

Apprenticeship Guide for Employers



skillsbase 
training for everyday brilliance

in association with Leek College

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Introduction

At Skillsbase, we are committed to supporting and guiding employers throughout the Apprenticeship programme. This guide highlights the basics that employers need to know. One of our experts will then explain in more detail about our Apprenticeship programmes, which are run in association with Leek College.

Our Apprenticeship training programmes are designed to meet the needs of employers, are available for all ages, and are open to both new and existing employees. By accessing government funding we will match an employer's commitment to hiring Apprentices by covering the training costs in full for 16-18 year olds and in part for over 19 year olds.

What's more, we will advertise any Apprenticeship vacancies free of charge on the approved national website, as well as on www.skillsbaseapprentice.co.uk.



“ We were impressed with the investment Skillsbase make in the search and selection process and Apprenticeship programme as a whole. More importantly to us as a commercial enterprise, we felt that their candidates had real world skills with relevance to our business. ”

Andy Rafferty, Managing Director, ARC IT Solutions

Skillsbase Apprentice Charter

The training and development of an Apprentice is a three-way partnership between the employer, the Apprentice and Skillsbase.

The Employer will:

- Support and develop the Apprentice.
- Provide on-the-job learning opportunities.
- Allow the Apprentice time for training and day release with Skillsbase at Leek College.
- Carry out an induction to the workplace so that the Apprentice understands employment rights and conditions; their own role (and the roles of colleagues); health and safety responsibilities; and equality, diversity and grievance procedures.
- Consider how to support the Apprentice, through supervision and mentoring in the workplace. A mentor needs to give the Apprentice help, advice, a listening ear and reassurance when needed.
- Support the Apprentice in the workplace by coaching them, conducting regular reviews and monitoring progress.
- Ensure that the Apprentice's job role develops in a way that covers all the different aspects of the chosen Apprenticeship programme.
- Pay a weekly wage of around £95.

The Skillsbase Apprentice will:

- Take responsibility for their learning, adopting a positive attitude.
- Participate in developing their Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- Maintain a record of training and assessment (like the National Vocational Qualification [NVQ] Portfolio).
- Share details of prior skills and qualifications.
- Attend training sessions or supervised workplace activities and take advantage of learning opportunities.
- Understand and commit to work responsibilities such as attending and performing work in a professional manner in accordance with the employer's requirements.
- Exercise a duty of care and value workplace property and resources.
- Respect colleagues' rights and wellbeing.
- Participate in regular reviews with Skillsbase to gauge progress and undertake training and development identified by the employer.
- Attend Leek College when required.
- Make all reasonable efforts to achieve the competencies specified in the ILP and undertake any training and assessment required.
- Attend work punctually and consistently.

Skillsbase will:

- Screen all Apprenticeship candidates so that only the most suitable are interviewed.
- Arrange the interview process if necessary.
- Explain the ILP and training requirements to the Apprentice.
- Assign a dedicated Training Co-ordinator / Assessor to the Apprentice.
- Arrange a trial period of one to four weeks. This gives the Apprentice time to settle in and experience real work activities, and the employer a chance to make sure the candidate is suitable.
- Manage the training and evaluation process, ensuring that national quality standards are met.
- Deliver the training required and review progress regularly (at least every 12 weeks) depending on the Apprentice's needs.
- Support the Apprentice throughout their training programme (Apprentices can lose their programme place if attendance is poor).
- Help existing staff at the company that may also benefit from training.
- Advise on progression opportunities.



“ It was much easier – and less costly – to recruit young people as Apprentices: recruitment costs were lower, retention rates were higher, and Apprentices were instilled with company values. ”

Research conducted by The Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick for the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

Health and Safety

One of the most important things we do is to run a Health and Safety check and risk assessment of an employer's premises to make sure that the environment is safe for Apprentices. We also check appropriate insurance cover like employer liability and public liability.

All employers with five or more staff (including Apprentices) should have a written Health and Safety policy. This should be explained thoroughly to the Apprentice during the first six weeks of the programme. Standard procedures for fire precaution, use of machinery, use of protective clothing and equipment, first aid and accident reporting should always be followed.

For learners working with children or vulnerable adults (on Health & Social Care and Children's Care, Learning & Development Apprenticeship programmes), it's the employer's responsibility to carry out mandatory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

Apprentices have the same rights as employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 so employers need to be fully aware of this law, and make Apprentices aware of their responsibilities. We'll need to monitor Health and Safety to ensure standards are maintained for the whole Apprenticeship programme.

You can get full Health and Safety advice over the phone, in person or at www.skillsbase.co.uk.



Training Costs, Hours of Work, Holidays and Pay

By accessing government funding, Skillsbase pays Apprenticeship training costs in full for 16-18 year olds, and in part for all other learners. These costs include the course, registration, examination fees, assessment, validation and certification fees. Here is what the employer needs to offer:

PAYMENT OF WAGES/SALARY

Payment of the agreed wage should be made to the Apprentice either weekly or monthly. The Apprentice should be informed of payment arrangements. The employer can decide what wage they want to offer, although from 1st October the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has set a minimum of £2.50 per hour. This includes time spent working, time spent training (both on and off-the-job) and any time at college.

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

Apprentices aged 19 or over who have already spent a year on their Apprenticeship must be paid at least the full National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate appropriate to their age.

You can find more information about NMW on the HM Revenue and Customs website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/pay/payroll/day-to-day/nmw.htm.

PAYE AND NATIONAL INSURANCE

Tax and National Insurance contributions should be deducted as normal, where applicable.

PENSION FUND

Pension fund contributions should be deducted as normal, if applicable.

WORKING HOURS

All Apprentices must work for 16 to 40 hours per week. The NAS expects Apprentices that may start on 16 hours to progress to a full time position of 30 hours plus.

HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT

Apprentices qualify for holiday pay and paid maternity leave.

The Apprentice's holiday entitlement is in accordance with the terms and conditions of the company. Skillsbase only needs advance warning of holidays which lead to absence from college (holidays during college term-time should be avoided wherever possible).

General Information

SICKNESS ABSENCE

The company's usual Self-Certification and Statutory Sick Pay procedures apply to Apprentices. All absences should be reported to Skillsbase; details of this, together with college absences, will be detailed on Progress Reviews. A Doctor's Certificate will be required for absences of 8 days or more.

OTHER ABSENCE

Other absences should be in accordance with the employer's terms and conditions outlined in the contract of employment.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Apprentices remain the responsibility of the employer in matters relating to the workplace, but in matters relating to their attendance and conduct at college, procedures can be obtained by phone or directly from www.skillsbase.co.uk.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

Skillsbase is here to make sure that Apprentices acquire occupational skills and vocational qualifications in line with their ILP.

Training sessions and workplace assessments are planned on the ILP. This is written at the start of the programme, is regularly updated and the Apprentice and employer will both get a copy. The employer needs to make sure that the Apprentice's role meets the relevant NVQ standards. The employer should also make time for Progress Reviews. These are carried out between the Skillsbase Assessor, the employer and the Apprentice every 8 weeks, at a time to suit the employer.

“One in five employers is hiring more Apprentices to help them through the tough economic climate.”

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)



Equal Opportunities

Skillsbase is an Equal Opportunities organisation and adheres to Leek College's Single Equality Scheme. This explains how the College promotes equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, disability, age, faith or sexual orientation, in both the delivery of its service and the employment of its staff.

For details of the Single Equality Scheme, visit www.leek.ac.uk/about/equalOpps.

“As the Apprentice achieves, and their skills develop, many employers decide to increase their wages – in fact, research has found that Apprentices earn an average of £170 net pay per week.”

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)



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