

Employer Mentor Handbook



Degree and Higher Apprenticeships 2025-26

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Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be a mentor in support of a colleague enrolled on an Apprenticeship with Northumbria University. Unlike many traditional higher education programmes, apprenticeships involve the application of learning in the workplace therefore mentors play an essential role in supporting the apprentice to achieve success. Mentoring is a highly rewarding experience, and we hope you will learn from your mentee as much as your mentee will learn from you. This handbook explores what mentoring means in the context of an apprenticeship and gives you tools to enable both mentor and mentee to get the most out of the experience.

This handbook is split into two sections 'What is an Apprenticeship?' and 'Guidance for Mentors'. The first provides useful background information about some of the features of a higher-level apprenticeship and the second has some practical tips on how to support your apprentice as a mentor. The Appendices provide additional resources to aid you in your mentoring role and a copy of the Training Plan which includes detailed information about the obligations of employer, University and apprentice.

What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a real job during which the apprentice learns new knowledge, skills, and behaviours. They are a paid employee with the same rights and benefits of all staff employed in the organisation. The training aspect of the apprenticeship is delivered by an approved training organisation such as the University in partnership with the employer. Typically, much of the knowledge-based content is delivered via a higher education qualification or a non-qualification course (for example Higher Apprenticeship), while skills and behaviours can be more appropriately developed and applied in the workplace. An employer must allow an apprentice a minimum of 20% of their normal working week to spend on training. This is called "Off the Job" (OTJ) time.

The requirements of an apprenticeship are defined by two documents 1) the apprenticeship Standard and 2) the assessment plan, both of which can be found on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFtAE) web page <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>.

The apprenticeship is paid for via the employer's apprenticeship levy fund or through co-funding with government (5% by the employer and 95% by government). Most funding is digitally transferred via the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) except for the co-funded employer contribution (5%) which will be invoiced by the training provider directly.

As someone who is involved in the support of apprentices in your organisation you are strongly advised to read and understand the employer obligations as detailed in the 'Commitment of Parties' section of the Training Plan (see Appendix Four) and in the DfE [Apprenticeship Funding Rules](#).

Types of Apprenticeship

There are many types of apprenticeships with differing structures and rules – below outlines those offered by Northumbria University.

Higher Apprenticeships: A higher apprenticeship is a nationally accredited work-based programme designed to meet employers' needs at higher skill levels and include qualifications at a level equivalent to higher education (HE). Higher apprentices gain a recognised professional qualification, technical knowledge, professional skills and wider business competencies. Higher

apprenticeships do not include an academic award as a compulsory component, but some HAS will offer a university award as an option.

Degree Apprenticeships: Simply put, they're apprenticeships with degrees! Like other apprenticeships the aim is to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) aligned to the apprenticeship Standard. They were introduced by the Government in 2015 to offer practical route into work as well as an academic background on their subject. As well as gaining the apprenticeship degree apprentices also graduate with a bachelor's degree (level 6 DA) or a master's degree (level 7 DA).

In addition, an apprenticeship can either be integrated or non-integrated, which refers to how the apprenticeship End-point Assessment (EPA) is delivered.

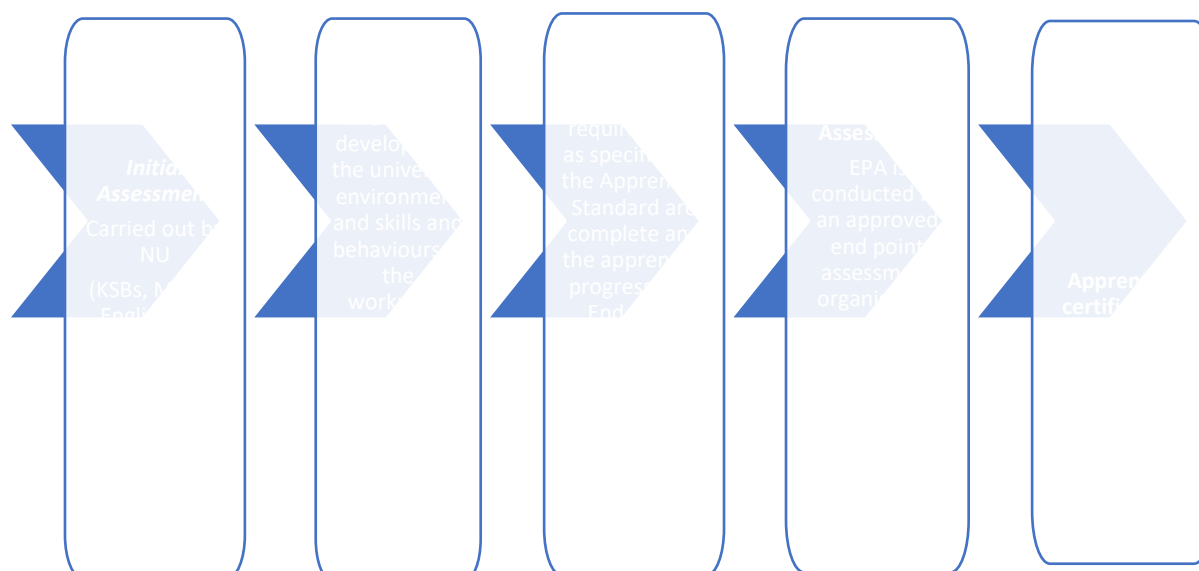
Integrated apprenticeships: The EPA tests the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required by the Standard and is delivered by the University at the end of the apprenticeship programme.

Non-integrated apprenticeships: Non-integrated apprenticeships have an EPA which is separate to the assessment of the degree. It is delivered by an independent EPA organisation (EPAO), chosen by you, which tests achievement against the apprenticeship Standard.

Details of EPA requirements for each individual apprenticeship can be found on the Apprentice Assessment plan on the IfATE [website](#).

The Apprenticeship Journey

As the apprentice's mentor, you need to be involved and understand each stage of the journey to ensure your apprentice has the appropriate support. This is an overview of the main phases of an apprenticeship programme:



Initial Assessment and the Training Plan.

It is very important that everyone involved in supporting the apprentice understands their starting point. This is done through Initial Assessment. This includes mapping existing experience and qualifications to the apprenticeship KSBs so that their training plan can be tailored to meet their needs. If the apprentice is required to achieve a Level 2 qualifications in maths and/or English, or has any additional support needs, these are identified at this stage, and appropriate support plans are put in place.

The initial skills assessment forms part of the Training Plan. The apprenticeship Training Plan is a contract signed by the employer, apprentice, and training provider before the commencement of the programme. The document is a list of expectations from the learner, training provider, and employer, and additional information about the programme. It is an important document that explains what everyone must do to make sure the apprenticeship goes to plan.

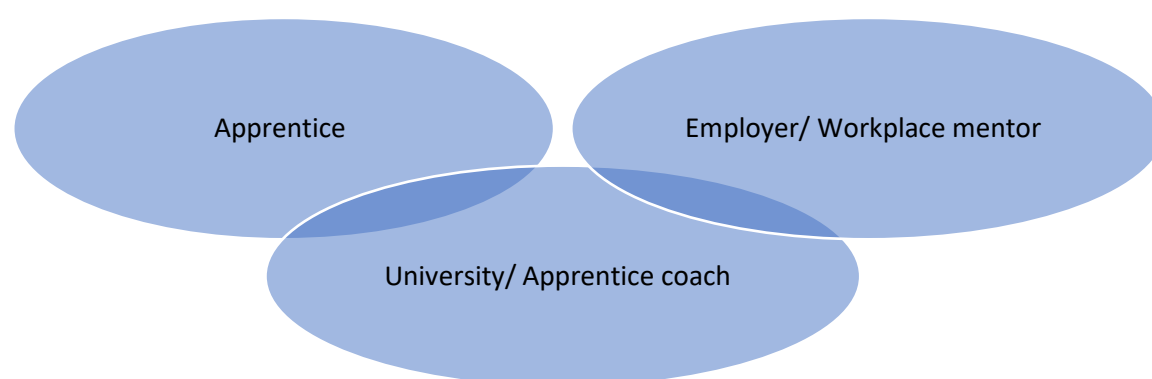
Off the Job learning

All apprentices must be employed in an appropriate job and be supported by their employer to spend the minimum off the job training hours for the standard. The minimum can temporarily be found in Annex C of the funding regulations. OTJ must deliver **new** knowledge, skills and behaviours that are directly related to the apprenticeship standard. All OTJ must be recorded from the beginning of the programme using Aptem, the University's chosen apprenticeship journey system.

You may find this OTJ infographic helpful [OTJT Flowchart v2 - 12092019 Final.pdf](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Tri-Partite Relationship

An apprenticeship only works well if the tri-partite relationship between the three parties is strong and that everyone communicates and supports each part of the apprenticeship. The next section will concentrate on the role of the mentor and how you can help support your apprentice to achieve their potential and provide a positive contribution to the organisation.



Key Roles and Responsibilities

The Workplace Mentor

What is mentoring? Mentoring, in a work-based setting such as an apprenticeship, is a short-medium term professional relationship where a more experienced individual (the mentor) uses their experience and expertise of an area of work or industry to advise, guide and support another individual (mentee) to achieve their stated goals.

“[mentoring is] help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking” David Clutterbuck (1995)

The Role of the Mentor

The apprentice's employer must provide a mentor from within the organisation who will:

- Support apprentices in developing the KSBs aligned to the apprenticeship Standard, and to effectively perform their role.
- Give the apprentice opportunities to gain wider knowledge and skills. ○ Signpost the apprentice towards other members of staff in the workplace who may also be a useful resource/support. ○ Attend the progress review meetings and work with the Apprentice Coach to ensure the apprentice receives the support needed from both the workplace and the University.
- Contribute towards assessing the apprentice's readiness for End Point Assessment (EPA).
- Be a positive role model who gives honest and constructive feedback. Who challenges the mentee to look at their work from new angles, to move out of their comfort zones and help them to recognise and realise their potential. ○ Act on 'at risk' flags raised during progress review meetings (PRM) and ensure the apprentice has appropriate wellbeing support and that they understand safeguarding and what to do/who to contact should they have any concerns.

Mentoring in action

Your contact with the apprentice will be centred around three main activities:

i) Touch Base meetings

Please make sure that you have regular one to one meeting with your apprentice – we suggest once every two or three weeks. These are informal but the apprentice may record the outcomes and actions in their e-portfolio.

ii) Progress Review Meetings (PRMs)

You will be expected to attend regular meetings with the university apprentice coach and the apprentice. Each meeting will last approximately 1 – 1.5 hours and will be online (via Teams). The first PRM is to set clear expectations for future review meetings and the apprenticeship. PRMs are held at least every 3 Calendar Months for the duration of the apprenticeship and are essential to monitor progress and ensure development goals are being met. Records of these meetings and actions agreed can contribute to the apprentice's e-portfolio.

Regular PRMs are important in supporting apprentices and employers successfully through to completion of the programme. When conducted well, these meetings give apprentices the chance to reflect upon and take stock of their learning, assess what progress they have made, what skills, knowledge and experience they have gained

and what still needs to be developed. Being able to identify progress and distance travelled is highly motivating for the apprentice. Crucially, the review discussion should lead to a new set of goals and actions, so the apprentice, University and employer are clear on the next steps of the apprentice's journey. **iii) Support the apprentice in completing the End Point Assessment (EPA)**

Towards the end of the apprenticeship, the apprentice will reach the Gateway. This is the end of the practical period when all the requirements of the apprenticeship standard have been met. The employer must agree that the apprentice is ready to proceed towards the EPA. You may be involved in confirming Gateway on behalf of your employer and you will be supported by the University during the process. The apprentice will have achieved all the required academic credits/qualifications in their apprenticeship including evidence of achieving a pass in English and maths at Level 2.

The purpose of the EPA is to provide confirmation the apprentice has reached occupational competency. Please check the relevant IFATE assessment plan for details of the EPA for your apprentice so you are prepared to provide support and guidance as needed.

What Makes a Good Mentor?

The Mentor/Mentee Relationship

This section provides a range of tools that will help you and your mentee to have a positive and successful professional relationship.

Setting Ground rules

Ground rules set out the basic terms of your relationship with your mentee. Set some principles and boundaries early on for example:

Aim: What you both want to get from the sessions and what you are able to provide.

Confidentiality: Agree what level of confidentiality you want to set. Mentor/mentee conversations and details about your mentee are confidential unless it has been agreed to specifically share information with managers or tutors.

Time Commitment: It is recommended you have 2/3 meetings per month in the first year (which may be by telephone/online/face-to-face). The length of the meetings can be discussed and agreed. As a guide, you may find it useful to schedule an hour for your first meeting and thirty minutes thereafter. Regular and consistent contact with your apprentice is key to developing their trust and confidence, allowing a meaningful and valuable mentoring relationship to develop.

Location: When agreeing a location please consider the following for both parties: **PROP – Professional, Relaxed, Open, Purposeful.**

Records: Agree how you will record your meetings considering the level of confidentiality that you have agreed. In addition to the core ground rules, you may want to discuss some other dimensions of the mentoring relationship.



Open/Closed: This is about the content of your discussions. Fully open means that anything is on the agenda. Fully closed means that only specific agreed items are discussed.

Public/Private: This is about who knows that mentoring is going on. We recommend encouraging your mentee to move towards the 'public' end of the spectrum within the institution, as it is vital the organisation can see the value of the apprenticeship programme, and the role mentoring plays within it. Though, this need does not overrule what you have agreed on confidentiality.

Formal/Informal: In a formal relationship, meetings are agreed in advance, occur at regular intervals with a clear agenda and notetaking (undertaken by the mentee). Informal relationships are more ad-hoc and "go with the flow". For the duration of the mentoring scheme, we recommend the formal end of the spectrum, but it is important that you agree what works best for you and the mentee.

Conducting a mentoring session

A mentoring session may be a tri-partite progress review meeting with the apprentice and their coach or a one to one with your mentee

Listening actively Listening actively is the most basic skill you will use throughout your relationship. Active listening, not only establishes rapport but creates a positive, accepting environment that permits open communication. By listening actively, you will ascertain your mentee's interests and needs. Examples include the following:

- Show interest in what they are saying and reflect important aspects of what they have said to show that you have understood.
- Use body language (such as making eye contact) that shows you are paying attention to what they are saying.

If you are talking to them by phone, reduce background noise and limit interruptions. Your mentee will feel that they have your undivided attention. When using email, answer within 24-hours if possible and be sure your message is responsive to their original message.

- Reserve discussing your own experiences or giving advice until after your mentee has had a chance to speak.

Giving effective feedback. Feedback is information about performance or behaviour. Feedback can be affirmative (giving praise) or developmental (constructive criticism). Whether the feedback is affirmative or developmental, it should be well-timed, direct, succinct, and backed up with specific examples.

Constructive criticism

(information which helps the mentee to see what they could do better or differently).

- Be specific/describe the issue/behaviour in some detail. It is unhelpful to attribute motives to your mentee. For example: "It seems to me that all you want is a quick promotion".
- Avoid words which can appear very definite and judgemental as they often provoke a defensive or attacking response. For example: "You always...", "You never..."
- Developmental feedback should not be presented so apologetically or so wrapped up in qualifying or conditional statements, that the message is lost.

Praise (information which tells the mentee they are doing well, and which encourages them to continue to do it).

- Wherever possible, praise should not be given at the same time as constructive feedback.
- The praise should be as detailed and specific as possible.

Opportunities to give feedback can arise from:

- Watching and listening to your mentee during the mentoring session and providing direct feedback by 'holding up a mirror' or repeating back and commenting on the words/tone that the mentee uses.
- Asking the mentee to recount something that they did, how they did it, how others responded, what they learned etc... ..then providing feedback on how it comes across to you.

Opportunities to give feedback can arise from: (continued)

- During a mentoring session: role playing with the mentee or listening to the mentee rehearsing (e.g., making a presentation)then providing the mentee with immediate praise or constructive feedback.
- Observing the mentee in a live situation (e.g., chairing a meeting or making a presentation) and providing feedback in private thereafter. and do not forget... feedback (and challenge) is a two-way process. Both parties are equal, and each can learn from each other.

Setting targets

As part of the progress review meeting process, the apprentice will need to set SMART targets. These targets should be discussed and agreed with the apprentice, you and the workplace coach following the SMART targets, and goals approach.

SMART is an acronym used to describe the process of setting goals. The acronym stands for the words "specific," "measurable," "achievable," "relevant" and "time-bound," which are essential traits of setting objectives. The SMART method provides

a way to measure your progress and be accountable for your success.



Most targets will be designed to help the apprentice achieve the skills, knowledge and behaviours required by the apprenticeship Standard, but some may be focussed on personal development or designed to provide professional or academic challenge. Targets and actions should be agreed between yourself, the coach and the apprentice and recorded and reviewed at each progress review meeting.

Other Employer/Mentor Responsibilities

Change of Circumstances

If there are any changes to the employment status of your mentee including a change in employer, nature of their role, or hours of employment you must contact the University Apprenticeships Academic Support team immediately so their Training Plan can be updated. This also applies if the apprentice needs to take a break in learning. If an apprentice is unable to engage with their programme of study for a period of a calendar month or more this is considered as a break in learning, and they must formally notify us, using the email address rq.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk.

Fundamental British Values Are a core component of all apprenticeships, and mentoring should help support and further develop these principles, which include.

- democracy,
- the rule of law,
- individual liberty,
- mutual respect for and
- tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

Health and Safety

All employers must take responsibility for the apprentice's safety at work. Your organisation should conduct a Health and Safety assessment of your apprentice's workplace before they start with you. This process will also identify any personal, protective equipment that might be required by the apprentice. As the mentor, you might not be a designated Health and Safety representative but as an employee, you do have an obligation to always consider health and safety in the workplace. You will be ideally placed to identify any potential risks to the apprentice and certainly obliged to act on any concerns raised by the apprentice. You can seek immediate advice from your local Health and Safety representative, but the University will also be well placed to offer advice and support and should be notified immediately if the apprentice has any concerns, even if they are being addressed.

Welfare and Safeguarding

In addition to the normal duty of care that an employer has towards any employee, there is an enhanced responsibility for ensuring that the apprentice is not at risk of harassment, discrimination, or abuse. Therefore, there needs to be adequate supervision in their place of work. The University will also provide the apprentice advice and guidance on staying safe and provide them with contacts to report any concerns that they might have. Employers also need to ensure that they have appropriate Safeguarding of any apprentices who are under 18 years of age. If Apprentices are Under 19 on program. Where an apprentice is under the age of 19, whilst on programme, the workplace coach will ensure that the employer is present during all progress review meetings and during the initial skills assessment meeting'. The University has a common law duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all vulnerable individuals and groups accessing its services and facilities. This applies to work-based learning as well as traditional classroom-based learning. ***If you have reason to believe that your mentee could be of harm to themselves or others, reports of serious misconduct, safeguarding issues, illegal incidents, inappropriate incidents etc. should be escalated.***

If you are made aware that an individual is at imminent risk of harm and on campus, you should call Security on the emergency number

Emergency Number: 3200 (0191 227 3200) , Please note, number is for emergency only

General Enquiries: 3999 (0191 227 3999) Email: CRSecurityTeams@northumbria.ac.uk

If you are unsure if a serious issue has been disclosed and need support/advice, please speak to your HR department in confidence in the first instance. Further information in relation to the University's Safeguarding Policies, process and support can be found here <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-governance/vice-chancellorsoffice/governance-services/safeguarding/>

Prevent Duty

Apprentice employers have a shared responsibility with the University to minimise the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism, and to ensure vulnerable individuals receive timely and appropriate support. As a mentor it is your responsibility to remain vigilant to ensure that the apprentice is not liable to be exposed to these risks. Again, if you have any concerns, you can ask your apprentice's University workplace coach or the Apprenticeship Academic Support team. For more information, please see Northumbria University.

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

Other key information for employers can be found [here](#)

APPENDIX ONE: UNIVERSITY PROCESSES, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

Level 2 Maths and English

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](#)

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.

Careers Support

We understand a Higher and Degree Apprenticeship is a unique pathway, combining on-the job learning as well as academic learning. Because of this, there may be times when academic studies and work feel like a combination of exciting and daunting as the apprentice adjusts to their programme and employment at the same time. The Graduate Futures team have developed a bespoke arrangement of activities to support apprentices on-programme development as well as future career aspirations. [Northumbria University \(careercentre.me\)](https://careercentre.me)

Library Support

The library has developed a range of bespoke activities and sessions to support your apprentice. In addition to a wide range of print and electronic resources we also provide guidance in information and academic skills, online help guides and 1-2-1 sessions. [Home - Library and information skills for Higher and Degree Apprentice students - University Library](#)
[Online at Northumbria University Library](#)

Confidentiality

In the submission or other presentation of module assessment, all efforts must be made to protect the identity of individuals, workplaces and employing authorities, including within appendices, bibliographies, and evidence within work-based portfolios. The identification of one or more individuals in either a written assessment or other form of assessed presentation/evidence to examiners or others without prior written informed consent could constitute a breach of the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) and/or relevant Professional Statutory Regulatory Body regulations and may lead to referral (resit) in that assessment. The identification of workplaces or employing authorities could also constitute a breach of required confidentiality/anonymity if it leads to the identification of, or harm to, those organisations. Apprentices will be provided with the following advice and guidance by their programme teams.

- ❑ It is essential that you confirm your plans with your Workplace Mentor and Module Tutor so that they are aware of the work you are doing.
- ❑ You must gain the permission for any workplace data you plan to use in an assessment.
- ❑ Individual identity must be protected by removing names from any documents you submit. You may refer to individuals by using a pseudonym.
- ❑ Under no circumstances must any client details be included in your work.
- ❑ You should remove the name of your workplace from your work. You can refer to your workplace by the nature of the work rather than by its name e.g., 'a large legal firm in a city location', or 'a local authority'.

APPENDIX TWO: ADDITIONAL MENTORING RESOURCES

What should be covered in the progress review?

Progress reviews are mandatory and ensure apprentices are supported and progressing on their programme and in their job role. The meetings should capture progress against the KSBs from the apprenticeship Standard, academic progress and progress towards end-point assessment (EPA). Additionally, PRMs will capture any learning support requirements and ensure they are acted upon appropriately, review progress against any personal, professional, and academic goals set and celebrate those achievements. The PRM is also an opportunity to address any issues relating to safeguarding and prevent, ensure appropriate careers support and guidance is in place, and that the apprentice understands and reflects upon the Fundamental British Values which are embedded within all our apprenticeships. Please note: Any personal information the student shares with the University will be treated confidentially. Sensitive information is shared with the employer only with consent of the student.

Focus of each Progress Review Meeting (PRM)

Over an academic year, PRM meetings are expected to cover the following:

Focus	Purpose: Compliance Criteria Covered in all Meetings: OTJ, Skills Radar, Safeguarding/Wellbeing, KSB, Change of Circumstances, Employer / Apprentice Feedback
Meeting One Checking Skills and goal setting	<p>First meeting starting point/base line taken from initial assessment including English and maths, Training Plan milestones, brief high-level introduction to EPA, signposting of relevant policies and information, any early learning support needs identified and signposted appropriately, provide overview of EPA and requirements of the assessment,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review individual apprentice Initial diagnostic results / initial skills assessment (first visit on programme) • Agree Apprenticeship Annual Individual Learning Plan (ILP) including OTJ and goals for the year ahead. • Confirm Q1 Action Plan – aligned to taught modules + workplace activities + identify evidence. • Ensure there are no safeguarding or Prevent concerns and that all pastoral needs are being addressed. • Confirm understanding of the KSBs, and that the employer is confident that the apprentice is in a suitable role to enable application of the KSBs.

Interim meeting/s Career development and progression	<p>Meeting 2 progress against actions from last meeting, discussion around how academic learning is being applied in the workplace and any work carried out on portfolio, check that OTJ is being recorded, identify any gaps in KSBs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Portfolio evidence before meeting where appropriate. • Check/Discuss progress on Apprenticeship ILP and OTJ • Review attendance on programme and highlight any issues. • Ensure record of evidence of 'new learning' gained since started the programme and progress towards EPA. • Celebrate success and achievements. • Review on programme and workplace support arrangements • Confirm Q2 action plan – aligned to taught modules + workplace activities + identify evidence. • Ensure there are no safeguarding or Prevent concerns and that all pastoral needs are being addressed. • Focus of this meeting also towards longer term career aspirations and support needed to achieve these
Interim meeting/s Career development and progression	<p>Meeting 3 skills gap analysis against KSBs, review of OTJ hours and portfolio work, progress towards achieving English and maths if required, reminder of EPA requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Portfolio evidence before meeting where appropriate • Check/Discuss progress on Apprenticeship ILP and OTJ • Review attendance and highlight any issues. • Ensure record of evidence of 'new learning' gained since started the programme. • Celebrate success and achievements • Review on programme and workplace support arrangements • Confirm Q3 action plan - aligned to taught modules + workplace activities/projects + identify evidence. • Review the KSB mapping – are there areas where further support is required; is the evidence that underpins the KSBs sufficiently robust for EPA? • Final Year – Discuss/confirm dates for EPA. • Ensure there are no safeguarding or Prevent concerns and that all pastoral needs are being addressed.
Final Meeting KSB mapping	<p>Meeting 4 of the year will review the apprentice's performance over the period, their progress against the goals set at the start of the year and agree new goals/ targets for the next period. Apprentices will be encouraged to be reflective of both their performance and experience and consider any changes they need to enact as a result.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review portfolio progress, and revisit the EPA requirements • Annual review of progress on Apprenticeship ILP and OTJ • Review attendance and highlight any issues • Progress towards achieving English and Maths (where required) we aim for apprentices to achieve this within 6 months of being registered. • Ensure record of evidence of 'new learning' gained since started the programme and how this map to the goals set at the start of the year. • Review progress against goals to set new goals/ targets for the next period. • Celebrate success and achievements • Review on programme and workplace support arrangements • Penultimate year – Discuss/ Confirm proposal for work-based project where relevant. • Final year – Discuss/Confirm progress to EPA Gateway and Assessment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify any revisions required to individual learning plan and Training Plan. • Ensure there are no safeguarding or prevent concerns and that all pastoral needs are being addressed.
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Learning Styles

When approaching a mentoring session, it might be useful to think about the different learning styles and reflect on the one(s) that most aligns to your apprentice. This will ensure you can give them the most appropriate support.

Activists

Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is “I will try anything once”. They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards. Their days are filled with activity. 23 Activists (continued) They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down, they are busy looking for the next. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer-term consolidation. They are gregarious people constantly involving themselves with others, but in doing so, they seek to centre all activities around themselves.

Reflectors

Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first-hand and from others, and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events is what counts, so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before making their own points. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant, and unruffled air about them. When they act, it is part of a wider picture, which includes the past, the present and others’ observations, as well as their own.

Theorists

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step-by-step logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists who will not rest easy until things are tidy and fit into a rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models, and systems thinking. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic, i.e., ‘if it is logical, it is good’. Questions they frequently ask are: “Does it make sense?”, “How does this fit with that?”, “What are the basic assumptions?”. 24 Theorists (continued) They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is their ‘mental set’ and they rigidly reject anything that does not fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgments, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories, and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications.

They are the sort of people who return from management courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They tend to be impatient with ruminating and open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down-to-earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities 'as a challenge'. Their philosophy is: 'there is always a better way' and 'if it works it is good'.

Learning Preferences.

Activists learn best from activities where:

- There are new experiences/problems/opportunities from which to learn.
- They can engross themselves in short 'here and now' activities such as business games, competitive teamwork tasks, role-playing exercises.
- There is excitement/drama/crisis and things chop and change with a range of diverse activities to tackle.
- They have a lot of limelight, high visibility, i.e., they can 'chair' meetings, lead discussions, give presentations.
- They are allowed to generate ideas without constraints of policy or structure or feasibility.
- They are thrown in at the deep end with a task they think is difficult, i.e., when set a challenge with inadequate resources and adverse conditions.
- They are involved with other people, i.e., bouncing ideas off them, solving problems as part of a team.

Reflectors learn best from activities where:

- They are allowed or encouraged to watch/think/ponder over activities.
- They can stand back from events and listen/observe, i.e., observing a group at work, taking a back seat in a meeting, watching a film or video.
- They are allowed to think before acting, to assimilate before commenting, i.e. time to prepare, a chance to read in advance a brief giving background data.
- They can carry out some painstaking research, i.e., investigate, assemble information, probe to get to the bottom of things.
- They can review what has happened, what they have learned.
- They are asked to produce carefully considered analyses and reports.
- They are helped to exchange views with other people without danger, i.e., by prior agreement, within a structured learning experience.
- They can reach a decision in their own time without pressure and tight deadlines.

Theorists learn best from activities where:

- What is being offered is part of a system, model, concept, theory.
- They have time to explore methodically the associations and interrelationships between ideas, events, and situations.
- They have the chance to question and probe the basic methodology, assumptions, or logic behind something, i.e., by taking part in a question-and-answer session, by checking a paper for inconsistencies.
- They are intellectually stretched, i.e., by analysing a complex situation, being tested in a tutorial session, by teaching high-calibre people who ask searching questions.
- They are in structured situations with a clear purpose.
They can listen to or read about ideas and concepts that emphasise rationality or logic and are well argued/elegant/watertight.
- They can analyse and then generalise the reasons for success or failure.

- They are offered interesting ideas and concepts even though they are not immediately relevant.
- They are required to understand and participate in complex situations.

Pragmatists learn best from activities where:

- There is an obvious link between the subject matter and a problem or opportunity on the job.
- They are shown techniques for doing things with obvious practical advantages, i.e., how to save time, how to make a good first impression, how to deal with awkward people.
- They have the chance to try out and practice techniques with coaching/feedback from a credible expert, i.e., someone who is successful and can do the techniques themselves.
- They are exposed to a model they can emulate, i.e., a respected boss, to demonstrate from someone with a proven track record, lots of examples/anecdotes, a film showing how it is done.
- They are given techniques currently applicable to their own job. ▪ They are given immediate opportunities to implement what they have learned.
- There is a high face validity in the learning activity, i.e., a good simulation, 'real' problems. They can concentrate on practical issues, i.e., drawing up action plans with an obvious product, suggesting short cuts, giving tips.

APPENDIX THREE: KSB Mapping

As part of the regular progress review meetings, apprentices will be encouraged to carry out a series of KSB Mapping activities. For apprentices, KSB Mapping is used to track progression against the apprenticeship standard– to identify which KSBs an apprentice has covered and any gaps in their learning. It is a valuable tool in allowing the apprentice to see how much progress they have made, as well as allowing the workplace mentor and university coach to consider what additional support an apprentice may require

KSBs identified in the apprenticeship standard	What evidence have you collated that demonstrates competency in this KSB?	Which module does this link to? (Use KSB reference guides)	Can you reflect on the KSB Examples discussed?
KSB 1			
KSB2			
KSB3			
KSB4			