching methods that promote active learning and allow learners to apply their knowledge in practical contexts. Active learning techniques engage learners more deeply and help them retain information more effectively.

- **Interactive Activities:** Incorporate group discussions, problem-solving tasks, and hands-on projects into the curriculum.
- **Real-World Applications:** Use real-world scenarios and case studies to help learners apply theoretical concepts.
- **Technology Integration:** Utilise technology to enhance learning, such as virtual simulations, online collaboration tools, and multimedia resources.

Regular Assessments

Plan and conduct regular assessments and mock tests to track learner progress and provide feedback. Regular assessments help identify areas where learners may need additional support and ensure they are on track to meet their learning goals.

- **Formative Assessments:** Use quizzes, assignments, and practical tasks to monitor ongoing progress.
- **Summative Assessments:** Conduct formal evaluations at the end of each module or unit to assess overall achievement.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Provide timely and constructive feedback to help learners understand their progress and areas for improvement.

Example of Implementation Strategy

- **Step 1: Initial Assessment:** Conduct a comprehensive assessment to determine each learner's starting point. This includes evaluating their current skills and knowledge, identifying gaps, and understanding their learning preferences.
- **Step 2: Personalised Learning Plans:** Based on the initial assessment, develop individual learning plans that outline specific goals, learning activities, and support mechanisms. Each plan should be tailored to address the learner's unique needs and aspirations.
- **Step 3: Expert Instruction:** Ensure that all trainers and coaches are experts in their fields and skilled in pedagogy. Provide ongoing professional development opportunities to keep them abreast of industry trends and teaching methodologies.
- **Step 4: Active Learning:** Incorporate interactive and practical learning activities into the curriculum. This could include hands-on projects, group discussions, real-world problem-solving tasks, and the use of technology to create engaging learning experiences.
- **Step 5: Regular Assessments:** Implement a robust assessment strategy, including formative and summative assessments. Regularly monitor learner progress and provide detailed feedback to help learners stay on track and achieve their learning objectives.

By following these steps, training providers can ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively, leading to meaningful learning experiences and successful outcomes for apprentices.

Evaluating Curriculum Impact

Curriculum impact focuses on the curriculum's outcomes. It measures how well apprentices have progressed, what they have achieved, and the overall effectiveness of the training. Evaluating impact is paramount to ensuring that the curriculum delivers the intended benefits and meets the needs of learners and employers.



Key Metrics for Assessing Impact

Learner Outcomes

Evaluate individual learner outcomes, including their performance in examinations and end-point assessments. These outcomes indicate how well the curriculum has prepared learners for their roles.

- **Examination Results:** Assess how learners perform in formal assessments and end-point evaluations.
- **Practical Competence:** Evaluate learners' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in practical settings.

Skill Application

Assess how well learners can apply the knowledge and skills they have gained in their workplace. This involves gathering feedback from employers and observing learners in their work environments.

- **Workplace Performance:** Measure how effectively learners perform their job roles post-training.
- **Employer Feedback:** Collect feedback from employers regarding the readiness and performance of the apprentices in their roles.

Progress Tracking

Track learner progress from their starting points and monitor their learning rate. This helps identify trends and areas where learners might need additional support.

- **Initial Assessments vs. Final Outcomes:** Compare initial assessment results with final outcomes to measure progress.
- **Learning Pace:** Monitor how quickly and effectively learners are acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Quality of Work

Review the quality of work learners produce throughout the training. This includes assignments, projects, and practical tasks completed during the programme.

- **Consistency and Excellence:** Assess the consistency and quality of the work produced by learners.
- **Innovation and Problem-Solving:** Evaluate the learners' ability to innovate and solve problems within their work.

Employer Involvement

Ensure that employers are involved in the training process and their feedback is incorporated into the curriculum. This helps align the training with industry needs and improve its relevance.

- **Active Participation:** Measure the extent of employer involvement in training and assessment processes.
- **Relevance to Industry Needs:** Ensure the curriculum remains relevant to current industry standards and practices.

Cohort Achievement Rates

Analyse cohort achievement rates to identify trends and areas for improvement. This involves looking at the overall success rates of different groups of learners.

- **Completion Rates:** Track the number of learners who complete the programme successfully.
- **Achievement Levels:** Measure the levels of achievement across different cohorts and identify patterns.

Steps for Evaluating Curriculum Impact

Data Collection

Collect comprehensive data on learner performance, including examination results, practical assessments, and feedback from employers and learners. This data forms the basis of your evaluation.

- **Surveys and Feedback Forms:** Use surveys and feedback forms to gather qualitative data from learners and employers.
- **Performance Metrics:** Track performance metrics such as pass rates, grades, and job performance indicators.

Data Analysis

Analyse the collected data to identify trends, strengths, and areas for improvement. This involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis to get a full picture of the curriculum's impact.

- **Statistical Analysis:** Analyse quantitative data and identify significant trends using statistical tools.
- **Thematic Analysis:** Analyse qualitative feedback to identify common themes and insights.

Reporting Findings

Prepare detailed reports on the findings of your impact evaluation. These reports should highlight key achievements, areas for improvement, and actionable recommendations.

- **Summary Reports:** Create summary reports for different stakeholders, including learners, employers, and internal teams.
- **Detailed Analysis:** Provide a detailed analysis of findings, including data visualisations and case studies.

Action Planning

Use the insights gained from your evaluation to develop action plans for continuous improvement. This involves addressing gaps and enhancing the curriculum to meet learner and employer needs better.

- **Improvement Strategies:** Develop specific strategies to address areas for improvement identified in the evaluation.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage stakeholders in the action planning process to ensure their perspectives are considered.

Example of Impact Evaluation Process

Step 1: Data Collection

Collect data from various sources, including learner assessments, employer feedback, and programme completion rates. Use surveys, interviews, and performance records to gather comprehensive information.

Step 2: Data Analysis

Analyse the data to identify trends and patterns. Look for correlations between different data points, such as initial assessment scores and final outcomes, to understand the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Step 3: Reporting Findings

Prepare reports summarising the evaluation findings. Highlight key successes, such as high completion rates or positive employer feedback, and areas for improvement.

Step 4: Action Planning

Develop an action plan based on the evaluation findings. This might include revising certain aspects of the curriculum, providing additional support for learners, or enhancing instructor training.

By following these steps, training providers can ensure that their curriculum has a meaningful impact on learners and meets the needs of employers. Continuous evaluation and improvement are essential for maintaining the quality and relevance of apprenticeship programmes.

Practical Checklist

The final element of curriculum planning is a comprehensive checklist summarising the key points from each stage of the curriculum development process. Use this checklist as a handy reference to ensure all essential aspects of curriculum intent, implementation, and impact are covered.

Intent Checklist

Intent Checklist	Description
Define Learning Outcomes	Clearly state the knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) apprentices are expected to learn.
	Ensure the learning outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).
Align with KSBs	Align curriculum intent with the KSBs outlined in the apprenticeship standards.
	Verify that the curriculum meets industry standards and expectations.
Sequence Learning	Sequence the curriculum to build on previous learning and ensure a progressive development of knowledge and skills.
	Structure the curriculum so that each new piece of learning builds on what has been previously learned.
Customisation	Tailor the curriculum to meet the specific needs of employers and apprentices, including the off-the-job training requirement.
	Ensure the curriculum is relevant and practical to real-world job roles.
Incorporate Organisational Values	Integrate your organisation's and the sector's core values into the curriculum intent.
	Ensure the training focuses on both technical skills and ethical and professional standards.

Intent Checklist	Description
Stakeholder Consultation	Engage with employers, industry experts, and former apprentices to ensure the curriculum meets job market needs.
	Incorporate feedback from stakeholders into the curriculum planning process.
Define End Points and Next Steps	Clearly outline the curriculum's endpoints and the learners' next steps after completing the programme.
	Ensure the curriculum includes opportunities for all learners with high vocational or academic ambitions.

Implementation Checklist

Implementation Checklist	Description
Initial Assessment	Conduct thorough initial assessments to understand each learner's starting point, including their existing knowledge, skills, and behaviours.
	Assess personal circumstances that might affect learning, such as work schedules and prior educational experiences.
Personalised Learning Plans	Develop personalised learning plans that address individual needs and goals.
	Set clear, achievable goals for each learner based on their initial assessment.
	Create customised learning pathways that incorporate a mix of on-the-job training, classroom instruction, and independent study.
Expert Instruction	Ensure trainers and coaches have expert knowledge of the sector and pedagogical skills.

Implementation Checklist	Description
	Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for trainers to stay current with industry trends and teaching methodologies.
Active Learning	Use teaching methods that promote active learning and allow learners to apply their knowledge in practical contexts.
	Incorporate interactive activities, real-world applications, and technology to enhance learning experiences.
Regular Assessments	Plan and conduct regular assessments and mock tests to track learner progress.
	Use formative assessments (quizzes, assignments, practical tasks) and summative assessments (formal evaluations) to monitor progress.
	Provide timely and constructive feedback to help learners understand their progress and areas for improvement.
Support Systems	Identify additional support learners might need, such as tutoring, mentoring, or counselling services.
	Ensure learners have access to the necessary resources and support to succeed.

Impact Checklist

Impact Checklist	Description
Evaluate Learner Outcomes	Assess individual learner outcomes, including performance in examinations and end-point assessments.
	Evaluate learners' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in practical settings.
Skill Application	Measure how effectively learners perform their job roles post-training.
	Collect feedback from employers regarding the readiness and performance of apprentices in their roles.
Track Progress	Compare initial assessment results with final outcomes to measure progress.
	Monitor the learning pace and ensure learners acquire new knowledge and skills effectively.
Review Quality of Work	Assess the consistency and quality of the work produced by learners.
	Evaluate learners' ability to innovate and solve problems within their work.
Employer Involvement	Measure the extent of employer involvement in training and assessment processes.
	Ensure the curriculum remains relevant to current industry standards and practices.
Analyse Cohort Achievement Rates	Track the number of learners who complete the programme successfully.
	Measure achievement levels across different cohorts and identify patterns.

Impact Checklist	Description
Data Collection	Collect comprehensive data on learner performance, including examination results, practical assessments, and feedback from employers and learners.
	Use surveys, interviews, and performance records to gather qualitative and quantitative information.
Data Analysis	Use statistical tools to analyse quantitative data and identify significant trends.
	Conduct thematic analysis on qualitative feedback to identify common themes and insights.
Reporting Findings	Prepare detailed reports on the findings of your impact evaluation.
	Highlight key achievements, areas for improvement, and actionable recommendations.
Action Planning	Develop specific strategies to address areas for improvement identified in the evaluation.
	Engage stakeholders in the action planning process to ensure their perspectives are considered.

Conclusion

By following this practical checklist, training providers can ensure that their apprenticeship curriculum is comprehensive, effective, and aligned with industry standards. Regular evaluation and continuous improvement are essential for maintaining the quality and relevance of apprenticeship programmes, ultimately leading to successful outcomes for apprentices.

Developing a robust apprenticeship curriculum that focuses on intent, implementation, and impact is essential for meeting Ofsted's standards and ensuring high-quality training for apprentices. This guide provides the necessary steps and tools to create a curriculum that meets regulatory requirements and supports apprentices in achieving their full potential.

References

Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework
Apprenticeship Standards and Guidelines