

Employer Newsletter

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Trailblazer updates

Level 4 and level 7 news

UK Apprenticeship Trailblazer groups are employer-led forums that develop new apprenticeship standards. These groups represent various business sectors and ensure that the training provided meets current industry needs. The Trailblazer initiative is overseen by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), which supports these groups during the process of creating and revising apprenticeship standards. First Intuition are active in all of the accounting Trailblazer Groups.



Level 4 Professional Accounting and Taxation Technician

Progress has been advancing on the creation of two separate standards at Level 4. One representing 'accountancy training' and the other more focused on 'tax training'. Some updates:

- The new Professional Accounting Technician Standard has been published (but not yet active). You can review the new standard [here](#)
- There will be a change in the funding band. From £8,000 to £12,000. This represents the first increase since 2019. Unlike the L3 standard though, exams and subscriptions are **not** covered.
- There has been the introduction of 'duties' within the standard to which cover the knowledge, Skills and behaviours required. Apprentices under this standard will need to evidence a significant proportion of these in their job role.
- There will be changes to the End Point Assessment and how it is graded. The EPA will be a role scenario assessment and a professional discussion with overall grades for success being a pass, merit or distinction.
- The timetable for release of this standard is currently a moving target. The release of this standard needs to coincide with the release of the new L4 Tax standard. Currently it is expected 12th May 2025.

We would like to invite you to an online webinar to chat through the new L4 standard if relevant to your organisation.

The session will be on **Monday 10th February at 1:30 for 30 mins**. *All that register will also get a copy of the recording.* Please register [here](#).

Level 7 – Accountancy or Tax Professional

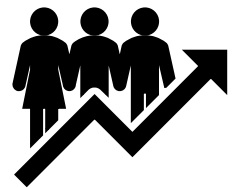
The level 7 Trailblazer group did meet early January having been put on paused late last year following the government's announcement to look at the scope of funding for L7 Apprenticeships overall.

We will continue to keep you posted on developments. To find out more about the Governments Announcement you may like to read our December 2024 newsletter which can be found [here](#). We are expecting to hear more as part of a larger announcement about skills England during National Apprenticeship Week.

AAT Level 4 Progression Plans

Introduction of new Level 4 Apprenticeship Standard

It has been confirmed that the new Level 4 Professional Accounting Technician Standard is expected to be released on Monday 12th May. In line with this, we are reviewing options for learners who are progressing to AAT Level 4 in the upcoming months. We are hoping the standard is released as planned, but please be aware that there is a small risk of this being delayed.



- **Reading Option 1** – Early Progression onto Current Level 4 Standard – apprenticeship start date 3rd March
- **Reading Option 2** – Later Progression after release of new standard – apprenticeship start date 15th May
- **Southampton Option 1** – Early Progression onto Current Level 4 standard – apprenticeship start date 4th April
- **Southampton Option 2** – Later progression after release of new standard – apprenticeship start date 14th May

We have already reached out to employers with learners set to progress over the next couple of months, providing more information about each option listed above. If you have any questions or would like to confirm your preferred programme, please get in touch with your client partner.

Name change to First Intuition South Ltd

First Intuition Reading has changed its name to First Intuition South Ltd

As you are aware, First Intuition Reading became a 100% subsidiary of First Intuition Limited on 30 September 2023. For some time, we have therefore been part of a larger group which now also includes First Intuition Bristol and First Intuition Maidstone.

You will appreciate that multiple legal entities gives rise to increasing regulatory and compliance requirements. We have therefore decided to simplify the group structure and merge the Bristol and Maidstone businesses into Reading to create a single legal entity, which will be renamed First Intuition South Ltd. This process is expected to be completed by 31 March 2025.

What does this mean for you?

The short answer is, very little. You will continue to be looked after by your local service team and your students will continue to be taught by the local tutors and skills coaches with whom they are familiar. There is no intention to move away from FI's approach of local service and local support.

If you currently have a contract with us, this will still be in force as we are the same legal entity, simply with a new name. Similarly, if you have apprentices with us, we are the same training provider with the same UKPRN (provider reference number). No action is therefore required from you. The combined entity will make it easier for us to support apprentices who wish to attend courses at different centres in the region as subcontracting restrictions will no longer apply across FI South.

ACCA Update - the exam Strategic Business Reporting

ACCA have decided to withdraw the SBR UK exam with the final session scheduled for June 2025.

Many students would choose SBR UK and AAA UK variant exams (rather than International variant) as choosing these exams would allow them to become an audit partner in the future and sign audit reports.

Recently the FRC have announced changes to FRS 102 that means there are too few material differences between the SBR UK and SBR INT syllabus to write separate exams.

Key updates:

- Students who choose to sit the final SBR UK exam in June 2025 but do not pass will need to resit the SBR International exam.
- Students intending to gain the Audit Qualification in Ireland should continue to select the SBR Ireland exam.
- Students who have already passed the SBR International exam and meet the other requirements can now apply for ACCA's UK Audit Qualification. (They may need to take the AAA UK exam if not previously taken and passed)
- If a student were to sit and pass SBR INT in December 2024, March 2025 or June 2025, for audit qualification purposes, the FRC have confirmed that the student would not be required to additionally sit and pass SBR UK.



Should you or your students have any questions on this, please do get in touch.

ICAEW Update – the new syllabus

Next Generation ACA – the new ICAEW Syllabus

A new ICAEW Syllabus will be coming into force from September 2025

We have written a series of blogs to help you understand the extent and implication of these changes and the impacts they might have on students transitioning. Over the coming months we will be working with our clients to ensure transitions are completed smoothly and relevant exemptions are maximised.

- [The New ICAEW Syllabus – Next Generation ACA](#)
- [ICAEW's ACA Update: Qualification Overview](#)
- [ICAEW's Next Gen ACA: Transitional arrangements and exemption mapping](#)
- [Next Gen ACA Facts and Questions](#)



As always, any further questions or concerns you might have, please do get in touch, we are happy to talk through these changes and answer any specific questions you may have for your teams.

Recruiting an apprentice

We are always looking to plan ahead with our resourcing so we can meet the needs of our clients. To help us, please share your expected recruitment plans and targets for 2025 with your FI Client Partner, even if they are relatively uncertain at this stage. This means we can ensure we have the resources in place to continue to support you and your trainees.

We often receive queries about recruitment, including the best way to find and recruit a new apprentice. One tried and tested approach is the Find an Apprenticeship site <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>. Many schools, colleges and universities direct their learners to this site to help them identify apprenticeship opportunities with local employers. This website is newly linked to the UCAS website to increase the student reach.

If this is a service you would like help with, we can set this up for you, free of charge, please do get in touch.

We also regularly attend recruitment fairs and schools to promote apprenticeships. If you are recruiting, please feel free to share with us your adverts and job descriptions. We can promote them at these events while we talk about apprenticeships. Please contact your client partner if this is something you would like to pursue.

Finally, some good news: don't forget, having an apprentice means you don't pay the Employers National Insurance while the apprentice is under 25 and earns less than £50,270 a year. This is even more valuable given the recent increase in NIC to 15%.

Earn £300 Amazon Voucher by introducing new apprentices to First Intuition Reading and Southampton

We are introducing a special referral program that rewards you for spreading the word about First Intuition!

Do you know another company who could benefit from our Finance Apprenticeships? If you introduce a new client to us and they sign-up an apprentice with us, you will receive a £300 Amazon voucher as our way of saying thank you (or a £300 donation to a charity of your choice).

Here's how it works:

1. Refer a **new** client to our Commercial Director (ryanhill@fi.co.uk)
2. Once they become a client and onboard an apprentice who stays on programme for 3 months, you will receive a £300 Amazon voucher as our way of saying thank you (or a £300 donation to a charity of your choice).

There's no limit to the number of referrals you can make. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to drop Ryan an email (ryanhill@fi.co.uk).

Past newsletters

Keep up to date. If you want to read some of the historical newsletters they can be found [here](#).