

Office of Quality, Standards
and Partnerships



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

SECTION **02B**

Regulatory Responsibility for Apprenticeships

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) formally regulates and funds apprenticeships, and operates the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.

The Institute for Apprentices and Technical Education (IfA) oversees the apprenticeship system, approves new standards and makes recommendations to the government concerning funding bands.

The Office for Students (OfS) supports the development and delivery of degree apprenticeships, and assures their quality.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) assures the quality of apprenticeships at all levels (2-7).

HM Revenue and Customs collects the apprenticeship levy.

Introduction

The Department for Education Apprenticeship Accountability Statement makes clear the roles and responsibilities of key players within the approval, delivery and regulation of Higher Education (HE) Apprenticeships.

To deliver apprenticeships providers must:

- Be registered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the Register of Apprenticeship training Providers (RoATP)
- Where providing End Point Assessment (EPA) or delivering an integrated degree apprenticeship be registered on the Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO) for each standard
- Where delivering to non-levy paying employers, have secured funding from ESFA to do so or be subcontracted (ESFA rules apply) by a training provider who has secured ESFA funding to deliver to non-levy-paying employers
- Comply with the ESFA Funding Rules for training Providers, Apprenticeship Service requirements and guidance issued by the ESFA, and contracts between ESFA and the provider, and employer and provider, provider and EPA organisation (where appropriate).

The University is subject to the above conditions of registration, which also includes the expectations of the Quality Code. Office for Students (OfS) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) are responsible for ongoing assurance to the ESFA on the quality of provider's delivery of level 6+ apprenticeship training and for working with Ofsted to reach a judgement for providers of all levels of apprenticeship training containing a higher education qualification.

This document should be read in conjunction with the University's *Higher and Degree Apprenticeships Policy*, the University's *Higher and Degree Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment Policy* and the University's Quality Assurance Manual.

Definition and Characteristics

A Higher Education Apprenticeship is an employer-driven programme of learning which is linked to a specific occupational level and develops knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required for a specific job role. The Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education is supported by the Department of Education and works with employers to develop and publish approved Apprenticeship Standards and Assessment Plans ready for funding. Each Apprenticeship Standard is approved for a set period.

Link to the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education and apprenticeship standards and assessment plans -

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

Qualifications offered as part of a Higher Education Apprenticeship are pitched at the appropriate level for the award, and align to the QAA FHEQ qualification descriptors and relevant subject benchmarks. On and off the job training and learning is included within the apprenticeship and each individual Apprenticeship Standard specifies the KSBs required to demonstrate full competence in the relevant occupation.

There are two types of apprenticeships involving HE qualifications:

- Higher Apprenticeships - offered at levels 4 and 5. These will normally be at the level of Certificate of Higher Education or Diploma of Higher Education or Foundation Degree qualifications
- Degree Apprenticeships - offered at levels 6 and 7. These will normally be at the level of Bachelor's or Master's degree qualifications respectively

Higher Education Apprenticeships Standards require an independently assessed End-Point Assessment (EPA), the details of which are set out in the associated Assessment Plan. Successful completion of the EPA leads to the awarding of the apprenticeship.

The End-point Assessment (EPA) may be undertaken in two ways:

- Non-Integrated - Non-Integrated EPAs are separate independent assessments from the degree programme, that test the occupation's duties and KSBs. They are normally conducted by a separate independent End-Point Assessment Organisation, contracted by the University and selected by the employer. The End-Point Assessor cannot be the university awarding the HE qualification.
- Integrated - Integrated EPAs involve embedding part or all of the EPA requirements within a degree programme, as prescribed by each specific Apprenticeship Standard, that test the occupation's duties and KSBs. Apprentices will not be able to complete the degree programme successfully without passing the EPA. Responsibility for the delivery of impartial EPA lies with the university awarding the HE qualification.

Programme Development

Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes require alignment to the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and the associated Assessment Plan in order to allow apprentices to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours for the apprenticeship and to allow them to achieve both the HE qualification and the apprenticeship itself. This will involve mapping of a programme's outcomes to the KSBs specified in the Apprenticeship Standard, which may take place at programme and/or module level as appropriate.

For all Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, the alignment of the programme assessment strategy with the apprenticeship assessment plan is essential. The programme assessment strategy should include a range of both formative and summative assessments which support both achievement of the programme / module learning outcomes and prepare apprentices for EPA.

Part of each Assessment Plan outlines the requirements which must be achieved in order for an apprentice to progress to EPA. These are referred to as the apprenticeship's Gateway requirements. The employer and University need to 'sign-off' on the successful completion of the Gateway requirements. Apprenticeship standards require apprentices to demonstrate a specific level of achievement of English and Maths prior to progressing through the Gateway.

HE apprenticeships must include a minimum of 20% off-the-job learning, which may take the form of traditional face-to-face or online learning. The remaining learning is on-the-job and is undertaken in the workplace. It is essential that an apprentice's workplace provides an appropriate source of learning, and the University is responsible for ensuring that this is the case.

Validation

The process for validating a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship programme follows that outlined in QAM 2: *Programme Approval*. Below are some further requirements specific to approval of higher and degree apprenticeships:

Stage 2: Production of Programme Documentation:

The following additional documents are required for a (re)validation meeting to take place:

- Apprenticeship Validation Checklist
- Approved Apprenticeship Standards document and associated Assessment Plan
- A mapping of the programme(s) to the Higher/Degree Apprenticeship Standard
- Draft example Handbooks (student/apprentice, employer, and workplace mentors) where available. If not available, a timeline for their development must be produced

Stage 3: (Re)Validation Event:

To run the (re)validation event the following additional criteria is required:

- The Panel must include sufficient external and/or internal expertise in Higher/Degree Apprenticeships.

Validation of Non-Accredited Apprenticeships

The pre-requisite for a HE accredited programme of learning to underpin the apprenticeship standard is being removed for many occupations. The University has an increasing number of employers and learners seeking to undertake apprenticeships at Levels 4, 5 and 6 which are not underpinned by the University's accredited awards. They use end point assessment of other employer selected programmes of study as part of the assessment processes. These programmes of study are quality assured both internally and externally.

As outlined in QAM 2: *Programme Approval*, proposals must be submitted to College Leadership Teams in advance of submission to the Portfolio Oversight Group. Aligned to existing University validation processes for lower risk programmes, non-accredited apprenticeships will subsequently be submitted for approval at College Apprenticeship Quality Committees.

The following stage of approval is submission to the University's Apprenticeships Quality Management Oversight Group (AQMOG), and final approval will be noted at University AAC through presentation of the AQMOG minutes.

An outline structure of the programme will be created in APMS, in order to ensure the University portfolio is up to date.

Operational Requirements

Each employer will contract with the University to deliver the apprenticeship and the University will also enter into a contractual relationship with the apprentice as a student. The specific arrangement will be defined in the Written Agreement (contract) between the employer and the University, and in the three-way Commitment Statement between employer, provider and apprentice.

The Commitment Statement signed by providers, employers and apprentices sets out what is expected and offered by the employer, higher education providers (and any subcontractors) and the apprentice in achieving the apprenticeship and provides clarity on how the quality of the apprentice's experience can be assured, while employer needs are also met.

Monitoring and Review

The monitoring and review of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship provision will follow the University's quality assurance processes for:

- Annual Programme Monitoring
- Periodic Academic Review
- (Re)validation and Programme Modification

Where Apprenticeship Standards and their associated Assessment Plans are reviewed and revised by the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education, a re-mapping process will need to be undertaken to ensure the provision is still meeting the required KSBs and EPA requirements.