

Apprenticeship FAQ – Employers

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APEL and RPL - does previous experience count?

Accreditation of Experiential Learning (APEL) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is something each apprentice will need to discuss with their chosen training provider as it is normally arranged on a case-by-case basis. It will only be possible to acknowledge it if the apprenticeship will still provide at least 12 months of new learning for the apprentice.

Does it include a qualification?

Apprenticeship Standards can only include a qualification where the qualification is required for registration, regulatory or license to practice purposes or if the apprentice would be significantly disadvantaged in the job market without a qualification. There is now different criteria for degree apprenticeships, these can be accessed on the [Degree Apprenticeships 2022](#) page on the IfATE website.

You can see if a qualification is mandated in the apprenticeship by downloading the standard document. If a qualification is included apprentices will have to meet the entry requirements for the qualification as well as the employer's selection criteria. Very often the selection process will be carried out in partnership between the employer and the education provider to make sure that the apprentice is suitable for both the practical and the academic progression they will be expected to make during the apprenticeship.

How are the funding bands decided?

Each apprenticeship is allocated to one of 30 funding bands, which range from £1,500 to £27,000. For further information about the allocation of funding bands, please [visit the IfATE \(Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Development\) website](#).

For more information on funding bands or the levy, visit gov.uk's guidance [How to register and use the apprenticeship service as an employer](#) . Please email funding enquiries to nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk

How long does an apprenticeship take?

An apprenticeship must be at least 12 months long. You can see the usual duration of the apprenticeship in each standard document. Some apprenticeships last for longer and, typically, degree apprenticeships last 36 – 60 months. Even if an apprentice has relevant prior learning the apprenticeship must still provide at least 12 months of new learning for them to be eligible for an apprenticeship in that occupation.

Is there an age limit?

Apprenticeships are open to anyone over the age of 16 who is living in England and is not in full-time education. There is no upper age limit.

Maternity leave

An apprentice may be eligible for maternity leave if they meet the service and earning conditions. You can find information on apprenticeships and maternity leave on the [Working Families website](#).

What are the requirements for English and Maths?

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education set the minimum requirements for all apprentices. The following is non-negotiable and applies to all apprentices undertaking Apprenticeship Standards (unless they have already achieved these levels prior to starting their apprenticeship):

- For level 2 Apprenticeships, apprentices must achieve level 1 English and maths (similar to a GCSE at grade D to G).
- For level 3 to 7 apprenticeships, apprentices must achieve level 2 English and maths (similar to a GCSE at grade A* to C).
- For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement the apprenticeships English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3 (below GCSE level) and British Sign Language qualification are an alternative to English qualifications for whom this is their primary language

From 11th February 2025 onwards there are changes to Functional Skills requirements in apprenticeships.

Apprentices aged 16-18 will continue to be subject to the mandatory requirement to study towards and achieve English and maths (as above).

Apprentices who began their apprenticeship training when aged 19+ will no longer be subject to the mandatory requirement to study towards and achieve English and maths. However, for apprentices aged 19+, the apprentice or their employer can still choose for the apprentice to study towards an English and maths qualification. [Further information can be found here](#).

What is a 'degree' apprenticeship?

At the end of a 'degree' apprenticeship, you will receive a full degree, equivalent to those awarded to students on a full-time academic programme. Degree level apprenticeships enable you to be employed as an apprentice whilst completing your degree programme. This may appeal to people who may not otherwise have seen university as a viable option. You will still need to meet the academic entry

requirements set by the university as well as being selected by your employer to do the apprenticeship. This is because you will have to study at the same level as all other students and need to be able to cope with the academic as well as the practical demands of the apprenticeship. A common misconception is that a degree apprenticeship is not as challenging as a 'normal' degree. This is not the case – you will have to work equally hard to get your degree!

When will the apprenticeship be ready?

Apprenticeship standards usually take about 9 to 12 months to develop. They are only ready for delivery once the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has approved the standard and the end point assessment plan and assigned a funding band. After that training providers and end point assessment organisations need to register. Then the training providers need to put together their course content and employers need to advertise vacancies. This can often mean there is a delay between a standard 'being approved for delivery' and being open for starts. Vacancies are usually advertised locally, on [NHS jobs](#) or the government [Find an Apprenticeship](#) website.

When will the apprenticeship be reviewed?

Standards need reviewing and revising to ensure they continue to meet changing needs. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education is developing a two-stage review process, starting with a Route Review (a review of occupations in a route and their relationship to one another), and then progressing to the more detailed scrutiny of a Pathway Review. This is when all of the apprenticeship standards within a route (eg health and science) are looked at all together. This process will take into account things like: take-up numbers, areas of potential overlap between occupations, feedback from apprentices, their employers, training providers, end point assessment organisations and external quality assurance providers.

Who provides end point assessment?

End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) provide end point assessment. Usually this will be an independent organisation who has not been involved with apprenticeship training. For registered healthcare occupations however the university or training provider that offers the degree or on-programme training may also be the EPAO. Visit gov.uk's [Find an End Point Assessment Organisation page](#) to find the currently registered EPAOs. Please note that there is often a time delay between a standard being approved for delivery and the EPAO list becoming available.

Who provides on-programme training?

Training providers for apprenticeship standards must meet the requirements to join the [APAR \(Apprenticeship Providers and Assessment Register\)](#). Normally the training provider will be a higher or further education provider although sometimes an employer will be registered as both an employer and a training provider. You can search for apprenticeship training in your local area using the government [Find apprenticeship training for your apprentice](#) website. You can also find an apprenticeship or view vacancies on [NHS jobs](#).

Who provides quality assurance?

Quality assurance of end point assessment is carried out by named external quality assurance (EQA) providers. Their job is to make sure that apprentices receive an equivalent end point assessment experience, irrespective of the end point assessment organisation they are with.

Visit gov.uk's [Apprenticeship end-point assessments – rules and guidance](#) where you can read rules and guidance for Ofqual-regulated apprenticeship end-point assessments.

For further information please also visit the IfATE website
– <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/quality/>