Department for Education

Flexible Apprenticeships in Construction

Department for Education

Produced in partnership with …

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What are flexible apprenticeships?

Introduction

- Apprenticeships have undergone major employer-led reforms to transform into a prestigious and high-quality training offer.
- Employers of all sizes now have greater involvement in their apprenticeship choices – the construction sector has been instrumental in driving this change.
- While we have made significant progress, we need to make sure apprenticeships reflect modern models of employment and work for all employers in all sectors. We are introducing changes to make apprenticeships more flexible and portable than before.

2012: Richard Review and introduction of employer-led standards through Trailblazer groups.

2017: introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy; and launch of IfATE and the Digital Apprenticeship Service.

2018: Transfers introduced – employers who pay the levy able to transfer levy funds in bulk to other employers, including SMEs.

2019: Applicants invited to test Digital Apprenticeship Service for SMEs

2020: All apprenticeship starts through employer-led standards

2021: All apprenticeship starts arranged through the Digital Apprenticeship Service.

Beyond 2021: Building on employer-led apprenticeships to deliver the ambitions of the Skills for Jobs White Paper.

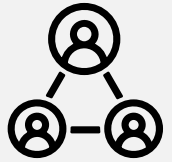
What is this manual for?

- This manual explains how off-the-job training can be flexed to meet individual employer needs. It includes information and case studies about:

  Flexible training models – options for delivering off-the-job training, including 'front-loading' blocks of training at the beginning of an apprenticeship.

  Accelerated apprenticeships – approaches to adjusting the content and duration of apprenticeship training plans through recognition of prior learning.
- Some employers are already making use of these flexibilities and are seeing the benefits in workforce satisfaction and productivity.
- We want all employers to think creatively about how they can tailor the delivery of off-the-job training to suit their needs; working with providers and apprentices to achieve the right blend of on- and off-the-job training with high-quality outcomes.

Apprentice: commits to training programme and end point assessment.



Provider(s): responsible for training and end point assessment.

Employer: supports apprentice through training to end-point assessment.

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Flexible training models

Key: Workplace (including on-the-job training) | Off-the-job training | Front-loaded off-the-job training | Gateway → End Point Assessment

What are flexible training models?

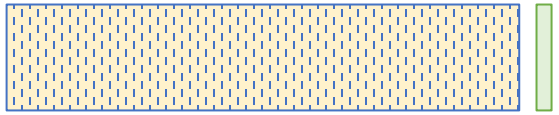
- Both employers and providers have a role in delivering training:
  - **Off-the-job training** is delivered by the training provider to give the apprentice the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to achieve occupational competence.
  - **On-the-job training** is delivered by the employer to help the apprentice perform the job they have been hired to do.
- Apprenticeships must involve at least **20% off-the-job training**. It is up to the employer and provider to decide how the training is delivered. This could be at the apprentice's usual place of work, or at an external location (e.g. a college or specialist training site).
- Employers use **different training models** to meet their needs, including regular day release, block release, and special training days/workshops. While there is no prescribed way of delivering training for any given standard, there are some common models, which can be arranged to suit the needs of employer and the apprentice (see figure 1).

For more information

- See Government guidance about off-the-job training
- Consult the ESFA funding rules
- Find a provider and talk to them about your options.

CLICK **HERE** TO SEE CASE STUDIES

Day release

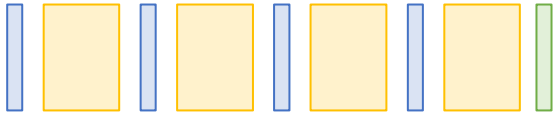


Time in the workplace frequently interspersed with training (e.g. a proportion each day, or a one day weekly/fortnightly)

Key features

- Local to workplace
- Frequent contact with provider
- Fits around day-to-day job role

Block release

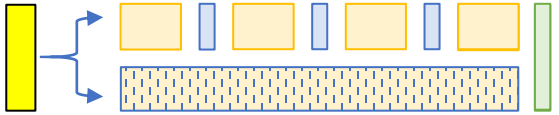


Longer periods in the workplace interspersed with concentrated periods of training of training of ≥1 week.

Key features

- Intensive training
- Extended time in workplace
- Potential residential element

Front-loading



A block of training delivered at the beginning of the apprenticeship to embed core knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Key features

- Intensive training up-front means core elements are embedded early
- Potential residential element
- Potential to reduce duration

Figure 1 – diagrams to show common delivery models for apprenticeship training and their defining features.

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Accelerated apprenticeships

What are accelerated apprenticeships?

- At the start of an apprenticeship, providers must complete an **initial assessment** to ensure the individual is eligible for an apprenticeship, and to identify their starting point or 'baseline.' This is done by assessing the knowledge, skills, or behaviours that the apprentice already has and therefore does not need to repeat in their apprenticeship training: their **prior learning**.
- Prior learning is **not limited to formal qualifications** and can include skills built through work or life experience. By removing prior learning from the training plan, the time it takes to complete the apprenticeship can become shorter.
- An **accelerated apprenticeship** is where the apprentice's planned duration is shorter (≥3 months) than the typical duration of the standard, based on prior learning. Minimum requirements of an apprenticeship must still be met, including the 12-month minimum duration and 20% off-the-job training.

For more information

- See Government's guidance about initial assessment, and end-point assessment.
- Consult the ESFA funding rules and the Government's apprenticeship agreement template.
- Find a provider and talk to them about your options.

CLICK **HERE** TO SEE CASE STUDIES

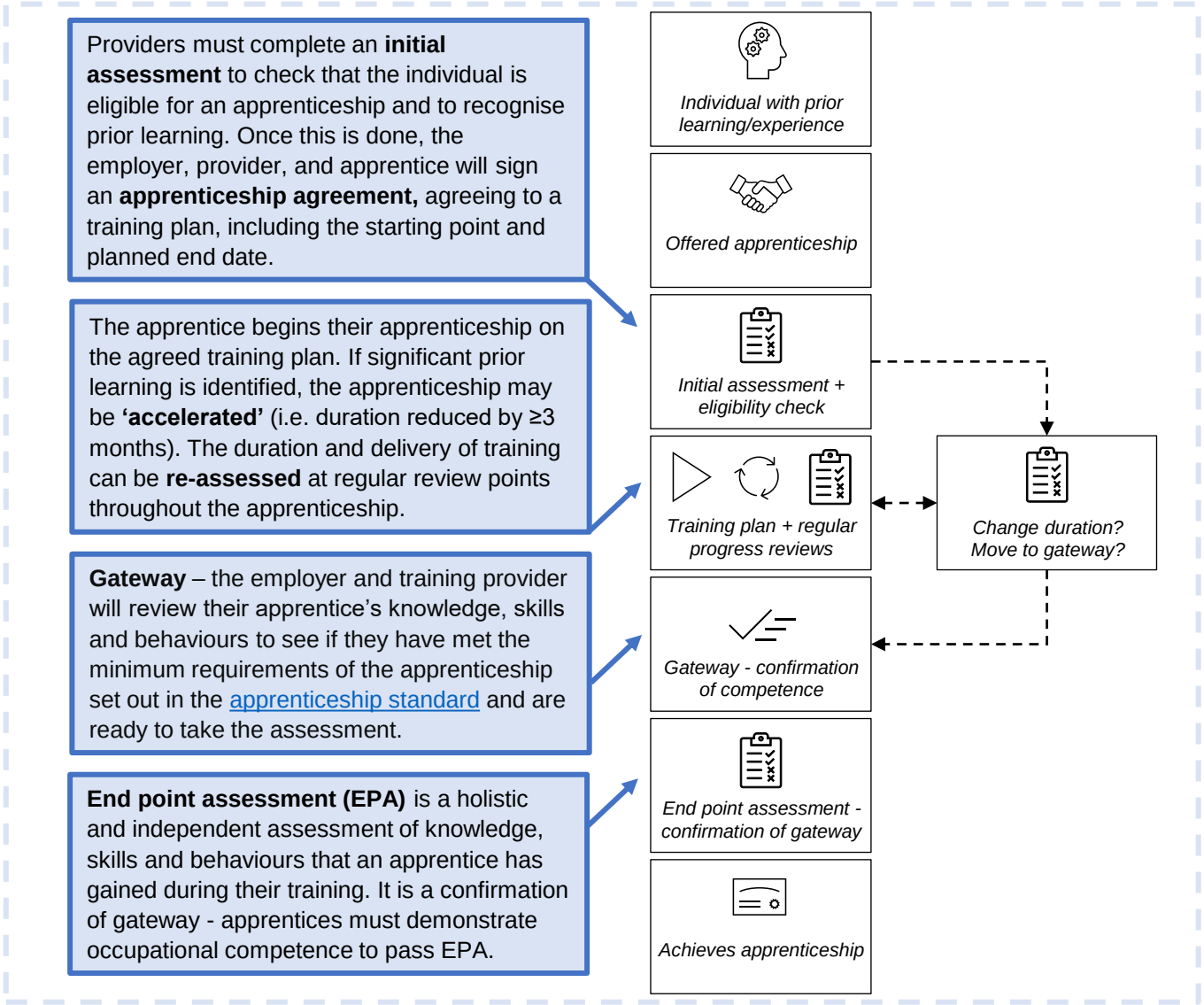


Figure 2 – model to show how training plans are adapted according to recognised prior learning.

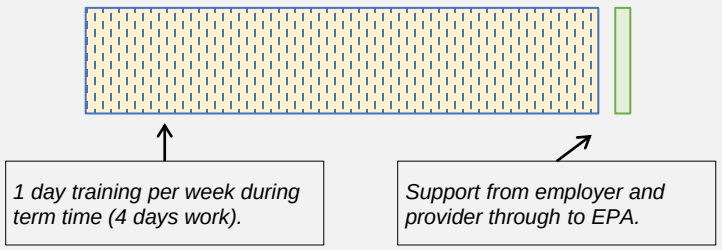
Case studies: flexible training models

Case study: day release model

Organisation(s): Troup Bywaters + Anders (TB+A) with London Southbank University (LSBU)

Apprenticeship(s): Building Services Design Engineer (Degree) (Level 6)

- Apprentice training follows a day release model during term time (4 days working and 1 day training) over a period of 5 years.
- Outside term time, apprentices work 5 days per week, except for agreed time for revision.
- Apprentices are mentored on and off the job throughout the apprenticeship. Apprentice mentors at TB+A and skills coaches at LSBU play an important role in developing knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace.



Benefits

- ✓ Builds knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally.
- ✓ Apprentices gain workplace experience quickly while maintaining contact with full-time learners in provider setting.
- ✓ Regular training allows for frequent reflection on practice in the workplace
- ✓ Encourages closer collaboration with wider team members and exposes apprentices to priority projects.
- ✓ Accommodates learners who may not be able to commit to block learning/residential courses (e.g. those with caring responsibilities).
- ✓ End-point Assessment (EPA) supports streamlined professional registration as an Incorporated Engineer (IEng).

Things to consider

- ○ Relies on local providers to deliver training.
- ○ Workforce planning – apprentices will need to be released one day per week and will require enhanced mentoring and support to develop both academically and professionally.
- ○ Where professional registration is sought, employers will also need to factor in additional sign-off on competencies, including membership of an appropriate professional body and their choice of EPA organisation.

Key

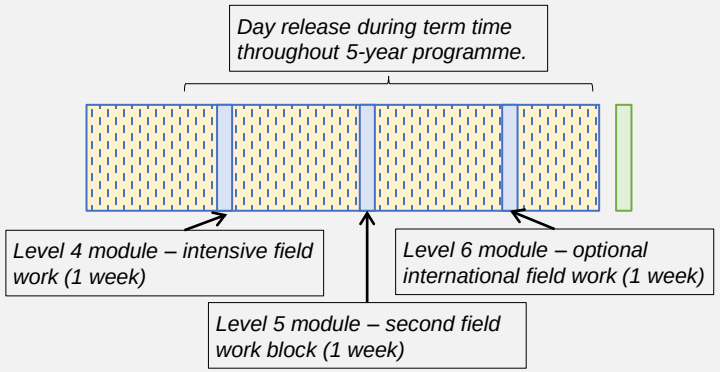
Workplace (including on-the-job training) | Off-the-job training | Front-loaded off-the-job training | Gateway → End Point Assessment

Case study: blended (day release/block) training model

Organisation(s): WSP Global Inc. with Kingston University

Apprenticeship(s): Environmental Practitioner (Degree) (Level 6)

- Training follows a day release model during term time over the 5-year programme.
- Weekly term-time training supported by 3 x week-long residential blocks to accommodate field work.
- Outside term time, apprentices work 5 days per week but are mentored on-the-job to ensure they are progressing the development of the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of the apprenticeship.



Benefits

- ✓ Builds knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally.
- ✓ Workplace mentors support the development, application and contextualisation of delivered off-the-job training.
- ✓ Residential blocks supplement the programme, allowing apprentices to immerse themselves into field work.
- ✓ Allows employers to quickly build apprentice experience in the workplace, including timely and regular opportunities to reflect on the knowledge, skills and behaviours they gain.
- ✓ Gives apprentices regular contact with full-time learners on the same programme, which develops their communication and wider employability skills.
- ✓ End-point assessment (EPA) supports streamlined professional registration as a Registered Environmental Practitioner (REnvP).

Things to consider

- Apprentices must be released from the workplace for one day each week routinely. This can be challenging for some projects, particularly when deadlines approach.
- Apprentices may need to travel longer distances to access training.
- Learners are encouraged to take time to reflect on block periods of training and should be open to rotating through different roles in the workplace to optimise their experience.
- When designing training plans, employers should accommodate time-needed for professional bodies to sign-off competencies.

Key

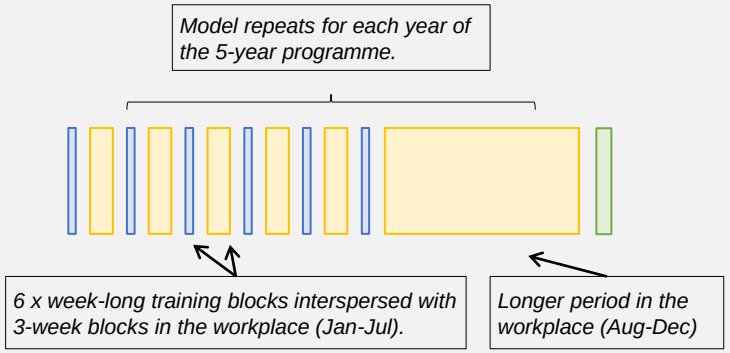
Workplace (including on-the-job training) | Off-the-job training | Front-loaded off-the-job training | Gateway → End Point Assessment

Case study: block training model

Organisation(s): University of Warwick

Apprenticeship(s): Civil Engineer (Degree) (Level 6)

- Blended delivery model, which includes 6 x week-long blocks of off-the-job training per year (January-July), interspersed with 3-week blocks of on-the-job training (including online learning).
- Longer period of on-the-job training (August – December) allow apprentices to embed learning in the workplace and complete Initial Professional Development.
- This model repeats for each year of the 5-year programme.



Benefits

- ✓ Concentrated periods of study help apprentices to focus on academic learning.
- ✓ Extended periods in the workplace allow apprentices to put new knowledge and skills into practice and develop behaviours to work towards professional competence.
- ✓ Open to employers and apprentices nationally – accommodation is provided on campus for the week-long blocks.
- ✓ Fosters cohort cohesion and allows apprentices to build strong networks with their peers.

Things to consider

- Progress reviewed during regular 'Tripartite Review' meetings to support apprentices during the period away from university.
- Offers flexibility to apprentices working on sites across the country or moving offices, allowing them to continue training with their existing provider.
- Week-long blocks planned at the beginning of the programme and employers given dates well in advance to help workforce planning.

Key

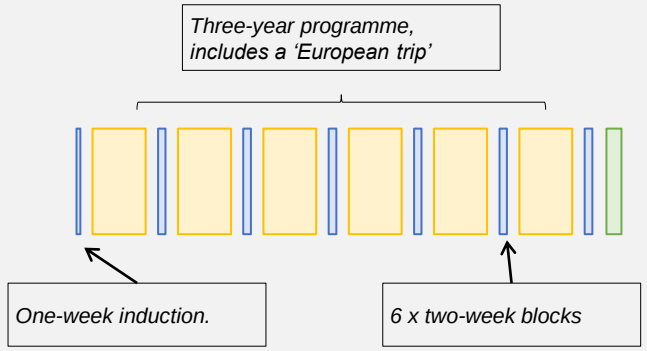
Workplace (including on-the-job training)	Off-the-job training	Front-loaded off-the-job training	Gateway → End Point Assessment

Case study: block training model

Organisation(s): Stantec with Leeds College of Building

Apprenticeship(s): Transport Planning Technician (Level 3)

- Three-year programme – off-the-job training broken into 6 x two-week blocks, including a 'European trip' and a one-week induction.
- Apprentices are also mentored on and off the job throughout the full duration of the apprenticeship to ensure they are developing and achieving the required knowledge, skills and behaviours in advance of gateway and end-point assessment (EPA).

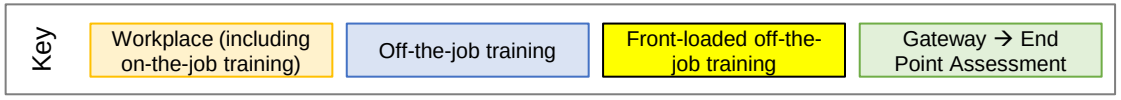


Benefits

- ✓ This relationship provides a nationwide offering ensuring the viable delivery through training blocks which can be used strategically to introduce key knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- ✓ Outside the learning blocks, apprentices must be mentored to ensure the provider introduced knowledge skills and behaviours are embedded, and their team working, communication and broader employability skills built often through project work.
- ✓ This block programme has been key to forging new relationships between employers and has resulted in short placements for apprentices between employers, particularly welcomed by SMEs and local authorities.
- ✓ End-point assessment (EPA) supports streamlined professional registration as an Engineering Technician (EngTech).

Things to consider

- ○ Workforce planning is needed to accommodate longer periods of time out of the workplace, and to manage the risk that some blocks coincide during periods of high demand/urgent deadlines.
- ○ Employers should consider the support and mentoring needed to help apprentices embed and further develop what they have learned during periods of block training in the workplace.
- ○ Block release may not be appropriate for all apprentices: employers will need to ensure apprentices are supported for longer periods away from their home.
- ○ Employers will also need to factor in costs of accommodation for the periods of block training and the European field trip.
- ○ Employers may need to factor in time for professional bodies to sign-off on competencies.



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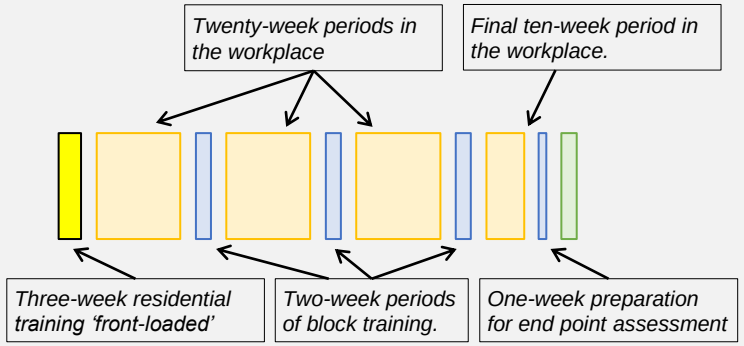
Case study: front-loaded training model

Organisation(s): Barratt Developments with Stephenson College

Apprenticeship(s): Bricklayer (Level 2) & Carpentry and Joinery (Level 2)

- 3-week residential training front-loaded, followed by longer periods in the workplace, broken up by 2-week periods of block training. This is followed by a final 1-week block of training and preparation for end-point assessment.
- Total duration of the apprenticeship is 18-20 months, including gateway and end-point assessment process.
- Progress is reviewed by regular provider site visits.



Benefits

- ✓ Core skills and knowledge embedded up-front. Apprentices are productive from their first day in the workplace
- ✓ Intensive learning and workplace support creates a quicker route to gateway.
- ✓ Single provider means consistent training for employer and a manageable cohort pipeline for the provider.
- ✓ Residential element makes this a nation-wide training offer, fosters cohort cohesion and builds a strong peer network.
- ✓ Apprentices gain something of a 'student experience'.

Things to consider

- ○ Employers must be prepared to release an apprentice for a longer 'block' periods of training before they enter the workplace.
- ○ Employers must be prepared to pay the apprentice's salary during this period of front-loaded training.
- ○ Employers may need to consider additional support and mentoring during longer periods in the workplace.
- ○ Apprentices may need additional support when away from home.

Key

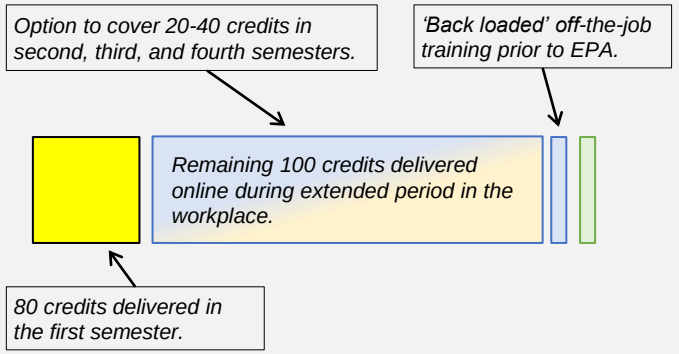
Workplace (including on-the-job training)	Off-the-job training	Front-loaded off-the-job training	Gateway → End Point Assessment

Case study: front-loaded training model

Organisation(s): University College of Estate Management

Apprenticeship(s): Chartered Surveyor (Degree) (Level 6)

- Off-the-job training front-loaded in the first semester (80 credits), with an option to cover between 20 and 40 credits in the second, third and fourth semesters.
- This is followed by an extended period in the workplace and a period of 'back-loaded' training prior to EPA.

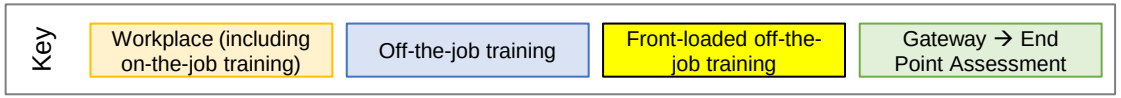


Benefits

- ✓ Front-loading does not impact the 20% off-the-job training requirement, or professional body accreditation.
- ✓ Delivery of the second half of the degree is flexible based on the employer's preferred schedule.
- ✓ Apprentices can make quick progress during less intense periods and are free to focus on the workplace experience during busier times.

Things to consider

- ○ The model does not provide change to the duration of the apprenticeship.
- ○ Apprentices must be confident and motivated to deal with the intensive training schedule in the first semester.
- ○ This model may be more suitable for those on the Chartered Surveyor postgraduate apprenticeship route.

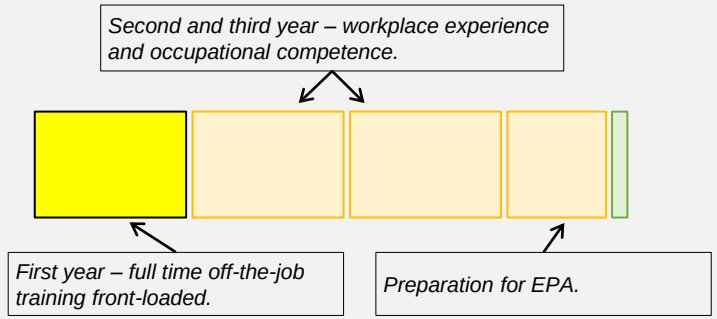


Case study: front-loaded training model

Organisation(s): ECITB

Apprenticeship(s): Various craft person/technician standards at Level 3

- Months 1-12: off-the-job training front-loaded covering foundation and core discipline knowledge, skills, behaviours, and achieve safety passport.
- Months 12-36: workplace consolidation of knowledge skills and behaviours. Build experience and occupational competence and gather evidence for end-point assessment.
- Months 36-42: preparation for end-point assessment and certification against apprenticeship standard.

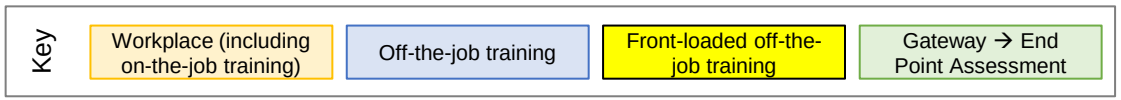


Benefits

- ✓ Employer receives apprentice that already has foundation and core knowledge and skills in place and is safe for site.
- ✓ Apprentice will become productive and reach occupational competence quicker.
- ✓ Years two and three are focussed on the workplace element of the programme.

Things to consider

- ○ Employer must maintain contact with the apprentice during the 'front-loaded' period.
- ○ Employer will have no return on investment during the first year of the apprenticeship.
- ○ Dependent upon discipline and apprentice standard requirements learner may have to attend day release in year two to complete knowledge qualification.

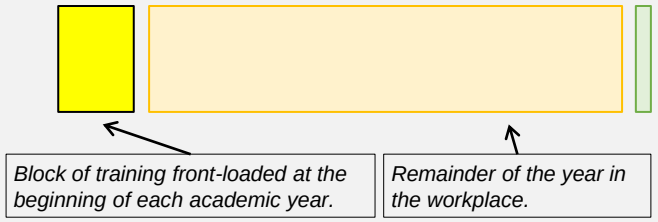


Case study: ‘front-loaded’ training model

Organisation(s) Coventry University

Apprenticeship(s): Civil Engineer (Degree) (Level 6)

- Years 1 and 2: eight-week block of training delivered up-front followed by 10 months in the workplace.
- Years 3-5: eleven-week block of training delivered up-front followed by 9 months in the workplace.



Benefits

- ✓ Focused periods of residential study allow time for knowledge to embed and space for apprentices to pause and reflect on their learning.
- ✓ Apprentices gain a ‘student experience’ and develop a sense of cohort cohesion.

Things to consider

- ○ Some apprentices stay enrolled for up to a year after the final teaching unit prior to end-point assessment.

Key

Workplace (including on-the-job training)

Off-the-job training

Front-loaded off-the-job training

Gateway → End Point Assessment

Case studies: accelerated apprenticeships

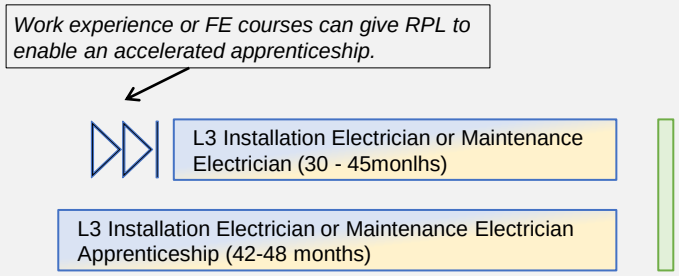
Case study: working in partnership

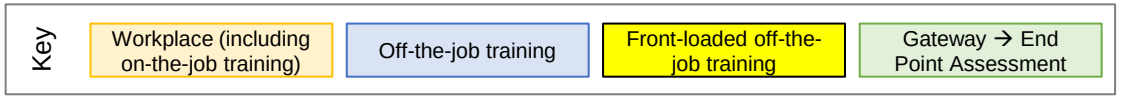
Organisation(s): The Electrotechnical Skills Partnership (TESP)

Apprenticeships: Installation electrician and maintenance electrician (Level 3)

- Learners studying specific level 2 and 3 technical qualifications regularly transfer into this apprenticeship; this transition can happen whilst on programme or after learners have achieved their qualification(s).
- Trailblazer employer groups, industry bodies and awarding organisations have developed guidance to support providers with recognition of prior learning (RPL) and reduction in apprenticeship duration.

  TESP publishes infographic routes showing the different ways to become a fully-qualified electrician.





Benefits

- ✓ Industry collaboration to develop and update guidance drives understanding of RPL amongst employers, learners and providers to reduce unnecessary duplication of learning and assessment.
- ✓ The RPL strategy and TESP guidance demonstrate multiple routes to achieve industry-recognised Electrician status, providing for learners' different skills, experiences and needs.
- ✓ Each of the TESP routes emphasises that developing skills in the workplace is always required to achieve occupational competence.
- ✓ The TESP routes illustrate when an apprenticeship is a suitable route for longer-term members of the workforce to become fully qualified.

Things to consider

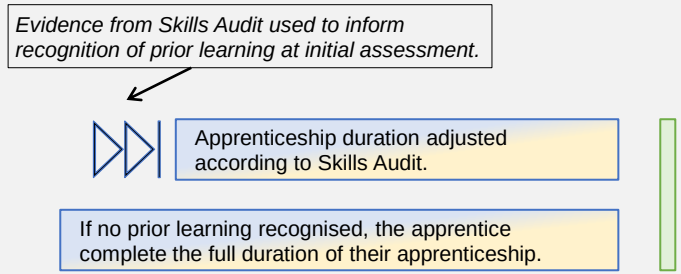
- ○ RPL should be captured through initial assessment as a minimum – employers and providers should think critically about how they are capturing prior learning.
- ○ Individuals can de-skill over time, and this is a safety-critical occupation. The RPL Strategy suggests that where an individual has achieved a qualification but not practised for some time, further training or repeat assessment may be required.

Case study: working in partnership

Organisation(s): Nottingham City Homes (NCH)

Apprenticeship(s) Various (case study relates to Skills Audit prior to all NCH apprenticeships).

- NCH conduct a Skills Audit in partnership with their training providers. This audit evidences an apprentice's existing knowledge, skills and behaviours against the apprenticeship standard; identifies how much new learning or training is needed; and considers the best progression pathway for the individual.
- NCH are proactive in supporting individuals to overcome gaps in evidence – they arrange work shadowing, and work placement opportunities elsewhere in the business to enable individuals to evidence or build their knowledge to enable them to progress more quickly.

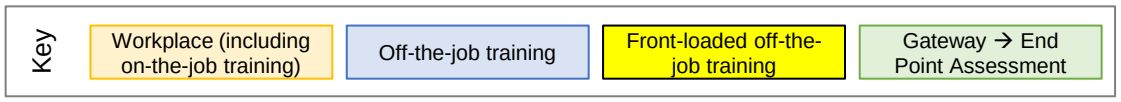


Benefits

- ✓ Accelerated apprenticeships based on prior learning can be an attractive option for experienced workers to up-skill or retrain, supporting a talent pipeline into more senior roles or emerging areas of the business.
- ✓ While initial assessment is the responsibility of the main training provider, the employer can play a key supporting role – particularly if the apprentice is an existing employee.
- ✓ Apprentices can have varying levels of confidence in their abilities. Some benefit from additional support to understand their level of prior learning, such as a discussion based on the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan.
- ✓ Employer involvement in recognising prior learning gives assurance that paid time spent on off-the-job training is delivering valuable new learning

Things to consider

- Prior learning is not just about English and Maths, or other qualifications. Apprentices can gain skills in a number of ways, including through work experience
- It may not always be easy to see whether an apprentice 'has' or 'doesn't have' a certain skill, where it has been built through experience and not accredited. This should be discussed with the provider, to understand the depth of the apprentices learning.

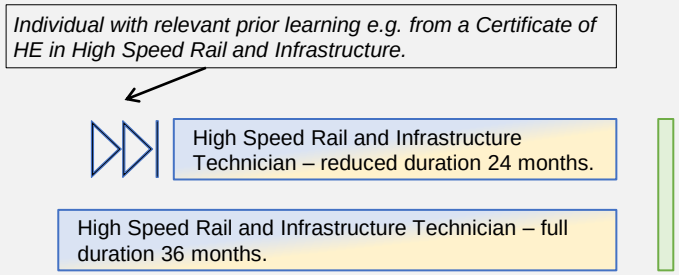


Case study: working in partnership

Organisation(s): Balfour Beatty

Apprenticeship(s): High Speed Rail and Infrastructure Technician (Level 4)

- Balfour Beatty work with providers and apprentices to recognise prior learning already gained and what this means for the duration of the apprenticeship.
- For example, apprentices who have completed a Certificate of Higher Education in High Speed Rail and Infrastructure can convert their prior learning to an 'accelerated apprenticeship' with up to a year reduced from the duration.
- NB individuals do not need to have a certificate or qualification to have their prior learning recognised.



Benefits

- ✓ Apprenticeship duration reflects outstanding learning required, to ensure the apprentice is competent and ready for EPA.
- ✓ Price can be negotiated based on prior learning, meaning potentially lower costs and improved value for money.
- ✓ There is no limit to how much duration can be reduced based on recognised prior learning, but the minimum duration of 12- months training and 20% off-the-job training must be upheld.

Things to consider….

- It is important that employers, providers and apprentices work together to understand delivery and tailor training plans and durations to meet their needs.
- Apprentices do not need to have completed a qualification or exam for their learning to be recognised, for example if they have been in full time study but not completed their qualification.
- Providers can also consider 'emerging' skills' where the apprentice may have a strong foundation in a certain area, but not enough depth to pass the assessment plan. This might mean they don't need to start from scratch, but training will need to be sufficient to enable an apprentice to pass their EPA.

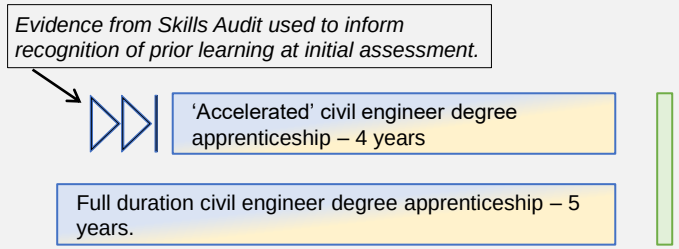
Key: Workplace (including on-the-job training) | Off-the-job training | Front-loaded off-the-job training | Gateway → End Point Assessment

Case study: accelerating to higher level programmes

Organisation(s): University of Warwick

Apprenticeship(s): Civil Engineer (Degree) (Level 6)

- More experienced apprentices with appropriate higher-level qualifications undertake a 4-year, rather than 5-year programme.
- Individual Learning Plans for apprentices on the 4-year programme will include remaining Year 2 and outstanding Year 1 modules not covered by prior learning in higher-level qualifications.
- Year 1 and Year 2 teaching weeks are delivered in alternate weeks, this allows apprentices on the shorter 4-year programme to complete outstanding modules from both Years 1 and 2.
- Price charged to the employer is reduced to reflect prior learning (and reduced programme duration) in line with ESFA funding rules.

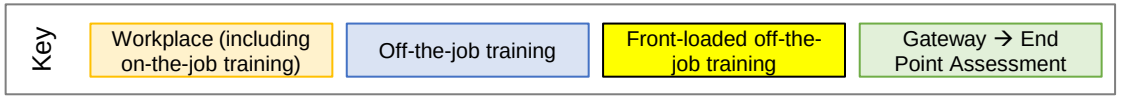


Benefits

- ✓ Mapping existing qualifications against level 6 learning outcomes allows more experienced apprentices to hit the ground running and accelerate their apprenticeship by a year.
- ✓ Delivers value for money – employers can negotiate the price of the accelerated apprenticeship with their provider based on the reduced training and duration.
- ✓ Training is flexible to allow for recognition of prior learning through individualised learning plans.

Things to consider….

- This case study reflects accelerated apprenticeship based on qualifications (certified) rather than experiential prior learning.
- Where a prospective degree apprentice has significant and relevant experiential learning gained through their work experience, this will be reviewed through an agreed assessment processes on entry. This process will determine i) whether the apprentice has sufficient experiential learning to gain entry onto the programme, ii) whether credit should be awarded, and specific exemptions made from the programme of study.

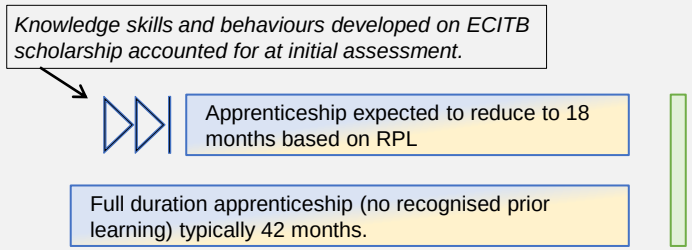


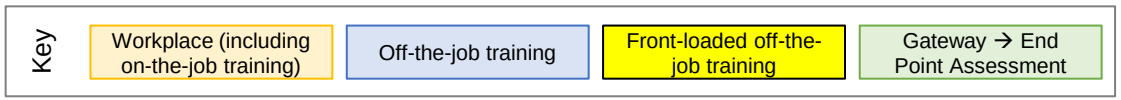
Case study: supporting progression

Organisation(s): ECITB

Apprenticeship(s): ECITB Scholarship → various L3 technician standards (Level 3)

- The ECITB scholarship is a full-time study programme, which helps bring new talent into the engineering construction industry while employers rebound from the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis. Learners are not employed but paid a learner bursary.
- Content is designed to align with relevant standards to enable progression into accelerated apprenticeships - programmes of shorter duration due to prior learning.
- Over 24 months ECITB scholars achieve: general skills training, level 3 knowledge qualifications, level vocational qualification, CCNSG safety passport, ECITB work-based tests, work experience.





Benefits

- ✓ ECITB's scholarship provides a 24-month, quality-assured training route into employment without requiring the employer to take on liability.
- ✓ Knowledge, skills and behaviours developed means length of level 3 technician apprenticeships are expected to typically reduce from 42 months to 18 months (including end-point assessment) due to prior learning.*
- ✓ Apprentice reaches occupational competence sooner and is more productive for the employer once on programme.
- ✓ Learners who would not otherwise have been able to enrol on an apprenticeship are able to do so.
- ✓ Employers can "pump prime" their resource pool to meet future requirements without the need to employ in the "now".

Things to consider

- ○ Employers should engage with the training provider as early as possible to identify suitable future apprentices.
- ○ Employers must commit to providing ECITB scholars with work experience.
- ○ Actual duration of accelerated apprenticeships may vary depending on recognition of prior learning (RPL) awarded to individual learners.*

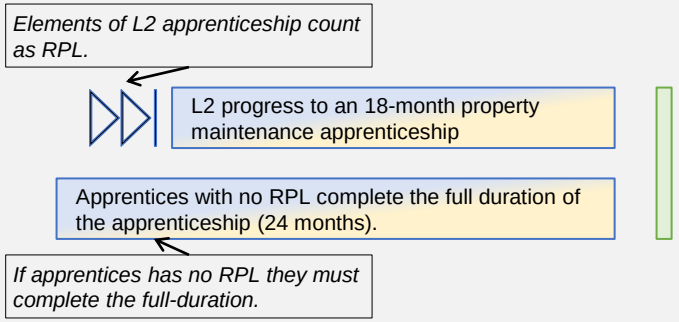
* The ECITB Scholarship launched in August 2020 – expected reductions are estimates based on course content.

Case study: supporting progression

Organisation(s): Guinness Property

Apprenticeship(s): Property Maintenance Operative (Level 2)

- Individuals who have achieved a L2 trade qualification through a previous apprenticeship, are able to progress into an accelerated property maintenance apprenticeship – this enables them to become multi-skilled where this better meets business needs, or to progress into premises management and other professional pathways.
- This progression pathway expands individuals' learning in multiple directions, not just through linear progression routes. The recognised prior learning gained from the initial apprenticeship, reduces the duration of the property maintenance pathway by 6 months



Benefits

- ✓ Individuals who have already completed an apprenticeship can go on to access a further apprenticeship to upskill, or progress with their career in a new role, if there is sufficient new learning to be eligible.
- ✓ Accelerated apprenticeships based on prior learning can be an attractive option for experienced workers to up-skill or retrain, supporting a talent pipeline into more senior roles or emerging areas of the business.
- ✓ Creates versatility within organisations and maximises trade skills, improving first time fixes.
- ✓ Creates an opportunity to build organisation specific training outside of core construction.
- ✓ Employer gets an earlier return on investment, apprentices become occupationally competent earlier.

Things to consider

- ○ Better suited to businesses which deal with all aspects of property maintenance – requires access to experts in certain trades.
- ○ An apprentice may still have relevant prior learning, even if they are re-skilling into a new occupation.
- ○ Ensuring that the apprentice has access to the range of work required to qualify.