

# University Policy, Procedure and Guidance for Apprenticeship Programmes

## **Institutional Statement on Apprenticeships**

Our vision for 2026 is that the University of Reading will be a vibrant, thriving, sustainable, global and broad-based institution, responsive to, stimulated by and informing changes in the world around us. As a result, we will also be significantly larger in terms of students, global reach and presence, and revenue.

Our ambition, now and towards 2026, is to enhance our standing as a leader in research and higher education that defines and responds to the needs of individuals and societies, and, by so doing, to be counted among the very best universities in the UK and internationally.

The University is optimistic, forward-looking and open to new possibilities.

Our Vision and Ambition underpins our commitment to apprenticeships. We believe in education for 21st century lives; at the University of Reading, we equip learners at all stages of their careers to develop and fulfil their intellectual and personal potential. We will support our apprentices to master the knowledge, skills and behaviours of their discipline, as well as encourage the development of personal effectiveness and self-awareness. We will equip individuals with the aspirations, confidence and skills to become highly employable graduates with the ability to respond to diverse opportunities and challenges.

We believe that the 2015 Levy and Apprenticeship Reforms are important steps in enabling employers and Higher Education Providers to work closely together to develop talent and meet the challenges of skills gaps and employers' training needs. We will build upon our well-established partnership links with employers from a variety of sectors and we will work with these and new employers to maximise the opportunity that the apprenticeship reforms offer at all levels.

We are committed to offering Higher Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships in areas that align with market demands and the strategic objectives of our academic Schools. Our Henley Business School has led the way in developing our apprenticeship provision by providing a range of innovative programmes designed to support organisational transformations.

The University of Reading apprenticeship provision will support the enhancement of both individuals' skills and potential and the needs of business and industry.

The following Policy and guidance should be applied to all apprenticeship programmes, including award programmes and non-credit bearing programmes. It is informed by the ESFA [apprenticeship funding rules](#) , the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education's [policy on Degree Apprenticeships](#) , the [Ofsted Education Inspection Framework](#) and the [QAA Characteristics Statement on Higher Education in Apprenticeships](#) .

## 1. Programme Design and Approval

- 1.1. All new apprenticeship programmes will be approved through the University's normal programme approval procedures. This includes award and non-credit bearing apprenticeship programmes at all levels.

The policy and process for introducing new programmes can be found in the University's [Programme Lifecycle Policies](#); specific information on introducing apprenticeship programmes can be found in Appendix 2.

- 1.2. All new apprenticeship programme proposals, including non-credit bearing programmes, are subject to a scrutiny process with internal, external and student representation. External scrutiny panel members should include those who bring practice expertise as well as subject expertise; this might include the School's existing External Examiners, the Professional Bodies who own the Standard or members of the End Point Assessment Organisation. The School should consult with CQSD on appropriate external scrutiny members.

Where an existing UoR programme is being adapted for apprenticeship funding, the proposers should consult with CQSD to ascertain whether an academic scrutiny process is required. Regardless of whether academic scrutiny is required, there should be external confirmation that the existing programme (along with any proposed amendments) maps to the required Apprenticeship Standard's Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.

- 1.3. In accordance with existing policy, all new apprenticeship programme proposals will be submitted to the University's Programme Board (UPB) for approval, including where existing UoR programmes are adapted for Levy funding. All new apprenticeship programme proposals should include an academic case and a business resource case for the programme. UPB will report all newly approved programmes to the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE).
- 1.4. All apprenticeship programmes will require a Programme Specification and Module Description Forms.
- 1.5. Programmes will be designed to the relevant approved national Apprenticeship Standard; programmes, including all training provision, will deliver the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours in order for learners to demonstrate full occupational competence in the relevant job.

- 1.6. All new programmes should be checked internally or externally to ensure that they are adequately mapped to the appropriate Apprenticeship Standard. It is the School's responsibility to ensure that this has been done and to assure UPB of the mapping process. The End Point Assessment Organisation may be willing to undertake a mapping exercise on the School's behalf.

A programme may include an element of 'negotiated learning' with tailored module content delivered on behalf of specific employer needs.

It is anticipated that for apprenticeship programmes, the Programme Specification and Module Descriptions will specify the Learning Outcomes and give a broad outline of the subject content for the programme. Delivery modes and content may be flexible and contextualised to the employer needs or the work-place setting.

- 1.7. Proposers are advised to discuss their programme proposal with CQSD and Legal Services at an early stage, in order to check any ESFA regulations concerning the delivery, RPL/RPEL, assessment criteria, subcontracting and so on..
- 1.8. When a new apprenticeship programme is developed, the School must undertake a 'gap analysis' to ensure that the systems in place adequately support the programme delivery and the required data returns, for example the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) monthly return. The School should work with key University systems owners (for example, the SIS team, Digital Technology Services, the TEL team, the Henley Apprenticeship Administration Office) to carry out this activity and identify and map any system modifications that will be required for the programme delivery in the Business Case.
- 1.9. Schools considering subcontracted provision should consult the ESFA rules and are referred to the [Management of Subcontracted Apprenticeship Provision policy](#) .
- 1.10 Schools should inform relevant University Services of new programmes, and new cohorts for existing programmes, to ensure resource is in place to fully support learners on the programmes. For Schools with significant apprenticeship provision, it is advised that an annual report of projected learner numbers is submitted to the University Executive Board, relevant School Boards and to the Director of Teaching and Learning Operations and Advice.

## 2. Employer Approval and Delivery

- 2.1. Schools should seek appropriate employer organisations with which they can develop and deliver the apprenticeship programme. This may occur after the programme has been approved or in tandem with the development and approval process. Potential employers may inform the development of a programme.
- 2.2. The [Policy and Procedure for Employer Approval](#) should be consulted (Appendix 2 of the Programme Life-cycle Policies) and the [Client Contract Requirement Form](#) should be completed and submitted to Legal Services to process the contractual arrangements for the programme delivery.

- 2.3. Early on in the Employer Approval process, Schools should have a full discussion with the Employer regarding each party's obligations and to set out the University's approach to apprenticeships and the ethos underpinning the University's provision of apprenticeship programmes. These discussions should also include arrangements for employers to provide off-the-job training time for learners to engage with the apprenticeship learning.
- 2.4. Written records of meetings with Employers should be kept in order to record decisions and expectations regarding the programme delivery. These may also be required by external regulatory bodies as part of a review process.
- 2.5. If an existing Employer wishes to enter into a new Contract for a different programme or level of programme, an [Apprenticeship Client Contract Renewal or Variation Form](#) should be completed and submitted to Legal Services.
- 2.6. Only after a programme has been approved, and a Client Contract Requirement Form/Client Contract Renewal or Variation Form has been completed and signed off by the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean, can an Agreement be put in place.
- 2.7. Where the University is bidding for an apprenticeship delivery under a procurement process, these steps must still be completed but may occur after a bid has been accepted by the Employer.

### 3. Entry Qualifications

- 3.1. Entry requirements for an apprenticeship with a University prescribed HE qualification must follow the University's entrance requirements as described in Section 7 of the [Admissions Policy for Taught Programmes](#).
- 3.2. In addition, learners must satisfy the ESFA rules for learner eligibility as specified in the [Apprenticeship funding rules](#) (2023/24 - page 7).
- 3.3. Entry requirements for programmes without a University award or credit must be suitable for the programme level and be approved by UPB.
- 3.4. A requirement of the ESFA is that learners must have a minimum of level 2 in maths and English in order to complete a Levy programme. If learners do not have this level of maths and English when commencing their programme, they must successfully complete a Functional Skills qualification during the programme. Schools should ensure provision is in place to support this or put in place entry requirements which include relevant functional skills.

### 4. Governance Arrangements

- 4.1. Governance arrangements for all apprenticeship programmes should follow the same structure as outlined in the [Enhancement-Led Quality Assurance \(EQA\) processes at the University of Reading](#).

- 4.2. A Board of Studies and Student Experience (BoSSE), or equivalent, should be in place to oversee operational quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms for modules and programmes which they own, as outlined in EQA1. The BoSSE will report to the relevant School Management Board and the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE).

## 5. Cyclical Quality Assurance Processes

### 5.1. Annual Monitoring

- 5.1.1. Each apprenticeship programme (at all Levels) will be subject to annual monitoring processes.
- 5.1.2. Apprenticeship programmes should be considered by the BoSSE and School in its cyclical School Teaching Enhancement Action Plan process, as outlined in the policy on [Monitoring and Enhancing the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Student Experience](#).
- 5.1.3. In addition, Schools with apprenticeship provision should follow the additional requirements in respect of Apprenticeship programmes outlined in paragraphs 27-29 of the policy on [Monitoring and Enhancing the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Student Experience](#).
- 5.1.4. As part of this process Schools will develop the SAR and QIP for their School-based provision and submit this to CQSD for review and onward reporting to the Sub-Committee on the Delivery and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (DELT). In addition, any subcontracted delivery will be annually reviewed in accordance with the [Management of Subcontracted Apprenticeship Provision policy](#).
- 5.1.5. Employers and learners must be involved in the evaluation of all aspects of higher education in apprenticeships. Schools must ensure that they give opportunities for employers and learners to provide feedback on the apprenticeship and reflect this in the annual monitoring and review processes.

In addition, feedback and issues raised at tri-partite progress reviews should be considered by relevant Boards in a timely manner.

### 5.2. Periodic Evaluation and Enhancement Review

- 5.2.1. All apprenticeship programmes should be considered as part of the School's [Periodic Evaluation and Enhancement Review \(PEER\)](#) process. If it is deemed appropriate, the apprenticeship provision within a School may be considered separately from the main PEER.

### 5.3. Review Prior to Contract Renewal

- 5.3.1. When an Employer Contract is due to expire, a review of the provision and programme delivery with this particular Employer should be undertaken prior to renewing/extending the Agreement in place).
- 5.3.2. An [Apprenticeship Client Contract Renewal or Variation Form](#) should be completed and submitted to Legal Services to process the contractual arrangements. The Agreement cannot be renewed or extended without this form.

## 6. External Regulatory Conditions

### 6.1. Record keeping:

- 6.1.1. Schools are advised on the importance of record keeping for both internal and external quality assurance processes and regulatory data returns.
- 6.1.2. Records should be kept up to date, and data should be updated as soon as possible and at least monthly, in order to comply with the ESFA data returns.
- 6.1.3. Both quantitative and qualitative data should be kept updated.

Quantitative data may include individual assessment results, progression statistics and cohort equality and diversity statistics.

Qualitative data may include notes of any meetings with a learner (including completed progress review records) or an Employer, referrals to study support, learner and employer feedback and minutes from apprenticeship Boards of Studies and Student Experience meetings.

More information about data requirements and the types of data required can be found in [ESFA ILR Collection](#) and in the [Ofsted Education Inspection Framework](#).

- 6.1.4. It is the School's responsibility to ensure that the quantitative and qualitative data records are kept up to date and are readily accessible for ESFA returns, Ofsted requirements between, and during, inspections and any other external or internal audits.
- 6.1.5. Learners will remain enrolled at the University until they have completed their End Point Assessment, which may be after they have completed their University programme. Schools should ensure records continue to be kept until the learner is signed off by the End Point Assessment Organisation.

### 6.2. ESFA

- 6.2.1. The University is responsible for monthly learner data returns to the ESFA in order to draw down the Levy Funding. Currently, a team sits within HBS to ensure this process occurs as required.

- 6.2.2. It will be important for Schools, CQSD and the Henley Apprenticeship Administration Team to be aware of changes in ESFA regulations and to ensure that the correct data is being collated and managed. The Henley Apprenticeship Administration Team will be responsible for carrying out a gaps analysis of data returns in light of any ESFA regulatory changes.
- 6.2.3. The ESFA may undertake an audit of the University's apprenticeship provision, including a site visit. This is likely to be a review across the institution, rather than per School. Schools should be prepared for such visits and will be supported by CQSD.

### 6.3. Ofsted

- 6.3.1. From 1 April 2021, external quality assurance for all apprenticeship programmes at all levels will be overseen and monitored by Ofsted.
- 6.3.2. Any Schools planning to add apprenticeship provision to their portfolio should consult with CQSD to discuss the additional requirements for external reporting to Ofsted.

These include:

- The production of an annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR) to Ofsted including performance data on:
  - Learner progression and attendance (including a break down by Cohort and Employer)
  - Individual learner details and learner journey (including qualitative data records, i.e. a record of every meeting and contact with a learner, consideration of progress, developmental feedback, progress towards, and achievement of, specific learning targets)<sup>1</sup>
  - Evidence of understanding by the learner of British Values, Prevent, safeguarding, and equality, diversity and inclusion,
  - All Employer details
  - Progression data (by cohort, Employer and individual)
  - Assessment data/EPA outcomes (by cohort, Employer and individual)
  - Cohort equality and diversity statistics.

The above performance data will have been analysed to inform the School's judgments of its strengths, and areas for improvement across the apprenticeship provision.

- Preparation for Ofsted inspections, compliance and alignment with the Ofsted benchmarks as outlined in the Education Inspection Framework is the responsibility of individual Schools.  
Schools should be prepared to be inspected and will be supported by CQSD.

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<sup>1</sup> See the [Ofsted Education Inspection Framework](#) for more details

Currently a Henley Business School representative will be nominated as the main point of contact with Ofsted for inspection activities. Each School will be responsible for providing relevant data for their learners and programmes and the process will be supported by CQSD.

#### 6.4. Office for Students (OfS)

6.4.1. The OfS oversees quality monitoring for all degree awards and the End Point Assessment for Degree Apprenticeships.

The University will capture apprenticeship activity in its Annual Learning and Teaching Report (ALTR), which is submitted to Senate and Council and informs the annual return to the OfS.

6.4.2. CQSD will be responsible for ensuring degree apprenticeship activity is captured in the ALTR.

### 7. Support for Learners

7.1. Schools will be expected to put in place provision to fully support learners and work with Employers to ensure learners have all the necessary assistance for success in the work-based elements of their programme. Within Henley, Apprenticeship Tutors will be put in place to support learners and carry out the following responsibilities, this or other models may be adopted by other Schools to fulfil these requirements.

Support should include, but is not limited to:

- Meeting learners during an induction/orientation event at the beginning of the programme and undertaking a baseline assessment of their knowledge, skills and behaviours and using this to inform their learning plan
- Maintaining regular contact with each learner
- Maintaining regular contact with the Employer to discuss issues across the cohort and, where necessary, individual learners
- Maintaining adequate records (Schools must document all meetings with Employers and learners)
- Ensure the learner's learning records are kept current and working with the learner to address any issues highlighted
- Prepare and agree 12-weekly progress reviews as required
- Maintain awareness of sources of support for the learner
- Monitoring learner progress and identifying at risk individuals
- Ensure accuracy of learner records
- Conducting one-to-one sessions with learners virtually, or at their workplace
- Assist learners with their personal, professional and career development in the context of the apprenticeship by:

1. Developing a learning plan

2. Directing learners to appropriate study skills support, and information, advice, and guidance
3. Encouraging and assisting with reflection on progress to date (including reflection on portfolio progression and developmental feedback for evidence and assignment (the latter, where applicable) submissions)
4. Encouraging learners to keep their learning plan up-to-date
5. Reviewing progress toward development of a portfolio (if needed for Gateway prior to the end point assessment)
6. Discussing learning gained from personal development modules

Version Control:

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Effective from</b>	<b>Next Review</b>	<b>Keeper (responsible for Policy maintenance and review)</b>
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3	08/06/21	UBTLSE	Date of approval	Summer 2022	CQSD
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