



MANAGING APPRENTICES WITH QA

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About this guide

Managing an apprentice ('learner') or a group of learners might be a new experience for you. After all, modern apprenticeships are innovative, fast paced and exciting - that's why we have designed this guide to help you and your learner(s).

Based on feedback and frequently asked questions from Leaders in your position, this guide will go a long way to demystifying apprenticeships. From key facts to delivery information, this guide covers a range of topics, we hope you find it useful.

It goes without saying, but your role is crucial. Effectively managing apprentices is beneficial for you, your organisation and the wider economy. However, you do not have to shoulder the entire responsibility: QA are here to support you and your apprentice/s throughout your journey.

There are some useful contact numbers towards the back of this guide. These will help you to identify the right people to get in touch with if you need help.

Key information



The apprenticeship starts with your learner's **programme launch**. You will need to attend this **2-hour** meeting (timing may vary). It's an opportunity for you to confirm you are happy for your team member to start the programme and get answers to any questions you may have (which aren't already answered in this guide, of course). This is the official start of your learner's programme.

Further information is provided on page 7.



The **duration** of your learner's programme will depend on their subject area. We aim to keep you as up-to-date as possible on their progress at the review meetings, which we will talk about next.



You will be invited to attend regular **review** meetings with your learner's Skills Coach throughout the programme. These will usually take place every 6-8 weeks and may be virtual* or face-to-face. You will be able to support & monitor your learner's progress at these meetings.

*NB We use Cisco WebEx for these meetings. Please be aware that you may need to install some software for these meetings or run this as a temporary application from your internet browser. Contact your IT team with any questions.



Your learner's **classroom training** is scheduled in a location as agreed with your QA representative. Training schedules are planned to give you and learners plenty of notice. If you need to reschedule any classroom training, try to do this well in advance as this may impact your learner's experience, travel arrangements and programme duration.



Your learner will have access to an **online learning portal**. We will show them how to use this at their programme launch if they do not access this before. This is where they will upload assignments they are working on and access online learning materials.



It is a government requirement that learners have **20%** of their working hours dedicated to **off-the-job learning**. Classroom training counts towards this with the remainder taking place during working hours. Your learner's Skills Coach will create a calculator with you and your learner to plan & log their learning time. It may seem like a lot, but learners need this time during working hours to complete assignments and other tasks.



All learners need to have a Level 2 **Maths & English** qualification before they successfully complete their apprenticeship. Before they start learning with us, all candidates will complete a short, online assessment to identify their capabilities in Maths & English.

- If learners have been able to provide GCSEs in Maths and English (or an acceptable equivalent included in the published list on GOV.UK) to the appropriate grade (A*-C or 9-4) as part of their enrolment, they will be exempt from completing a **Functional Skills** qualification.
- If not, learners will need to complete a Functional Skills qualification in Maths and/or English.

During the Apprenticeship programme, all candidates (regardless of a Functional Skill qualification need or who have an exemption), will be developing their Maths and English to ensure these skills are stretched and challenged throughout their learning.

Functional skills are mandatory and are essential to supporting longer-term career prospects. As part of the Government's ambition for a **world-class** technical education system and in line with recommendations from independent experts, progression towards and attainment of, approved level 2 Maths and English qualifications are an important part of the apprenticeship programme. Your learner's **Skills Coach** will make sure they are prepared for the Functional Skills qualifications before booking exams.



Our **Learner Services** team provide additional support for learners, managers and QA staff when they need it. They help by providing advice and guidance on anything from budgeting, information about grants (for eligible learners). They can also provide financial support or advice for learners that need extra help.

This includes **Safeguarding** and advice on the **Prevent** agenda. These will be discussed with learners at their regular review meetings with their QA Skills Coach.

Taking a proactive approach to **Safeguarding** is everyone's responsibility. As a learning provider, we are here to empower everyone involved throughout this journey.

The **Prevent** Agenda is part of the government's counter terrorism strategy. Its goal is to stop people getting involved in terrorism.

Find out more about [Learner Services here](#). Contact details for the team are provided [below](#).

Ready? Let's begin...

Your learner's **programme launch** takes place after their **enrolment** is complete. Their programme finishes with their **end-point assessment (EPA)**. Your learner's **Skills Coach** will be supporting your learner with the knowledge, skills & behaviours that comprise their apprenticeship. The Skills Coach will advise as required on any additional support needed from you.

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- 1 Enrolment**
- Learner documents (enrolment form, ID, prior qualifications) are uploaded to a central system.
 - Functional Skills*/Maths & English* are referred to the Skills Coach.
 - Additional learning needs and/or disability information is shared.
-

- 2 Launch**
- 2-hour meeting to attend.
 - Learner Services support explained, including:
 - Safeguarding & Prevent.
 - Equality & Diversity.
 - Health & Safety.
 - Start of learning.
 - Classroom training schedule confirmed.
-

- 3 Learning & Support**
- Classroom training.
 - Online learning.
 - 20% off-the-job learning time.
 - Regular review meetings with the Skills Coach.
 - Portfolio is built by the learner, with help from the Skills Coach.
-

- 4 End-Point Assessment**
- Gateway process starts – 3 months' preparation period.
 - Portfolio submitted.
 - Internal QA check.
 - External body conducts interview & EPA**.
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- 5 Achievement**
- Certificates are sent to the employer address provided by you in the Gateway form (completed with the skills coach).
 - Certificates can take up to 6-8 weeks to be received.
 - Learners can appeal their result up to 4 weeks after their EPA.
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* For more information, see above.

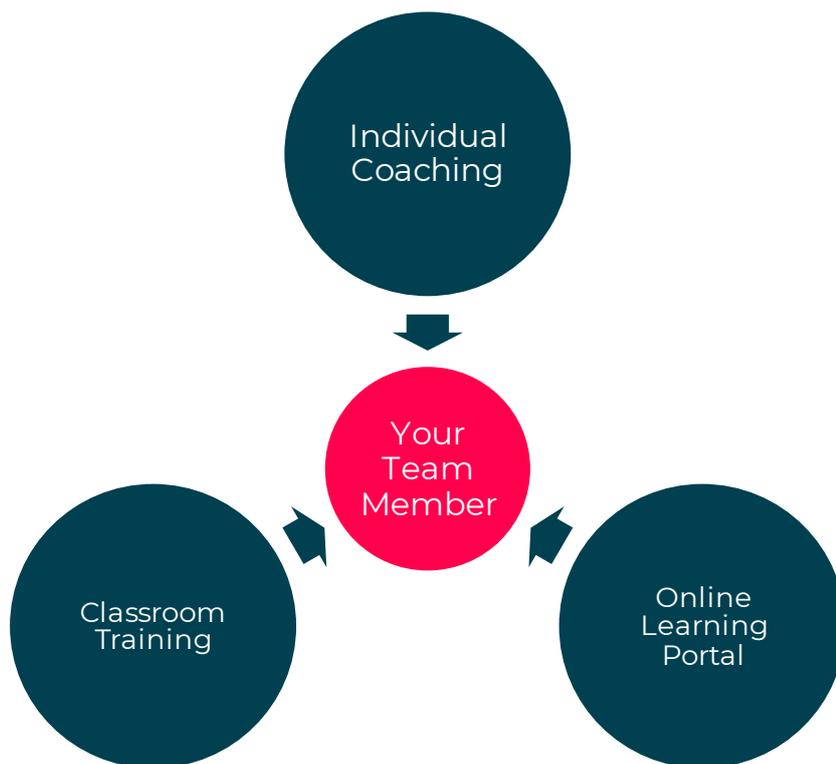
** EPA details varies by programme. The Skills Coach will support in preparation for this.

Delivery

Learners gain new skills through a number of different methods.

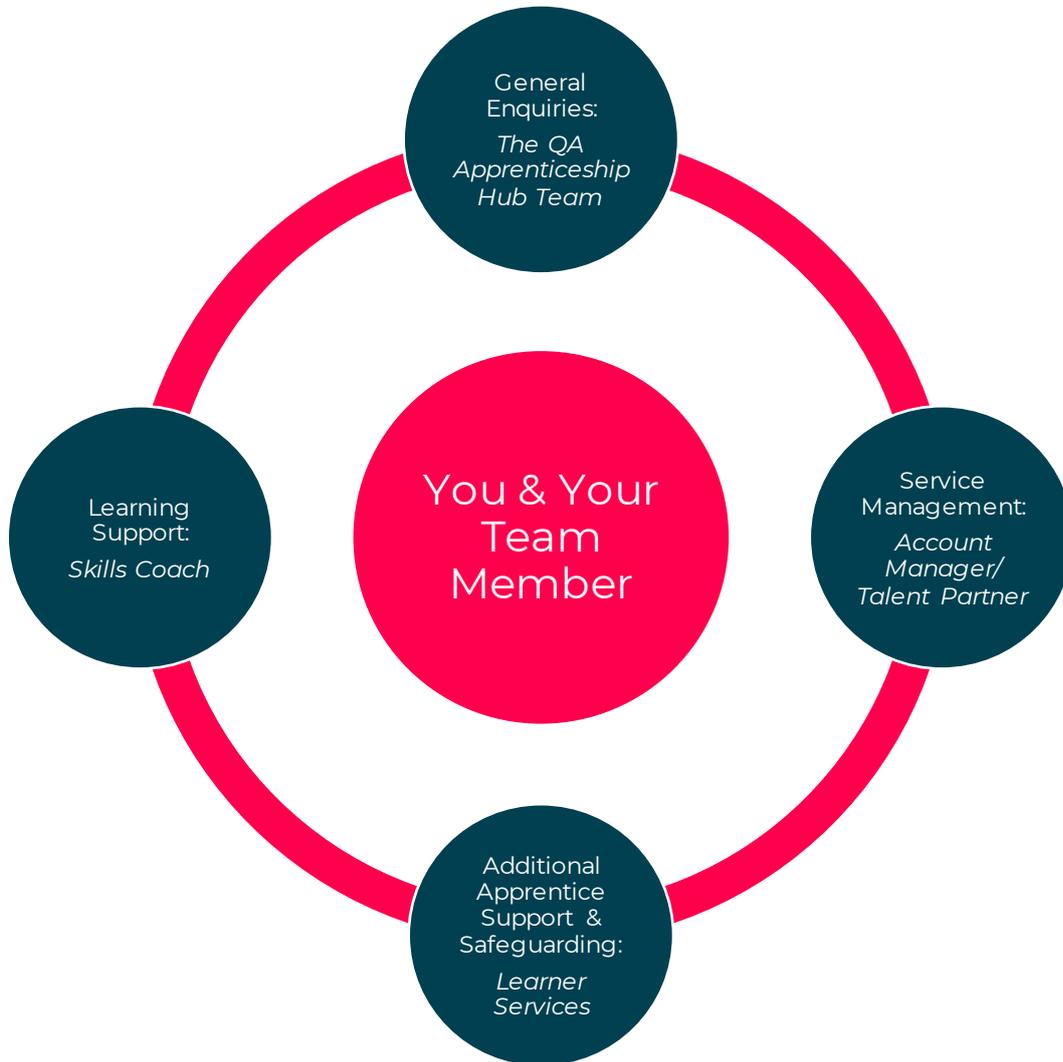
At QA, we have made it our mission to consistently innovate our apprenticeship programmes so organisations and learners attain modern and relevant skills.

Our delivery methods drive empowerment and lead to learners and organisations quickly seeing noticeable practical changes through our apprenticeships.



Support

We are here to support you and your learner. If in doubt, call the [QA Apprenticeship Hub Team](#) with your questions. Contact details are towards [the end of this guide](#).





Your QA support contacts

Contact	Phone	Email	Purpose
The QA Apprenticeship Hub Team	0345 074 7973	TheApprenticeshipHub@qa.com	General enquiries
Learner Services	01753 898482	Learner.Services@qa.com	Additional learner support
Safeguarding	01753 898740/ 07808 050273	Safeguarding@qa.com	Safeguarding concerns

Your dedicated QA Skills Coach contact details will be shared with you directly. If these have not been provided yet, please get in touch with the [The QA Apprenticeship Hub Team](#).

Before your learner begins – checklist

Steps to a successful programme launch

Leading learners can be a new experience. This checklist will help you to set the tone for the rest of your learner's journey. It will help you to give suitable, timely support for your learners as they progress through their journey.

- Get familiar with key areas of ESFA Apprenticeship funding rules. You can access the funding rules [here](#) – select 'employer rules' for the bit that applies to you.
- Understand eligibility criteria. These are different for each programme (and can change) so even if you have had a learner before, it does not hurt to brush up here. Details can be found in [programme brochures](#) or [contact QA](#) who will support you with this.
- Support is available for the 20% off-the-job employer commitment. Find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training>.
- Check in with your learner. It's important they understand their commitment to the apprenticeship programme.
- Keep in regular contact with QA. Your learner's skills coach will be in contact with you and your learner. You can also contact the [QA Apprenticeship Hub Team](#).
- Learner details. Please make sure [QA](#) have been given all accurate learner details at least 6 weeks prior to programme launch.
- Sign and return the Apprenticeship Programme Confirmation (APC). You can send this to the [QA Apprenticeship Hub Team](#).
- Create a new cohort on The Apprenticeship Service system (a member of the [QA Apprenticeship Hub Team](#) can help walk you through this process).
- Support your learner through the QA online enrolment process – see the [FAQ](#) section for further details.
- When you receive the Programme Launch invitation, make sure you are available for the full duration of the induction and a suitable room is booked.
- Electronically sign and return the induction paperwork before the end of the Programme Launch.

FAQs

Q. How do I contact QA?

A. You will have a dedicated QA representative and can access additional support via the centralised QA Apprenticeship Hub Team:

TheApprenticeshipHub@qa.com.

Q. Where can I find the programme overview?

A. You can request a copy of the programme overview by emailing TheApprenticeshipHub@qa.com. This will also be shared with you in the invitation to the programme launch.

Q. Who will be my point of contact during the on-boarding process?

A. You will have a dedicated member of the [QA Apprenticeship Hub Team](#) (details above) who you can contact throughout the on-boarding process.

Q. What if I am unavailable for the Programme Launch?

A. It is a mandatory requirement that a line manager is available for Programme Launch. If you are unable to attend, you can request another member of staff attend on your behalf or request an alternative date for Programme Launch. Before the end of the Programme Launch you will be required to sign and return the Apprenticeship Induction paperwork electronically. Some paperwork may require a wet signature.

Q. What will my learner be required to complete / submit as part of their enrolment?

A. This process differs slightly between learners who are already in employment and those who are recruited by QA into the apprenticeship.

- Those already in employment will need to complete and return the online enrolment form. This will ask the learner for personal details, i.e., home address, prior attainment and emergency contact.
- Those recruited by QA will be asked additional questions as part of their recruitment process which will form part of their enrolment.

All learners will need to provide a valid passport or birth certificate.

All learners will need to provide their GCSE certificates and any relevant certificates for the Apprenticeship programme they are enrolling on.

SkillsForward, an assessment of Functional Skills, will need to be completed if they do not hold GCSE Maths / English at Grade C or above.

N.B. If your learner is enrolling onto a Leadership and Management programme, they will also be required to complete the Apprentice Learner Engagement Form. During on-boarding, the learner may also be asked for further documentation from compliance to support their enrolment.

Q. When will my learner begin their training?

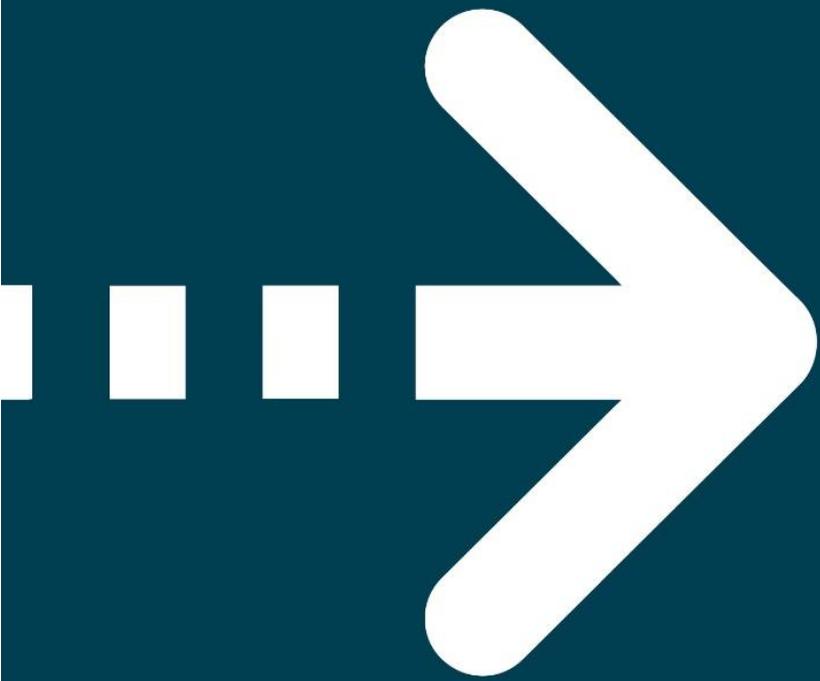
A. Your learner's programme starts with their programme launch where their first learning will take place. Their training dates will be provided at the programme launch and they will receive a copy of their training schedule following this.

Q. What if my learner does not have their GCSE Maths & English certificates?

A. Functional Skills are the essential skills needed for English and Maths and are seen as vital for life, learning and work. Level 2 Functional Skills are equivalent to GCSE Grade C-A*. Learners who have not already achieved English and Maths GCSE (C-A), equivalent qualifications or are unable to provide proof of these qualifications (or an approved alternative) will be required to take Level 2 Functional Skills.

Q. What is SkillsForward?

A. QA use SkillsForward to provide the vital baseline initial assessment for Maths and English, which is an ESFA mandatory requirement for every learner. This will determine whether the learner is working to the required level to come onto the programme. SkillsForward will also support them to prepare for Functional Skills in English and Maths.



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