



Strengthen your team

Higher and degree apprenticeships
employers' handbook

University of
Hertfordshire **UH**

An apprenticeship is a work-based programme that combines full-time work with an industry-designed qualification. Employers play a key role in creating an apprenticeship that fills their skills shortage gap, resulting in a highly skilled workforce that drives innovation and productivity, while helping to boost the economy. Your learner will benefit from a rewarding job, a salary and a recognised higher or degree qualification. They will be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week in the workplace and spend no less than 6 hours of their week dedicated to off-the-job training.

We provide higher and degree apprenticeships leading to qualifications at levels 5, 6 and 7. Level 5 is equivalent to a Higher Education Certificate/ Diploma or a Foundation degree, level 6 is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree, and level 7 is equivalent to a Master's degree. Apprenticeships take between one and 5 years to complete.

This handbook is designed to tell you everything you need to know about apprenticeships; from funding and the apprenticeship levy, through to requirements for you and your learner, to ensure you both get the best out of the apprenticeship. It's for anyone involved in supporting a learner, including their line manager and mentor, human resources, training managers and designated liaison managers.

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Funding and the levy

Funding through the apprenticeship levy

In April 2017, the UK government initiated the apprenticeship levy for all employers paying a wage bill of more than £3 million per year. If you meet the criteria, you are required to pay 0.5% of your payroll each month as a levy tax. You can reinvest this payment to fund apprenticeship training.

Support with apprenticeship costs

If you pay into the levy but your funds do not cover the full cost of the apprenticeship training, additional support is available. The government will pay 95% of the additional costs (up to the maximum of the relevant funding band), with the employer 'co-investing' 5%.

If you are a non-levy paying employer, you will pay 5% towards the cost of apprenticeship training. This is paid directly to the higher education provider. The government will pay the remaining balance (95%), up to the funding band maximum. You can pay the difference from your own budget if the price of training is more than the funding band maximum.

Please contact us by emailing apprenticeships@herts.ac.uk to discuss co investment opportunities with the university.

Levy transfers

A levy transfer occurs when levy paying employers transfer unused apprenticeship funds to other employers or apprenticeship training agencies. The transfer allowance percentage is currently set at 25%. This is calculated from the total amount of levy declared during the previous tax year,



with the English percentage applied, plus the 10% government top up payment. This allowance is recalculated every tax year and any unused allowance will not be carried forward. If you receive transferred funds, you can use them to pay for training and assessment, for assessment standards and for new apprenticeship starts. A transfer must be agreed and put in place before a learner starts their apprenticeship.

Information supplied is correct at the time of publishing (March 2024). The latest guidance on apprenticeship funding can be found [here](#).

Employer requirements

Before your learner can start their programme with the University, we require you to:

- Sign your contract with the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA), and set up your apprenticeship service account to enable you to pay your levy.
- Ensure your learner meets both the University's entry requirements for the chosen programme and the ESFA's apprenticeship eligibility requirements.
- Work with us to complete an initial needs assessment for your learner to establish any relevant prior learning they may have undertaken.
- Have all the legal agreements signed and in place, namely:
 - Apprenticeship Service Agreement
 - Call-Off Contract
 - Training Plan
- Have an apprenticeship agreement providing them with a job role that has a productive purpose and the opportunity to embed and consolidate the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of the Apprenticeship Standard, into the workplace.
- Work with the University throughout the apprenticeship to support your learner and to assist them to achieve the apprenticeship.
- Allocate a mentor to support your learner with their apprenticeship. This could be a line manager or an experienced employee who's willing to provide support and guidance in the workplace.
- Understand and confirm your commitment to supporting your learner throughout their apprenticeship. This includes:
 - Releasing them from work for off-the-job learning for an average of 6 hours per week across the duration of the programme.

Learner requirements

To study for an apprenticeship at the University, we require your learner to:

- Be eligible to undertake an apprenticeship, as set out in the most up to date ESFA rules which can be found [here](#).
- Be employed with a contract that lasts for the full duration of the programme.
- Have the right to work in England.
- Ensure they have not studied an equivalent programme before commencement of the programme they are applying to.
- Be at least 18 years old.
- Have achieved GCSE mathematics and English Language at grade 4/C or equivalent, and provide evidence of that achievement.
- Meet the University's specific entry requirements for their chosen programme. This may include academic requirements and also relevant experience.
- Confirm their commitment to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviour required to achieve the apprenticeship, notify us and you of any change in circumstances which may impact on the apprenticeship, and keep a record of their off-the-job learning.

Learner recruitment process

To recruit your learner and to enable them to commence their apprenticeship journey with the University, you will need to complete the following steps:

- Set up your contract with the Education, Skills and Funding Agency, including setting up your apprenticeship service account.
- Identify your existing employees who meet the requirements for the relevant programme and/or begin your recruitment process to recruit your new learner to the apprenticeship role.
- Put your potential candidates forward to the University's Apprenticeships and Professional Programmes Team via this [form](#).



What happens next?

- A member of our Apprenticeships and Professional Programmes Team will have an informal discussion with you and your learner to discuss their suitability for the programme.
- We will then invite you and your learner to complete an online Employer Instruction Form and Learner Eligibility Form respectively.
- Once we have agreed with you that your learner is, in principle, suitable for their chosen programme we will send you our legal documentation for review. This will need to be signed and in place before your learner can start their programme.
- Concurrent with agreeing and signing the legal documentation, we will invite your learner to formally apply for the course, at which point we will assess their academic eligibility and invite suitable candidates for interview.
- A cohort request will need to be sent through to the University via your apprenticeship service account using **UKPRN: 10007147**.
- As long as the learner's application demonstrates that they have met the relevant entry criteria, we will make them an offer to study on the programme, subject to completion of all necessary legal documentation and any other programme-specific requirements.

Support for you and your learner

Learner support

We are committed to providing all students with outstanding levels of support. Learners will have ongoing academic and pastoral support from our tutors. As well as access to a wide range of professional on campus services, including:

- Student wellbeing: counselling,
- Disability and mental health services.
- Disability support.
- A multi-faith chaplaincy.
- Students' Union.
- Hertfordshire Sports Village.

Learners will also have access to our extensive Learning Resource Centres, and StudyNet, our online virtual learning environment where they can access teaching materials, resources and assignments.

We expect employers to provide as much support as possible to their learner when they're in the workplace, mainly through their mentors. This should include ensuring they have the time and resources needed to complete their assignments, and offering advice and guidance.

Work based learning tutor

The work based learning tutor is the first point of contact for the employer and learner. They will be responsible for maintaining communication with the employer and learner and will be expected to:

- Hold regular progress review meetings with the learner and the employer.
- Discuss and set goals with the employer for the learner to complete in the workplace to achieve learning outcomes.
- Visit the learner's workplace regularly to review and monitor their work in practice.
- Feedback to relevant University staff to address any matters that may arise.
- Ensure the learner updates and maintains their e-portfolio.

Programme leader

The programme leader is a member of academic staff who has overall responsibility for the apprenticeship programme. They will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day management of the programme including supervision of any personal tutors.
- Arranging support for the learner and counselling individuals, particularly with regard to academic progress.
- Leading the dissemination of experience and good practice across the programme.
- Taking a pro-active role with the monitoring of academic standards.
- Working with learner representatives to promote active learner participation in the management of the programme.

Employer support

Relationships and support are a key factor in a successful and enjoyable apprenticeship journey. A strong relationship with good communication and support between the employer, learner and the University is vital, and we are dedicated to providing that support. You will be introduced to an work based learning tutor who will support you throughout.

Supporting off-the-job learning

Off-the-job learning is taken outside of day-to-day work duties and must focus on achieving the apprenticeship. The minimum requirement is an average of 6 hours per week across the duration of the programme.

There are regular discussions between the line manager, the University, and the learner, known as progress review meetings, to decide at what point during the apprenticeship the training is best delivered.

Off-the-job learning will include the time the learner spends on University learning, some of which will be timetabled, and some will involve independent study. Some programmes have regular teaching sessions, and others make use of blocks of teaching or practical elements.

The remainder of time to be spent on off-the-job learning can be scheduled flexibly throughout the apprenticeship to meet the needs of the business and the learner.

There are three distinct ways of describing off-the-job learning on an apprenticeship

Learning the theory of professional knowledge

- Classes and workshops
- Lectures
- Online learning
- Webinars
- Masterclasses
- Relevant reading
- Research
- Lunch and learn sessions
- Role playing
- Simulation exercises

Learning the skills and behaviours

- Job shadowing
- Mentoring
- Attending meetings
- Project work
- Professional networks
- Events
- Competitions
- Visits to other departments
- Visits to wider parts of the organisation
- Visits to industry

Learning the theory of professional knowledge

- Writing self-assessments
- Writing assignments
- Reflective journals
- Revision
- Peer discussions
- Preparation for assessments
- Preparation for exams
- One-to-one tutorials that contain guided learning or support



Organising End-Point Assessments

Prior to an End-Point Assessment (EPA), you must be clear that the learner has met the Gateway requirements of the apprenticeship standard, and is occupationally competent in the knowledge, skills and behaviour of the standard. The End Point Assessment Organisation will be an organisation from the Approved Register of Apprenticeship Providers (APAR) selected by either the University or the employer.

The EPA is an independent assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard, and all apprenticeship standards must have an EPA. The learner will not be able to achieve the apprenticeship without passing the EPA.

Integrated and non-integrated apprenticeships

There are two types of apprenticeship, integrated and non-integrated. The majority of the apprenticeships offered by the University are non-integrated.

Integrated apprenticeship

An integrated apprenticeship includes the EPA as part of the degree, typically through a final work-based product, practical assessment, professional discussion and/or portfolio of evidence. For integrated EPAs the University of Hertfordshire is always the EPAO.

Non-integrated apprenticeship

A non-integrated apprenticeship has a separate EPA, delivered by a different organisation to the training provider and usually requires the degree to be completed and awarded prior to attempting EPA.

The learner journey



Recruitment

Interested applicants will undergo a robust application process to define their suitability to undertake the desired apprenticeship programme. This includes checks that they meet Education Skills Funding Assessment eligibility criteria and academic entry-level criteria for the relevant programme. This step also involves completion of relevant apprenticeship documents, such as an agreement form with the employer, commitment statement and an initial needs assessment.



Initial needs assessment

Before the start of their programme, the learner will take part in an initial needs assessment with the University, which may also involve their line manager or workplace mentor.

The aim of this is to agree a skills, development and training plan, for each learner, which will be captured in the Training Plan.

It's also an opportunity for your business to specify any additional training requirements, for example, if you need your employee to learn a specific technology or computer programming language.



Induction

At the start of each programme, we run induction sessions for learners and their employers, where we'll explain the programme in more detail, as well as introduce our facilities and support services.



Individual learning plan

Your learner will have an individual learning plan that requires them to keep a summary record of their learning and the hours spent doing off-the-job learning. Learners also need to collate evidence of their progress towards achieving the apprenticeship standard. The plan is agreed by all parties and updated regularly through progress reviews.



Teaching and learning

The learner studies at the University on day/block release, through our virtual learning environment StudyNet, and through their normal duties in the workplace.

As an employer, you should make sure your learner has the time, support and resources to complete their Off-the-Job learning.



Progress review meetings

Reviews are a formal requirement of the apprenticeship programme and take place quarterly as a minimum. Progress review meetings are key opportunities for the employer, learner and the work based tutor to review the learner's progress. The meeting should cover and review their competencies, evidenced development, and off-the-job training. Additional support needs should also be identified, where applicable, through individualised action plans, to help the learner achieve their full potential.



Assessments

Learning is assessed by tutor set assignments; typically through coursework such as reports, and practical assessments such as presentations.

You won't be asked to mark assignments, but your learner may want to discuss their ideas for their assignments with you. You should also advise your learner on whether they can carry out their assignments in the workplace or use workplace materials, including confidential or commercially sensitive information.

The final stage of the apprenticeship is the End-Point Assessment (EPA). Some apprenticeship standards require the employer to be involved in the EPA process. Learners must complete the EPA in order to pass the apprenticeship and achieve their apprenticeship certificate.





Gateway requirements

The employer, learner and the University must all confirm and agree that the learner is fully competent and ready to undertake a formal End-Point Assessment (EPA). This review must be scheduled in good time to confirm booking arrangements with an EPA organisation if the apprenticeship requires a separate EPA.

An apprenticeship is not completed until the learner undertakes (and ultimately passes) the EPA. For integrated apprenticeships this is included within the achievement and awarding of the degree itself, but for apprenticeships with a separate EPA, the learner must pass the required element of the on-programme delivery first before undertaking their EPA with the selected EPA organisation.

The EPA acts as an independent and impartial assessment to verify that the learner has met all the competencies (knowledge, skills and behaviours) entailed by the apprenticeship standard.



Completion

The completion of an apprenticeship is a key milestone to be celebrated. As a University and apprenticeship training provider, we take particular care and pride in enabling success and career progression of our learners, and continue to nurture a relationship with them when they graduate.





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