**Employer Handbook**

**(Schedule 2)**

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Description automatically generated**

**Degree or Higher Apprenticeship Standard:**

**Name of apprenticeship**

**Name of programme**

**2025-26**

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| This document was updated on 26 June 2025 and will be reviewed by 31 August 2026  **Employer Handbook Template**  **Next Review Date no later than August 2026 Reviewed By A Hilling** |

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**Introduction**

We look forward to working with you and your Apprentices and trust you will find our Northumbria University Apprenticeship programme meets your needs. We have designed the programme to provide an outstanding learning experience for your Apprentices, which will integrate work-based learning with level 6 or 7 study providing an employee with up-to-date skills and knowledge relevant to today’s workplace.

This Employer Handbook provides you with information about the programme structure as well as referencing procedures and processes. It also describes how the University and the Employer will work together to ensure the programme meets the requirements of the Apprenticeship Standards, the Department for Education (DfE) Apprenticeship funding rules and the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF). We have also developed some web pages to provide you with further information and current news which we hope you will find helpful <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/business-services/engage-with-us/degree-apprenticeships/updates-and-information-for-employers>. We recommend you check the webpages regularly for updates.

Apprentices will be provided with a Programme (Apprentice) Handbook with detailed information about being an apprentice at Northumbria, their programme, on-campus and online facilities, learning resources and key contacts.

**Northumbria Apprenticeships**

**The Northumbria University Apprenticeship Ethos**

We offer two types of apprenticeship at Northumbria University, Degree Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships. According to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (Skills England) Standards, the first mandates a full bachelors or masters degree and the second does not. We do acknowledge learning on some Higher Apprenticeship programmes however and make University awards to students meeting the relevant learning outcomes so the two types of apprenticeship may appear very similar from the perspective of the apprentice and employer. However, by accessing levy funding, you as employer are agreeing to support the apprentice to successful completion of their apprenticeship in full, i.e. where there is a mandatory qualification, it is also mandatory that End-point assessment (EPA) is attempted.

The key principle underpinning all apprenticeships is the use of the workplace as a source of and focus for learning. This requires the apprentice to develop reflective and analytical skills. Thus, a practitioner is developed who not only has the necessary knowledge, skills and competences but is also an independent learner with critical thinking skills that will impact on their future and also potentially on the future of your organisation and its workforce. Work-based learners need to be highly motivated active learners and be able to work autonomously. To ensure you can affectively support your apprentice it is crucial that you are familiar with the relevant apprenticeship standard and end point assessment plan, all of which can be found on the Skills England web pages. You can find out more regarding EPA later in this document.

The nature of learning at work moves the focus of responsibility firmly into the hands of the learner. Individual learners are required not only to take responsibility for identifying their learning needs and aspirations but also for managing the learning process. This will involve the Apprentice engaging with a range of learning experiences, enabling them to interpret, analyse and challenge current thinking and practice. This will however require a supportive learning environment in the workplace and coordinated facilitation by both the employer (Workplace Mentor) and the Northumbria University Programme Team (Workplace Coach). Working together will allow the apprentice to identify and be supported through a number of learning goals which will align to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) identified in the relevant apprenticeship standard.

We will work with you to create apprenticeship graduates with the knowledge, skills and behaviours identified in the specific Apprenticeship Standards. Technical, contextual and behavioural competency development and assessment will be embedded in apprenticeship programmes; where relevant being informed by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. We seek, therefore, to produce apprenticeship graduates who display distinctiveness through a sophisticated understanding of the ways in which their organisations operate, equipping them for a career in their chosen industry.

**Northumbria University Graduate Characteristics**

An Apprenticeship Graduate will:

* Be able to think independently, understand and justify their own opinions, and will recognise the need to challenge their thinking, and the thinking of others.
* Be able to apply their disciplinary knowledge to complex problems in their discipline and its professional or industrial practice in order to identify appropriate solutions, which are sustainable and justifiable.
* Value curiosity, collaboration and analysis as keystones in the creation of new knowledge and practice.
* Be able to communicate effectively to diverse audiences utilising a range of formats and media.
* Display the attitudes and skills to engage and work constructively and sensitively in multi-cultural environments and teams and have an awareness of ethical considerations.
* Combine all of the above to support their employability and long-term career prospects.
* Use their expertise to take responsibility for people, projects, operations / services to deliver organisational success.

**Apprenticeships as Partnerships**

Below you will find a summary of the main roles in the tri-partite relationship between employer, university and apprentice. You are advised to read the DfE Apprenticeship funding rules found [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules) for a full breakdown of your responsibilities as Employer.

**The Employer’s Role in the Partnership**

* Employ the apprentice with a contract of service in a genuine paid role which is relevant to the subject area of their apprenticeship, is of sufficient duration to allow completion of the apprenticeship (including EPA) and provides opportunities for them to apply the knowledge, skills and behaviours learnt in the apprenticeship.
* Confirm that the apprentice is receiving a wage in line with the national minimum wage requirements and that the apprentice rate was not used prior to a valid apprenticeship agreement being in place.
* Ensure apprentices have the right to work in England and spend at least 50% of their working hours in England. This also applies to remote and hybrid workers.
* Confirm that apprentices will not be required to contribute financially to the eligible costs of training, on-programme or End-point assessment (EPA). This includes both where the individual has completed the apprenticeship successfully or has left the programme early (this includes where they have left the employer).
* Check and sign an Apprenticeship Training Services Agreement (commonly known as a Contract), an **Apprenticeship Agreement** and a **Training Plan** (formerly known as a Commitment Statement - see below)foreach apprenticeprior to the start of the apprenticeship programme as advised by the University.
* Be actively involved with the apprentice initial skills assessment and agree the output iin collaboration with the University, prior to the start of the apprenticeship programme.
* Provide workplace learning opportunities, support and supervision to enable apprentices to carry out their job and complete the apprenticeship, including End-point assessment (EPA).
* Provide a Workplace Mentor for every apprentice and ensure their engagement in regular progress review meetings.
* If your apprentice has been registered on Aptem, our online apprenticeship management system, then you will also need to activate your employer account on the system. Please note that you will be contacted by the Apprenticeship Academic Support team if this applies to you.
* Provide their apprentice with at least the minimum off the job training hours for the standard. The minimum can temporarily be found in Annex C of the funding regulations.

OTJ can include:

* Attendance at scheduled classes for the teaching of theory, e.g. lectures, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning.
* Practical work-based training, e.g. shadowing, mentoring, industry visits where the activity has been agreed and documented as part of the agreed training plan.
* Active engagement with learning support.
* Time spent writing assessments/assignments.
* Revision (where this is specifically required for achievement of the apprenticeship.

OTJ records form a mandatory part of the apprentice portfolio and evidence pack and must be recorded by the apprentice via the system provided by the University.

Note that additional time must be given for English and maths training, where required, because it does not count towards the minimum OTJ.

More detailed information about OTJ can be found [here.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training)

* Ensure apprentices who have successfully progressed to Gateway, including completing any academic qualification, are also supported to remain on the apprenticeship to attempt the EPA and complete the full programme on which they are enrolled.
* Inform us of any changes in circumstances affecting the apprenticeship. For example, if an apprentice needs to take a break or withdraw from study, is made redundant or changes job role to one not related to the apprenticeship.
* Confirm that you have read, understood and will comply with the complete set of regulations governing the role of the Employer which can be found at DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules found [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules)
* Inform the University at the start of the apprenticeship if you wish to select your own End-point assessment organisation (EPAO) from the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR) <https://download.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/apar>

In addition, the Employer should retain and provide the following documents to DfE or the University as required.

1. The [Apprenticeship Agreement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template):
2. Evidence that the Apprentice has spent at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship. This also applies to remote and hybrid workers.
3. Contract of employment and work rosters.

**The University’s Role in the Partnership**

* Provide a validated programme of study which develops the skills, knowledge and behaviours as published in the programme specification and apprenticeship standard.
* Carry out an initial skills assessment and review apprentices’ learning support needs and prior learning and experience against apprenticeship standard learning outcomes and agree exemptions from study where appropriate. This assessment will also establish starting point or ‘baseline’ in order to track progress throughout the programme.
* Appoint a Coach to support apprentices in their learning; specifically portfolio building and applying learning to the workplace. Coaches will meet with the Workplace Mentor and apprentice at progress review meetings to review progress.
* Provide an electronic platform for apprentices to maintain their portfolio in a format that can be shared with their employer.
* Provide learning materials including access to the Blackboard Ultra online learning environment to support apprentices achieving success on the programme.
* Provide regular reports to the employer about the engagement and progress of the Apprentices.
* Provide the means for completion of a Level 2 English and/or maths qualification where it has been determined that the apprentice is required to undertake training.
* Ensure the programme, apprentice records and evidence pack comply with DfE Apprenticeship funding rules.
* Negotiate with and select an appropriate EPAO from the APR (unless the employer wishes to do this themselves) and ensure information and data is made available to the EPAO.
* Ensure any sub-contractors fulfil their obligations according to DfE Apprenticeship funding rules.
* To fulfil all obligations to apprentices as students as laid out in the [Northumbria University’s Student Charter](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/student-charter/).
* Comply with the complete set of regulations governing the role of Training Provider.

See [DfE Apprenticeship funding rules](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules) for more information about the role of the University as a Main Provider.

**The Apprentice’s Role in the Partnership**

* Attend and engage in scheduled teaching sessions and other learning activities.
* Engage in workplace Off-the-Job Training (OTJ).
* Record their own OTJ using the the University’s system, Aptem.
* Complete any coursework, assignments and examinations, including EPA, as required by the programme.
* Maintain an ongoing portfolio (where required) using the online system provided by the University.
* Attend and engage with progress review meetings.
* Bring any issues effecting their learning or workplace training to the attention of the employer and/or University. This includes a change in circumstances and role changes at work.
* Record attendance in classes using the system provided by the University.
* Read and understand University rules and regulations governing the conduct of students published in [Northumbria University’s Student Charter](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/student-charter/) and [Handbook of Student Regulations](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-governance/vice-chancellors-office/legal-services-team/handbook-of-student-regulations/)

**The Training Plan** (formerly known as ‘Commitment Statement’)

* The Training Plan is a document signed by the University, you the Employer, and the apprentice, which sets out how the apprentice will be supported to successfully achieve the intended outcomes of the apprenticeship.
* DfE Apprenticeship funding rules stipulate that the University must retain a signed training plan for every apprentice as it forms part of the apprentice evidence pack needed for the final award. As it contains a GDPR statement, it is essential we have a copy before we release any information to the employer about the apprentice’s progress or engagement with the programme.
* The Training Plan is intended to inform the regular progress review meetings which take place between the University Workplace Coach, employer mentor and apprentice.

It is anticipated that the Training Plan is a ‘live’ document and will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary on agreement with all parties.

* The document has been cross-referenced to the DfE Apprenticeship funding Rules and will be retained within the evidence pack stored alongside the contract and apprenticeship agreement.

**Data Protection and Data Sharing**

Where the University or the employer handle any personal or sensitive personal data (within the meaning of the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as defined in section 3(10 and 205(4) of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003, including in relation to the apprentices or employers), they undertake to comply with their respective obligations under that legislation.

The University can share apprentice information with employers if we have a signed Training Plan, including data sharing protocol. For any request for information outside of the scope of that covered in the Training Plan, we will seek permission from the apprentice to share their personal information. This is in line with GDPR and NU [Privacy Notices](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-governance/vice-chancellors-office/legal-services-team/gdpr/gdpr---privacy-notices/" \l ":~:text=Privacy%20notices%20are%20made%20available,of%20receipt%20of%20the%20data.)

Please also be aware of the Department for Education (DfE) privacy notice which can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-privacy-notice/education-and-skills-funding-agency-privacy-notice-may-2018). For the purposes of relevant data protection legislation, the DfE is the data controller for personal data, this also includes data processed by DfE.

**Confidentiality**

This is a work-based programme and as such it is likely the apprentice will complete a substantial amount of work relating to the workplace. In line with data protection, commercial sensitivity and professional practice requirements apprentices and Workplace Mentors should give very careful consideration to issues of confidentiality within submitted work and take advice from within their own organisation if necessary.

Student work is not published or shared with third parties other than for quality assurance purposes in line with normal practices within Higher Education.

**About the Programme**

**Application and Induction**

Apprentices must be paid employees of your organisation: they may be either existing employees or new employees who you recruit specifically to undertake the apprenticeship programme. In future if you plan to recruit new employees, please be aware that the deadline for Employer Application Forms to be received by the University is three months prior to the commencement of the programme to allow sufficient time for us to complete the recruitment and admissions process.

We feel it is important that apprentices and their employers are welcomed to the University and receive all the information they need to enable a smooth and successful partnership. The induction session will introduce the apprentice to their programme, explaining the principles, rules and regulations and other important information about studying at the University.

**Initial Skills Assessment and Recognition of Prior and Experiential Learning and Experience**

DfE Apprenticeship funding rules state that funds must not be used to pay for training for skills, knowledge and behaviours already attained by the apprentice. Or in other words, the apprenticeship must consist of new learning. In order to assess prior and experiential learning and skills, the University invites apprentice applicants to submit an initial skills assessment which may result in identification of recognition of prior and experiential learning (RPEL), following a discussion with a Workplace Coach and/or Programme Leader and employer where practicable. This is assessed by comparing to the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard. If exemption from any part of the programme is approved, the apprentice’s schedule of study and fees are amended accordingly. A record of the application and initial skills assessment will be agreed by all parties, retained and stored in the apprentice evidence pack. The outcome of this process will allow the employer and University to ensure the apprentice receives the appropriate support to achieve their goals, and meet the knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard.

**English and Maths Requirement**

**For apprentices aged 16–18** funding rules state that students undertaking apprenticeship programmes must hold, and be able to evidence, an approved Level 2 qualification in both English and Maths (equivalent to a GCSE minimum Grade C or 4) prior to passing through gateway and before they can complete EPA. A list of equivalent accepted qualifications can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-and-maths-requirements-in-apprenticeship-standards-at-level-2-and-above)

For 19+ apprentices English and maths are now **optional** and must only be included in the training plan if agreed by both the apprentice and employer during the initial assessment. The agreement must be signed by all parties, and funding can only be claimed once confirmed.

If the apprentice needs to complete a level 2 English or Maths qualification, the University will work with a designated level 2 provider to facilitate an initial diagnostic test, learning support and assessment leading to the required qualification. Functional Skills learning must be **planned, structured, and recorded** in the training plan to ensure apprentices are engaged in active learning. The time required for learning and assessment on these qualifications is in addition to the off the job training and you, as the employer, must support them with the time required to do this during paid working hours.

**Apprentice or Employer Changes**

In order to keep records up to date and avoid funding issues, the employer should let the University know where a change in circumstances effects the apprentice, as soon as possible.

**Examples of changes:**

* The apprentice taking a break in learning where they plan to return, and this is agreed with their employer. The reason for the break and its expected duration must be discussed with you as employer and the University and an appropriate return date should be agreed. This could include medical treatment, parental or personal reasons. A short-term absence of up to 4 weeks, such as sickness or annual leave, does not have to be recorded as a break. Where a break in learning has taken place, the training plan and apprenticeship agreement must be updated to reflect any change in completion date as appropriate. Note that the University may apply an enforced break in learning where compliance is at risk.
* Where an apprentice is made redundant, the University is required to make reasonable efforts to support the apprentice to find a new employer. The apprentice and/or employer must forward a copy of their redundancy notice for the evidence pack.
* When an apprentice withdraws from the apprenticeship, e.g. the apprentice is no longer employed by the employer (not redundancy), the job role has changed and the apprentice can no longer continue on the programme they originally enrolled on.
* When the apprentice starts a new role either with the same employer, or new employer, and requires a different apprenticeship programme because the job role no longer aligns to the existing KSBs.

**End Point Assessment (EPA)**

End-point assessment is mandatory and is the final stage of all apprenticeships. It is an impartial assessment of whether your apprentice has developed the knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard. Assessments are designed by employers in the sector and are conducted by independent bodies known as end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs).

It's important that an EPAO is selected as early into the apprenticeship as possible to ensure that you and your apprentice fully understands the assessment criteria and how they will be assessed. The University will select the EPAO on your behalf unless you notify us that you wish to select one yourself. All EPA plans can be found on the Skills England web page. EPAs are regularly updated so it is important to review the Skills England web page periodically to ensure you are familiar with the requirements of the EPA for your apprentice. As an employer of an apprentice, and in accessing levy funding, you are agreeing to support an apprentice to the successful completion of the EPA. See the [Department for Education (DfE) best practice guide on how to support your apprentice through end-point assessment](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/support-your-apprentice-through-end-point-assessment?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=8de79fa5-a6f1-4d26-9971-a092827ab5cc&utm_content=daily)

The XXX apprenticeship is non-integrated but includes a mandatory degree. Note that this degree qualification will not be conferred by the University until EPA is attempted. This means that a degree certificate and invitation to a graduation ceremony will only be issued once the full apprenticeship has been completed.

**Programme Facts**

Programme Overview

Faculty: xxx

Department: xxx

Apprenticeship Standard: xxx

Award/Programme Title: xxx

Length: xxx

Programme (Practical Period) Start Date: xxx

Programme (Practical Period) End Date: xxx

Estimated End-point Assessment Date: xxx

Delivery Mode: Part-time xxx

**Programme Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs)**

These KSBs are taken from the Apprenticeship Standard which can be found here

The Northumbria programme learning outcomes have been mapped to these KSBs.

xxx

**Programme Structure**

**xxx**

**Professional Statutory and Regulatory Board (PSRB) Accreditation**

xxx

**Key People**

**The University**

**The Northumbria Apprenticeship Academic Support Team**

The Apprenticeship Academic Support Team will be your key point of contact, from supporting you through the contract signing process and ensuring all required documentation is in place, right through the duration of the programme to completion of the apprentice’s EPA and graduation. When dealing with any queries you or your Apprentice may have, the Academic Support Team will triage them to the appropriate person/University department/service.

Kerry Douglas, Academic Support Manager

Amanda Hilling, Academic Support Manager (Apprentice Progress)

Contact details: Phone number: 07598544180

E-mail [rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk)

**The Northumbria Apprenticeship Business Development Manager and Business Development Coordinator**

As an employer looking to find a suitable apprenticeship programme for a prospective apprentice or existing employee, your key point of contact will be the Northumbria University Business Development Manager and Business Development Coordinator. They will liaise with you regarding contractual terms and employer responsibilities, entry requirements for the programme and advertising vacancies. They will also require details of candidates who you wish to be considered for admission to the University. Once an employee has been offered a place, the Apprenticeship Academic Support Team will be your main point of contact.

Name: Vince Robson

Sales and Business Development: Phone number: 0191 215 6300 (this is the telephone number to contact Sales and Business Development through the Horizon system)

E-mail: degree.apprenticeships@northumbria.ac.uk

**The Northumbria Apprenticeship Programme Leader**

The Programme Leader is a member of academic staff with subject expertise. They will manage the design and delivery of the programme and co-ordinate the teaching team to ensure quality assurance and regulatory obligations are met. They will also assess non-standard applications and oversee the organisation of progress review meetings and EPA in liaison with the Academic Support Managers.

Name: xxx

Contact details: Phone number: xxx

E-mail: xxx

**Workplace Coach**

Apprentices have a Workplace Coach from the University. The coach will conduct progress reviews to ensure the apprentice is on track to complete their programme. The coach is one of the main links between University, apprentice and workplace and they will be present at the progress review meetings to discuss progress, support needs and any issues with either teaching or workplace and provide reports on apprentice engagement and progress. Progress Review Meetings will take place at least every 3 calendar months, as per DfE Apprenticeship funding rules.

**The Employer**

There are two key functions carried out by the employer, workplace mentoring and apprentice coordination. They may be carried out by the same person or, in the case of large organisations, the coordinating contact may be someone from an HR or training department whereas the mentor will normally be a line manager or supervisor. See below sections for further details.

**Workplace Mentor**

The employer must appoint a Workplace Mentor for each apprentice. The Workplace Mentor is fundamental to ensuring that the apprentice is supported and has opportunity to undertake work-based learning. The role includes:

Familiarising themselves with the apprenticeship programme and its workplace requirements and responsibilities as outlined in the Training Plan, the Apprenticeship Standard and End-point assessment plan.

Facilitating the appropriate learning opportunities to ensure that the apprentice meets the requirements of the Apprenticeship Standard and End-point assessment plan.

Contributing to relevant aspects of student induction/orientation within the workplace.

Participating in progress review meetings on behalf of the employer, with the apprentice and the University, and contributing to the maintenance of records of the apprentice’s programme.

Sharing updates from progress review meetings with a nominated person in the HR and/or Training departments.

Taking part in any elements of assessment required by the programme /apprenticeship EPA plan, including any skills assessment.

Undertaking liaison with the Employer Apprenticeship Coordinator and University as necessary but particularly if any problems are encountered.

Supporting the apprentice in identifying and securing opportunities for development and evidencing the application of learning in the workplace to meet the requirements of the Apprenticeship Standard and End-point assessment plan.

The employer and the University will work together to ensure that Workplace Mentors are suitably prepared for their role which will normally include engagement with a programme of activities. You can find further information in our [Workplace Mentor Handbook.](https://northumbria-cdn.azureedge.net/-/media/services/careers/documents/pdf/workplace-mentor-handbook.pdf?modified=20240823181259)

**Apprenticeship Coordinator**

The Employer Apprentice Coordinator has the following /responsibilities:

Confirm proposed apprentices are employed in a post relevant to the apprenticeship standard and are able to complete the relevant work-based learning, and inform the University immediately if the apprentice changes role

Ensure apprentices are given an adequate allowance as ‘Off the Job Training’ and English/maths tuition and exam time as outlined in the DfE Apprenticeship funding rules, in order to undertake study and work based learning.

Liaise with the University on any admissions queries.

Liaise with the University on the following:

* Key programme dates, timelines and milestones, including EPA.
* Induction arrangements including Employer attendance.
* Workplace Mentor allocation (names and contact details) and associated staff development.
* Progress review meetings schedule.
* Completion of apprenticeship enrolment processes and mandatory paperwork.

Engage with and contribute to Northumbria Programme and Programme Review processes.

Engage with work-based learning arrangements and quality of learning opportunities in the workplace to ensure apprentices can meet learning outcomes/knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) of apprenticeship standards, notifying the Northumbria Apprenticeship Programme Leader of potential problems.

Receive assessment results, where there is a signed Training Plan in place, or evidence that the student has given permission for information to be shared. This is in line with GDPR and NU Privacy Notices.

Engage with changes to the Employer Handbook and associated documents and record agreement by signing the updated Training Plan and send a copy of your Apprenticeship Agreement at the start of the programme to the Apprenticeship Academic Support Team.

Provide the details of any staff changes, specifically your Workplace Mentors to the Northumbria Apprenticeship Programme Leader and Apprenticeship Academic Support Team at [rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk)

**Key Policies**

The University has a range of policies to support the health, safety and wellbeing of all its students and staff. Please familiarise yourself with the following policies, you will be asked to confirm you have read and understood some of these policies when you sign the Training Plan.

**Student Conduct Expectations**

Students of Northumbria University have obligations to behave reasonably, ensuring that the University is a safe and supportive place to live, study and work for all. Everyone, fellow students, staff, visitors to the University, and neighbours in the community, have a right to be treated with dignity and respect. All members of the University community have a duty to support this principle in accordance with the [Student Terms and Conduct Expectations](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/governance/terms-and-conditions/) and [Student Charter](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/student-charter/).

The University provides advice, guidance, policies and procedures to make your apprentices aware of available support and to assist their understanding of the standards of behaviour expected by the University. Further information can be found [here](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/governance/terms-and-conditions/).

**Academic Misconduct**

Every student of the University is expected to act with integrity in relation to the production and representation of academic work. Academic integrity is central to University life and requires in particular that students are honest and responsible in acknowledging the contributions of others in their work.

If Academic Misconduct is suspected then the [University Academic Misconduct Procedure](https://livenorthumbriaac.sharepoint.com/sites/slas/qsl/Shared%20Documents/Assessment/Assessment%20staff%20guidance/PL.005-v005%20Academic%20Misconduct%20Policy.pdf#search=academic%20misconduct%20procedure) will be followed.

**Health and Safety**

The University recognises the importance of providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment in which we all teach, study, research and pursue the University’s other business interests.

The [University Health and Safety Policy](https://www.flipsnack.com/northumbriaod/h-s-policy/full-view.html) describes how the University, overseen by its Board of Governors, manages the risks to health and safety and explains:

* The strategic aims of the Board of Governors and the University Executive;
* The organisation of managers and staff at all levels with health and safety roles and responsibilities;
* The arrangements by which management will discharge those responsibilities.

Further information can be found [here](https://one.northumbria.ac.uk/service/cs/hs/Pages/home.aspx).

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Northumbria University is proud to be a multi-cultural community; we value diversity and are determined to ensure that the opportunities we provide are open to all. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strongly underpins the University’s Strategy 2030.

Further information can be found [here](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/).

**Anti-bullying and Harassment**

The University aims to create an environment that respects the dignity and rights of all students and staff, where individuals have the opportunity to realise their full potential.  The aim of the University’s Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy is to support this ethos and to strive to prevent harassment and bullying of any form occurring.

Further information can be found [here](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/-/media/corporate-website/new-sitecore-gallery/services/legal/saco/terms-and-conditions/anti-bullying-and-harassment-policy.pdf?la=en&hash=54EBE532FB96ED5D5568BAE21C1CA6BFA39980E3).

**Unacceptable Behaviours**

No one should accept or tolerate unacceptable behaviour, which includes: bullying, discrimination, domestic violence, harassment, misogyny, hate incidents, sexual misconduct or abuse, victimisation or violence. We are committed to being a community that is welcoming and respectful and is supported by a set of [values and behaviours](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/work-for-us/our-values-our-behaviours/). Our [Unacceptable Behaviours Policy and online tool](https://northumbria.service-now.com/ub) makes it easier for apprentices to seek support and/or report their concerns if they experience, witness or are aware of, unacceptable behaviour.

**Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances.

Safeguarding is a consideration for a range of University activities, and we are all responsible for the safety of under-18s and vulnerable adults.

The University's Safeguarding arrangements include risk–based policies and procedures that focus on University activities that involve children and vulnerable adults. The University has a dedicated structure of staff, made up of the Principal Safeguarding Officer (PSO), Designated Safeguarding Officers, and Safeguarding Champions, to facilitate reporting and management of Safeguarding related queries, reports and cases.

All apprentices at Northumbria will receive training on Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, to ensure they are familiar with their responsibilities, and that they know how and where to report any concerns while at the University or on work placement.

For further information on the University’s approach to Safeguarding, including the reporting procedure and the contact details for Designated Safeguarding Officers and Safeguarding Champions, please consult the following links:

For further details of what this includes and how these services can be accessed, and the dedicated safeguarding officer please consult the following link.

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-governance/vice-chancellors-office/governance-services/safeguarding/>

**Safe and Effective use of IT**

As more of our information is saved and shared online, its becoming increasingly important for apprentices to manage online safety and keep themselves and their data safe and secure. Apprentices are required to undertake mandatory training on Safe and Effective use of IT at the start of the programme.

**Prevent and Radicalisation**

Northumbria University has a duty under the government’s Prevent Duty Guidance to safeguard our student community against the risk of radicalisation. Prevent is a part of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy and aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

There are three objectives of Prevent:

* tackle the ideological causes of terrorism.
* intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation.
* enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

Further information in relation to this can be found at

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-governance/vice-chancellors-office/governance-services/prevent-duty/>

**Fundamental British Values (FBV)**

In 2014, the UK Government created five fundamental values that it identified as those that were unifying values, fundamental to British society and cohesion. The values were designed to balance freedom of thought, expression and choice in a liberal society with the need to maintain a safe and secure society. The five British Values are democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. These values underpin the apprenticeship journey, the development of the teaching and learning material, the learning environment. In partnership with the Northumbria Students Union, we developed the [Student Charter](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/student-charter/) which states;

*"In partnership, Northumbria University and Northumbria Students’ Union encourages staff and student behaviours underpinned by values of equity, diversity and fairness. Collegiality and a concern for ethical behaviour and for the welfare of individuals within the University and wider society are paramount, as is upholding standards in order that students are justifiably proud of their achievements and the value of a Northumbria award”.*

Apprentices can find further details in relation to FBV, and how it informs and shapes their apprenticeship on their programme Blackboard pages.

**How we Support and Assess our Apprentice Students**

**Workplace Coaches**

The University has a comprehensive learning support structure in place to ensure apprentices have the best possible chance of success. There are several points of contact for direct academic and learning support including: Module and Programme Leaders, and Workplace Coaches. A key design feature of our apprenticeship programmes is the interface between academic and workplace skills. University staff work closely with apprentices and Workplace Mentors to ensure this synergy is understood and applied to maximise benefit to the apprentice and employer and prepare for EPA.

**Timetables**

Scheduled learning will be included the apprentice’s University timetable which they will be issued following enrolment and can be accessed from the University website and via Office 365 Calendar.

**Attendance and Engagement**

Apprentices are expected to attend all timetabled University activities and individual attendance will be monitored using University systems. Apprentices will be expected to inform their Module Leader and you as employer if they are unable to attend and make every effort to catch up on any missed work.

The Northumbria University [Student Attendance Monitoring policy](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/university-services/student-library-and-academic-services/quality-and-teaching-excellence/student-engagement/academic-engagement/) will apply. Attendance issues will be discussed with coaches and workplace mentors at review meetings and ongoing concerns will be reported to monthly departmental apprentice journey meetings. Where necessary, interventions will be agreed to ensure progress is maintained and engagement is in line with regulatory expectations.

Note that there is an expectation that apprentices will continue to engage with active learning towards their apprenticeship outside of scheduled on campus activity (but still within normal working hours), even during University standard vacation periods.

**How Aptem will support you and your Apprentice(s)**

Aptem is the University’s chosen online apprenticeship management system. It will support and manage the entire apprenticeship journey for both you and your apprentice(s) to ensure a seamless learner experience from enrolment through to End point assessment. Apprentices can view a tailored learning plan that allows them take ownership for keeping their learning on track. The University coach, and the Apprentice Progress team, will also closely monitor your apprentice to ensure they are engaging and meeting the planned off the job (OTJ) hours. Any apprentice who is at risk of falling behind, or becoming non-compliant, will be flagged to you at the earliest opportunity.

As an employer you will have access to a dashboard for all your apprentices which provides an insight on how your learners are progressing, both at individual and at programmes level. You will also be able to manage and complete the below apprenticeship tasks in one place:

* View and sign the outcome of the Initial Skills Assessment and assessment of recognition of prior learning.
* View and sign the Apprenticeship Agreement and Training Plan
* Accept, view and complete progress review meetings.

You will be sent guidance on activating and using your Aptem account in advance of your apprentice beginning their apprenticeship with us.

**Apprentice Progress Monitoring**

Individual apprentice monitoring is essential for all three parties. Normal University processes will be supplemented by the requirements for apprenticeships generally and the specific requirements of the relevant Apprenticeship Standard. Progress review meetings will include the University Workplace Coach, an employer representative (normally the Workplace Mentor but may be somebody else nominated by the employer) and apprentice. These meetings will take place at least every three calendar months, unless there is an evidenced delivery reason that means an alternative frequency is more appropriate. If this is the case, there must be an agreement between the University and the employer.

Apprentice progress will be considered at regular Departmental Apprentice Journey (DAJM) meetings where the coaches and the academic team review data and reports from the apprentice progress review meetings and agree interventions where necessary. A summary of apprentice engagement and progress will be presented at an end of year Apprentice Assessment Board alongside academic results.

**Sources of Student Support**

The Student Life and Wellbeing service delivers a range of specialist advice and support whatever the apprentice needs and circumstances are. The work they do is complemented by digital platforms which means that no matter where the apprentice is studying, their services can still be accessed.

Student Life and Wellbeing encompasses specialist teams which offer free, impartial and confidential advice on the following:

* [Accessibility](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/support-for-students/accessibility-support/), encompassing: support of disabled students and those with additional support needs.
* [Wellbeing and Health](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/support-for-students/welfare-and-health-support/), including: keeping healthy and safe.
* [Counselling and Mental Health](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/support-for-students/counselling-and-mental-health-support/)
* Student Life, including: financial support, international student support, chaplaincy and faith advice and inclusion.

Programme Leaders and Coaches also provide an important source of advice about the programme and studies. They work to ensure the educational opportunities and university experience provided is inclusive for all learners and offer tailored support and guidance for specific groups such as care leavers, mature learners and learners with caring responsibilities.

The University Library Service supports academic success by providing your apprentice with learning spaces, scholarly resources, online services and opportunities to develop their learning skills. The Library achieves some of the highest levels of student satisfaction in the UK and has held the Cabinet Office accreditation for Customer Service Excellence since 2010.

On campus, apprentices have access to learning spaces, designed to meet a variety of needs, from silent or quiet study, through to social and collaborative learning. Around half of the library learning spaces are equipped with standard PCs (some with dual screen monitors) or Macs.

City Campus Library and the University Library Digital Commons are open 24/7 during term-time and other libraries also operate generous [opening hours](https://library.northumbria.ac.uk/opening-hours?_gl=1*izeqog*_gcl_au*MTIwMTg5NjAxOC4xNzE3NTIxNzgw*_ga*NzE3ODA3MzQ3LjE3MDgwODc0NzM.*_ga_GZ3Q7PNF2K*MTcxNzc2OTg0Ni4yMC4xLjE3MTc3NzMyODMuNjAuMC4w), which can vary throughout the year to meet demand for space and support. A range of bespoke activities, sessions and guides to support learners on apprenticeship programmes has been developed. In addition to a wide range of print and electronic resources, resources are also provided for guidance in information and academic skills, EPA, online help guides and 1-2-1 sessions. Further information can be found [here](https://library.northumbria.ac.uk/c.php?g=689681)

Ask4Help is the first point of contact for all student support enquiries. They are available 24/7 during term-time and apprentices can contact the team in person, by phone or via their portal to raise queries and seek support or guidance on a range of topics.

**The Student Portal**

The Student Portal provides apprentices with a single point of access to a range of self-help information and guidance on a range of topics.

**Employer and Apprentice Feedback**

Apprentices are regularly asked to provide feedback on the programme and their experience via a variety of mechanisms such as surveys and meetings/forums. We very much welcome feedback from you as employer and will provide opportunities for you to do this, for example inviting you to attend employer forums or to complete a survey. If you wish to provide us with feedback at any time, please write to the Apprenticeship Academic Support team at [rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk)

**Feedback on Assessed Work**

Feedback on assessments will be provided to apprentices within 20 working days (four weeks) following the assessment hand-in date. Hand-in and hand-back dates will be specified in the module information. As well as providing a mark for their work, students will be provided with formative feedback.

**Referral and Deferral**

If an apprentice student is referred in a module, they will be required to resubmit an assignment or re-sit an examination. As outlined in the [University Academic Regulations for Taught Awards](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/university-services/student-library-and-academic-services/quality-and-teaching-excellence/assessment/) it is the apprentice’s responsibility to ensure that all referrals/deferrals are completed.

Deferral describes the situation when the Assessment Board decides that they should be given a first attempt at the assessment, for example, because of experiencing personal extenuating circumstances (PECs).

University Regulations allow a student who has failed at referral attempt to repeat the whole stage of a programme or individual modules. They are not allowed to progress to the next stage until they have successfully completed all modules. However, DfE Apprenticeship funding rules state funding is not available for apprentices repeating any part of the programme if there is no new learning involved. In these cases, University tuition fees must be paid by the employer outside of the levy and the apprentice must not be charged. In the event that this happens, we will work with you to agree appropriate next steps.

**Results**

Following Assessment Boards apprentice students can access their end of level Student Module Record Form (SMRF) via the Student Portal on given published dates.

Marks received before an Assessment Board are subject to change and are not confirmed until they have been externally moderated and ratified at the Board.

**End-point Assessment (EPA)**

The EPA is a holistic and independent assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours, which have been learnt throughout an Apprenticeship Standard. The requirements for EPA are set out in the Assessment Plan for the specific standard. An apprentice can only take the EPA once they have met the minimum duration of an apprenticeship, satisfied the gateway requirements set out in the Assessment Plan, including submitting an approved and verified off the job training log, and their employer (in consultation with the University) is content they have attained sufficient knowledge, skills and behaviours. It is expected that all apprentices who fulfil the criteria will attempt to undertake EPA and that you as employer will support them to do this.

As of 1 August 2023, the DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules state that the University is able to negotiate with and select an EPAO for non integrated apprenticeships. Please inform us if you would prefer to do this yourself.

Although the University will be involved in arrangements for EPA on integrated apprenticeship programmes, the assessment itself must be independent. The EPA requirements are set out in the Assessment Plan for the Standard. Some assessment plans give the employer and the training provider specific roles but having been involved in delivering the programme Northumbria cannot make EPA judgement for that same group of apprentices.

**Funding**

To see full details and a list of eligible and non-eligible costs, please refer to DfE Apprenticeship funding rules found [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules) and the relevant Apprenticeship Standard*.* All Standards can be found on the Skills England website [here](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/).

As stated in the DfE Apprenticeship funding rules an individual apprentice must not be asked to contribute financially to the eligible costs of training, on-programme or EPA. This includes both where the individual has completed the programme successfully or left the programme early.

Costs include any co-investment or additional training and assessment costs, above the funding band, that you have paid directly to the main provider where this is part of the agreed apprenticeship.

Note that as per clauses 4.1.9 and 4.1.10 of the Apprenticeship Training Services Agreement (often known as the contract) of which this Employer Handbook is Schedule 2, the Employer may be asked to provide payment where the Apprentice does not attempt EPA and training costs are still outstanding.

**Accessing Funding**

Apprenticeships are funded via the Apprenticeship Levy and/or Government co-investment funding (see DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules for further information). The agreed fee covers the EPA. Funding is normally released from the Apprenticeship Levy to the University on a monthly basis for the duration of the apprenticeship.

An annual invoice will be issued for non-levy employer co-funding usually in November. Levy employers that are co-funding will be invoiced twice-yearly, usually in February to cover the period August-January and again in August for period February-July.

The maximum funding band set by the Government for this apprenticeship is **£xxx**

Employers with access to the Apprenticeship Service Account should link with Northumbria University by following these steps:

**Apprenticeship Service Account**

All employers are now required to have an Apprenticeship Service account. For employers that do not already have an account we can send an email invitation which simplifies the set up process, provides step by step guidance and removes a couple of the required steps. We do need to seek approval from the employer to send the invitation, therefore if you would like to receive the account set-up invitation, please email vcapprenticeshipdataandfinancesupport@northumbria.ac.uk.

For non-levy employers only – you must have set up an account, reserved government funding added and approved the apprentice(s) **within one calendar month of the apprentice start date.**

Go to your Apprenticeship Service account: [https://accounts.manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk/service/index](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Faccounts.manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk%2Fservice%2Findex&data=02%7C01%7Ckerry.douglas%40northumbria.ac.uk%7C9f2326d1e4264434a8a608d83f9291c8%7Ce757cfdd1f354457af8f7c9c6b1437e3%7C0%7C0%7C637329246039410644&sdata=Jw0P7AaTkWBPa%2BAHnKgI4aMa7lHNJt%2FoEzlod83%2F398%3D&reserved=0)

You will need to make a note of the University’s UKPRN: 10001282.

There are three ways (listed below) to add and approve apprentices on the Apprenticeship Service account – option 3 is our preferred method

1) In the ‘Apprentices’ section, you can begin adding your apprentices, which will be passed to the University for review and approval.

2) You can ask the University to add the apprentices on your behalf, which you can select in the ‘add an Apprentice’ form. If you do this, you will still have to approve any apprentices added by the University before any funding is released.

3) You can also grant permissions in the “Your training providers” section on the homepage. This would allow the University to add apprentice details on your behalf without you having to make a request. Once the apprentice or cohort details have been added by the training provider, you will still have control and will need to approve the apprentice(s) before funding is released. This is particularly useful for Employers that will be sending apprentices to a training provider on a regular basis.

DfE has a YouTube website at which you can access a variety of videos. The website can be found at [here](https://www.youtube.com/@esfagovuk6416/featured)

Another helpful resource can be found at <https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/sections/360001841359-Employer>

**Northumbria University’s Programme Quality Assurance**

**Programme review: internal (University and Employer)**

Apprenticeship programmes will be subject to the same [Continuous Programme Performance Review (CPPR)](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/university-services/student-library-and-academic-services/quality-and-teaching-excellence/monitoring-and-review/) process as standard Northumbria programmes and is part of the Review strand of the [Northumbria University Quality and Standards Framework](https://livenorthumbriaac.sharepoint.com/sites/slas/qsl/Shared%20Documents/PL.029-v004%20Framework%20for%20Quality%20and%20Standards.pdf#search=quality%20and%20standards%20frameworks). CPPR is the single process to be used across the institution for reviewing modules, programmes and as appropriate, subjects.

CPPR is a cyclical process based on the formal review of performance data, and implementation and evaluation of actions at three points in the academic year for apprenticeship programmes. The focus of each review point will be informed by the publication of key datasets.

**External Oversight**

As part of DfE Apprenticeship funding rules, the University (as the provider) is required to maintain the evidence pack, which is subject to DfE audit. This will be managed electronically and will require the Employer to submit a number of items to the University (see earlier section ‘The Employer’s Role in the Partnership’).

Ofsted play a leading role in the inspection, monitoring and review of levels 6 and 7 apprenticeship provision. At any time, the University will be subject to an inspection visit under the regulations contained in the [Education Inspection Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework). Inspectors will focus their inquiry on areas such as progress providers made since the introduction of apprenticeship programmes and ensuring that as a provider, Northumbria is meeting the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision. As part of any inspection, Ofsted will want to talk to employers via survey and may wish to visit employer premises. The University will contact you with further details in the event of any inspection. Further information can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inspecting-further-education-and-skills-guide-for-providers).

[The University underwent a full inspection in February 2024 and were rated as ‘Good’ in all categories.](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/43/133854)

The Office for Students (OfS) announced that as of 1 April 2023, it will undertake assessments as part of the External quality Assurance of End-point Assessment Organisations for integrated apprenticeships.

**Accreditation and re-accreditation**

Apprenticeships with Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Body (PSRB) accreditation may require the University to submit data about the programme/students on a regular basis or for the purposes of reaccreditation. This will depend on in individual PSRB requirements.

**Appeals and Complaints**

**Employer Complaints**

If you, as the Employer have a problem or issue regarding any aspect of the University’s role in the apprenticeship you should follow the process below. Please note there is a separate process for student complaints and appeals and you may need to establish which is the most appropriate route for your particular issue.

**Informal Issue Resolution**

In the first instance, Employers should contact the Apprenticeship Academic Support Team at [rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk) with queries or concerns regarding the apprenticeship programme, apprentice progress, funding or any other aspect of the partnership. The team aim to provide an initial response within 2 working days. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the contractual dispute resolution process will be invoked.

**Dispute Resolution**

In the event of a dispute arising between the parties in relation to this agreement, either party may serve written notice on the other stating the nature of the dispute (a Dispute Notice). See clause 7 of the full Training Service Agreement for details and procedure.

In addition to the process set out in clause 7 Apprentices and Employers can contact the apprenticeship helpline regarding apprenticeship concerns, complaints and enquiries:

DfE Apprenticeship Service Support

Email: [helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk.gov.uk](mailto:helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk.gov.uk) Tel: 08000 150 600

**Student Complaints and Appeals**

The University has set procedures for the Apprentice to appeal against decisions made by the University so consideration occurs and decisions are made in a systematic and transparent manner. These procedures apply to those elements of the apprenticeships that the University is responsible for.

In all cases, it is best to first raise any concerns the apprentice may have directly with the person most directly involved with those circumstances. If the apprentice remains dissatisfied he/she may raise their concerns formally (please refer to the relevant section of the [‛Handbook of Student Regulations’](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-governance/vice-chancellors-office/legal-services-team/handbook-of-student-regulations/) for further details).

Hopefully apprentices will not need to use these procedures but, should they need to do so, they will find their concerns are listened to and considered in a fair manner.

The University ‛Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman’ is responsible for the operation of the University’s student appeals and complaints processes and also investigates appeals on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. Apprentices having any questions about these procedures should contact ‛Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman’ by email. Alternatively, apprentices may wish to contact the Students’ Union Education Caseworker. The ‛Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman’ works closely with them to ensure proper, transparent, access to the University's appeals and complaints processes.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (the OIA) is the ultimate body to whom students in English and Welsh universities may take their cases. It is completely independent of the universities. Apprentices may only take their case to the OIA once all internal university processes have been completed and they have received a ‛Completion of Procedures Letter’. Further information may be obtained from the University Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman or the [OIA website](http://www.oiahe.org.uk/).