



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Apprenticeships Handbook

2023-24



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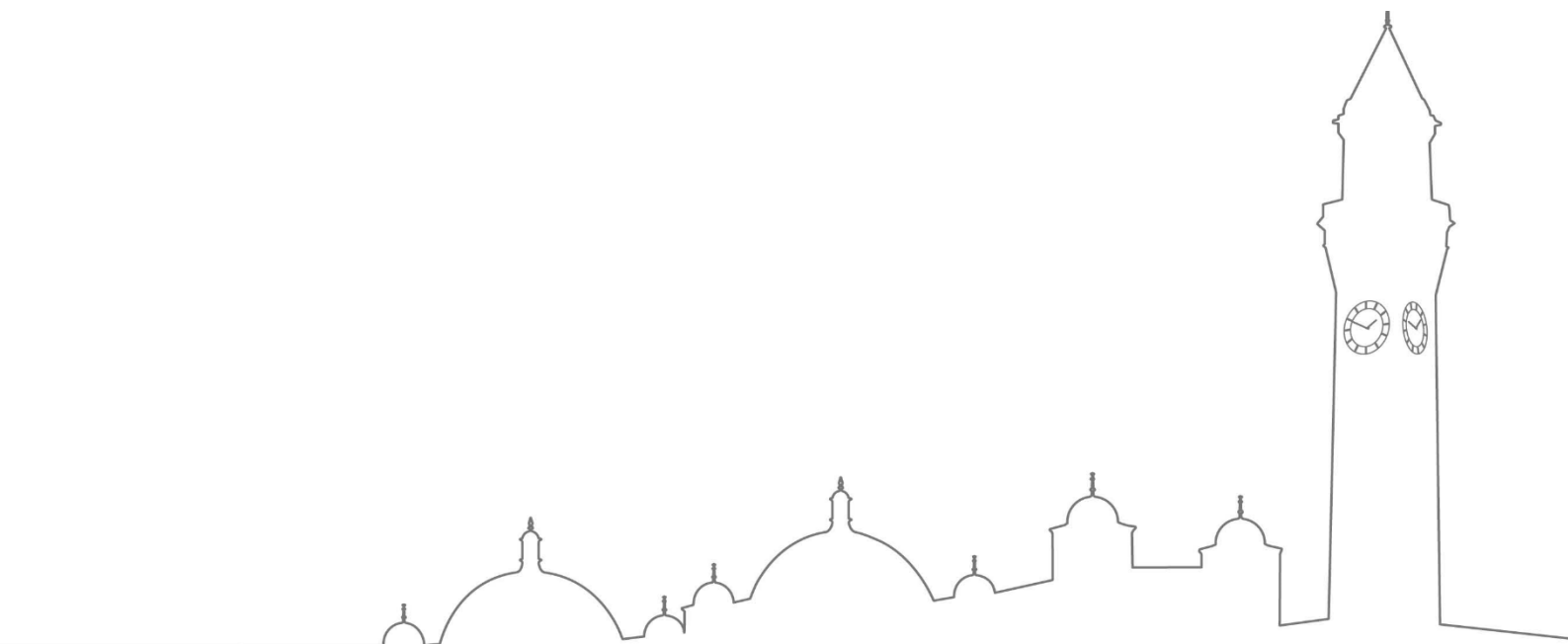
Thank you for your interest in a University of Birmingham Apprenticeship.

This handbook has been designed to guide you through the apprenticeship journey and outline key expectations and requirements before and during your time with us.

We hope that this will help inform your decision and would be happy to answer any further queries you may have.

Over the next few pages, we will cover the following:

- A Brief Overview of Apprenticeships
- Application Process
- Your Responsibilities as an Apprentice
- Our Responsibilities as a Training Provider
- Apprentice Checklist
- FAQs



AN OVERVIEW OF APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships are an innovative new approach to developing the nation's workforce, bringing together the best of higher and vocational education. Apprenticeships can be from Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) to Degree Apprenticeships at Level 6 (undergraduate degree) and Level 7 (postgraduate degree). Each programme is mapped to an Apprenticeship Standard. Apprenticeships can be paid for by employers through the Apprenticeship Levy.

Apprentices are employed throughout the programme and this combines work with university study, either in blocks of time, day release, a blend of face to face and online study, or full-time study with placements, depending on the programme and the employer.

For an employer, an apprenticeship programme provides an opportunity to recruit, develop and retain outstanding individuals with the skills needed as the business evolves.

For apprentices, it's a practical way of putting theory into practice and gaining a wealth of experience whilst achieving a formal qualification without incurring the cost of fees.

The University's apprenticeship programmes are co-designed with employers to ensure apprentices graduate with the career-boosting practical skills and academic knowledge the industry needs.

Our diverse portfolio of programmes, from Digital Skills, Leadership and Management, Science and Engineering, and Healthcare, means that we have the expertise to meet specific requirements. The University of Birmingham has been producing high quality graduates for over a century and we have a wealth of experience in partnering with business and industry to find solutions to real world issues.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Make an Application

Applications are made via the University's SITS application system. In this case, employers will normally send the link to staff once they have been identified as being interested in an apprenticeship.

If a condition of entry to the programme is to provide a copy of your degree certificate or any other qualification, then you will need to locate this and upload a copy with your application form.

Once you have submitted an application form, your submission will be assessed by the University and, if you are eligible for the programme, a conditional offer will be made.

A conditional offer is an offer of a place to study which is dependent upon you meeting the 'offer conditions', once all of the offer conditions have been met, the offer is updated to unconditional which secures your place at the University if you wish to accept it.

Your offer will be conditional if you still have examinations to take, we need verification of your qualifications and/or if you have to meet other non-academic entry requirements – such as completion of the Additional Information Form (see below).

The conditional offer letter will state the examinations you must pass and/or academic documents that require verification, plus any non-academic requirements. All conditions must be met in full before you can register for your programme.

Whilst scanned copies are sufficient in order to submit an application, scanned copies from applicants are not accepted as evidence when securing your place to study. If your offer of a place is conditional upon providing evidence of your academic qualifications, an acceptable form of verification is needed. Please visit the [Verification](#) webpage for further information.

2. Complete the Additional Information Form (AIF)

Once you have received a conditional offer, you will be asked to complete an AIF. There are additional data collection requirements for an apprenticeship which are covered in this form. This is split into three sections:

1) Eligibility

You will be asked a series of questions to verify that you are eligible to undertake apprenticeship training.

In addition, you will be asked whether you will require any additional learning support. This information will be passed to the University's Student Disability Service who will make sure you receive the right level of support throughout your studies.

2) Level 2 Maths and English Evidence

You are required to evidence a minimum of Level 2 Maths and English (GCSE equivalent) by the time you have completed an apprenticeship. Where you have not achieved this or cannot provide evidence then you must achieve this before the Gateway meeting.

If you are able to locate your GCSE or equivalent English and Maths certificates, the AIF provides an opportunity to upload scanned copies. If you cannot locate your certificates but have undertaken training previously, you should get in touch with the institution through which you sat the examinations or the Exam Board if you know it.

A list of Exam Boards can be found [here](#) and check [here](#) if you want to know which Board to contact for a replacement certificate. Level 2 Maths and English equivalencies can be found [here](#).

Additional Functional Skills training can be provided to any apprentice who does not have evidence of these prior qualifications or who has not previously achieved them. At present, the Functional Skills training is delivered by Solihull College and further details of this training will be provided once it is confirmed that the training is required. **This learning is not included your off-the-job training calculation.**

3) Prior Learning

As part of the apprenticeship application process, every applicant is required to review the programme they wish to study and the relevant Apprenticeship Standard to determine whether they have any prior learning or experience which should be taken into account.

You should take your time when reviewing the programme and Apprenticeship Standard and notify the University through the AIF of instances where you feel that prior learning has taken place

For experiential learning you will be expected to provide evidence of learning that maps to specific module outcomes or Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours listed in the Apprenticeship Standard.

Any prior learning submitted will be assessed by an academic member of staff at the University and the programme cost and duration may be reduced as a result.

3. Registration

Once you have accepted your place onto a programme, you will receive a registration email. This email is automatically generated on acceptance of your unconditional offer and will be sent to the email address you used during your application. If you have not received the email, please check your spam/junk folders as these emails can sometimes be blocked, particularly if you are using your work email address.

You will be asked to upload a passport style photo as part of online registration which will be used on your student ID card.

You will need to complete registration before you attend your induction to ensure that you are able to access University materials.

4. Complete an Initial Needs Assessment

In advance of your induction, you will be sent an Initial Needs Assessment to review, complete, and raise any queries you have. A meeting between you, an academic member of staff, and your employer will then take place to review your completed form and discuss any queries or concerns. This form will then be used to assess your initial competence against the Apprenticeship Standard and will be revisited periodically during your apprenticeship.

The Initial Needs Assessment also acts as a mapping tool so that you can clearly see where the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours set out in the Apprenticeship Standard are addressed in modules studied on the programme.

5. Sign a Training Plan Agreement

All parties (apprentice, employer, and University) will sign a Training Plan Agreement, which will set out how the apprenticeship will be successfully achieved. The University will coordinate signatures from all three parties and a copy will be emailed to you and your employer. Any changes to the programme or contracted hours should be documented in the Training Plan Agreement and re-signed by all parties.

You will need to upload your Training Plan Agreement onto PebblePad so that it is stored on a platform accessible to all parties.

6. Sign an Apprenticeship Agreement

Every apprentice must sign an Apprenticeship Agreement with their employer to confirm that both parties are content with the arrangements. The University will need a signed copy of this agreement on file for audit purposes.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN APPRENTICE

Off-The-Job Hours

At the start of your apprenticeship, you will receive details of the total number of off-the-job hours you are required to meet by the end of your apprenticeship training (before Gateway). This calculation will be monitored throughout your apprenticeship through your progress reviews and through your activity log in your evidence portfolio.

The academic content delivered to you counts towards this, along with a range of other activities to evidence how you have met the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours set out in the Apprenticeship Standard.

Collate an Evidence Portfolio

As part of an apprenticeship, apprentices must create an evidence portfolio to demonstrate how their learning meets the requirements outlined in the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours in the Apprenticeship Standard. The University and employer must verify that the evidence provided is relevant and meets the requirements. Apprentices at the University of Birmingham use PebblePad, an online portfolio tool, to support apprentices with collating the required evidence and storing in an appropriate format.

Examples include:

- Certificate of learning records
- Certificate of attendance at training courses/meetings/workshops etc
- Workbooks demonstrating work and learning undertaken
- Witness statements/Emails from colleagues
- Personal and reflective statements
- Case studies
- Work products
- Executive Team/ Board/ Programme Board reports
- Presentation slides from meetings

As an apprentice, it will be your responsibility to keep on top of your evidence portfolio. This will be assessed as part of the apprenticeship Gateway and End Point Assessment.

Attend Progress Review Meetings

Progress review meetings should take place at least four times per year and are scheduled to review your progress on the programme. As part of this, both your employer and the University has a responsibility to review progress made by you and verify evidence provided in your portfolio.

Study for Your Programme

In addition to collating evidence to support your progress on the apprenticeship, you will also be expected to attend all teaching sessions in connection with your programme of study as these count towards your off-the-job training. If you are unable to attend a session, you should notify your Personal Tutor and the School Office as soon as possible, in advance of the session. In order to complete the apprenticeship, you will need to make sure that you catch up with any learning missed.

All of your marks for assignments and examinations will be shared with your employer and discussed at tripartite meetings.

Complete the Gateway and End Point Assessment (EPA)

The EPA takes place at the end of the apprenticeship after all on-programme training has been completed. Before you are put forward for an EPA, a meeting takes place between you, your employer, and the University to confirm that you are occupationally competent and working at or above the level set out in the apprenticeship standard and ready to undertake EPA. This is referred to as the EPA Gateway.

All apprentices must take an independent assessment at the end of their training to confirm that they have

achieved occupational competence. A rigorous and robust EPA is essential to give employers the confidence that their apprentices can demonstrate that they meet all of the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors set out in the occupational standard.

EPAs can be integrated (where the University also acts as the End Point Assessment Organisation) or non-integrated (where an external body acts as the End Point Assessment Organisation). You will be given further details of the End Point Assessment during induction.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS YOUR TRAINING PROVIDER

As your training provider, we are committed to deliver a training programme that allows you to develop the **Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours** set out in your Apprenticeship Standard. We provide full support and opportunity for regular **progress meetings**, facilitate open and honest conversations between you, your employer, and the University, and support you throughout your **End Point Assessment preparation**.

Additionally, as a registered Apprentice at the University of Birmingham, you have full access to all services undergraduate and postgraduate full-time student have! Below you can find a list of some of the services you can access. For a full list, please visit the UoB student intranet site.

[Health and Wellbeing Support](#)

[Careers and Financial Advice](#)

[Digital Services and Support](#)

[Sport and Fitness](#)

[Study Spaces](#)

We are committed to **lifelong learning** and are proud to provide LinkedIn Learning courses to all of our students, staff and apprentices. For information on how to access LinkedIn Learning for free, please visit this [page](#).

Last but not least, we are committed to keeping you safe.

At the University of Birmingham, we believe **Safeguarding** is everyone's responsibility. As your apprenticeship training provider, we will:

- Ensure you develop an awareness of safeguarding and understand how to access University support services. Safeguarding training is now part of the apprenticeship induction
- Provide safeguarding training for University of Birmingham staff working with apprentices
- Maintain open channels of communication with all our employer partners
- Ensure we create a safe learning environment for apprentices and staff

The University's [Safeguarding Policy](#) has further details of how we ensure that the University is a safe environment.

Q: What is the Apprenticeship Levy?

A: The Apprenticeship Levy came into effect in April 2017. The Levy applies to employers in England who have annual pay bill above £3m. The Levy is charged at a rate of 0.5% of the employer's pay bill.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for an apprenticeship?

A: In order to be eligible to study for an apprenticeship, you must be:

- 16 or over at the start of the apprenticeship
- Living in England and spending at least 50% of your working time in England
- Not in full-time education

Q: What is the minimum duration of an apprenticeship?

A: Apprenticeships must last a minimum of 12 months and we will seek confirmation that you can meet the off-the-job hours commitment. A breakdown of the off-the-job training will be provided at the start of the apprenticeship.

Q: What is off-the-job training?

A: All apprenticeships contain a minimum off-the-job hours calculation, as set out in the [Apprenticeship Funding Rules and aligned to the length of your programme and working hours](#). Off-the-job training is defined as 'learning which is undertaken outside of the normal day-to-day working environment and leads towards the achievement of an apprenticeship'. Off-the-job training can take place in the workplace, as well as through university study, but should not be part of your normal working duties.

The off-the-job hours calculation is calculated across the overall apprenticeship programme, up to End Point Assessment. An off-the-job hours calculation will be given to you at the start of your apprenticeship.

Q: What counts towards off-the-job training?

A: Evidence may include:

- Teaching of theory, e.g. lectures
- Manufacturer training, e.g. new equipment or technologies
- Shadowing or being mentored
- Simulated exercises and role play
- Learning support provided by the employer or University
- Practical training
- Attendance at competitions
- Some online learning, e.g. webinars or blended learning
- Visiting other departments within your place of work
- Industry visits or visiting other companies or suppliers

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, for further information, please visit the Government's [guidance page](#).

Q: What evidence is not included in off-the-job training?

A: The following is not included:

- Level 2 English and Maths training
- Progress reviews or on-programme assessments that are required in the Apprenticeship Standards
- Training that takes place outside of your paid working hours and time is not given back in lieu; and apprenticeship inductions, unless there is an educational element that provides some basics of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that are core to the Apprenticeship Standard.

Q: What are the rules around Level 2 Maths and English?

A: In order to complete an apprenticeship in England, an apprentice must evidence that they have achieved a minimum of Level 2 Maths and English (GCSE or equivalent at grade C or above) by the time they have completed the apprenticeship.

If an apprentice has not achieved this already, or cannot provide evidence, they must undertake additional training and achieve a Level 2 Functional Skills qualification in English and/or Maths before they enter the Gateway period. This training and assessment will be managed in conjunction with one of the University's local College partners.

Q: What is a Progress Review meeting?

A: The three-way relationship between the employer, University and apprentice is critical to the success of an apprenticeship. Regular and open ongoing dialogue of communication between all three parties will ensure that the apprentice is making good progress and meeting the needs of the apprenticeship.

Progress review meetings take place four times a year and should be face to face, where possible. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure you receive the right support both at work and at the University.

Q: What happens if I need to report an absence?

A: If you are not able to attend a university activity, you will need to let your tutor and School Office know. All reasonable endeavours should be made to catch up with any missed learning, as these hours count towards off-the-job training. Your employer will be notified of any unauthorised absences or lateness. Where you will be absent for more than four weeks, you will need to take a break in learning.

Q: What happens if I wish to take a break in learning or withdraw from the apprenticeship?

A: You should notify your employer as soon as possible if you wish to pause your learning or withdraw from the apprenticeship altogether. You may also wish to discuss a break in learning with your Personal Tutor or Welfare Officer before submitting the request.

Your School will share a Leave of Absence or Voluntary Withdrawal form with you for you to complete.

Q: Can I continue with my apprenticeship if I am on maternity, adoption, or shared parental leave?

A: You can use any of your 'Keeping in Touch' days to undertake apprenticeship training and/or assessment, including End Point Assessment. However, please note that you will lose your entitlement to statutory maternity/ adoption pay and may bring your leave to an end if you undertake more than ten days' work during that time. You should speak with your employer if you are considering this.

Q: What happens if I leave the organisation?

A: If you choose to leave your current job, you should follow the standard procedures within your workplace. You should discuss this with both your employer and the University to understand what impact the apprenticeship may have on your notice period, if any. You will need to complete a Voluntary Withdrawal form which will be signed-off by your employer and the University.

If you leave the organisation which is funding your apprenticeship and begin employment at a new organisation which is happy to continue to pay for your apprenticeship, you can continue the programme at the point you left your previous company. In order for this to happen, you should notify your College Apprenticeships Partner as soon as possible once you are aware that you will be changing employers so that they can begin the contracting process with the new employer and ensure that everything is in place before you leave your previous organisation.

APPRENTICESHIP CHECKLIST

Task	Owner	Complete
Application process:		
Complete application form	Apprentice	
Conditional offer issued	University	
Original degree certificate verified (if applicable)	Apprentice	
Complete Additional Information Form	Apprentice	
Upload evidence of Level 2 English and Maths or GCSE certificates Grades A*- C, or: Confirm that Level 2 English and Maths training is required	Apprentice	
Upload evidence of prior academic learning or prior experiential learning through the Additional Information Form (if applicable)	Apprentice	
Unconditional offer issued	University	
Review any prior academic or experiential learning evidence	University	
Verify Level 2 evidence, or confirm details of Level 2 training	University	
Digital Account Service (DAS) set up	Employer / University	
Apprentice contracted hours, annual leave and bank holiday entitlements sent to University for off-the-job calculation	Employer	
Line Manager's name, job title and contact details sent to University	Employer	
Apprenticeship Programme start and end date confirmed	University	
Induction:		
Initial Needs Assessment completed and discussed	All parties	
Training Plan signed and dated	All parties	
Employer and apprentice sign an Apprenticeship Agreement (copy to be sent to the University)	Apprentice / Employer	
On programme:		
Tripartite meetings arranged (4 per year)	All parties	
Off-the-job hours being managed effectively	All parties	
Complete Level 2 training (if applicable)	Apprentice	
Gateway meeting (to ensure apprentice is EPA ready)	All parties	
End Point Assessment	Apprentice	