

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Apprenticeships

How much will 'it' cost me?

Each apprenticeship programme has a [funding band](#) allocated to it. A funding band sets out the minimum to maximum government funding contribution. Before you agree to start an apprentice on programme, you should agree the cost with the training provider. If you agree a higher amount than the funding band, you will have to pay for this from your own company budget, this will not be funded through your levy or co-investment.

The Advanced Therapies Apprenticeship Community (ATAC) have been working with industry to understand interest and suitability of apprenticeship programmes. For the programmes identified by industry, we have researched different training providers to recommend the most suitable to meet our industry need and then negotiated on the cost, whilst maintaining quality of delivery. Therefore, you will have ATAC reassurance from choosing one of our preferred training providers knowing that the cost is also within the funding band guidelines.

Can I access funding to pay for the apprenticeship?

Yes. If you're an employer with a pay bill over £3 million each year, you will pay the apprenticeship levy. You will report and pay your levy to HMRC through the [PAYE process](#). Apprenticeship funding is a devolved matter and so how you get your funds depends on whether you're in:

- [England](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)

If you are not a levy paying employer, you can still pay for your apprentice training and assessment via the apprenticeship service, through co-investment. The Government will fund 95% of your apprentice's programme (as set out by the funding band). You will then only need to pay 5% towards this.

Employers who already have an apprenticeship service account and haven't spent all their apprenticeship funds, can transfer up to a maximum of 25% of their [unused funds](#) to another employer who work within their supply chain, through their account. If you are an SME and part of a large levy paying company's supply chain, or visa-versa, contact each other to explore this further.

The apprenticeship levy and/or co-investment will fund the training and assessment of the apprenticeship. You can't use funds in your account to pay for other costs associated with your apprentices (such as wages, statutory licences to practise, travel and subsidiary costs, work placement programmes or the setting up of an apprenticeship programme). Read the [apprenticeship funding rules](#) for full details of what you can and can't pay for with funds from your apprenticeship service account.

I don't pay the apprenticeship levy - does this mean that I can't take on apprentices?

No, you can still support an apprentice. You can fund your apprentices training and assessment through co-investment. Please see question and answer above which explains this.

Are apprenticeships just for 16-18-year olds?

No, not at all. The apprenticeship reform in 2017 has positively changed the way that apprenticeships are delivered and used across the UK. Apprenticeships are available to people of all ages and can be used to upskill your existing workforce as well as recruiting new talent where there is a genuine vacancy. People can gain highly transferable skills and training (which could include a degree), across hundreds of occupational-focused standards, through an apprenticeship.

Is it true that you can't do an apprenticeship in science?

No, this is certainly not true. There are currently 89 different [apprenticeship standards](#) available across 'Health and Science' that have been designed by employers for employers and this number is continuously growing. The Advanced Therapies Apprenticeship Community (ATAC) have been working with industry to understand interest and suitability of science apprenticeship programmes and have identified various options. If you would like to discuss these further, please contact us at apprenticeshipinfo@ct.catapult.org.uk.

How do I manage 20% off the job training?

Any activity that is teaching new knowledge, skills and behaviours applicable to the apprenticeship standard can be counted towards 20% off the job training. When you enrol your apprentice on programme, it is important that you attend their enrolment meeting as this is an opportunity to discuss and agree what the 20% off the job training will look like. Some examples of how you can manage this, to suit you and your apprentice's needs are:

- If your apprentice is new to your company, the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that you teach them as part of their induction could count towards this time.
- Obtain details from your training provider of when any taught aspects of the programme will take place. These might be weekly and will count towards the 20% that can be pre-planned in diaries.
- Agree a set day or pattern each week for your apprentice to have dedicated and prioritised time to complete activities towards their apprenticeship. This could be completing assignments, evidence towards their portfolio, shadowing an experienced colleague or attending an event.
- If your apprentice has any absence (e.g. annual leave, sickness etc), agree how they are going to take their 20% off the job training time when they return.
- Agree with your apprentice and training provider how the 20% off the job training time will be recorded and monitored.

You can access further details of 20% off the job training, including what can be counted and examples of this at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training>

Where can I find the support I need?

Your training provider will be your first point of contact to support you and your apprentice throughout the apprenticeship. They are responsible for delivering the training and assessment of the apprenticeship and will support you with every aspect of this. The Advanced Therapies Apprenticeship Community (ATAC) are able to provide you with support in identifying the most suitable apprenticeship programme, recommended training providers, provide guidance in recruiting apprentices in addition to arranging various industry lead events to compliment your apprentices programme and being a supportive point of contact. The following webpages contain lots of useful information:

- ATAC: <https://www.advancedtherapiesapprenticeships.co.uk/>
- Government information: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>

Why is there an end point assessment as well as all the exams?

The purpose of the end point assessment (EPA) is to test that an apprentice is fully capable of doing their job before they receive their apprenticeship certificate. It also helps to demonstrate that what an apprentice has learnt throughout all of the different learning and assessment methods can be applied in the real world. The EPA is independent of the training provider and gives reassurance of the quality of overall provision for the apprentice.

Where do I find information on apprenticeships?

The main websites to get information on apprenticeships are:

- ATAC: <https://www.advancedtherapiesapprenticeships.co.uk/>
- Apprenticeship standards: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>
- Apprenticeship funding bands: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-bands>
- Apprenticeship funding rules: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>
- Apprenticeship vacancies: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
- Government information: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>
- Manage apprenticeships account: <https://accounts.manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk/service/index>

How do I recruit an apprentice, how do I set up an assessment day, who can help?

Here are some considerations for recruiting and employing an apprentice. It is important to note that this guidance does not cover all aspects, these are initial consideration points only:

- You will need to ensure you have a genuine vacancy to attain the learning required to complete the apprentice standard. Follow your normal in-house approval processes for this
- Once you have agreed your recruitment and advertised through your normal methods, send your advert via e-mail to your training provider
- Vacancies will be posted on the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website by your training provider. This is a primary tool used by future apprentices and training providers and links are provided to employers to circulate to their networks.

We would recommend that you pre-plan an assessment day. Your training provider and/or the ATAC team can support you with this. You can also access a recruitment and assessment guidance and checklist available on the ATAC webpage at:

<https://www.advancedtherapiesapprenticeships.co.uk/support-or-recruit-an-apprentice/>

What contracts do I need in place?

You will need to put in place an 'apprenticeship agreement' which is a contract of training rather than a contract of employment and a 'commitment statement'. The apprenticeship agreement will need to detail the duration of the apprenticeship as a minimum (such as, if the apprenticeship is a minimum of 2 years, the contract must reflect this as a minimum) the qualification they are working towards, their salary, location and working conditions. You can find guidance and templates for this at: <https://www.gov.uk/take-on-an-apprentice/apprenticeship-agreement>

What policies do I need to change/look at?

We would recommend that you review all of your policies to ensure apprentice practices are referenced and consist. You can obtain details on practices that you need to follow through the

ACAS website. For example, you will need to consider your health and safety and working time policies if you are recruiting an apprentice under the age of 18.

How much do I pay an apprentice?

Apprentices should be paid for their normal working hours and training that's part of their apprenticeship (usually one day per week). Apprentices are entitled to the [National Minimum Wage](#). They must be paid at least the minimum wage rate for their age if you're an apprentice aged 19 or over and have completed your first year. The ATAC team have undertaken research into the average apprentice salary within the industry, this ranges from £12,500 for an entry level apprentice (levels 2 to 3) to £14,500 for apprentice studying a higher or degree level.

What other costs do I pay as an employer?

The apprenticeship levy or co-investment will fund the training and assessment of the apprenticeship in accordance with the funding band. You will need to pay for your apprentice's wages, statutory licences to practise, travel and subsidiary costs, work placement programmes or the setting up of an apprenticeship programme.

Are they entitled to discounted travel – apprentice NUS card etc?

A NUS Apprentice extra card provides discounts in-store and online at their favourite brands to help their hard-earned cash go a little further. Your apprentice can apply for this via the link below: <https://www.apprenticeextra.co.uk/>. Local councils also offer various discounts and promotions for apprentice travel. Visit your local council webpages for further information.

Can we rotate the apprentice around the business?

Yes, as long as they are gaining the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours that are needed to achieve their apprenticeship.

How do I know I am giving the apprentice the training they need? What should the first 6 weeks look like?

Your training provider will assist you with this when you enrol them on programme, hence the importance of you attending the enrolment meeting. The first 6-weeks should consist of a normal local induction to your company and to the apprenticeship programme. An example of what this might entail is:

- Meet with their line manager to understand more about their role and the apprenticeship, e.g. what to expect and support available
- Tour around their base – where they can find everything they need, getting access to everywhere where they need to work, ID pass, provided with IT equipment etc
- Meeting with colleagues, their buddy and/or mentor
- Enrolment onto their apprenticeship with their training provider – agree what they need to complete during their first 6-weeks which feeds into the next point below
- Agree a personal development plan and objectives for them to achieve during their first 6-weeks – includes a plan towards achieving their mandatory and essential training for their role (e.g. Health and Safety, SOPs etc)
- Regular one to one meetings with their line manager to check in, review progress and offer support if needed

Where can I find further information?

You can find useful information on apprenticeships, funding and recruitment on the [ATAC webpage](#), where there are guidance documents available.