# HE Taught Award Regulations: Part B

**Section:** 13: Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Regulations
**Version:** 1.0
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## APPROVAL

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## REVISION HISTORY

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## B13.1 INTRODUCTION

These regulations relate to the provision of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships delivered at Blackpool and The Fylde College. It describes the College's requirements for the design and delivery of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships that are developed in conjunction with employers to provide apprentices with the opportunity to combine employment with study and training. These regulations apply to all Blackpool and The Fylde College apprenticeship programmes ensuring that all Higher and Degree Apprenticeships align to, at least one, approved Apprenticeship Standard including when the apprenticeship does not contain a prescribed award.

B13 – Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Regulations has been produced with consideration of the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code (QAA) and their associated guidance documents, the funding rules set out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency as well as the criteria set out by the Department for Education, which underpin the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's arrangements for the development and approval of Apprenticeship Standards.

### B13.1.1 LINKED REGULATIONS

This document should be read in conjunction with other relevant College regulations, policies and procedures, including:

- Admissions Policy
- Student Protection Plan
- Regulations for the relevant type of award (where appropriate)
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- B4 - Programme Development and Approval
- B8 - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Procedure
- B12 - Programme Monitoring and Review

## B13.2 SCOPE

The College currently validates four types of apprenticeship programmes:

- Higher Apprenticeships at Level 4 and 5 associated with a prescribed HE qualification (such as a Foundation Degree, HNC/HND)
- Higher Apprenticeships at Level 4,5 and 6 without a formal qualification
- Degree Apprenticeships (Level 6) associated with an existing validated degree programme that has been adapted for the context of an apprenticeship
- New programme validations of Degree Apprenticeships (Level 6) aligned to an Apprenticeship Standard

Wherever possible, Higher and Degree Apprenticeships developed at Blackpool and The Fylde College will include the involvement of employers in the developmental and approval stages.

## B13.3 APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS & FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

All Blackpool and The Fylde College Higher and Degree Apprenticeships programmes must be aligned to, at least one, pertinent Apprenticeship Standard and its associated Assessment Plan as well as meeting the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Each Apprenticeship Standard identifies the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) each apprentice must demonstrate to be fully competent in the role. Programmes, will deliver the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours in order for apprentices to demonstrate full occupational competence in the relevant job.

Employers are responsible for selecting an independent End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPOA), Blackpool and The Fylde College may if requested by an employer support them in this selection process. Apprentices on an apprenticeship programme will be expected to successfully complete an End-Point Assessment (EPA) to assess their competence in the role against the KSBs of the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.

All apprenticeship programmes must operate in accordance within the Government funding and performance management rules for apprenticeships, as published by the ESFA. All staff involved in the delivery and support of apprenticeship programmes are responsible for familiarising themselves with current ESFA funding rules. Staff must act in accordance with the funding rules, including retaining appropriate documentation demonstrating compliance as part of an associated evidence pack.

## B13.4 WRITTEN AGREEMENT AND COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Blackpool and The Fylde College, will put in place a Written Agreement between the College and the Employer which forms the contract for services between the two institutions in relation to the delivery of the apprenticeship programme.

For each apprentice, an Apprenticeship Sign-up and Commitment Statement (ASCS) must be put in place, signed by the apprentice, the Employer and the College. This statement sets out how all three parties will support the achievement of the apprenticeship. The content of the ASCS should align with the requirements of the funding rules, including setting out the planned content and schedule for the training, including the EPA, start and end dates, and the roles and responsibilities expected of each party.

Signed copies of both the ASCS and Apprenticeship Agreement (agreement between the apprentice and employer) must be in place at the start of the apprenticeship and for its entire duration, with any revisions resulting from a change in circumstance must be retained in the evidence pack.

## B13.5 APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT, ADMISSION AND ENROLMENT

The process of Recruitment and Admissions of apprentices to Higher and Degree Apprenticeship is very different to that of other College students in that there are additional eligibility checks to be performed by the College in order to adhere to ESFA funding rules. Apprentices must be working for an Employer who has in place an agreement with the College to deliver apprenticeship programmes. Employers, together with the College, must conduct initial checks of eligibility against the relevant criteria for the particular Standard and that of the Awarding Body/College.  To accord with funding rules apprentices:

a) are required to be in full-time or substantive part-time employment (normally at least 30 hours per week)
b) must have an employment contract, the duration of which is long enough for them to successfully complete the apprenticeship programme, this duration must allow time for the EPA to be completed
c) be provided with information about their contract of employment stating both contact hours and remuneration at the application stage
d) perform a job role that provides them with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to achieve their Apprenticeship Standard

In all cases, the College is responsible for checking the eligibility for funding for individuals prior to enrolment to the apprenticeship programme, in accordance with the eligibility criteria outlined in the funding rules.

Each Apprentice should undertake an initial needs assessment as part of the process for determining eligibility for admission to an apprenticeship programme. This enables any gaps in knowledge, skills or experience to be identified, and for an individual learning plan (ILP) to be developed to address these as part of the overarching Commitment Statement.

Entry requirements for the apprenticeship programme should be aligned with the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and where appropriate take cognisance of the entry requirements of the academic award associated with the programme.

In accordance with the funding rules, the College is required to demonstrate that prior learning has been accounted for and that the content, duration and price of the apprenticeship is adjusted accordingly. Suitable evidence of this includes written assurance that the content of the apprenticeship is materially different to any prior learning and a skills gaps analysis demonstrating the new skills needed by the apprentice and how the apprenticeship will address these.

## B13.6 ENGISH & MATHEMATICS REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with funding rules and where stipulated in the Apprenticeship Standard, Higher and Degree apprentices should successfully achieve English and Mathematics qualifications before taking their EPA. Where this is not set as an entry requirement, provision should be made enabling apprentices to achieve these in the allocated time.

## B13.7 APPROVAL OF APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES

The validation and re-validation of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes is undertaken in accordance with the College's standard procedures for programme validation and re- validation. Specific documentary requirements for the validation of apprenticeship programmes are outlined below.

All validation panels will be provided with additional documentation that relates to the delivery of each apprenticeship programme. Specifically these documents are:

**Outline Planning Permission** document incorporates aspects of the concept, business case and outline planning permission documents and is to be used to initiate the development of new apprenticeship provision. Curriculum Areas are encouraged to engage with HE Directorate, Business Development and prospective employers as early as possible to ensure that developments are included in the business planning schedule.

**Higher/Degree Apprenticeship Validation Document**, this document must be completed for all Higher and Degree apprenticeship programmes. Apprenticeship programmes which are associated with a formal qualification (HND, Foundation Degree and Degree) must be read in conjunction with the academic programme validation documentation. Additional *Units of Learning* documentation are required for Higher Apprenticeships (at level 4 or 5) that are delivered without a formal prescribed qualification.

Content will include details relating to:

- An overview of the particular Apprenticeship Standard
- The demand for the apprenticeship programme
- The design and structure of the apprenticeship programme, including how the 20% off-the-job element is met and monitored
- A timeline considering each element of the apprenticeship programme from on-boarding to EPA
- The occupational knowledge, skills and behaviours
- A mapping of the Apprenticeship Standard to the academic programme
- A Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy relevant to the delivery of the apprenticeship programme where it differs to the TLA set out in the academic programme
- Details of the End Point Assessment, as outlined in the Apprenticeship Standard, in terms of roles and responsibilities and the support for it leading up to the gateway
- Monitoring and Evaluation specific to the apprenticeship programme above and beyond the standard processes of all programmes
- Additional support arrangements for apprentices, for example, how HELMs will be accessed
- Apprenticeship programme specific resources
- The roles and responsibilities or the
  - College

- o Employer
- o Apprentice
- o Workplace mentor
- Any additional staffing requirements

**Apprenticeship Handbook**

This apprentice facing document provides details useful to any apprentice undertaking a particular apprenticeship programme. Equally, the handbook is a useful point of reference for employers as it provides information about how apprenticeships with be delivered and assessed, and demonstrates correlation between workplace activities and core underlying themes and principles taught within the programme.

**Mentor Guide** sets out the role and responsibilities of the mentor who will work with the education provider to support the apprentice in the workplace

## B13.8 STRUCTURE AND TIMING OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Where possible, the structure of the academic year for Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes should align with the requirements for the relevant award however it may be appropriate, particularly where no academic award is included in the Apprenticeship Standard to accommodate a more flexible approach; if this is the case the additional apprenticeship programme documentation should describe the alternative structure.

The typical and maximum duration of the programme will be outlined in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard. The minimum duration of an apprenticeship programme is one year, unless the Apprenticeship Standard or Assessment Plan specifies otherwise.

In accordance with funding rules, all apprentices must spend at least 20% of their paid hours in off-the-job training over the planned duration of the Apprenticeship programme. This excludes progress meetings and English and Mathematics training which does not qualify for the purposes of the 20% requirements.

Modes of delivery for apprenticeship programmes will vary according to employer need, and may include day release, block release or a blended learning approach involving a combination of face-to-face and distance learning. In accordance with the funding rules, off the-job training cannot be delivered solely via distance learning. The structure and timing of delivery and duration of study will be approved at the point of validation and outlined in the handbook for the programme.

A programme may include an element of 'negotiated learning' with tailored module content delivered on behalf of specific employer needs. It is anticipated that for apprenticeship programmes, the validation documentation will give a broad outline of the subject content for the programme. Delivery modes and content may be flexible and contextualised to the employer needs or the work-place setting.

## B13.9 APPRENTICE PROGRESS MONITORING

ESFA regulations require a minimum 12-weekly review with the employer. This should include statistical data on cohort progress and individual progress as well as any individual issues or needs.

Informal apprentice progress reviews should be undertaken at least every twelve weeks, drawing on input from the College, the Employer and the individual apprentice. These should feed into formal tripartite progress review meetings which should be held at least once a semester. These meetings should include a review of progress against the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and Commitment Statement, including ensuring that the apprentice is on target to meet the 20% off-the-job training requirement. Any change in circumstance (for example to the apprentice's paid hours or line manager) should also be discussed. A formal record of these meetings should be maintained for the evidence pack.

E-portfolios provide an effective mechanism for developing individual learning plans, setting targets, reviewing progress and tracking off-the-job training. The e-portfolio is also often a requirement for the EPA. Further advice and guidance on e-portfolio systems and their use in supporting apprenticeship provision is available from the Head of Apprenticeships.

The apprentice's employer should be notified in the event of any concerns regarding attendance highlighted through established monitoring procedures, and this should also be considered as part of both informal and formal progress reviews. Apprentices should be encouraged to consider Interruption of Study where there are personal mitigating circumstances meaning that they are not fit or able to study for an extended period.

## B13.10 SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE

Programme teams should encourage active employer engagement in the design and delivery of apprenticeship programmes, for example through active participation in induction processes, informal and formal progress reviews, and supporting apprentices in the workplace. There should be clear points of contact and channels of communication between the programme team and the Employer to facilitate effective programme delivery and partnership working.

Support is normally provided by the employer through the appointment of a mentor, who is usually a more senior or experienced member of staff who is able to provide advice and guidance to the apprentice and support them in developing the required knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the Apprenticeship Standard. The apprenticeship validation document should consider arrangements for supporting the apprentice in the workplace, including any arrangements for appointing, briefing, training and supporting workplace mentors.

## B13.11 END POINT ASSESSMENT (EPA)

EPA provides a holistic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been acquired through the apprenticeship programme. In line with the Apprenticeship Standard, EPA may either be integrated into the programme of study or it may represent an additional stage beyond meeting the requirements for the relevant academic award. The approach to EPA will be outlined in the Assessment Plan for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and confirmed at the point of programme validation.

Where EPA is not integrated into the programme, apprentices who fail to successfully complete the EPA may still receive the relevant academic award where the requirements for that award have been met, but will not receive the apprenticeship completion certificate from the ESFA.

Non-integrated EPA requires the involvement of an authorised independent End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) listed on the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations (RoAAO). Blackpool and The Fylde College will provide information to employers about possible EPAOs but the selection of the EPAO is the responsibility of the employer. The College will liaise with the EPAO to arrange the EPA and will fund the cost of the EPA from the apprenticeship fee paid to the institution.

One EPA for each apprentice will normally be funded, with any re-sits funded on the basis of the agreement between the Blackpool and The Fylde College and the employer as set out in the Written Agreement.

An apprentice can only take the EPA once they have satisfied the gateway requirements set out in the Assessment Plan (including attainment of English and Mathematics) and both the employer and the College are content that they have attained sufficient skills, knowledge and behaviours.

## B13.12 INTERRUPTION OF STUDY OR WITHDRAWAL

Apprentices may apply to interrupt their studies on the basis of personal mitigating circumstances where they are not fit or able to study for an extended period, in agreement with their Employer and in accordance with the College's B1 - Personal Mitigating Circumstances and Interruption of Study Procedure and ESFA funding requirements. Any periods of interruption must be reported to the ESFA so that funding can be adjusted accordingly. Where any contradiction between the College's regulations and ESFA funding requirements is found the ESFA funding requirements will take precedence.

Where an Apprentice is made redundant by their Employer, the College will make reasonable efforts to find the Apprentice a new employer. If a new employer is not found within twelve weeks of the Apprentice becoming redundant, the Apprentice must be withdrawn from the apprenticeship if they are more than six months from the end date of their apprenticeship. If they are less than six months from the end date of their

apprenticeship, they may continue on the programme without being employed under a Written Agreement and will continue to be funded by the ESFA.

## B13.13 ONGOING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes are subject to the same monitoring and review processes as all other higher education programmes at the College. This includes arrangements for gathering apprentice feedback, for example through module evaluation questionnaires, apprentice representation and the National Apprentice Survey (NSS).

The ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey and Employer Satisfaction Survey provide supplementary sources of information on the quality of apprenticeship programmes from an apprentice and an employer's perspective, and outcomes should feed into quality monitoring processes.

Furthermore, ESFA regulations require a minimum 12-weekly review with the employer. And, Employers should receive a monthly engagement report. This should include statistical data on cohort progress and individual progress as well as any individual issues or needs. Curriculum Areas should also provide a monthly engagement report to employers. Employer representation at programme quality meetings and/or the establishment of employer consortium groups is also encouraged as a means of securing employer input and gathering feedback.

Each Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programme will be subject to annual monitoring processes. Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes should be considered by the Curriculum Area in its Annual Programme Review process, alongside all other programmes in the Curriculum Area. In addition, Programme Leaders for each apprenticeship programme should complete the APR Supplement for Apprenticeship programmes.

The APR Supplement for Apprenticeship programmes is intended to provide Programme Leaders with the opportunity to routinely monitor the management and operation of their apprenticeship programme and their relationship with individual Employers during the previous academic year.

## APPENDIX A

Taken from the QAA's Characteristics Statement Higher Education in Apprenticeships July 2019:[i]

## Characteristics of higher education in apprenticeships
Apprenticeships incorporating higher education:

- are constituted as first and foremost a job which requires work-integrated learning. The workplace becomes a site for the development and generation of knowledge, understanding, skills and professional behaviours rather than just a site for their application.

- are designed to enable apprentices to develop professional/occupational competence within a defined occupation and apprenticeship pathway
- are based on occupational standards
- support inclusion and diversity in the workplace and should ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment
- require the integration of on and off-the-job learning
- may require at least 20 per cent off-the-job learning and/or meet notional guided hours
- require the development of professional and/or occupational competence that is concerned with the ability to continually enhance professional practice to drive innovation, informed by codes of ethical practice and values. This should be distinguished from a 'closed' model of competence, which is only concerned with the ability to perform a set task to an established standard
- seek to maximise the transferability and recognition of apprenticeship outcomes to enhance career development opportunities for apprentices and deliver workforce development objectives for employers
- require comprehensive collaboration with employers at all stages
- position the employer as the primary gatekeeper for admissions working closely with the higher education provider
- involve tripartite agreements between employers, apprentices and higher education providers
- include support for apprentices in the workplace by a competent mentor and in their learning and assessment by a qualified trainer/educator/assessor who have sector experience and knowledge
- are not necessarily aligned with traditional academic years and may reflect varied patterns of employment
- may include a higher education qualification; where it does not it will be ascribed at a higher education level
- may include professional recognition.

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[i] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/characteristics-statement-apprenticeships.pdf?sfvrsn=12dac681_8