



The Total Guide To Apprenticeships For Employers

Everything you need to know about
hiring an apprentice

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What is an Apprenticeship?



In a nutshell, an apprenticeship is a combination of hands-on work with the opportunity to obtain qualifications and learn new skills. An apprenticeship blends practice and theory, allowing your apprentice to gain knowledge and skills that will make them a well-rounded employee.

In an apprenticeship, the learner is employed in work for 80% of the time, with the remaining 20% of time being set aside for learning. This is often provided at a college, university or with a training provider. An apprenticeship must last a minimum of 12 months for the apprentice to obtain their qualification. Apprenticeships are not just limited to trade professions. You can now recruit an apprentice within a massive range of industry's, from groundworks to digital marketing.

As an employer, you provide the workplace learning; teaching them everything you want them to know, moulding them from the start.

When you recruit an apprentice, you are hiring a person in the early stages of their preferred career. They may have come from leaving school, higher education, or from a career change, and can even be your current staff who wish to learn a new range of skills. No matter what, you can be sure they will bring enthusiasm and a hard-working attitude to the role. In turn, the apprentice can gain real-world professional industry skills and experience. The process is a win-win scenario, with both the employer and apprentice gaining from the experience.

Why an Apprenticeship?

There are many benefits to hiring or putting a member of staff onto an apprenticeship. It not only helps you to fill any skill gaps within the company, it also allows new or current staff to learn a new skillset.

Studies have shown time and again that hiring an apprentice helps to increase workplace productivity, with over 80% of businesses reporting a higher than normal efficiency. Apprentices new to the business bring with them fresh perspectives and new ideas, while current staff who train via an apprenticeship are more motivated.

Apprenticeships are tailored to specific job roles making them an ideal way to deal with any skill gaps you have within your business. The UK Government has stated that skill shortages are one of the biggest threats to the UK economy. Training your staff with an apprenticeship can help to combat the impact of this. The skills learnt on an apprenticeship will fill in any skill gaps, ensuring your business is future-proof.

And onto what is possibly the biggest factor when deciding on a training method in any company; the cost. Apprenticeships are partly if not fully funded by the Government, meaning they are the ideal way to ensure your workforce have the right set of skills without a huge financial hit. Find out more about the cost and funding options for apprenticeships on page x



Apprenticeship Facts

Looking for some statistics that prove how beneficial apprenticeships can be? We've got you!



76% OF WORKFORCES
PRODUCTIVITY INCREASED
WITH HIRING APPRENTICE



AFTER AN APPRENTICESHIP
90% OF PEOPLE STAY IN
EMPLOYMENT



75% OF EMPLOYERS
SAY APPRENTICESHIPS
IMPROVED THE QUALITY OF
THEIR PRODUCT/SERVICE.



814K APPRENTICES IN
ENGLAND



1 IN 5 COMPANIES HAVE A
FORMER APPRENTICE AT
BOARD LEVEL.



1 IN 5 EMPLOYERS ARE
HIRING MORE APPRENTICES
TO HELP THEM CREATE A
SKILLED WORKFORCE.



80% OF EMPLOYERS
REPORT THAT
APPRENTICESHIPS REDUCE
STAFF TURNOVER.



THE FIRST NATIONAL
APPRENTICE SCHEME WAS
INTRODUCED IN 1563

How an Apprenticeship Works

An apprenticeship blends practice and theory, allowing learners to gain the needed knowledge and skills for their role. Employers and Training Companies work together to craft each learner into a well rounded, skilled employee.

Employers provide the apprentice with workplace learning; teaching them everything they need to know, moulding them from the start.

The other instruction comes in the form of off-the-job training. Apprentices must spend 20% of their working hours taking part in this. It is often led by the training provider and could include a day in college, online learning or personal development time, workshops, webinars or workplace observations. No matter the format it will give them the time to practice anything they're unsure of, or learn new skills.

When the apprenticeship comes to an end, your apprentice will sit an endpoint assessment, which may be backed-up by coursework like assessment plans. The endpoint assessment will determine how well the apprentice has done and will grade them accordingly. When they've passed, it's then up to you if you want to keep the apprentice as part of your team.



How to Hire an Apprentice

When hiring an apprentice, you need to be aware of what that entails. When a company hires an apprentice, you take on a responsibility of not only providing a job for that apprentice but also making sure they obtain their qualification.

This section will cover how to hire an apprentice, from advertising for the position to finding the right training provider for you. If you want to put your current staff onto an apprenticeship, skip ahead to page x.

When hiring an apprentice there are a few precautions you need to take. Before you take on a new member of your team through an apprenticeship, you will need to check their age. Apprentices must be over the age of 16 before they begin their employment. Another important factor is where they are living. If the apprenticeship is based in England the apprentice must also be living there. One last thing to check is their education status, as only people out of full-time education can start an apprenticeship.

When hiring an apprentice, you want to consider the skills and training that would be beneficial to your company. A great option is to look for skills that you could add to make your company more successful in the future or to fill any gaps you have in your workforce. Apprenticeships are available over a variety of different industries, there are currently over 550 apprenticeship standards to choose from.

Advertise your apprenticeship

The first thing that you'll have to do once you decide on an apprenticeship is to advertise. You need to get information on what you are looking for out to the public. One way you can do this is by using the 'Recruit an apprentice' service, which will promote your vacancy through the 'find an apprenticeship' service on the government's website. You can also post your listing on sites such as Indeed, or the Apprenticeship directory, Zappz.uk.

When advertising you need to be as clear as possible in what you are looking for, this is so potential candidates can see if they fit your criteria.

You could also use more physical routes to find an apprentice:

- Hold open days
- Arrange visits to schools, colleges and universities
- Use social media
- Participate in careers events, such as WorldSkills UK Live



Finding a Training Provider

Once you have found an apprentice who fits what you are looking for you will need to find a training provider. You and your training provider must agree on the total cost and price of each apprenticeship, including the cost of end-point assessment. You will also need to find a courses level that fits the apprentices level of experience and previous qualifications.

Finding the right apprentice is hard so make sure you take your time and look at each candidate in depth. This will allow you to make sure you are finding the best possible person. Spending more time and effort on finding an apprentice who will fit and succeed within your company, will allow for the results to be more beneficial to both parties.



Apprenticeships for Current Employees

A great way of gaining a more skilled workforce is placing your current staff in more training such as an apprenticeship. It is a way for employees to gain new skills and knowledge.

By placing your staff in apprenticeships, it will allow them to retrain on the job, addressing any critical skills gaps and preparing your workforce for the job roles of the future.

Apprenticeships used to be solely for people to learn a skills-based trade. This is no longer the case, and employers are now utilising the resource of apprenticeships to retrain and develop the knowledge of their current employees.

Identifying the potential in staff and investing in them personally can make them feel more valued, which increases motivation, improves job satisfaction, and creates a greater sense of loyalty.

Not only does providing ongoing training in the way of apprenticeships to your employees improve motivation it significantly improves staff retention and that has huge financial benefits.

Benefits to re-training current staff

Hiring an apprentice may be the best option for some businesses but for others, training existing staff is the option for them. So, you need to find the best option for you and your company. Look at the benefits of both and make a decision which will benefit your business and workforce.



Cost

It is a cheaper option, upskilling your staff allows you to lose less money. If they want to hire someone new who has the skills you need, it will be most likely costly. This is because they will already have the training and are a benefit to your company. This is why it will be easier and more convenient to train one of your existing staff members.



Loyalty

Employees who have been trained by their company tend to be highly motivated, committed to the company and supportive of its business objectives. They feel more supported as you have invested time and money into their training. Placing your staff into an apprenticeship encourages employees to stay with the company for longer, reducing recruitment costs.



Diverse

Apprentices can be any member of staff, no matter a staff member's age or gender. Anyone can do an apprenticeship. This allows companies to train the best person for the job, meaning that no matter if you have a workforce of all older staff members or younger people, it won't affect your training.



The Apprenticeship Levy

In April 2017 the apprenticeship levy was introduced by the Government. This requires all employers with salary bills of over £3 million to pay 0.5% of said salary bill into a dedicated fund; the levy can only be spent on apprenticeship training – with new or existing staff.

The payments are collected by HM Revenue and Customs on a monthly basis, and are done automatically through PAYE. Employers are able to access funding through an online account. From the time of payment, the employer has 24 months to spend it before they expire and are absorbed by the government. To further encourage the use of this levy, the Government will offset the levy by £15,000, and will grant a 10% top-up, meaning for every £1 put in, employers can draw out £1.10.

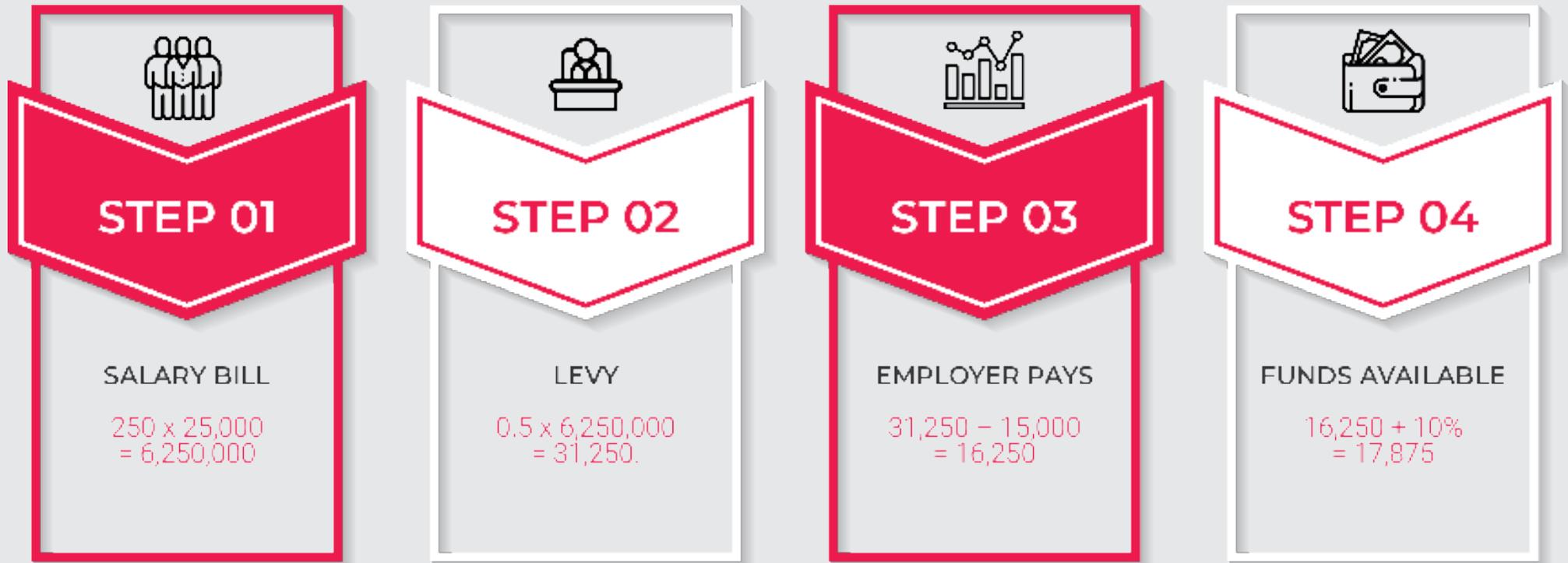
If you are a levy-paying employer, you can now register for an account on the apprenticeship service, this will allow you to:

- receive levy funds for you to spend on apprenticeships
- manage your apprentices
- pay your training provider
- stop or pause payments to your training provider

Funds will show in your apprenticeship service account on the 23rd day of each month. Training providers will be paid around this time as well.

Levy Example

Here's an example of how the levy payments work for an employer. This example uses a company of 250 employees with a gross salary of £25,000.



Non-Levy Apprenticeships

If your salary bill is less than £3 million then you are eligible to receive 95% government funding for the apprenticeship, meaning the company only has to pay the remaining 5%.

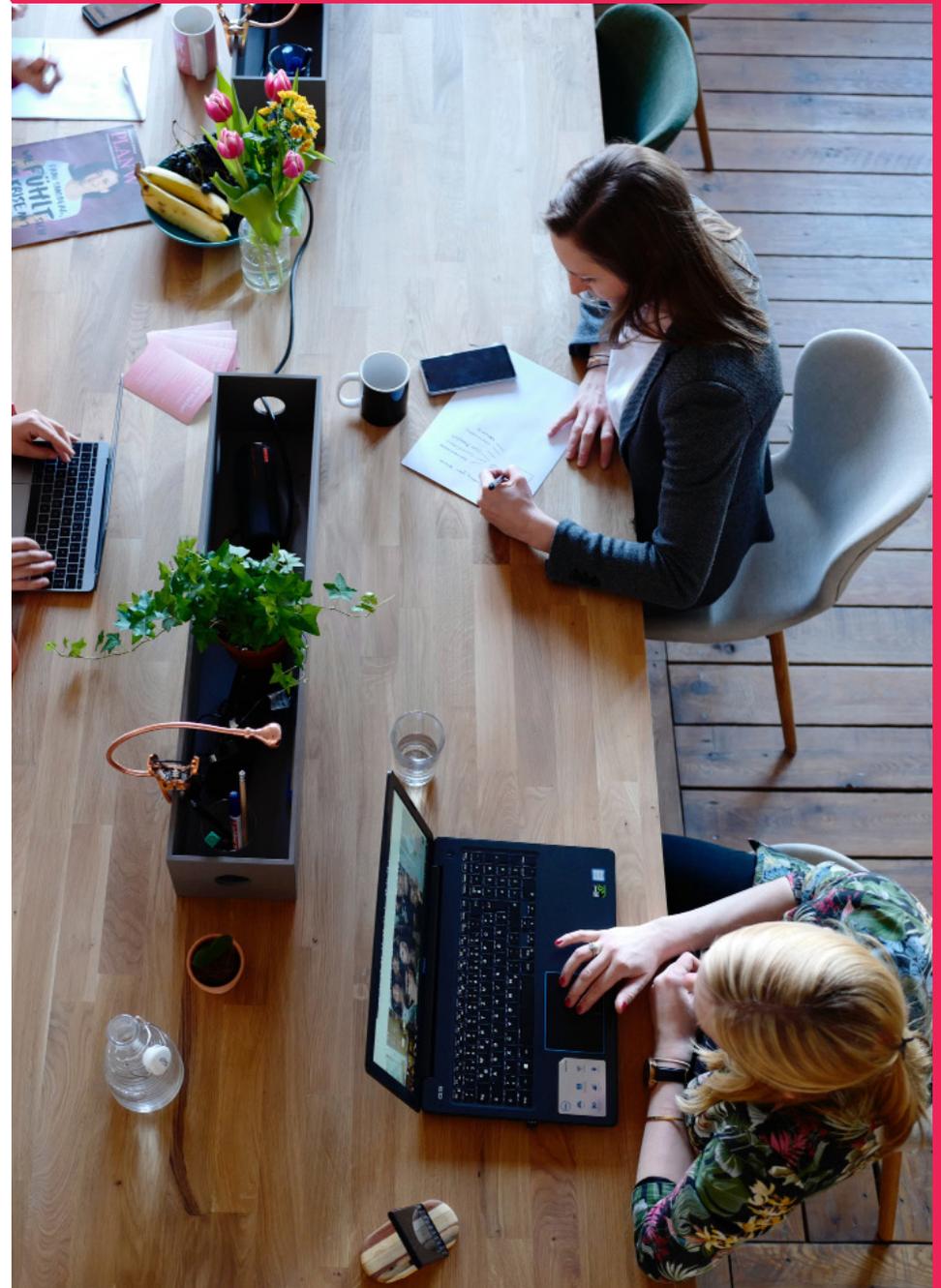
This makes hiring an apprentice a cost effective solution no matter the size of the company. As an additional incentive to small businesses, any company with less than 50 employees hiring an apprentice aged 16-18 will be 100% government funded, and will also receive a £1000 payment.

Financial Incentives for Apprenticeships

On 1st August 2020, the government introduced a new scheme of financial incentives for apprenticeships to encourage employers to hire apprentices. This programme is currently running until 31st September 2021. Until this time, anyone who hires an apprentice will be given a **£1000** bonus per new apprentice. This is regardless of their age; the removal of the age restriction opens doors for employers and apprentices alike.

There are specific financial incentives for businesses that are willing to take on apprentices which fit certain criteria. There is **£1000** for businesses that take on apprentices aged 16-18 and under 25 with an education, health and care plan, or has been in the care of their local authority. These changes have been made to benefit more people; a better incentive for employers, and a boost to opportunities for anyone looking to gain new qualifications, as well as for many young people and school leavers.

The Chief Executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, Jane Hickie, said that the financial incentive boost could potentially be “Game-changing” and will prove to be “particularly attractive to smaller businesses.”



The End Point Assessment

The End Point Assessment (EPA) is the final assessment an apprentice will take to ensure that they can do the job they have been training for. The EPA is separate from any qualifications or any other assessment that the apprentice will undertake during the learning stage of the apprenticeship. The End Point Assessment is the final assessment learners will take before gaining their official apprenticeship qualification.

Before an apprenticeship starts there will be an agreement concerning the EPA. The employer will need to choose an End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) who will conduct the assessment. An EPAO is a third-party organisation, separate from both the employer and training provider, that conducts the final assessment of the apprentice and determines their final grade.

Reaching Gateway and How the EPA Works

GATEWAY

Once an apprentice has completed their formative training, both the employer and training provider will assess the apprentice's progress. The employer will then determine if the apprentice is ready to undertake their EPA. This leads to the Gateway stage; where all aspects of the apprenticeship must be completed

This could include:

- Any on-programme qualifications, including Functional Skills
- Finalising projects, such as portfolios or projects
- Any other requirements outlined in the Apprenticeship Standard
- For some apprenticeships, there will need to be a meeting between parties involved in the apprenticeship to determine how and when the assessment process will unfold.

HOW THE EPA WORKS

The EPA is made up of several assessments that the apprentice must complete before they can formally finish the apprenticeship. The assessments in place are designed to allow apprentices to demonstrate all of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they have learned over the course of their training. The assessors will test these skills against a list of apprenticeship standards, ensuring the apprentices are fully competent in their job role and have the skills necessary to complete future jobs.

The apprentice will typically undergo several assessments over a period of days or weeks during that is known as the assessment period. This will be led and graded by the End-Point Assessor.

EPA Frequently Asked Questions

Who conducts an endpoint assessment?

The EPA is held by an End Point Assessor. This is an individual who is a professional with years of experience in their related field. Each apprentice will be individually assigned an End Point Assessor by the EPAO.

Where will it take place?

Unless otherwise stated it will take place on the employer's premises. Both the employer and training provider are responsible for making sure the premises are ready and prepared for the assessment to take place. This will include any equipment or resources needed for the apprentice.

How long does it take?

Assessment period length depends on the apprenticeship. Some assessments take a few weeks, while others can take months. The length will depend on the End Point Assessor and how the apprentice progresses through the assessment.

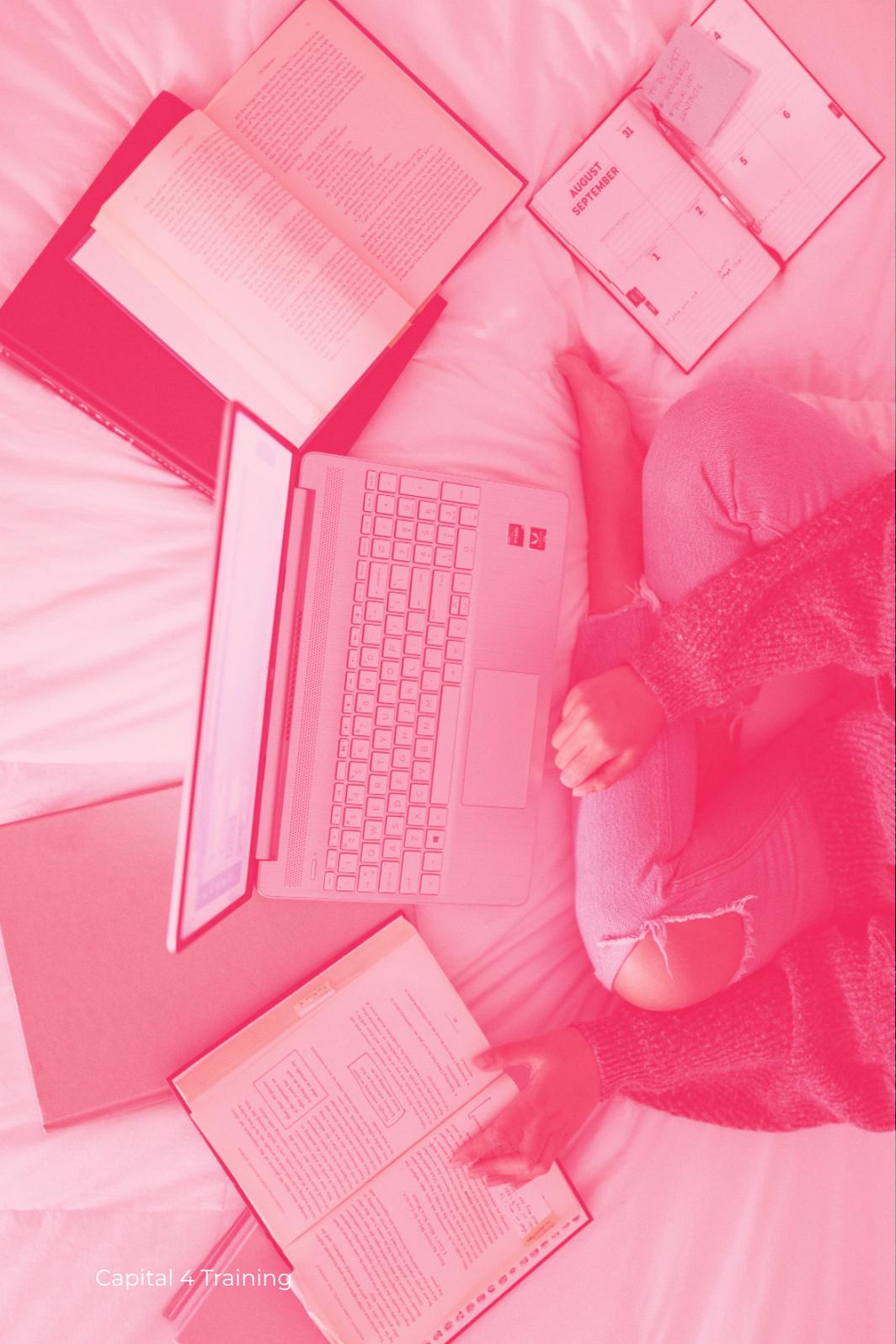
What does the assessment entail?

Assessment activities will depend on the apprenticeship undertaken. Some may include presentations, portfolios or projects, professional discussions, interviews, showcases, Q&A sections, practical observations, situational judgment tests, or culinary challenges.

Assessment activities will be chosen based on what can draw out the apprentices best knowledge, skills and behaviours. But while also maintaining an impartial assessment of their abilities.

How does Grading work?

One all assessments have been completed, a final grade is awarded, based on performance. Grading for assessments is split into the common grading scale; Pass/Distinction or Pass/Merit/Distinction. This will depend on the apprenticeship.



Retaking the End Point Assessment

If an apprentice does not pass their assessment, they will need to retake the assessment and successfully pass in order to finish the apprenticeship. Some apprentices will have to wait a certain amount of time before they can resit. Also, some EPAO's have different policies with retakes, so make sure to check this when choosing one.

The cost of retakes will be covered by the employers. This could be from the apprenticeship levy pot or by funding allocated. If no funding remains the employer will have to finance it from the business directly.

The EPA is extremely important, and apprentices should use the 20% off the job learning to prepare and study for the End Point Assessment during the Gateway period. Once an apprentice has passed the End Point Assessment they have completed their apprenticeship and will receive their qualifications and certificate.

Legal Aspects of Apprenticeships

When you hire an apprentice, as with any other employee, there are certain legal obligations you have as an employer. Taking on an apprentice is very similar to hiring any other member of staff; it is a type of employment contract, and apprentices will have all the same rights and benefits as other employees. This will include following the minimum wage standards and when doing this making sure everyone is being paid in the correct ages bracket. There are also agreements that the apprentice, training provider and employer will need to go over. Apprentices must be contracted to at least 30 hours a week.

Employee rights

Apprentices must be offered the same rights and conditions as other employees working in similar roles. These include:

- Paid Holidays
- Sick Pay
- Any benefits offered such as childcare voucher schemes
- Support such as coaching or mentoring
- Apprenticeship Minimum Wage



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