



APPRENTICE HANDBOOK



Herefordshire &
Ludlow College

What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a paid job with an accompanying skills development programme which allows the apprentice to gain technical knowledge and real practical experience through a mix of learning in the workplace, formal 'off-the-job' training and the opportunity to practise and embed new skills in a real work context. So, not only will you gain valuable experience you will also be learning and studying and earning money at the same time.

Apprenticeships have been designed by employers to meet employers' needs for a particular sector or job role, and each apprenticeship defines the skills, knowledge, behaviours and formal qualifications that the apprentice needs to acquire in order to become competent in their chosen field, and to be awarded the status of fully qualified apprentice.

Apprenticeships are nationally recognised as a fantastic pathway into the career of your choice and HLC now offers apprenticeships in almost all industries. The range of apprenticeships we offer can be found on our website.

This handbook has lots of useful information that will help you to get the most out of your apprenticeship. If you need help with any aspect of your course or other things that are happening in your life, your college assessor is your first point of contact. They will be able to help you with most things and if they don't know the answer they will know someone who does. Don't worry, just ask.

What types of apprenticeship are available?

Apprenticeships are changing. The government has asked employers in each sector to review the content of apprenticeships for their industries and occupations, and these new, revised apprenticeships, are known as **Apprenticeship Standards**. Over the next few years, these new Standards will be phased in to replace the existing **Apprenticeship Frameworks**, which have been around for a number of years.

Because of this transition from Frameworks to Standards, HLC offers a mixture of both Apprenticeship Frameworks and Apprenticeship Standards, depending on the sector in question and the availability of new Standards for that sector. We will advise you on whether you will be signed up for an Apprenticeship Framework or an Apprenticeship Standard as part of our interview and selection process, and we also have further information on our website.

More information on **Apprenticeship Frameworks** and **Apprenticeship Standards** can be found later on in this handbook.

What levels of apprenticeship are available?

There are three levels of apprenticeships available for those aged 16 and over.

Intermediate Apprenticeships (equivalent to five good GCSE passes)

Intermediate Apprenticeships involve the development and assessment of skills and knowledge at Level 2 (relevant to the occupational sector or job role), and as defined by the Framework or Standard. Achievement of an Intermediate Apprenticeship may allow progression onto an Advanced Apprenticeship.

To start an Intermediate Apprenticeship, the applicant should ideally have 5 GCSEs (grade E/grade 2 or above).

Advanced Apprenticeships (equivalent to two A Level passes)

Advanced apprenticeships involve the development and assessment of skills and knowledge at Level 3 (relevant to the occupational sector or job role), and as defined by the Framework or Standard. Achievement of an Advanced Apprenticeship may allow progression onto a Higher Apprenticeship.

To start an Advanced Apprenticeship, the applicant should ideally have five good GCSEs (grade C/grade 4 or above) or have completed an Intermediate Apprenticeship.

Higher & Degree Apprenticeships

Higher & Degree Apprenticeships involve the development and assessment of skills and knowledge at Level 4 or above (relevant to the occupational sector or job role), and as defined by the Framework or Standard. Higher Apprenticeships at Level 4 and 5 can allow progression on to university degrees, and Degree Apprenticeships are also now becoming widely available in most sectors.

To start a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship, the applicant should ideally have a relevant Level 3 vocational qualification or three good A Levels or have completed a relevant Level 3 Apprenticeship.

How long is an apprenticeship?

The minimum length of an apprenticeship is 12 months, but some apprenticeships will be designed to last two, three or four years. This will depend on the Framework or Standard being followed, the level of apprenticeship, the specific occupational area/sector and the prior skill levels of the apprentice.

Once you start your apprenticeship you will be taken through an induction programme which will guide you through your training and the contents of your

apprenticeship, including the studying of any formal qualifications. It is our aim to help and advise you throughout your apprenticeship. Our team will help to make the process as painless as possible. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

What can I do after I complete my apprenticeship?

There are a number of routes that you can take after an apprenticeship. You can use the skills that you have developed to carry on in employment. You can also continue with the apprenticeship scheme to progress to the next level of apprenticeship, such as an Advanced Apprenticeship or a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship.



What is in an Apprenticeship Framework?

The elements that make up an Apprenticeship Framework will vary slightly from sector to sector, but below are the elements that could be included.

All Apprenticeship Frameworks will include as a minimum a competence element, maths and English (unless the apprentice is exempt), and the employment rights and responsibilities element. Many frameworks also include the requirement for a technical certificate to be completed.

We will advise you on the requirements for your particular sector.

Your employer will be required to release you from work in order to receive off-the-job training. This could be the requirement to attend college in the form of a day release or block release, or it could be training that takes place at your place of work but away from the immediate requirements and pressures of your normal job role. We will advise you and your employer about the off-the-job attendance requirements for your chosen apprenticeship.

1. Competence Element/NVQ

This is a nationally recognised vocational qualification, usually an NVQ, which assesses the competence of the apprentice in relation to the skills they need in order to do the job to a specified standard. It is assessed by portfolio and by the assessment of the apprentice performing tasks in the workplace. The college will allocate an assessor who has the relevant industry experience and background.

2. Knowledge Element - Technical Certificate

A technical certificate is a knowledge-based qualification which helps develop an understanding of the industry or role and teaches the apprentice specific skills and relevant theory. This element is delivered off-the-job, normally requiring college attendance on a day release or block release basis. It will be a nationally recognised qualification, such as a BTEC or City & Guilds, and is normally assessed via assignment work and/or examinations.

3. Maths and English and ICT - Functional Skills

Virtually all frameworks include maths and English qualifications, and some also include ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

Apprentices without prior qualifications in English and maths at Level 2 (e.g. GCSEs at grade C/grade 4 or above) will be required to study these subjects as part of their apprenticeship.

English and maths Functional Skills are practical, applied literacy and numeracy qualifications, relevant to both young people and adult learners. They will help the

apprentice to develop and apply important skills such as communication, analytical and presentational skills.

Functional Skills are assessed by examination and normally require the apprentice to attend college on one or more three-day blocks throughout the year, depending on individual requirements.

4. Employment rights and responsibilities element

Each framework must include a requirement for the apprentice to develop knowledge and understanding about the world of employment, their rights and responsibilities. This element is normally delivered as part of the competence or technical certificate elements.

5. Additional qualifications/assessments

Some apprenticeship frameworks in some sectors specify additional qualifications or assessments that are needed in order for the apprentice to complete their qualification. You will be advised if this is the case for your sector.



What is in an Apprenticeship Standard?

New Apprenticeship Standards are being phased in to replace existing Apprenticeship Frameworks. The current list of Apprenticeship Standards available for each sector or job role can be found on the government website;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

Each Apprenticeship Standard defines the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for that particular job role or occupation, and each Standard is accompanied by an Assessment Plan, which details how the apprentice will be assessed against the Standard.

Your employer will be required to release you from work in order to receive off-the-job training. This could be the requirement to attend college in the form of a day release or block release, or it could be training that takes place at your place of work but away from the immediate requirements and pressures of your normal job role. We will advise you and your employer about the off-the-job attendance requirements for your chosen apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship Standards can be quite different from each other. For example, some specify the achievement of mandatory qualifications, whilst others do not require the achievement of formal qualifications. We will advise you on the requirements for your particular apprenticeship.

However, all Standards will contain the following:

1. Skills & Competencies

The Standard will define the range of skills and competencies that the apprentice needs to practice and acquire in order to do the job to a specified standard. These skills are largely acquired and practised in the workplace and the college will allocate an assessor, who has the relevant industry experience and background, to carry out formal or informal assessment of your skills and provide you with feedback.

2. Knowledge & Understanding

The Standard will define the knowledge and understanding that the apprentice will need to acquire and apply in order to carry out their role effectively and become occupationally competent.

3. Behaviours

The Standard will define the behaviours that the apprentice will need to demonstrate in order to become occupationally competent. This may include behaviours such as good attendance and punctuality, good communication, problem solving or customer service skills etc.

4. Maths and English

Virtually all Standards require the apprentice to achieve qualifications in English and maths prior to the end of their apprenticeship, and this will normally be Functional Skills qualifications.

Apprentices without prior qualifications in English and maths at Level 2 (e.g. GCSEs at grade C/grade 4 or above) will be required to study these subjects as part of their apprenticeship.

English and maths Functional Skills are practical, applied literacy and numeracy qualifications, relevant to both young people and adult learners. They will help the apprentice to develop and apply important skills such as communication, analytical and presentational skills.

Functional Skills are assessed by examination and normally require the apprentice to attend college on one or more three-day blocks throughout the year, depending on individual requirements.

5. End Point Assessment

Each Standard has a detailed Assessment Plan that sets out how the apprentice is going to be assessed against each of the above elements of their apprenticeship.

Some Standards may require the achievement of formal and recognised qualifications as part of the Standard. Other Standards may require the apprentice to pass formal skills and knowledge assessments at certain points in their apprenticeship before they can move on to the next stage, and these are known as Gateway Assessments.

The range and type of assessment methods vary significantly between Standards, but all Standards will contain an End Point Assessment. This is an assessment that takes place at the end of the apprenticeship and is designed to assess the apprentice against all elements of the apprenticeship; skills, knowledge and behaviours. The End Point Assessment is carried out by an independent End Point Assessment organisation, and it will typically be spread out over a number of days.

The apprentice needs to pass the End Point Assessment in order to become a fully qualified apprentice.

The assessment methods employed to assess the apprentice throughout and / or at the end of their apprenticeship could be one or more of the following:

Portfolio/Log-Book	Written or online knowledge tests
Observations	Practical Test/Assessments
Presentations	Projects
Assignments	Interview/viva/professional discussion

What is expected of me?

Being clear in your understanding of your commitment and obligations under the rules of the apprenticeship programme is especially important. This may be your first experience of the workplace and/or learning or you may be consolidating years of experience through a recognised apprenticeship. As a responsible apprentice you will need to be able to demonstrate that you are committed to your apprenticeship programme and that you are prepared to play an active part in your development.

You will be expected to act and behave in a professional manner at all times, both at work and at college, which includes a commitment to full attendance, punctuality and responsible and respectful behaviour.

Reporting illnesses and absences

If it is a college day, you must ring or get a message to the college before 8.30am on your first day of sickness. You must also inform your employer. If it is a work day then you need to just inform your employer. You must try to give some details of how long your illness will last. Failure to phone in may result in a loss of money for that day.

If you are absent for five or more days you must provide a self-certification note to your employer and college assessor. However, if you are off for a period of more than seven days (including weekends) you must provide a medical certificate. Any apprentice who has incurred a period of four weeks sickness may be suspended from the programme for up to six months but may re-apply to be reinstated on the programme after having been deemed fit for work. Any apprentice who has incurred a period of four weeks of consecutive working days of unauthorised absence is terminated from the programme.

Punctuality

If you are consistently late without good reason your employer may deduct money from your wages. This may also lead to disciplinary procedures being taken against you. Persistent lateness on college days may result in your employer being informed and you being subject to the college's disciplinary policy.

Keeping appointments

Your college assessor will need to carry out progress reviews with you and your employer at least every 12 weeks and to also carry out a number of assessments and observations in the workplace during the length of your apprenticeship programme. These workplace visits will be arranged and agreed in advance. If you

have to change a scheduled appointment then you need to give your assessor as much notice as possible. If you do not attend or are not present for scheduled appointments then the college may charge your employer for missed appointments. Continually missed appointments may result in disciplinary action being taken or you being withdrawn from the apprenticeship programme.

Depending on your apprenticeship programme and your prior qualifications, you may also be required to attend college on additional days to complete your Functional Skills qualifications as part of your apprenticeship. Failure to attend these days may also result in the college charging your employer for costs incurred, and persistent failure to attend may result in disciplinary action being taken or you being withdrawn from the apprenticeship programme.



What can I expect from the college?

Our aim is to ensure you have all the information and support necessary for you to successfully complete your apprenticeship with us. The key person will be the college assessor, who will guide you through the programme from start to finish. The college assessor will carry out assessments in the workplace and set you targets through formal progress reviews. They will act as the link between your employer and the college and will be your first point of contact if you have any questions, issues or concerns. In some cases the responsibilities of workplace assessment and carrying out progress reviews will be split between two people.

Other key people may include college teaching staff who will deliver any college-based qualifications and a workplace mentor allocated to you by your employer.

At each stage of your apprenticeship you can expect the following from us:

Prior to the start of the apprenticeship

- Advice and guidance on the right apprenticeship for you, and support in helping you to secure an apprenticeship with a suitable employer.
- An initial assessment in maths and English to ensure you are on the right level of apprenticeship and to identify any numeracy or literacy needs.
- The identification of any additional support requirements for those apprentices with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.
- An initial Health & Safety Risk Assessment will be carried out on your employer before you start your apprenticeship to ensure that you are being placed within a healthy and safe environment.
- Issue of a contract and/or a Commitment Statement, signed by all parties, which sets out the roles and responsibilities on all sides for the apprenticeship programme.

At the start of the apprenticeship

- An induction into the apprenticeship programme, which may also include a college induction and induction into any college-based courses.
- The issue of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) & Commitment Statement that sets out the requirements of the apprenticeship, including a training and assessment plan which identifies the time spent at work in 'on-the-job' training and time spent away from work in off-the-job training.

During the apprenticeship

- You can expect to experience a high quality apprenticeship training programme, taking into account your needs and those of your employer and delivered by a professional and highly competent delivery and assessment team with relevant vocational expertise.
- Regular progress reviews (at least every 12 weeks) to review your progress at work and at college and to set targets for the next period. The progress review will also monitor and respond to any concerns and issues you may have in respect of health and safety, equality and diversity, and safeguarding. See the relevant sections in this handbook for more information.
- Regular assessment of your knowledge and skills, based on industry standards. Assessment can take one or more of the following forms:
 - **Observation:** Direct observation of the apprentice performing a task to required standards in the workplace or in college.
 - **Portfolio:** A portfolio contains evidence of tasks completed, consisting of job write-ups, photos, witness statements etc. These will be assessed against the relevant standards by the college appointed assessor.
 - **Questioning:** Knowledge and understanding may be assessed via on-the-job or off-the-job questioning by the assessor or by written questions and answers.
 - **Assignments and exams:** Apprentices may also be required to produce assignments or to sit internally or externally set exams in order to evidence knowledge and understanding. These are the most common assessment methodologies for any college-based qualifications and for Functional Skills.
- We will carry out a formal survey of all apprentices once a year in order to gain feedback on how we as a college are doing. Please take the time to complete this survey fully and provide us with your honest feedback and suggestions for improvement.

At the end of the apprenticeship

- For those following an Apprenticeship Standard, an End Point Assessment will be carried out by an independent End Point Assessment organisation.
- Certification of any qualifications achieved, including any End Point Assessment, and the issue of the apprenticeship completion certificate.
- Further advice and guidance on your options for further progression, e.g. progressing on to the next level of apprenticeship if available and suitable.

What can I expect from my employer?

In taking on and supporting an apprentice there are certain obligations that an employer needs to commit to.

Employment and working hours

- You must be paid a wage that is at least the national minimum wage for apprentices, which is dependent on age, set by government and reviewed annually. The current minimum wage for apprentices can be found under <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>. Your rate of pay may exceed this, at the discretion of your employer, and will take into account your abilities, age, skills and experience, and the market rate for the job concerned. Many employers choose to pay significantly above the apprentice minimum wage in order to secure and retain the best apprentices.
- Apprentices should work a minimum of 30 hours per week up to a maximum of 40 hours per week and must be paid both for the hours they spend working and for those that they spend formally studying at college or away from the workplace.
- All apprentices must have a contract of employment and receive a pay slip, or other evidence of payment.
- Apprentices must be given at least two full days off per week. If working on a Sunday is a requirement, and the apprentice is under 18, then the employer must obtain parental consent.



- You are entitled to paid holidays from your first day of employment. The minimum statutory entitlement is currently 28 days annually, including bank holidays. Where possible, holidays should not be taken during college terms or days as this may delay progress towards your qualifications. Holiday pay will be accrued in accordance with the terms of your employment contract.
- Your employer should allow you to join a recognised trade union if you so wish. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) offers free, confidential and impartial advice on all employment rights issues.

Induction

Employers must provide apprentices with a full workplace induction, covering subjects such as health and safety, fire procedures, sickness, holidays and complaints.

Mentoring

Providing you with a mentor is optional for your employer, but if you are allocated a workplace mentor, there are many positive outcomes. The mentor can act as a role model and lets you see, first hand, the level you should be aspiring to.

Providing learning opportunities and supporting skills development

To demonstrate competency in the workplace, which is a core component of your training programme, you may be required to collect evidence to demonstrate that you are competent in a range of different activities and skills. As part of the apprenticeship recruitment process, we will advise the employer on the range of tasks and activities that you will need to undertake in order to develop your skills, and check that the employer has the range and scope of work available to evidence this.

Your allocated college assessor will discuss and agree the best way of providing this evidence to achieve the national standards. This will involve identifying naturally occurring opportunities to practise and demonstrate skills in the workplace or organising activities specifically to demonstrate particular skills. The college assessor will work with your employer to help them to deliver the training required and to create the opportunities necessary for you to develop your skills and achieve your apprenticeship.

Much of the training will take place within the workplace itself. This will typically involve you developing your skills through observing others perform activities, practising such activities yourself and learning from your peers and more senior

colleagues. The more learning opportunities that you can access, the greater the range of skills you are likely to acquire, which will be of benefit to your apprenticeship.

Your employer is required to release you to attend the progress reviews that are carried out by the college assessor, and (wherever possible) your employer, work supervisor or mentor should be present at these reviews in order to better support your progress and to identify and discuss any areas of concern or of good practice and to be involved in the setting of targets.

Release for college attendance

You may be required to attend college or other off-the-job training in order to gain certain skills and undertake certain assessments. Your employer is obligated to release you on the agreed days or times for this and to count this time as part of your normal weekly paid hours.

Some employers allow the apprentice time at work to complete college-based assignments, job write-ups or portfolio building activities, although they are not obliged to do this.



Health & Safety

All employers should take all the necessary steps to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of all persons participating in an apprenticeship is of the same standard as that required in relation to any of its employees under current relevant health and safety legislation in Great Britain

You are entitled to the same protection under the law as any employee, but you also have a legal duty to obey safety rules at your work placement and college.

Protective clothing and safety equipment must be used at all times where specified. If special protective equipment, or safety equipment is necessary, then it must be provided free of charge to the apprentice by the employer.

You also have a duty of care to your employer and other employees in the work place. This applies also when at college.

If you have an accident you must report it to your workplace supervisor and make sure it is recorded in the accident book. Any accident, however minor, must also be reported to your college assessor immediately.

Equality & Diversity

Your employer is obliged to comply with current equality legislation and not to discriminate under the 'protected characteristics' of sex, disability, marital status, race (including national or ethnic origins), sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, religion or belief, age, pregnancy/maternity and ex-offenders with a spent crime.

All employers are required to have a policy/complaints procedure for harassment.



Safeguarding & Prevent

Safeguarding you both at work and at college is important to us.

Safeguarding means:

- The promotion of your health and development
- Ensuring your safety and care
- Ensuring you are offered the best life chances
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Prevention of bullying and harassment
- Prevention against exposure to terrorism and extremist views

The term 'safeguarding' embraces both child and vulnerable adult protection and preventative approaches to keep the apprentice safe. Safeguarding encompasses the apprentice's health and safety, welfare and well-being. The prevention against exposure to terrorism and extremist views applies to all, regardless of age or background.

We will monitor and respond as appropriate to any safeguarding concerns raised or brought to our attention by either the employer, the apprentice or a third party.

Our safeguarding policy can be found on our website: www.hlcollege.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about your safety, well-being or rights then please contact:

- Your contact at the College (i.e. college assessor or member of teaching staff)
- The College's Designated Senior Safeguarding Lead, Debra Baldwin
Call: 01432 365309, email: baldwind@hlcollege.ac.uk

If you have concerns about someone's safety or about their involvement in extremism or terrorist actions, or if you are particularly concerned that someone might leave the country to travel to a conflict zone:

- Then contact West Mercia Police, Protective Services on 01386 591835, or
- The College's Designated Senior Safeguarding Lead, Debra Baldwin
Call: 01432 365309, email: baldwind@hlcollege.ac.uk

A free support service is available for apprentices who are feeling low, upset and struggling to keep up with their apprenticeship. It is completely confidential and run by fully trained professionals with expertise in mental health. For further information, please email apprentices@remploy.co.uk or visit the Remploy website or call [0300 456 8210](tel:03004568210)

Complaints & Issues

If you should have cause for complaint or wish to raise a concern with us then you should speak with your assessor or a member of our college employer engagement team in the first instance who will do their best to deal with the issue or else refer it on to their manager for follow up. If you are still not satisfied then you can follow the college's complaints procedure which can be found on our website (<http://www.hlcollege.ac.uk/policies-and-governance>)

You can also contact the Apprenticeship helpline on 0800 015 0400 or email at nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk

Summary & Further Information

We hope that you have found this guide helpful and we wish you every success in your apprenticeship.

As an HLC apprentice you will be enrolled as a student at the college and as such you will have full access to the same range of resources and support services as any other student, including things like the library services and online resources. You will have a college IT account and a college email account.

With a college IT account you will be able to access all the information and resources contained within our online learning portal, called Moodle. In particular, the college's 'hello' induction course on Moodle provides you with a wealth of information that you might find helpful or that you may need to refer to from time to time. This includes, but is not limited to:

- College student disciplinary procedures
- Exam and assessment regulations
- Appeals and complaints procedure
- English and maths learning resources
- Car parking and smoking policies
- Careers help and guidance
- Further information on health and safety, wellbeing, equality and diversity and safeguarding
- Links to the library's online catalogues

Call: 0800 032 1986 Email: enquiries@hlcollege.ac.uk Web: www.hlcollege.ac.uk