



<b>Apprenticeship Framework Policy</b>		<b>Ref: PL55-v003</b>	
<b>Brief Description &amp; Purpose:</b>	To set out the framework for the operations of Apprenticeships at Northumbria University		
<b>Applicable to (list cohorts):</b>	<b>Staff:</b> All Staff	<b>Students:</b> Learners studying an Apprenticeship	<b>Third Parties:</b> All who are in a formal relationship with the University
<b>Effective From:</b>	September 2024	<b>Last Review Date:</b>	June 2024
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Academic Board	<b>Approved:</b>	June 2024
<b>Executive Owner:</b>	Deputy Academic registrar (Academic Support)	<b>Business Owner:</b>	Registrar (Apprenticeships)
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	June 2027	<b>Publication External Y/N</b>	Y

# Northumbria University Apprenticeship Framework

## 1. University Position and Strategy

Apprenticeships represent a valuable means through which to apply our existing strengths in research and education, and to allow us to address skills gaps and broader workforce development challenges in the region and beyond, and to act as an enabler for deeper societal change. The development of our apprenticeships portfolio aligns to our 2024-2030 University Strategy and draws on the established expertise in academic departments, partnerships with industry, public and third sector organisations and supports the application of that existing expertise in innovative ways. Each apprenticeship uses this expertise to address a clear strategic need identified with employers and other industry partners and focuses on occupations requiring the higher-level skills and competences that Northumbria is particularly well-placed to deliver.

We recognise the opportunities presented through apprenticeships to support the diversification of the workforce and engage students from backgrounds who may not be attracted by more traditional forms of study. We are particularly proud of the work we do in this field to widen participation in Higher Education and to support social mobility in these professions. Our strategic intent is well suited to enable apprentices to benefit from the synergies with our wider undergraduate and postgraduate taught student community, as well as celebrate the uniqueness of the apprenticeship pathway. Our policy and support infrastructure underpins this strategic approach and ensures that our developments are accordingly fit for purpose.

Successful completion of an apprenticeship at Northumbria requires programme teams to be cognisant of the fundamental differences in the design, delivery, management, regulation, and funding of apprenticeships compared to our traditional provision. Northumbria is regulated as a single Apprenticeship Training Provider and is required to operate as such with a coherent framework for managing its apprenticeship provision. Where an academic department proposes to deliver an apprenticeship, it recognises and agrees to operate wholly within this framework comprising unified policies, processes, systems, and ways of working, in order to secure our ongoing compliance with our regulatory obligations.

As an evolving Apprenticeship Training Provider, the development of our framework for managing apprenticeships remains iterative so that our academic departments and professional services regularly review and ensure the continued alignment of their practice.

The regulations and policies governing the academic experience of Northumbria students shall apply in full to apprentices as to any other registered student enrolled on a Northumbria programme, except where a specific provision is made, or variation sought to accommodate the specific requirements of apprenticeships.

## 2. Governance and Policy

### Apprenticeship Governance Structure and Management

The University has a complex governance structure, reflecting its range of provision and activities. The information below outlines at a high level the role of the relevant boards and committees in apprenticeships.

## **Formal Governance**

### Board of Governors

Supreme decision-making body of the University, overseeing all activities of the University and endorsing its strategic direction. The Board of Governors is the accountable authority under the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA).

### University Executive

Advises the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive on matters relating to the management of the University. The overall strategic direction of apprenticeships, and high-level aspects of apprenticeship operation and compliance will be considered here.

### Planning Committee

Has delegated authority from University Executive to manage the business and commercial aspects of portfolio proposals and developments, including new apprenticeship proposals.

### Academic Board

Academic Board, subject to the oversight of the Board of Governors, oversees the education and research of the University and is responsible for the academic quality and standards of the University, and the admission and regulation of students and other learners (including apprentices). It advises the Vice-Chancellor and the Board of Governors on academic matters.

### Education Committee

Strategy and policy oversight for student learning and experience activities, providing advice and monitoring activities in these areas. It manages business through several sub-committees including:

#### Apprenticeship Sub-Committee

The Apprenticeship Sub-Committee leads on the development of the apprenticeship portfolio in the context of University Strategy, and specifically in the context of the requirements of external regulatory frameworks. It considers reports on new apprenticeship opportunities and provides pre-scrutiny of new programme proposals to assess any compliance implications.

The work of the Apprenticeship Sub-Committee is informed by and complemented through the following Groups and Sub-Committees:

#### Quality and Standards Sub-Committee

Responsible for oversight of the approval and review of all programmes, including apprenticeships, which are considered in the context of the overall portfolio of the University.

#### Faculty Education Committee

Responsibility for promoting, supporting and facilitating the creation of a culture of Education excellence at Faculty and Department level across all delivery models, including apprenticeships.

#### Apprenticeship Assessment Board (AAB)

Confirms University awards and monitors progression and engagement on apprenticeship programmes according to apprentice-specific requirements, including Gateway.

### Department Apprentice Journey Meetings (DAJM)

Conducts regular review of individual apprentice progress, including skills assessment, attendance, off the job (OTJ), and academic progress. Identifies actions and interventions where areas of concern are identified, including safeguarding concerns.

A diagram of the governance structure is available in **Appendix A**.

## **Assessment Regulations**

The Assessment Regulations for Northumbria Awards (ARTA) and its related policies apply to apprentices, except where there are particular requirements relating to the apprenticeship external regulation and funding rules. Variations to the regulations might also be applied to cover the requirements of any relevant Professional and Statutory Bodies (PSRBs). Variation Orders will be approved through the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee of Education Committee as per standard policy.

## **3. Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Access to Levy Funds**

### **3.1 Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR)**

The University must be registered as a provider on the APAR to run apprenticeship programmes, draw down levy funds, and deliver End Point Assessment (EPA). Registration is via a substantial application process which includes information on our quality control measures, management, leadership and staffing. From time to time the University will be invited to renew membership. The APAR submission is managed by Quality and Teaching Excellence (Apprenticeship Quality and Compliance).

### **3.2 Education and Funding Skills (ESFA) Contract**

ESFA contracts and agreements are published to a secure government portal and are electronically approved/signed off by an authorised signatory on behalf of the training provider. Variations to the contracts and agreements can be made throughout the funding year and require re-signing. ESFA will stop or pause apprenticeship funding where there is not an up to date signed agreement.

### **3.3 Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Funding Returns**

The Individualised Learning Record (ILR) is the primary apprenticeship data collection process. All training providers must return an ILR return each month to ensure that public money is distributed through the ESFA in line with government targets for quality and value for money. The ILR return calculates the actual funding earned and monitors training providers delivery against the apprenticeship budget.

Training providers collect information about each of their learners, the learning they are doing, and the learning outcome. The ILR data is stored in the student record system and is submitted to the ESFA each month through a secure ESFA portal – “Submit learner data”. The ILR return goes through strict validation and other checks to ensure the data is in good quality and in the correct format. Valid learner data is run through a funding calculation, checked against contract information and the appropriate payment is then made. Funding will not be received for any learners that have validation errors.

## **4. Types of Apprenticeship**

Apprenticeships are work-based programmes of study which are designed to meet Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) Apprenticeship Standards. The

University delivers two types of apprenticeships; Degree Apprenticeships (DA) and Higher Apprenticeships (HA).

All types of apprenticeships can be delivered as 'open' or 'closed' programmes. An open programme is offered to any employer with apprentices in appropriate roles, whilst a closed programme is delivered to a specific employer. Closed programme content and delivery pattern may differ slightly from the 'open' equivalent.

All apprenticeship programmes must operate in accordance with the ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules (hereafter referred to as "the funding rules"). For apprenticeship programmes delivered by the University, the University is responsible for compliance with the funding rules.

All staff involved in the delivery and support of apprenticeship programmes within the University will be kept informed of the requirements of the funding rules (and any associated changes) by the Quality and Teaching Excellence (QTE) Apprenticeship Quality and Compliance team. Staff must act in accordance with the funding rules, including retaining appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance as part of an associated evidence pack.

#### **4.1 Degree Apprenticeships (DA)**

The IfATE DA Standards include a level 6 or level 7 award as part of the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan. The Degree element is governed via standard ARTA regulations (or approved variations thereof). The apprenticeship End Point Assessment (EPA) assesses professional competency and completion of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) as outlined in the specific apprenticeship standard. The EPA is either integrated into the degree programme (the degree and the apprenticeship award are assessed at the same time) or non-integrated (the degree and the apprenticeship award are assessed separately). EPA requirements are published in the Apprenticeship Standard Assessment Plan. (See section 7 below for more information on EPA).

#### **4.2 Higher Apprenticeships (HA)**

The IfATE HA Standards do not normally include an obligatory University award though optional awards may be incorporated into the programmes. Northumbria University's principles for the delivery and management of Higher Apprenticeships are as follows:

- Like Degree Apprenticeships, HAs combine academic study with work-based learning. Students must be employed in a job role which provides opportunity to practice and evidence the knowledge, skills & behaviours (KSBs) required to achieve the apprenticeship as defined by the relevant IfATE Standard. HA awards are made by IfATE after completion of an approved programme of study and successful completion of EPA.
- Unlike Degree Apprenticeships, HA Standards do not also include an obligatory University award. Students may successfully complete the programme and be awarded a Higher Apprenticeship by IfATE without receiving a university degree or other university award.
- Progression to the EPA Gateway is not dependent on achievement of a university award.
- At Northumbria University, HA programmes are made up of modules with notional workload and corresponding credit size. Module learning outcomes should map directly

to the HA Standard and enable apprentices to demonstrate acquisition of KSBs and professional competence. All content must contribute to the apprenticeship award.

- University awards on HA programmes will be written into the programme design and approved via the normal University approval process. Any University award title should be distinctive from the apprenticeship title to clearly differentiate.
- University awards may be made to students on HA programmes in the following circumstances:
  - Where an award has been written into the IfATE Standard.
  - As recognition of achievement on early exit from the programme.
  - As recognition of credits gained on the HA programme after successful completion of EPA.

## **5. Mapping to Standards**

All learning on both DA and HA programmes must contribute to the IfATE standard. At programme development stage a mapping exercise is carried out and submitted as part of the programme approval documentation (see section 5). The mapping must clearly demonstrate that all module learning outcomes directly contribute to the apprenticeship standard KSBs and all standards are covered by learning outcomes.

This mapping demonstrates that levy funds are being used appropriately i.e., to deliver only IfATE Apprenticeship Standards.

## **6. Programme Approval and Revision**

Initial approval and any subsequent revisions of all apprenticeship programmes follow University approval processes in all respects, other than the specific requirements referenced in the two sections below.

### **6.1 Programme Approval**

Initial approval for developing an apprentice programme must be supported by the Dean of Apprenticeships, in order to ensure fit to University Apprenticeship Strategy.

Following endorsement by the Dean of Apprenticeships, the proposer follows the standard University programme approval process and submits a proposal to the Portfolio Development Team which coordinates strategic (business case) consideration process, and approval by Planning Committee. At this stage, an apprenticeship supplement must be included in the documentation for consideration. The supplement requires the proposer to demonstrate the following:

- How the minimum requirement for off the job training hours is met on the programme,
- Programme costing which complies with ESFA rules and an indicative delivery schedule including start and end dates, and EPA Gateway.
- A due diligence report is also required at this stage if the proposal includes sub-contracted delivery (see section 10).
- How the unique features of an apprenticeship – such as Safeguarding, Prevent and Fundamental British Values (FBV) are clearly articulated.

Following strategic approval, in order to prepare for academic approval, the proposers must complete the University's bespoke Apprenticeship Programme Specification template, as well as other key documentation which is specific to apprenticeship programmes. These templates are owned by the Quality and Teaching Excellence team in Academic Registry.

To aid and document appropriate scrutiny, at the time of academic programme approval the University Approval Panel (UAP) members are issued an Apprenticeship-specific checklist which ensures that the key features of an apprenticeship programme have been appropriately addressed within the programme design. The UAP must ensure that the programme is structured to deliver the learning aims (KSBs) of the IfATE Apprenticeship Standard, and the EPA (where integrated) follows the appropriate Assessment Plan. Where a PSRB is involved in programme approval, mapping of learning aims and outcomes must include both PSRB standards and IfATE standards.

UAP members are additionally asked to question and clarify the role of employers in the design and delivery of apprenticeship programmes, to ensure compliance with apprenticeship design expectations.

## **6.2 Programme Revisions**

It is fully expected that apprenticeship programmes will need to change over time, especially when a new IfATE (or related PSRB) standard or version of a current standard is published in the sector. The process for revising an apprenticeship programme is the same as for any other University programme, but with some key additions:

- Heads of Apprenticeships and appropriate professional support staff are expected to assess each revision submission for apprenticeship programmes, to ensure compliance with apprenticeship regulations, latest standards, and design principles.
- Apprenticeship programmes should be marked / highlighted as such in the revisions process, to enable robust tracking and monitoring of IfATE standard revisions.
- Apprenticeship programme documentation must be on the correct apprenticeship-specific templates, to ensure all key information is captured.
- After approval of apprenticeship revisions, the amended information must be accurately transferred into the apprenticeship management system (Aptem) and updates must be communicated to apprentices and employers in a timely manner, when there is an impact on contractual obligations requiring training plans and relevant agreements to be reissued.

Post-approval, final versions of documentation will remain stored on standard University systems, in line with all other Northumbria programmes.

## **7. Work-based Learning and Off the Job Training (OTJ)**

Apprenticeship programmes combine academic study with work-based learning. Every apprentice must be supported to achieve the apprenticeship standards within their job role.

ESFA places obligations on employers and providers to ensure that apprentices are employed in an appropriate job role and are adequately supported. Each employer provides a mentor to support the apprentice through the programme. The mentor is usually the immediate line manager and attends a progress review meeting every 12 weeks with the University coach and the apprentice.

Employers must allow a minimum of 20% of standard working hours (capped at 30 hours per week) known as 'Off the Job Training' (OTJ). This equates to 6 hours a week of OTJ training. Defined by ESFA as:

Off the job training is a statutory requirement for an English apprenticeship. The provider must verify that the off the job training delivered to the apprentice meets the following definition:

- i) It is training which is received by the apprentice within their practical period, during the apprentice's normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship they are undertaking. By normal working hours we mean the hours for which the apprentice would normally be paid, excluding overtime.
- ii) It is not on the job training, which is training received by the apprentice for the sole purpose of enabling the apprentice to perform the work for which they have been employed. By this we mean training that does not specifically link to the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship.

The provider must ensure that off the job training delivers new skills that are directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard. Off the job training can include:

- a) The teaching of theory (e.g. lectures, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning and manufacturer training)
- b) Practical training (e.g. shadowing, mentoring, industry visits and participation in competitions)
- c) Learning support
- d) Time spent writing assignments
- e) Revision (where this is specifically required for achievement of the apprenticeship).

Apprentices are required to record their OTJ hours and collect supporting evidence to validate their claim.

OTJ components are designed specifically for individual learner training plans, mapped within Aptem. This acts as a progress monitoring tool for all stakeholders, supporting attendance and engagement, and a linked repository for portfolio evidence.

## 8. **End Point Assessment (EPA)**

EPA is the final assessment of an apprentice's attainment of the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours, and confirmation of professional competence. Successful completion of EPA is necessary for the award of the Apprenticeship Certificate. In the case of **Integrated** Degree Apprenticeship Standards, the EPA will normally form part of the University award and will be conducted by the University via Independent Assessors appointed for this purpose. For **Non-integrated** Degree Apprenticeship Standards, the EPA will be undertaken by an external End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) (see also section 3.1).

For both integrated and non-integrated EPA, the University will confirm that apprentices have satisfied the requirements of Gateway, which is the point they progress to EPA, via an Apprentice Assessment Board, or AAB (see section 15 below).



The nature of the EPA and Gateway requirements differ according to the IfATE Apprenticeship Standard.

The University's EPA policy can be found [here](#).

## **9. Employer Agreements and On-Boarding**

### **9.1 Employer Application Form**

Business Development Managers in Global Marketing and Business manage the initial Employer Application. At this stage, due diligence, appropriateness of the programme to business and apprentice needs and eligibility of proposed apprentices are confirmed in line with ESFA funding rules. Employer information and that of each apprentice candidate (where known) is extracted from Approved Employer Application forms and added to an onboarding SharePoint site, accessed by Business Development, Applicant Services, Apprenticeship Academic Support and Strategic Planning and Performance to begin the apprentice admission and employer contracting processes.

### **9.2 Employer Contracts**

There must be a written contract between the University and the employer which forms the contract for services between the two institutions in relation to the negotiated fees, set against the pricing matrix of the ESFA eligible costs including the cost of EPA.

The contract template has been developed by Legal Services and Apprenticeship Academic Support Team to meet ESFA and University needs and is managed on an operational level on a self-service basis by Apprenticeship Academic Support Team. Legal Services will be consulted if an employer requests a change to the standard terms or when a need to adjust the agreement has arisen from the University or changes to external regulations.

Contracts are issued to employers by the Apprenticeship Academic Support Team. The contract will be in place prior to commencement of the apprenticeship programme and full onboarding of the apprentice in line with funding rule requirements.

A contract will normally be for a period of four or five years. For repeat cohorts with the same employer which fall within the main contract term, an annual schedule is used which details any amendments or updates to the main contract and the names of the new apprentices.

### **9.3 Other Agreements**

In addition to a contract, the following documents must also be in place prior to the start of the programme:

- **Apprentice Agreement:**  
This is an agreement between the apprentice and the employer. The University will provide information to assist employers to complete this, but the document is owned by the employer.
- **Training Plan:**  
This is an agreement between the University, the apprentice, and the employer. The document sets out how all three parties will support the apprenticeship. The content of the Training Plan must align with the requirements of the funding rules, including setting out the planned content and schedule for the training (including module list and EPA); start and end dates for the apprenticeship (including EPA); start and end

dates and duration of the practical period (excluding EPA); the number of planned off-the-job training hours for the full apprenticeship; the roles and responsibilities of each party; and written confirmation from the employer that the apprentice will be allowed to undertake the required amount of off-the-job training (and English and Maths training if required) within their normal working hours. An example of the Training Plan available on Aptem can be found [here](#).

Signed copies of the Apprenticeship Agreement and the Training Plan are retained by the Apprenticeship Academic Support Team in Aptem. The Training Plan must reflect any key updates and reissued for signature where required. A document audit trail of any revisions resulting from changes in circumstance is kept in the evidence pack.

## 10. External Quality Monitoring (EQA) for EPA

EQA of the (degree and higher) apprenticeship provision is the responsibility of the Office for Students (OfS) via the Designated Quality Body (DQB). The DQB function is currently being undertaken by the OfS.

The process of EQA is based on the [IfATE EQA Framework](#). Guidance has been released by the Office for Students on the process for EQA. Judgements focus on whether EPA is effective, valid and reliable, and in line with OfS Condition B4.

**EQA readiness checks** would apply when an EPAO intends to deliver EPA for a new apprenticeship standard. These confirm that the EPAO is ready and able to ensure timely delivery of assessments for learners who have completed their learning and are ready to take the EPA.

**EQA monitoring checks** are designed to ensure that the actual delivery of EPA provides a relevant, reliable and independent assessment of occupational competence, when an EPAO has completed at least one cycle of EPA. EPAOs are selected for monitoring checks on the basis of risk as identified by IfATE and prioritising is likely to take place based on the number of apprentices on standards. Northumbria University has not yet been selected for a monitoring check.

Parts of the ongoing monitoring includes the EPAO's internal and external quality monitoring processes, which, in turn, will inform above checks by the OfS.

External examiners form one of the lynchpins of Northumbria's moderation processes. Northumbria's [external examiners policy](#) outlines criteria for appointment, roles and responsibilities, nomination, and appointment processes as well as internal reporting and feedback requirements applicable. Additional duties as to End Point Assessment around review documentation, review of sample work, standardisation/moderation meetings and examination boards observation, meeting with independent assessors, apprentices and employers are also referenced.

Conflicts of interest are managed as part of the recruitment/appointment process with prior scrutiny applicable by heads of apprenticeships initially to ensure suitable due diligence. Any further escalation is enabled through the Governance structure, where required.

Regular governance reporting of external examiners appointments and feedback takes place through Apprenticeship Sub-Committee, Education Committee and Academic Board throughout committee cycles.

Training of and communication with external examiners is ongoing through the recruitment, appointment, reporting and (fee) claim processes. An additional yearly webinar also takes place to provide details of the sector context, Northumbria practices and contacts in place.

Please see **Appendix C** for external examiner/assessor supplementary report.

## 11. Annual Quality Monitoring

Through Continuous Programme Performance Review (CPPR) colleagues will review apprenticeship programmes, with adjustments to take into account apprenticeship-specific data sets and considerations. Apprenticeship Programme CPPR Reports are continuously monitored, whilst being signed off by the relevant Faculty Education Committee (FEC) at three points per academic year (September, December and April), providing the audit trail that all data has been considered.

Signed off Apprenticeship CPPR Reports are noted at Apprenticeship Sub-Committee (ASC) and used as a basis for the institutional SAR (Self Assessment Report). A meeting of Apprenticeship Programme Leaders and Heads of Apprenticeships will be convened to draft the institutional SAR, then signed off by Apprenticeship Sub-Committee.

Apprenticeship Sub-Committee continuously monitors AAF (Apprenticeship Accountability Framework) metrics.

Learner feedback is gathered by the Governance and Enhancement Team, using a number of applicable Learning and Teaching Surveys such as module evaluations. NSS (National Student Survey) eligibility also applies.

Employer feedback is monitored internally via a yearly employer survey carried out jointly by Governance and Enhancement and Global Marketing and Business teams. Results are then reported to the Apprenticeship Sub-Committee. Additionally, risk monitoring of the Government Employers' Survey (currently carried out every 90 days) outcomes is taken place through the AAF dashboard with reporting through the Apprenticeship Sub-Committee.

## 12. Sub-Contracted Provision

Apprenticeship provision may be sub-contracted to other suitable organisations where there is benefit to the programme, for example by enhancing employer collaboration, workplace expertise or expanding the geographical location of delivery. A sub-contractor may be the employer or another training provider. This activity is closely monitored by ESFA and the University must adhere to the ESFA sub-contracting standard. The University has a sub-contracting policy and rationale in place which outlines the governance and management of such arrangements. The University's management of sub-contracting is subject to an annual ESFA audit. The University's Sub-Contracting Policy and rationale is published on our webpages in line with ESFA regulations and can be found at: <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/business-services/engage-with-us/degree-apprenticeships/develop-an-apprentice>

Proposals including potential sub-contracting are subject to scrutiny as early as possible in the planning process. The approval process is set out in the sub-contracting policy:

- The Apprenticeship Sub-Committee will initially consider all new requests to enter a sub-contracting relationship for an Apprenticeship opportunity, regardless of value. This scrutiny takes place prior to tender.
- Following the Apprenticeship Sub-Committee sign-off, details of any proposed subcontracting arrangement including educational rationale, due diligence report and

costings for wider University scrutiny is submitted to the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee is therefore able to halt development of the programme if the appropriate scrutiny of potential sub-contracting has not taken place according to University policy.

- The Planning Committee recommendations regarding proposals to sub-contract will be submitted to Education Committee for approval and reported to Employment and Finance Committee to endorse.
- The Employment and Finance Committee receive rationale for sub-contracting and confirm Governor sign-off annually.

ESFA regulations on sub-contracting determine that rationale must meet **one or more** of the following criteria:

- Enhance the opportunities available to young people.
- Fill gaps in niche or expert provision or provide better access to training facilities.
- Support better geographical access for learners.
- Offer an entry point for disadvantaged groups.

## **13. Apprentice Application and On-boarding**

### **13.1 Eligibility**

In addition to academic entry criteria the following criteria apply to prospective apprenticeship students in accordance with ESFA Funding Rules.

For example, they must:

- Be in employment and have a contract of sufficient duration to allow them to complete the apprenticeship.
- Be a resident in the UK.
- Be in a job role which provides them with the opportunity to apply the knowledge, skills, and behaviour (KSBs) stipulated in the apprenticeship standard.
- Be able to evidence certification of qualifications and/or have a Personal Learning Record to evidence qualifications.

See [Apprenticeship funding rules 2023 to 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) for full rules on eligibility.

### **13.2 Application**

The apprentice application process follows University Online Application process and standard University policies and procedures apply (although with variations relating to Apprenticeship standards). Apprentices are initially nominated by their employer as part of

the employer contracting process and it is then the University's responsibility to check potential apprentices against University and ESFA eligibility criteria. The Application process is managed by the University's Applicant Services team.

### 13.3 Initial Skills Assessment

When eligibility is confirmed, an Initial Skills Assessment (ISA) must be carried out for each prospective apprentice. Prior experience is mapped against the standard's KSBs to determine a starting point against which to benchmark progress and identify any RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) required. ESFA funding must not be claimed for learning previously acquired and the University must demonstrate that the apprenticeship programme provides new learning for each learner. ISA is carried out by Apprentice Coaches assigned to support the relevant programme.

Where RPL is due, the University can either exempt a student from studying the module or part of the module reducing OTJ hours, or if deemed appropriate, allow the student to complete the module but remove the cost of delivery from the funding claim.

From 31 October 2023, ESFA have accepted that prior learning is less likely to exist for 16-18 year olds but, where this is the case, the provider must still evidence this with a check of the personal learning record and a discussion. There is no longer a requirement to complete a skills scan in this scenario.

## 14. The Apprentice File/Evidence Pack

The University must hold evidence to assure ESFA that funding is being used appropriately. Most evidence will occur naturally from normal business process. In the event of an ESFA audit, if evidence is not available, funding may be at risk.

See 'Evidence Requirements' P261 of ESFA funding rules for details of evidence pack requirements and the relevant sections relating to evidence.

## 15. Coaching and Progress Review

### 15.1 The Workplace Coach

Each apprentice is allocated an Workplace Coach. The coach forms a tri-partite group along with the apprentice and the employer mentor when completing Progress Review Meetings (PRM). PRMs take place every 12 weeks during the apprentice's programme. PRMs monitor, review progress, and support the apprentice in developing and applying work-based skills as defined by the Apprenticeship Standards Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs). The coach also conducts a compliance check to ensure that the apprentice is taking the OTJ hours required for the apprenticeship and recording evidence.

The role of the Workplace Coach includes:

**Conducting an initial assessment** of each apprentice's existing knowledge, skills and behaviours against the apprenticeship standard prior to the start of the programme. This assessment informs RPL and forms a foundation to monitor development during the programme. The initial meeting takes place via teams with the stakeholder's Apprentice, Employer and Workplace involved in the process.

**Leading Progress Review Meetings** with the employer, mentor and apprentice. The coach will complete a standard monitoring review form which is developed and managed by the Apprenticeship Academic Support Team Coach Coordinator for each PRM. Actions are identified and actively followed up and overall progress is RAG rated, which identifies cases

for intervention and escalation requirements. These actions are discussed in the monthly DAJM Meetings. Workplace Coaches and members of the academic staff teaching on the apprenticeship programme formulate any actions needed to get the apprentice back on track.

**Supporting portfolio development.** The coach will provide advice and guidance to apprentices and employer mentors on the completion of the apprentices' work-based portfolio.

**Preparation for End Point Assessment.** The coach completes a PRM focused on KSB mapping and helps to prepare apprentices for professional discussions if necessary.

## 16. Departmental Apprentice Journey Meetings

### 16.1 Purpose and Remit

Departmental Apprentice Journey Meetings (DAJMs) will undertake regular progress reviews to ensure work-based learning and OTJ are on track and an adequate level of employer support is in place.

At each DAJM, the content and structure of discussion will differ depending on apprenticeship nuances but **core** consistent focus for review will be as follows:

- To consider a summary of Apprentice Progress Review Reports (with RAG ratings), academic records of apprentices, OTJ and attendance records (where available).
- The workplace coach to go through their caseload of apprentices monthly with Line Manager and Programme Leader to discuss any queries etc per apprentice.
- To discuss, on an exceptional basis, (Red and Amber rated) apprentices and apprenticeships with unsatisfactory progress or engagement.
- To identify actions and interventions where progress is not satisfactory and maintain a centrally held log of discussions, decisions and follow up actions.
- To refer wellbeing concerns to the dedicated safeguarding officers.
- To refer concerns relating to ongoing lack of engagement to the Apprenticeship Academic Support team for investigation.
- Once established by the Apprenticeship Academic Support team, to endorse decisions to suspend apprentices due to lack of engagement in line with ESFA funding rules and report to the Apprentice Assessment Board (AAB).
- The Workplace Coach to choose an action to help get the apprentice back on track e.g. Category 1: Workplace Coach to follow up, Category 2: Academic Support to follow up, Category 3: The faculty HOA (Head of Apprenticeships) to follow up.

Additional items of focus will differ but may include the following:

- To consider Business Development updates.

- To update on Admissions.
- To receive updates from Registry teams if relevant.
- To receive an update from Workplace Coaches.
- To receive an update from each apprenticeship programme.
- Any Other Business.

## **16.2 Operation**

Each Workplace Coach will share their caseload and report any actions taken from their apprentice PRMs raising any areas and apprentices for concern. The DAJM will agree and record any necessary actions which need to take place, or have to date been put in place, to support any apprentice identified. Progress on actions will be discussed and recorded at the following DAJM to assess completion and impact. See DAJM Terms of Reference at **Appendix B**.

## **17. Apprentice Assessment Board**

### **17.1 General Purpose and Remit**

The remit of the Apprentice Assessment Board (AAB) incorporates the standard University PAB (Programme Assessment Board). The Terms of Reference were amended to accommodate the distinct types of apprenticeship and additional monitoring and compliance responsibilities.

- To confirm linked University awards on Degree Apprenticeship programmes and optional University awards on Higher Apprenticeship programmes (NB these should have been formally agreed at the initial approval stage, see section 5.1).
- To confirm the academic progression status for individual apprentices based on their profile of confirmed marks with reference to the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards, any specific regulations formally agreed to apply to a programme (e.g., Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) considerations) and the Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours (KSBs) relating to the relevant apprenticeship standard.
- In the case of Higher Apprenticeship programmes and at the final AAB for Degree Apprentices, to confirm progression to Gateway for End Point Assessment (EPA).
- To monitor apprentices' engagement and compliance by:  
At programme and cohort level, to receive any apprentice specific interventions which have taken place following ongoing review and progress activities at Departmental Review Meetings. Covering, but not exclusive to; Off the Job Training (OTJ), Employer Engagement and trajectory to meet required apprenticeship KSBs.
- Ratifying any eligibility or contractual breach decisions taken for individual apprentices which result in either withdrawal or suspension of the Apprentice.

See AAB Terms of Reference at **Appendix B**.

## 17.2 AAB Remit - Degree Apprenticeships (integrated)

**Final Year:** The role of the AAB is to confirm competency against the Standard's KSBs, as demonstrated by assessment results and eligibility for aligned University awards. For integrated standards the AAB will confirm that apprentices have met the Gateway requirements to progress to EPA. After the EPA, the AAB will confirm achievement of the University Award and the apprenticeship. The AAB also confirms resit requirements, including resits of the EPA.

To do this, the AAB receives:

- Module results as evidence of KSB achievement
- Employer sign-off as evidence of workplace competency
- Acquisition of level 2 functional skills
- OTJ hours
- Other Gateway requirements as may be specified by the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

**Progressing:** The AAB confirms apprentice competency to be appropriate to the stage of study by consideration of module results and an overview of Tri-partite Progress reports. It ratifies interventions in cases of non-engagement and non-compliance referred by the Departmental Apprentice Journey Meetings.

### AAB Remit - Degree Apprenticeships (non-integrated)

**Final Year:** The role of the AAB is to confirm progression to Gateway and eligibility for any University awards. It receives and considers:

- Student performance, as demonstrated by module results
- Overview of Workplace Coach reports
- Flags raised by DAJMs reports
- Other Gateway criteria (OTJ and functional skills acquisition where needed)
- Employer's recommendation

The AAB confirms progression to Gateway and makes a recommendation to the EPAO regarding the level of competency against the Standard's KSBs.

**Progressing:** The AAB confirms apprentice competency to be appropriate to the stage of study by consideration of module results and an overview of Tri-partite progress reports. It ratifies interventions in cases of non-engagement and non-compliance referred by the Departmental Apprentice Journey Meetings.

## 17.3 AAB Remit - Higher Apprenticeships

**Final Year:** The role of the AAB is to consider apprentice performance as demonstrated by assessment results and an overview of Tri-partite progress reports. The AAB makes a



recommendation to the employer and the EPAO regarding the level of competency against the Standard's KSBs.

**Progressing:** The AAB decides on whether apprentice competency is appropriate to the stage of study by consideration of module results and an overview of Tri-partite progress reports. It ratifies interventions in cases of non-engagement and non-compliance referred by the Departmental Apprentice Journey meetings.

#### **17.4 Powers of intervention**

The AAB has the power to withdraw or suspend an apprentice for the following reasons in line with ESFA eligibility criteria:

- Does not possess a level 2 maths and English qualifications and will not do so before Gateway.
- Non-attendance for more than 30 days.
- Apprenticeship is not developing new knowledge related to their job role.
- Lack of progress against KSBs.
- Studying on another DFE (Department for Education) programme.

#### **18. Risk Register**

Under the [University Risk Management Policy](#), all Faculties and Services must have operational risk registers. These registers identify the departmental risks, the measures that are currently in place to manage the risks, and what additional measures may be required to further reduce the adverse effect, should the risk event occur. For specialist areas, such as Apprenticeships, whose activities sit across multiple faculties and/or services, it is prudent to create a specific risk register for that activity to provide an overarching view and allows for the risks to be managed more cohesively and effectively.

The Apprenticeship Risk Register will feed in laterally to any other appropriate Faculty of Service risk registers as well as upwardly influencing the University's Strategic Risk Register where risks are significant enough to do so. The Governance Services Team will facilitate regular review of the Apprenticeship Risk Register, in line with the University Risk Management Policy, reviews being conducted with the identified risk owners or their delegates.

#### **19. Safeguarding**

All Apprentices are given information about staying safe at university, in the workplace and online (through the Safer Online training). Apprentices are encouraged to stay safe at work and identify any potential risks to their mentor or employer.

Apprentices must complete mandatory Safer Online training and Prevent training. This is currently undertaken via Blackboard sites, but with the introduction of Aptem, the training will be completed and monitored through Aptem. For apprentices on programmes using Aptem, additional Safeguarding information videos have been provided.

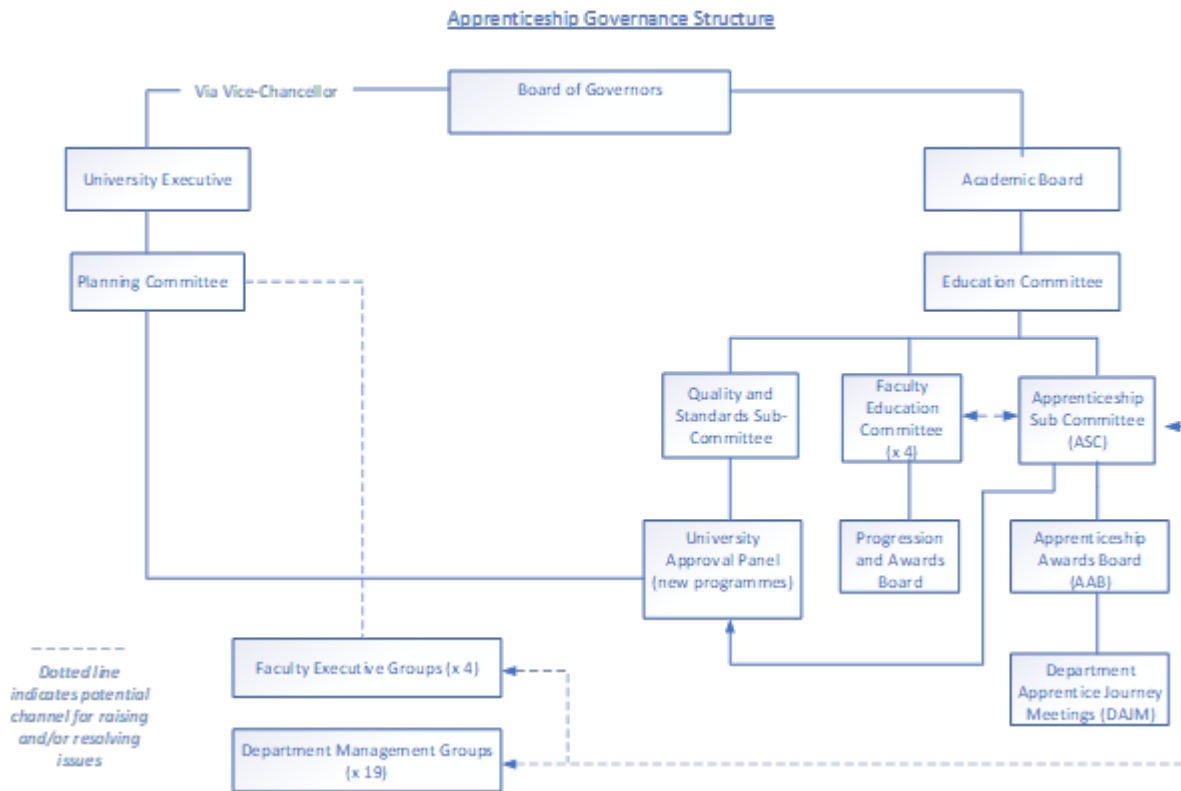
As part of the improved onboarding process, Apprentices are required to upload a copy of their employer's safeguarding policy to Aptem. The initial Progress Review Meeting will involve a discussion around this to ensure Apprentices understand this.

All staff undergo a rigorous appointment process, with an embedded safe recruitment process, where appropriate checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service are undertaken where necessary.

All staff receive mandatory Safeguarding training, which includes awareness of the Prevent Duty and how to spot signs of potential signs of radicalisation. This is complemented by a specific Prevent Duty online module and an in-person Advanced Prevent Duty module, both of which are optional training available to all staff, but targeted towards 'key staff' as identified under the Prevent Duty requirements. Online training is renewed on a 3-yearly basis. Staff training completion is monitored through the Safeguarding Steering Group and the QTE compliance lead.

An annual Safeguarding and Prevent report goes to the University Board each year containing information on cases handled by the Serious Welfare Team and which of those resulted in an external Safeguarding or Prevent referral.

## Appendix A – Apprenticeship Governance Structure



## Appendix B - DAJM and AAB Terms of Reference

### Departmental Apprenticeship Journey Meeting (DAJM)

#### Terms of Reference

**Departmental Apprenticeship Journey Meeting (DAJM)** are sub-committees/boards of the Apprenticeship Assessment Board (AAB). DAJMs provide the opportunity for apprentice progress to be reviewed regularly and have the following specific remit.

#### **1. Monitoring and Review**

- 1.1 Using outputs from the Coach Apprenticeship Review activity and forms, to regularly review apprentice progress.
- 1.2 To specifically consider apprentice progress using a RAG rated approach to highlight those at risk, in terms of, but not inclusive to, the below:
  - 1.2.1 Skills Assessment – against required Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs)
  - 1.2.2 Attendance
  - 1.2.3 Off the Job Training
  - 1.2.4 Academic Progress
  - 1.2.5 End Point Assessment (EPA) Progress
- 1.3 To identify actions and interventions where progress is not satisfactory and to hold a central, shared log of risks and follow up actions.
- 1.4 To refer any safeguarding concerns to the dedicated safeguarding officers.
- 1.5 To refer concerns relating to ongoing lack of engagement to the Educational Partnerships (EP) team for investigation which may result in the DARM being asked to endorse the suspension of apprentices due to lack of engagement with the ESFA funding rules.
- 1.6 To report to the AAB, via Apprenticeship Programme Leaders, any interventions which have been taken as an output of the DAJM and to highlight any students who have been suspended on the apprenticeship due to lack of progress and/or compliance.
- 1.7 To consider any further, relevant apprentice journey items nuanced by department.

#### **2 Notes to inform conduct of the DAJM:**

- 2.1 All DAJM documents will be electronic, in keeping with the University's Environmental Sustainability aims.
- 2.2 A summary data report which RAG rates apprentices' overall progress will be prepared and stored online on a central Teams site
- 2.3 At the meeting, apprentices flagged as Amber or Red will be discussed actions noted directly into the online spreadsheet.

## Apprentice Assessment Board (AAB) Terms of Reference

**Apprentice Assessment Boards (AAB)** are sub-committees/boards of the University Education Committee. AABs replace Programme Assessment Boards (PABs) for apprenticeship programmes and have the following specific remit:

### 1. Monitoring and Review

- 1.1 To confirm linked University awards on Degree Apprenticeship programmes and optional University awards on Higher Apprenticeship programmes.
- 1.2 To confirm apprentice competency to be appropriate to the stage of study by consideration of module results and an overview of apprentice progress reports.
- 1.3 To confirm resit requirements, including resits of the EPA.
- 1.4 To confirm the academic progression status for individual apprentices based on their profile of confirmed marks and with reference to the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards, approved variations thereof, or any specific regulations formally agreed to apply to a programme (e.g. Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) considerations) and the KSBs relating to the relevant apprenticeship standard.
- 1.5 To confirm progression to Gateway for End Point Assessment (EPA) by due consideration of Gateway requirements according to the relevant Apprenticeship Standard/s.
  - To confirm that scrutiny of module marks has taken place with reference to:
    - 1.5.1 Satisfactory internal moderation
    - 1.5.2 Satisfactory external moderation
    - 1.5.3 Anonymous marking where applicable
    - 1.5.4 Release of marks by each Department, noting any issues arising including missing marks, ratification of marks changes from Heads of Department (HoDs), Technical Extenuating Circumstances (TEC) decisions and Academic Misconduct cases.
- 1.6 To receive confirmation from the External Examiner(s) aligned to the provision.
- 1.7 To monitor apprentice engagement and compliances by:
  - 1.7.1 Noting interventions which have taken place following ongoing review and progress activities at Departmental Review Meetings including those to address concerns in the following areas: Off the Job Training (OTJ), Employer Engagement, Attendance, Engagement and trajectory to meet required apprenticeship Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs).
  - 1.7.2 Ratify any decisions to suspend or withdraw an apprentice due to eligibility or contractual breach.

1.8 To receive and review programme cohort level statistics, including progression, retention Coach RAG rating, and achievement rates alongside action planning from the Programme Leader.

## 2. Notes to inform conduct of the AAB

2.1 All AAB documents will be electronic, in keeping with the University's Environmental Sustainability aims.

2.2 Ordinarily, the AAB will only discuss exceptional student profiles defined as follows:

2.2.1 Module failure

2.2.2 Decisions relating to apprentices with approved Personal Extenuating Circumstances

2.2.3 Cases of substantiated academic misconduct

2.2.4 Lack of progress against apprenticeship standards and/or frameworks

2.2.5 Established breach of contract and/or eligibility

2.2.6 Failure to progress to EPA

2.3 Where discretion is applied this will be noted and reported to the University Education Committee.

2.4 AAB discussions should be held in a collegiate manner with involvement of the External Examiner(s) and any EPA Independent Assessors present who will be offered the opportunity to make any observations either in discussion of individual apprentices or apprenticeships and/or at the end of the Board.

## 3. Constitution

3.1 The Parent Body of the Board is the University Education Committee.

3.2 The AAB is normally convened at the end of the apprenticeship stage or year.

3.3 The quorum for the Board is as determined by the Chair.

## 4. Membership

4.1 Head of Department or nominee (Chair). Nominees to Chair should be of a suitably senior level, such as another Head of Department or Deputy Head of Department.

4.2 Directors of Education

4.3 Directors of Apprenticeships

4.4 Programme/Apprenticeship Leaders

4.5 External Examiners (who can be a professional body representative) appointed to the AAB as a full voting member. At least one External Examiner must be present at boards considering levels 5 and above.

4.6 Secretary: Registrar or nominee


4.7 Ad Hoc Attendees:

4.7.1 At the discretion of the AAB Chair, examiners or PSRB assessors, including EPA Independent Assessors, may be admitted to meetings

of the AAB as observers or, in circumstances deemed appropriate by the Chair, as voting members

- 4.7.2 The AAB Chair has the final authority for determining membership of the AAB that is appropriate to the apprenticeships under consideration. The number of attendees at a meeting (i.e., individuals who are not members) should not exceed the total membership numbers of the meeting.
- 4.7.3 Module Leaders and Apprentice Coaches may attend meetings of the AAB at the invitation of the Chair.

## Appendix C – External examiner/assessor supplementary report

 <b>Northumbria University</b> NEWCASTLE														
<p><b>Designated Quality Body (DQB) - External Assessor's Report</b></p> <p>This report should be completed by external assessors in relation to External Quality Assurance (EQA) of End Point Assessment (EPA) for integrated Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.</p> <p>In line with <a href="#">DQB guidance</a>, this report of activities and findings should be produced for each year of EPA delivery occurring at Northumbria University as the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). It should be uploaded to the eVision portal using the document upload facility located in Section 6. Please note a copy of the report will also be provided to the DQB as part of ongoing monitoring engagements and evidence.</p> <p>For support using the portal, please contact the Governance and Enhancement team via <a href="mailto:ar.external.examiners@northumbria.ac.uk">ar.external.examiners@northumbria.ac.uk</a></p>														
<b>Academic year</b>														
<b>Faculty</b>														
<b>Department</b>														
<b>IFATE Occupational Standard Code and Title</b>														
<b>NU Apprenticeship Programme(s) Title</b>														
<b>External Assessor's Details (full name and title)</b>														
<b>Date of Report Completion</b>														
<p><b>1. Work conducted to date</b></p> <p><i>Please provide details of the work conducted including observations, meetings and sampling undertaken.</i></p>														
<p><b>2. Commentary and feedback on EPA delivery</b></p> <p><i>Activities undertaken should have enabled assessor feedback and, specifically, <b>whether the following statements are correct. Please indicate in the list and provide comments as applicable below the table.</b></i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 5%;">No.</th> <th style="width: 55%;">Statement</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Yes</th> <th style="width: 10%;">No</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Not applicable</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					No.	Statement	Yes	No	Not applicable					
No.	Statement	Yes	No	Not applicable										





## 2. Commentary and feedback on EPA delivery

*Activities undertaken should have enabled assessor feedback and, specifically, **whether the following statements are correct. Please indicate in the list and provide comments as applicable below the table.***

No.	Statement	Yes	No	Not applicable
1	The EPA is delivered in line with the published EPA assessment plan for the Standard			

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2	Any requirements of the Standards have been achieved prior to sign-off, with the employer making the final decision on the readiness of the apprentice for EPA			
3	Apprentices and employers consider they are ready for the EPA and that the EPA meets their occupational needs			
4	The EPAO is using up-to-date EPA resources and documents			
5	Individual assessment materials/instruments are fit for purpose, up-to-date and cover the requirements of the assessment plan and occupational competence when applied in practice			
6	Assessment materials are a valid measure in practice of the knowledge, skills and behaviours required			
7	Clear marking schemes are in place for apprentices and used by independent assessors			
8	Resources are adequate to support EPA delivery and internal quality assurance			
9	The EPA is carried out independently in practice			
10	The EPA is operating effectively in that apprentices understand the assessment, conducted on time or in line with clearly set expectations with sufficient assessors involved			
11	Access to the EPA is fair and decisions on reasonable adjustments are consistent, taking learners needs into account			

20	The procedures and arrangements for confirming the <u>final outcome</u> are in accordance with the Standard and Northumbria's procedures and requirements.			
Commentary on the above statements (using the numbers as cross reference), required if any statements cannot be confirmed as correct.				

**3. Good Practice**

*Please identify any areas of good practice and provide developmental advice.*

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**4. Compliance Issues**

*Please identify any issues within the context of EPA delivery which do not meet the requirements of the Standard or pose a risk to effective EPA delivery and/or achievement of occupational competence.*

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**5. Progress Status**

*Please comment on progress with any items for improvement previously raised with Northumbria University completing the table below.*

Priority Improvement Area (Intent)	Success Criteria (Impact)	Actions (Implementation)	Action Owner	By When