



# Employer Handbook

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

# Welcome to University of Leeds Apprenticeships

## Purpose of handbook

This handbook provides an overview of the University of Leeds apprenticeship programmes for employers and the commitment required by all parties to ensure a successful implementation of the apprenticeship in the workplace. It also contains useful links for all employers who are planning to take on an apprentice or who already have one within their organisation.

## University background on apprenticeships

The University of Leeds was founded in 1904 and has delivered a wide range of Higher Education programmes over the years. Now, with the creation of Higher and Degree Level apprenticeships in the UK, the University has begun to offer work-based programmes tailored to meet the needs of local and national employers. These apprenticeships have been developed to provide students with the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to be successful within their chosen career and are offered in a wide range of professions, from leadership to healthcare.



## University Values

The University holds its ethos of professionalism, inclusiveness, integrity, community and academic excellence at the heart of everything we do. With these in mind we have developed a wide range of values that encompasses the institution's principles, these are:

- Making a Difference to Society
- Building Relationships
- Equality and Inclusion
- Engaging with the Community
- Sustainability
- Climate Action
- Research Integrity
- Commitment to Fairtrade

To find out more about these underpinning foundations please see [University values and responsibility](#).

## University Strategic Aims for Apprenticeships

The University's strategy for apprenticeships is to develop its higher and degree level apprenticeships to the same level of excellence as its traditional programmes. The five aims that drive the strategy are:

- The development and strengthening of new and existing employer partnerships
- Conversion of traditional University programmes into apprenticeships to meet the needs of employers and students
- Addressing the changing nature of funding streams within HE and specific employment sectors
- Utilisation of digital technologies to meet the needs of on campus and geographically dispersed apprentices
- The implementation of an apprenticeship focussed infrastructure that maintains the high standards of delivery at the University

## Quality Assurance

Quality assurance underpins the University's excellence in student education. A number of review activities will be conducted throughout the programme to ensure the outstanding quality of our apprenticeship provision. Some of these will require [input from the employers we work with](#) and as such you may be contacted by external bodies, such as Ofsted or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), to provide feedback on the full service offered to you by the University.

In addition to the above, the Learning Enhancement team are also happy to receive feedback from our employers via email at any time: [apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk)

## Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Amongst their remits, they conduct formal inspections of organisations that provide government funded education including schools, FE providers and more recently, apprenticeships in Higher Education. Apprenticeships are government funded programmes which puts the University in scope of a formal inspection. These are important for the government and the University as they enable us to measure our standards of delivery and ensure that we are putting systems in place to maintain and improve our training for employers and apprentices.

Part of this inspection will be the gathering of evidence by Ofsted inspectors through talking to our employers and apprentices about their own individual experiences, in order to understand how our programmes operate.

# Introduction to Apprenticeships

## What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are employment based training programmes designed to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours for someone to succeed within their chosen career and to fill skill gaps for their employer. The apprentice will be contracted to a minimum of 30 hours per week which will be split between training at the University and working at the employer's premises. At least 20% of these contracted hours must be spent on Off the Job training (further details on this can be found on page 5). Whilst studying on an apprenticeship, the apprentice will be granted the same benefits as anybody else employed by the organisation such as annual leave entitlement or statutory sick pay.

## Levels of Apprenticeships

The University of Leeds offers higher and degree apprenticeships across a variety of sectors. These are:

**Level 5** – programmes that equate to (and may contain) a foundation degree, higher national diploma or industry specific qualification.

**Level 6** – this level of apprenticeship is equivalent to a full bachelor's degree. On some apprenticeships you will be required to complete a University degree before being able to achieve your apprenticeship.

**Level 7** – the highest apprenticeship level the University offers and is the equivalent of postgraduate study.

To find out more about the apprenticeship programmes we offer please visit the [University of Leeds Apprenticeships](http://University of Leeds Apprenticeships site) site.



## Funding – Levy & Co-Investment

The [Apprenticeship Levy](#) is a mandatory government tax for all employers who exceed an annual pay bill of £3 million. This will be calculated at a rate of 0.5% of anything that goes over the above threshold plus a 10% top up from the government.

Below is an example for an organisation with a £7 million annual pay bill:  
 Pay bill: £7,000 000  
 Minus £3 million threshold:  
 $£7,000\ 000 - £3,000\ 000 = £4,000\ 000$   
 Annual Levy Tax Bill: 0.5% of £4,000 000 = £20,000  
 Government 10% Top Up = £20,000  
 + £2,000 = £22,000

Total Available Amount to Spend on Apprenticeship Training: £22,000

Any payments from your apprenticeship service account use the oldest levy funds first. If you do not use your funds within 24 months of them entering your levy account, they will expire.

[Co-Investment funding](#) is for those employers who do not pay into the Apprenticeship Levy (wage bill of <£3 million). This will require the employer to fund 5% of the total apprenticeship cost with the other 95% covered by the government. You could also be eligible for additional funding and support depending on your apprentice's circumstances or if you are a small employer employing fewer than 50 employees.

Non Levy paying organisations can also benefit from a [Levy transfer](#) from larger organisations. Levy payers can transfer a proportion of their funds to cover the full cost of apprenticeship training for smaller organisations. If you would like to discuss potential partnerships for this in your local area, please contact us on [apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk)

## Digital Apprenticeship Service and Reservation of Funds

The [Apprenticeship Service](#) is the system that is used to arrange all apprenticeship training. You will be able to use this to get apprenticeship funding, manage your training providers and to recruit new apprentices. Prior to using the service, you will need to [setup an account](#).

If you are an employer who does not pay into the levy you will be required to [reserve apprenticeship funding](#). From April 2021 you will be allowed to reserve funding for a maximum of 10 apprentices up to 6 months in advance of their start date.

## Employer Incentives

There are a number of [additional payments](#) available for employers who are looking to employ their first apprentice(s). These can differ depending on the circumstances of your apprentice and the organisation itself. If you would like further information on funding and incentives, please contact us on [apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk).

## Initial Needs Assessment

Every apprenticeship is tailored around the individual undertaking the programme. At the University of Leeds our team will complete an initial needs assessment with every potential apprentice to understand what previous experience/ qualifications they already have to determine a suitable starting point for them. This means that each of your apprentices receives training that is useful to them throughout the apprenticeship and they are not just revisiting knowledge or skills that are already held.



## Apprenticeship Enrolment Paperwork

**Commitment Statement** – To enrol onto an apprenticeship all three parties (the employer, apprentice and training provider) must sign a document known as a commitment statement. This outlines the duration and content of the apprenticeship alongside the expectations and requirements of all parties to ensure the fulfilment of the programme. This needs to be completed before the start of the training programme.

**Apprenticeship Agreement** – this document will accompany the commitment statement and will detail the required Off the Job hours and duration of the apprenticeship. It is an agreement between the apprentice and employer. The government have [developed a template for employers to use](#).

**Apprenticeship Contract** – As the employer you will also need to sign an Apprenticeship Contract with the University. This is different to the apprentice's contract of employment and will detail the funding details for the apprenticeship and other key information.

## Delivery Model (day or block release)

All of the apprenticeship programmes at the University of Leeds involve scheduled teaching sessions with academic staff (both on site and remote). These may be for one day per week or delivered in a study block. Upon enrolment, a timetable will be issued with all planned teaching hours for your apprentice's first semester. Apprentices should be paid at their usual salary/ hourly rate when attending these sessions and should count towards their working hours for that week.

## Maths and English

If an apprentice cannot provide evidence of previous attainment in Maths and English at Level 2 (GCSE Grade C/4 or above) then they will be required to achieve Functional Skills during the apprenticeship. This will require the attendance of teaching sessions with one of the University's third-party subcontractors and the completion of invigilated exams. You will need to provide your apprentice time to attend these sessions during their regular working hours, in addition to the 20% Off the Job allocation.

## Off the Job (OTJ) Training

As discussed earlier in the handbook, at least 20% of an apprentice's total paid hours should be spent working towards their apprenticeship through "Off the Job" training. A majority of this will be covered during the teaching sessions with the University, but also complemented with a range of activities in the workplace. All OTJ hours must be logged in the apprentice's PebblePad portfolio using the Activity Log.

Some examples of Off the Job activities are:

- Mentoring sessions with a senior colleague
- Shadowing experienced staff in a similar role
- Completing project/ assignment work
- Attending industry specific workshops/ seminars
- Networking with other apprentices to share good practice
- Roleplay or simulation of workplace situations
- Writing a reflective account of a workplace experience
- Attending training sessions on key industry topics

## Role of a workplace mentor

Every apprentice must be allocated a workplace mentor throughout their programme. The title of these people may differ depending on their sector (e.g. practice assessor in healthcare), but their purpose should be relatively similar across all apprenticeships. Mentors are there to help apprentices contextualise and apply their University learning within their job roles and to support them with any additional guidance they may need.

## Tripartite reviews

Throughout the apprenticeship the University, employer and apprentice will meet to discuss the amount of progress made and discuss/ resolve any issues that have occurred up until that point. These tripartite review meetings will take place once a term and are a great opportunity for apprentices and employers to feedback their thoughts on the apprenticeship.

## Gateway & EPA

All apprenticeships involve an End Point Assessment (EPA) that measures the apprentice's capabilities across the skills, knowledge and behaviours of the standard. To be put forward to sit an EPA, the apprentice must have approval from their employer and training provider that they meet all gateway requirements set out in the assessment plan. These can vary across programmes, but usually involve the award of a HE level qualification and evidence of achievement for English and Maths at level 2.

A full breakdown of gateway requirements and EPA details for each apprenticeship can be found on the [Institute for Apprenticeships website](#).

# Apprentice's rights and responsibilities

## Workplace policies

An apprentice has the same rights and responsibilities as any other member of staff and should be treated as such. This means that you should follow your usual induction process for new staff to ensure their understanding of key workplace policies. If there is any mandatory training that is required and relevant to the apprentice's role this should also be kept up to date and logged in the same way as other staff members.

## Contract of Employment

All employees, including apprentices, should have a contract with their employer. These are different to the apprenticeship contract, that lay out the terms of the training programme, and instead set out an employee's rights, responsibilities, duties and employment conditions. These are usually issued prior to the start date of the role and require a dated signature from both the employer and the employee.

These documents may not include all terms of employment and will rely on certain legal requirements to be implied. For example, employees should not steal from their employers.

## Probationary Periods

A probationary period is a duration of time at the start of employment that a member of staff may be dismissed with little notice, if they are found to be unsuitable for the role. These typically last for around three months and are important for employers as they allow for swift action if somebody does not meet the requirements of the role. Full details of an apprentice's probationary period should be outlined within their contract of employment.

## Working Time Regulations

By law, an employee should not work more than 48 hours a week (on average) unless they meet one of the following [exceptions](#). On shifts lasting more than six hours, workers have the right to one uninterrupted break lasting twenty minutes and should be granted at least eleven hours rest between shifts (e.g. if they finish work at 9:00pm then their next shift should not begin until at least 8:00am).

## Annual Leave

Full time workers are legally entitled to 28 days paid holiday a year (calculated on a pro rata basis for part time staff). Some employers may offer more than the legal requirement and details of this should be written within the contract of employment. Holiday entitlement is still accrued when the employee is absent due to sickness and during maternity/ paternity/ adoption leave. Apprentices should not be asked to take annual leave for attendance of University or examinations related to their apprenticeship.

## Minimum Wage

Every worker within the UK is entitled to a minimum wage (See [National Minimum Wage Rates](#)) dependant on their age and whether or not they are an apprentice. It is your responsibility as an employer to ensure that your staff are paid the correct wage. If you are unsure about what this should amount to, you can seek guidance on this from ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service).

## Change of Circumstances

Some apprenticeships can span across multiple years so we understand that your organisation/ apprentice's situation may change during the programme. If something changes during the apprenticeship that may affect the quality of the apprentice's training e.g. reduction in working hours, please contact your University of Leeds representative to discuss an action plan.





# Apprentice safety and wellbeing

## Health and Safety

By law, employers must ensure the Health and Safety of all their employees as far as reasonably practicable. You must consider the job role of your apprentice(s) and assess the potential hazards and risks associated with the environment. A discussion will be had between the University and employers about health and safety prior to the start of any apprenticeship programme.

## Safeguarding

The University is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of children, young persons and adults in vulnerable circumstances who are on its property or who are engaged in University activities at any location. See further information on our [responsibilities and safeguarding policy](#).

## Prevent

The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of the UK's overall counter-terrorism strategy, [CONTEST](#). The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. In the Act, this is expressed as the need for education providers to "prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

## British Values

British Values are a government initiative to embed the cultural values of the country into the curriculum of education institutions. The four values outlined in the strategy are Mutual Respect and Tolerance, Democracy, The Rule of Law and Individual Liberty.

## Equality and Diversity

Every employer has a duty to create a work environment that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. Your policies should meet the requirements laid out in the Equality Act (2010) and your apprentices should be inducted on your expectations and rules on this subject. If you would like to find out more about the University of Leeds approach you can [view our full list of policies online](#).

# Support for Employers & Apprentices at the University of Leeds

## Teaching Staff

The academic staff at the University of Leeds are specialists within their respective fields and may have even written books and research articles that your apprentice will be using as part of the apprenticeship. Our teaching standards are internationally recognised and undergo thorough quality assurance processes to ensure that your apprentice gains knowledge and skills useful in their chosen career and to your business.

## Personal Tutor

Your apprentice's personal tutor is an important contact within the University and will organise meetings with them to discuss their academic progress. They will listen to any issues they may face and help signpost them to relevant services to support and resolve these as appropriate. In some cases, they may also complete the tripartite reviews with yourself and the apprentice.

## Workplace Mentor

Although the title of these may differ within employment sectors, the role of a workplace mentor is to support apprentices to embed the learning undertaken at the University within the workplace, by sharing their knowledge and expertise. The individual may be your apprentice's line manager or a designated colleague with relevant experience.

## University Account Manager

From the start of the setup of the apprenticeship programme you will have a named contact within the University who will guide you through the enrolment process. They will be on hand to answer any questions you may have, or deal with any concerns that arise (following our [complaints procedure](#)). This person will be available to you throughout your apprentice's programme to maintain service excellence and to meet the needs of our local and national partners.

## Careers Centre

If you would like to partner with us for more than just apprenticeships, the University of Leeds has a [Careers Centre](#) dedicated to developing partnerships with employers. They can help you to advertise any job vacancies to our students, organise for your organisation to attend our careers fairs or just book you onto a campus visit.

## Pastoral Support

The University has a network of [support and pastoral care](#) to help your apprentice make the most of their time with us and to assist with any difficulties they may have. Our services will work together to ensure any problems are dealt with as quickly as possible. No matter what the problem is, there's always someone who can help.



## Support for Disabled Students

If your apprentice has an impairment, health condition (including mental health conditions) or a specific learning difficulty, like dyslexia, it's important they contact our Disability Services as soon as possible. It's better if they contact us before they start their apprenticeship, so we can discuss their support needs and get everything in place. To access additional support, they will need to complete our [online sign-up form](#).

## Learning Enhancement Team

The Learning Enhancement team are in place to ensure that the quality of your apprenticeship programme is outstanding. They may contact you throughout your time at the University to ask for feedback on how you feel the apprenticeship is going and any changes you feel would be beneficial to our students and employers. This will help the University to continuously improve our apprenticeship provision.

# Employer FAQs

## Why should I take on an apprentice?

Apprenticeships can help businesses within all sectors access new talent with a significantly reduced recruitment cost. With the opportunity to work with training providers to mould the training around your business need, you can minimise skills shortages within your organisation and increase productivity. Studies have found that companies invested in apprenticeships have lower staff turnover and workplace incidents with an increase in desired outputs and staff satisfaction.

## Does the University pay the apprentice's wages?

No. An apprentice's salary is paid in the same way as all other employees within the organisation and will therefore come at a cost. The apprentice may be eligible to be paid at a slightly lower rate than National Minimum Wage, depending on their age and circumstances, but you should check this prior to taking on an apprentice, as the organisation will be liable for any underpayments.

## How much will the apprentice's training cost me?

You should refer to our full breakdown on funding within the handbook on Page 3 to understand the funding available to an organisation of your size. But in short, if you are a Non-Levy paying employer then the maximum you will contribute to the training cost is 5% of the maximum funding band. There are also a number of government funded grants available to offset this cost to employers.

## Are my current employees eligible to undertake an apprenticeship?

Yes. Apprenticeships are available to both new and existing staff. Before starting the programme the University will undertake an Initial Needs Analysis with every apprentice to make sure that the course is right for them and that they will not be covering skills and knowledge they already hold. Those with significant experience may be able to obtain Recognised Prior Learning, but an explanation of this will be given prior to enrolment.

## What is the maximum age you can be to be eligible for an apprenticeship?

There is no upper age limit. Apprenticeships are available to anyone who has finished compulsory education. Our students range from those who have just completed their Level 3 qualifications (e.g. A Levels/ BTECs) all the way up to sector professionals with 30+ years of experience.

## Is there a limit to the number of apprentices I can take on?

No, you can take on as many apprentices as are required within your organisation. However, if you are a Non-Levy paying employer you will need to reserve the required funds and gain approval through the apprenticeship service prior to starting an apprenticeship programme.



## Are apprentices exempt from paying tax and National Insurance?

No. As is the case for all employees over the age of 16, apprentices must pay National Insurance and tax based on their salary or income.

## Can I dismiss my apprentice?

Although we hope you will not need to think about this option for the duration of the apprenticeship programme, you are able to dismiss any apprentice. As they have the same rights as any other employee you should follow your organisation policies on disciplinary action/ dismissal before letting them go.

## Can I recruit apprentices from outside the UK?

Apprentices must meet the eligibility guidance laid out in the [Apprenticeship Funding Rules](#). You should become accustomed with the set written for employers prior to taking on any apprentice. If you are unsure if your staff member would be eligible after reading through the rules please contact the University, who will be happy to assist.



# Useful contacts/ links

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

<https://www.acas.org.uk/>

Apprenticeship Funding Rules

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>

Apprenticeship Service Help

<https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb>

Citizens Advice Bureau

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency>

HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs>

HSE (Health and Safety Executive)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/apprentices.htm>

Naric (National Academic Recognition Information Centre)

<https://www.ecctis.com/Agencies/Default.aspx>

Prevent

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

University of Leeds Learning Enhancement Team

[apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk)

## UoL Social Media

**Facebook** - [uolcurrentstudents](#)

**Twitter** - [@UoLStudents](#)

**Instagram** - [Universityofleeds](#)

**Youtube** - [Universityofleeds](#)



# Apprenticeship Glossary

**Activity Log** – where the apprentice logs a record of completed Off The Job learning hours in their ePortfolio (via PebblePad).

**Apprenticeship** – an apprenticeship is employment with training to industry standards in a recognised occupation. It will involve a substantial programme of on and off-the-job training.

**Break in Learning** – is a break in training, that lasts for more than four weeks, where an individual is not currently continuing with their apprenticeship, but has told the employer and training provider beforehand that they intend to resume their apprenticeship in the future.

**Commitment Statement** – summarises the obligations of the training provider, the employer and apprentice for the apprenticeship programme. It will be updated with relevant information throughout the apprenticeship. All parties will hold an accurate and up-to-date, signed copy.

**Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)** – agency accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults.

**End Point Assessment (EPA)** – rigorous, robust and independent assessment undertaken by an apprentice at the end of training to test that the apprentice can perform in the occupation they have been trained in and can demonstrate the duties, and knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) set out in the occupational standard.

**End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)** – an organisation approved to deliver end-point assessment for a particular apprenticeship standard. EPAOs must be on the register of end-point assessment organisations.

**Gateway** – takes place before the EPA can start. The employer and training provider review their apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours to see if they have met the minimum requirements of the apprenticeship standard, and are ready to take the assessment.

**Knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs)** – the set of criteria an apprentice will need to evidence their competency against to prove their readiness for EPA.

**Lectures** – A lecture is usually a talk or a presentation by a member of academic staff and is timetabled as a formal part of a module. Normally, it is not interactive (although some lecturers may invite questions).

**Minerva** – is the University's Portal and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Minerva provides quick access to the systems your apprentice will need and is also where your apprentice will find online materials for their modules.

**Ofsted** – Ofsted's role is to make sure that organisations providing education, training and care services in England do so to a high standard for children and students. They undertake physical inspections of education providers and talk with their students to ensure they meet this standard.

**PebblePad** – Is the University of Leeds e-portfolio tool. It helps students create and keep together records of learning, progression and achievement that is underpinned by personal, professional and academic development.

**Practical Period** – The period for which the employer and apprentice agree that the apprentice will work and receive training on their chosen programme. This does not include end-point assessment.

**Seminars** – A seminar is also timetabled as a formal part of a module you are enrolled on. It usually involves fewer apprentices than a lecture and is usually interactive, in that apprentices are expected to contribute, either by preparing an item to present to fellow peers or joining in with a question/answer session arising from a presentation.

**Training provider** – any organisation that delivers apprenticeship training. For example, a college, higher education institution, private training organisation. Training providers delivering training for apprenticeships must be on the register of apprenticeship training providers. The University of Leeds is your training provider.

**Tutorials** – Tutorials are interactive meetings between a lecturer and a small group or an individual. They are not timetabled as a formal part of a module but are arranged at intervals during a course; sometimes they will be part of a programme, sometimes part of a module.





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