

Apprenticeship policy: quality assurance and guidance for apprenticeship programmes

UPR AS17, Appendix I version 15.0

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces version 14.2 of UPR AS17 Appendix I, with effect from 1 September 2022.

Summary of significant changes to the previous version

This document has been amended to reflect the implementation of observations of practices and lessons for higher and degree apprenticeships.

Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in [UPR GV08](#).

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide a statement regarding the internal quality assurance and compliance arrangements for all apprenticeships delivered by the University of Hertfordshire as a Main Provider or through a partner organisation via a subcontract arrangement.
- 1.2 This document should be read as a supplement to the established University's Regulations and Policies¹ and sets out the additional requirements for the quality assurance and compliance for those programmes that offer both an academic award and an apprenticeship.
- 1.3 The University has embedded its apprenticeship provision within existing functions of the institution. This institution-wide approach involving collaboration between academic² and professional Strategic Business Units (SBUs) ensures academic quality is maintained, compliance requirements adhered to and professional and streamlined services for employers and learners alike are provided.
- 1.4 Where existing policy and guidance refers to 'student' it must be considered that these are equally applicable to apprentices and learners.

2 Underlying Quality Assurance Framework

- 2.1 The University is committed to ensuring that the combined programmes of study and apprenticeship will meet the requirements of the Academic Regulations and thereby satisfy the expectations and core practices of the QAA UK Quality Code³ and the QAA Characteristic Statement on Higher Education in Apprenticeships⁴.
- 2.2 The University undertakes to deliver its apprenticeship provision in accordance with its obligations to Education and Skills Funding Agency⁵ (ESFA), the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills⁶ (Ofsted). By committing to apprenticeships, the University will take every reasonable effort to ensure that the provision is compliant with the ESFA Funding Rules⁷ and, where required, the Further Education and Skills Inspection handbook⁸ (March 2021). To achieve this, the University will aim to:

1 <https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-policies-and-regulations-uprs/uprs>
2 Academic Strategic Business Units are referred to as Schools from this point onwards
3 <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>
4 <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/characteristics-statement-apprenticeships.pdf>
5 <https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>
6 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>
7 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>
8 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif>

- 2.2.1 meet the requirements of the ESFA including notification to them of programme approval and subsequent listing on the Learning Aims Reference Service Database (LARS);
- 2.2.2 meet the requirement of the quality standards as published by Ofsted for all provision that is within its scope;
- 2.2.3 identify and provide relevant training for staff to meet the requirements of external regulatory processes (Section 3);
- 2.2.4 meet the health and safety needs of apprentices (including Safeguarding, Prevent, British Values);
- 2.2.5 ensure any subcontracted delivery complies with the requirements of this policy;
- 2.2.6 provide an annual report on its apprenticeship provision to the established governance committees (Academic Standards and Audit Committee and Education and Student Experience Committee);
- 2.2.7 continue to enhance the provision and to raise standards for apprentices and employers through the agreed annual monitoring and continuous enhancement process.

3 Scope and implementation of the Apprenticeship Policy

- 3.1 All staff involved in the delivery of apprenticeship programmes are required to engage positively with this policy.

3.2 Programme Design and Approval

- 3.2.1 Apprenticeship programmes are approved and developed in accordance with the requirements set out in UPR AS17⁹ and the guidance provided on the Centre for Academic Quality Assurance website.
- 3.2.2 If Schools are considering subcontracted provision the ESFA rules should be consulted prior to making any proposal to the Academic Development Committee.
- 3.2.3 The periodic review of all apprenticeship programmes will be considered as part of the normal periodic review process (UPR AS17⁹). Apprenticeship Standards normally have a three-year life cycle, the expectation is that any amendments to the Standard necessitating changes to the programme will be managed through established processes.

⁹ UPR AS17 'Academic Quality'

3.3 Continuous Monitoring of Apprenticeships

- 3.3.1 All apprenticeship programme will be subject to a continuous monitoring process within the normal academic quality assurance cycle as established in UPR AS17⁹.
- 3.3.2 Programme Leaders for each apprenticeship programme are required to complete a self-assessment exercise and complete programme Continuous Enhancement Planning (CEP) annually. These will form the basis for the University Self-Assessment Report (SAR), which is submitted to Ofsted annually, and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).
- 3.3.3 The University will engage in the Education and Skills Funding Agency Employer Satisfaction Survey and the Learner Satisfaction Survey. The results from both of these surveys will be considered when developing the SAR and QIP.
- 3.3.4 The End Point Assessment process will be taken account of in the SAR and QIP. This should include employer feedback, the external examiner report with specific detail of EPA noted (integrated EPA only) and any other relevant information.
- 3.3.5 The Department for Education National Achievement rates table for apprenticeships and education and training provide details of Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR). This measure should be used to monitor the success of apprenticeship programmes and for benchmarking purposes in the SAR.

3.4 Admissions

The process of recruitment for Apprentices differs from that of other University students. It is a collaborative process which is determined by both parties: the University and the Employer. It is the responsibility of the University and the Employer to ensure that requirements of UPR SA03¹⁰ and ESFA eligibility requirements are adhered to. The requirements for the admission process are such that:

- i the University sets out the minimum entry criteria for the apprenticeship and takes account of those specified in the relevant apprenticeship standard;
- ii the programme specific entry criteria is detailed in the programme specification;
- iii eligibility criteria as mandated by the ESFA Funding rules must be met in order that the University can access funding;

¹⁰ UPR SA03 'Admissions - Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students'

- iv the starting point for all Apprentices must be assessed prior to entry on their eligibility to undertake the apprenticeship using the Initial Needs Assessment (INA) process. This should be a decision made following discussion between the Employer, the applicant and the University. The requirement is that the INA process will be completed prior to the apprentice enrolling on the apprenticeship to enable timely and accurate completion of the Training Plan. Responsibility for this lies with the Programme Lead/Admissions Tutor. Monitoring arrangements and oversight for compliance with this process will be managed by the Enterprise & Business Development Compliance and Support Team.
- v it is a requirement of the ESFA that all Apprentices have a minimum of level 2 maths and English in order to complete a levy funded programme. The University requires that applicants must be able to provide evidence of maths and English at a minimum of Functional skills level 2 on entry. If this cannot be evidenced or has not been achieved prior to entry to the programme, this will result in a delay in entry to the apprenticeship;
- vi where selection interviews are required as part of the approved admission process, representatives from both University and Employer should be involved;
- vii all offers of a place on an apprenticeship are conditional subject to full completion of Training Plan and Written Agreement;
- viii all offers of a place on an apprenticeship are conditional, subject to full completion of all documentation required by the ESFA (including the Training Plan, Written Agreement, Call-off Contract, Apprenticeship Agreement and (where applicable) Sub-Contracting Schedule) prior to the programme start date. The University reserves the right to defer the start date if the above documents are not completed prior to the start date. Any deferral to proposed start date will be discussed on an individual basis with the Employer and Apprentice.

3.5 Change of Circumstances

3.5.1 Circumstances may change for the Apprentice during their course.

3.5.2 If any circumstances change that affect any agreements made between the Employer, Apprentice and the University, existing agreements must be altered. This includes but is not limited to:

- i changes to price;
- ii changes to their eligibility;
- iii changes to the apprentice's contract or working pattern;
- iv changes to the apprenticeship duration;
- v changes to the subcontractor;

- vi breaks in Learning:
 - a the learner may request a Break in Learning (BiL) at any point during their course;
 - b employers must agree to their apprentice taking a BiL;
 - c breaks in Learning do not apply when the apprentice has been made redundant;
 - d Academic Services must be notified of all BiLs as soon as the Programme Leader becomes aware of this as the University is obliged to record this accurately on the ILR;
 - e as a main provider, the University must re-plan the delivery, with the employer, agree any changes to price, revise written agreements/commitment statements and update the ILR.

- 3.5.3 It is the responsibility of the School to notify Academic Services if the apprentice has changed Employers as soon as they become aware of this information.

- 3.5.4 It is the responsibility of the School to notify the Academic Services in cases where an Apprentice withdraws from their programme for any reason. This notification is in addition to the normal University's withdrawal procedure.

- 3.5.5 Where the Apprentice is withdrawn from their programme following a Programme Board, the University has a responsibility to inform the Employer (see section 4).

- 3.5.6 In the event of redundancy, the University should make reasonable efforts to support the Apprentice to find new employment, support the Apprentice to continue with their training where appropriate or provide the Apprentice with a Record of Apprenticeship Part Completion if the Apprentice cannot find new employment or continue with their training.

- 3.5.7 In the event of relocation of an employer's facilities, the University should make every effort to support the Apprentice to either continue their programme with the University or support them to transfer to another Training Provider who offers the same apprenticeship.

- 3.5.8 If the Apprentice chooses to leave their Employer, the Employer should notify the University. Every effort should be made to enable the Apprentice to continue their programme (including the possibility of transferring to a non-degree apprenticeship pathway with liability for fees becoming that of the Apprentice).

- 3.6 Professional development of employees delivering apprenticeship training**

Aligned with our Strategic Plan 2020-2025, the University has a clear vision for the professional development of its employees. This includes:

- 3.6.1 Mandatory training for all staff, both as part of induction and probation, and as an annual requirement. This includes central induction, health and safety, equality and diversity, GDPR and unconscious bias training. Additional mandatory training, which is specific to all those working on, or with responsibility for, apprenticeship delivery includes safeguarding, Prevent, and compliance, with other training determined on the role of the employee.
- 3.6.2 Supporting staff to develop their practice including:
- i those academic staff without a teaching qualification or Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy to join the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. The completion of this programme requires a successful teaching observation. This is monitored through the academic probation process for the first year, with reviews at 4, 8 and 10 months;
 - ii the academic probation 4-month review must also include an observation of teaching by the Dean/Head of Department. Once probation is successfully completed, development is discussed regularly at appraisal;
 - iii development of practice through peer observation, with specific expectations for those delivering apprenticeship training to ensure practice is aligned with the Education Inspection Framework;
 - iv regular observation of practice by leaders and managers to ensure that learners benefit from effective teaching and support.
- 3.6.3 Individual Appraisal to support and monitor employees' professional development. The appraisal policy (UPR HR18) requires an annual appraisal and six-month review.

The purpose of the appraisal process is to ensure that the individual's contribution is recognised, that individuals are clear about what is expected of them, to provide a constructive environment to discuss work priorities and targets, to provide an opportunity to discuss development needs for both the current role and for future career opportunities, to allow for identification of and discussion about difficulties or obstacles which hamper effectiveness and to help focus staff development.

Line managers of staff involved in apprenticeship training will work with the individuals to ensure that action plans resulting from appraisal include:

- i how sector expertise, skills and performance is maintained and improved;
- ii how teaching and training knowledge, skills and performance is developed, maintained, and improved, including through the use of planned lesson visits and observation of practice;
- iii how actions are aligned to the delivery of apprenticeship training ensuring individual, customer and University needs are met.

- 3.6.4 Providing academic staff with a contractual allowance for research and scholarly activity, which may take place throughout the year, to be integrated into the overall pattern of activities. Outputs from research and scholarly activity time are discussed at annual appraisal and mid-year review.
- 3.6.5 Providing Professional staff with a contractual allowance for professional development.
- 3.6.6 Managing performance. The University is committed to enabling staff to reach their full potential and to deliver at least a satisfactory level of performance. In the event that a member of staff is judged to be performing at a less than acceptable level, the University will offer reasonable counselling, support and training in order to resolve the problem. In the majority of cases this approach will result in an improvement in performance, bringing it up to the level required. Only after these approaches have been tried and there has been no improvement, or there has been a deterioration in performance, will the Managing Poor Performance policy (UPR HR19) apply.
- 3.6.7 Performance concerns which affect Fitness to Practise for members of staff who must be registered with one of the UK's regulators in order to practise and therefore teach/tutor/assess learners will be reported appropriately.

4 Communication with Employers

- 4.1 Communication with the Employer is central to the success of the apprenticeship. There are many avenues and levels where the University is required to engage with the Employer and the Apprentices; e.g. recruitment, on-boarding, progress review.
- 4.2 All Employers will be provided with a University Employer's Handbook, contact details of the Programme Leader and Employer Liaison Tutor, and a general contact point within Enterprise & Business Development.
- 4.3 Information to the Employer in relation to the academic withdrawal of their Apprentice should be managed in a timely and transparent manner.

5 Complaints

In addition to the standard complaints procedure the University has a procedure for managing employer complaints UPR GV15¹¹. Details of the complaints process will be outlined in the Written Agreement, Employer handbook and Programme handbook.

¹¹ UPR GV15 'Complaints Policy (non-staff, non-student)' can be found at the following link:
https://www.herts.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/253121/UPR-GV15-Complaints-Policy-Non-Staff,-Non-Student.pdf

6 Assessment and End Point Assessments

6.1 Assessment

University regulations and processes apply to all assessments as per the Academic Assessment regulations for undergraduate and taught post graduate programmes:

- Assessment, Examinations and Conferment (University-Delivered Provisions) (UPR AS12);
- Assessment, Examinations and Conferment (Partner Organisation-Delivered Provision) (UPR AS13); and
- Structure and Assessment Regulations-Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate Programmes (UPR AS14).

6.2 End Point Assessment

- 6.2.1 All Apprentices are required to undertake an End Point Assessment (EPA) (integrated or non-integrated).
- 6.2.2 The University will undertake the steps necessary to register as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) for each apprenticeship standard (integrated EPA) and ensure the EPA is managed in accordance with UPR AS14 Appendix IV¹² and Appendix V¹³.
- 6.2.3 It is the responsibility of each School to engage with the EPAO of the Employer's choice (non-integrated EPA) and to ensure timely preparation for the End Point Assessment.
- 6.2.4 Apprentices will remain enrolled at the University until they have completed their End Point Assessment (non-integrated EPA).

6.3 External Examining

- 6.3.1 The University's normal external examining arrangements apply for the academic award associate with the level 5, 6 or 7 apprenticeships. Where Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements indicate, this will include level 4.
- 6.3.2 When seeking to appoint an external examiner for an apprenticeship that has an integrated EPA, academic, relevant practice-based experience and CPD should be considered.

¹² UPR AS14, Appendix IV 'Apprenticeship Provision - End Point Assessment policy'

¹³ UPR AS14, Appendix V 'Apprenticeship Provision - Fair Access Policy for End Point Assessment'

- 6.3.3 When the End Point Assessment (EPA) is integrated, the External Examiner will be expected to have oversight of the EPA. To assure their independence they will only have responsibility for the EPA and will not have any other on-programme external examining responsibilities. The EPA plan for integrated assessments provides detailed requirements for external examining. This must be adhered to and the External Examiner must ensure their availability for Board of Examiners for those programmes with an integrated EPA.
- 6.3.4 For non-integrated EPA, the External Examiner will not be directly involved in the EPA process but will be involved in awarding the academic award associated with the programme. They will undertake their role as either Module and/or Programme External Examiner as defined in UPR AS14¹⁴ section E.

7 Ofsted

- 7.1 Apprenticeship programmes (Levels 4-7) are within scope for an Ofsted quality assurance inspection with some exceptions.
- 7.2 Schools must be prepared for inspection and will be supported by members of the Apprenticeship Advisory Group. The Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Committee will oversee the University level preparation for Ofsted inspections.
- 7.3 The University will appoint a Nominee who will be the main point of contact between the University and Ofsted for inspection visits.
- 7.4 Preparation for Ofsted inspection at programme level is the responsibility of the School in scope for inspection, including any subcontracted provision managed by the School. This includes compliance and alignment with the Education Inspection Framework¹⁵ (2019). This preparation includes but is not limited to:
- 7.4.1 Production and on-going review of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) including data on:
- i learner body data by cohort and employer;
 - ii individual learner data-starting point, progress made, targets specified, feedback;
 - iii cohort data detailing progression, continuation and completion (QAR data);
 - iv equality and diversity data;
 - v demographic data;
 - vi evidence of understanding of Prevent, Safeguarding, British Values, Health and Safety agendas, contextualised for the apprenticeship by the learner, employer and programme team;

¹⁴ UPR AS14 'Structure and Assessment Regulations - Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes'

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>

- vii consideration of the Quality of Education that underpins the apprenticeship;
 - viii National Student Survey (NSS)/ Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) data;
 - ix external quality assurance monitoring reports, e.g. PSRBs.
- 7.4.2 Specific staff training and development (Prevent, Safeguarding).
- 7.4.3 Undertaking and recording regular learning observations with staff and learners.
- 7.4.4 Working with employers and apprentices to ensure they are aware, understand and are prepared for inspection.

8 Review

This policy (Appendix I UPR AS17) will be reviewed annually.

Sharon Harrison-Barker
Secretary and Registrar
Signed: **1 August 2022**

Alternative format

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at governanceservices@herts.ac.uk or telephone us on +44 (0)1707 28 6006.