

HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL  
ESSENTIAL APPRENTICESHIP GUIDE

# Supporting an apprentice as a line manager



**Henley**  
Business School

UNIVERSITY OF READING

Where business comes to life

# Supporting an apprentice as a line manager

When someone chooses to start an apprenticeship, they are embarking on a journey of growth and discovery. They are also taking on a big commitment that needs to be balanced with their other work and home responsibilities. As line manager to an apprentice, you have the opportunity to make a real difference to their progress, as they seek to develop themselves personally and professionally.

This guide seeks to share ideas and make recommendations on how to undertake this challenging but rewarding role.

---

## 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

Creating an impactful work-based project  
Understanding off-the-job training

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



# Support your employee in deciding what is right for them and the organisation

1

Starting an apprenticeship should be a mutual decision between employee and organisation. The most successful organisations embark on apprenticeships with a clear view of the benefits they want to achieve – from growing the talent pipeline to delivering organisational change. Likewise, apprentices will be best placed to meet the challenges of the programme if they have a clear sense of what they want to achieve personally and professionally.



## Recommended actions:

- Discuss with your employee whether this is the right opportunity for them and support them in defining what they hope to gain.
- Review the commitments that the apprentice will be signing up for – such as time away from work – and make plans for any changes that you might have to make to facilitate this.
- Reflect on your organisation's strategic reasons for using apprenticeships, and how the employee can deliver organisational impact through their participation.

2

# Engage with the learning programme

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 create learning programmes to deliver the standard. This can be customised to reflect individual apprentices' starting points, as well as the context and challenges of your organisation. As a line manager, you should support the apprentice through their learning and help them identify how learning can best be developed and applied in the workplace context.

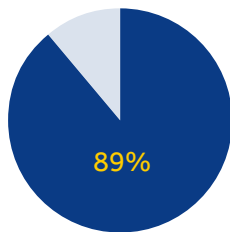
## Recommended actions:

- Attend briefings run by Henley Business School to give you an insight into the apprenticeship.
- Gain an understanding of what your apprentice will be learning by reviewing their learner commitment statement, apprenticeship agreement and the apprenticeship standard.
- Schedule key dates into your diary.
- Build a relationship with your apprentice's tutor and get involved in progress reviews between your apprentice and their apprenticeship tutor.

### 3

## Help the apprentice implement what they learn

Applying learning in the workplace will allow apprentices to bring their new insights to life and deliver lasting impact for themselves and the organisation. Your role as line manager is to support the apprentice in integrating what they are learning into the wider life of your organisation.



89% of apprentices find support from their line manager essential or very useful.   
The Work-based Learning Dividend (Towards Maturity, 2017)

#### Recommended actions:

- Review the learning programme and consider opportunities within the workplace where the apprentice's learning can be deployed for positive impact, for them and the organisation.
- Identify suitable experts in the discipline with whom apprentices can connect.
- Help your apprentice make connections between their learning and your organisation's strategy, opportunities and/or challenges.
- Understand the assignments or projects associated with each module and consider opportunities within your organisation where the development of this work can be supported.

### 4

## Enable off-the-job training

It is a government requirement that all apprentices spend at least six hours per week (equivalent) of their working hours in off-the-job training. Time away from day-to-day work allows apprentices to assimilate new knowledge, consider new ideas and try out new approaches. From an apprentice's perspective, it also signals the importance that the organisation attaches to them and their development. However, taking time away from a busy job is never easy, and as their line manager you should support your apprentice in doing so.

#### Recommended actions:

- Work with your apprentice and their tutor to plan for their off-the-job training – including what Henley will provide and what is to take place within your organisation.
- Arrange opportunities across your organisation for your apprentice to gain valuable learning that will also count as off-the-job training.
- Ensure that your apprentice is recording their off-the-job training in their portfolio of evidence.
- Reinforce to your apprentice that they are required to achieve six hours per week (equivalent) in off-the-job training and that your organisation will support them in doing so.

## Integrate the apprenticeship into your performance and development process

5

Your employee's apprenticeship will be a major part of their work life – and likely one of the most significant development activities that they will undertake. Apprentices and their line managers should look to integrate the apprenticeship with organisational performance management, personal development and operational planning processes.



### Recommended actions:

- Ensure your apprentice's organisational personal development plan aligns to and supports their apprenticeship.
- Work with your apprentice in target setting and operational planning discussions to align apprenticeship and work priorities – such as identifying projects or roles that could build on their development.
- Review the updates from Henley on your apprentice's progress and discuss them with the apprenticeship tutor.
- Play an active role in quarterly and annual apprenticeship reviews by preparing, attending and supporting the implementation of actions from these reviews.
- Provide regular feedback to the apprentice concerning their development.

6

## Support an impactful work-based project

The final stage of the apprenticeship requires the apprentice to undertake a significant work-based project. Your apprentice will need your support in identifying a suitable project and gaining organisational buy-in, as well as in progressing and implementing their project.

The project should be meaningful to the organisation and the apprentice; it should provide significant stretch to enhance their development.

### Recommended actions:

- Encourage the apprentice to engage with senior stakeholders to find a project aligned to organisational needs and strategy.
- Support the apprentice in using their project to build their reputation and networks internally.
- Share good news about how the project has delivered value to your area or organisation.

## 7

## Encourage professional curiosity and further learning

Apprenticeships really start to deliver impact when apprentices are inspired to take up new opportunities – and to positively challenge the status quo.

■ ■ One line manager gave an apprentice a six-figure budget to build and manage a pipeline of future apprentices. Ultimately this contributed to developing human capital and achieving organisational social responsibility objectives. ■ ■

**Hattie Robinson**, Apprenticeship tutor,  
Henley Business School

### Recommended actions:

- Encourage your apprentice to look outside your organisation and think about how it can bring in new approaches or technologies to improve its performance.
- Help your apprentice seek out routes for personal and professional development, such as by taking on new projects or responsibilities, or seeking opportunities for career progression.
- Support your apprentice to plan for their ongoing development in addition to, and after, their apprenticeship.
- Challenge your apprentice to mentor others within your organisation to apply their new-found knowledge, skills and behaviours and to play a role in improving the capabilities of others.

## 8

## Consider your own development

You may discover that the apprenticeship challenges you at times as well. It might be that you find yourself wanting to get to grips with unfamiliar terminology and models – or it might highlight a need for you to develop your own coaching skills.

### Recommended actions:

- Make use of line manager development sessions offered by Henley.
- Reflect with your own line manager or coach on how acting as line manager may offer you development opportunities; identify any developmental support that you might need.

### 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 | 3.5  
Information valid at the time of publication. Sept 2022.  
21.MIS.038

