

Recognition Of Prior Learning Policy

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Introduction

At Tolley®Exam Training, we recognise and value the experience and qualifications that our apprentices have gained prior to starting their apprenticeship programme.

This policy is divided into two parts:

1. Apprenticeship Programme: The first section discusses recognition of prior learning in relation to the tax apprenticeship programme.
2. Functional Skills: The second section discusses recognition of prior learning for those apprentices who do not hold a relevant qualification in English and are therefore enrolled onto the functional skills in English qualification programme.

1. Apprenticeship programme

Before joining the apprenticeship programme, we assess the apprentice's previous work history and experience, as well as their qualifications, the purpose being two-fold.

Firstly, we must be certain that the student requires sufficient learning to be eligible for apprenticeship funding, as required by the Department for Education. If the student has significant previous experience of working within a taxation professional background, whether with the same or a previous employer, they might have already gained significant development in the knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to the apprenticeship standard (the Standard), the substantial learning requirement may not be met, thus calling into question the eligibility for apprenticeship funding.

Secondly, it prevents duplication of learning, by allowing a credit against the relevant unit of the programme, hence reducing the time the apprentice spends on programme, as well as the overall cost.

Eligibility for apprenticeship funding based on experience

Before being accepted into the apprenticeship programme, prospective candidates are required to disclose their previous qualifications and working experience. This allows us to form a view on their eligibility for apprenticeship funding.

The decision as to whether an applicant can be accepted into the apprenticeship programme will be at the discretion of Tolley®Exam Training and will be made after careful consideration of the facts. The decision will be final, and no appeal process is available.

Where it is decided that there has been some prior learning, but the substantial learning requirement is still met, an adjustment to the cost of the programme and the funding available can be made in accordance with the funding rules.

Recognition of prior learning and transfer of achievement

If an apprentice joins the programme with a prior qualification, exemptions might be available. For example a student who is a member of the Associate of Accounting Technicians (AAT), will have an exemption against the CBE in Accounting in the Association of Tax Technician (ATT) qualification in the level 4 tax apprenticeship programme and the Chartered Institute of Tax (CIOT) qualification in the level 7 tax apprenticeship programme. By recognising an earlier qualification, it can potentially shorten the tax apprenticeship programme, therefore potentially reducing the cost of the programme, although it is noted that the OTJ requirement remains the same.

Prospective candidates may apply to join the apprenticeship programme having achieved other qualifications relevant to the subject, such as a degree in accounting or business studies. As part of the onboarding programme, we will review the modules of the degree and compare this to our programme.

Skills and behaviours

Everyone joining the apprenticeship programme will have previous experience, whether through studies or work, paid or voluntary. This means that most apprentices will have acquired a base level of skills and behaviours before they apply to join our programme.

We assess skills and behaviours against the Level 4/Level 7 taxation Standards only and in the context of the roles of taxation technicians and professionals. As such, we assume the generic skills and behaviours that apprentices acquire in their day-to-day life are not regarded as evidence of development towards the taxation Standard's skills and behaviours.

As part of the onboarding process, all apprentices must complete a skills scan where both the individual and the employer assess the level of skills and behaviours as 'learning, developing or performing'. It is important to emphasise that the skills and behaviours must be assessed only against those specified within the Standard and therefore within the context of the tax working environment. This means that for many students it is unlikely that their skills and behaviours will be recognised.

Whilst it is helpful to have the apprentice's personal skills scan, it is recognised that they will not usually have an in depth understanding of the skills and behaviours of the taxation Standard. For this reason, the employer is also asked to do a skills scan, which tends to give us a more rounded view of the apprentices' base level of the Standard's skills and behaviours, as they are able to benchmark against someone who may be already operating at the Level 4 or Level 7 taxation standard. For this reason, where the employer and the learner disagree on the skills scan, we will tend to use the employer's score if it is lower. Using those answers, we would proceed as follows:

Degree of learning/developing/performing- Level 4

Where there is a high degree of 'learning' and some or no 'developing', we take the view that there is a substantial learning requirement, and they will benefit from our whole programme. In this situation, no recognition will be made for RPL, as whilst the learning will be prior, it is unlikely to be relevant. Generally, this will be taken to be the case where there are a **maximum of 7** skills and behaviours for which the apprentice is already working at the developing and/or performing stage.

Where there is a high degree of 'developing and/or performing' we will take the view that the 'substantial learning' requirement has not been met and they are not eligible to join the program. Generally, this will be taken to be the case where there are **14 or more** skills and behaviours for which the apprentice is already working at the developing and/or performing stage. In summary:

Number of KSBs listed as Developing or Performing:	7 or less	8 to 14	15 or more
Likely outcome:	Likely to be accepted	Sent to Coach for review	Likely to be rejected, subject to Coach review

Degree of learning/developing/performing- Level 7

Where there is a high degree of 'learning' and some or no 'developing', we take the view that there is a substantial learning requirement, and they will benefit from our whole programme. In this situation, no recognition will be made for RPL, as whilst the learning will be prior, it is unlikely to be relevant. Generally, this will be taken to be the case where there are a **maximum of 2** skills and behaviours for which the apprentices is already working at the developing and/or performing stage.

Where there is a high degree of 'developing and/or performing' we take the view that the 'substantial learning' requirement has not been met and they are not eligible to join the program. Generally, this will be taken to be the case where there are **6 or more** skills and behaviours for which the apprentice is already working at the developing and/or performing stage. In summary

Number of KSBs listed as Developing or Performing:	2 or less	3 to 5	6 or more
Likely outcome:	Likely to be accepted	Sent to Coach for review	Likely to be rejected subject to Coach review

This initial assessment is taken very seriously at Tolley®Exam Training, and a lot of care is given to determining eligibility for the programme. Where there is any uncertainty as to the suitability for the programme, the case will be referred to the Tolley®Exam Training appointed skills/behaviours assessor. They, or their deputy may ask further questions in relation to the apprentice's previous experience, to give a fuller background in determining the eligibility to the programme and its funding. We believe that this approach will give consistency to the process and their decision in terms of eligibility will be final, with no appeals procedure available.

2. Functional skills in English

There are a handful of apprentices who join the programme without holding the requisite qualification in English that will allow them to pass through Gateway to End Point Assessment. Consequently, they will need to take a qualification in functional skills in English at level 2 before they arrive at this point on their apprenticeship journey. This qualification consists of three individual components, in reading, writing, and speaking, listening and communicating. Apprentices who have previously achieved individual components at the same level, but not the over functional English skills qualification, may transfer their achievement(s).

Tolley®Exam Training is registered as an assessment centre for functional skills with the awarding organisation NCFE. It is recognised that on occasions there will be apprentices who may move their training provider during their apprenticeship programme and during the delivery of their functional skills qualification.

NCFE will accept transfer of achievement for components of this qualification, even where they were from a different awarding body providing supporting evidence can be provided. Evidence provided must clearly identify the learner, the component, the achievement, and be an official document generated from an awarding organisation. This could include an awarding organisation certificate or results slip. Please note that NCFE will not accept documents generated from a centre's internal student information management system as proof of achievement. Evidence will only be accepted if it is valid, authentic, sufficient and reliable.

Our approach

Where appropriate, Tolley®Exam Training will make the application to NCFE to transfer learn achievement using the form found at:

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualifications/centre-assessment-support/transfer-achievement-functional-skills-english/>

This form will be emailed to customersupport@ncfe.org.uk, attaching all relevant supporting evidence for all relevant apprentices. NCFE commit to responding within 5 working days of submitting the form and the unique learner number (ULN) allocated to a candidate will be retained when transferring achievement between awarding organisations.

The decision as to whether to accept the transfer of achievement will be at the discretion of NCFE, in accordance with their Recognition of Prior Learning Policy which can be found on their website at the link shown above.

It should be noted that certificates will not have any indication that a transfer of achievement has taken place and will simply state that the component is achieved, and it should be noted that no special considerations will be considered solely on the grounds of a transfer of achievement.