

University of
Northampton

**Higher Education
Apprenticeship
Handbook**

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1 Definitions of higher education apprenticeships

- 1.1 A higher education apprenticeship combines both higher and vocational education, and fully tests wider occupational competence and academic learning. This is achieved either through an integrated degree, or through a degree plus a separate end-point assessment which tests professional competence, co-designed by the University and employers.
- 1.2 An apprenticeship is an employer-driven programme of learning which is linked to a specific occupational level and develops knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a specific job role. Qualifications offered as part of an HE apprenticeship are positioned at the appropriate level for the award, and align to the qualification descriptors and relevant subject benchmarks.
- 1.3 On-and off-the-job training and learning is included within the apprenticeship and each individual Apprenticeship Standard specifies the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to demonstrate full competence in the relevant occupation.
- 1.4 There are two types of apprenticeships involving a HE qualification:
 - a. Higher apprenticeships are offered at levels 4 and 5. These are equivalent to a Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education or a Foundation Degree.
 - b. Degree apprenticeships are offered at levels 6 and 7. These are equivalent to a Bachelor's or Master's degree respectively.
- 1.5 To be eligible for an apprenticeship, the apprentice must be in paid employment and have a job role (or roles) within an organisation that provides the opportunity for them to gain the required knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.
- 1.6 There are two ways Apprenticeships will be paid for:
 - a. Levy Paying Employers - The levy amounts to a 0.5% tax on the wage bill for employers whose salary costs are £3 million or more each year. Employers paying the levy are able to access their funding through the digital apprenticeship service to pay the apprenticeship provider of their choice.
 - b. A higher education apprenticeship combines both higher and vocational education, and fully tests wider occupational competence and academic learning. This is achieved either through an integrated degree, or through a degree plus a separate end-point assessment which tests professional competence, co-designed by the University and employers.

- c. Non-Levy Paying Employers - Small businesses with a pay bill of less than £3 million will have 95% of the training fees for apprentices paid on their behalf by government funding. The government will require the employer to make a 5% contribution to the cost of this training and government will pay the rest, up to the maximum amount of government funding available for that apprenticeship. This is called 'co-investment'

Explanatory notes

- The principles and practice within this section are governed by rules as set out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA rules), and can be found here for reference.
- Apprenticeship Standards are developed by employer groups and set out what an apprentice is required to do; the skills, knowledge and behaviours to be developed and other information about the apprenticeship.
- An endpoint assessment is a holistic and independent assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours learnt throughout the apprenticeship. The end-point assessment is set out in the assessment plan for the apprenticeship standard.

2. Strategy and governance

The University is responsive to the needs of employers and ensures that the design of the apprenticeship reflects these needs while ensuring that its awards continue to meet the requirements of the Office for Students with regard to standards and quality.

Requirements

- 2.1. Executive oversight and determination of strategic direction of HE apprenticeships rests with the University Management Team (UMT), led by the Executive Dean: Research, Impact and Enterprise, supported by the University Apprenticeship Manager'
- 2.2. The University offers two modes of HE apprenticeship delivery as follows:
 - a. Open programmes: the University designs and approves programmes in specific occupational subject areas which are mapped to relevant Apprenticeship Standards and are advertised openly for engagement with apprentices and employers.
 - b. Closed programmes: the University and an employer (and professional bodies if applicable) co-design a degree programme specifically for apprentices, which delivers and assesses both academic learning and on-the-job training. This operates as a closed programme and is not advertised for open admission.
- 2.3. **Subject to the decision of the approval panel**, every programme approved for offer as part of an apprenticeship has a unique subject-

based title reflecting the special nature and character of these applied programmes. Programmes offered as part of apprenticeships (2.2 a and b above) will have a different title to non-apprenticeship, academic programmes in the same subject.

- 2.4. The academic governance of higher education apprenticeships aligns to standard University processes as defined in The University of Northampton Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF). 2.2 a and b above are standard 'home' programmes for the purpose of NQAF. The University's strategy on apprenticeships does not include the development of collaborative programmes including subcontracting arrangements, at this time.
- 2.5. The approach to the design, management and enhancement of Higher and Degree apprenticeship programmes aligns to UoN's overall principles for the Validation of programmes, Annual Review and Periodic Subject Review (as set out in the Handbooks for Validation, Annual Review and PSR). Requirements specific to Apprenticeships are covered in detail in this Apprenticeship Handbook.

3. Recruitment, selection and admission of students

The approach to recruitment and selection of HE apprentices is agreed at an early stage between the University and employer(s) and is designed to be fair and clear to all stakeholders. It is the joint responsibility of the University and employer(s) to ensure these processes are implemented consistently and monitored routinely

Requirements

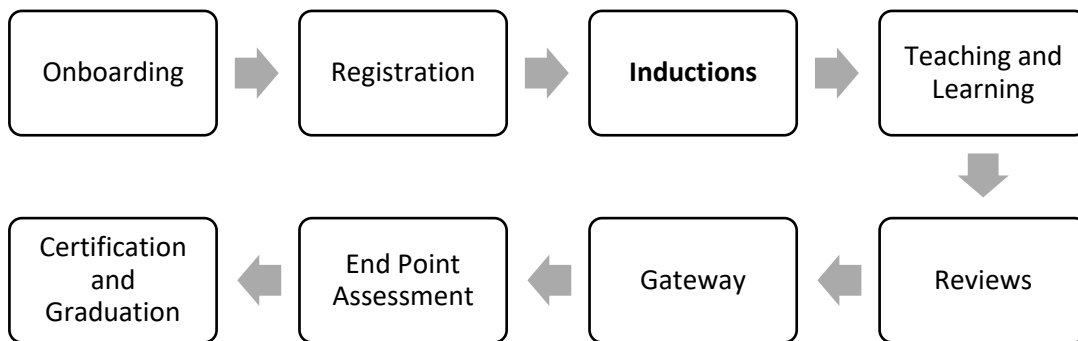
- 3.1. The processes for recruitment and entry for apprenticeships are different from standard student recruitment and admission.
- 3.2. The University sets out the minimum entry criteria requirements for the HE apprenticeship taking account those specified within the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.
- 3.3. Apprentices are employees, and therefore are recruited by the employer. Apprentices may be new employees, or existing employees where significant new learning from an apprenticeship can be demonstrated. Where apprentices are new employees, the employer's recruitment and selection processes apply, which in some cases may involve the University taking part in these processes. Alternatively, dual admission processes may be undertaken separately but concurrently.
- 3.4. The specific arrangements for recruitment and selection for the apprenticeship are set out in the programme documentation; how this works in practice is agreed with each employer in advance.

- 3.5. Level 2 or equivalent maths and English qualifications are required in order to successfully complete assessments at higher education level. For this reason, apprentices should meet the standard for maths and English at level 2 or equivalent on entry, or, they may be supported by the employer to achieve them before commencing the apprenticeship.
- 3.6. The final decision on admission to an apprenticeship involving a HE qualification rests with the University

4. Programme design and structure

Programmes offered as part of an HE apprenticeship are flexibly designed to allow apprentices to achieve both the HE qualification and the apprenticeship

The Apprentice Journey



Onboarding

Completion of initial skills assessment and all key apprenticeship documentation such as training plan and apprenticeship agreement.

Registration

Enrolment with University of Northampton to gain access to campus facilities and online systems.

Inductions

Welcomes from the University and programme lead and introduction to the apprenticeship programme.

Teaching and Learning

Learning on campus/ online; training at work; completing and recording on and off the job training hours.

Reviews

Regular apprentice progress reviews; 12 weekly tripartite reviews with employer, apprentice and University.

Gateway

Fixed point where the apprentice meets the requirements of the apprenticeship and can evidence readiness to commence the end point assessment.

End Point Assessment

The final stage of the apprenticeship. An impartial assessment demonstrating whether the apprentice has developed the skills, knowledge and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard.

Certification and Graduation

The apprenticeship is successfully completed. Certification claimed and apprentice graduates

Requirements

- 4.1. A unique feature of apprenticeship programme design is that it ensures alignment to the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and the associated Assessment Plan in order to allow apprentices to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and behaviours for the apprenticeship and to allow them to achieve both the HE qualification and the apprenticeship itself. Documenting this alignment effectively supports University and Employer staff in understanding the links between the academic programme and the apprenticeship ensuring the effective delivery of the programme in line with the Apprenticeship Standard. Alignment and likely effectiveness of delivery are among the criteria for validation.
- 4.2. Mapping against the Apprenticeship Standard involves mapping of the learning outcomes to the skills, knowledge and behaviours specified in the Apprenticeship Standard, at programme and module level. Templates are available for the specification of apprenticeship programmes and modules to facilitate this. This mapping is in addition to standard curriculum mapping. Mapping against the Assessment Plan is discussed in Section 6.
- 4.3. Student achievement on Higher Education apprenticeships should be recognised if a student does not complete the full programme. Validation events should ensure that appropriate interim academic awards are identified in non-integrated Apprenticeship programmes. In integrated programmes the possibility of a 'top-up element' should be explored to enable students to achieve a fall-back award.
- 4.4. The minimum duration for apprenticeship training is 12 months. The Apprenticeship Standard indicates the suggested duration for a specific apprenticeship. Apprentices are in full-time employment and normally will take longer than a full-time student to complete the equivalent learning. Flexibility is required when planning the academic cycle of the HE apprenticeship programme to meet the requirements of employers.
- 4.5. Each programme is designed with a range of potential methods of delivery. For each cohort of students, the programme team and the employer(s) decide upon the delivery method, from the approved range, in advance of students enrolling onto the programme.
- 4.6. Programmes may need to be customised to meet employer specifications through optional modules. The offer of options will be particularly relevant in open programmes where apprentices are attending from a

number of employers.

- 4.7. HE apprenticeships must include a minimum of 20% off-the-job learning delivered by the University, which may take the form of traditional face-to-face or online learning. The remaining learning is on-the-job and is undertaken in the workplace. It is essential that an apprentice's workplace provides an appropriate source of learning, and the University is responsible for ensuring that this is the case. The process of validation confirms that an employer can provide an appropriate learning environment. New employers can be approved to deliver existing approved apprenticeships via the Change of Approval process.
- 4.8. Off-the job learning is undertaken outside the normal day-to-day working environment. This can include training that is delivered at the apprentice's normal place of work but must not be delivered as part of their normal working duties.
- 4.9. Off-the-job learning does not include:
 - a. English and maths (up to level 2) which is funded separately;
 - b. progress reviews or on-programme assessment;
 - c. training which takes place outside the apprentice's paid working hours
- 4.10. An apprentice must work enough hours each week so that they can undertake sufficient appropriate, regular training and on-the-job activity. The minimum duration of each apprenticeship is based on the apprentice working 30 hours a week or more, including any off-the-job training they undertake. If the apprentice works fewer than 30 hours a week the minimum duration (pro rata) must be extended to take account of this. This will also apply to any temporary period of part-time working.

Explanatory notes

- Additional information about the requirements of off-the-job training can be found in the ESFA funding rules.

5. Personalised learning

The University's principles for learning and teaching are just as relevant for apprenticeships as they are for other programmes of study. Learning and teaching are framed to develop students' intellectual rigour and agility, initiative, creativity and collaboration. The specific nature of the apprenticeship's study means that additional activity is incorporated into student's academic journey in order to ensure personalised, integrated on- and off-the-job learning.

Requirements

- 5.1. Learning and teaching strategies for apprenticeships are expected to align to University requirements.

- 5.2. Each apprentice is allocated an academic mentor appointed by the University and a workplace mentor appointed by the employer. These mentors support the progress and achievement of the apprentice and support identification of appropriate workplace activity to facilitate work-integrated learning opportunities.
- 5.3. Apprentices are visited (face to face or virtually) by the University in the workplace in order to optimise their learning opportunities and support progression. The validation process will consider the appropriateness of the proposed arrangements. The University expects that apprentices will normally be visited at least once in each academic stage (level). Visits should normally include a meeting between academic and workplace mentors and the apprentice.
- 5.4. Additional contacts with the apprentice may be undertaken by telephone or video conference.
- 5.5. Apprentices must evidence learning throughout the apprenticeship reflecting their experiences, and progress towards the skills, knowledge and behaviours set out in the Apprenticeship Standard.
- 5.6. The academic mentor is required to keep evidence of the agreed average and actual weekly hours, including time spent on off-the-job training for each apprentice. This may include:
 - a. the teaching of theory (for example, lectures, role playing, simulation exercises, structured online learning);
 - b. practical training; shadowing; mentoring; industry visits and attendance at competitions;
 - c. learning support and time spent writing assessments/ assignments.
- 5.7. Employers and apprentices provide the University with appropriate data and information to enable completion of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and to meet ESFA funding rules.

Explanatory notes

- The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) is the method used by the Further Education and Skills Sector in England to collect data about learners in the sector. The data is used for monitoring funding allocations

6. End Point Assessment

Assessment across the programme focuses on the knowledge, skills and behaviours within the selected subject/pathway culminating in a comprehensive synoptic end-point assessment.

Requirements

- 6.1. HE Apprenticeship Standards require an independently assessed, synoptic end-point assessment, the details of which are set out in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard's Assessment Plan. Successful completion of the

end-point assessment leads to the awarding of the apprenticeship.

- 6.2. The end point assessment may be undertaken in two ways;
 - a. **Non-integrated.** Non-integrated end-point assessments are conducted by a separate, independent Apprentice Assessment Organisation, contracted by the University, and selected by the employer. The end-point assessor cannot be the University.
 - b. **Integrated.** The University may conduct the end-point assessment as an integrated aspect of the degree. For this purpose, the University has to be listed on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations.
- 6.3. The end-point assessment tests that apprentices can fully demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours specified in the Apprenticeship Standard.
- 6.4. Before taking their end point assessment, all apprentices have to meet the Gateway requirements. These are requirements set out in the Assessment Plan that must be met by the apprentice prior to undertaking end-point assessment of the Apprenticeship Standard. They will include confirmation of the completion of English and maths qualifications (where applicable) and completion of any on-programme mandatory qualifications (where applicable) by the end of the first year of the apprenticeship, along with satisfactory evidence (as determined by the employer, in consultation with the University) that the apprentice has achieved the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard. The employer and University 'sign-off' the successful completion of the Gateway requirements.
- 6.5. For non-integrated apprenticeships the following apply:
 - a. An apprentice must have passed their degree in order to be put forward for the end-point assessment. This is determined by the University.
 - b. Successful completion of the degree does not constitute completion of the apprenticeship. The apprenticeship is not achieved until both the degree and the end-point assessment have been achieved.
 - c. The University is responsible for providing continued support to the apprentice until the end-point assessment has been successfully completed
- 6.6. For integrated apprenticeships, successful completion of the degree also constitutes successful completion of the apprenticeship. In such cases the final capstone module of the degree may constitute the end-point assessment. Where this is the case, the assessment of the capstone module will need to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship

Assessment Plan.

- 6.7. For all HE apprenticeships, the alignment of the programme assessment strategy with the apprenticeship Assessment Plan is essential. The programme assessment strategy should include a range of both formative and summative assessments which support both achievement of the programme / module learning outcomes and development of professional competence to perform the job role. Apprenticeship programme and module specification templates require that the programme assessments are mapped to the apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

Explanatory notes

- The UMF applies to assessment unless Supplementary Regulations have been approved.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the University, the apprentice and the employer are set out in clear contractual documentation.

Requirements

- 7.1. The process of validation considers at a minimum the following contractual documents which set out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the apprenticeship: agreement between the employer and the University and the Training Plan between the University, the apprentice and the employer.
- 7.2. The University has an agreed template for each of the contractual documents listed in 7.1 which will be amended in discussion with employers before being presented for consideration during the validation process.
- 7.3. The Quality Unit will hold the records of the contractual documentation approved at the point of Validation and Change of Approval. Contractual documentation may be subject to amendment outside of these processes due to the needs of participants. The University Apprenticeship Manager is responsible for maintaining the definitive, complete and accurate contract documents on behalf of the University, and ensuring they are available to all stakeholders.
- 7.4. The key document for apprentices is a Training Plan which is produced for every apprentice and is duly signed by the programme leader (or nominee), apprentice and employer, setting out how they will support the successful achievement of the apprenticeship.
- 7.5. Each apprenticeship is a complex programme involving on and off the job learning in a variety of contexts. A key source of information for the apprentice is the apprentice handbook which must provide the detail required to allow students to understand their programme. This will be considered in detail as part of the validation process. The handbook

should include as a minimum:

- a. Details of the apprenticeship, including start and end-dates for learning, end-point assessment and key milestones for mandatory or other qualification achievements
- b. A detailed schedule for learning/training at each apprenticeship stage
- c. Details of the end-point assessment.
- d. Information on academic and workplace mentoring including academic mentor visits/engagements.
- e. Employer commitment for apprenticeship access to study in the working day.
- f. Information on key academic regulations including the process for resolving any queries or complaints regarding the apprenticeship

Additional details outlining the University's approach to delivering and managing the quality of End-Point Assessments are set out within the 'Higher and Degree Apprenticeship End- Point Assessment (EPA) Policy and Procedure'.

Explanatory notes

- The Training Plan is an essential component of the Apprenticeship Agreement between the University, employer and the apprentice, as directed within the ESFA rules

8. External examining

The principal role of an external examiner is to monitor the academic standards of the apprenticeship, as well as the internal moderation and assessment processes.

Requirements

- 8.1. The University's normal external examining arrangements apply for the degree aspect of HE apprenticeships. External examiners should have both academic and practice-based experience and, if possible, experience of HE apprenticeships.
- 8.2. For integrated apprenticeships, the external examiner will be involved in the oversight of the end-point assessment. In these cases, the specific requirements for external examining are set out the apprenticeship Assessment Plan, and must be adhered to in the assessment process.
- 8.3. For non-integrated apprenticeships, the external examiner will not play a direct role in the end-point assessment process. They will however, be involved in the awarding of the degree.

9. Academic regulations

The University provides clear policy and process for both employers and apprentices with regard to extenuating circumstances, breaks in learning, academic misconduct, appeals and complaints

Requirements

- 9.1. Apprenticeships are expected to follow the University Modular Framework. If addressing the requirements of the Apprenticeship Standard or Assessment Plan requires a variation to the UMF programme teams should apply to the Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services to request that the University consider Supplementary Regulations. All extenuating circumstances claims, academic misconduct, complaints and appeals will follow standard University regulations.
- 9.2. Subject to approval, an apprentice may vary their rate of study to suit their individual needs and circumstances.
- 9.3. There may be changes in circumstances, specific to the nature of apprenticeships, not identified in the above, with responsibilities for the programme team, employer and University. These may include:
 - a. Where a redundancy situation occurs the University makes reasonable effort to support the apprentice to find new employment to enable the apprenticeship to continue.
 - b. Where the apprentice starts a new role with the same employer and requires a different apprenticeship programme, the relevant programme leaders and employer agree the programme and assessment for the new apprenticeship, which should take into account relevant prior learning from the first apprenticeship.
 - c. If the apprentice is no longer employed by the employer (not redundancy) the employer is required to notify the University, and consideration may be taken to enable the student to continue on the degree programme.
 - d. Where the apprentice withdraws from the programme, or is failed and terminated by a progression board, the University has a responsibility to inform the employer.
- 9.4. The student handbook should include details.

Explanatory notes

- ESFA rules regarding reporting requirements can be found in Apprenticeship funding and performance-management rules for training providers.

10. Keeping apprentices safe

- 10.1. The University is committed to ensuring that a safe and supportive environment exists for all apprentices, providing a positive learning experience. The University therefore expects a commitment to these

standards from all parties: the university, the apprentice and their employer.

- 10.2. Safeguarding - The University has a clear commitment to safeguarding, which is overseen by a dedicated safeguarding officer. They promote and implement the Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that it is reviewed regularly and acted upon. Additionally, all members of University staff working with apprentices are trained in safeguarding and are able to access additional information, advice and training when appropriate. Employers have a duty to comply with all current and future UK legislation and statutory responsibilities. There is a particular expectation that an employer should take responsibility for an apprentice's welfare in the workplace and to also seek appropriate advice when they feel an apprentice may be at risk in their personal lives.
- 10.3. Prevent - As part of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, universities are required to pay 'due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism'. An important part of Prevent, is also the promotion of British values. These are the norms that shape our society and which are enshrined in law, through legislation such as the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.4. All apprentices studying on a programme at the University, will be expected to complete a compulsory training programme in which all of these topics will be covered and explored.

Explanatory notes

- Additional information for these topics is set out within the University's general Policies and Procedures

11. Apprenticeship subcontracting

Requirements

- 11.1. The University of Northampton offers higher and degree level apprenticeships to employers covering a range of subject areas. The University continually seeks to broaden its provision to meet local, regional and national educational needs of young people and adults. The University undertakes subcontracting agreements as part of its apprenticeship offer where a subcontracting arrangement will add value to the quality of its apprenticeship delivery. To assist this, the University may engage with a small portion of subcontracted provision to be able to:
 - 11.1.1. enhance the opportunities available to young people and adults through the delivery of high value and innovative flexible degree-based provision;
 - 11.1.2. fill gaps in niche or expert provision, or provides better access to training facilities;

- 11.1.3. support wider geographical access for learners across Northamptonshire.
- 11.1.4. This will also include English and Maths functional skills where the apprentice cannot demonstrate that they have these qualifications as per the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements.
- 11.2. The University operates its apprenticeship subcontracting arrangements in-line with the ESFA apprenticeship funding rules and associated guidance for subcontracting with delivery partners. The University operates apprenticeship subcontracting in one of two ways:

The University acts as the lead training provider and sub-contracts specialist training to a partner institution for delivery. The University retains oversight of the whole apprenticeship.

The University acts as a subcontractor to another lead training provider for parts of the training. The lead provider retains oversight of the whole apprenticeship.

Explanatory notes

- Full details of the University's approach to Apprenticeship subcontracting is set out within the University's 'ESFA funded Apprenticeship Provision Subcontracting Policy'.
- for the purpose of Apprenticeships, the University adheres to the definition and rules governing subcontracting as set out within ESFA guidance documents.

12. Policies and Procedures

Apprentices have the exact same rights and responsibilities as all other students within the university and all existing policies and procedures will apply accordingly.

Should an apprenticeship regulation set out with the ESFA rules contradict a university policy or procedure, then the apprenticeship regulation will take precedent and apply.