

EMPLOYER HANDBOOK

(Schedule 2)



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE



DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP STANDARD:

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Employer Handbook Template

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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 degree-level 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 Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 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 and 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 (IfATE) Standards, the first includes a mandatory higher education qualification 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 IfATE web page. 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 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 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 ESFA Funding Rules and Guidance for Employers found [here](#) for a full breakdown of your responsibilities as Employer.

The Employer's Role in the Partnership

- To 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.
- To 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.
- To ensure apprentices have the right to work in England and spend at least 50% of their working hours in England.
- To inform us of any changes in circumstances effecting 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.
- To confirm that apprentices will not be required to contribute financially to the cost of their apprenticeship.
- To provide workplace learning opportunities, support and supervision to enable apprentices to carry out their job and complete the apprenticeship, including end-point assessment (EPA).
- To provide a Workplace Mentor for every apprentice and ensure their engagement in regular progress review meetings.
- 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) for each apprentice prior to the start of the apprenticeship programme as advised by the University.
- If your apprentice (s) 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 Degree Apprenticeship Support team if this applies to you.
- 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 ESFA Funding Rules and Guidance for Employers found [here](#)

- Confirm the end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) in liaison with the University before the start or as early as possible in the apprenticeship. The Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR) can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/finding-an-end-point-assessment-organisation>
- Allow for the apprentice to spend a minimum of 20% of their normal working hours but **at least** 6 hours per week for a full time equivalent, i.e. an individual who works 30 hours or more per week. in activities related to their learning. This is called 'Off the Job Training' (OJT).

OJT can include:

- Attendance at scheduled classes
- Practical work-based training: Shadowing, mentoring, industry visits where the activity has been agreed and documented as part of the agreed training plan
- Active engagement with learning support and time spent writing assessments/assignments

OJT forms part of the apprentice portfolio and evidence pack and must be recorded by the apprentice via the system provided by the University.

Note that English and maths training, where required, does not count towards the minimum 6 hours per week OJT.

More information about OJT can be found [here](#)

- Ensure apprentices who have successfully progressed on the programme are supported to attempt the EPA and complete the full apprenticeship.

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

1. The [Apprenticeship Agreement](#):
2. Evidence that the Apprentice has spent at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship.
3. Contract of employment and work rosters.

The University's Role in the Partnership

- To provide a validated programme of study which develops the skills, knowledge and behaviours as published in the programme specification and apprenticeship standard.
- To 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.
-

- To 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.
- To provide an electronic platform for apprentices to maintain their portfolio in a format that can be shared with their employer.
- To provide learning materials including access to the Blackboard Ultra online learning environment to support apprentices achieving success on the programme.
- To provide regular reports to the employer about the engagement and progress of the Apprentices.
- To provide the means for completion of a Level 2 English and maths qualification where apprentices do not hold, or cannot evidence they hold, the appropriate qualifications.
- To ensure the programme, apprentice records and evidence pack comply with ESFA regulations.
- To liaise with the employer regarding appointment of an EPAO and ensure the necessary information and data is made available to the EPAO.
- To ensure any sub-contractors fulfil their obligations according to ESFA Rules.
- To fulfil all obligations to apprentices as students as laid out in the [Northumbria University's Student Charter](#)

See [ESFA Funding Rules and Guidance](#) for more information about the role of the University as a Main Provider.

The Apprentice's Role in the Partnership

- To attend and engage in scheduled teaching sessions and other learning activities.
- To engage in workplace Off-the-Job Training (OJT).
- To record their own OJT using the system provided by the University
- To complete any coursework, assignments and examinations, including EPA, as required by the programme.
- To maintain an ongoing portfolio using the online system provided by the University.
- To engage with progress review meetings.
- To bring any issues affecting their learning or workplace training to the attention of the employer and/or University.

- To record attendance in classes using the system provided by the University.
- To read and understand University rules and regulations governing the conduct of students published in [Northumbria University's Student Charter](#) and [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.
- ESFA regulations 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 will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary on agreement with all parties.

- The document has been cross-referenced to the ESFA 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](#)

Please also be aware of the Department for Education (DfE) privacy notice which can be found [here](#). [For the purposes of relevant data protection legislation, the DfE is the data controller for personal data, this also includes data processed by ESFA.](#)

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 is three months prior to the commencement of the programme to allow sufficient time for the University to complete the selection 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

ESFA 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

Please also note the additional requirement from ESFA 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](#).

For any student who does not hold, or is unable to evidence, these qualifications we will identify the best way to support the apprentice to either achieve or evidence the appropriate level of qualification before gateway and completion of the apprenticeship.

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. Note that time required for learning and assessment on these qualifications is in addition to the minimum of 6 hours per week OJT hours and you as employer must support them with the time required to do this.

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 affects 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. An appropriate return date should be agreed between employer and main provider. 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. Note that where a break in learning has taken place the training plan must be updated to reflect any change in completion date as appropriate.
- Where an apprentice is made redundant, the University is required to make reasonable efforts to find the apprentice a new employer. The apprentice or employer must forward a copy of their redundancy notice for the evidence pack.
- When an apprentice withdraws from the apprenticeship, i.e. the apprentice is no longer employed by the employer and has withdrawn from their programme (not redundancy).
- Change in programme where the apprentice starts a new role with the same employer and requires a different apprenticeship programme and the provider remains the same.
- Confirmation of eligibility for where the employer contribution is waived including evidence from the employer that they had an average of 49 or fewer employees with a contract of employment in the 365 days before the apprentice was recruited. This only applies to apprentices who are 16-18 years old or 19-24 years old with an education, health and care (EHC) plan on the first day of the apprenticeship.

End Point Assessment (EPA)

End-point assessment is the final stage of an apprenticeship. It is an impartial assessment of whether your apprentice has developed the skills, knowledge 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 working together we select an EPAO as early into the apprenticeship as possible to ensure that your apprentice fully understands the assessment criteria and how they will be assessed. All EPA plans can be found on the IfATE web page. EPAs are regularly updated so it is important to review the IfATE 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](#)

Programme Facts

Programme Overview

Faculty: xx

Apprenticeship Standard: XX Award/Programme Title: Programme

(Practical Period) XX

Start Date: XX

Programme (Practical Period) End Date: XX

End-point Assessment Date: XX

Delivery Mode: Part-time

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

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

On programme: E-mail rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk

Compliance: E-mail as.degree.apprenticeships.compliance@northumbria.ac.uk

End-point Assessment: E-mail: as.end.point.assessment@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 first 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 Manager.

Name: Julie-Anne Lowe

Contact details: Phone number: 0191 215 6061

Email: julianne.lowe@northumbria.ac.uk

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. It is expected these meetings will be quarterly with at least one physical meeting, preferably in the workplace, during the course of the programme. Other meetings will be conducted virtually.

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 co-ordinating 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](#).

Apprenticeship Co-ordinator

The Employer Apprentice Co-ordinator 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.

Ensure Apprentices are given an adequate allowance as 'Off the Job Training' and English/maths tuition and exam time, 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

Engage with and contribute to Northumbria Programme and Module 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.

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](#) and [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](#).

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](#) will be followed.

Health and Safety

The University Health and Safety Policy 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](#).

Equality and Diversity

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 and Diversity strongly underpins the University's Vision 2025 and Strategy 2018-2023.

Further information can be found [here](#).

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](#).

Unacceptable Behaviours

Our [Unacceptable Behaviours Policy and online tool](#) makes it easier for apprentices to seek support and/or report their concerns if they experience, or witness, unacceptable behaviour.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a consideration for a range of University activities, and we are all responsible for the safety of under-18s and vulnerable adults. 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. The University's Safeguarding arrangements include risk-based policies and procedures that focus on University activities that involve children and vulnerable adults, 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/>

Prevent Duty

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on all universities, including Northumbria, as a relevant higher education body (RHEB) to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. 'People' in this sense is principally staff and students and those who represent the University. The Prevent duty guidance for higher education institutions in England and Wales was published by the government in late summer 2015. This document requires universities to review their arrangements to ensure the Prevent Duty is implemented, to be overseen on behalf of government by HEFCE as 'principal

regulator' of the University. HEFCE has produced a Monitoring Framework which all registered HEI providers in England are required to satisfy.

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](#) 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 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](#) will apply. Attendance issues will be discussed with coaches and workplace mentors at review meetings and ongoing concerns will be reported to monthly departmental review 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 learning towards their apprenticeship outside of scheduled on campus activity (but still within normal working hours), even during University standard vacation periods.

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. As a minimum, these will take place quarterly or more frequently if defined in the Apprenticeship Standard.

Apprentice progress will be considered at regular Departmental 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.

If your apprentice (s) has been registered on Aptem, our online apprenticeship management system, then you will also have access to an employer dashboard where you will be able to view and monitor progress throughout the apprenticeship.

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 and Inclusion, encompassing: support of disabled students and those with additional support needs

- Wellbeing and Mental Health, including: counselling and mental health support and guidance around self-help
- Student Life, including: financial support, wellbeing and health advice, international student support, chaplaincy and faith advice.

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 expert help and high-quality resources. 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 unique learning spaces, designed using student feedback and giving a choice of places to read, think, focus and be inspired. Around half of the library learning spaces are equipped with PCs or Macs and there is WiFi throughout the University Library for connecting to personal devices. City Campus Library and the University Library Digital Commons are open 24/7 during term-time and other libraries also operate generous opening hours. 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, online help guides and 1-2-1 sessions. Further information can be found [here](#)

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 Student Staff Programme Committees. 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

Feedback on 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 a 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](#) it is the student'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.

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, ESFA Rules and Guidance state funding is not available for students 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 and the apprentice must not be charged. In the event that this happens, we will work with the employer to agree appropriate next steps.

Results

Following Assessment Boards 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 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 and their employer (in consultation with the training provider) is content they have attained sufficient knowledge, skills and behaviours. It is expected that all apprentices who fulfil this criteria will attempt to undertake EPA and that you as employer will support them to do this.

Unless the apprenticeship has been identified as an 'integrated standard', the employer will select and negotiate the price with an end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) to deliver the EPA from the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). As of 1 August

2023, the University will be able to choose an EPAO on your behalf, should you wish us to do this..

Although the University will be involved in arrangements for EPA, 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 ESFA Funding Rules and Guidance found [here](#) and the relevant Apprenticeship Standard. All Standards can be found on the IfATE website [here](#).

As stated in the ESFA 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. 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 **£24,000**

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) **before the start of the programme**.

Go to your Apprenticeship Service account: <https://accounts.manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk/service/index>

. 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.

ESFA has a YouTube website at which you can access a variety of videos such as 'Using the apprenticeship service'. The website can be found at [Apprenticeship Service Playlist](#)

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) process as [standard Northumbria programmes](#). CPPR is the single process to be used across the institution for reviewing modules, programmes and as appropriate subjects.

As a robust quality and student-focused assurance and enhancement tool, CPPR uses the most up-to-date data to drive pro-active recommendations and decision making, having a transparent end to end process and ensures the student voice is at the centre of decisions made, impacting positively on the student experience.

It aims to:

- Deliver continuous assessment of quality and standards, academic performance, and student experience and outcomes through the robust evaluation of modules and programmes, enabled by the presentation of performance data at three points in the academic year, and the implementation of actions and prioritisation of resources.
- Engages fully with the student body and at appropriate stages.
- Provide assurance to Academic Board, the Board of Governors and the University Executive that Northumbria is meeting the Office for Students (OfS) Quality and Standards Conditions.
- Secure the highest level TEF rating.

External Oversight

As part of ESFA Funding Rules, the University (as the provider) is required to maintain the evidence pack, which is subject to ESFA 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').

It was announced in autumn 2020 that Ofsted would 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](#). 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 an inspection. Further information can be found [here](#).

[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 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 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:

ESFA Apprenticeship Service Support

Email: helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.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'](#) 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](#).