

FederationOracle

The one source for all your Apprenticeship Certification information

Christmas is in the air...

OK, so you may now be cursing us for reminding you that the big day is now round the corner and that 2016, like many other years, seems to have passed by very quickly. However there continues to be changes in the world of Apprenticeships and we have touched on many of these in this issue of the Federation Oracle.

Withdrawal of SASE frameworks to new starters – Reminder of Batch 2 closure

Effective as of the 30th November, a further 56 apprenticeship frameworks in England will be closed to new starters. Existing learners on programme will of course be able to complete their apprenticeship and have their apprenticeship certificated in the usual way. The last date for new starts on withdrawn Frameworks will be updated on [Apprenticeship Certificate England \(ACE\)](#) and on the learning aims search on [the Hub](#). Also the Frameworks will be archived on [Apprenticeship Frameworks Online](#).

The list detailing the 56 frameworks has already been notified to providers and certification bodies and can be found here [Withdrawn Framework List](#)

Although the consultation for withdrawal dates for the 3rd Batch of SASE frameworks has concluded we have not yet had closure dates confirmed, but will update you with these details as soon as they have been agreed.

Rejections on the increase again!

Over the past 18 months together we have carried out various activities to try and reduce the monthly rejection rate. In August we were over the moon when the rejection rate was 15.62% which is the lowest it has ever been since ACE launched in 2012. Unfortunately since August the rejection rate continues to steadily climb again with October's rejection rate sitting at 17%. Each rejection costs your organisations money which we estimate to have been £250,000 for 2015, so far in 2016 the figure is circa £200,000 which means it is likely that rejections are going to cost the same as last year.

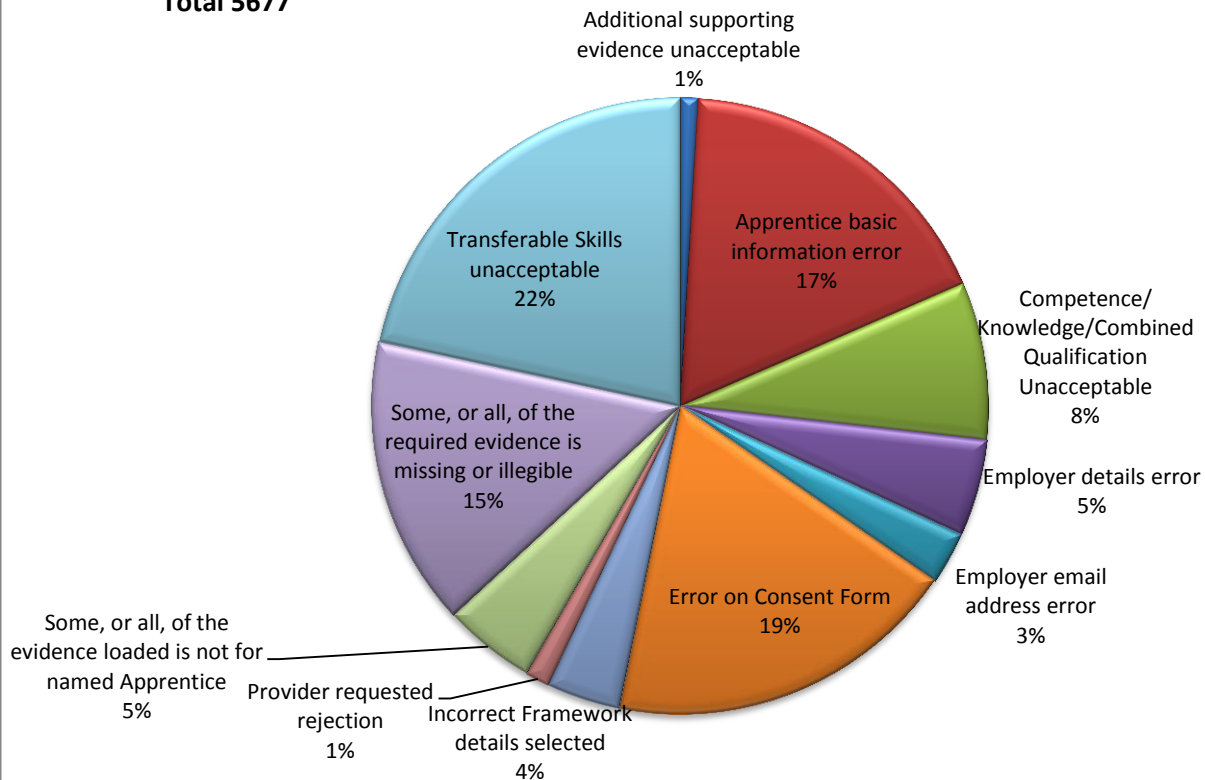
Analysing the rejection reasons we have put together the pie chart below to show where most of the errors are being made. The top 5 with the number of rejection reasons are:

- Transferable Skills – 1228
- Error on Consent Form – 1057
- Apprentice Basic Information Error – 998
- Some or all of the evidence is missing or illegible – 864
- Competence/Knowledge/Combined Qualification unacceptable - 469

News in Brief

- [Christmas is in the air](#)
- [Withdrawal of SASE frameworks to new starters – Reminder of Batch 2 Closure](#)
- [Rejections on the increase again!](#)
- [Interface Project](#)
- [Mark Froud at Gov Net](#)
- [Apprenticeship end-point assessment – deciding on your organisation's involvement](#)
- [UK Skills Federation at the Asian Development Bank International Skills Forum](#)

October 2016 Rejection Reasons
Total 5677



To help combat these rejections there is guidance available and we have made some additional changes to ACE:

- Transferable Skills guidance documents are available on the [Knowledge Base](#) tab on ACE.
- Our seven short videos are also available on the Knowledge Base tab but also accessible from your dashboard when you first log into ACE.
- Additional reporting facilities are available for you when you visit the reports tab on your dashboard. Video 7 shows you how to access reports available to you which contain statistical information about your organisations rejections.
- During the summer additional validation checks were added to ACE to limit the list of framework options based on the Apprentices start date.

We really want to see the rejection rate decrease each month. If you think there is something you would find beneficial in reducing your rejections please contact us through the Helpdesk and we will endeavour to support you.

Interface Project

As you may be aware, the Federation have been developing an Interface project with the SFA which will automatically download Apprentice achievement data in to ACE. This project is nearing the end of the development stage. We will be testing the Interface over the next couple of months and will launch the system in a slightly modified ACE in January 2017.

Communications will be sent to you to keep you updated on developments and timescales. A comprehensive user manual and simple guide is also in development and will be sent around the network as testing is completed. This is an exciting development that should reduce processing times, reduce rejections, and limit the opportunities for fraud in the system.

Further communications will be sent out over the coming weeks.



At a recent skills conference I followed 3 Government officials onto the stage and covered a number of constructively critical points about the new English Apprenticeship system.

The 3 million was driven by politics and nothing else. Is that bad, well probably not, as a target has to come from somewhere?

The previous Employer Engagement model via Sector Skills Councils was deemed to not be working. So, it is somewhat ironic that Sector based bodies are helping Employers to develop the new standards with over 60% of the Apprenticeship standard development groups using them.

Apprenticeship Frameworks which we understand will be closed to starts in 2019, will deliver about 1.5m starts. That means the standard system needs to deliver the other 1.5m or on average 500,000 a year on top of Framework starts. Less than 4,300 starts so far and our information from employers is that there will be a hiatus between the two systems.

The math does not add up!

Do Employers really want to “own” the system? They certainly do not want ownership without control and that is where we are at the moment. Employers are frustrated about being told it is your system, then being told what to do and micro managed.

Since the end of last year the system has increasingly been driven by levy payers seeking, quite understandably, to get “their” money back. This has been to the marginalisation of small businesses. Small businesses employing less than 50 deliver 55% of the current Apprenticeships and non levy payers deliver 73% of all Apprenticeships.

A black box system in which Training Providers managed all the complicated wiring for Employers is being replaced by a system in which Employers are expected to deal with a lot of this wiring. Ask any Employer, and they are perplexed. To the extent that one asked me the other day if there was an Apprenticeship standard in Apprenticeship standard engagement and if so which level might it be at?

They are confused and do not want to read long and impenetrable Government rule books. Is it any wonder Employers are beginning to feel fatigued and opt out?

The Government has been silent in response to all the recent examinations of the Apprenticeship reform process. The latest of these was by the National Audit Office. It simply says what most people outside Government have been saying for 3 years.

A plan is needed. There are no targets and no way of measuring progress or success or managing risk. There are ways of gaming the system and it has few fraud prevention measures built into it. AELP and AoC recognise this and we all want to ensure rules do not become so bureaucratic they cost the system, but sadly a few gamers might mean this happens.

And there is only a theoretical connection to the economic agenda of Government to drive productivity.

In the current system we know where all the money goes and what it is spent on. 70+% finish and those do not finish gain one or more qualifications on the way through.

In the new system all we will know about the 30% of people who fail or do not take their end test is that they did some training. We will not know what training, or if they really did it. At a meeting with the Shadow chair of the IfA a Training Provider said, “Some Providers already have in place a series of ways to capture money from the system, without breaking the rules.” This is potentially a £750m a year problem. It could be solved very simply.

Second, no one knows the costs involved in delivering the new system. The cost of training is unknown, the cost of assessment is unknown and the cost of managing the system is unknown.

Some have suggested we should start again or abandon the levy, but I see no reason for that.

1. We should build on what works. Are Training Providers, Awarding Organisations or Sector Skills Councils perfect? Definitely not, but were they totally broken? – NO. So we might as well use their expertise and experience.
2. We have to be practical now and recognise some of the theoretical constructs do not work in reality. Let's work together on this. Work with people who have some expertise and experience rather than cut them out. We offered the Apprenticeship Unit Occupational maps over a year ago. These will help reduce proliferation. We have now given them to the Gatsby Foundation who have been asked to help DfE.
3. Have a plan.
4. The DAS and NAS are working because they are run by people that do and deliver.
5. Keep it simple. Arcane theoretical models cut no ice with Employers, especially small businesses.
6. Given the shortage of time now, deliver the essentials, not the nice to haves. They can follow.
7. Set a Framework, not rigid rules applied across all sectors. What works in the production of pharmaceuticals does not work in retail. And let Employers manage those rules.

Or stop pretending it is Employer owned.

And finally we need a secure way for Training Providers and Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations to exchange information. The DAS and the ILR will not deliver this in the short term.

We need to put the past behind us and learn from it and we need to work together. Without doing this we will all fail.

And the big losers are the businesses and apprentices who take the greatest individual leap of faith.

Apprenticeship end-point assessment – deciding on your organisation's involvement

Are you considering your involvement in delivering end-point assessment for apprenticeship standards?

As part of a new support programme within Future Apprenticeships, 15 workshop packages are being hosted around the country with the aim of helping you reach a decision on your involvement.

The package is made up of a 1-day workshop during November and December, and a follow-up call with action planning. The workshop will help you understand end-point assessment, the issues and the opportunities for your organisation, possible organisational models and the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations.

All packages are part-subsidised by the Education and Training Foundation. [BOOK HERE](#)



UK Skills Federation at the Asian Development Bank International Skills Forum

The UK Skills Federation, which represents the international work of FISSS members, was invited by the Department for International Trade to join a delegation representing the UK skills sector at the Asian Development Bank International Skills Forum in Manila in September. The event was an opportunity to learn about policy and best practice in vocational skills development from policymakers and other skills stakeholders from countries across Asia. The delegation also attended a dedicated session hosted by the ADB Board Member responsible for the United Kingdom, where specialists covering each of the ADB's regions across Asia presented on the work of the ADB, and provided useful insights into the procurement process and upcoming funding opportunities for UKSF members. For more info, please contact Helen Joannou helen.joannou@fiss.org, UK Skills Federation.

