

Apprenticeship Certificates England (ACE)

- **ACE is coming January 2012**

Key messages

Context

1. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL) was enacted in November 2010 and the new certification requirements came into force on 13th April 2011. One of the key requirements of the Act is that only the Certifying Authority for England can issue Apprenticeship certificates to successful apprentices in England. In order to make this happen the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils (Alliance) has been designated the Certifying Authority in England. The Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) remains the Accountable Officer for certification, but he has delegated this role to the Alliance. As a result the Alliance is the only organisation that can issue Apprenticeship certificates in England.
2. From 19th January 2012, a new certification service will be run by the Alliance and will be known as Apprenticeship Certificates England (ACE).

The four ACE elements

3. ACE is comprised of the following four elements:
 - The ACE brand
 - The ACE on line system
 - The ACE charges to issue certificates
 - The ACE quality assurance system
4. Apprentices or learning providers or employers who act on their behalf, will be able to request Apprenticeship certificates using the ACE online system.
5. The Alliance will sit in the middle of a hub and spoke model where the SSCs and SBs will
 - receive requests for certificates from apprentices or from learning providers or employers who act on their behalf via the ACE online system
 - issue Apprenticeship certificates, providing the requirements of the particular Apprenticeship framework have been met.
6. Apprentices will receive a new certificate approved by the Minister of State for further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, which at his request includes either bronze, silver or gold foil seals:
 - Bronze this seal appears on the certificate issued to apprentices who completed an Intermediate Apprenticeship.

- Silver this seal appears on the certificate issued to apprentices who completed an Advanced Apprenticeship.
 - Gold this seal appears on the certificate issued to apprentices who completed a Higher Apprenticeship.
7. The ACE online system is a development from on MA Online, which is already used for Scottish apprentices by providers through the UK. This tried and tested online system is both popular with users and easy to use.
 8. ACE will include a web-based training system and a fully downloadable PDF manual.
 9. The ACE online system can be used for more than just requesting certificates. For example, learning providers and employers can put the details of their apprentices onto the ACE online system at an early stage of their training and add evidence of their achievements as they progress. This will prevent people having to put on all the evidence needed to issue an Apprenticeship certificate when apprentices have finished all the elements of the framework. This will support the collation of Labour Market Information and also help us gain a more informed idea of apprenticeship numbers and success rates. The ACE online system will be used to simplify the current administrative requirements.
 10. ACE will store all the evidence of achievement an apprentice needs to claim an Apprenticeship certificate. The ACE online system means the days where SSCs and SBs had to store paper evidence and the costs associated with this are over.
 11. Individual apprentices will be able to use the ACE online system to request their own certificates if they want to.
 12. A certificate charge will be collected by the SSCs and SBs. This charge is being currently worked out and will be used to cover SSC and SB costs to issue certificates and Alliance costs to run the certification service.
 13. The Alliance will monitor the performance of the SSCs/SBs through a quality assurance process designed to ensure a consistent certification service. The quality assurance process will include a standard appeals system and complaints process.

Going live

14. The ACE online system is scheduled to go live from 19th January. SSCs and SBs will be brought on line using the following phased approach:
15. Phase one
 - Week One - Monday 16th January to Friday 20th January
 - Construction Skills
 - SkillsActive
 - LSIS
 - Skills for Health
 - Financial Skills Partnership
 - SummitSkills

16. Phase two

- Week Two - Monday 23rd January to Friday 27th January

- CFA
- Cogent
- The Institute for the Motor Industry - IMI
- Improve Ltd
- People 1st
- Skillset

17. Phase Three

- Week Three - Monday 30th January to Friday 3rd February

- Asset Skills
- ECITB
- Lantra
- Senta
- Skills for Justice
- Skillsmart Retail

18. Phase Four

- Week Four - Monday 6th February to Friday 10 February

- Creative & Cultural Skills
- Energy and Utility Skills
- e-skills UK
- Skills for Logistics
- Proskills UK
- Skills for Care and Development
- Skills for Security