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Apprenticeship Reform

Milestone 1 & 2

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1. Introduction

Milestone 1

The purpose of this project is to:

- Design a high quality business and administration apprenticeship programme that meets the needs of SfBN employers on a UK wide basis
- To work with SfBN and the regulatory bodies of the 4 home nations to expand the reach of business and administration apprenticeships
- To evaluate existing frameworks and make improvements in line with the requirements of the regulatory bodies of the 4 home nations
- Meet employer needs for a robust and attractive apprenticeship framework according to the needs of the SfBN and the requirements of each home nation
- Improve the business and administration apprenticeship completion rates
- Identify barriers to completion and submit recommendations as to how to solve these
- Improve the assessment of apprenticeships and NVQs
- Promote apprenticeships offered by SfBN and CfA to employers
- Input into good practise and support SfBN development on apprenticeships

Milestone 2

The purpose of this project has been to consult on the Business & Administration Apprenticeship model and ensure that it meets the needs of the Skills for Business Network (SfBN) employers and key stakeholders.

The first milestone reported on the results of the nationwide consultation and the recommendations for the current model.

The final milestone looks at the possible Business & Administration Apprenticeship models and evaluates each against set criteria. This is to ensure that the model adopted for the future will be appropriate for use with the Apprenticeship as a Qualification pilot as well as used for testing the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

In order to create and evaluate the three Business & Administration Apprenticeship models, the recommendations from the first milestone were used to shape a basic content structure, which can then be used to structure three models.

The list of evaluative criteria has been developed from the guidelines issued from the QCF and the Apprenticeship Blueprint as well as the criteria set for this project. The evaluative criteria are listed as Appendix 1.

The models evaluated in this milestone would only be appropriate for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the framework is structured differently as it has no Technical Certificate and 5 Core Skills as well as two enhancements. With this in mind, the changes affecting the Scottish framework would only be to the SVQ in model 2 and models 1 and 3 would not be applicable. There is however a need for an evaluation of how enhancements are used within the Scottish framework to ensure that the quality of the framework is consistent.

Each of the four nations uses a different blueprint for its apprenticeship framework (including different terminology) which makes it difficult to have one model for use in all nations.

2. Executive Summary

Milestone 1

Desk Research

Existing evaluation reports from various educational bodies were used to establish common issues with: barriers to completion; delivery of the framework and its components; content and structure; key/core skills; assessment of all components; achievement; recruitment and initial assessment. These findings were used to shape the content of the employer and learner questionnaires.

Framework for Achievement documents such as 'New Thinking for Reform', were used to determine where apprenticeships will sit within the new VQ Reform Programme. This was to ensure that our framework model would be forward thinking and cutting edge.

Past and current projects were consulted to ensure that the framework would compliment findings from other projects such as: Young Apprenticeship; Labour Market Information; International Benchmarking; Specialist Standards; Specialised Diplomas; Foundation Degrees.

Consultation

Employers

Employer questionnaires were designed with different versions for each of the four nations reflecting the differences in apprenticeship structure and terminology. These were posted to 485 companies recorded on the CfA employer database. The questionnaire was also sent electronically to 950 learning providers and they were asked to pass these onto their employers. In total, there were 58 responses.

Learners – Current and Completers

Two separate questionnaires were designed for both current learners as well as those that had completed an apprenticeship framework. Completer questionnaires were sent out with completion certificates and learning providers were asked to pass on the learner questionnaires to their current learners. In total, 102 learners responded.

Regulatory Bodies

In total, nine regulatory bodies within the UK were consulted on the apprenticeship framework, namely: LSC (England), WAG (Wales), DfES (England), QCA (England), SSA Scot (Scotland), DELNI (Northern Ireland), Scottish Executive (Scotland), Highlands & Islands Enterprise (Scotland) and SSDA (England).

Skills for Business Network

The Apprenticeship Manager at each of the 25 SSCs were contacted either by telephone or by email.

Findings

Employers

Key findings:

- 89% use 'on the job' training such as work shadowing as the most popular method of training administration staff
- 31% said that learning for the apprenticeship should fit better alongside job commitments
- 28% said that the training should be appropriate for the job role
- 34% said that there needed to be a reduction in assessment bureaucracy

Learners

Key findings:

- 62% preferred projects, role plays or demonstrations as a delivery method in learning or assessment
- 45% said 'on the job' training within the workplace is the preferred method of training
- 49% said that they would prefer to be taught and assessed according to their learning style
- 34% said that the framework should be more flexible with options for choice
- 45% said that they would prefer assessment which gave them feedback on where they needed to improve

Skills for Business Network

SSCs fell into three groups: those that required more N/SVQ units, those that required a unit or module of a VRQ and those required no specialist knowledge at all.

Conclusions & Recommendations

S/NVQ

- Need for contextualisation of administration standards for different sectors and then submission as N/SVQ units
- Need for new guidance and criteria on employer accredited training programmes for use as NVQ proxies

Technical Certificate

- Include business functions content within technical certificate
- Include a specialist option in each technical certificate to fit function
- Introduce specialist technical certificates such as public administration and legal secretary diplomas
- Include business qualifications such as BTEC Nationals and GCSEs as technical certificates or proxies
- Awarding body criteria should state that assessment assignments should be written in the context of the industry and company
- Investigate the possible introduction of the technical certificate in Scotland

Key/Core Skills

- Need for contextualisation and integration of learning materials for key/core skills
- Investigation into possible removal of key skills exams in England

Milestone 2

The final milestone looks at the possible Business & Administration Apprenticeship models and evaluates each against set criteria. This is to ensure that the model adopted for the future will be appropriate for use with the Apprenticeship as a Qualification pilot as well as used for testing the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

Apprenticeship Model 1 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland only)

The first model is taken directly from a previous project that the CfA undertook to design an Adult Apprenticeship. The project did not extend to Scotland as adults are currently able to register on the Business & Administration Modern Apprenticeship in Scotland as there is no upper age limit.

The content is the same as the current model in that completion ensures that the candidate has completed an NVO, technical certificate and key skills. The difference with this model is that the programme is arranged into 4 modules for each level, which have been grouped into topics and a separate assessment regime is recommended.

Apprenticeship Model 2 (All UK Frameworks)

The second model is taken directly from the recommendations that were suggested to alter the existing apprenticeship model.

The content differs slightly to the current model in that there are 'extra' options within each of the elements of the apprenticeship to ensure more flexibility. The structure is the same as the current model.

Apprenticeship Model 3 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland only)

The third model is taken from the ITQ model developed by E-Skills and held as an example of best practise.

The content differs slightly from the current model in that extra elements have been added which are optional within the framework. The structure has also altered from the current model.

The final model that has been chosen however is Model 2 - the Current Framework. The reasons for this are straightforward as the ITQ Model would require a complete change in the framework structure. Since it has only been a year and a half since the implementation of the 2005 Business & Administration Framework it would be unrealistic to implement a brand new framework so soon after this date. With the recommended changes to the current framework in place, the new framework would prove just as rigorous and easier to understand than the ITQ framework.

It is a further recommendation from this project that the CfA look at the quality and methodology of apprenticeship delivery. This appears to have been the main improvement required of the current UK frameworks. This involves working closely with learning providers and improving the administration of the framework, improved initial assessment processes, improve the quality of N/SVQ assessment and produce better learning materials. It is also a recommendation that learning providers develop flexible methods for delivery of the frameworks so that they are able to offer a better service to SME employers. There is also a need to evaluate the current use of enhancements within the Scottish framework to ensure consistency.

3. Methodology

Milestone 1

3.1 Desk Research

3.11 Evaluative Reports of the Apprenticeship

Existing evaluation reports from various educational bodies were used to establish common issues with:

- barriers to completion
- delivery of the framework and its components
- content and structure
- key/core skills
- assessment of all components
- achievement
- recruitment and
- initial assessment.

These findings were used to shape the content of the employer and learner questionnaires.

3.12 Apprenticeships and VQ Reform

Framework for Achievement documents such as 'New Thinking for Reform', were used to determine where apprenticeships will sit within the new VQ Reform Programme. This was to ensure that our framework model would be forward thinking and cutting edge.

3.13 Links with other CfA Projects

Past and current projects were consulted to ensure that the framework would compliment findings from other projects such as:

- Young Apprenticeship
- Labour Market Information
- International Benchmarking
- Specialist Standards
- Specialised Diplomas
- Foundation Degrees.

3.2 Consultation Methods

3.21 Employers

Employer questionnaires were designed with different versions for each of the four nations reflecting the differences in apprenticeship structure and terminology. These were posted to 485 companies recorded on the CfA employer database. The questionnaire was also sent electronically to 950 learning providers and they were asked to pass these onto their employers. In total, there were 58 responses.

To ensure effective representation of the four nations, percentage proportions were achieved to resemble the administration population of the UK, namely: 67% of administrators are based in England, 10% are based in Wales, 17% are based in Scotland and 6% are based in Northern Ireland. This is reflected in our employer responses.

3.22 Learners – Current and Completers

Two separate questionnaires were designed for both current learners as well as those that had completed an apprenticeship framework. Completer questionnaires were sent out with completion certificates and learning providers were asked to pass on the learner questionnaires to their current learners. In total, 102 learners responded.

3.23 Regulatory Bodies

In total, nine regulatory bodies within the UK were consulted on the apprenticeship framework, namely: LSC (England), WAG (Wales), DfES (England), QCA (England), SSA Scot (Scotland), DELNI (Northern Ireland), Scottish Executive (Scotland), Highlands & Islands Enterprise (Scotland) and SSDA (England).

3.24 Skills for Business Network

The Apprenticeship Manager at each of the 25 SSCs were contacted either by telephone or by email. All employers were asked to identify which sector their business was affiliated to which meant that we were able to reach SfBN employers without having to go through the SfBN. As part of the partnership arrangement with Automotive Skills, SSCs were contacted as part of the overarching project and so Apprenticeship Reform was included in the list of topics to discuss with each SSC.

4. Findings

Milestone 1

4.1 Desk Research

4.11 Criticisms of the Apprenticeship

Delivery

In terms of delivery, several issues are identified as needing improvement.

In England particularly, employers reported a lack of recognition of their own training schemes which meant a repetition of learning. In Scotland, in-house training can be used as an enhancement on the apprenticeship programme.

English employers wanted as much training to be delivered on employer premises as possible as they were reluctant to give learners time away from their work commitments. In many cases, apprentices have one day a week away from the workplace to undertake training and learning.

English employers reported that their apprentices seemed to have trouble balancing their work commitments (in essence providing good quality work activity) with their learning commitments in terms of completing coursework, NVQ assessment and Key Skills learning.

Adults in particular have specific needs when it comes to delivery.

Adult learners are more likely to achieve if their individual learning style is used to deliver and assess learning, particularly if they have been out of learning for some time.

For adults, fitting learning alongside work and personal commitments is difficult which means delivery of learning needs to be offered in a variety of ways.

Adults are not able to take time away from the workplace especially if they are in a position of responsibility or line management. They enjoy off the job training but employers insist that training be held on employer premises if possible.

For adults, the fear of 'going back to school' needs to be addressed in the design of any programme ensuring that delivery options are not just classroom based.

Content & Structure

In Wales, employers reported that the apprenticeship programme does not always company needs. They suggest making the apprenticeship programme more flexible so that it better meets the needs of individual employers rather than 'employers' as a whole.

In England, employers reported that the apprenticeship framework was not flexible enough to incorporate SME needs with those of large organisations. Again, a 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate.

Employers in England also reported that the apprenticeship must fit the job role of the individual, suggesting that a menu of options should be used enabling flexibility of structure and content.

For adults in particular, smaller bite sized learning ensures that motivation for learning and achievement is built and that completion is more likely. Adults also preferred to learn IT within a context rather than learnt in isolation.

Key/Core Skills

In both Wales and England, the Key Skills examinations were criticised (since the report revealing this, Wales has dropped the mandatory key skills exams from their framework) as an ineffective method of assessing literacy and numeracy especially for those learners that were not academic. In Scotland however, Core Skills were not reported as a problem with employers or learners, possibly because a large number of learners complete Core Skills whilst at school.

At the last Apprenticeship Appeals Panel, 75% of the appeals were appealing against retaking of Key Skills exams which learners were unable to pass after 3 or 4 attempts.

In England, employers were disgruntled that they were 'paying' for Key Skills learning which they felt should be the school's responsibility in terms of teaching literacy and numeracy. Employers also felt that in their current state, there was a lack of relevance for Key Skills in the workplace.

Assessment

In Scotland, employers commented on the quality of training. They felt that some training providers were using the NVQ as a check list and not taking into account where a learner had undertaken the work before. Assessor visits were sporadic and not planned well.

In England, employers felt that assessment should be moulded to the job and not be set tasks with little relevance. They felt that although NVQ assessment is done by external assessors, qualified line managers are more able to judge real competence in the workplace. Employers commented that it was vital that Technical Certificates are fit for purpose and do not become academic and examination based. Employers suggested that there should be a structure where there is a minimum standard for each element and that the different elements are graded as well as the overall apprenticeship. Employers wanted to allow for as many types of assessment as possible and that learners should be allowed to take exams at employer premises. An electronic NVQ portfolio streamlined the assessment process.

Adult learners prefer coursework and competency based assessment rather than end-of-course tests and felt that assessment methods should encourage feedback. They felt that NVQs are too bureaucratic and that most are happier with a workplace supervisor assessing. They also felt that work based assignments show competency and knowledge effectively.

Achievement

In Wales, employers reported that there should be a change in the way in which achievements are obtained in terms of allotting grades to the apprenticeship. Welsh employers also wanted an introduction of incentives to participants on completion as well as rewarding participants with achievements at different stages of the programme.

For adults, achievement and accreditation are very important. Progression opportunities are essential and in many cases smaller steps are more appropriate for those that have been out of learning for some time.

Recruitment and Initial Assessment

In Wales, employers reported that too many trainees left the programme early and that those that remained were often of poor quality. This would require further investigation but it might simply be because the recruitment process is not rigorous enough in Wales.

In England, learners reported that a barrier to entering the programme is to have to 'sign up' for the full framework when ideally they would prefer to start with elements and then achieve the full framework afterwards. Learners also reported that the initial assessment process did not always take in account previous leaning or qualifications already gained.

For adults, it is essential that prior knowledge and experience should be accounted for at the initial assessment process so that the programme can be tailored to the individual, can ensure a good level of literacy and numeracy and can avoid repetitive learning.

4.12 Apprenticeship and VQ Reform

In 2004, SSDA announced a national reform of apprenticeships. At the time of announcement, the Chief Executive of Skills for Business welcomed the reform but warned that the system of reform needed to be led by employers if it was to be successful as 'they are the only ones that can really now what skills their workforce needs, both now and in the future'.

The reform stresses the need for flexibility in the shaping of apprenticeships to meet the different workforce development needs of different sectors.

In 2004, QCA also released a paper on the proposed Framework for Achievement (FfA) now known as VQ Reform.

The key design principles (which should be taken into account when creating an apprenticeship model) are:

- The backbone of the framework will be a range of qualifications that genuinely qualify people in particular occupations or signify their competence
- Flexibility will be built in so that achievements from appropriate employer and private training programmes can be formally recognised; this flexibility will allow for the inclusion of customised awards that meet specific market needs
- The framework will provide fit-for-purpose assessment options, including the choice to use e-assessment where appropriate
- The framework will recognise a wide range of achievements, which will help people get back to learning and set them on a journey of personal or professional progress
- All provision in the framework will be unit based, with the volume of each unit measured by a system of credits so that there are no dead ends to progress, achievement can be measured in smaller steps and learners get the chance to keep their credits and re-use them, if appropriate
- The credit system will be aligned with the emerging 14-19 proposals so that there are clear progression routes into and across the adult framework
- All units recognised within the framework will be subject to a quality-assurance regime
- Common language and terminology will be used across all qualifications in the framework to provide a platform from which to build wide public understanding and confidence in the system

As part of the Apprenticeship as a Qualification Project, the following research was undertaken on the design of apprenticeships:

Most respondents believed that the current model incorporated the right components for a programme which could be valuable in giving young people the skills they need to enter and perform competently in the workplace. Learners in particular were happy with the current model and recommended no changes.

Employers, providers and other stakeholders were more critical and highlighted many aspects of implementation which required improvement in order for apprenticeships to meet their aims. Despite these criticisms, most accepted that the apprenticeship model was structured appropriately and, in theory, could deliver a skilled and flexible workforce. Any shortcomings in the current model related to its implementation and delivery.

The main factor which detracted from the quality of apprenticeships was the Key Skills. There was little dissent about the benefits of learners having these skills but the current model was said to be too rigid to be suitable for all sectors, all employers, and all learners. The main points highlighted were:

- Difficulties with integrating the Key Skills into the occupational sector
- Inappropriate assessment which both de-contextualised the Key Skills and de-motivated learners by using formal written tests
- Too little flexibility about which Key Skills were needed and at which level to suit particular sectors or occupations within sectors
- Confusion about the rules on exemption and relaxation
- The disparity created between the vocational and non-vocational routes where only the former required Key Skills achievement.

The difficulties with the Key Skills undermined the value of apprenticeships and meant that learners were not following coherent programmes. This in turn devalued apprenticeships in the eyes of employers and other stakeholders.

Further criticism was targeted at the NVQ itself. Some respondents felt that occupational competence need not be synonymous with an NVQ, which was effectively the case in many sectors. NVQs suffered from a poor image in some quarters and this impacted negatively upon the apprenticeship.

Funding was structured in such a way that it penalised providers for partial achievement, which was an enormous barrier given the difficulties learners had with Key Skills. It also effectively excluded older learners from the apprenticeship, which impacted disproportionately on many sectors, such as health and social care, which valued the experience brought by older learners.

Underlying all the suggestions was a need to retain demonstration of occupational competence as central to any new qualification. It was said to be paramount that apprenticeships prepared candidates for employment and gave them specific skills to do a specific job. In addition, a more coherent and valuable qualification could be achieved by resolving issues related to Key Skills and the development of occupational standards. This would ensure more integrated delivery and assessment of both the Key Skills and the sector's underpinning knowledge.

The analysis of respondents' views revealed a number of key principles to be adhered to in developing models for a new qualification. These principles require that a new qualification should be:

Work based

In both delivery and assessment
 Focused on occupational competence, though not necessarily be tied to NVQs
 Assessed mostly through demonstration and observational evidence
 Assessed in the occupational context

Integrated

To deliver and assess underpinning knowledge, Key Skills and employer rights and responsibilities in the work context
 Designed with progression in mind
 Linked to the national framework for qualifications, further and higher education and suitable qualifications such as diplomas

Employer-led

Reflect the needs of small and medium sized employers as well as large companies.

Unitised

Recognising partial achievement
 Retaining unit accreditation and certification where appropriate

Flexible, where possible

Including optional units
 Requiring different levels and types of Key Skills

To meet the needs of all learners, the qualification should not be time-bound nor age limited. Therefore issues of funding ought to be considered in developing the new qualification.

4.13 Links with other CfA projects

Young Apprenticeship

“Employers in law and finance sectors felt there was some scope for creating a more specialist programme of study in the workplace geared towards admin skills required for those sectors.”

At present the YA programme has the following structure:

Element	Options
Level 2 Outcome	NVO Technical Certificate GCSE Applied Business BTEC Cert/Dip in Business
Work Placement	50 Days
Enrichment	CLAIT ECDL H&S Qualification Text Processing Qualification

The learner is able to specialise their programme by undertaking a work placement with a specific employer that interests them or by choosing an enrichment option which focuses their programme on a suitable pathway.

Labour Market Information

Administration only roles are decreasing whilst specialist administration roles are increasing. This looks set to continue into the futures as roles evolve.

International Benchmarking

In Australia, learners are given a wider variety of topics to choose from which tailors their training package to their job role.

In Germany, apprentices learn about the different functions of the business which means that apprentices are able to work in different functions effectively.

Languages are also becoming more important. When learning a language alongside a degree, the degree becomes known as 'International'.

Specialist Standards

Within each SSC there are some roles which require specialist knowledge of the industry/sector/job role as well as that of administration. We are developing specialist NVQ units for these roles to tailor the NVQ for specialist administrators.

Specialised Diplomas

The current thinking of the structure of the specialised diploma is:

Element	Options
Generic Learning	Functional Skills in English, Maths, IT Personal Learning and Thinking Skills
Principal Learning (Sector Related)	General & Applied
Specialist	HR, Finance, Management Law, Marketing, Operations
Additional	Science Economics Languages

This structure allows for learners to have transferable skills in literacy and numeracy, sector related learning, a specialist focus depending on career aspirations and additional interests.

Foundation Degree

The suggested structure for the Foundation Degree framework is:

Element	Options
Mandatory	Communication IT Customer Service Office Administration Problem Solving
Optional	Operations Change, Project Management Finance Health and Safety HR, Training & Development Entrepreneurship

The mandatory elements develop the core skills required of the learner such as IT, numeracy, literacy, team working and problem solving.

The optional elements allow for learners to create specialist pathways according to their own career aspirations.

National Certificate (Scotland only)

A current review suggests that the 12 units of the National Certificate should be broken down into 7 mandatory units and 5 optional units. The mandatory units will cover the generic skills needed by all administrators whilst the optional units provide specialisms in medicine, law, HR and shorthand.

The projects above show that the future of qualifications is a flexible menu of options that allow the learner to specialise their learning according to their career aspirations. Currently, the apprenticeship framework does not allow for this, except in Scotland.

4.2 Consultation

4.21 Employers

When asked how employers currently train their administration staff:

- 89% use 'on the job' training such as work shadowing
- 76% use in house company training such as time management courses
- 60% use external training such as attending college courses
- 59% use in house training delivered by an external provider
- 27% use distance learning

Of those employers that currently use the business and administration apprenticeship framework to train their administration staff, they suggested the following improvements:

- 31% said that learning should fit better alongside job commitments
- 28% said that the training should be appropriate for the job role
- 24% said that all elements of the framework should be integrated
- 22% said that the N/SVQ should be improved
- 21% said that the Technical Certificate should be improved
- 17% said that the Key/Core skills should be improved
- 7% said that the length of the framework should be reviewed

Employers suggested improvements to assessment, as follows:

- 34% said that there needed to be a reduction in bureaucracy
- 29% said that the apprenticeship should be graded
- 29% said that workplace supervisors should be allowed to assess the N/SVQ
- 21% said that the apprenticeship should be a qualification in its own right

Of those employers that do not use the business and administration apprenticeship framework to train their administration staff, they suggested the following improvements would be needed before they could consider using the framework:

- All components should be integrated especially in delivery terms
- It should be appropriate for those over the age of 25
- More guidance needed for employers in order to provide a solid structure and effective resources to run the framework
- Make the framework more relevant for their sector or industry

4.22 Learners

Learners were asked their preferred methods of learning:

- 62% preferred projects, role plays or demonstrations
- 53% preferred attending classes, seminars and/or lectures
- 52% preferred looking at CD ROMs and websites
- 24% preferred reading textbooks and/or manuals
- 14% preferred listening to pod casts, CDs or audio recordings

Learners were also asked where they would like to do the majority of their training and learning:

- 45% said 'on the job' within the workplace
- 36% said off the job at a learning provider such as a college
- 33% said off the job at employer premises

Learners were asked what improvements could be made to the business and administration apprenticeship framework:

- 49% said that they would prefer to be taught and assessed according to their learning style
- 34% said that the framework should be more flexible with options for choice
- 23% said that the framework should be shorter
- 19% said that they would prefer to learn IT within an administration context
- 18% said that they would prefer to learn key/core skills in an administration context
- 16% said that exams should be removed
- 2% said that the framework should be longer

Learners also gave feedback on how assessment should be improved:

- 45% said that they would prefer assessment which gave them feedback on where they needed to improve
- 34% said that the apprenticeship should be a qualification in its own right
- 30% said that the apprenticeship should be graded
- 19% said that their supervisor should be allowed to assess them

4.23 Skills for Business Network

All 25 SSCs were asked to comment on how the business & administration apprenticeship framework could be improved to ensure that administrators in their sector were learning the essential skills for that industry:

People 1st: Customer service is the primary skill for this industry across all roles. It is more about practical competence of customer service skills than knowledge of the sector so added customer service units to the S/NVQ would be appropriate.

Go Skills: It would be useful to have an appreciation of the sector or industry but an NVQ unit would be too specific. One of our VRQ modules at level 1 that introduces the industry would be very effective.

Automotive Skills: The business and administration apprenticeship is used mainly with the rental and leasing sector of the retail automotive industry. It doesn't fit the sector as well as it could. A module of a new VRQ called 'Introduction to the Motor Industry' would give a UK wide perspective on the market. We can then work with motor vehicle providers to offer the administration provision. There is also a great need for HR administrators in this industry to be trained with NVQ and VRQ units tailored to them.

Summit Skills: Contextualised evidence for the NVQ or VRQ sufficient for the industry would be preferable than a separate unit/module.

Skills Active: Industry and Organisational Awareness qualifications from our own VRQs would be appropriate.

Skills for Health: BTEC national in Health and Social Care has a unit called Working in the Health Sector which would be useful.

Skills smart Retail: The vast majority of administrators in this sector will be working in retail head offices or customer contact centres so customer service and IT user units are the most important within the NVQ.

Creative & Cultural Skills: Creative Business Unit, Arts Administration or Arts Marketing units within the VRQ/TC.

Asset Skills: Within property and housing, it is useful for administrators to have an overview of the sector using a VRQ that contains information on relevant legislation and contract management.

Cogent: Knowledge of technology, legislation and environmental impact policies within a VRQ would be useful.

Construction Skills: No specialist knowledge needed.

EU Skills: Health and safety and environmental policy knowledge within a VRQ would be useful.

E-Skills: Knowledge of IT and terminology in this sector is essential. Customer service skills are also required especially in contact centres.

FSSC: Finance sector knowledge is essential in this sector, so a VRQ unit would be effective.

Government Skills: A VRQ with a public sector focus using appropriate terminology would be essential. A customer service focus is especially important to councils. And specialist knowledge such as legislation is essential for HR administrators.

Improve Ltd: No specialist knowledge needed.

Lantra: No specialist knowledge needed.

Lifelong Learning: Knowledge of education and public sector terminology covered within a VRQ would be useful.

Proskills: No specialist knowledge needed.

SEMTA: Manufacturing industry knowledge as well as environmental awareness and legislation knowledge within a VRQ would be useful.

Skillfast: No specialist knowledge needed.

Skills for Care and Development: Children legislation knowledge essential as well as excellent customer service skills.

Skills for Justice: Public sector knowledge and terminology essential as well as legal knowledge within a VRQ.

Skills for Logistics: Customer service skills essential especially for Transport and Distribution Clerks.

Skillset: No specialist knowledge needed.

4.24 Nations

Employers and learners in all four nations were encouraged to participate in this review especially because each nation has different framework requirements and use different terminology. There were no significant findings from employers within the four nations to suggest a radically different approach or improvement to the framework within their country.

Milestone 2

Apprenticeship Model 1 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland only)

The first model is taken directly from a previous project that the CfA undertook to design an Adult Apprenticeship. The project did not extend to Scotland as adults are currently able to register on the Business & Administration Modern Apprenticeship in Scotland as there is no upper age limit.

The content is the same as the current model in that completion ensures that the candidate has completed an NVQ, technical certificate and key skills. The difference with this model is that the programme is arranged into 4 modules for each level, which have been grouped into topics.

The table below shows the name of each module and how the achievement of each module has different 'qualification' titles.

Module	Level 2 Content	Level 3 Content
1	Business Communications	Supervising an Office
2	Customer Relations	Leadership and Management
3	Planning and Organising	Planning and Organising
4	Information Management	Information Management

Within each module, the candidate would develop work competence, technical certificate learning as well as IT and key skills learning relevant to the topic. Two assessment methods have been proposed: end test and confirmation of competence or online testing.

The advantages of this model are that it:

- meets the apprenticeship blueprint criteria
- combats the main barriers to completion
- improves assessment methodology and quality by assessment being in the context of the topic
- meets the needs of SMEs as well as large organisations by its flexibility
- enables the programme to fit the job role of the individual by grouping topic coverage
- has units that can be credited as each module is the same size
- enables IT to be learnt within an administration context which removes a barrier to learning
- enables literacy and numeracy to be developed within an administrative context which removes a barrier to learning
- encourages progression onto further modules as well as onto Level 4
- meets the needs of different age groups in that it is bite-size and focuses on workplace competence assessment

The disadvantages of this model are that it:

- doesn't take into account in-house training schemes
- doesn't reflect the changing scope of the labour market for administrators as it does not include sector specific knowledge or business functional knowledge
- doesn't meet the needs of different sectors (see above point)
- doesn't deliver learning of business functions as well as administration
- doesn't deliver a range of options within each element to encourage flexibility as the structure is rigid
- doesn't use both mandatory and optional elements to provide choice as all elements are mandatory

Apprenticeship Model 2 (All UK Frameworks)

The second model is taken directly from the recommendations that were suggested to alter the existing apprenticeship model. The content differs slightly to the current model in that there are 'extra' options within each of the elements of the apprenticeship to ensure more flexibility. The structure is the same as the current model.

Scotland

Element	Example	Changes to current model
Competence	SVQ	Contextualise administration standards for different sectors. Guidance and criteria on endorsed training programmes mapped to NOS.
Transferable	Core Skills in Communication, Numeracy, IT, Problem Solving and Working with Others	No changes.
Enhancements	Employer training scheme	Evaluation of current enhancement options within the framework.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Element	Example	Changes to current model
Competence	NVQ	Contextualise administration standards for different sectors. Guidance and criteria on endorsed training programmes mapped to NOS.
Knowledge	Technical Certificate (includes ERR requirements)	Include business functions content within technical certificate. Include a specialist option in each technical certificate to fit function/industry. Introduce specialist technical certificates such as public administration and legal secretary diplomas. Awarding body criteria should state that assessment assignments should be written in the context of the industry and company.
Transferable	Key Skills in Communication and Application of Number	No changes.

The advantages of this model are that it:

- meets the apprenticeship blueprint criteria for all nations
- combats the main barriers to completion
- improves assessment methodology and quality
- takes into account in-house training schemes which are mapped to NOS
- meets the needs of SMEs as well as large organisations in that the framework will have flexible delivery options
- enables the programme to fit the job role of the individual with the options within each element
- involves units that can be credited to fit on the NQF/QCF/SCQF
- reflects the changing scope of the labour market for administrators as it encourages sector specific learning through the technical certificate
- encourages progression onto Level 4
- meets the needs of different sectors in that the technical certificate delivers sector specific knowledge
- meets the needs of different age groups in that both adults and young people are able to use this model
- ensures that learning is undertaken on business functions as well as administration as the technical certificate will contain knowledge on the functions of business
- delivers transferable skills such as Communication and Numeracy
- delivers a range of options within each element to encourage flexibility such as S/NVQ optional units

The disadvantages of this model are that it:

- doesn't encourage IT to be learnt within an administration context
- doesn't encourage literacy and numeracy to be developed within an administrative context
- doesn't use both mandatory and optional elements to provide choice

Apprenticeship Model 3 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland only)

The third model is taken from the ITQ model developed by E-Skills and held as an example of best practise. The content differs slightly from the current model in that extra elements have been added which are optional within the framework. The structure has also altered from the current model.

The table below shows the ITQ Apprenticeship Framework developed by E-Skills and held up as a framework model of best practise.

%	Mand/Opt	Requirement	Element	Example
10%	Mandatory	Competence	Decision making relating to job role	Workplace supervisor assesses competence in this field using appraisals etc
10%	Mandatory	Knowledge	Common knowledge required of sector	The section of the TC that relates to knowledge that EVERYONE should know
5%	Mandatory	Transferable	Key Skills ERR	
20%	Optional	Competence	On the job learning and assessment	Employer devised programmes (mapped to NOS) or the NVQ
20%	Optional	Knowledge	Off the job learning	Part of TC that relates to job role; Employer devised programmes (mapped to NOS)
5%	Optional	Transferable	Chosen by student and employer	Courses or programmes – relating to industry

30%	Optional	Competency OR knowledge OR transferable	Chosen by student and employer	Courses or programmes – relating to job role or industry or personal development
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The ITQ model is structured in this way to:

- Enable selection of units across different levels according to the individual's needs and job role
- Take into account employer training programmes
- Be credit and unit based
- Use NQF programmes (for those that are not, they are mapped to NOS)

If the CfA were to develop an apprenticeship framework based on the ITQ model, it would have the following structure:

%	Mand/Opt	Requirement	Element	Example
10%	Mandatory	Competence	Decision making relating to job role	Workplace supervisor assesses competence in this field using appraisals etc
10%	Mandatory	Knowledge	Common knowledge required of sector	The current technical certificate criteria covering all aspects of administrative functions
5%	Mandatory	Transferable	Key Skills ERR	Key Skill in Communication and Application of Number
20%	Optional	Competence	On the job learning	NVQ or an endorsed programme mapped to NOS
20%	Optional	Knowledge	Off the job learning	VRQ modules from other SSCs/SSBs covering an overview of the sector they work within
5%	Optional	Transferable	Chosen by student and employer	Courses or programmes – relating to occupation e.g. time management
30%	Optional	Competency OR knowledge OR transferable	Chosen by student and employer	Courses or programmes – relating to job role or industry or personal development e.g. communication styles training

The advantages of this model are that it:

- meets the apprenticeship blueprint criteria
- combats the main barriers to completion
- improves assessment methodology and quality
- takes into account in-house training schemes
- meets the needs of SMEs as well as large organisations
- enables the programme to fit the job role of the individual
- involves units that can be credited
- reflects the changing scope of the labour market for administrators
- encourages progression
- meets the needs of different sectors
- meets the needs of different age groups
- delivers transferable skills
- delivers a range of options within each element to encourage flexibility
- uses both mandatory and optional elements to provide choice

The disadvantages of this model are that it:

- doesn't enable IT to be learnt within an administration context
- doesn't enable literacy and numeracy to be developed within an administrative context
- doesn't ensure that learning is undertaken on business functions as well as administration

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

Milestone 1

5.1 Delivery

It is clear that there is an urgent need for a more flexible delivery approach to suit both the employer (in terms of location) and learner (in terms of learning style). Only a quarter of employers use distance learning to train their employees and this is set to increase with the creation of more e-learning packages and more degrees being offered at a distance using workbooks and online facilities. Distance learning enables learners, and adults particularly, to fit their learning alongside their job commitments which is the key improvement required by a third of employers. It is essential that both delivery centres and awarding bodies support and offer flexible training delivery in order to retain employers.

5.2 Content and Structure

A third of employers reported that it was essential that the framework offered flexibility to ensure that learning fitted the administrator's job role and made it fit according to their function and/or sector. This is currently lacking with both the competency and knowledge element of the framework. It is clear that there need to be more options within the NVQ to choose units that are appropriate for sector and job role as well as more learning about business functions and different industries within the technical certificate.

5.3 Key/Core Skills

There is a need for an investigation into the possibility of the removal of exams for Key and Core Skills in England and Scotland to ensure that barriers to achievement are reduced.

There is also a need for learning of Key and Core Skills to be contextualised for administration as well as integrating the learning within the underpinning knowledge aspect of the framework.

5.4 Assessment

There is a need for the delivery centres to ensure that assessors and IVs are providing quality assessment practises. This should be achieved through regular CPD and training.

There is also a need for assessment to be appropriate to the learner's learning style such as use of practical projects and assignments that are contextualised for their sector or industry. 50% of learners said that this would remove barriers to achievement.

There is a need for exams should be removed where appropriate, or based at employer premises and made online where possible.

Both learners and employers reported that the apprenticeship should be graded as well as being a qualification in its own right.

It is also vital that all methods of assessment allow feedback to be given to the learner in how to improve as nearly 50% of students reported this as an essential improvement.

Milestone 2

After evaluating the three Apprenticeship models, there are two that compete in terms of meeting the evaluative criteria (appendix 1) and being an obvious choice for a final model: Model 2 - the Current Framework and Model 3 - the ITQ Framework. They both meet 14 out of the 17 criteria.

The final model that has been chosen however is Model 2 - the Current Framework. The reason for this is that the ITQ Model would require a complete change in the framework. Since it has only been a year and a half since the implementation of the 2005 Business & Administration Framework it would be unrealistic to implement a brand new framework so soon after this date. With the recommended changes to the current framework in place, the new framework would prove just as rigorous as the ITQ framework.

The current framework appears to be working well. It is designed to be a simple apprenticeship solution which attracts more learners and increases the chances of learners completing the framework. Centres report an improvement in the framework design from the 2002 model as well as improved implementation, recruitment and retention rates.

It is a further recommendation from this project that the CfA look at the quality and methodology of apprenticeship delivery. This appears to have been the main improvement required of the current UK frameworks. This involves working closely with learning providers and improving the quality of N/SVQ assessment, administration of the framework, improved initial assessment processes and better learning materials. It is also a recommendation that learning providers develop more flexible methods for delivery of the frameworks so that they are able to offer a better service to SME employers. There is also a need to evaluate the current use of enhancements within the Scottish framework to ensure consistency.