



Apprenticeships Trailblazers

The Chartered Insurance Institute's guide for employers

February 2014



CII

Introduction

The Government's recent *UK Insurance Growth Action Plan*¹ highlighted the recruitment and development of future talent as vital to the future health of the sector. There are number of different ways of tackling this and several entry pathways into the industry already exist – with some better understood and utilised than others.

Apprenticeships represent one of these entry points but they have been a relatively untapped resource for insurance until now. We are beginning to see a change and there is a growing recognition of what apprenticeships can offer, both in terms of attracting new recruits and developing existing talent. Importantly, technical apprenticeships provide an onward track for an individual's future career, setting them on the professional qualifications pathway and offering a viable alternative for those not wishing to go to university.

The CII's annual skills survey² has seen a significant rise over the past four years in employers' awareness of technical apprenticeships (67% awareness in 2013 – an increase from 46% in 2009) and in their willingness to take on an apprentice (53% up from 41% in 2012). This has been matched by a rise in those starting an apprenticeship in insurance. In 2012, we saw over a thousand technical apprenticeship starts for the first time.

As part of the *UK Insurance Growth Action Plan*, our industry made a commitment to double the number of technical apprenticeships (those containing professional qualifications) over the next five years.

Change is underway to further improve apprenticeships and their value to firms and individuals. The aim is to make apprenticeships simpler, higher quality and driven by employers – key to this are the apprenticeship trailblazers. Led by employers, these pilots will develop the next generation of apprenticeship standards.

The benefits of taking on an apprentice are well documented – but what if you could take on an apprentice whose programme you have had a hand in designing? This short guide provides information on how apprenticeships are evolving, what the new standards cover, what a trailblazer is and how you can get involved.

***67% of employers are aware of insurance apprenticeships
(CII skills survey 2013)***

***53% of employers would be willing to take on an apprentice
(CII skills survey 2013)***

¹ HM Treasury *UK insurance growth action plan* (December 2013) <http://bit.ly/19YAWkZ>

² CII *Skills survey 2013* (November 2013) <http://bit.ly/1aZytTi>

Trailblazers: your questions answered

Apprenticeships in England are changing. Following a review, the government has chosen to create an employer-led model for the development of new apprenticeship standards. This will replace the current system by 2018. Financial services has been chosen as one of a small number of employer groups to act as 'Trailblazers', early adopters of the apprenticeship reforms. Each Trailblazer will develop the Apprenticeship standard and high level assessment approach for a number of occupations in their sector. This guide explains how this will happen.

How are apprenticeships changing?

Following a review in 2013 by entrepreneur Doug Richard, the government is reforming the apprenticeships system in England to make it simpler and to ensure it is driven by employers. The new apprenticeship standards will be shorter and designed by employers, supported by professional bodies.

These changes apply to England ONLY. Separate mechanisms for developing new apprenticeships exist in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

What will the new standards look like?

The new apprenticeship standards will be short (one/two pages), accessible documents, describing the level of knowledge, skill, and behaviours required to do a particular role well i.e. describing full competence for the role. They should be stretching and require at least one year of training to meet the standard. In addition, they will include assessment criteria and relevant qualifications.

All new standards have to relate to a specific role or occupation (e.g. financial services administrator) and provide a pathway to a career within the sector.

What is a trailblazer?

Eight 'trailblazers' have been set up to pilot this new employer-led approach across a number of different sectors. Financial service has been chosen as one of these initial trailblazers. These trailblazers bring together employers and professional bodies to develop new apprenticeship standards and assessment criteria. At present they are facilitated by consultants or others with experience of the sector they are dealing with.

Financial services employers are now able to develop further apprenticeships using the new approach, including ones in insurance, financial advice, pensions and mortgages.

How do they work?

Employers identify a need for a new standard that relates to a role or occupation. This can be done in a number of ways - via the trailblazer directly, collectively as a group of employers or through professional or trade bodies. The trailblazer will then bring together all those who want to be involved.

Once the employers taking part understand the process (see below) they are then able to proceed in developing the new standard.

1. Employers meet to agree on the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for the role. This could involve meetings as well as email correspondence.
2. Once a draft standard is agreed, this is then reviewed by a wider group of employers, including SMEs, to ensure it has broad based sector support. This can be done quickly and easily over the internet.

3. Employers, working with professional bodies, trade bodies and providers, then identify qualifications, professional memberships and the assessment approach that will be taken as part of the apprenticeship.
4. The final standard and assessment approach is agreed by employers and the relevant professional bodies before being submitted to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills for ministerial approval.
5. Once the standard has been approved, there is then a stage of developing the detailed assessment approach, identifying/developing the training required and agreeing funding. It then becomes available for employers to make use of.

For those of you with experience of the current system, it is important to realise that most of the processes and rules have changed and are a lot simpler than in the current apprenticeship world.

Can I get involved?

Yes. All employers, large or small, are encouraged to take part. The trailblazer process provides the opportunity for employers to directly influence the content of future apprenticeships. Employers are also able to join the process at any point, and so if you miss the first meeting, don't worry. You'll be more than welcome to take part.

Does taking part involve a big time and resource commitment?

No. This has been kept to a minimum to ensure that employers of all sizes are able to take part should they wish. Employers taking part in the trailblazer will be required to attend a small number of face to face meetings, with some e-mail correspondence. Firms do not need to worry about arranging meetings as this is dealt with by the trailblazer facilitator.

I'd like to comment but am unable to commit to attending meetings. Is there a way I can participate?

Yes. The new standards need a broad base of support from across the relevant sector; therefore there will be opportunities to contribute to the draft standard that the core group of employers have developed. As part of the early pilots, professional and other representative bodies have put out draft standards to their membership for comment.

Aren't trailblazers just for big firms?

No. Trailblazers are inclusive of firms – whatever their size. They have been designed to be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of small and medium businesses.

What does this mean for existing apprenticeship frameworks?

Existing frameworks continue to be valid and will be able to be utilised by new apprentices. However, all new apprenticeship standards within financial services will need to be developed through the employer-led, trailblazer model. By 2017/18 this model will be standard across all sectors and will progressively replace the existing frameworks.

Who do I contact for more information?

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The CII: Promoting skills development

Discover Risk is an award-winning campaign that reveals the breadth of opportunity in the insurance profession to those still in education. Integral to this are interactive sessions in schools and colleges that introduce young people to the concepts of risk and how they are applied in practice around the world. These sessions are supported by local employers.



Discover Fortunes is a school, college and university activity that provides students with an understanding of the role of financial planning in life. These sessions are supported by local employers.



For more information visit: www.discoverrisk.co.uk or email discover@cii.co.uk

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