

What does an Apprentice really mean for my business?

Apprentices have historically been known as the young entrant into the workplace, whilst this can still be true, an apprenticeship is now about new skills, as well as new people. An apprentice can help a business to grow. Businesses that employ apprentices are able to train and develop them into the kind of employees they need. Often employing an entry level apprentice can invigorate the workforce and encourage the development of new thinking and new uses for technology. Giving opportunities for career development to existing employees enables businesses to retain talent who possess valuable skills and knowledge about an organisation. By using the apprenticeship route, not only are you taking advantage of government funded training, you will be supported by an industry expert training provider who will work with you to tailor an appropriate package for your business based upon an Apprenticeship Standard which has been designed by employers in your sector.

What is involved in an Apprenticeship?

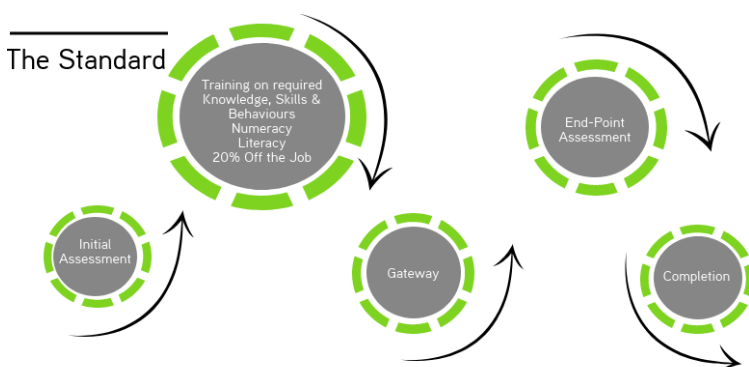
Initial Assessment – The apprentice will undertake an initial assessment of skills prior to formally starting their apprenticeship. This will be a series of tests on the current level of knowledge they possess on the apprenticeship they intend to take as well as English, Maths and Communication skills.

On-Programme – The apprentice will undertake a minimum development phase which will be over- seen by a training provider. During this phase the apprentice must spend 20% of their working hours on development activities to enhance their knowledge, skills and behaviours. These hours must be documented as they will be checked. If the apprentice is required to improve on their numeracy or literacy skills they will also need to do this during the on-programme phase.

Gateway – Once the apprentice has completed the minimum amount of time on-programme their employer and training provider must decide with the apprentice if they are ready to undertake the end-point assessment. Once everyone is confident the apprentice is ready they will be progressed through the gateway.

End-Point Assessment – Apprentices will need to take a minimum of two assessments which will be determined by the assessment plan. They will be designed to test across all elements of the apprenticeship standard. These assessments will be carried out by a third party organisation that has been approved by the Education and Skills Funding Agency as specialists within the relevant sector to determine occupational competence against the standard. The types of assessments could include observations, multiple choice tests or professional discussions.

Completion – Once the apprentice has successfully passed all elements of the end-point assessment they will be awarded an overall grade and an Apprenticeship certificate.



What is hiring an Apprentice going to cost?

Since May 2017 apprenticeships are funded in a different way. Prior to the introduction of the levy there was a tiered system that favoured younger people. It was recognised that this did not provide equal opportunities to those wishing to pursue alternative careers or those seeking career progression. The levy operates a system which sees a particular apprenticeship being given a maximum funding band regardless of the age of the person undertaking it. Whilst there are still additional incentives for employers of £1000 available for employing an apprentice under the age of 19, the main funding streams are now linked to the apprenticeship itself.

Employers with an annual wage bill of over £3 million will pay 0.5% of their total bill into the Levy; it is collected by HMRC alongside income tax and National Insurance. Each employer will receive an allowance of £15,000 per year to offset against the levy. Employers who do not pay the levy can still access funded apprenticeships through a centralised pot, however, most will now need to pay for 10% of the apprenticeship themselves. Fully funded apprenticeships are available for businesses with less than 50 employees or for apprentices in the 16-18 age category. Funding in the levy digital account is valid for 24 months before it expires and is put back into centralised government funds.

As the employer you are in control of the Apprenticeship, the reform has put employers back in the driving seat of how their apprentices are trained.

What do I have to pay an Apprentice?

An entry level apprentice can be employed on an [apprenticeship wage](#), although many employers seek to pay nearer the [national minimum wage](#) or living wage. For those above the age of 19, the apprenticeship wage can be paid for the first year, after then the applicable national minimum wage must be paid. There is no recommended legal wage for those employees who are already employed but are seeking career advancement through their apprenticeship.

Who trains the Apprentice?

The Trailblazer Apprenticeship Standards were developed by sector specific employer groups to put employers back in the driving seat of apprenticeships and the training given. What this means in real terms is that an employer will contract a training provider to support them and their apprentice through their apprenticeship. The training provider should work with the employer to provide a comprehensive development package that meets the requirements of the apprenticeship standard.

What is my responsibility as the employer?

As an employer of an apprentice you need to be committed to the development journey your employee will need to undertake to achieve their apprenticeship. You will be expected to sign a contract with the training provider agreeing your role in the process. In addition to this you will need to:

- Release your employee for development activities during which total 20% of their contracted hours and this must be paid
- Engage actively with the training provider
- Provide a mentor to your employee
- Provide opportunities for your employee to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours

There isn't a Trailblazer Standard available yet

If the Apprenticeship you are interested in for your business isn't available yet as a Trailblazer Standard then you can still use funds to undertake a Framework Apprenticeship. It will be funded in the same way as a Standard and will

have been given an equivalent funding band but will follow the pathway of a Framework not a Standard. A Framework will become obsolete once an equivalent Standard is approved, or when the Frameworks approval date expires. If you have an Apprentice registered on the Framework when a replacement standard is approved, don't worry it won't affect your business or Apprentice. Any new registrants would need to register on the Standard.

How do I get started?

If you are new to Apprenticeships you can find full details on [how to employ an Apprentice](#) on the .Gov website. You can also find approved apprenticeship training providers through the [Register of Approved Training Providers \(RoATP\)](#) who will be able to offer support and guidance on the process. You can find approved end-point assessment organisations via the [Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations \(RAAO\)](#)