

2.1 Context

These guidelines apply to all statutory apprenticeship programmes governed by the Industrial Training Act 1967. Under this Act, the further education and training authority, SOLAS, has a range of statutory responsibilities; including the designation of statutory apprenticeships via Industrial Training Orders.

The Department of Education and Skills commissioned a review of apprenticeship in 2013. A report, *Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland*, was subsequently published in December of that year. Following this, an Apprenticeship Council was launched on

18 November 2014 on an interim basis. The Apprenticeship Council³ is tasked with the expansion of apprenticeship across a range of qualification levels into new sectors of the economy, leading to the ‘new’ apprenticeships referred to in the preceding paragraph.

The *Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland* report made recommendations for apprenticeship as follows:⁴

“Apprenticeship is a programme of structured education and training which formally combines and alternates learning in the work place with learning in an education or training centre, (a dual system, i.e. a blended combination of on-the-job employer-based training and off-the-job training) whose completion:

- *prepares the participant for a specific occupation, and*
- *leads to a qualification nationally recognised under the National Framework of Qualifications at any level from Level 5 upwards.*

Every apprentice should be employed under an approved Contract of Apprenticeship for the duration of training.

Apprenticeship training should be substantial in depth and duration, and the apprentice should be employed in a real job. For a programme to be classified as an apprenticeship at entry level, it should have a duration of no less than two years. The structure of the programme should provide for more than 50% workplace-based learning.

Graduates of apprenticeship programmes should be qualified to work autonomously in a competent, professional and independent capacity in their selected field.

Apprenticeships should be open to persons of all age groups above the statutory school leaving age. They are a valued mode of learning both for initial entrants to the labour market and for those who wish to continue upskilling. Apprenticeships must prepare the participant for a new job role.

³ <http://www.apprenticeshipcouncil.ie/faq.aspx>

⁴ Department of Education and Skills (2013) *Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland, Dublin Executive Summary, Section 1 p7*, <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Review-of-Apprenticeship-Training-in-Ireland.pdf>