

Apprentice Progress Review Guidance for Modern Apprenticeship Providers

Version History

Version	Revision(s)	Approved by	Date
1	First Publication	Karen Murray	01/04/21
2	Second Publication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of SIA Approval • Updated Section 8 - Removal of signed statements. 	Karen Murray	07/09/23
3	Third Publication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated SDS Compliance requirements. • Updated SDS Quality Requirements purpose of the progress review. • Updated Guidance for completion of the exemplar APR document sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 • Clarification Section 2: Progress against development of transferable skills (core skills, career skills and meta skills) • Clarification Section 6: Employer representative comment updated. 	Karen Murray	01/04/24
4	Fourth Publication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on the SDS Contract requirements for APRs 	Karen Murray	01/06/24
5	Fifth Publication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and updated introduction section and a re-positioning of the SDS Contract Requirements section. 	Karen Murray	10/10/24

Apprentice Progress Review (APR) Guidance.

This guidance document has been produced to support staff who are involved in delivering Apprentice Progress Reviews.

We hope this document will aid your understanding of why you should review your apprentices on a regular basis and help you carry out an effective progress review.

We encourage you to focus on your apprentice's needs and provide the necessary support to help them to achieve their apprenticeship.

When planning your programme of delivery, we would expect you to be able to demonstrate how you will work with them, ensuring all the relevant support has been identified and put in place and you can evidence the apprentices progress during their reviews.

SDS Quality requirements - Purpose of progress reviews

Regular progress review meetings are important in supporting apprentices and employers successfully through to completion of the apprenticeship. When conducted well, these meetings give apprentices the chance to reflect upon, and take stock of their learning, assess what progress they have made, what skills, knowledge and experience they have gained and what still needs to be developed. Being able to identify progress and distance travelled is highly motivating for the apprentice.

Making sure employers are involved and engaged in the discussion helps you, as a provider, to manage the learning process well.

Crucially, the review discussion should lead to a new set of goals and actions, so that the apprentice and employer are clear on the next steps of the apprentice's journey.

Your role in facilitating the review discussion.

A good provider will facilitate the review meeting encouraging all parties to contribute fully to the discussion. Evidence shows us that the best quality models for carrying out APRs involve an element of in-person engagement.

Apprentices should be encouraged to reflect upon their own progress. Some apprentices are better at articulating this verbally, others gain more from writing it out themselves. It is at the provider's discretion as to who completes the form, but the content of the form MUST reflect the conversation between apprentice and the reviewer and the employer's representative input.

It is good practice that the employer representative is a person who has a close working relationship with the apprentice, such as a supervisor or mentor so they can speak knowledgeably and from an informed position about progress and help in agreeing realistic and achievable future goals.

The employer representative must be employed with the same organisation as the apprentice or there is an SDS approved and authorised subcontracting arrangement in place.

Ideally, employer representatives should be involved in the APR discussion at the time of the review process. There are occasions when the employer cannot be there when the APR process is being undertaken. In these circumstances, it is important that the review is shared and commented upon, then shared back with the provider, and most importantly, with the apprentice.

To ensure the APR process is efficient and effective you should:

- Plan review meetings in advance and negotiate/agree times and format for the meeting (for example, face to face or video conferencing).
- Have the most up-to-date information on progress with any off the job training, and formative or summative assessment activity undertaken in the review period.
- Take comprehensive notes so that the progress review report is fully reflective of the discussions and actions that have been agreed.
- Make sure any actions for you as the provider, are followed up in good time to ensure apprentices can progress in line with the agreed goals. This may include arranging additional learning support or further training.

Guidance for Completion of the APR document.

SDS has created an exemplar document for completing the APRs. Below is a step-by-step guide to help you complete each section. We are aware that Providers have their own versions of their progress review forms with the SDS minimum requirements set out on the forms and we would encourage you to follow this same approach for completing your progress reviews with your own forms as detailed below.

Section 1: Progress on qualification achievement: short-term goals

Apprentice comments and Score.

In this section, you are asking the apprentice to reflect upon how well they have met the goals that were set out for them since the last formal review or, where it is the apprentice's first formal review, against the initial planned activity set out in their learning plan.

You might begin the conversation by re-capping on what was expected since the last review and asking them how well these goals have been achieved, and any achievements towards their qualification to help them agree a self-assessment score, if you wish to use the scoring.

Try to ensure that the apprentice reflects on their rationale for their progress- for example, did they progress further than expected with their qualification because they were given opportunities for new work tasks unexpectedly or if their progress is less than expected, can they reflect on why?

Note that the ownership of the apprentice comment section and the score is with the apprentice, so take care, if you are writing it down on their behalf, that it is written in the first person (*I have, I did etc*).

The self-assessment scoring may or may not be useful for the individual. This is for the discretion of the reviewer and the apprentice to complete.

If using the scoring section, come to an agreement upon the score as to whether:

1. They met all the goals that were set out for them.
2. They met some of the goals.
3. They met none of the goals.

Provider comments

The conversation should inform what you write in terms of providing support and guidance as to how tasks or activities might be broken down more if they have not met goals and what they need to work on. This does not have to be related in an exacting way to apprenticeship units in terms of how it is written but it should give a sense as to whether the apprentice is on track or behind in terms of their original learning plan and it is appropriate to refer to the qualification units and how they relate to tasks that they are working on.

Section 2: Progress on development of transferable skills

Apprentice comments and score.

This section of the review is to help the progress reviewer discuss the apprentice's transferable skills, specifically their core skills or career skills and meta skills development, in an explicit way. These transferable skills are at least of equal importance to the vocational skills the apprentice is developing, irrespective of the current apprenticeship framework requirements for delivery and certification of these skills.

It is important that the apprentice can recognise how they are developing core skills or career skills and meta skills through their apprenticeship and can understand how these skills might be applied in different and future work situations. This is the case whether they are undertaking core skill or meta skill units as part of their qualification.

Therefore, in your discussions it is important that you actively encourage the apprentice to speak about and reflect upon their core and meta skills. This will help them to recognise the value and importance of these skills for their apprenticeship and when thinking about their future career aspirations.

The conversation might be about what core or career skills and meta skills have been developed through workplace activities or specifically about core/career or meta skill units that the apprentice is working towards if these are to be certificated. SDS has published [meta skills guidance and tools](#) for providers to use which you may find useful to revisit. There is no requirement to mention all five core skills or all twelve meta skills in the discussion. Rather, focus on the key strengths and areas that the apprentice needs/wants to work on that will support them on to the next stage of their learning journey. You may guide the conversation to consider career progression and employability needs where it is fitting to do so. **You are likely to use language that reflects meta and core skills but that also makes sense to the apprentice.**

Again, take care to ensure that this is written up in the first person, particularly where the reviewer is writing it on behalf of the apprentice.

As in section 1, the self-assessment scoring may or may not be useful for the individual. This is for the discretion of the reviewer and the apprentice to complete.

Note that, in apprenticeships where reflection on meta skill development is part of the underpinning apprenticeship qualification, you should not rely on the SDS exemplar APR paperwork to demonstrate that the apprentice has met the performance criteria on meta skills. It is important that you ensure that you meet your Awarding Body full requirements in this case.

Section 3: Where am I with my apprenticeship journey?

This section of the document is designed to give the apprentice, and their employer, a good sense as to where they are with the apprenticeship, what they have done, and what remains to be done. It should relate back to their original learning and assessment plan or any subsequent updates and should give all parties a good sense of when they are likely to complete but does not need to be exact in terms of percentage of completion. The conversation to support this should be motivating, particularly where the apprentice has had delays or has faced barriers.

In this section, any additional learning or training that the apprentice has completed should also be discussed and recorded.

Section 4: Other areas we discussed that are relevant to my progression.

This part of the review document is an area for the progress reviewer to record any factors that have influenced previous progression and expected progression for the next review. It is important to celebrate the successes of the apprentice as well as any challenges or barriers that need addressing.

Some prompts on the types of information you may include are suggested below:

- specific strengths that the apprentice has had since the last review (for example, the apprentice completed a particularly good piece of work or been involved in additional training).
- what additional support arrangements are, or need to be, in place to support the learning plan.
- outline any pastoral factors, including health and wellbeing, that might mean changes to support are required for the apprentice.
- comments on any rationale for the nature of the next set of short-term goals (for example, the apprentice is going to be absent for a period or they are particularly struggling with an area of the apprenticeship competencies etc).

Section 5: Goals for next formal review

In this section of the review, it is expected that the short-term goals before the next formal review are explicitly set out so that the apprentice is clear on what they need to do before you next meet with them formally. Note that a date should be given for that next review, even if it can only be an approximate one that may change. Goals should relate to competencies required in the apprenticeship units, but it may be written more generally in relation to work activities that the apprentice is moving on to engage with. For apprentices that failed to meet all their previous goals, it is expected that the conversation has explored how these tasks can be better achieved and so they may be broken down further than they were stated previously. Ideally, some timelines should be included to provide guidance for the apprentice to plan their apprenticeship related activity before the next review. This may or may not refer to the apprentice's learning plan. Goals should be written in a SMART context to ensure the apprentice fully understands what is expected of them for the next review.

Section 6: Employer representative comments

As stated above, the employer representative should ideally be present at the time of the review, but if they are unable to attend, they should ensure comments are added **within 3 weeks** following the date of the review activity to ensure that it adds value for the apprentice's journey. For QPR payments, all signatures should be gained within the 6-week window.

There are two closed questions that the employer representative is required to answer:

- The first question is about whether the employer representative believes the progress of the apprentice is satisfactory in relation to their last review. It is important that this is considered in relation to each apprentice's situation. So, for example, is the apprentice getting opportunities in the workplace to develop their competence to meet the assessment criteria? Or, if the apprentice had an unexpected absence for sickness or bereavement, the employer representative should consider this in relation to how well they had met the goals of the previous review.
- The second question relates to how well the apprentice is developing their transferable skills. Here, the employer representative is expected to consider how well the apprentice is developing and using core skills and meta skills in the workplace, giving examples of this. They may also want to comment on attributes and behaviours that should be developed in the workplace such as timekeeping, attitude to learning, resilience, and/or career progression (planning their next steps).

In the comments space, the employer representative should identify any specific positive areas of success since the last review and consider what they expect the apprentice to work on for the next review, identifying how they will support them to meet the short-term goals set out in section 5.

Section 7: Changes to information held in FIPS.

Please refer to the [MA Specification](#) for details of changes that can be made using the APR document.

Section 8: Signatures

It is important that all three parties read and sign the signature statements which relate to the content above. For more information on signatures, please review the [MA Specification](#).

SDS Contract requirements

The Apprentice Progress Review (APR) is part of your contractual obligations with SDS, and each apprentice's progress must be regularly reviewed and assessed. APRs are a mandatory requirement for all Apprentices and all MA Frameworks and there must be engagement with each Apprentice as a minimum, every 13 weeks, for each contract year and for the duration of the Apprentice's apprenticeship.

For full details of your contractual obligations on Apprentice Progress Reviews, please refer to the [MA Specification](#)