



# Policy Statement on Apprenticeship Reform

## IMI Position

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) supports reform of the apprenticeship system where it strengthens delivery, improves outcomes and reflects the evolving needs of employers and learners.

However, the IMI is clear that reforms must not compromise the quality, integrity or safety of automotive apprenticeships, particularly in technical and safety-critical roles.

The automotive sector is undergoing rapid technological change, with increasing complexity in vehicles, systems and repair processes. This places a growing premium on high-quality training, robust assessment and clear demonstration of competence.

Any weakening of these foundations risks undermining both workforce capability and public safety.

## Protecting quality and standard

Automotive apprenticeships play a critical role in developing a skilled, competent and safety-conscious workforce.

Maintaining rigorous, independent end-point assessment is essential to:

- Ensure apprentices meet consistent national standards
- Provide confidence to employers and consumers
- Protect the integrity and credibility of the apprenticeship system

Independent assessment is not an administrative step. It is a critical safeguard that ensures competence is verified objectively and consistently across the sector.

## A risk to safety, capability and confidence

Reducing the robustness of assessment or narrowing the depth of training required for technical roles would introduce significant risks.

In the automotive sector:

- Work is increasingly safety-critical, particularly in areas such as electrification and advanced vehicle systems
- Technicians must demonstrate practical competence, not just theoretical knowledge
- Employers rely on apprenticeships to produce job-ready, safe and capable individuals

Any move that weakens assessment or reduces training depth risks:

- Inconsistent competence levels across the workforce
- Increased safety risks for technicians and consumers
- Reduced employer confidence in the apprenticeship system



## Employer voice must be respected

Employers are central to the design and development of apprenticeship standards, ensuring they reflect real-world skills needs.

The IMI is concerned that, under current reform processes, recommendations from employer groups and sector specialists may be overridden or diluted during final approval stages.

This risks disconnecting apprenticeship standards from the needs of industry.

A successful system must:

- Respect the role of employers in defining occupational competence
- Ensure that consultation outcomes are meaningfully reflected in final decisions
- Maintain transparency and accountability in the approvals process

## The case for maintaining independent assessment

The IMI believes there is a strong and evidence-based case for retaining independent end-point assessment within automotive apprenticeships.

This is particularly important in:

- Technical occupations, where competence must be demonstrated in practice
- Safety-critical roles, where errors can have serious consequences
- Emerging technologies, where standards must keep pace with innovation

Independent assessment provides:

- A consistent benchmark for competence
- Assurance for employers and the public
- Protection for apprentices, ensuring their skills are recognised and transferable

## The IMI's position

The IMI is calling for apprenticeship reforms to:

- Maintain rigorous, independent end-point assessment
- Protect the depth and quality of training for technical roles
- Ensure competence standards reflect the safety-critical nature of automotive work
- Respect and reflect employer-led recommendations within the approvals process

Reform should strengthen the system, not dilute it.

## The IMI's role

As the professional body for automotive, the IMI works closely with employers, training providers and policymakers to ensure that apprenticeships remain fit for purpose, future-ready and aligned to industry needs.

We will continue to work with government and stakeholders to ensure that apprenticeship reforms protect quality, support employers and deliver a safe, competent workforce for the future.