



Programme Guide

# FRONTLOADED APPRENTICESHIPS

QA.com



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## About QA

### QA is a technology and digital skills pioneer.

We help many of the world's leading companies to build their technological and digital capabilities via our range of training courses, reskilling bootcamps, workplace learning programmes and apprenticeships. We also create customised solutions to meet specific client needs.

Globally, our **Cloud Academy** platform enables our clients' tech teams to train at scale across a range of the most in-demand skills, while our Circus Street platform provides similar capability for our clients' marketing and commercial teams.

Where organisations need diverse junior and/or senior tech talent, we can fill those gaps immediately through bespoke team creation as part of our accelerated talent proposition, or via entry-level apprenticeships.

### BUSINESS OVERVIEW

#### APPRENTICESHIPS

We help organisations use the apprenticeship levy to bridge the digital skills gap, through recruitment of apprentices or by upskilling and reskilling existing staff.

#### TRAINING

For the last 30 years, we have consistently invested in our trainers, technology and facilities to become a trusted training and talent partner for global businesses and government organisations.

#### CONSULTANCY

We recruit and train high-calibre tech specialists and deploy them into organisations to fill critical skills gaps and accelerate digital change.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION

Working in partnership with universities in the UK, we recruit, market and deliver a range of programmes from foundation level to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

#### CLOUD ACADEMY

In 2019, QA acquired **Cloud Academy**, the leading enterprise technology training platform. The union of QA and **Cloud Academy** has created one of the largest collections of blended learning resources in the world, covering AWS, Microsoft Azure, GCP, Cyber Security, Project Management, DevOps, Agile Development, Big Data and more.

#### CIRCUS STREET

In 2021, QA acquired Circus Street, an award-winning global leader in providing commercial digital skills including ecommerce, data analytics and digital marketing skills, allowing international businesses to build and develop digital capabilities across their organisation, while delivering exceptional business outcomes for the world's largest brands.

### THE DIGITAL SKILLS GAP

We are facing a severe crisis when it comes to the gap between the digital skills needed by employers and the available talent. Having entered the pandemic with a pre-existing digital skills shortage, the increased pressure to deliver large-scale transformation means the skills shortage is at an all-time high.

- 87% of executives said they were experiencing skills gaps in the workforce or expected them within a few years (McKinsey)
- Even before Covid-19, the skills gap was already directly costing employers over £6bn a year and tens of billions more in opportunity cost (ITPRO)

Building a skilled and diverse tech workforce is complex but as the UK's number one provider of tech and digital apprenticeships, **We Power Potential, Faster.**



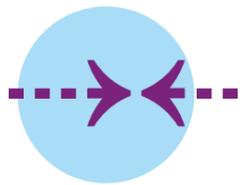
# 2

## Leveraging Apprenticeships to build a pipeline of sustainable talent

An apprenticeship is a paid job where the employee learns and gains valuable experiences. Alongside on-the-job training, apprentices spend at least 20% of their working hours completing live and online learning with a training provider such as QA which leads to a nationally recognised qualification.

Apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities give your business the competitive advantage you need to stabilise and grow your organisation's talent pipeline. With hiring talent forecast to become more challenging than securing budget, developing existing digital talent must be one of the highest priorities.

At QA, we help you to address these challenges with three different talent solutions that can each be funded from the apprenticeship levy you're already paying, or co-funded with government investment for SMEs:



### RECRUIT

We find fresh and diverse tech talent with the right aptitude and attitude, bringing them into your organisation on Tech Apprenticeship Programmes.



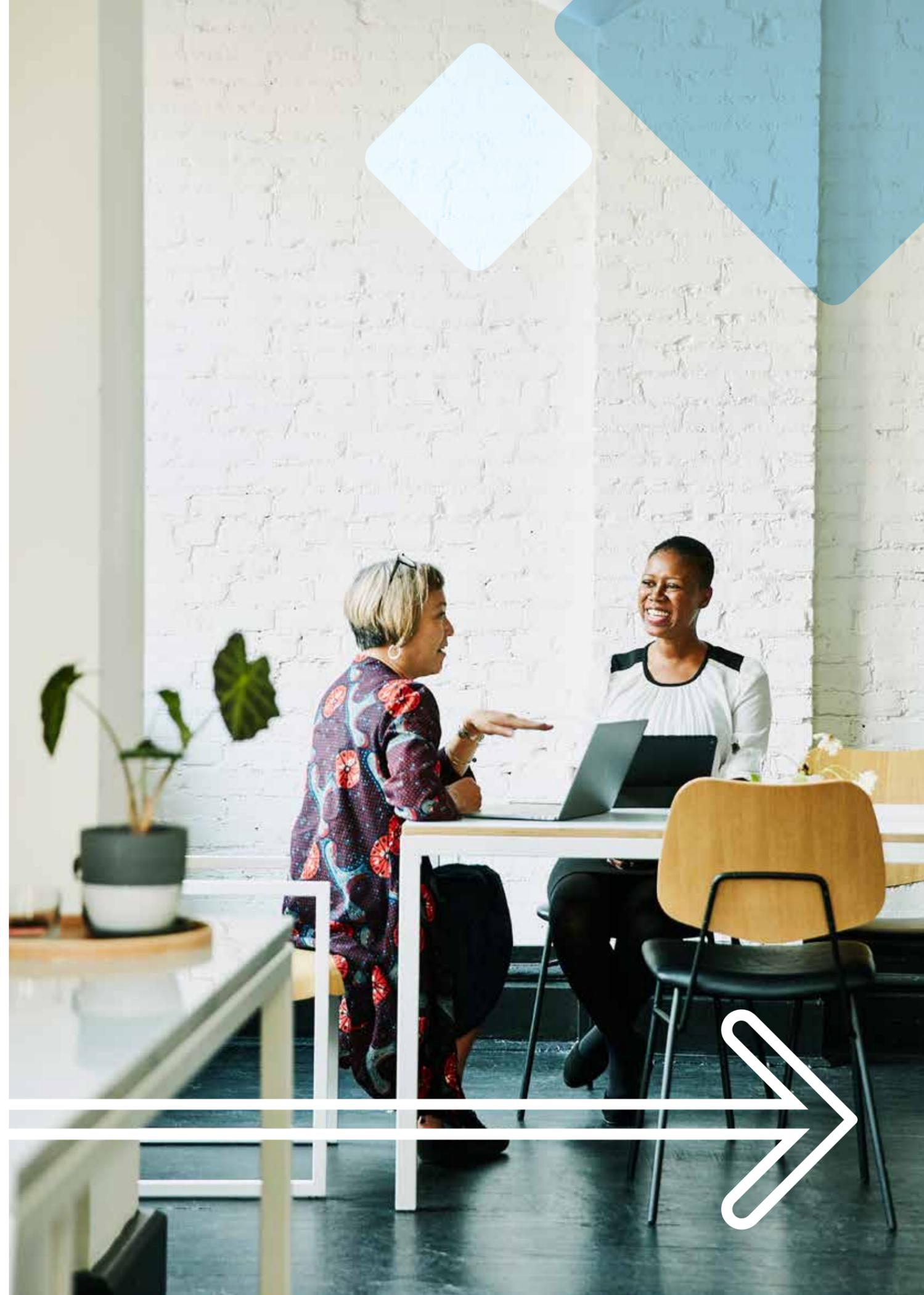
### UPSKILL

We design and deliver programmes that will increase the tech capabilities of your existing staff, allowing them to learn new skills while delivering on the job.



### RESKILL

Our broad range of apprenticeships make sure your staff are right up to date with the leading-edge technologies that are transforming the way organisations work.



# 3

## Partnering with QA will help your organisation thrive

### We Power Potential, Faster

#1

#1 UK provider of tech and digital apprenticeships

1m+

1,000,000+ global employees and learners benefitting from training by QA every year



Unrivalled QA group content solutions and digital delivery flexibility

98%

We have the highest overall pass rate and 98% of QA learners complete on time, developing skills faster



Access to major cloud vendors such as Microsoft Azure, AWS, Google and Salesforce.

### MULTI-CLOUD CAPABILITY

We are proud to work with leading partners and vendors to provide more choice for our customers, as well as the best and most acclaimed training content available.

Gain recognised certifications in cutting-edge technologies from our partners at Microsoft, Amazon, Google or Salesforce through supplementary skills bundles available through our Cloud Academy content.



### ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS AT SCALE

QA apprenticeships drive the impact of enterprise-level talent, combining our scale, vendor partnerships and digital learning content to solve tech skills gaps and transform your levy into talent.

#### ACCELERATED APPRENTICESHIP BOOTCAMPS

Create 'day one' job-ready skills in core tech areas with funded solutions to drive immediate business needs:

1. Software Developer L4
2. Data Analyst L4
3. DevOps L4

#### CERTIFIED MULTI-CLOUD VENDOR SKILLS

Enable cloud transformation and skills adoption with unique access to vendor certification apprenticeship programmes:

1. Cloud Support Technician L3
2. Data Analyst L4
3. DevOps L4
4. Digital Degrees L6 & L7

#### BUSINESS AND TECH SKILLS ACADEMIES

Use your levy to transform business capability with scalable talent solutions:

1. Data Essentials L3
2. Data Technician L4
3. Digital Marketer L4
4. Business Analyst L4
5. Project Management L4
6. DevOps L4
7. Chartered Manager L6
8. Project Manager L6
9. Digital Marketer L6



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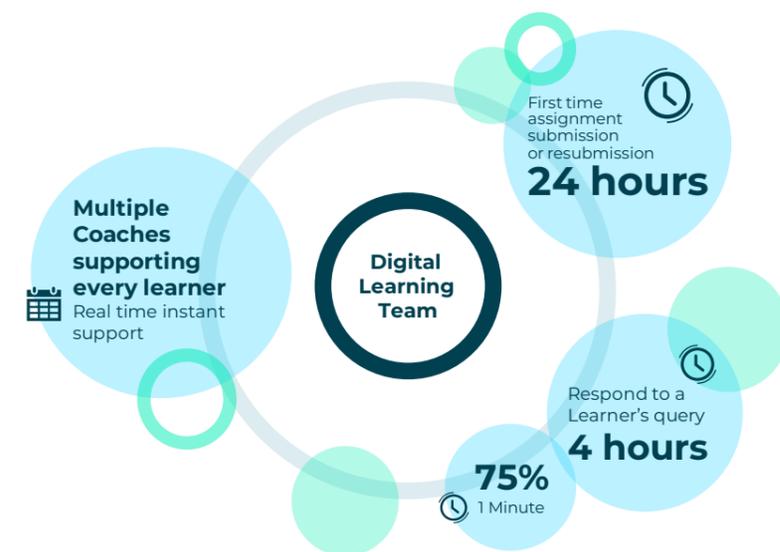
## Introducing Digital by Design

Our approach to blended learning, **Digital by Design**, is award-winning, ground-breaking and market-leading. Our course structure is built on intuitive, digital learning content to immerse the learner in their job role and provide more flexibility for the employer.

Based on in-depth research, we have created a learner experience that goes above and beyond the design of the programmes, catering for a variety of different learner personas and their needs. Throughout our Workplace Learning Programmes, three key elements work together: i) content ii) the service and support, and iii) the technology.

Using a guided discovery approach to learning, learners are empowered to take ownership of their own three-dimensional learning experience through the Discover, Practise and Apply model. By doing so, learners become more engaged, more productive employees earlier, providing significant value to their employer and the wider economy.

Learner's Discover and Practise digital skills, and then build a personalised 'apply' plan moving into their active role within the company. Bespoke learning, that is digitally embedded in the workplace.



### 'Best use of blended learning' 2020

98% Complete on time or sooner than programme duration

Highest overall pass rate (Based on End-Point Assessments by the BCS 2020)

Our market-leading global learning platform, **Cloud Academy**, enhances the bespoke learner experience by providing a unique 'skills bundle' tailored to support any specific learning requirements unique to your business so they can confidently hit the ground running on completion.

The apprenticeship programme we've created with QA focuses on developing a converged skill set, meaning apprentices can quickly meet the diversity of the job. This makes a real difference to our talent pipeline; we can bring people in, develop them to our model, and help them specialise. This journey will add huge value across the business for years to come.

- **Graham Webb - Vodafone's Field Operations Manager**



- Learners receive access to our world-leading digital skills platform, **Cloud Academy**
- Guided Learning Paths across Azure, AWS, GCP, Data, DevOps, Cyber, etc.
- Over 1,000 different technology learning modules, labs and exams which can be customised for your needs – provides an optimal end user experience.

ENHANCE PROGRAMMES	TARGETED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	EXAMPLES OF DATA CONTENT
<p><b>Gamified Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline skills, gauge readiness</li> <li>• Constructive competition</li> <li>• Integrated throughout learning journey</li> </ul> <p><b>Hands-on labs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run with – or without – guidance</li> <li>• Practical training directly in console or CLI</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning paths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided training experiences with Courses, Quizzes, Labs and Exams</li> </ul> <p><b>Stretch Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vast catalogue of over 10,000 hours of meaningful, constantly updated content available within the <b>Cloud Academy Library</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Introduction to Data Science and Machine Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting Started With Deep Learning</li> <li>• Working with Convolutional and Recurrent</li> </ul> <p><b>Neural Networks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical Data Science with Python</li> <li>• Getting Started with Machine Learning Models</li> <li>• Wrestling With Data</li> <li>• The Basics of Data Management, Data</li> </ul> <p><b>Manipulation and Data Modelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Databases – Moving from Spreadsheets</li> <li>• The Beginners Guide to Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence</li> <li>• Practical Machine Learning</li> </ul>

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## Frontloaded Apprenticeships

Our new delivery model, designed to address your digital skill gaps faster, is delivered in partnership with our Enterprise and large-scale Public Sector partners, providing a powerful schedule of cohorts.

At QA we have the expertise and resources to create apprenticeship programmes in a way that best meets each businesses' unique skills gap. That's why our frontloaded apprenticeships deliver a block of learning right at the beginning of the course to develop key knowledge and skills early on.

Whether you are recruiting or reskilling existing employees, this market-leading accelerated talent solution aims to quickly address skills gap challenges through a structure where apprentices receive approximately 10 weeks of training before starting their new job. Skills are established earlier through apprenticeship journeys tailored to the role, with personalised on-the-job learning.

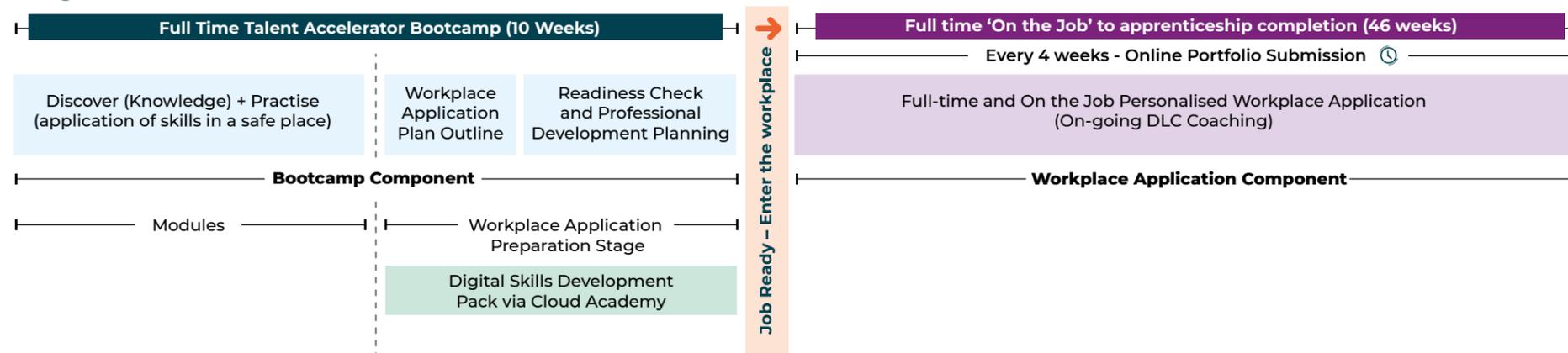
This workflow allows learners to develop their knowledge foundation and practise their new skills upfront through the Discover and Practise components of each module, creating day-1 ready tech talent.

While our frontloaded programmes are focussed on job readiness, we have combined this with comprehensive, on demand digital learning support to ensure an engaged and successful learner journey from launch to completion.

Ahead of starting their new job, professional development plans are agreed, alongside a readiness check. While on the job, apprentices will go through their Workplace Application Plan. This means that they will complete these activities in the order specified in their plan, which will be aligned to workplace activities and tasks.

### EXAMPLE

#### Programme Timeline: Duration 14 months



QA's ability to offer both standard and frontloaded apprenticeships, as well as our bespoke approach to scaling talent, means we can meet the diverse needs of any organisation. We can confidently deliver both models to a high specification, ensuring that both apprentices and employers succeed.

If you're considering talent acquisition, QA has access to a diverse talent pipeline sourcing learners through our national recruitment and screening teams. We tap into ambition and potential from all backgrounds, and bridge the gap toward valuable tech expertise through rapid upskilling. This empowers diverse talent to make their impact faster, and delivers benefits more efficiently to businesses.

Our Graduate Scheme 2.0 provides an additional channel, harnessing the highest calibre of tech talent potential, and getting them job-ready. The QA progression route can take any learner all the way to Degree and Masters qualifications.

No other provider can match QA for content, services and commercial funded solutions to help you maximise budgets and ROI while recruiting quality, diverse digital talent.

Standard Apprenticeships	Frontloaded Apprenticeships
<p><b>Learning is iterative</b></p> <p>Learners will progressively apply new skills in the workplace, module by module.</p>	<p>Accelerated upskilling (earlier ROI).</p> <p>Learners will have a well- rounded skillset at the completion of their bootcamp component.</p>
<p><b>Learning is progressive</b></p> <p>Each module will naturally set the foundation for follow-on modules, with no gaps or misalignments.</p>	<p>Truly personalised learning.</p> <p>Each learner will define the order of their apply activities, meaning each learning experience will be personal.</p>
<p><b>Proven workflow</b></p> <p>This approach has been used for years and delivered results, such as reduced withdrawals and LPEDs.</p>	<p>Improved employer engagement and tighter control over workplace application.</p> <p>Learners and employers will agree how to plan for workplace application, increasing tripartite ownership of learning.</p>



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## Frontloaded Programmes at a Glance

We have developed our frontloaded programmes to equip skills that are in high demand. These programmes result in qualifications that are valued in the tech sector by the world's most successful organisations.

### 1

**Software Engineer Level 4**

### 2

**Data Analyst Level 4**

### 3

**DevOps Engineer Level 4**

### FRONTLOADED CONTENT OVERVIEW

	Total Bootcamp duration	Hours of training within Bootcamp	Content on programme via the Bootcamp
<b>Software Engineer Level 4</b>	9 Weeks & 4 Days	392 hours of training within Bootcamp	66%
<b>Data Analyst Level 4</b>	9 Weeks & 3 Days	370 hours of training within Bootcamp	66%
<b>DevOps Engineer Level 4</b>	8 Weeks & 1 Day	320 hours of training within Bootcamp	64%

### BLENDED DIGITAL LEARNING & TEACHING APPROACH INCLUDING:

- Live instructor-led sessions
- Online technical training via **Cloud Academy** and a tailored Skills Bundle and direct tripartite learning interventions

# Software Engineering

## Role profile and entry requirements

Our Software Engineer Level 4 Apprenticeship gives learners the advanced skills and the technical grounding to design, test and maintain software and web systems. Learners will also gain an understanding of advanced programming as well as systems and software development projects.

Employers should assess whether each candidate is working in a suitable job role to successfully complete their programme. This programme is a great match for job roles such as: web developer; applications developer; software developer; entry-level software development; and development support staff looking to step up.

**Bootcamp Duration:** 9 weeks & 4 days

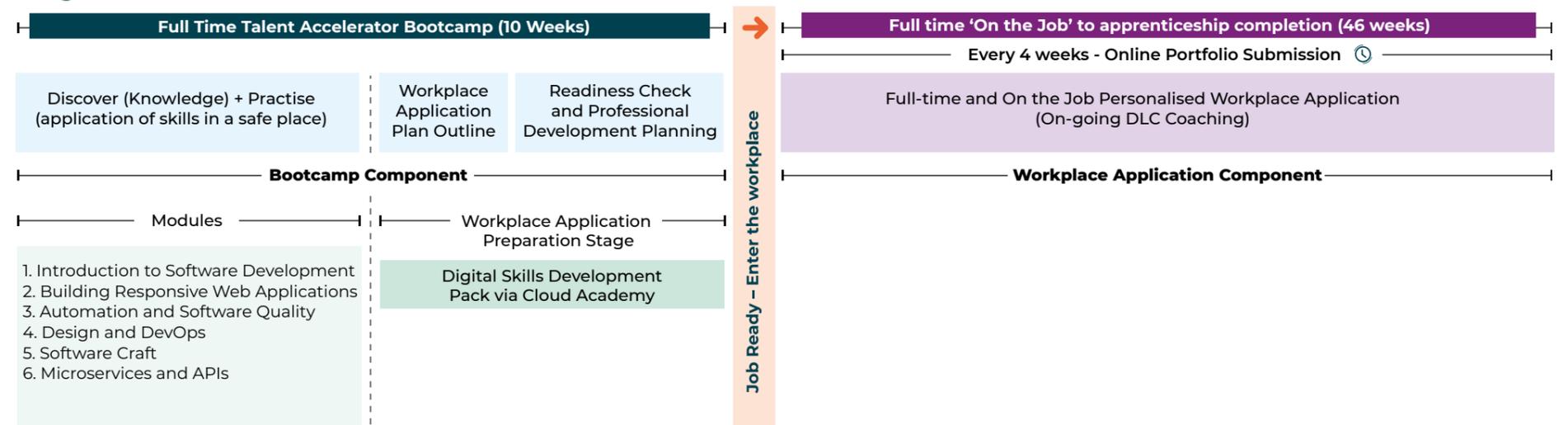
**Workplace Application:** Project submission every 4 weeks

### Entry requirements

The entry requirements for this programme are as follows:

- The learner must have completed a Level 3 Software Development Apprenticeship with QA or have an equivalent qualification with another training provider
- OR an A-level in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subject and a successful completion of our aptitude test
- OR a BTEC Diploma in IT and a successful completion of our aptitude test
- OR 2 years' experience in a relevant role and successful completion of our aptitude test

### Programme Timeline: Duration 18 months



### Module overview

The modules in our Software Engineer apprenticeship are designed to cover key technical and practical skills.

#### Module 1: Accelerated Introduction to Software Development

Focuses on the fundamental skills all software developers need, including algorithms, logic and data structures; front-end HTML development, CSS and JavaScript; back-end Python and SQL development; object-oriented programming principles; software patterns; secure development practises; mathematics and computational thinking; and Agile fundamentals.

**Module 2: Building Responsive Web Applications**  
Develops more advanced applications using HTML5, CSS3 and JavaScript

**Module 3: Automation and Software Quality**  
Learners will gain an understanding behind the theory of testing, alongside manual and automated testing using Selenium.

#### Module 4: Design and DevOps

Introduces learners to the concept of DevOps and further knowledge of how software is designed and deployed.

#### Module 5: Software Craft

Consolidates and develops the most important and advanced skills a developer needs to take the next steps in their career.

#### Module 6: Microservices and APIs

Focuses on the future skills that developers will need in their career. This includes: microservices architecture; RESTful APIs; and the cloud.

# DevOps Engineer

## Role profile and entry requirements

The DevOps Engineer Level 4 apprenticeship programme encompasses multiple stages of the software development life cycle, from automating processes around development, testing and release to the ongoing integration of new features, and subsequent continuous delivery of a product.

Employers should assess whether each candidate is working in a suitable job role to successfully complete their programme. Job roles this programme is a great match for include: automation engineer; build and release engineer; deployment engineer; DevOps engineer; full stack developer; infrastructure engineer; platform engineer; reliability engineer and site reliability engineer.

**Bootcamp Duration:** 8 weeks + 1 day

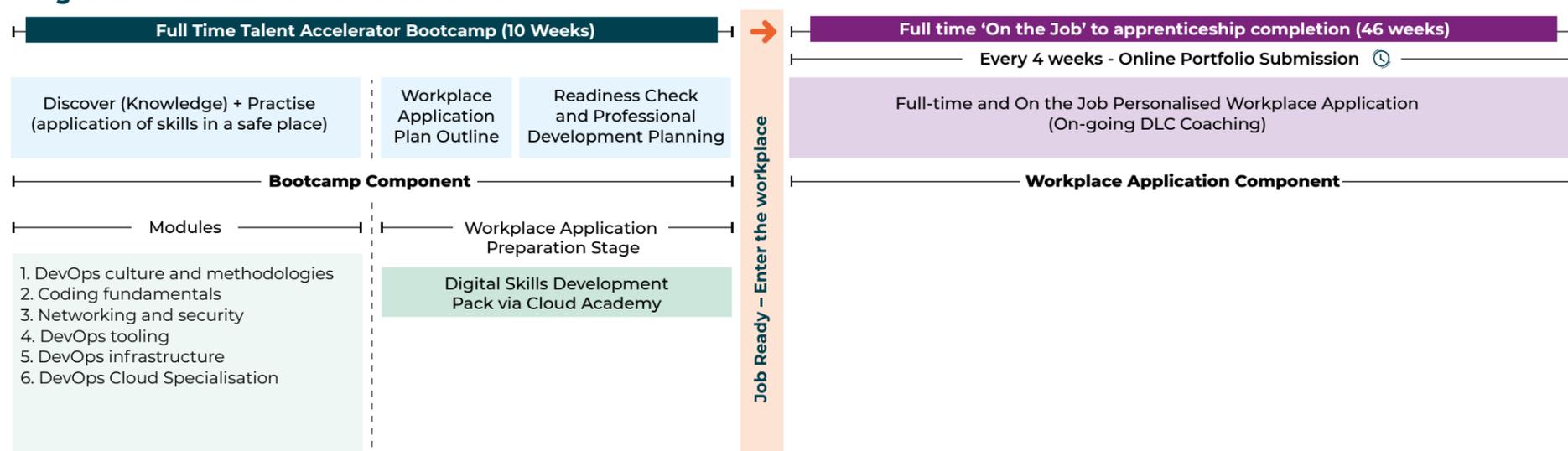
**Workplace Application:** Project submission every 4 weeks

### Entry requirements

The entry requirements for this programme are as follows:

- Level 3 Software apprenticeship
- OR A-Level in a STEM subject (in technology and maths fields only) and successful completion of our aptitude test
- OR BTEC Diploma in IT and successful completion of our aptitude test
- OR two years' experience in a relevant role and successful completion of our aptitude test

### Programme Timeline: Duration 14 months



### Module overview

The modules in our DevOps Engineer apprenticeship are designed to cover key technical and practical skills.

#### Module 1: DevOps Culture and Methodologies

Introduces learners to common practices whilst working in a DevOps environment, including Agile, Scrum, continuous integration and continuous delivery. The module also introduces the fundamentals of cloud computing alongside version control with Git.

#### Module 2: Coding Fundamentals

Focuses on the developer skills needed for learners to create applications through Python with connected databases, practicing TDD and OOP when applicable.

#### Module 3: Networking and Security

Introduces learners to networking and security principles both generally and within a DevOps context.

#### Module 4: Linux and DevOps Tooling

Takes a deep-dive into the build and environment tools within DevOps, discussing the design and construction of pipelines within DevOps CI/CD to support application development, building, testing and release within a local and cloud-based context.

#### Module 5: DevOps Infrastructure

Focuses on infrastructure as code and configuration management, building upon a learner's DevOps skills to automate the creation and provisioning of cloud-based infrastructure.

#### Module 6: Cloud Computing Specialisation

Explores the specifics of a cloud vendor – AWS, Azure or GCP – including developing and architecting DevOps solutions and pipelines on the platform.



# Data Analyst

## Role profile and entry requirements

QA's Data Analyst, including Power BI Level 4, apprenticeship develops the skills needed to collect, organise, and study data to provide valuable business insight. Data analysts are typically involved with managing, cleansing, abstracting and aggregating data, then conducting a range of analytical studies on that data.

Employers should assess whether each candidate is working in a suitable job role to successfully complete their programme. Job roles this programme is a great match for include: data analyst; customer data analyst; digital marketing analyst; finance analyst; HR analyst; junior analyst; operations analyst; pricing analyst and procurement analyst.

**Bootcamp Duration:** 9 weeks + 3 days

**Workplace Application:** Project submission every 4 weeks

### Entry requirements

The entry requirements for this programme are as follows:

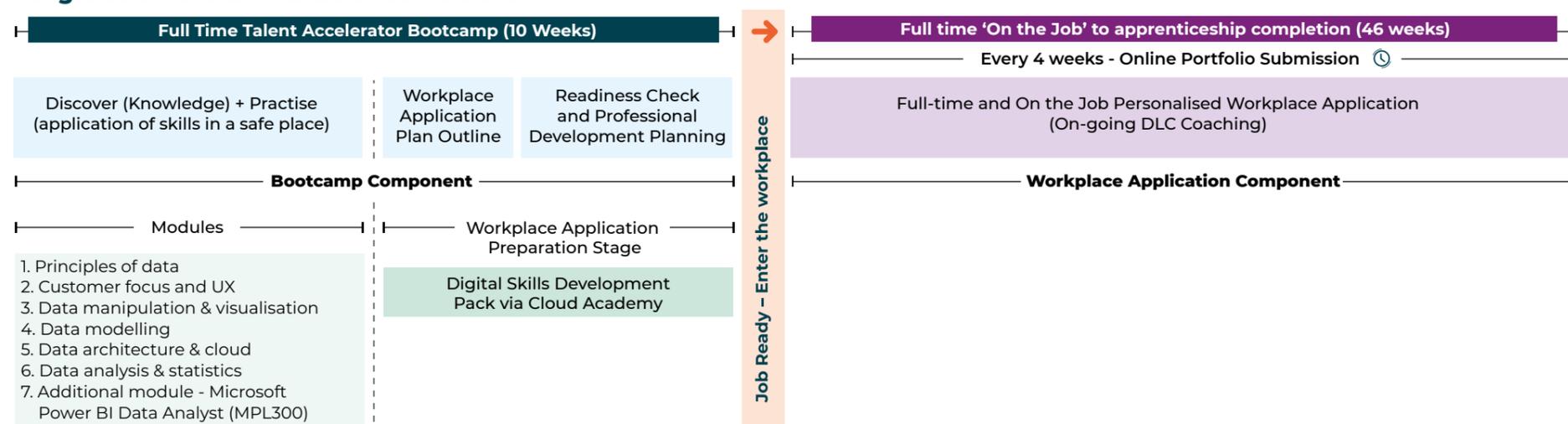
Standard entry:

- Level 3 qualification (apprenticeship/A-levels/BTEC, etc)
- OR equivalent work experience (typically two years in a relevant role)

Plus:

- 5 GCSEs, including English and Maths at Grade 4 (C) or above
- Experience with using Excel and Microsoft products (or similar)

### Programme Timeline: Duration 14 months



### Module overview

The modules in our Data Analyst apprenticeship are designed to cover key technical and practical skills.

#### Module 1: Principles of Data

Provides learners with fundamental knowledge on legislation, security and ethics alongside understanding core data theory, including the principles of data, types of data and data lifecycles.

#### Module 2: Customer Focus & UX

Focuses on user experience, understanding customer requirements and risk management.

#### Module 3: Data Manipulation & Visualisation

Explores accessing and manipulating data from different sources, and how to visualise and present data to stakeholders.

#### Module 4: Data Modelling

Introduces learners to databases, working with SQL and Data Modelling. Learners will also be introduced to the programming languages Python & R. Learners who wish to expand their knowledge on R can access a range of optional courses on **Cloud Academy**.

#### Module 5: Data Architecture & Cloud

Progresses on to core concepts of data architecture and cloud technologies. Topics covered in this module include Data Warehousing, business intelligence, big data and cloud architectures.

#### Module 6: Data Analysis & Statistics

Explores analytical techniques, methods and statistical analysis methodologies.

#### Additional Module: Microsoft Power BI Data Analyst (MPL300)

Discusses the various methods and best practices for modelling, visualising, and analysing data with Power BI. It will show how to access and process data from a range of data sources including relational and non-relational data.



## 7

## Funding explained

### What is the apprenticeship levy?

Introduced in April 2017, the apprenticeship levy is a government initiative to fund apprenticeships and encourage more organisations to hire apprentices – and help reduce skills gaps in the UK.

### Who pays the apprenticeship levy?

Employers in England with an annual wage bill in excess of £3million pay 0.5% of that wage bill into a closed levy account that they can only spend on apprenticeships.

### How is it paid?

Funds are taken monthly – and are available to spend the following month. All payments are 'one month in arrears'. Employers also receive a 10% top up to monthly funds entering their Apprenticeship Service (AS) account.

### How are apprenticeships funded?

Levy-paying employers in England can use funds in their Apprenticeship Service Account to fund apprenticeship training costs. They also receive a 10% government top-up. For non-levy paying employers, with 51+ employees, the government will fund 95% of the cost of training an apprentice, with a 5% contribution from the employer.

Some apprenticeships can be 100% Government funded if the employer is an SME (less than 50 employees) and the apprentice is aged 16-18 or aged 19-24 with an Educational Health Care Plan on the day the apprenticeship starts.

Our Frontloaded Apprenticeship solutions combine high-skill, high-tech bootcamps with levy funding, allowing you to tap into funds you've already invested, without compromising on the calibre of training. This leads to improved and more immediate ROI.

### Does the levy expire?

Funds expire after 24 months unless they are spent on apprenticeship training. This also applies to any top-ups in the account.

### What if I've used all the funds in our apprenticeship levy?

If you have used all the funds available in your apprenticeship levy, the 5% contribution will apply until levy funds become available again in your AS account.

### How can our apprenticeship be funded if we don't pay the apprenticeship levy?

Employers that do not accrue their own levy funds still have access to funding in England but in a different way. Employers are required to cover 5% of the total negotiated price of the apprenticeship' as it covers EPA as well as delivery directly to the training provider.

This is often paid in a single upfront payment. Remaining delivery costs are paid in the same way direct to the training provider, as applicable. There is no recourse to attain a refund, in total or part, of an employer co-investment contribution.

All organisations are required to register for the Apprenticeships Service. On the AS account, employers can reserve funds for up to ten future apprentices (reserved funds expire after 3 months and remain subject to the 5% employer co-investment).

# 8

## How to partner with QA

QA's approach to building out your organisation's tech skills capability is unmatched. Our integrated technology platforms, experienced trainers, and capacity to build bespoke solutions at scale make us the perfect partner to power potential, faster.

### Trusted Partnership

QA are the **UK's largest and most respected digital apprenticeship provider**. We have the capability to create pathways that genuinely meet the needs of the end client.

### Scale and capability

Access over 1,950 learning courses, over 260 learning pathways on Cloud Academy, major vendor certifications and solution design teams to blend into funded pathways.

### Agility and Flexibility

Always keeping the learners and end client in mind, our Digital by Design delivery is ground-breaking, with digital learning pathways that can be flexed by learner and client. This platform for all QA's group content supports bespoke client pathways.

### Our partnerships:

#### AWS Advanced training partner

We are the most experienced authorised training provider for AWS in the UK. Our courses and certifications keep you up-to-date with the latest technologies and developments.

#### Microsoft Gold learning partner

We're a leading Microsoft Gold Partner in the UK, training over 25,000 people on Microsoft Technology Instructor Led Training courses per year. Our world-leading learning experts deliver the skills to transform performance.



# FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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V1.0 DECEMBER 2022

This information is correct as of publishing in December 2022.

