APPRENTICESHIPS
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Version 2 (June 2008)
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The questions below should help to answer some of the more frequently asked questions about Apprenticeships.

About Apprenticeships

Q1: What is the difference between a NVQ and an Apprenticeship?
A: An NVQ is a vocational qualification with no special entry requirements, of which there are over 650 different titles ranging from Levels 1 to 5. It is designed to demonstrate competence in a particular job role.

An Apprenticeship is specifically designed to provide the depth and breadth of training to enable an individual to be effective in a particular job role. It also develops the skills to enable an individual to progress with an employer. The Apprenticeship provides a mechanism for the apprentice to learn on the job, usually through a structured mentoring programme, and in some circumstances, off the job at an external training facility. The Apprenticeship will include an NVQ as well as a Technical Certificate and Key Skills, together with any additional training that the employer may feel is relevant to the Company and the individual apprentice.

Q2: What is an Apprenticeship made up of?
A: The structure of an Apprenticeship is developed by the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSCs) and is usually made up of the following elements:

- A Competence Based Element (NVQ) to demonstrate competence in the job role
- A Knowledge Based Element (Technical Certificate) to provide the depth of understanding around the job role (does not apply to all frameworks)
- Transferable Skills (Key or Functional Skills such as Numeracy, Communication Skills and Information Technology) to help develop current and future work related skills
- Employment Rights & Responsibilities (ERR) to provide understanding of the industry they work in and the context in which they perform their job role.

Q3: What Apprenticeship frameworks are available?
A: There are over 180 Apprenticeships in approximately 80 different sectors and industries. Please see the link below for a full list: http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/partners/frameworks/apprenticeships/

Q4: How long does an Apprenticeship take?
A: There is no set time to complete an Apprenticeship as they vary widely in content and size. The length of time taken will depend on the ability of the individual apprentice and the employer’s requirements. Some Apprenticeships can take up to five years however, the average times are shown:
• Apprenticeship: 1 – 2 years
• Advanced Apprenticeship: 2 - 3 years

Q5: How is an Apprenticeship monitored?
A: The learning provider will visit the apprentice in the work place on a regular basis to work with the apprentice and employer to ensure the programme is running smoothly, benefiting the business and the apprentice and to progress the apprentice’s qualification.

This will be followed up by a review process held every 12 weeks, which gives all parties the opportunity to comment on training and how it is working for the individual and the business.

Eligibility

Q6: Who is eligible for an Apprenticeship?
A: To be eligible, a person must:

• be in employment (unless on a programme led pathway, a route intended for individuals who may be unable to secure an employer led pathway opportunity without extra support)
• not be a graduate
• not be undertaking another course which is classed as full-time
• be an EU resident or have had residency status in the UK for 3 years and classed as “settled”
• Note - There are no age restrictions on access to Apprenticeships – the Government have stated that for people aged 16 - 25 Apprenticeships are the preferred programme of learning for employed learners.

Q7: Can an individual from a New Deal programme embark upon an Apprenticeship?
A: If the jobseeker is taking part in a New Deal programme they cannot access funding for an Apprenticeship. However, if they are under the age of 24 and have completed a 12 month New Deal full time education and training option but still have elements of their NVQ training to complete, this can be done so through an Apprenticeship framework.

Employer Questions

Q8: What employers are eligible?
A: All employers are eligible to take on an apprentice, provided the employer meets normal legal and health and safety employment requirements and there is a role for the apprentice within the company.
Q9: Is there any help available for an employer to recruit an apprentice?
A: Employers can be helped with the recruitment process. There are a number of ways that this can be done; normally the training provider will help and advise the employer as to the most appropriate recruitment strategy. Please contact your local LSC region to discuss as regional practices vary.

Q10: What should an employer pay an apprentice?
A: All full-time employed apprentices should receive at least £80 (not subject to tax contributions) per week on starting an Apprenticeship (Requirements for Funding Work Based Learning - 2007/08). It is strongly recommended however that the apprentice receive incremental rises based on competence, achievement and productivity to the organisation. Again, the training provider will help and advise the employer regarding wage levels and incremental pay rises for the apprentice.

Q11: How much commitment and input is needed by the employer?
A: As with any training, the employer must be prepared to employ and support the apprentice through the completion of their Apprenticeship and also provide the following:

- a work-based mentor / supervisor
- in some circumstances, time away from the work environment to complete other components of the framework e.g. Key Skills and Technical Certificate
- a senior member of the organisation to be involved with the completion of a learning agreement; this sets out the employer’s commitment and the obligations of both the employer and apprentice. It is good practice for the integration of apprentices into an organisation to be embedded into the company HR strategy. This ensures that the whole organisation can understand what Apprenticeships are and how they help to deliver added value for the business.

Q12: How much will having an Apprentice cost the employer?
A: The employer will be responsible for paying the salary of the apprentice, but for 16-18 year olds all the framework delivery costs will be funded by the LSC. For those over 18 the employer may be expected to make a contribution to the training delivery- this may not be in monetary terms but may take the form of providing training facilities or access to equipment. This would need to be discussed with the preferred training provider. In most circumstances, the value that older, productive apprentices add to the business enables employer costs to be substantially offset.
Funding

Q13: How are Apprenticeships funded?
A: Apprenticeships are funded through the LSC using the employer responsive funding model. The training provider will give a detailed explanation to the employer of how the funding works and in most circumstances will deal with the processes and documentation on the employer’s behalf. This ensures that the employer doesn’t have the burden of any unnecessary administration and can concentrate on their core business.

If an employer chooses to contract directly for Apprenticeship funding (normally where the employer is considering employing more than 50 apprentices) then a representative from the newly forming National Apprenticeship Service would offer the employer advice and guidance as to how to facilitate this.

Q14: Is funding available for Advanced Apprenticeships if the individual has already completed an Apprenticeship?
A: Yes, and this would be recognised as good practice, subject to the employer and apprentice’s agreement, as it would extend the skill set of the apprentice and enable them to make an enhanced contribution to the employer’s business.

Q15: Which courses are not available for funding?
A: The LSC no longer funds Technical Certificate courses of fewer than 9 guided learning hours. They also do not fund Health and Safety, First Aid and Food Safety provision and all other standards required by regulation, unless it is part of the Apprenticeship Framework as part of a mandatory Technical Certificate and the LSC has agreed to fund it. Further information on this can be found at http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/A_Framework_for_Managing_the_Balance_and_Mix_of_Provision_200708_23Feb2007.pdf

Further Information
For more information regarding Apprenticeships please see the website at: http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/ where there is information for the employer, the prospective apprentice and partner organisations along with a list of all Apprenticeship frameworks.