

HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL
ESSENTIAL APPRENTICESHIP GUIDE

Helping your apprentices build a support network



Henley
Business School

UNIVERSITY OF READING

Where business comes to life

Helping your apprentices build a support network

Apprenticeships offer a way for your organisation to deliver strategic transformation, as well as personal and professional development for individual apprentices. Your apprentices will get the most out of their learning – and be best placed to deliver impact in your organisation – if they have access to a variety of sources of support.

This guide shares ideas on how you can help apprentices build a support network and sets out the typical responsibilities of the key roles.



Essential Apprenticeship Guides

This guide is one of a series designed to help our clients engage with apprenticeships and deliver best value to their organisation and their apprentices.

Further reading

Launching an apprenticeship scheme

Supporting an apprentice as line manager

henley.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/essential-apprenticeship-guides

Line manager: supports an apprentice in their learning and helps them apply it in their role and organisation

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Mentor: a valuable source of advice, helping apprentices gain insights and skills

2

Expert: helps apprentices embed and implement what they have learned

3

At a glance

Peers: offer one another learning and support

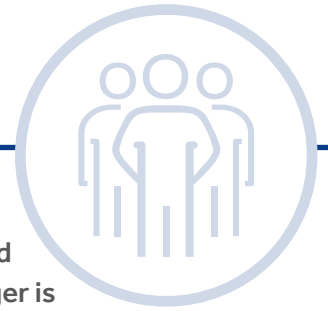
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Apprenticeship lead or team: design and implement apprenticeship strategy

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1

Line manager



An engaged and supportive line manager is key to a successful apprenticeship. This person supports an apprentice in their learning and helps them apply it in their role and organisation. Typically, a line manager is the manager to whom an apprentice directly reports, although in 'matrix management' structures you may need to identify a suitable named individual.

A line manager should:

- Understand the apprenticeship programme and what will be required from the apprentice
- Support the apprentice in managing their workload to give them time for on- and off-the-job learning
- Actively participate in tripartite apprentice reviews with the apprentice and their tutor, to help embed the apprentice's learning within the workplace and integrate the apprenticeship within your organisation's internal professional development process
- Help the apprentice identify work-based project(s) that are aligned to your organisation's needs
- Help the apprentice gain broader exposure within your organisation, including beyond their direct function or team
- Make sure the apprentice is safeguarded and supported within your organisation

2

Mentor

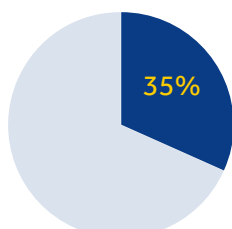
A mentor can provide a valuable source of advice, helping the apprentice gain insights and skills as they develop personally and professionally through their apprenticeship. A successful mentor can have a huge impact in helping an apprentice to become a confident, resilient learner and leader.

A mentor should:

- Make time to meet with the apprentice and build a relationship with them
- Listen, ask questions and offer different perspectives to the apprentice
- Provide support, encouragement and advice on career and personal development

Mentors are typically colleagues who offer their time to support others to develop. Many are motivated by wanting to expand their own coaching and mentoring skills. They may therefore need their own support and development (mentorship and coaching courses, for example) to refine their skills and achieve the best results for themselves and the apprentice.

Sometimes, line managers also take on some aspects of the mentor role for an apprentice if their skills and workload allow it.



Organisations that are using coaching and mentoring as a development approach are 35% more likely than the average learning organisation to build a learning culture.



3

Experts

As they learn, an apprentice will encounter a raft of new information, ideas and skills, which they can apply directly in your organisation. We recognise that, in many cases, you will also have subject matter experts within your organisation. Having contact with these internal experts can add significant value in helping apprentices embed and implement what they have learned – driving positive changes within your organisation.

If you have high ambitions for your apprentices, you should use internal experts who can contribute to their development in a variety of ways.

An expert should:

- Act as a sponsor for a particular module or project relevant to their expertise
- Contribute to the apprentice's learning – for example, by providing a talk or article on a relevant issue
- Offer advice if the apprentice is working on projects or assignments relevant to their area



4

Peers

Some of an apprentice's most relevant learning and valued support will come from their peers. Relationships among peers typically form within Henley apprenticeship cohorts or in the smaller learning sets within these. Some organisations develop further ways to build connections between their apprentices, such as by using messenger services, social media or in-house communication platforms.

Peers should:

- Offer each other support during and after the apprenticeship and help each other address concerns or issues
- Work together to extend their thinking or ideas



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Apprenticeship lead or team

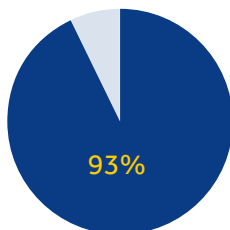


Having enthusiastic involvement from all areas of your organisation will create the best environment for apprentices to thrive.

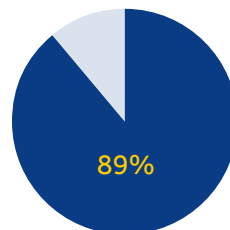
Your apprenticeship lead or team should:

- Work with the senior executive team to define an apprenticeship strategy, including setting out how it will contribute to delivering the overall organisational strategy
- Select and partner with a training provider(s)
- Set and implement approaches to attracting, selecting and on-boarding the right candidates onto apprenticeships
- Lead and co-ordinate the support that the organisation offers its apprentices
- Monitor how apprentices are progressing in their apprenticeships, their careers and their personal development, and take action to promote their success
- Manage your organisation's apprenticeship budget and use of its apprenticeship levy
- Liaise with other functions such as HR or health and safety, to ensure that apprenticeship decisions are safe, compliant and aligned to organisational policies

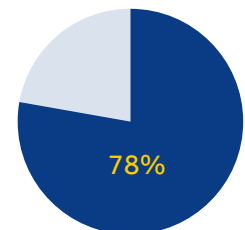
Apprentices find collaboration with other team members the most important factor to learn what they need to do their job. They are sociable and social learners, keen to work beside and learn from more experienced colleagues.



93% find working in collaboration with other team members essential or very useful



89% value support from their manager



78% value support from their mentor/coach/buddy

(The Work-Based Learning Dividend: Learning from the Apprenticeship Model, Towards Maturity 2017)

Where business comes to life

Henley is a triple-accredited business school with over 75 years' experience in developing confident, resilient business leaders and supporting organisations in reaching their strategic and transformational goals.

We are one of the largest providers of leadership, management and digital apprenticeships. Our programmes support around 1,600 learners and are enriched by the cutting-edge research and wide-ranging commercial experience of our academics.

The depth and breadth of this knowledge base equips learners with an extensive understanding of leadership and, along with the latest sector-specific insights, enables them to become the strategic and responsible leaders of the future.

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