

## Modifications to SASE – February 2015

*(Effective for Apprenticeship Starts on, or after, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015)*

### FAQs

Q: Why are changes being made to SASE now when the new Apprenticeship Standards are being developed?

*A: Although new standards are being developed, the majority of apprentices are still starting on SASE Apprenticeship frameworks and we expect many apprentices to continue to start on SASE frameworks until the 2017/18 academic year. We therefore felt that it was right to make the changes to SASE to benefit many apprentices.*

Q: Why was the revised SASE published on the .gov website in advance of it becoming a statutory requirement?

*A: The process for revising SASE is set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. This provides that SASE is published and then brought into effect by Order (secondary legislation). SASE is a statutory requirement.*

Q: Why is the revised SASE dated 12 February 2015 but does not apply for Apprenticeship starts on, or after, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015?

*A: Wherever possible legislation comes into effect on one of the two common commencement dates. 6th April 2015 is the next of these dates. The delay also gives stakeholders a little time to prepare for the change.*

Q: Will there be other changes be made to SASE?

*A: We have no other plans to make any more changes to SASE at this stage.*

Q: Why has the range of acceptable ICT qualifications not been extended to include other qualifications types such as BTECs and those offered by OCR? Many schools deliver these rather than GCSE ICT.

*A: Framework developers had the option of whether or not to include ICT qualifications as a framework requirement, or to specify any additional/alternative ICT learning that would be acceptable.*

Q: Does the revised SASE only apply for new Apprenticeship starts?

*A: Yes it will only apply for new Apprenticeship starts on, or after 6/4/15. Legally we cannot bring in retrospective changes.*

Q: Are AS and A Level qualifications now acceptable, irrespective of when they were achieved?

*A: If these qualifications have been achieved to at least Grade E then they are now acceptable irrespective of when they were achieved.*

Q: Why has the minimum grade for a GCSE and iGCSE (without Enhanced Functional Content and achieved before Sept 2012) changed from a C to an E? Is this not a dumbing down of the standards of expected achievement in English and Maths and widening the gap for those who wish to progress to a higher level Apprenticeship?

*A: The treatment of GCSEs and iGCSEs in the SASE has previously been overly complex and confusing for students, their parents and providers, and resulted in numerate and literate Apprentices having to study English and Maths because SASE deemed their GCSEs out of date or their iGCSE invalid. Removing the five year rule and including both regulated and unregulated iGCSEs as equivalent to GCSEs will streamline the SASE guidance considerably, without diminution of standards. NB: Where relevant to the occupation, the minimum required grade can be set higher than the minimum stated in SASE.*

Q: Why has the minimum acceptable grade for an AS or A level, achieved at any time, now changed from an A to a C? Is this not a dumbing down of the standards of expected achievement in English and Maths and widening the gap for those who wish to progress to a higher level Apprenticeship?

*A: The treatment of AS and A Levels in the SASE has previously been overly complex and confusing for students, their parents and providers, and resulted in numerate and literate Apprentices having to study English and Maths because SASE deemed their AS or A Levels to be out of date. Removing the five year rule will streamline the SASE guidance considerably, without diminution of standards. NB: Where relevant to the occupation, the minimum required grade can be set higher than the minimum stated in SASE.*

Q: Why has the minimum acceptable grade for an O Level now changed from A to C? Is this not a dumbing down of the standards of expected achievement in English and Maths and widening the gap for those who wish to progress to a higher level Apprenticeship?

*A: The treatment of O Levels in the SASE has previously been overly complex and confusing for students, their parents and providers, and resulted in numerate and literate Apprentices having to study English and Maths because SASE deemed their O Levels to be out of date. Removing the five year rule will streamline the SASE guidance considerably, without diminution of standards. NB: Where relevant to the occupation, the minimum required grade can be set higher than the minimum stated in SASE.*

Q: Why are the minimum grade requirements for an AS/A Level or O Level in an Advanced Apprenticeship the same as for an Intermediate Apprenticeship when the requirements for Functional Skills, GCSEs or Key Skills is higher in an Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 2 rather than Level 1 as in an Intermediate Apprenticeship)?

*A: AS/A Levels are Level 3 qualifications and an E Grade is the lowest pass grade. This is deemed to be acceptable for the requirements of a Level 3 Apprenticeship. A C grade at O Level is generally regarded as the lowest pass grade and is broadly equivalent to a current Level 2 pass/achievement and is deemed to be acceptable for the requirements of a Level 2 Apprenticeship.*

Q: Is GCSE English Literature still out of scope as an acceptable qualification?

*A: Yes, GCSE English Literature is still not acceptable under the modified SASE.*

Q: Do iGCSEs contain the enhanced functional content (EFC)?

*A: No, iGCSEs were not revised to include enhanced functional content (EFC). However, under the modified SASE, they are now acceptable irrespective of when they were achieved.*

Q: Are all iGCSEs now acceptable, irrespective of whether or not they are on the Ofqual register?

*A: Yes, both regulated and unregulated iGCSEs are now acceptable as meeting the requirements of a SASE Apprenticeship, providing any required grading requirements are met.*

Q: What are the minimum acceptable grades for a double award for an Intermediate and Advanced Level Apprenticeship?

*A: A double award will have two grades e.g. CD. The higher grade will count for Apprenticeship purposes so a EF will meet the minimum requirement for an E Grade (Level 1 equivalent) and CD will meet the minimum requirement for a C grade (Level 2 equivalent).*

Q: Will current SASE frameworks need to be amended and re-issued to take account of the changes made to SASE?

*A: No we have obtained agreement that the current SASE frameworks do not need to be amended and re-issued but the SASE changes will still affect new Apprenticeship starts on any of these frameworks if the apprentice start date is on, or after 6/4/15 **ONLY**.*

Q: Are Functional Skills, GCSEs (with EFC) and Key Skills the only qualifications that contribute 5 credits towards a SASE Apprenticeship?

*A: Yes this has not changed. If an apprentice does not already have one of the specified qualifications he or she should take either GCSEs or Functional Skills qualifications as part of their Apprenticeship.*

Q: Which ICT qualifications are acceptable under SASE?

A: *A list of acceptable ICT qualifications can be found in the relevant Transferable Skills Guidance Document on the Knowledge Base tab of the ACE Website: <https://acecerts.co.uk/web/knowledge-base>*

Q: Where can I get further guidance on what English & Maths qualifications can be accepted in a SASE framework?

A: *There is further guidance on acceptable Transferable Skills available on the Knowledge Base tab of the ACE Website: <https://acecerts.co.uk/web/knowledge-base>*

THIS FAQ DOCUMENT WILL BE REGULARLY UPDATED TO INCLUDE OTHER QUESTIONS THAT ARE RAISED OVER THE COMING WEEKS.

If you have a question that isn't answered here then please contact the ACE Support Team using the ACE online Helpdesk.

Alternatively, they can be contacted on: 0300 303 4444 or [ace@fiss.org](mailto:ace@fiss.org)