

New Standards in Hairdressing

1 Trailblazers - what are they?

Groups of employers responsible for setting apprenticeship standards in England: what an apprentice should know and be able to do before they are ready to work in hairdressing, barbering or beauty. The groups include large, medium and small employers and are supported by the NHF and Habia.

2 What's the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and standards?

Apprenticeship frameworks are being phased out and replaced by 'hair professional' and 'beauty professional' Trailblazer standards from May 2017.

3 Hair and beauty standards

The Trailblazer groups have developed apprenticeship standards at level 2 which have been approved and published by the government.

The hair professional standards include:

- Hairdressing
- Barbering

The new standards are set at a higher level than the apprenticeship frameworks and include some knowledge, skills or behaviours which were at level 3 in the old frameworks, being phased out.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standard-hair-professional>

4 When will the new standards be available?

Although the hair and beauty apprenticeship standards are now published, standards are not available for delivery until assessment plans are also approved and published by the government.

The hair professional assessment plans have just been published, but as they include new qualifications which still have to be developed, the hair professional standards will not be available for delivery until May 2017.

We expect the beauty professional assessment plan to be approved shortly, also aiming for launch from May 2017.

5 What's different about the new apprenticeship standards?

To achieve a hair professional apprenticeship, learners must successfully complete:

- An end-point assessment carried out by an Independent Apprenticeship Examiner at the end of the apprenticeship, similar to a trade test
- A new qualification, the Diploma for Hair Professionals (Hairdressing / Barbering)
- Maths and English functional skills at level 1 but learners must also take the level 2 functional skills tests (even if they don't pass them). Learners who have achieved Maths and English GCSE at grade A*-C are exempted from functional skills.
- Apprenticeships will be graded at pass or distinction level depending on the learner's performance in the end-point assessment.

The qualification is assessed as learners progress through their apprenticeship programme. The final part of the qualification is the end-point assessment. Apart from the end-point assessment, all assessment will be carried out by the training provider/centre as specified by the Awarding Organisations.

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6 How do I know what learners should be taught?

The Employer's Occupational Brief sets out the detailed information about what learners should be able to do and what they should know and understand for each part of the apprenticeship standards and for each unit of the Diploma for Hair Professionals (Hairdressing / Barbering).

The Employer's Occupational Brief is freely available on the NHF website (www.nhf.info/apprenticeships) and on the Habia website (www.habia.org/apprenticeships)

7 How long do the new apprenticeships last?

Typically, two years for the hair professional standards, but the minimum duration is one year (372 days).

For the beauty professional standards one year (372 days) is the minimum which should be long enough for most learners to achieve the standards required.

8 How are the new standards assessed?

The Trailblazer groups are also responsible for developing assessment plans which specify what will be assessed, how it will be assessed and who can carry out the assessment.

An Independent Apprenticeship Examiner will observe learners carrying out specified practical tasks, set out in the assessment plan. They will also use oral questioning to check the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding, also set out in the assessment plan. The end-point assessment will be graded based on the learner's overall performance.

9 Can learners retake the end-point assessment?

Yes, but they must re-do the whole assessment. They cannot retake just parts of the assessment because it is a holistic assessment. At the time of writing, there is no time limit on the number of retakes. However, there will be additional costs for any retakes which are unlikely to be covered by funding.

Employers are therefore strongly advised to enter learners for the end-point assessment only when they are confident that they are competent in all the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for the end-point assessment.

10 Who can carry out end-point assessments?

Independent Apprenticeship Examiners, appointed by Assessment Organisations, who have no connection with the learner, the employer or the training provider. For the hair professional standards, the Assessment Organisation must be an Awarding Organisation, regulated by Ofqual, because the end-point assessment is a compulsory part of the Diploma for Hair Professionals.

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11 What is the apprenticeship levy?

Employers with a pay bill of £3million or more will be required to pay 0.5% of their pay bill into a pot, to be used for apprenticeship training. The levy applies across the whole of the UK but how the funds can be used varies between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Large employers will have a £15,000 allowance to offset against their levy payment. Levy funds will be available through a new digital service on GOV.UK. The first funds will appear in digital accounts in late May 2017. 20% of the total cost will be held back, to be paid on completion of the apprenticeship. Any unused funds will expire after 24 months.

Click here for a link to government information about how the apprenticeship levy will work: www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work

12 What about employers who don't pay the levy?

This section applies to England only.

- Non-levy paying companies must contribute 5% of the cost of apprenticeship training and assessment
- **Small employers (less than 50 employees) who take on 16-18 year olds**, or those aged 19-24 who have been in care, or who have a local authority care plan will not pay anything towards the cost of apprenticeship training and assessment.
- Any employer taking on 16-18 year olds or those aged 19-24 who have been in care, or who have a local authority care plan will also receive £1000 to support the additional costs of training these groups and the training provider will also receive £1000. The money is paid in two instalments, £500 after 3 months and the balance at 12 months.

Contributions from employers must be in cash, not kind, but can be spread over time.

13 What will it cost me as an employer?

In England, Apprenticeship standards are allocated into one of 15 funding bands once assessment plans have been approved. For the hair professional standards, the funding band is set at Band 9 which means that the maximum government contribution is £9000.

Unless they are small employers taking on 16-18 year olds, or those aged 19-24 who have been in care, or who have a local authority care plan employers will be required to pay 5% (£450) per apprentice.

Employers are expected to negotiate the price of training and assessment with training providers, so if you negotiate a price which is lower than the maximum allowed, your contribution will be 10% of the lower price you negotiate.

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14 What does that mean for me?

If you are:	It will cost me:
A large employer with a pay bill of £3m or more	0.5% of your pay bill
A medium sized employer eg 80 employees	5% or £900 per apprentice
A medium sized employer eg 80 employees, taking on a 16-18 year old	5% or £900 per apprentice You and your training provider will each receive an incentive payment of £1000.
A small employer eg 10 employees, taking on a 16-18 year old	Nothing You and your training provider will each receive an incentive payment of £1000.
A small employer eg 10 employees, taking on a 24 year old	5% or £900 per apprentice

15 Do I still need to pay the apprenticeship National Minimum Wage?

Yes. Employer contributions towards the cost of apprenticeship training and assessment are on top of the wages and any other employment-related costs you already pay for apprentices. Here's a link to the minimum wage rates: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

16 How much of the apprenticeship is off the job training?

Employers must allow all apprentices to spend a minimum of 20% of their working week (eg 6 hours of a 30 hours working week) doing off the job training, either in the salon or with a recognised training provider, academy or college.

17 Will apprenticeship agreements change?

Yes. Anyone starting on the Trailblazer apprenticeships will need a new-style apprenticeship agreement which must include a commitment statement to be signed by employers and apprentices and, for 16-18 year olds only, by parents/carers.

18 Will the AGE grant continue in England?

No, from May 2017 it will be replaced with the new apprenticeship funding arrangements described above.

Our thanks to Hilary Hall at the National Hairdressing Federation for supplying this information