

2019

Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit



WEBS Training Limited
The Poplars,
Nottingham
NG9 2PD
Tel: 0115 967 7771

Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

Date: 23 April 2019

Purpose of Policy: Sets out the arrangements for WEBS process of learner initial assessment and how it should feed into the formation of a learning plan.

Approved by: Nick Crowther (Board Chair)

Responsibility for Updates: Sammy Jones (Managing Director)

Policy applies to: All WEBS Employees, Learners, Employers and Sub-Contractors.

Version no: 4

Proposed Date of Review: April 20

Version History			
Version	Date	Detail	Author
1	10.12.14	Creation and implementation	Sammy Jones
2	04.03.16	Review	Sammy Jones
3	11.10.17	Review & Update	Sammy Jones
4	23.04.19	Review & Update	Sammy Jones

Links and Dependencies

This policy is part of a suite of support policies defining the learner journey support arrangements and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures

- Appeals Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Disability Statement
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Information Advice and Guidance Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Recruitment & Progression Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Resource Handbook



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

Contents Page

Purpose.....	4
What is Initial Assessment?	4
What can we learn from Initial Assessment?	4
Why carry out Initial Assessment?	4
How do we ensure a good Initial Assessment process?.....	5
Information that can be considered during initial assessment	6
Assessing English and Maths	6
Interviews/Discussions	7
Prior Learning/ Experience & Career Aspirations	8
Job Role.....	8
Learning style inventories	8
Documentary Evidence	9
Observations.....	9
Self Assessment.....	9
Information sourced from other referral agencies	9
The link between a skills check and bksb initial assessment.....	9
Feedback from assessment	10
Initial Assessment Implementation Checklist.....	10
Staff CPD.....	11
Monitoring.....	11
Document Checklist.....	12



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to set out guiding principles and standards governing WEBS process of learner Initial Assessment. WEBS Training Limited is committed to maintaining an initial assessment system that is rigorous and consistent to ensure fair assessment and identify support needs for effective learner progression.

Initial Assessment will be undertaken with all learners, irrespective of age.

What is Initial Assessment?

We define Initial Assessment as:

Building up a clear, accurate and relevant picture of an individual's attainment and potential to use as a basis for negotiating an individual and suitable programme of learning and assessment opportunities.

Initial Assessment is concerned with both:

- What learners have already achieved – their attainment
- What they should realistically be able to achieve in the future – their potential

Initial Assessment is a crucial part of the learner learning journey. It provides the information needed to agree and plan a learner's starting point. It is the benchmark from which learners' progress and achievement can be measured.

"Initial Assessment needs to be done with learners rather than to them. It should be of benefit to learners and help them feel positive about themselves and their potential to learn."
Green M (2003) Initial Assessment: a learner-centred process. Learning & Skills Development Agency.

What can we learn from Initial Assessment?

Initial Assessment is the first step in the processes of:

- Negotiating learning. The key skill in improving own learning and performance is founded on the process of negotiated learning, where trainer and learner meet to identify needs and to plan and agree what they hope to achieve
- Continuous assessment. Equally important is the process of reviewing progress at regular intervals, and giving and receiving constructive feedback; again, central to improving own learning and performance
- Developing a relationship. Initial Assessment should help trainer and learner to get to know each other and begin to build trust and co-operation.

Why carry out Initial Assessment?

Information about current interests and achievement can provide a strong basis for building an effective learning programme. Initial assessment checks that the apprenticeship (both the job role and the training) is an appropriate programme for the individual. The outcomes



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

of screening, diagnostic testing and induction tasks and activities can all be used to put together a detailed picture of the learner as they move through the different stages of the process.

Initial Assessment involves the collection of a wide range of information to form a coherent picture of the individual skills, knowledge, abilities and learning needs. This information should be used to place them on an appropriate pathway which matches their skills, knowledge and abilities and addresses their individual needs thus improving their opportunities for success. Without this, there are only assumptions. It's always possible to make some predictions about learners from an application form or selection test, but it's an insecure basis for planning. Learners themselves bring assumptions about learning based on the past, and some of these may get in the way of looking ahead to a new way of learning.

It is really important to 'Get It Right' in order for the learning and support opportunities offered are the best possible match to their needs and learning needs. A learner who is on a programme at the right level and has interest and aptitude for the work they do will be more likely succeed in meet their agreed programme outcomes.

Initial Assessment can therefore help us to identify:

- The learner's current abilities, skills and attributes – what are they bringing with them
- The learner's learning needs – what they need to learn and which aspects they need to improve
- Their support needs – how will they best learn. This involves both ways in which the learner is likely to learn most happily, productively, effectively and the kind of help they will most value

How do we ensure a good Initial Assessment process?

A good Initial Assessment process should be learner centred. This means that it needs to:

- engage learners and be of benefit to them and their learning journey
- help learners feel positive about themselves and their potential to learn

Learners who move into the world of training with modest or limited achievements need to be individualised learning at a level that offers personal challenge allowing them to succeed. They may need support with specific aspects of their learning. It is important that the process is not seen as part of a deficit model that serves to undermine confidence by focusing only on the things that learners cannot do.

It is important that learners need to:

- understand why we want to put together an early and accurate picture of their skills and needs
- have access to all their learning plans
- feel confident about how the learning plans will be used to help them

Many young people and adults have different levels of reading, writing, numeracy and language skills as well as other strengths and areas for development which may impact upon a learning programme. A good process is one that:-

- is completed early on – in the first few days or weeks of contact with learners



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

- is different from selection – though information gained through the selection process should be useful
- is a process, not a single event
- uses a range of methods
- helps Training Officers and employers to find out about learners
- helps learners to find out about themselves and their programme (what they will learn and how)

Information that can be considered during initial assessment



As stated above, information can come from a range of sources:

- the learner
- other professionals involved with the learner e.g. Job Centre Plus, Youth Offending Team, Schools, Colleges and Employers
- those involved in the learner's earlier phases of learning
- the qualifications they have achieved
- the results of testing
- the outcomes of practical tasks and activities

Assessing English and Maths

All young people commencing training programmes who have not attained a Grade A*-C in English and/or maths should work toward them as part of their learning programmes.



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

For many, school certificates will provide the learners current attainment level. However, we will also underpin this by using the BKSB English and maths Initial Assessment which tracks the Functional Skills standards and satisfies the updated core curriculum for English and maths from pre-entry level to level 2. The Initial Assessment tool is dynamic and adjusts the level according to the answers given, allowing the learner to see what level they are currently working at.

The Initial Assessment enables learners to find out their current level in English and maths and informs them which Diagnostic Assessment to take. The diagnostic will then identify their strengths and weaknesses and signpost the learner to the specific learning resources they require to support their learning programme and achieve their programme outcomes.

The table below gives a general guide to the level of study that learners will undertake based on their GCSE grades and screening results.

Screening Result	GCSE Results	Main Programme	Maths and English
Entry 3	E and F (1-2)	Level 1	Level 1
Level 1	E and F (1-2)	Level 1	Level 2
Level 2	D and E (2-3)	Level 2	Level 2/GCSE
Level 2 or above	C or above (4-9)	Level 2/3	Not required

As part of the Adult Education Budget there is an entitlement for every adult learner to have the opportunity to improve their English and maths skills as well as achieving their vocational qualification if they do not hold a level 2 qualification. Improving these underpinning skills will help the learners to achieve their vocational qualifications and generally build confidence levels. More specifically, skills development will help learners to understand the requirements of working towards their qualification and to produce good quality evidence for their portfolio, and help them to learn more efficiently.

Interviews/Discussions

A well managed interview can generate a lot of useful information. Talking to learners, asking them questions and actively listening to what they have to say is an essential part of the Initial Assessment process. The information gathered through discussion can be drawn on to provide a strong indication of interest, aptitude and ability. Conversations with prospective learners are also a good way of involving them in the process and showing them that they are valued and can help to plan their learning programme. All interviews should be structured and consistent although they do not need to be formal and where the opportunity arises, further probing questions can be asked if required. The key reasons for this are:

- a structured approach is far more likely to elicit more information and ensure that no questions are forgotten;
- all learners are asked a standard set of questions rather than leaving the questions open to the individuals carrying out the interview

Face to face discussions are also an ideal opportunity for staff and learners to get to know each other.



Prior Learning/ Experience & Career Aspirations

Information about a learner's qualifications and achievements can provide an indication of their general level of ability. In recognising prior learning, the following should be considered against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the Apprenticeship standard or framework:

- Work experience (this is particularly important if the apprentice is an existing employee);
- Prior education, training or associated qualification(s) in a related sector subject area (this goes beyond just English and maths); and
- Any previous apprenticeship undertaken

Consideration should be given as to what the learners overall careers aspirations are and how the learning programme can help them toward achieving this. Information of existing qualifications may also indicate weaknesses in particular areas. For example, the absence of (or low grades in) GCSE maths & English, may suggest basic skills needs which require further investigation during initial assessment. The purpose of establishing a learner's prior experience and learning is to avoid any duplication of learning in an area for which they are already deemed competent; and the impact on the minimum length of time required to complete the apprenticeship. Equally, learners should not be placed on apprenticeships where their prior skills and understanding do not allow them to access the learning effectively.

Job Role

If the learner is already employed, discuss and identify the duties involved in the job role whether it be a new job role or an existing job role, to ensure relevance to the qualification/framework being undertaken. Consideration should be given as to the knowledge, skills and behaviours that already may have been gained in the job role against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship framework/standard.

Where there is job role progression, a requirement to evidence competency at a lower level would indicate the individual is ready for progression

Learning style inventories

The Learning styles inventory is a tool that can help to provide details of different learning preferences. The outcome of which can be used in different ways. Knowledge of learning preferences can help learners exploit opportunities to learn through activities that match well with preferred style. However there should also be support for learners to learn when teaching/training strategies do not match well with preferred learning style. For example, a joiner who prefers to learn through hands on activity and quick to learn in practical sessions in the workshop may need to be supported with approaches to theoretical work that is used in off the job training.



Documentary Evidence

Documentary information is also a good source of information that can be considered as part of the initial assessment. Applications forms can provide useful information about prior experience and career ambitions. It can also be a useful early indicator in assessing English by the way it is written and whether there are spelling errors. Records of achievement, certificates, and references can all be sources of information about the skills and abilities that an individual can bring to their learning.

Observations

Observation is a constructive and useful tool that can support the initial assessment process. Observation of how a learner performs within a group or on their own can provide information as to how they demonstrate skills and attributes such as

- do they relate well to others
- how well do they communicate
- do they maintain eye contact during communication
- do they join in as part of a group activity
- do they show leadership skills or lack confidence
- what is their body language, comfort zone with paperwork and tests
- have they dressed accordingly

However, staff need to be very careful to ensure that conclusions drawn from observation are indeed valid and reliable so they should not be used in isolation.

Self Assessment

As part of the application the learner is given the opportunity to think about the skills they might need as part of the job/training through the completion of a self-assessment. This can be expanded upon during the interview process to allow the learner to think about their strengths and weaknesses and where they feel they might need to improve. Remember, the individual's own views should be taken seriously. They are an important dimension in the overall picture, put into perspective by information from other sources.

Information sourced from other referral agencies

Where young people are being referred via other agencies, it may be possible to seek reports/risk assessments, particularly in the case of referrals from the Youth Offending Teams. These should also be taken into account as part of the assessment process to ensure the necessary support and resource can be given.

The link between a skills check and bksb initial assessment

Skills checks are a quick way of identifying all those learners who would benefit from functional skills as part of their vocational training. This may be a helpful way of introducing functional skills at the start of a programme. It can also identify those learners who are



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

competent at Level 2, already hold Level 2 qualifications and don't require functional skills (a 'screen out' model, rather than a 'screen in' model).

Feedback from assessment

Feedback should be offered as soon as possible after the initial assessment. Ideally feedback should be used to increase the learner's self-awareness, build confidence and motivate them to succeed. Where learners are encouraged to talk about the outcomes of assessment they will be able to develop a language of learning. This will help them take an active role in making decisions about goals and targets for their individual learning plan.

When providing feedback, always:

- Stress and promote the positives. Always celebrate the learners' achievements which will support their confident levels.
- Seek learners' views and value their contribution. This will help them to get better at assessing their own work, which is vital to them becoming independent learners.
- Frame questions carefully and use prompts such as 'Would you like to say more about that?'
- Pause for a few seconds after questions have been posed or responses have been given, to encourage learners to carefully consider and expand on what they have said.
- Be specific. Avoid generalisations such as 'There are a lot of inaccuracies' and instead focus on individual points which you can discuss with the learners.
- Focus on things learners can change, and avoid overloading them with too much feedback at once.
- Look for ways forward together. Share ideas and explore solutions rather than always putting forward your own suggestions.
- Agree what you will both do as a result. This could include agreeing new actions, targets or planning learning opportunities.

Remember, feedback is not a one-way process. Invite the learner to comment on what you do as well.

The results of the Initial Assessment process should be used to inform the individualised learning plan.

Remember the learning plan should be a key document for the individual learner where it is a 'live' document. It should provide:

- a frequent reference point for progress review
- recognition of success
- a record targets set and goals achieved.

For more information refer to the ILP Guidance.

Initial Assessment Implementation Checklist



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

- Is the assessment introduced to learners in a positive way?
- Does the learner understand what will happen during and after the assessment?
- Are the assessments providing the information you need in order to advise and guide the learner?
- Is the learner given the opportunity to discuss and feedback on the assessment process?
- Does the learner understand who will see the information from the initial assessment and how it will be used?
- Has the outcome of initial assessment been mapped over to the ILP?

Remember Steps of Action Planning!

- 1st Step – Results of Initial Assessment are used to inform the Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- 2nd Step – If the need for additional support is identified this is identified on the ILP and the Training Officer is informed
- 3rd Step – All staff dealing with the learner are made aware of any support needs and this is agreed
- 4th Step - Once support has been addressed, on-going support is provided throughout the learner's time on programme.

Staff CPD

It is important to WEBS that staff involved in the initial assessment process hold a wide range of skills and knowledge. They will have at least a minimum understanding of:-

- The purpose of Initial Assessment
- Methods of identifying learning and support needs and collecting information
- The pathways available within WEBS Training and a brief understanding of the qualifications available
- Other providers or agencies who may be best able to support a learner's needs
- Requirements of employers
- Interviewing and questioning techniques
- Putting learners at ease
- Equality and Diversity and non-discriminatory practices
- Difference in learning styles and ways of learning
- Data protection policies

Monitoring

Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy will be through:-

- monitoring of achievement targets
- learner and employer evaluation
- learner and employer satisfaction surveys
- complaints, compliments and the "uum I think" process
- the self-assessment process
- annual policy review



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

Document Checklist

- Application Form
- One to One Discussion Proforma
- Learning Styles Inventory
- BKSB Initial Assessment Results
- BKSB Diagnostic results
- Certificates
- Initial Assessment Summary Form
- Any other documentary evidence received. i.e Risk Assessment, School reports

Other documents for learner information

- Learner Consent Form
- Learner Feedback Charter
- MIAP Notice



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

WEBS Interview Proforma

Applicant Name: ID Checked.....

Age..... DOB..... Date:

Assessment Area	Notes
What attracted you to this apprenticeship and what trades	
Do you understand how an apprenticeship works?	
What would you like to achieve by doing an apprenticeship?	
Do you have any trade work experience or other work experience?	
What would be your ideal company? For example, a small, medium or large company?	
Why would an employer want to employ you?	
Are you happy to work for the apprentice wage of £3.70?	
What do you like to do in your spare time? Hobbies/Interests	
Is there anything that might get in the way of you attending regularly for the hours agreed and achieving the programme? An example of this would be if you were to be a career.	
How far are you willing to travel to get to work and what would be your mode of transport?	
Do you have any needs or medical needs that we can assist and support you with? I.e. learning difficulties, dyslexia, medical etc.	
Are you currently employed?	
Have you any unspent criminal convictions; or pending court appearances. If so what and when?	



Initial Assessment Policy & Toolkit

Eligibility

Apprentice Name:DOB / Age: Date:

Achievements:

Copies of certificates seen	Yes		No		Or; Personal Apprentice Record Checked	Yes		No	
Level of Prior Learning	Level:								

BSA Initial Assessment Results	Maths			English		
Grades A-C achieved within the last 5 years?						
Functional Skills Required (please tick)	Literacy		Numeracy			Both
Level of Functional skills working toward	Literacy	E3 <input type="radio"/>	L1 <input type="radio"/>	L2 <input type="radio"/>	Numeracy	E3 <input type="radio"/> L1 <input type="radio"/> L2 <input type="radio"/>

<p>Overall comments from Initial Assessment and Interview: -</p> <p><i>Inc. assessment of skills knowledge and behaviours, special needs/styles of learning etc e.g. anything that a Training Officer may need to be aware of in developing individual programme and to support funding rationale.</i></p>	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Declaration:

I can confirm that the appropriate checks have been made regarding the above Apprentice's eligibility and I am satisfied they comply with the eligibility requirements for funding.

NAME:		POSITION:	
SIGNATURE:		DATE:	

Suitable Programme	Tick	Start Date
Apprenticeship		
Traineeship		
No suitable Programme		

Where no suitable programme, please detail action taken:	
----------------------------------------------------------	--

