

Federation Oracle

The one source for all your Apprenticeship Certification information

Hitting the ground running in 2016

The Christmas break may seem like a distant memory for most of us but the Apprenticeship world continues to evolve. New Standards being developed, ACE activity, ACE-IT review, the launch of Kapiro and a Customer Satisfaction Survey. Along with these activities, Sector Skills Councils are busy with Creative and Cultural are hosting a National Skills Conference of which there is more information in this issue of the Federation Oracle.

ACE Rejections

Throughout 2015 almost a fifth of all submissions were rejected across the ACE Certification system. As highlighted in the previous issue of the Federation Oracle we are undertaking work to reduce rejections. We estimate the past year rejections cost the network of training providers circa £250,000. We understand that there will always be a degree of human error, when making or processing an ACE claim, but we firmly believe that current rejection rates can be reduced.

As part of this work we are looking to put together some helpful videos highlighting common pitfalls and how to avoid these. So make sure you check out the ACE website when these are released.

We are working with some of you to tackle the problems you have identified so that we can help you save money.

ACE-IT is undergoing a review and facelift

ACE-IT is the online training tool for users undertaking Apprenticeship Certification for England. It is a question based tool which presents users with examples of a wide variety of achievement evidence that can be submitted as part of an Apprenticeship Completion Certification claim on ACE. It is used to help train and support users as to what is/or is not acceptable as evidence, both in terms of its regulatory compliance and quality.

ACE-IT was originally launched in October 2014 with its target audience being both Training Providers and Certification Bodies. The tool has been well received and a user survey was undertaken in the middle of 2015 to get feedback on the current system and some proposals that the Federation had to enhance and improve ACE-IT current functionality.

As a result of the survey, a project has just begun to further develop the ACE-IT tool and update the question bank with new evidence examples that will be in line with current regulatory and quality requirements. Some of the new features in development are:

- Where errors have been made in an ACE-IT exercise - a new 'reveal' button will present users with an annotated image of the correct, acceptable evidence example to make it clearer where mistakes have been made.
- A hyperlink will be provided to the current, online supporting guidance documents to enable users to easily and quickly access further information.
- Ability for team leaders/supervisors to manage and monitor their team's ACE-IT usage and exercise results.
- Option for users to customise their ACE-IT exercises i.e. limited questions to evidence from particular Awarding Organisations only.
- Ability for users to print out a report of their own ACE-IT exercise results.

News in Brief

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The enhancement work is due to be completed during early March and, following a period of testing and uploading of the new question bank, we anticipate a re-launch date in April. Notification of the re-launch will be sent out to all ACE users in advance of the planned date, along with details of an ACE-IT competition!

So, get yourselves prepared for a newly updated ACE-IT which will soon be coming to a PC, laptop or tablet near you!!

Apprenticeship policy update

The world of Apprenticeships doesn't stay still for long and the past 3 months are no exception. Latest announcements on the reforms in England are:

1. Introduction of an Apprenticeship levy - The apprenticeship levy will come into effect in April 2017, at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's pay bill. A £15,000 allowance for employers will mean that the levy will only be paid on employers' pay bills over £3 million. Current estimates are that less than 2% of UK employers will pay the levy.
2. A new body - The Institute for Apprenticeships - an independent body led by employers who will regulate the quality of Apprenticeships and one of their tasks will be to be responsible for certification - no detail is known as yet but... in the meantime.
3. We will retain the certification function on the existing framework based Apprenticeships until they have concluded, so look forward to many more years of working together and supporting your certification needs through ACE.
4. The Federation staff are also working with the government to design and implement the processes for the new Apprenticeship standard certification system and will be responsible for that until the end of December 2016. Providing some stability in the transition period.

For further detail on any of these points check out the latest BIS Trailblazer guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-guidance-for-trailblazers>.

KAPIO Launched

KAPIO is a new free service to help you design and manage Apprenticeship standards. It not only sets out all of the approved skills, knowledge and behaviour statements by Industry/sector and occupation in a searchable form, and as well as reviewing what's already been approved it will help you to build your own standard learning from those that have gone before you.

It will also allow you to explore all existing standards across your industry to help avoid duplication and will streamline the standard development process. Saving both time and money!

To register for a free user account – please email Kapio@fiss.org for a user log on, and to see a quick demonstration – please visit the [Federation website](#).

If you have any enquiries please call us on 0300 303 4444

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2016

The Federation carries out an annual, online survey of its key customers to collect their views on a number of issues such as the operational performance of ACE itself and specifically to get feedback on your experiences the support and guidance that you get from both the Federation and individual Certification Bodies.

Last year we had an unbelievable response to the survey which drove some key changes to the ACE system including the categorised rejections allowing for rejection reporting, a new Apprentice Consent Form and associated process and the Acceptable Evidence guide reformatted online.

We value all feedback from our ACE users and this year's survey will be sent out in February via ACE notifications, please spare just a few moments when you receive this notification to complete the survey.

Building a Creative Nation: Putting Skills to Work

Bookings are open for the [Creative & Cultural Skills National Conference](#), bringing together leaders from across the creative industries and education for a day of ideas, learning and networking. Speakers include Darren Henley, Chief Executive of Arts Council England. Take your apprentices for only £37.50.



Contact the Federation

If you have any queries regarding Apprentice Completion Certificate Claims then please contact the Support Team who will be able to assist you with your queries.

If you any questions about information within this newsletter or would like to include anything in future editions please contact the Support Team with the subject Federation Oracle.