

CWA Employer Guide to Apprenticeships

Welcome to our Apprenticeship Guide

This guide is designed to give you an overview of what an Apprenticeship is, how it is delivered and what role we all play within the Apprenticeship journey. Further details can be found on the government's apprenticeship website:

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/employer-guides>

This guide will cover the following:

- What is an apprenticeship?
- Things to consider when taking on an apprentice?
- What is 'Off the job' training?
- What are Progress Reviews?
- What is the Training Plan?
- What are Functional Skills qualifications?
- What is Gateway & End Point Assessment?
- How do I register as an employer of an apprentice?
- The Apprenticeship Learning Journey
- The Apprentice enrolment process



What is an Apprenticeship?



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An apprenticeship is a job with an accompanying assessment and skills development programme. It is a way for individuals to 'earn while they learn' gaining valuable skills and knowledge in a specific job role. The apprentice gains this through a wide mix of learning in the workplace, formal **'off-the-job' training** and the opportunity to practise new skills in a real work environment.

How is an apprenticeship structured?

Once an apprentice has been accepted onto a programme of study, they will need to meet the **'knowledge, skills and behaviours'** (KSB's) within the apprenticeship standard. Depending on their apprenticeship, they may also be required to work towards a qualification within the apprenticeship. All apprenticeships require learners to achieve Maths and English at a particular level. This may be a requirement if the apprentice hasn't already got the relevant grades in these subjects. If an apprentice needs to obtain these, they will be enrolled onto **'functional skills'** qualifications.

Once a learner has fulfilled the outcomes for the apprenticeship, they will move to the **'Gateway'** stage. This indicates all learning has been completed. During this stage, the apprentice prepares for their **'End Point Assessment'** (EPA). An EPA is carried out by an external assessor and involves assessments being carried out with the apprentice. The outcome of the assessments determines if the apprentice has achieved their apprenticeship.

Things to consider when taking on an apprentice.



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Workplace suitability – It is important that the workplace can offer an apprentice the opportunity to gain the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours required for their apprenticeship. We offer support to employers to determine this and may ask them to complete a ‘Scope of work’ document prior to signing up. We also need to consider Health & Safety.

Apprentice job role – It is important that the job role an employer offers the apprentice is aligned to the apprenticeship standard and will allow for the relevant outcomes to be achieved. This will be discussed prior to enrolment.

Workplace mentor – Employers must provide the apprentice with a workplace mentor for the duration of their programme. This person must be someone that works directly with the apprentice; usually their line manager. This person should have a clear understanding of the apprentice's role and should familiarize themselves with the apprenticeship outcomes. They will be required to support the apprentice; ensure they are being given their ‘off the job’ training and attend all **Progress Review meetings** arranged by the assessor (approx. 1 every 3 months). It is also expected that the mentor will report to the assessor any concerns they may have at any stage and work collaboratively with us throughout.

Safety & Safeguarding – Employers must ensure a safe working environment for the apprentice and provide a culture that is committed to protecting them from harm. It is also important to understand safeguarding legislation in relation to the apprentice - <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/raising-the-standard-best-practice-guidance/welfare-and-wellbeing-raising-the-standards/>

Apprentices staff members and therefore employers should provide their apprentice with a contract of employment in the same way they would for other staff.

What is 'Off-the-Job' Training?

All apprentices enrolled on an apprenticeship will be required to spend 20% of their contracted hours on 'off the job' learning' so an apprentice who works 30 hrs a week will be expected to spend 6 hours of that week in 'off the job' learning.

This is a mandatory part of the governments funding rules and is calculated across the whole period of the apprenticeship. The training will take place outside the normal day to day work and can include training that is delivered in the apprentice's workplace but not be part of their normal work duties.

'Off-the job' learning will:

- Focuses on **new learning and gaining competence** in the current job role related to the apprenticeship standard
- Take place **every calendar month** & the training plan must reflect this.

Below are types of 'off the job' that show eligibility:

Eligible Off the Job

- Practical training or KSB development at college or in the workplace
- Teaching of theory (lectures, workshops, webinars)
- Completion of assignment work
- Masterclasses
- Relevant reading
- Research
- Revision (only where this is specifically required for achievement of the apprenticeship)
- Mentoring & shadowing (as long as it is included in the training plan)
- Industry visits
- Competitions

Ineligible Off the Job

- Initial assessment & on-boarding activities
- Training & knowledge not related to Knowledge, Skills & Behaviours (KSBs) of the apprenticeship
- Routine work tasks
- Mock and mandatory assessment of KSB's / mandatory qualifications e.g. exams, assessments
- Time spent putting portfolio evidence together or professional discussions – this is not new learning
- Mock End Point Assessments
- Time spent towards developing English & maths functional skills
- Time spent in training reviews
- Anything outside of paid working hours
- Learning that takes place prior to start date or after gateway declaration date

What are Progress Reviews?



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Progress reviews are a mandatory part of the apprenticeship and provide an opportunity for all parties to collaborate, reflect and measure the progress of an apprentice at any given stage in their apprenticeship.

They are pre-booked in advance and must always include the employer (mentor), training provider and apprentice.

All parties will be expected to provide feedback on how the apprentice is performing in the workplace and how they are progressing on their apprenticeship. The apprentice will be expected to showcase what they have learnt since their last progress review and how this has impacted on their workplace.

Progress reviews contribute to the recognition and celebration of achievements, progress and performance of an apprentice. They also highlight any concerns that any party may have around progress or issues in the workplace.

Progress reviews cover all aspects of the apprentices learning journey. There will be discussions around the completion and logging of 'off the job' training, progress with English and Maths (as necessary), how they are performing in the workplace, completion of work set by the trainer/assessor, and any other relevant discussions that are appropriate.

Progress reviews conclude with a set of agreed targets for the apprentice to work towards. These are reviewed based on their deadline dates and at the next progress review. The training plan is then updated for the next 10-week period.

Progress reviews will be scheduled at the 5-week point, then 10-12 wkly. A progress review can be brought forward on request from any party if it is felt it would be beneficial.

What is the Training Plan?



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An apprenticeship training plan is a mandatory requirement of an apprenticeship and contains in-depth details about the apprenticeship programme length and content. It ensures the dedication of all parties to the programme and confirms the eligibility of the learner.

The training plan contains a full rundown of the programme including content and delivery. It outlines the commitment of the employer and training provider and what the apprentice can expect.

The training plan is completed with the employer and training provider in the workplace, prior to commencement of the apprenticeship.

[The Training Provider](#) will be responsible for delivering the taught aspect of the apprenticeship, which we refer to as the 'knowledge' outcomes. This will be detailed in the training plan.

[The Employer](#) is responsible for delivering the 'skills & behaviours' outcomes, and this must also be detailed in the training plan. 'Off the job' training supports the apprentice in learning the skills they need, and they will log this new learning on the e-learning platform.

A meeting will be arranged with the employer to complete the training plan. It will be agreed between both parties what will be delivered, how and when, and the details will be input into the training plan. The training plan is a live document and if any changes are made to it by the learner, employer or provider it would need to be updated and resigned by all parties.

At each Progress Review, the training plan will be updated with any new learning the apprentice will be doing in the workplace and details on further training delivered by the training provider. It will be resigned by all parties.

What are Functional Skills qualifications?



English and maths functional skills qualifications are a mandatory part of the apprenticeship structure, and apprentices will need to gain these alongside their apprenticeship standard if they didn't obtain the necessary grades in school or previous study.

Proficiency in these subjects is crucial for all the reading, writing and numerical requirements encountered in the workplace. They have an important role in daily life too, helping with regular tasks including communication, paying bills and doing shopping.

All applicants will undergo an initial assessment for English and maths, regardless of whether they have obtained the necessary grades prior. This is because we embed English and maths into our delivery to upskill apprentices in these subjects.

For those that need to obtain functional skills, specialist tutors are on hand to offer support and guidance. A variety of teaching resources are available from online learning platforms to classroom lessons on campus. You will be advised as to the model of delivery, based on your initial assessment outcomes and what level of functional skill you need to achieve.

College attendance for functional skills is mandatory if a tutor requests this. It is essential that the apprentice and employer collaborate with the training provider to facilitate the achievement of functional skills. It is important to note that an apprentice cannot complete their apprenticeship without achieving their functional skills first.

What is Gateway and End Point Assessment?

Gateway

This is the period between an apprentice completing their training and commencing their end-point assessment (EPA).

All parties must agree that the apprentice has completed their training and can enter Gateway. To enter Gateway, the apprentice must have completed and achieved the minimum requirements necessary to undertake the EPA as set out in their apprenticeship training plan, to show that they have acquired the competencies necessary for their job role.

Once the employer, training provider and apprentice are all in agreement that they are ready to enter Gateway, the required evidence should be submitted, along with the Gateway declaration form by the training provider to confirm this.

End point Assessment

This is the final stage of an apprenticeship. It is an impartial assessment, carried out by an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) of whether the apprentice has developed the skills, knowledge and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard. Apprentices will need to pass all elements of the EPA to achieve their apprenticeship.

If an apprentice does not pass all assessments, they can resit them. The employer is responsible for resit costs. Further details on this are discussed prior to commencement.

How do I register as an employer of an apprentice?

Employers must register on the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) - Please follow link below and allow full permissions [Create an apprenticeship service account](#)

The College of West Anglia UKPRN 10007916

We will need to carry out a **Health and Safety Pre-Placement check** prior to your apprentice starting.

We will need from you the following:

1. Employer/Public liability insurance details, please make your insurance company aware that you are employing an apprentice.
2. Number of employees.
3. Details of health and safety contact (Committee/Safety representation) name and phone number.
4. If applicable details of enforcement actions in the past 5 years (prosecutions, notices etc).
5. Able to explain/show commitment to health and safety in the workplace and how this is communicated to employees i.e. induction process, training, displaying health and safety law poster (can be purchased here [Health and Safety Law Poster - What You Need to Know: A2 version \(hse.gov.uk\)](#))
6. Written risk assessments in place (N/A for less than 5 employees).
7. First aid box in place and maintained.
8. Accident book (can be purchased here (<https://books.hse.gov.uk/?DI=649639&ClickID=002160>)).



The Apprenticeship Learner Journey



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Total Planned Duration of apprenticeship

Gateway

Enrolment Processes

- Employer to register on the digital apprenticeship service (DAS)
- CWA Apprenticeship Advisor to complete Health and Safety pre-placement check
- Applicant to apply on CWA website
- Apprenticeship Advisor to complete an interview, eligibility check and initial assessments
- CWA trainer/assessor to complete prior learning checks
- Confirm place with employer and applicant in consultation with trainer/assessor
- CWA trainer/assessor to complete 'off-the-job' training plan with the employer
- Start date agreed and enrolment administration completed by all parties
- CWA trainer/assessor to organise learner Induction

Apprenticeship learner Journey (weeks)

Start date of learning



Planned learning end date

- Trainer/assessor organises sessions with apprentice/employer to ensure ongoing progress is made throughout the learning stage.
- Employer to support apprentice to record 'off-the-job' training on Smart Assessor throughout the apprenticeship journey
- First Progress Review to be completed at 5 weeks from their start date. Further Progress Reviews to be completed every 10-12 weeks with employer, apprentice and assessor.
- English and maths functional skills sessions to be organised if applicable and employer to support online learning and release apprentice for college attendance as required.
- Apprentice to have a minimum of one session a month with their trainer/assessor
- Employer, apprentice and trainer/assessor to agree when ready for gateway and ensure minimum amount of off-the-job has been recorded and English and maths achieved if applicable
- Provider to register for gateway

End Point Assessment

- CWA can facilitate when/where End Point Assessment takes place with employer/apprentice
- Completion of apprenticeship exit paperwork to be completed by all parties.

The Apprentice enrolment process



Eligibility and initial assessments

Applicants must apply on The College of West Anglia website – Please follow link <https://cwa.ac.uk/apprenticeships>

Prior to starting an apprenticeship, the Apprenticeship Advisor will invite the applicant into the college to:

- Check their eligibility
- Conduct an interview
- Complete English and maths assessments
- Complete a cognitive assessment to identify any support needs

The trainer/assessor will be allocated who will carry out a skills scan to identify any prior learning. (this may affect the duration and cost of the apprenticeship and could highlight the applicant is ineligible.)

Once the process has been completed, the applicant will be notified of the outcome and if they have been accepted onto the apprenticeship.

The enrolment can then commence, and a start date agreed by all parties. A training plan meeting must be agreed with the employer and trainer/assessor before the start date of the apprenticeship.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much should my apprentice be paid?

Please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Some employers already have trainee pay scales in place and take the opportunity to link wage rises to achievement i.e. increasing wages as components of the training plan are completed.

Do I need to pay my apprentice for a full week or just the hours they work?

Apprentices are entitled to paid leave to attend college as part of their apprenticeship. Wages should be paid for all time on training and work.

Is my apprentice entitled to holidays – if so, how many and do they need to be paid?

You should use your own company's policy regarding holiday entitlement or refer to the Government website www.gov.uk. Holidays during term time should be discouraged where it could impact on the apprentice's college attendance as this could result in the non-achievement of their programme.

If my apprentice does not turn up for work, what should I do?

You should follow your company procedures in the first instance and then notify the apprenticeship department or the apprentices trainer/assessor of any unauthorised absence.

How long does an apprenticeship last?

This depends upon the apprenticeship e.g. Administration apprentices are expected to complete within 18 months, whilst electricians may take up to 4 years.

Frequently Asked Questions contd.

What if my apprentice leaves or is dismissed?

We require a minimum of one week's notice of termination of our apprenticeship agreement with you – where the apprentice wishes to continue their training and is considered suitable, we would help them secure an alternative placement.

Is there an upper age limit for apprentices?

No, we can offer apprenticeships to all age groups.

What are the H&S responsibilities for me and my apprentice?

The Apprenticeship Advisor will go through this during your Health and Safety pre-placement check, but you are responsible for ensuring your apprentice is safe while they are in the workplace, as you would do for any other staff member you employ. Your apprentice must take reasonable care of their own health and safety, as well as the health and safety of any other person who works with them or may be affected by what they do. They must co-operate with your health and safety procedures and ensure they are carried out correctly.

How will my apprentice log evidence of their work and learning?

We use an e-learning platform called Smart Assessor. This is set up on enrolment and the employer and learner will get their own account to log into and guidance on how to use the platform. Learners log their 'off the job' training here, and employers can access the platform to see what progress is being made and what sessions are being carried out. The training plan is stored in here, as are the progress reviews. Apprentices and employers will be required to log in regularly to sign documents ie. Progress reviews, updated training plans.

Frequently Asked Questions contd.

What should I do if I am concerned about my apprentice's performance?

Your apprentice is an employee, so follow the relevant workplace policy regarding staff performance as you would any other staff member. You should also contact the trainer/assessor to outline the concerns you have so that appropriate support can be put into place, and we can both be aligned as to next steps and what is best for the apprentice.

What is the role of the apprentice's mentor?

This is a crucial role and one that will contribute significantly to the success of the apprentice and overall achievement of their apprenticeship. It is essential that communication channels remain open between the trainer/assessor and the mentor. We need to facilitate regular appointments throughout the apprenticeship ie. Progress review meetings, workplace visits etc, so your cooperation is required to ensure this can be facilitated in a timely manner. We appreciate the pressures many organisations face with conflicting workplace priorities, and this can lead to delays in responses or cancellations of appointments by mentors, but we are governed by strict funding rules and therefore must adhere to them as laid out and agreed by all parties in the apprenticeship agreement.

What happens if there is a change in apprentice's mentor?

If the mentor assigned to the apprentice can no longer carry out the role, it is essential that you inform the college and assign the role to a suitable alternative. We will need to update this on our records and get in touch with the new mentor to ensure they are fully prepared for their role and what is expected of them.

Frequently Asked Questions contd.

What is a break in learning?

An apprentice can request a 'break in learning' at any point of their learning journey. This could be used when an apprentice is struggling to meet the demands of the job and study and is at risk of falling behind or withdrawing. It could also be used for an apprentice going on maternity leave for instance. A break in learning freezes the funding we receive; therefore, no learning can be completed during this stage. The duration of the break is added onto the end of the duration, meaning an apprentice doesn't lose any of their apprenticeship time.