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Apprentice Handbook 2021 / 2022

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Contents

- Page 3: What is an Apprenticeship?**
- Page 4: What types of apprenticeship are available?**
- Page 5: How long is an apprenticeship?**
- Page 6: What can I do after I complete my apprenticeship?**
- Page 6: What is an Apprenticeship Standard?**
- Page 8: What is expected of me?**
- Page 9: What can I expect from MITSkills**
- Page 12: What can I expect from my employer?**
- Page 14: Health and Safety**
- Page 15: Equality and Diversity**
- Page 16: Safeguarding and Prevent**
- Page 16: Complaints and Issues**
- Page 17: Summary and Further Information**

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, 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 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 MITSkills offer 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 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 have changed. The government asked employers in each sector to review the content of apprenticeships for their industries and occupations; these new, revised apprenticeships, are known as Apprenticeship Standards.

We will advise you on what Apprenticeship Standard matches your potential employer vacancy and skill requirements as part of your interview and selection process, and we also have further information on our website.

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

What levels of apprenticeship are available?

There are different levels of apprenticeships available for those aged 16 and over. These range from Level 2 (Intermediate Apprenticeships) through to Degree Level Apprenticeships.

Intermediate Apprenticeships (equivalent to five good GCSE passes)

Intermediate Apprenticeships involve the development and assessment of skills, knowledge, and behaviours at Level 2 (relevant to the occupational sector or job role), and as defined by the 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, knowledge, and behaviours at Level 3 (relevant to the occupational sector or job role), and as defined by the Standard. Achievement of an Advanced Apprenticeship may allow progression onto a Higher-Level 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 and Degree Apprenticeships

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

To start a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship, the applicant should ideally have a relevant Level 3 vocational qualification, 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 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 several 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 Standard?

The Apprenticeship Standards were phased in to replace the previous Apprenticeship Frameworks. The current list of Apprenticeship Standards available for each sector or job role can be found on the government website.

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

Each Apprenticeship Standard defines the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for that 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 to receive 'off-the-job' training. This could be a requirement to attend the centre in the form of a day release or block release, or it could be training that takes place at your 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 apprenticeship.

However, all Standards will contain the following:

1. Skills and Competencies

The Standard will define the range of skills and competencies that the apprentice needs to practice and acquire to do the job to a specified standard. These skills are largely acquired and practised in the workplace and MITSkills 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 and Understanding

The Standard will define the knowledge and understanding that the apprentice will need to acquire and apply 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 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 the centre 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 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 several days.

The apprentice needs to pass the End Point Assessment 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/Logbook
Written or online knowledge tests
Observations
Practical Test/Assessments
Presentations
Projects
Assignments
Interview/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 always be expected to act and behave in a professional manner, both at work and at the training centre, which includes a commitment to full attendance, punctuality, and responsible/respectful behaviour. MITSkills has a [Learner Code of Conduct](#) which we expect all learners to comply with.

You are required to comply with several policies and procedures as a learner. These are aimed at ensuring you and other learners are safe and have standards you know can expect of us, other learners and we in turn can expect of you, these are provided on our [website](#) and are part of our terms and conditions. Hard copies are available on request.

Reporting illnesses and absences

If you are absent for five or more days, you must provide a self-certification note to your employer and 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.

If it is a day that you should attend the training centre, you must ring or get a message to us before 8:30am on your first day of sickness. You must also inform your employer. If it is a workday, 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.

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 may result in your employer being informed and you being subject to MIT Skill's disciplinary policy. For more information on our disciplinary process please see our [Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy](#) on our website.

Keeping appointments

Your assessor will need to carry out regular progress reviews with you and your employer and to carry out several 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 must 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 MITSkills may charge your employer for missed appointments. Continually missed appointments may result in disciplinary action being taken or you are being withdrawn from the apprenticeship programme.

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



What can I expect from MITSkills?

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 work-based trainer or lead tutor, who will guide you through the programme from start to finish. The work-based trainer and/or tutor will carry out training and assessments in the workplace and set you targets through formal progress reviews. They will act as the link between your employer and MITSkills 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 teaching staff who will deliver any knowledge-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 and 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

- You will be allocated a Learning Coach who will support you throughout your apprenticeship journey.
- An induction onto the apprenticeship programme.
- The issue of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and 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, considering 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 to review your progress at work and in lessons 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, skills, and behaviours, 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 the centre.
 - 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 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 to evidence knowledge and understanding. These are the most common assessment methodologies for any knowledge-based qualifications and for Functional Skills.
- We will carry out a formal survey of all apprentices after 12 weeks, 6 months and annually, as well as at the end of the apprenticeship, to gain feedback on how we 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

- 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 in 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> (valid August 2021). Your rate of pay may exceed this, at the discretion of your employer, and will consider your abilities, age, skills, experience, and the market rate for the job concerned. Many employers choose to pay significantly above the apprentice minimum wage to secure and retain the best apprentices.
- Apprentices should be employed for 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 the training centre or away from the workplace. (There are a few exceptions to this rule for learners your employer and our work-based trainer will explain this if it is relevant to your apprenticeship).
- All apprentices must have a contract of employment and receive a pay slip, or other evidence of payment.
- Apprentices under 18 must be given at least two consecutive full days off per week and restricted from working shifts. Those aged 16 or 17 must not work after 10pm or before 7am although there are some industries which are allowed early or late working. For further information on working time and breaks please see the ACAS guide <https://www.acas.org.uk/young-workers-apprentices-and-work-experience> (Valid August 2021)



- 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 term time 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 (including Covid 19 workplace systems), fire procedures, sickness, holidays, and complaints. Your employer should nominate a single point of contact (SPOC) for the company; this person will be a contact between the employer and the training provider if you or the employer require wider support during your apprenticeship. This may be your mentor, or they may be another member of staff. The Department of Education recognises this as good practice in developing a strong working relationship between the training provider and employer in delivering health and safety in relation to Prevent and Safeguarding.



Mentoring

Your employer will allocate a workplace mentor. The mentor can act as a role model and let you see, first-hand, the level you should be aspiring to. Your mentor and other skilled staff may support you in the skills build required for your Apprenticeship.

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 to develop your skills, and check that the employer has the range and scope of work available to evidence this.

You will be allocated a work-based trainer who 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 skills. The 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 work-based trainer or tutor, and your employer, work supervisor or mentor should be present at these reviews 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.

Day Release

You may be required to attend MITSkills or other 'off-the-job' training to gain certain skills and undertake 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 assignments, job write-ups or portfolio building activities, although they are not obliged to do this.

Bursary

Apprentices that are 19 to 24 and meet the criteria of Care Leaver may be able to qualify for a Bursary on evidence of eligibility MITSkills staff can support you with this for more details of the Bursary and criteria. please follow the link below.

<https://mitskills.com/policy-documents/>

Please take the time to read the Care Leavers Bursary Policy and if you believe you are eligibly complete the Care Leaver and Declaration and send it in to our Bursary Administrator (see the policy).

Health and 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 on day release.

Protective clothing and safety equipment must always be used 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 workplace. This applies also when at the training centre.

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 work-based trainer immediately.

Covid-19

Your employer will have a Covid-19 system of work in place and expectation for the duration that it is deemed required nationally and or locally. You as an employee are required to follow your employer's guidance You should comply with your employer's system of work and follow Government guidance where relevant including outside work. If you are unclear on your employer's expectations, ask.

It is important that you are clear on expectations and requirements as these are varying across the country and by sector. There is general guidance here to help you understand what kind of things employers and employees are being asked to do (note your employer may have sector specific advice to follow).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19> (Valid August 2021)

MITSkills delivery centres and our work-based trainers will also have a Covid-19 system of work in place.

If you are attending a centre, please ensure you ask about the systems in place to keep you safe.

Current advice on Covid-19 from the Government can be found [here](#)

Ensure you contact MITSkills and your employer if you have symptoms, please do not attend the training centre. Make sure you are clear what your employer expectations are if you get symptoms.

Information advice and guidance

MITSkills provides a range of information and advice and guidance via your work-based trainer, or by our IAG trained staff who can be contacted via phoning on 01932 341416 from 9 to 5pm Monday to Friday.

We also provide sign posting to a range of self-referral high quality national and regional IAG on our [website](#) available 24/7 to support you, or your family at a time that suits you.

Equality and 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 and Prevent

Safeguarding you both at work and at study 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](#).

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

- Your contact at the centre (i.e., assessor or member of teaching staff)
- The Designated Senior Safeguarding Lead, Claire Clark; phone: 01932341416, email: safeguarding@mitskills.com

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:

- The Designated Prevent Lead, Claire Clark or back up Senior Manager, Sam Hanmer. phone: 01932341416, email: safeguarding@mitskills.com

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, visit the Remploy website, call 0300 456 8114 or please email: a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk

<https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/access-work-mental-health-support-service-apprentices>

Complaints and 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 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 complaints procedure which can be found on our website <https://mitskills.com/policy-documents/>. (Valid August 2021)

Summary and Further Information

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

As an MITSkills apprentice you will be enrolled as a learner and as such you will have full access to a range of resources and support services.

The following information on the following can be found on our website. Those marked with* form our terms and conditions accepted by yourself (hardcopies are available on request).

- Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure*
- Exam and Assessment Regulations
- Internal Quality Assurance and Appeals Policies*
- Code of Conduct*
- Health and Safety*
- Equality and Diversity*
- Safeguarding*
- Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment*
- Apprenticeship Care Leaver Bursary Policy
- Apprentice Care Leaver Bursary Declaration
- Prevent*

External Links

- Apprenticeships and Benefits
- English and Maths Learning Resources
- Careers help and guidance
- NUS Card
- Apprentice Oyster photocard

