

## **Future Apprenticeships Webinar: Apprenticeships in Higher Education – Policy, Practice and Partnerships Questions and Answers**

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### **Q: Of the 23 standards approved for delivery how many have EPAs approved?**

A: The ESFA manage and publish the Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations which lists all approved EPA Organisations for each Standard. The window for applicants opens every month. An EPAO obviously can't apply to the Register until the Standard is approved and published as available for delivery with its funding cap, so there is always a delay in the EPAO being in place.

**Of the degree apprenticeships with a separate EPA, there are still some without an EPAO for the reasons outlined above. For integrated degree apprenticeships without a separate EPA the HEI offering the degree apprenticeship must join the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations.**

### **Q: Where can we get the list of HE apprenticeships that are approved?**

A: The main landing page for all Standards is below. This gives you access to the Standards and other key docs <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

The list of apprenticeships approved for delivery, listed with their funding cap is <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-bands>

**On .GOV.UK the IfA publish the latest list of Standards approved and in development at all levels. This list provides the level for those approved for delivery, and an indication of level and progress of development for those still in development. This list is updated regularly.** [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/657099/ticklist\\_03\\_11\\_17.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/657099/ticklist_03_11_17.pdf)

To check on new expressions of interest in the development of Standards, comment on Standards and End Point Assessment Plans seeking approval each month see <https://consult.education.gov.uk>

**Q: Did not quite follow the point about a change in May and the difference between Levy payers and non-levy payers. Can this be expounded upon, please?**

A: All providers who intended to deliver apprenticeship at all levels with effect from 1 May 2017 had to be approved on the newly created Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.

From 1 May, all providers on the Register are able to deliver to Levy paying employers. The arrangement for non-Levy paying employers is different.

To deliver to non-Levy paying employers from 1 May the Skills Funding Agency launched an ITT at the end of 2016 to procure provision which would be funded by allocation only to those providers who were successful in the ITT and already listed on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. In April, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (successor to the SFA) paused the decision on the ITT and simply extended the contracts of those already delivering.

This left some regions of England without any local provider with Apprenticeship funding to deliver degree apprenticeships to the majority of employers and had a deep impact on business momentum, employer choice and ultimately dissuaded many non-levy payers from investing in the higher and degree apprenticeship market. UVAC would argue that this sent a strong message that apprenticeships at the higher level are not for 98% (the % of non-levy paying employers) of businesses in England.

The ESFA re-ran the ITT procurement exercise during the summer with decisions due in late November / early December on allocations to fund delivery to non-levy payers from January 2018 to July 2019. This set a higher minimum threshold and favoured those with historical funding allocations and delivery patterns to SME employers which then disadvantaged new provider entrants to apprenticeship delivery - many from HE who aimed to deliver degree apprenticeships to the SME market.

**Q: I'm writing and delivering the new Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship within a HEI. How do you see entry requirements for the degree programme being set?**

A: Some Standards clearly indicate minimum entry requirements which every HEI would need to meet. The employer group developing the Standard set the entry requirements in the Standard. Where this is not stipulated, each HEI takes their own decision on their entry requirements.

Many Standards don't have entry requirements in recognition that apprenticeships are there to promote and support social mobility, widening access and deliver to both a traditional and non-traditional cohort of learners in the workplace.

As the first principle of an apprenticeship is that it is a job, employers will adopt their own practice for recruitment and selection. Some may choose to engage providers in this exercise. HE Providers take their own view on the admissions criteria for the HE programme element of the Apprenticeship. Apprenticeship providers are operating in a competitive space so employers will work with those institutions that recognise prior or other

learning/achievement/experience on entry if that meets their needs. Institutions have to decide how to engage, respond to and support learner type on entry to ensure success in the apprenticeship.

**Q: Also, 20% of officer's time needs to be applied to the learning opportunity... but in a heavy first year curriculum and needing to gain independent patrol by end of year 1... how do you see this percentage being realistic?**

A:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/621565/OTJ\\_training\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/621565/OTJ_training_guidance.pdf)

The minimum 20% off the job requirement is a fundamental principle of apprenticeship delivery, to ensure that the apprentice has sufficient time in their working time to learn and embed this learning. It is a challenge though in a busy job with a packed curriculum, and it is usually this that results in the apprenticeship duration being agreed over a longer time period as part of the design of the apprenticeship e.g. often four or sometimes five years, rather than three.

You do have to provide evidence that the 20 % minimum is being met to qualify for apprenticeship funding. It is measured over the lifetime of the apprenticeship and guidance on what is accepted as off the job activity is helpfully provided by the ESFA

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/621565/OTJ\\_training\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/621565/OTJ_training_guidance.pdf)

The final agreement on how to meet this is part of the discussion between the HE provider in discussion with the employer and/or apprentice.

**Q: Is UVAC purely a membership organisation for universities? We deliver degree apprenticeships under a validation arrangement with our local university so strictly aren't an HEI - can we join UVAC?**

A: UVAC has different levels of membership and we have HE, FE and Awarding Organisations in membership including a group membership by the Mixed Economy Group of Colleges. We recognise that delivery arrangements and collaborative partnerships with degree awarding institutions are an important feature of the apprenticeship system and welcome new members on that basis.

**Q: Lastly, since the levy pot is finite... and as students join the PCDA in Years 1, 2 and 3... how will this pot work in practice, given employers are only allowed a certain % of their whole staff to be apprentices? With a limited number of PC apprenticeships... how do you see social mobility and better diversity being achieved?**

A: There isn't a limit (other than the practicalities) set on the number of apprentices in any employer. Clearly each employer's levy is finite, but employers who run out of levy can still access government support for apprenticeships - they would pay 10 % of the cost and

government pays 90% up to the cap for the Standard.

**Q: Can universities access any other funding for learners on degree apprenticeships alongside the funding for the apprenticeship?**

A: Yes in that HEFCE top up funding still applies where relevant, there is additional funding for learning support for apprentices, and for English and maths up to a level 2 should the apprentice need this support. In addition, the employer and provider are paid a £1000 incentive each for an apprentice aged 16-18 or up to 24 with an Education Healthcare Plan.

To note though that an apprentice cannot be enrolled on another apprenticeship, or another DfE funded FE/HE programme, at the same time as any new apprenticeship they start and if the apprentice has a student loan, this must be terminated before they start the apprenticeship – i.e. it cannot be used to fund the apprenticeship.

**Q: Thank you ref the eligibility answer... I guess one concern may be that if the academic standard at entry is low, we may be setting up students to fail as they don't have the academic skills to be successful at degree level.**

A: Yes which is why the universities must consider their entry points and ensure that they have support for an apprentices who may need additional help – e.g. additional Maths sessions for apprentice on a STEM degree apprenticeship.

**Q: Are we able to subcontract to the Police force we are working with in order to deliver a Policing degree apprenticeship.**

A: Yes but you need to be clear about the basis for this subcontracting. If you are their main provider you will retain all the responsibility for quality of delivery and value for money. All of the Due Diligence requirements and Funding Rules apply whether or not it is the employer delivering some of the apprenticeship training. If the employer retains the lead, they will need to subcontract with you.

**Q: Could Rebecca just go over the difference between integrated and non-integrated EPA please?**

A: All apprenticeships have to have a synoptic assessment that assesses the competency and skills gained by the apprentice over the duration of the apprenticeship. This End-Point Assessment must enable them to demonstrate their competence (and therefore readiness) for the role. The employer group developing the apprenticeship decide whether the endpoint assessment will be integrated or not. The requirements of all end point assessments i.e. the competencies they want the end point to assess, are set out the Standard Assessment Plan – these are all published on .GOV.UK

Integrated means that the assessment strategy within the degree award itself must include this synoptic end point assessment. This then means that the HE Providers own delivery and conferring of the Degree award, means the apprentice has passed their end point and the apprenticeship is completed.

Non-Integrated means that the employers decided they wanted an independent end point assessment. In this case the HE Provider cannot assess their own apprentices, and the employer must choose an approved EPA Organisation for this Standard, listed on the Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations. The EPAO develops the end point assessment to meet the Standard and administers this at the end of the apprenticeship.

**Q: Where can we find out what the funding cap is?**

A: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-bands>

**Q: Can universities charge LESS than the maximum cap for the cost of the apprenticeship.**

A: Yes, the cap is not a price, it is a limit on the level of levy and government co-investment available for this apprenticeship and the price of an apprentice is a negotiation between employer and provider. You are also required to discount the cost to account for any prior learning.

**Q: Can you tell us something about how PSRBs have been involved in any of the degree apprenticeships that are now set up?**

A: One of the original design principles of the apprenticeship reforms was to ensure that where a professional/statutory body existed, the Apprenticeship and its achievement would align and be recognised by the PSRB.

PSRBs are and have been instrumental in helping design the Standards with employers - and have supported the creation of new professions (B2B sales professional for example). HEIs play a fundamental role in delivering programmes with PSRB approval and this remains a feature in Higher and Degree Apprenticeships. Other example of PSRB involvement - nursing, supply chain leadership, management, accountancy, social worker, engineering among others.

**Q: For curriculum design in police apprenticeships, the 20% rule will cause problems for police employers whose workers are shift workers. Any ideas on how this can be approached and resolved?**

A: Resolving the 20% as a minimum can be achieved by blended approaches including face to face activity of work-based learning and online learning plus other methods of delivery that will be asynchronous, facilitates engagement across peers etc. The 20% is a fundamental principle of apprenticeship at all levels currently so employers have clear roles and responsibilities here too and that should be a feature of any first discussion with an employer. Lots of good practice is now emerging about how to deliver the 20% and will be available as case studies via UVAC's website.

**Q: Do you find many institutions struggle to manage the data and reporting requirements in terms of the software they use?**

A: Data requirements in apprenticeships are a generally a challenge for all providers and yes in HE it's often the case that main systems don't collect the right data to create a full ILR extract or to create comprehensive tracking report. This said though, it is also that the wider data capture / document and evidence capture for each apprentice also needs to be part of an integrated

system approach to apprenticeships. However, most HEIs are coping and as yet, the alternatives or upgrades on offer seem to be restricted to large and for HE, unnecessary full ILR module bolt-ons to existing systems so many HEIs are looking for a more comprehensive alternative.

**Q: A university degree is about 1000 hours of contact plus 2600 hours of study, i.e. 3600 hours in total. There are about 8500 working hours in five years, 1000 of which will be university contact hours. An apprentice will spend, therefore about 8500 'work and university' plus 2600 study hours on the apprenticeship. The university is delivering 3600/ (8500+2600), i.e. 33% of that. So the 20% is easily covered, but the student will need to spend a lot more than just five days a week to complete it. Is this fully understood?**

A: The apprenticeship currently must be delivered in the working week and there must not be an expectation, tacit or otherwise that the 'rest' of the apprenticeship is completed in the apprentice's own time. This is a funding rule and you need to evidence that this has been met. To maintain this you would need to spread the apprenticeship over a longer duration to reduce the learning requirement.

This said, there is an issue about the relevance of the minimum 20% off the job for degree apprenticeships for example. Some degree apprenticeships are being delivered over 3 years and some between 3 and 6 years so impact will vary. UVAC is currently lobbying government to allow employers where it is higher-level skills learning to take a view on what is reasonable. But until change happens, the minimum 20% has to be managed and complied with.

**Q: Do you know of anywhere employer providers can get this kind of apprenticeship development and implementation advice?**

A: They can join UVAC or AELP and get the same support as any other member. The ESFA has been providing regional workshops and sessions for employer providers covering all aspects of the apprenticeship and in particular help to use the Apprenticeship Service online account. The National Apprenticeship Service team can advise but we know employer-providers (many who are new providers of apprenticeships) are still grappling with the massive changes. We have encouraged employers to seek our support too as we have brokered collaboration between HEIs and employers who aim to deliver part of the apprenticeship on-programme delivery. Our programme of support including an extensive webinar series is currently free to access by any provider of higher or degree apprenticeships.

**Q: Procurement rules can be complicated. What level of work can be done between and potential provider and a potential customer BEFORE the customer goes out to tender for the HLA provision?**

A: This is all dependent on the employers own procurement policies. They must conduct due diligence and operate in a fair and transparent way

**Q: Is there any guidance on prior learning?**

A: See Apprenticeship Funding and Performance Management Rules, which simply set out that:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/646244/17\\_18\\_apprenticeships\\_funding\\_and\\_pm\\_rules\\_V4.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/646244/17_18_apprenticeships_funding_and_pm_rules_V4.pdf)

P36. You must not claim funding for any part of any apprentice's programme that duplicates training or assessment they have received from any other source.

156.1. You must account for prior learning when agreeing a price with the employer. You must reduce the content, and price, where the individual has prior learning necessary to achieve the apprenticeship. Funds must not be used to pay for skills already attained by the apprentice. You must document how you have assessed the individual's prior learning and include this in the evidence pack (paragraphs 207 to 217).

In practice you need to evidence that you have checked, and the easiest way is to map the prior qualifications or learning content / modules with the apprenticeship modules, and based on the credits/ time, discount the price and learning time accordingly.

**Q: Is there any guidance or examples of apprentice study leave policies or expectations for employers and apprentices?**

A: No, this is dependent on the employer's own practices. Expectations of employer/ apprentice and provider must be set out in the commitment statement and the Funding Rules do have some minimum requirements for an apprenticeship e.g. 20 % min off the job etc.

**Q: We have started changing our HESA form and we have had to change 70 fields!**

A: Yes – this sounds about right!

**Q: Does Ofsted have any role to play in the quality assurance of degree apps?**

A: Not for Degree Apprenticeships see Apprenticeship Accountability Statement published by DfE in April.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/605552/Apprenticeship\\_Accountability\\_Statement.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/605552/Apprenticeship_Accountability_Statement.pdf)