



**GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP**
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FAQs

on the review of the process to develop and approve new apprenticeships

SOLAS and the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) together with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) have initiated a review of the process to develop and approve new apprenticeships.

Consortia Led Apprenticeships (CLA's) have been in development and operation since 2016. The alignment of new CLA's with economic drivers and priorities is in continuous focus. In the decade since 2016, significant progress has been made in the development and rollout of the 53 new CLA's across 15 broad sectors such as Finance, Engineering, BioPharma, Hospitality etc.

Why we are doing the review

Given the current ongoing review of the 2021- 2025 Action Plan for Apprenticeship by the OECD and the development of the next Action Plan, it was agreed with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, SOLAS/NAO and the HEA, that it would be timely to review the application and assessment process for CLAs.

What the review will cover

The review will focus on the process to develop new apprenticeship programmes and also the way in which they are approved. The scope of the review will include: the proposal process to put forward a new apprenticeship for development | the approval process to proceed to development | a new process to develop an apprenticeship | processes for identifying funding and resource requirements of new apprenticeships and mechanisms to ensure that new apprenticeships are meeting clearly defined national skills needs and that apprenticeship is the right approach to do so.

The timeline to completion

It is anticipated that the review will conclude at the end of Quarter 2 2026.



What we hope to achieve

Through this review we hope to develop more efficient and effective processes to develop and approve new apprenticeships taking on board stakeholder feedback gathered since the inception of the current 10-step process and that will be gathered during the course of this review. The outcome envisioned will:

- Ensure the revised process for developing and approving apprenticeships continues to be fair, transparent, straightforward to navigate, and maintains strong integrity.
- Ensure that the national apprenticeship system continues to be aligned with the national skills needs
- Enable prospective consortia to quickly decide whether apprenticeship is the right mechanism to meet their industry skills needs or whether an alternative is more appropriate
- Clear processes and clearer guidelines to support navigation of that process for all prospective apprenticeship consortia. This may include stated parameters on the time to develop a programme

How we will engage and communicate to stakeholders

As part of the review, we will be engaging with a broad range of stakeholders. To date, the consortia of the apprenticeships that are approved for development and those that are at proposal stage under the current process, have been notified through individualised emails that the review is taking place. In addition, a notification has been placed on the homepage of the Generation Apprenticeship website and all Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) engaged in Apprenticeship delivery have also received notification of the review.

- An in-person stakeholder engagement event is planned to take place on the **22nd of April**.
- The review will also seek to include, as appropriate, feedback shared with the NAO, SOLAS and / or the HEA through other forums such as the Generation Apprenticeship Partners Network meetings and the recent OECD-led workshop to review the Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025.
- Following conclusion of the review, information around any revision to the application process will be communicated to stakeholders.

What happens in the interim

Currently, there are thirty-four programmes which have been approved by the National Apprenticeship Alliance (NAA) for further development. These programmes are all at various stages of the 10 Step Development Cycle ranging from Industrial Training Order process, validation process, funding discussions and proposed commencement dates. Work is ongoing with the relevant consortia in progressing these programmes and this work will continue during the proposed review period. In addition, there are thirty-five programmes at initial proposal or consultation stage. These programmes have not yet been approved by the NAA. Consortia can continue to develop these proposals while the review is ongoing.

For further information contact apprenticeship@nao.ie.



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