

HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL  
ESSENTIAL APPRENTICESHIP GUIDE

# Launching an apprenticeship scheme



**Henley**  
Business School

UNIVERSITY OF READING

Where business comes to life

# Launching an apprenticeship scheme

Apprenticeships are an excellent way for you to enhance skills and build capability within your organisation.

The apprenticeship levy was introduced to help address skills shortages in the UK labour market and encourage employers to engage with apprenticeships. However, apprenticeships can offer organisations far more than the levy alone. Apprenticeship schemes provide an opportunity to drive productivity and engagement, and so they can play a vital role in a successful wider people strategy.

Henley Business School clients have used apprenticeships to:

- Develop emerging talent to meet the needs of an ageing workforce
- Implement new project streams, such as disruptive technologies
- Synthesise culture during and post-merger/acquisition
- Implement re-engineering or growth strategies

This guide will help you understand how to plan to deliver apprenticeships in your organisation and gives recommended actions to enable high-quality, transformational training that promotes growth, sustainability and success.

---

## 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

Helping your apprentices build a support network

Understanding off-the-job training

[henley.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/essential-apprenticeship-guides](https://henley.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/essential-apprenticeship-guides)



## 1

## Develop your strategy

Apprenticeships are most effective when they are used strategically, by organisations that have a clear sense of what they are trying to achieve.



### Recommended actions:

- Articulate how apprenticeships will help to address the key issues or challenges facing your organisation.
- Gain senior-level support for the apprenticeship agenda. Ensure organisational leaders have agreed on the strategic objectives and desired outcomes.
- Identify which apprenticeships will best meet your organisation's needs.

■ ■ We've already seen significant changes in the thinking and behaviour amongst those in the first group of 40 delegates, and we're seeing the positive benefits from the different ways in which those staff are connecting with each other across the Trust.

This programme is very different from other leadership development programmes; its multi-disciplinary approach, and the way it has been designed to address our specific issues makes it important in the development of our core values and behaviours. ■ ■

Steve McManus CEO, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

## 2

## Understand your funding and financial position

Employers in the UK with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million pay the apprenticeship levy at a rate of 0.5% of that. Apprenticeship funds can be used to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment costs in any of the 600+ available apprenticeship standards.

### Recommended actions:

- Establish how much apprenticeship levy funding your organisation has available and note the time limit for using your levy funds.
- Work with relevant areas in your organisation (particularly your finance and HR functions) to create a plan and budget for apprenticeship activity.
- Explore the option to support other businesses in your supply chain if you have an apprenticeship levy surplus.

## 3

## Identify what your apprentices need to learn

The core of what an apprentice will learn is the apprenticeship standard – a summary of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that each apprentice is required to develop. Training providers like Henley then create a learning programme to deliver the standard. This should be customised to reflect the context and challenges of your organisation.

### Recommended actions:

- Select training provider(s) who will work with you to deliver your desired organisational benefits.
- Identify the skills gaps that you want to address – consider your organisation's people plan and learning and development strategy.
- Work with your training provider to align the off-the-job training delivery to your organisation's needs. For example, the apprentice and your organisation will get the most out of work-based projects that are focused on real issues.
- Plan how apprentices will implement and extend their learning in your organisation. Consider opportunities for them to undertake specific projects or to participate in job shadowing or mentoring.
- Identify opportunities to utilise expertise from within your organisation; this might include your internal learning and development offer or input from in-house experts.
- Explore how you can help apprentices build a support network within your organisation.

## 4

## Design your apprentice recruitment strategy

Once the strategy and the programme are developed, it is time to select candidates with the need and ambition to develop new skills, knowledge and behaviours, and who are in an appropriate job role to complete the programme.

### Recommended actions:

- Determine whether your apprenticeships are aimed at internal staff or new recruits – or both.
- Consider how you will engage with and attract candidates. Communicate the benefits to apprentices and to your organisation – but make sure that everyone understands the commitment involved.
- Develop a recruitment and selection process to make sure you are putting the right people forward for an apprenticeship. Ask whether candidates have the right capabilities and motivations to undertake the apprenticeship programme. You might also want to prioritise people or roles who you see as important to your organisation's future.
- Work with your training provider to understand their entry criteria (including eligibility for government funding) and agree on the candidate characteristics you are looking for.
- Support diversity and inclusion by ensuring that all prospective apprentices are able to access suitable opportunities. Is there anything that you could do to increase the presence of underrepresented groups?

## 5

## Engage with your wider organisation

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

### Recommended actions:

- Promote the organisational benefits of higher and degree apprentices.
- Work with your marketing/communications function to plan how to identify and share good news stories.
- Consider establishing a network of 'champions' to create wider apprenticeship visibility and alignment, especially if your organisation is large.
- Identify enthusiastic senior sponsors. One leader might act as sponsor for all your apprenticeship schemes; several leaders might take an interest in different aspects of your schemes.
- Offer colleagues the opportunity to contribute to apprentices' development – for example, by acting as mentors.
- Seek out opportunities to report on apprenticeships to senior leaders in your organisation.

## 6

## Build a good relationship with your training provider

Building a long-term partnership with a training provider like Henley allows each party to deliver best value.



### Recommended actions:

- Keep in regular contact with your training provider throughout your apprenticeship scheme.
- Work together to develop a project plan and governance structure, so that everyone is clear about what needs to happen and by when.
- Make sure you understand how your training provider will update you on the progress of your apprentices. Consider how you will track the delivery of your organisation's desired outcomes.
- Plan how you and your training provider will manage and monitor your apprenticeship delivery, and share feedback on what is working well and what could be improved.

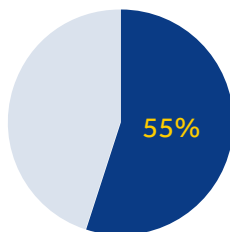
## 7

## Prepare for launch

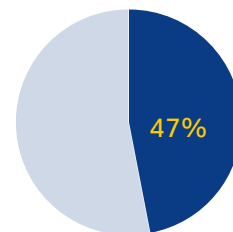
The culmination of your work to launch an apprenticeship scheme is getting your first cohort of apprentices started. Careful planning helps deliver a successful launch – and sets your apprentices up for long-term success.

### Recommended actions:

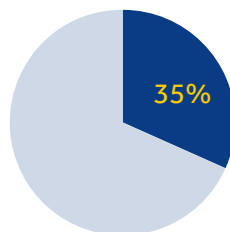
- Work with your training provider to plan out the 'onboarding' timetable and make sure your apprentices and their line managers have received the upfront information they need.
- Aim to make the best first impression by making the first session energising and inspiring! Your training provider should take the lead on this, but apprentices will really value some involvement from you – particularly from the senior level of your organisation.
- Find ways to maintain momentum. It is common for apprentices to feel apprehensive at the beginning, so make sure you and your training provider give them the support they need to get off to a great start.



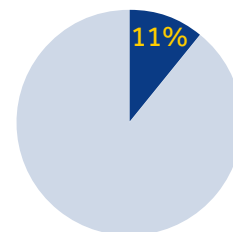
55% of CEOs say that developing the next generation of leaders is their top challenge.



Companies can fill only 47% of leadership roles.



Only 35% of leaders said they are effective at managing change.



Only 11% of HR respondents say they have a strong bench to fill leadership roles.

### 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.

### Henley Business School

Greenlands  
Henley-on-Thames  
Oxfordshire  
RG9 3AU

[apprenticeships@henley.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@henley.ac.uk)

[henley.ac.uk/apprenticeships](https://henley.ac.uk/apprenticeships)

Guide reference | 1.2  
Information valid at the time of publication. Sept 2022.  
21.MIS.038

