



**Institute for Apprenticeships  
& Technical Education**

# **STATUTORY REVIEW REPORT: DIGITAL ROUTE**

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

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# 1. AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This report presents the results of the Institute's first statutory review on the apprenticeship standards in the Digital Route. It marks a key milestone in the Institute's short life thus far. Up to this point our priority has been in establishing ourselves as an organisation and working hard to increase the number of high quality apprenticeship standards and improving the experience for those employers developing them. We have made significant strides, with over 400 apprenticeship standards now approved for delivery to date and more in the pipeline. Having reached this point, we have now turned our attention to the apprenticeship standards that were approved prior to the Institute coming into existence, exercising our responsibility to ensure that apprenticeship standards remain current and to improve quality. As occupations evolve, there is a need to take a holistic view and statutory reviews provide the opportunity to keep apprenticeships up to date, coherent and relevant.

The purpose of the review has been to take a route-wide look at standards that have been approved for over two years to identify if there are any areas of overlap or gaps, if any standards appeared overly narrow and whether the content needed to be updated to reflect current practice. As with everything we do in the Institute, the review of the Digital Route has been employer-led at every stage. We have consulted widely with a range of employers with insight on the standards: those who developed them as part of trailblazer groups, those who have used them and those who might have faced challenges in doing so. As well as employers we have sought the input of apprentices who have experienced the quality of these apprenticeships and training providers who have been responsible for delivering them on the ground. Their feedback has been equally recognised and I was encouraged that these groups have been fully involved with half the responses to our consultation coming from these sources.

We combined these rich responses with comprehensive performance data and thorough analysis, providing them to our employer Route Panels and Board. Digital skills are at the heart of the government's Industrial Strategy, and indeed underpin technological advancements in most other sectors. All these contributions have been so important, as they all feed into higher quality apprenticeship standards and the improvement of digital skills to the benefit of all involved.

Having announced the decisions of the statutory review the attention returns to the trailblazer groups who will reflect them in new apprenticeship standards. We are planning a sensible pace of introduction to enable the market to respond. With support from the Institute we expect new apprenticeship standards to be approved within 12 months and the old versions withdrawn.

We now look forward to seeing the impact that the outcomes of the review will have on the quality of apprenticeships on the Digital Route. The reviews should lead to betterment: improving the quality of the overall digital sector programme and the standards within it for the benefit for all involved. At the same time we are now announcing the next four reviews which will start this year. We look forward to working with employers to ensure these reviews are equally consultative, thorough and lead to the current, high quality standards that we need for a world class technical education system.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the outcomes of the Institute's first statutory review ("the review") of apprenticeship standards on the Digital Route. This follows a period where the Institute has focused on building its capability and increasing the number of apprenticeship standards available for delivery. This exercise represents the first time the Institute has exercised its legal power to undertake a review of apprenticeship standards with the intention of considering whether they ought to be revised or withdrawn. Over time, reviews will become one of the core functions of the Institute as the apprenticeship programme reaches maturity and the focus becomes ensuring that apprenticeship standards underpin world class apprenticeships and broader technical education. The reviews play a central role in doing this by ensuring that individual standards and routes as a whole, in this case Digital, have currency and relevance. This is what will set our technical education system apart and ensure the best outcome for employers, apprentices and the broader economy.

The first review prioritised those apprenticeship standards approved prior to the establishment of the Institute, where there is the most opportunity to improve quality. The review focused on the content of the occupational standard in the first instance, recognising that any changes required may need to be reflected in the assessment plan and funding band (the other elements of an apprenticeship standard). The Digital Route was chosen because it was seen as a route subject to fast changing technology which presents unique challenges to maintaining contemporary relevance in training. It also contains many of the occupations vital to the success of the [Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future](#) which has digital capability and skills at its core. Characteristically, employers within the route were also some of the earliest adopters of new apprenticeship standards and it is fitting to look at these as early as possible. Therefore, a total of 12 apprenticeship standards that were approved for delivery prior to April 2017 formed the basis for the review.

The review, in line with the core ethos of the Institute, has been employer-led and focused on quality. We have conducted a significant public consultation with over 200 respondents (including employers, training providers and apprentices); engaged with the original trailblazer groups; sought input from expert peer reviewers; applied the expertise of our employer Route Panels and our employer-led Board. We have also thoroughly assessed the most up to date performance data on the apprenticeship standards and applied the Institute's quality criteria to each one.

Following the review this report presents the final decisions on each of the occupational standards in scope:

### Review decisions

**The following six standards will be retained and revised to ensure the content is relevant and up to date:**

1. Data Analyst (Level 4)
2. Software Developer (Level 4)
3. Software Development Technician (Level 3)
4. Digital & Technology Solutions Professional (Level 6)
5. IS Business Analyst (Level 4) (This will be broadened in scope and renamed as Digital Product Analyst/Digital Business Analyst), and
6. Software Tester (Level 4) (changing to Level 3)

**The following three standards will be withdrawn and some of the content incorporated into revised standards, broadening and enhancing the content:**

1. Cyber Intrusion Analyst (Level 4) will be withdrawn and incorporated into the Cyber Security Technologist standard (Level 4)
2. Unified Communications Technician (Level 3) will be withdrawn and incorporated into the Infrastructure Technician standard (Level 3)
3. Unified Communications Trouble Shooter (Level 4) will be withdrawn and incorporated into the Network Engineer standard (Level 4). This will be broadened and renamed as Network & Infrastructure Engineer.

These decisions will result in a collection of new occupational standards which reflect genuine, in demand occupations and provide apprentices with the knowledge, skills and behaviours employers need, benefitting all stakeholders in the Digital Route.

As well as making decisions on specific occupational standards, the Institute has also set out broad observations on the quality of apprenticeships in the Digital Route with reference to:

- the knowledge modules which currently sit outside of the standard,
- vendor qualifications which are organisationally specific,
- contemporary currency: the challenge of keeping the apprenticeships relevant in a changing technological environment and
- small business representation to ensure the apprenticeship can be applied consistently in small and large organisations.

In addition, the Institute will trial and measure the impact that gender neutral language has on the take up of the digital apprenticeships that have been subject to the review. The Route Panel have also established the future direction of development on the Digital Route by reviewing and amending the occupational map so it better reflects the occupations that can be achieved through an apprenticeship or T Level. The occupational maps will increasingly describe the whole of technical education including apprenticeships, T Levels and Level 4 and 5 qualifications. They will enable people to understand and navigate the system, ensure the content of technical education meets the needs of the labour market now and in the future and help learners to progress to different opportunities. The Institute's programme of reviews will be central to achieving this across every route.

The Institute has engaged with trailblazer groups on the outcome of the review and will seek to approve new apprenticeship standards (which may include new assessment plans and funding bands) within 12 months of the announcement so that the existing apprenticeship standards can be withdrawn. The introduction of the new apprenticeship standards will therefore be sensibly paced to enable the market to respond. The Institute will work with Department for Education, ESFA, employers, training providers, End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) and External Quality Assurance (EQA) providers to ensure a smooth transition between existing and new apprenticeships. The Institute will also work closely with relevant Awarding Organisations to take account of the decision on T Levels currently in development.

This report sets out the approach and timetable for the next wave of reviews. Reviews will continue to focus on apprenticeship standards where there is the most opportunity to improve quality. This will include pre-Institute apprenticeship standards in the first instance as well as other apprenticeship standards where it would be helpful for them to be included in the review, informed by evidence from employers, EPAOs or EQA providers. Complementary activity to

ensure value for money of funding bands for existing apprenticeship standards and to proactively address quality concerns about assessment plans will continue in parallel. Outside reviews, the Institute encourages any employers who want to revise an apprenticeship standard to improve its quality to continue to do so by submitting any changes for consideration through the usual approvals process.

There will be three additional reviews completed in 2019/20:

### Next reviews

- Hair & Beauty – commencing July 2019
- Creative & Design – commencing July 2019
- Agriculture, Environment & Animal Care – commencing September 2019

We will also start the Engineering & Manufacturing Route – commencing October 2019.

### **3. PURPOSE OF THE STATUTORY REVIEW**

The Institute has a statutory responsibility to regularly review apprenticeship standards and determine whether they should be revised or withdrawn. This function is central to the Institute's accountability for the quality of apprenticeships and technical education. Notwithstanding our statutory responsibility there is a need to ensure apprenticeship standards are high-quality, fit for purpose and have contemporary currency and relevance for employers and apprentices. Ensuring this allows employers and apprentices to thrive and supports growth and productivity in the economy at large.

Ensuring that apprenticeship standards, and the technical education which they underpin, are of the highest quality means that employers recognise them as delivering employees with the relevant, up to date occupational competence they need. This means getting a return on their investment in skills and driving growth and productivity across the economy. High quality also means that those undertaking apprenticeships have confidence that the skills they are learning will be recognised and support them to succeed, progress and thrive in their careers.

In the early phases of the Institute's existence, the priority has been to increase the number of apprenticeship standards that are available. By March 2019, the total number of apprenticeship standards had surpassed 400 and it is therefore timely that the Institute now commits to the review of existing apprenticeships. This will become a key priority in future for the Institute.



## 4. APPROACH TO THE STATUTORY REVIEW

### Choice of the Digital Route

The Digital Route was chosen for the first review as it includes occupations which are subject to emerging and fast-moving technologies. Of all the routes, Digital presents a unique challenge to ensure that apprenticeship standards are up to date and fit for purpose. More broadly, boosting the nation's capability in digital skills is a central part of the Government's [Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future](#). This strategy recognises that digital businesses need to build their organisations with the most talented people and those nations that can nurture home grown talent will be in the best position to drive productivity and growth. The need for skills is immediate and growing and world class digital apprenticeships and technical education play a critical part in that success story.

So, ensuring digital apprenticeships are of the highest quality is also critical to success, particularly as the relevant occupational standards at Level 3 also underpin the three new Digital T Levels currently in development and that will welcome the first students in September 2020 and 2021.

### Scope of the review

The Digital review has focused on apprenticeship standards that were approved for delivery prior to the establishment of the Institute. The apprenticeship standards in scope were:

#### Digital standards in scope of the review

- Cyber Intrusion Analyst (Level 4) (ST0114)
- Cyber Security Technologist (Level 4) (ST0124)
- Data Analyst (Level 4) (ST0118)
- Digital & Technology Solution Professional (Level 6) (ST0119)
- Infrastructure Technician (Level 3) (ST0125)
- IS Business Analyst (Level 4) (ST0117)
- Network Engineer (Level 4) (ST0127)
- Software Developer (Level 4) (ST0116)
- Software Development Technician (Level 3) (ST0128)
- Software Tester (Level 4) (ST0129)
- Unified Communications Technician (Level 3) (ST0130)
- Unified Communications Trouble Shooter (Level 4) (ST0131)

The focus has been on the content of the occupational standard. Depending on the scale of change and other information acquired on the End Point Assessment (EPA) plan, it may also be necessary to make consequent changes to the EPA and/or the funding band (the other elements of an apprenticeship standard).

The review of apprenticeship standards is relevant to the whole of technical education as T Levels are based on Level 3 occupational standards. Any changes to Digital Level 3 occupational standards, will therefore have an impact on the Digital T Level outline content and changes may need to be made accordingly.

## Consultation

The review began with a cross-cutting data gathering exercise to best understand the experience of employers, apprentices and training providers of the apprenticeship standard. The Institute ran a four week public consultation in September 2018 in which employers, apprentices and training providers were asked specific questions about the quality and performance of the standard. In total there were around 200 responses to the consultation. Half came from employers, a quarter from apprentices and a quarter from training providers. Representatives from all three groups who have direct experience of the apprenticeship standards were targeted and the number of apprentices and training providers responding was particularly encouraging. Generally, the responses to the consultation were positive about the apprenticeship standards in scope of the review. In summary:

### Consultation Summary

- 85% of apprentices said the apprenticeship met their expectations.
- 95% of respondents said the title of the standard reflected the content.
- 89% of respondents said that off the job training on the standards was between 20% and 39%.
- 41% of respondents (employers and training providers) encountered difficulties training apprentices (these issues are addressed further below).

## Decision-making and governance

Following the consultation, the results, along with performance data, were shared with members of the original trailblazer groups to obtain their initial responses. In addition to the consultation responses the Institute commissioned independent peer reviewers from our register, relevant occupational experts, to provide feedback on the occupational standards. Institute officials also assessed the existing occupational standards against the current [apprenticeship criteria](#) used in the approval process to determine whether the standards represented genuine occupations.

All this thoroughly compiled evidence was presented to the Digital Route Panel who made recommendations on each of the occupational standards which were subsequently ratified by the Institute's Approvals & Funding Committee (a committee of the Board). This approach follows the established process for approving and updating apprenticeship standards.

## 5. OUTCOMES OF THE STATUTORY REVIEW

The Digital review has sought to raise the quality of apprenticeships on the Digital Route by focusing on four key areas:

- Ensuring apprenticeship standards are based on genuine, in-demand occupations
- Improving and bringing content up to date
- Establishing principles for future approval of digital occupational standards and the digital content in occupational standards across all routes
- Updating the occupational maps to set the future direction for technical education on the Route

### Genuine, in-demand occupations

The Institute has reviewed the evidence from the public consultation, trailblazer group engagement, expert peer review feedback, performance data, analysis against the Institute's [quality criteria](#) and the expertise of the Route Panel. This has ascertained whether the apprenticeship standards in scope are underpinned by genuine occupations, in demand from employers, and appropriate for an apprenticeship.

#### Institute decisions

In summary the Institute has decided that:

**Cyber Security Technologist (Level 4)** will be broadened to incorporate **Cyber Intrusion Analyst (Level 4)**.

**Infrastructure Technician (Level 3)** will be broadened to incorporate **Unified Communications Technician (Level 3)**

**Network Engineer (Level 4)** will be broadened to incorporate to **Unified Communications Trouble Shooter (Level 4)**. It will be renamed Network & Infrastructure Engineer.

**Digital and Technology Solutions Professional (Level 6):** will be retained on the basis that each of the individual options are reviewed in detail to ensure they each meet the requirements of an occupation.

**IS Business Analyst (Level 4)** will be revised and broadened in scope to become Digital Product Analyst/Digital Business Analyst (Level 4). The occupation should apply to a broader range of sectors rather than just Information Systems to better serve the needs of employers.

**Software Tester (Level 4):** will be revised but should be set at Level 3. An assessment demonstrated that a majority of the content aligned with Level 3 occupation level descriptors rather than Level 4.

**Data Analyst (Level 4)** will be revised to ensure it is relevant to employers. .

**Software Developer (Level 4)** will be revised to ensure it is relevant to employers. .

**Software Development Technician (Level 3)** will be revised to ensure it is relevant to employers. .

**This changes will result in the following apprenticeship standards being withdrawn:**

- **Cyber Intrusion Analyst (Level 4)**
- **Unified Communications Technician (Level 3)**
- **Unified Communications Trouble Shooter (Level 4)**

## **Content improved and brought up to date**

Each trailblazer group will receive detailed individual feedback on the content of their standard. However, there are broad themes to the feedback that will be provided.

### **Advances in technology**

As it is some time since the apprenticeship standards were approved for delivery, so inevitably there have been advances in technology and practice to be integrated. At Level 3, trailblazer groups will benefit from the development of outline content by T Level panels which has already integrated significant new material into the outline content for the new qualifications on the Digital Route.

### **Removing knowledge units**

Many of the Digital occupational standards in the scope of the review use content from units in existing qualifications referred to as “knowledge units”. These contain content which is outside of the standard and has created some confusion amongst employer and apprentice respondents to the consultation. Whilst one intention of knowledge units was to ensure future-proofing of occupational standards, the significant amounts of content outside of the standard has meant that the content could be updated at different times, impacting on the credibility of the standard. Additionally, because the apprentice must achieve the relevant knowledge units as well as pass their End Point Assessment there is potential duplication of assessment. To bring these occupational standards into line with more recent standards and to support the premise that the occupational standard stands alone as the definition of competence, trailblazer groups will be asked to bring all relevant information into a standard as they are redeveloped.

### **Mandatory qualifications**

Following this review trailblazers are required to redevelop their apprenticeship standards and submit them in due course to the Institute for approval. As part of that process trailblazers will propose any additional qualifications they want all apprentices in an occupation to achieve and the Institute will evaluate those against the Institute’s criteria for mandated qualifications. Trailblazers will need to evidence how the qualification relates to the occupation and justify mandating it for all apprentices. Qualifications can be mandated if there is a regulatory, professional body or “hard sift” requirement (whereby an applicant for a job would be at a disadvantage by not holding the qualification). These criteria aim to ensure value-for-money so that Government funding is only used when a qualification is necessary competence in an occupation.

The review has not made judgements on specific mandatory qualifications as trailblazer groups will need to consider whether mandating a qualification is appropriate. The review findings on the use of qualifications in the digital apprenticeships will be important for trailblazers to reflect

on as they undertake their redevelopment.

Many of the reviewed Digital occupational standards currently mandate a range of vendor qualifications<sup>1</sup> and specific issues were raised by numerous respondents to the consultation. Concerns included that lists of qualifications in standards did not cover the full range of software and approaches required for full occupational competence. At times they were considered a hurdle that did not relate to the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the standard.

If trailblazers determine that a particular vendor qualification remains relevant and meets the Institute's criteria, they will be expected to:

- Provide evidence that they have consulted widely and have listed the fullest possible range of qualifications in the occupational which satisfy the mandatory requirement in an apprenticeship
- Work with the Institute to maintain the currency of the standard by keeping lists of qualifications up to date as new versions emerge

It is likely there will be some qualifications that are currently mandated that will not meet the criteria. If this is the case, it is of course still possible for employers to use qualifications if they choose to do so as part of delivering the apprenticeship standard.

### **Transferability to small businesses**

The review identified that the interests of small businesses could be better represented in the occupational standards. There is an opportunity for reconvened trailblazer groups to include more small businesses as members or seek their views more actively. This is vitally important in a sector dominated by smaller businesses and there is an opportunity to encourage greater take up of apprentices. For example, in several instances, content in these occupational standards is broad and high level, which has provided flexibility to larger businesses who are clear how they want their apprenticeships to be delivered and have significant leverage over training providers to achieve what they need. However, this broad approach is less beneficial for smaller businesses who have less capacity and capability to shape the offer of training providers. This underlines the importance of occupational standards being very specific about the definition of competence to ensure there is suitable commonality between the competence of one apprentice and another.

### **Best practice approaches and levelling**

All the occupational standards in scope were written some time ago and will need to be redrafted in line with the Institute's current format to raise quality and promote consistency of approach. The new format includes a more substantial, detailed occupational profile. This profile provides an overview of the occupation including purpose, responsibilities and relevant sectors and sets out the duties (competences and activities) that individuals perform in the workplace.

As they develop the new occupational standards, trailblazer groups will be encouraged to make a judgement about the occupational level of the standard. Similarly, professional body

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<sup>1</sup> Vendor qualifications are awards specific to particular companies' products

alignment should be at the same level as the apprenticeship standard.

### Promoting diversity

The Institute recognises that bringing the best possible talent into digital industries is vital to the success of apprenticeships, T Levels and businesses across the sector. Up to now, the digital sector has experienced difficulty in recruiting a diverse workforce. For example, 20% of Computer Science GCSE entrants are female and this drops to 8% at A Level. A significant contributor to this trend is the way in which digital occupations and training are presented and perceived. For example, varying the language used in digital job adverts has been seen to have significant impact. The Digital Route Panel have identified that they can influence the language used in apprenticeship standards and have committed to trialling and measuring the impact that gender neutral language change has on the take up of digital apprenticeships. The approach will be tested on the occupational standards within the scope of the Digital review in the first instance.

### Establishing principles for future approval

As part of the process of approving occupational standards and T Level outline content the Digital Route Panel have identified a series of core elements that should be included in a Digital occupational standard. These are set out below. The Route Panel will work to share these with trailblazer groups so these core elements are represented consistently across all digital apprenticeships.

Element	Description
Wider Digital Context	An individual learner should understand how their occupation fits into the wider digital landscape and any current or future regulatory requirements
Ethics, Safety and Society	An individual learner must understand how to use data ethically and the implications for wider society. This is particularly important for the use of data, automation and artificial intelligence
Accessibility and Diversity	An individual learner must understand the need for accessibility for all users and diversity of user needs
Self-Learning and Continuous Development	An individual learner must be able to keep up to date with a fast-paced sector and continually develop themselves.
Multi-disciplined and team approach	An individual learner must develop flexibility to work across different disciplines and teams
Future Facing	Occupational standards should consider the future as well as current requirements of Digital occupations
Future Proofed	Occupational standards should avoid specifying tools and rather specify examples
Naming conventions	Occupational standards should adhere to consistent naming conventions across the Digital Route to promote consistency and understanding

During the review the Digital Route Panel also recognised that Digital knowledge and skills are fundamental to all occupations, regardless of route. The Panel is therefore in the process of devising a Digital framework to be used by trailblazer groups and Route Panels to support the inclusion of appropriate digital content in new and revised occupational standards. The intention is that trailblazer groups will be able to identify from the framework relevant digital

skills that are required in an occupation. These can be integrated into the apprenticeship standard and approved by the relevant Route Panel.

The framework builds on the [Essential Digital Skills Framework](#), established by the Government, in collaboration with industry, in 2017. This framework defines the skills needed to safely benefit from, participate in and contribute to the digital world of today and the future. The framework is available to everyone in the UK engaged in supporting adults to enhance their essential digital skills. The Digital Route Panel are building on this to set out guidance on appropriate digital skills across a range of occupations at every level. The framework follows the foundation skills of Essential Digital Skills:

### Essential Digital Skills Framework

- Problem Solving: Find solutions to problems using digital tools and online services
- Communicating: Communicate, collaborate and share online
- Transacting: Apply for services, buy and sell and manage transactions online
- Handling Information and Content: Find, manage and store digital information and content securely
- Be safe, legal and confident online

The digital apprenticeships framework will be tested with the other Route Panels to ensure it is applicable to all other occupations and the Digital Route Panel will also compare it to the forthcoming Digital Framework for T Levels which will underpin relevant skills in these qualifications.

### Occupational maps

Alongside the review of existing occupational standards, the Digital Route Panel enhanced the role of the occupational map to support and set the forward direction for the future approval of digital standards. The occupational maps will increasingly describe the whole of the technical education including apprenticeships, T Levels and Level 4 and 5 qualifications. They will enable people to understand and navigate the system, ensure the content of technical education meets the needs of the labour market now and in the future and help learners to progress to different opportunities. The Institute's programme of reviews will be central to achieving this across every route. The occupational map includes all the occupations which can be achieved through an apprenticeship or technical education. These occupations are grouped together recognising similar knowledge, skills and behaviours. The Digital Route Panel have taken the opportunity to amend the grouping of occupations as well as identify where there may be gaps and place occupations on the map for future development by trailblazer groups. A representation of what the new map will look like once all the new apprenticeship standards are approved is included as Annex A. In the meantime, we will continue to publish an up to date map every quarter.

### Changes to the occupational map

The main changes from the current occupational map, in addition to the decisions made on the 12 apprenticeship standards in scope, are:

#### **Digital Support & Services pathway**

Two occupations awaiting development have been removed: IT Support, as the occupation was judged to be covered elsewhere and Systems Engineer as this will be covered by the new Digital Network & Infrastructure Engineer

### **Digital Production, Design & Development pathway**

Four occupations awaiting development have been amended. One has been revised and the other three have been moved to other clusters.

Digital Front End Developer (occupation awaiting development) has been added at level 3, replacing Web Development/Web Design occupation at level 4/5. This better reflects a genuine occupation.

Gaming Audio Engineer (occupation awaiting development) has been added to the Software Development Advanced Technician cluster. This was previously missing.

IT Product Manager (occupation awaiting development) has been moved from Digital Solutions Advanced Technician to Software Development Advanced Technician cluster as the occupation better aligns with this cluster.

Computer Science/Software Engineer (occupation awaiting development) has been added to Software Development Professional cluster as it better aligns with this cluster.

### **Digital Business Services pathway**

Changes on this pathway have mainly been to create more appropriate clusters for relevant occupations. The Digital Business Technician, Digital Business Advanced Technician and Digital Business Professional clusters have all been removed as they no longer reflect the occupations in the pathway. These have been replaced by a Digital Solutions Technician cluster.

In addition, the Web Content Manager (occupation awaiting development) has been renamed Digital Content Manager to better reflect the occupation.



## 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE STATUTORY REVIEW

### Apprenticeship standards

The final outcomes of the review of the Digital Route have been shared with the trailblazer groups who are in scope. The Institute has needed to reconvene many of these trailblazer groups; each have been given detailed feedback letters and will work with Relationship Managers, using intensive workshops, to act on the decisions of the review. Our aspiration is that revisions to apprenticeship standards set out in the review are approved and the existing ones withdrawn within 12 months. We will be working closely with the Department for Education and the ESFA to ensure there is a smooth transition for employers, apprentices, training providers, EPAOs and EQA organisations between existing and new versions of apprenticeship standards.

### T Levels

As T Levels are based on occupational standards, it is expected that reviews will have an impact on the composition of the technical qualifications which form the core of the T Level programme. The changes required to Infrastructure Technician, Software Development Technician and Unified Communications Technician will have an impact on the current set of Digital T Levels. As Software Tester will move from a Level 4 to a Level 3 occupation it will now potentially be in scope for inclusion in a T Level.

The first T Level qualification in the Digital Route is now in development with a further two T Levels soon to be in development. The Institute will work with the relevant Awarding Organisations to ensure that the outcomes of the review are appropriately reflected in the technical qualifications.

## 7. FUTURE STATUTORY REVIEWS

### Approach

The overarching approach to future reviews will be similar to the Digital review in that the Institute will prioritise apprenticeship standards where there is the most opportunity to improve quality. This means, initially we will continue to prioritise the review apprenticeship standards that were approved for delivery prior to the establishment of the Institute. The Institute may, however, also prioritise other apprenticeship standards for early review based on ESFA, employer, training provider, end point assessment organisation and External Quality Assurance (EQA) feedback. During the review of the Digital Route the Route Panel have had access to the Digital Route End Point Assessment Market Insight Report produced by the National Skills Academy for Rail as a provider of EQA. There were no specific quality concerns relating to the content on occupational standards in the report, but the findings will be invaluable when revised assessment plans are submitted alongside updated occupational standards. The Institute will continue to use similar insights throughout the reviews.

Whilst future reviews will again start with the content of the occupational standard they will have an enhanced focus on the quality of each EPA plan and also whether a funding band continues to be the most appropriate band.

### Schedule for next statutory reviews

The Institute has devised a schedule for the first wave of reviews in 2019/20. This timeline balances a series of factors including: the impact of particular reviews on T Levels and the opportunities to review the Level 3 occupational standards on which T Levels are based during the development of the outline content; the identification of known quality concerns (i.e. high number of pre-Institute apprenticeship standards on a route); and the need for the Institute to begin the reviews of large routes such as Engineering & Manufacturing at an early stage in the process.

The Institute will complete the reviews on three routes in 2019/20:

#### Next reviews

- Hair & Beauty – commencing July 2019
- Creative & Design – commencing July 2019
- Agriculture, Environment & Animal Care – commencing September 2019

We will also start the Engineering & Manufacturing Route – commencing October 2019.

The second wave of reviews will commence in early 2020/21. We will provide six months' notice of these being launched to ensure employers are fully ready to engage. This approach will ensure we make the most of the lessons learnt from the first wave of reviews and can respond to the most pressing priorities.

In the meantime, the Institute encourages any employers who want to revise an apprenticeship

standard to improve its quality to continue to do so through the Institute's [regular revisions process](#). As well as making any changes, revised apprenticeship standards should also meet all the Institute's quality criteria. Similarly, the Institute will continue to proactively identify EPA plans with quality issues, working with employers to revise these, and submit them to the Institute for the improvements to be approved.

Once this round of statutory reviews have been undertaken on all 15 routes, we expect the Institute to begin a process of reviewing all apprenticeship standards on each route, moving specifically to those approved for delivery by the Institute after April 2017 and those where there are particular quality concerns. .

## Lessons learnt

The Review of the Digital Route was intended to be a pilot. We have learnt a variety of lessons from the review and will integrate these into future reviews.

### Lessons learnt

- **Expanded and targeted Communications:** Whilst the volume and content of responses to consultation was very positive, future reviews will benefit from even more targeted communications and engagement activity with employers, apprentices, providers and other stakeholders such as EPAOs.
- **Consultation on Occupational Maps:** occupational maps should be included in the public consultation which will enable the Institute to publish a comprehensive occupational map at the end of each review.
- **Enhanced use of data:** this will be deployed more comprehensively to assess the performance of apprenticeship standards.
- **Early engagement with trailblazer groups:** the Institute will work with trailblazer groups from the earliest possible opportunity to ensure they are ready to respond to review decisions, particularly as it may be some time since the trailblazer group was last convened.

# **Annex A: Occupational map reflecting outcome of the Statutory Review**

Please refer to separate document



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