



UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICHESTER

CELEBRATING  
180 YEARS  
OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION

ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS SERVICE

2020-21

# Quality and Standards Handbook



Section F: Degree Apprenticeships

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## INTRODUCTION

This document is concerned with the processes in place for apprenticeship programmes. In relation to academic awards which form part of an Apprenticeship it should be read in conjunction with the University's Handbook for Quality and Standards and Academic Regulations.

Principles underpinning the University's management of Apprenticeships are based on relevant guidance from the regulatory bodies with responsibility for oversight of Apprenticeship provision and delivery. These include:

- **DfE:** accountable for the apprenticeship programme and apprenticeships policy
- **Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA):** operational management of the apprenticeship funding system. Delivers the contracting and auditing of training providers and the operation of the Registers of Apprenticeship Training Providers and Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations respectively
- **Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA):** accountable for designing and operating approvals and review processes for standards and assessment plans. Responsible for advising employers/trailblazers on the policy and process for developing standards and ensuring all end-point assessments (EPAs) are quality assured
- **OfS:** regulate the quality of Degree Apprenticeships at level 6 and 7
- **QAA:** works with OfS to quality assure degree apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7
- **Ofsted:** works with OfS to quality assure degree apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5

Apprenticeships are partnerships between industry and higher education institutions, designed to meet the needs of employers. Apprenticeships should be developed with employers and industry partners to meet local and national skills strategies and where relevant to contribute to the addressing of skills shortages. Apprenticeships are designed to a national standard for a job role and often come with professional qualifications and accreditation.

The development and delivery of apprenticeship provision needs therefore to be approached very differently to standard academic provision, and although a higher-level academic qualification is part of the Apprenticeship it is only one part of the overall requirements.

When designing, developing, approving and delivering apprenticeships, the University must ensure that the higher education provided meets the expectations set out by the Quality Code. The University must, for example, position each HE programme at the relevant level of the relevant qualifications framework, and ensure that learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in that framework, that it operates formal and effective processes for approval, and ensures that qualifications are only awarded where standards have been satisfied and the relevant learning outcomes achieved. Thus, in the context of apprenticeship programmes, the University, while having to be sufficiently flexible to ensure an appropriate response to diverse and emerging employer and economic sector priorities when designing and developing programmes, also needs to ensure that it is able to satisfy requirements for assuring academic standards.

## PROGRAMME CONCEPTION, DESIGN AND APPROVAL

The validation and re-approval of apprenticeship programmes should be undertaken in accordance with the University's standard procedures for approval and re-approval as set out by the Academic Board.

Apprenticeship programmes may either be (i) developed as a new programme or (ii) developed using an existing programme, adapted to meet the requirements of the relevant Apprenticeship Standard (usually in liaison with employers).

The approval and re-approval processes should include consideration of the full apprenticeship programme including preparation for, and arrangements for conduct of, End Point Assessment (EPA) regardless of whether this is integrated or sits outside the University's award.

The programme needs to both enable an apprentice to develop the attributes required for proficiency in a particular occupation as specified in the standard and assessment plan under the categories of knowledge, skills and behaviours, and also to meet the requirements for academic standards and quality set out in the QAA Quality Code for any academic award. The starting point must therefore be an approved Apprenticeship Standard and End Point Assessment Plan which the course team must use to map against the proposed academic award as part of the course approval process. The standard itself will determine whether the EPA is integrated (part of the achievement of the academic award) or non-integrated (academic award completed prior to EPA).

The University is responsible for all aspects of the apprenticeship and hence work-based learning expertise should inform the development and subsequent approval and review of these programmes. Clear processes for admissions and preparation/Gateway procedures for the EPA should be considered at an early stage in course development.

The minimum duration for apprenticeship training is 12 months. The Apprentice Standard indicates the suggested duration for a specific apprenticeship. Flexibility is required when planning the academic cycle of the course to meet the requirements of employers.

Modes of delivery for apprenticeship programmes will vary according to employer need, and may include day release, block release or a blended learning approach involving a combination of face-to-face and distance learning. But, in accordance with ESFA funding rules, off-the-job training cannot be delivered solely via distance learning.

Apprenticeships must include a minimum of 20% off-the-job learning, which may take form of traditional face-to-face or on-line 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. Off-the-job learning is undertaken outside the normal day-to-day working environment. This can include training that is delivered at the apprentice's normal place of work but must not be delivered as part of their normal working duties.

## **RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND ADMISSION OF STUDENTS**

The approach to recruitment and selection of apprentices is agreed at the beginning of the collaboration between the University and employer(s) and are designed to be fair and clear to all stakeholders. It is the joint responsibility of the University and employers to ensure these processes are implemented consistently and monitored routinely.

The processes for recruitment and entry for apprenticeships are different from standard student recruitment and admission. The University sets out the minimum entry criteria requirements for the apprenticeship taking account of those specified within the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.

Apprentices are employees, and therefore are recruited by the employer. They may be new employees, or existing employees where the potential for significant new learning from an apprenticeship can be demonstrated. When apprentices are new employees, the employer's recruitment and selection processes apply, which in some cases may involve the University taking part in these processes. Alternatively, dual admission processes may be undertaken separately but concurrently.

The specific arrangements for recruitment and selection for the apprenticeship should be set out in the course documentation; how this works in practice should be agreed with each employer in advance.

Employers advertise for their apprentices and applications are made to the employer (in the first instance). Appropriate information exchange needs to happen between employers and the University to enable timely and accurate decision-making to enable an offer to be made by the employer.

Academic decisions on applications should be made at department level but processed through central admissions. Entry criteria need to take into account expectations and baseline criteria in the relevant apprenticeship standard and should be set in conjunction with employers. The University, as the higher education provider, is accountable for accurately recording and assessing applicant academic qualifications and eligibility. University staff should work with employers through the recruitment and selection process, and at the end point of the admissions process the University must perform a detailed needs analysis of the apprentice in order to create an individual learner plan for them. This should include any additional skills support needed (including maths and English) or additional qualifications that they may need to meet the requirements of a particular standard. This should also include application of any relevant APEL, which should be agreed and documented at this stage as per standard University processes. The initial assessment outcomes should be recorded on the commitment statement along with any additional required support for English and maths.

## **APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT AND COMMITMENT STATEMENT**

An apprentice is undertaking a University academic award because they are employed as an apprentice and are undertaking a particular role. The relationship with potential employers is therefore very important and the discussions at an early stage needs to consider how the apprenticeship, which is mapped to the relevant standard, could map to the proposed occupation/roles which the employer requires.

The apprenticeship is a tripartite relationship which builds upon:

- Commitment from an employer, with the intention and capability of employing someone through to completion of their training and EPA
- Commitment from the learner as an apprentice, to be motivated to learn and work diligently to complete the apprenticeship

- High quality off-the-job training and support, advice and guidance for work-based learning delivered by the University
- An initial assessment of any recognised prior learning relevant to the job role, mapped against the standard
- the apprentice agreement and commitment statement, signed by the employer, the apprentice and the University, setting out the details of the training to be provided and each party's roles and responsibilities

Course teams should work with each employer contracted to the apprenticeship when developing the content of the programme to ensure that the academic and apprenticeship elements of the programme can meet the needs of the employer and the individual apprentice.

## **LEARNING, TEACHING AND APPRENTICE DEVELOPMENT**

The “on-programme” phase is the period from commencement on the relevant Apprenticeship up until the EPA Gateway is met. A minimum of 20% of the apprentice’s time is to be spent on “off the job” training. This can be a combination of off-the-job activities with the employer or the University and may be supported by online learning opportunities. Training should prepare apprentices for the EPA by developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours and should also include completion of any qualifications including any level 2 English and Maths prescribed by the standard.

Course teams are expected to demonstrate how apprentices make “sustained and substantial progress from their starting points” in all aspects of their apprenticeship enabling them to develop excellent skills, knowledge and behaviours to high industry standards. The ILP should be reviewed regularly and progress reviews should demonstrate and document that progress is monitored, learners are challenged (even where they are already high achievers) and where appropriate learners who fall behind are able to catch up and progress appropriately.

Development of reflective practice as a means of supporting the development professional competence is key to apprenticeships; this includes approaches such as learning logs and professional development portfolios for formative and/or summative assessment of learning. Apprentices need to develop the ability to identify learning opportunities within the context of their work in negotiation with employers and University tutors. Tutors should therefore, within all their teaching sessions, continually relate the academic aspects of the course to practice and to highlight and promote opportunities to relate to the development of skills relevant to their role and vocational area.

In addition to the standard requirement for each learner to have an allocated Academic Advisor, each apprentice should have a named work-based mentor in place and should also have in place arrangements to oversee these ongoing tripartite relationships with employers and monitoring of learners in the workplace.

The requirement for tripartite meetings between employer, University staff member and apprentice would be two per year (including at least one onsite). Additionally, a contract meeting once per year with each employer who has an Apprenticeship Agreement with the University should take place. The agreed arrangements for meetings should be recorded in the Commitment Statement.

### **THE TRI-PARTITE RELATIONSHIP**

The three-way relationship between the University, employer and the apprentice is an integral part component in the success of an apprenticeship. Regular, planned and ongoing dialogue between all parties will ensure that apprentices are making good progress and that the apprenticeship training is meeting the needs of employers.

## **Requirements**

- Each apprentice is allocated an academic mentor appointed by the University and a workplace mentor appointed by the employer. These mentors support the progress and achievement of the apprentice and support identification of appropriate workplace activity to facilitate work-integrated learning opportunities
- Apprentices should be visited by their academic mentor in the workplace in order to optimise their learning opportunities. The following minimum contact arrangements apply:
  - At least one contact is undertaken in each academic year
  - In most cases contacts should be conducted face-to-face at the apprentice's place of work
  - Contacts are carefully timed in order to support progression
  - Contacts include a meeting between academic tutors or members of the Apprenticeship Team and workplace mentors and the apprentice
  - Written notes are produced by the academic mentor following each contact
- A Commitment Statement is produced for every apprentice and is duly signed by the University nominee, apprentice and employer, setting out how they will support the successful achievement of the apprenticeship. The workplace visits should be used to ensure that the commitment statement continues to be up-to-date and accurate throughout the apprenticeship
- The Commitment Statement must set out the Apprenticeship Standard being followed, planned content, a schedule for learning/training and details of the EPA
- The Commitment Statement should include the following as a minimum:
  - Details of the apprenticeship, including start and end dates for learning, End-Point Assessment and key milestones for mandatory or other qualification achievements
  - A list of all organisations delivering the training
  - Roles and responsibilities for the University, employer and apprentice and arrangements for how the three parties will work together operationally
  - Attendance and study time requirements
  - Employer commitment for apprenticeship access to study in the working day
  - The process for resolving any queries or complaints regarding the apprenticeship
  - Data sharing requirements

Attendance monitoring and absence reporting should be undertaken in accordance with the University's attendance monitoring procedures. The apprentice's employer should be notified in the event of any concerns regarding attendance, and attendance issues should be considered as part of both informal and formal progress reviews. Any University concerns about the engagement of individual apprentices should be raised and discussed with the employer in similar ways.

## **Support for apprentices**

Departments are expected to put in place provision to fully support apprentice students and work with employers to ensure apprentices have all the necessary assistance for success in the work-based elements of their programme. In this regard, academic mentors should:

- Meet students during an induction/orientation event at the beginning of the programme

- Maintain regular contact with each apprentice
- Maintain regular contact with the employer to discuss issues across the cohort and, where necessary, individual students
- Maintain adequate records (all meetings with employers and apprentices must be documented)
- Ensure the apprentice's learning log is kept current and working with the apprentice to address any issues highlighted
- Prepare and agree progress reports as required
- Monitoring apprentice progress and identify at risk individuals
- Ensure accuracy of apprentice records
- Visit apprentices in their workplace
- Assist apprentices with their personal, professional and career development in the context of the apprenticeship by:
  1. Developing a learning plan
  2. Directing apprentices to appropriate study skills advice
  3. Encouraging and assisting with reflection on progress to date
  4. Encouraging apprentices to keep their learning plan up-to-date
  5. Review progress toward development of a portfolio (if needed for the EPA)

## ASSESSMENT

Standard regulations and processes apply in relation to all assessments as per the University's Academic Regulations.

The format, timing and volume of assessment across modules needs to be carefully considered in the context of the 20% off-the-job time available to apprentices. The nature and format of assessment will be heavily influenced by the Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan and may include gateway independent assessments.

Progress and assessment must be discussed at tripartite reviews with employers and apprentices. The University and the employer should work together to agree competence and preparedness for the end-point assessment.

### **GATEWAY REQUIREMENTS AND END POINT ASSESSMENT**

Assessment across the course focuses on the knowledge, skills and behaviours within the selected subject/pathway culminating in a comprehensive synoptic end-point assessment. Prior to undertaking the end point assessment, apprentices must meet the gateway requirements set out in the relevant apprenticeship standard.

Apprenticeship Standards require an independently assessed, synoptic end-point assessment, the details of which are set out in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard's Assessment Plan. Successful completion of the end-point assessment leads to the awarding of the apprenticeship.

The end-point assessment may be undertaken in two ways:

- a) Non-integrated – which are conducted by a separate, independent End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), contracted by the University, and selected by the employer. The end-point assessor cannot be the University.
- b) Integrated. The University conducts the end-point assessment as an integrated aspect of the degree. For this purpose, the University has to be listed on the Register of End Point Assessment Organisation.

The End-Point Assessment tests that apprentices can fully demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours specified in the Apprenticeship Standard. It must include at least two forms of assessment, which are specified in the Assessment Plan for the Apprenticeship Standard.

Before taking their EPA, all apprentices have to meet the Gateway requirements. These along with satisfactory evidence re requirements set out in the Assessment Plan that must be met by the apprentice prior to undertaking end-point assessment of the Apprenticeship Standard. They will include the completion of English and Maths qualifications (where applicable) and completion of any on-programme mandatory qualifications (where applicable) along with satisfactory evidence (as determined by the employer, in consultation with the University) that the apprentice has achieved the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard. The employer and University sign-off the successful completion of the Gateway requirements.

For non-integrated apprenticeships the following apply:

- a) An apprentice must have passed their degree in order to be forward for the end-point assessment. This is determined by the University.
- b) Successful completion of the degree does not constitute completion of the apprenticeship. The apprenticeship is not achieved until both the degree and end-point assessment have been achieved.

The University is responsible for providing continued support to the apprentice until the end-point assessment has been successfully completed.

For integrated apprenticeships, successful completion of the degree also constitutes successful completion of the apprenticeship. In such cases the final capstone module of the degree may constitute end-point assessment. Where this is the case, the assessment of the capstone module will need to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

For all apprenticeships, the alignment of the course assessment strategy with the apprenticeship Assessment Plan is essential. The course assessment strategy should include a range of both formative and summative assessments which support both achievement of the course/module learning outcomes and prepare apprentices for EPA.

## **QUALITY MONITORING, REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

Apprenticeships are included in the standard quality monitoring and review processes that apply to all other courses, and the same overarching principles of monitoring, review and reporting apply.

However, the quality monitoring, review and quality improvement planning for apprenticeship programmes take account of the nature, structure and milestones associated with degree apprenticeships and they also take account of the substantial contribution of employers to apprenticeships.

Ultimate responsibility for monitoring and review of programmes rests with the University but where, as in the case of apprenticeships, the learning and training environment is multi-location, with other organisations involved in the design, delivery and assessment of a programme, the University will need to ensure that the review and improvement processes allow for the input of all relevant parties. For this reason, as well as the review of apprenticeship programmes at the time of annual monitoring (November), an interim review needs to take place in June, at a time when the results of the ESFA Employer and ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey are available.

Reviews of apprenticeship programmes will be supported by analysis of learner, employer and staff views and perceptions, gathered via questionnaires, surveys and review meetings. Students should regularly complete course and module evaluations, bespoke to the degree apprenticeships. These should contribute to interim, annual and periodic course review.

All apprenticeship courses are included in the Department for Education National Achievement Rates Tables. These table detail the qualification achievement rates nationally. Course monitoring and review should take into account these measures for benchmarking purposes.

## **EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

The University's normal external examining arrangements apply for the degree aspects of apprenticeships. In the nomination of external examiners, course teams are required to consider both academic and practice-based experience. The expectation is that when appointing external examiners for apprenticeships, the University ensures that examiners are suitably qualified to undertake the role, which might mean, for example, having an appropriate level of practice-based experience. The required balance of subject and practice expertise might be achieved through the appointment of two external examiners, one a subject expert and the other with practice expertise.

For integrated apprenticeships, the external examiner will be involved in the oversight of the end-point assessment. In these cases, the specific requirements for external examining are set out in the apprenticeship assessment plan, and must be adhered to in the assessment process.

For non-integrated apprenticeships, the external examiner will not play a direct role in the end-point assessment process. They will, however, be involved in the awarding of the degree.

## **APPRENTICESHIP INTERIM REVIEW AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

As indicated above, apprenticeship programmes are included in the University's annual monitoring process in November, as for any other course, as set out in section C (Annual Monitoring) of the Quality and Standards Handbook.

However, in addition, apprenticeship programmes should be subject to an interim review in June, primarily focused on the outcomes of processes designed to elicit feedback from employers and students (primarily the ESFA Employer Survey, ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey, but also from any completed module reviews, employer and student complaints, and issues raised in individual student review meetings). This review process should provide an opportunity for a prompt and well considered review of issues in need of improvement, leading to a quality improvement plan designed to address those issues. It is intended that this process will support a systematic, rather than purely ad hoc / informal, approach to quality improvement, to provide a working document which is clear, unambiguous and comprehensive, and which directs action and facilitates monitoring of progress.

The results of this interim process will then feed into the annual monitoring process in November.

This monitoring form should be completed by the Programme Coordinator and submitted to the Head of Department for approval and sign-off.

This document is intended to be reflective as well as indicate future plans. Programme Coordinators should highlight examples of good practice which can be shared with other departments engaged in delivering Apprenticeship programmes, key issues that have arisen and actions taken in response to these issues.

Departments are asked to complete one form per programme.

The Apprentice Annual Monitoring and Quality Improvement Planning pro-forma can be found in Appendix 1.

## ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

The University provides clear policy and process for both employers and apprentices with regard to mitigating circumstances, breaks in learning, academic irregularities, appeals and complaints.

All mitigating circumstances claims, academic irregularities, complaints and appeals will follow standard University regulations.

In addition to the standard complaints procedure for apprentices, The University has clear procedure for managing employer complaints.

Subject to approval, an apprentice may vary their rate of study to suit their individual needs and circumstances. Acceptable circumstances for breaks in learning are categorised in the ESFA Apprenticeship Technical Funding Guide. A break in learning will alter the expected end date of the apprenticeship. Therefore, all breaks in learning have to be recorded within the ILR. Accurate and timely reporting of breaks in learning is a requirement of funding.

There may be changes in circumstances, specific to the nature of apprenticeships, not identified in the above, with responsibilities for the course team, employer and University. These may include:

- *Redundancy*
- *New role*
- *Change of employer*
- *Apprentice withdrawal*

In case where an apprentice withdraws from their apprenticeship for any reason, it is the responsibility of employer or apprentice to notify the Apprenticeships team for the purpose of updating the monthly ILR return. This notification is in addition to the standard University withdrawals procedure.

**APPENDIX 1 -  
APPRENTICESHIP INTERIM REVIEW AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

<b>Programme details</b>	
Programme title	
Programme Coordinator	
Department	

<b>Feedback from Students</b>
<i>Please report on comments or feedback from students about the programme, including the ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey, and module evaluations.</i>

<b>Feedback from Employers</b>
<i>Please report on comments or feedback from employers about the programme (including the ESFA Employer Survey), student progress/development and the partnership with the University.</i>

<b>Programme Delivery</b>	
Identify any areas of good practice with regards to delivery of the programme	
Summarise areas in need of improvement, based on the preceding analysis of employer and student feedback	

**Action Plan**

Please provide a composite list of significant actions completed or in progress:

- From the previous annual monitoring report and/or periodic review report
- ESFA Employer Survey
- ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey
- From student module evaluations

Source e.g. ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey	No	Action	Timeline (please be specific, rather than 'on-going', for example)	Role responsible for action	Evaluation of progress
	1				
	2				
	3				

**Programme Leader Sign Off**

Any further comments

Signed:

Date:

**Head of Department Sign Off**

Any further comments

Signed:

Date: