

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Appointing an Apprentice

General

Q What is an apprenticeship?

A An apprenticeship is a paid job which gives the learner (an apprentice) practical work experience and the opportunity to train in a particular occupation, whilst gaining valuable skills and qualifications to enable them to become proficient in their chosen occupation.

Q What are apprenticeship standards?

A An apprenticeship standard is essentially the job role that the apprentice will be training for.

With the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, the government has also introduced over 800 Apprenticeship Standards, which have replaced the old Frameworks. Each Standard is job-specific and identifies the key knowledge, skills and behaviours for that particular job. In addition, each Standard requires an end-point assessment to ensure that the learner is fully competent by the end of their Programme.

Please visit the [Institute for Apprenticeships](https://www.institute-for-apprenticeships.org.uk/) website to view a list of current apprenticeship standards.

Q What kinds of levels are there?

A The different levels of apprenticeships are outlined below:

Intermediate: entry-level with no experience

- Level 2, 12-18 months
- Equivalent to 5 GCSE A*-C or 9 - 4

Advanced: for those with some experience, looking to specialise

- Level 3, 18-48 months
- Equivalent to 2 A-Levels

Higher (and degree):

- Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, 24 months+
- Equivalent to Foundation degree and above

An apprenticeship can take between one to four years to complete. The duration will depend on factors such as the level of the programme and type of standard, as well as the apprentice's ability and previous experience.

Q When do apprenticeships start?

A Some programmes - especially those who run in the traditional 'one day a week at college' format - start at set times of the year, typically in September. Some popular programmes will have a fresh cohort starting in January. Many learners, however, prefer to study more flexibly and many training providers offer this route. In those circumstances, it is likely that the learner can start at any time.

Q How long does an apprenticeship last?

A This is usually determined by the length of the apprenticeship standard (programme) but will be a minimum of 12 months.

Q What is a Degree Apprenticeship?

A Degree apprenticeships are a new type of programme, usually offered by universities. Learners achieve a full Bachelors or Masters degree as part of their programme.

Q Who delivers apprenticeship training?

A The training of your apprentices is carried out by a recognised training provider, experienced in delivering certain apprenticeship standards. The training provider should manage all aspects of the training, including preparing, planning and booking the End-point Assessment at the end of the apprenticeship.

As an employer, you're responsible for supporting the apprentice through their learning, making sure a line manager or mentor is present for their reviews and giving them time during their working hours for their off-the-job training.

Recruitment, selection, onboarding and contracts

Q How do I build a case for employing an apprentice?

A There are many benefits that apprentices can bring to your department/faculty/area.

Apprenticeships are real vacancies and should be included in your workforce planning. They allow us to grow our own talent. Department Managers should take an apprenticeship first approach with any vacancies and consider where roles could be offered as an apprenticeship at any levels.

Q Do apprentices need a lot of support?

A Some apprentices are often new to the world of work with little or no prior work experience. While additional support may be needed initially, it is likely to decrease as their skills, competence and confidence grow.

The line-manager has a crucial role in helping to shape and support their career pathway and future. An existing member of staff wishing to gain experience as part of their development, could offer to provide informal buddying or mentoring support, where appropriate.

The whole team has a role to play in supporting the apprentice and engaging in the apprenticeship journey.

Q What are the main steps to taking on an apprentice?

A Here is an outline of the main steps:

Planning:

1. Enquire.
2. Get Approval.
3. Choose an apprenticeship standard and training provider.
4. Confirm apprentice pay.

Recruitment:

5. Your apprenticeship is advertised on the University of York job pages, along with all other vacancies, and on the National Apprenticeship Service.
6. Select your apprentice - the Staff Apprenticeships Team will then sign an apprenticeship agreement and training plan with them.

Please refer to the [Apprenticeships at York: Managers' Handbook](#), for further information.

Q What type of employment contract do apprentices need?

A All apprentices must have a contract of employment that is long enough for them to complete their apprenticeship programme (including their End Point Assessment period). This will be a minimum of 12 months, plus 3 months for EPA. Importantly, they must also be in a role that provides them with the opportunity to gain the skills, knowledge, and behaviours needed to complete their apprenticeship.

Essentially:

- Employment is offered on a fixed term basis.
- Spends 20% off-the-job training.
- They are entitled to the same holiday/annual leave as per university policy and any other benefits such as childcare or paid sick leave.
- They are not entitled to redundancy.

Q How do I flag a vacancy as an apprenticeship in the VRF on e:recruiter?

A You would select an apprentice grade from the options in the 'Grade and salary' section.

You would add details about the fixed-term contract in the relevant fields of 'About the job' section.

You would also reference the apprenticeship in job title, advert and job description, as well as the fixed-term contract in the advert and job description.

Q What if a staff member leaves during the apprenticeship?

A If a staff member terminates before the successful completion of their apprenticeship, then the [Staff Apprenticeships Team](#) must be notified as soon as possible. This is to ensure that the levy payments to the training provider are stopped, and no overpayments are made.

Q What happens if a fixed-term contract learner goes on long-term sickness?

A In exceptional circumstances - such as long-term sickness - it might be possible to negotiate an extension to the contract and their apprenticeship programme, although the latter must be agreed with the training provider. These two parts (the contract of employment and the apprenticeship programme) must both be in place: you cannot have one without the other.

Q Can job candidates who are already enrolled on an apprenticeship programme with their current employer, transfer to York?

A For cases like this, it is possible to transfer the apprenticeship from one employer to another, however a department cannot simply guarantee this. Nor can you draw from the university's levy without consulting and getting approval.

Please alert the [Staff Apprenticeships Team](#) about the situation as soon as possible, so we can explore options with colleagues in HR to try to reach the best possible outcome for all parties.

Q How does an apprenticeship opportunity at York get promoted?

A They are advertised on the University of York job pages, along with all other vacancies. They will also be advertised via the National Apprenticeship Service.

Q What should I do to prepare for my apprentice's start date?

A Expectations of the host department, work plans and details of the scheduled training must be clearly set out as part of the induction and must also be documented as part of the Apprenticeship Agreement and Training Plan.

Please refer to the [Apprenticeships at York: Managers' Handbook](#), for further information.

Q Can I employ someone under the age of 18?

A The university does not discriminate against any staff based on age and does therefore employ staff under the age of 18. However, as the manager, you will need to be aware of the Safeguarding policy and carry out due diligence checks to ensure that you have considered the additional risk that a lack of experience could bring.

Q What happens if my apprentice finishes their qualification early?

A They should be kept on until the original end date of their contract because their apprenticeship encompasses both job and qualification.

Please notify the [Staff Apprenticeships Team](#) as soon as your apprentice has finished their qualification and send us a copy of their certificate when received.

Q My apprentice requires an extension, how do I go about arranging this? How does this impact their contract?

A You should instigate a contract variation with HR Services and inform the [Staff Apprenticeships Team](#) as soon as possible.

Q My apprentice is coming to the end of their fixed term contract and qualification but there is still work to be done in the team, which they would be qualified for. Can I keep them on?

A Some departments may be keen to retain the skills and experience the learner has acquired throughout their apprenticeship and may be able - subject to post funding and approval - to offer further employment or even a successive

apprenticeship programme. If this is the case, you can speak to your HR contact in the first instance.

Q Do I have to employ them at the end of the apprenticeship?

A The hiring of apprentices should form part of your workforce planning and retention strategies.

We hire apprentices on a fixed-term basis and whilst we acknowledge that managers may wish to retain staff, they have taken care and time to develop, there should be no expectation of a job after they complete their apprenticeship.

Although there is no requirement to consult on the FTC ending due to it being a training contract, we would expect the apprentice's line manager to be meeting periodically with their apprentice and discussing work opportunities for the future, either within or external to the university.

If the manager has a vacancy, they should follow the usual recruitment process and advertise the position so that the apprentice can apply and be assessed alongside any other candidates.

Finances

Q How is an apprenticeship funded?

A The University of York pays 0.5% of our pay bill to an apprenticeship levy account. You can draw on these funds to provide training and assessment of the apprenticeship.

It cannot be spent on:

- Salary Costs
- Managerial (or other staffing) costs
- Travel expenses and subsidiary costs.
- Work placement programmes.
- The cost of setting up an apprenticeship programme

The department pays new apprentice staff an [apprentice's salary](#) and other associated costs so you must have the approval, including financial, to recruit.

This Apprenticeship Levy is managed by the Staff Apprenticeships Team in POD.

Q What is their salary?

A New apprentice staff are recruited on unique [Apprentices Pay Scales](#).

Increments happen automatically once they reach their year anniversary, 2-year anniversary etc. This is an automatic rule due to the number of Standards with different targets.

Q What are the eligibility criteria for apprenticeship levy funding?

A In addition to any requirements outlined in their job description, or person specification for the apprenticeship role, individuals must also satisfy the following criteria:

- Employment at York for a minimum of 30 hours per week.
- Over 16 years old.
- Have a contract of employment for a minimum of 12 months.
- Are not in full-time education.
- Have been a UK or EEA resident for three years before the start of their Apprenticeship.
- The apprenticeship can be higher or lower to a qualification an individual (apprentice) already holds, permitting it allows them to gain substantive new skills.

For further details, see the full [apprenticeship funding rules](#) at GOV.UK

Q Is there any financial help for apprentices needing additional support?

A Additional payments may be available to support younger 'early career' apprentices. For example, young care leavers and young adults up to 25 who have an education, health, and care plan (EHC). Additional funding is also available to enable apprentices to gain Functional Skills in English and Maths (Level 2 or an agreed level) and individuals who have a disability or long-term health condition.

The Apprenticeship Programme

Q How will it be delivered?

A As part of the programme, the apprentice must undertake a minimum of 20% 'off-the-job' training.

The delivery of a programme will vary according to the apprenticeship standard and training provider. This will be agreed at the procurement phase and can be adapted to ensure that it is fit for your department's needs. Typically delivered through tutors and skills coaches, and a blend of face-to-face and online support besides practical assessments and theoretical learning. Apprentices will have designated days or blocked time away from the office, for example. Line managers will also play a pivotal part in supporting them to complete challenging work-related projects and tasks, as well as to take time out to learn and study.

Q What is off-the-job training and what does it look like?

A Essentially, these are activities within the apprentices' role, away from their day-to-day job and the apprentice gets to learn and practice their skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to complete the programme.

Training is delivered flexibly to suit the needs of the department, the apprentice and training provider.

The time spent on off-the-job training should be at least 20% (approximately 6 hours a week) and is part of the working hours.

Examples include:

- Training Provider: Virtual tutorials, practical (college-based) workshops.
- Delivered at the place of work: mentoring, work shadowing or practical training in different departments, attending courses, lectures, or workshops off-site as long as the training is directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard.

Activities which are part of the apprentice's day-to-day job do not count towards off-the-job training such as assessment time, or 121 meetings between you and the apprentice.

See the [definition of off-the-job training](#) and some [myth-busting facts](#) provided by GOV.UK

Q What is the End Point Assessment?

A An End-point assessment takes place at the end of an apprenticeship, to ensure the learner has reached the necessary levels of knowledge, skills and behaviours and is ready to undertake their qualification.

Q What is a Training Plan?

A Training Plans replaced Commitment Statements. They are produced by the training provider and signed by the learner, employer, and training provider. This three-party statement sets out how the learner will be supported to achieve their qualification.

The Staff Apprenticeships Team signs on behalf of the university.

Q What is an Apprenticeship Agreement?

A An Apprenticeship Agreement exists between the employer (the university) and the learner. It is a formal document that sets out the Apprenticeship Standard and the duration of the programme. It is co-signed by the learner and the Staff Apprenticeships Team.

The Staff Apprenticeships Team signs on behalf of the university.

Q Aside from their apprenticeship training, is there any other training that my new apprentice should do?

A If your learner is an externally recruited learner and new to the workplace, they may need some additional development, particularly around the softer skills.

Please contact the Staff Apprenticeships Team for guidance.

Q Who monitors the learner's training progress?

A The training provider is key: they should hold regular reviews with the learner and include you in some of those discussions. As with all employees, you should be holding regular one to one meetings, where you can discuss their progress and any concerns.

Q Who liaises with the training provider?

A The training provider will liaise with you in relation to the progress of your learner. The Staff Apprenticeships Team in POD liaises with the training provider on all central activity, such as initial enquiries, setting up the payments and signing contracts. POD can also step in if a problem with the training provider is not resolved.