

Level 4 School Business Professional Apprenticeship

Overview for Applicants (2022)

Serco Education delivers the **Level 4 School Business Professional Apprenticeship**, an apprenticeship developed by a group of employers which included Serco, based on standards and an assessment plan by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IFA) and the Department for Education. As well as the IFA apprenticeship, an optional qualification is also available within the apprenticeship, the Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers which is accredited by the Institute for Leadership & Management (ILM).

The programme is eligible for school business managers or those in similar business or support roles (Finance Manager, Office Manager, School Administrator, Business Support Officer, Bursar, HR Manager, etc.) in a school or academy based in England. There is no age limit and the vast majority of apprentices will already have experience of the role or could be relatively new to role. The Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship will support participants in developing their operational and management capabilities as an SBM.

Benefits to the school will include:

- A professionally trained staff member who will enhance the management of your school
- A school business professional who understands the importance of your role and its scope
- Allows headteachers to focus on teaching, learning and student attainment
- Helps to develop the school business team and gain specialist expertise in areas including leading support services, finance, marketing, procurement, HR and infrastructure management

Successful apprentices will achieve:

- On-the-job experience
- A professional pathway for future development
- IFA apprenticeship certificate (plus optional ILM Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers if selected)
- Level 2 in maths and English (if you do not already have these qualifications)

Programme Overview

Applicants wishing to join the Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship are committing themselves to a 24-month programme. If you work term-time only (or other part-time pattern) then the study period will be extended pro rata. The final end-point assessment occurs within a 3-month window after the study period. You are supported by a coach, a facilitator, the line manager/mentor and also through peer support via online group forum areas and networking opportunities at face-to-face workshops. Apprenticeships also require employers to agree to 20% off-the-job training for the apprentice (which does include attendance at workshops, portfolio building and writing assignments, etc)

As part of the application process, you will need to complete a self-assessment (skills scan). There are a number of **additional registration forms** we will require the apprentice (and line manager in some cases) to complete as part of the onboarding process for the apprenticeship. You then begin your studies, developing a portfolio of the skills, knowledge and behaviours of a school business professional.

All units will begin with face-to-face workshops (5 x one-day workshops in total, held at regional centres) with the remainder of your studies online, maximising the flexibility of learning. In addition, you will receive visits and support from your coach (6 x workplace visits plus up to 3 x touchpoint phone support calls). Your coach, with your line manager's support, will ensure that your learning is put into practice and also helps you develop a portfolio. The line manager should attend as many of the coach visits as possible (even if briefly) to contribute to your progress reviews.

You will need to attend a one-day assessment centre (end-point assessment - EPA) with an external assessor once you have completed all your learning. This EPA will take place within a 3-month window.

Structure

The programme includes units on:

- Leading Support Services
- Finance
- Marketing
- Infrastructure
- Procurement
- Human Resources

The programme will develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours associated with the role of a school business professional in these areas.

Further information on these units can be found in the FAQ (frequently asked questions) document available on the Level 4 SBP web page via www.serco-education.com

In addition to the above, it is a requirement that you are able to evidence that you are working at Level 2 maths and English in order to complete the apprenticeship. You will be required to take online initial and diagnostic assessments as part of the application process. If you do not have these GCSE Level 2 qualifications (or their equivalent) or provide copies of your original certificates, we will provide additional support to help you gain these qualifications (at no extra cost). Note that these eligibility conditions are applied rigorously to comply with ESFA (Education & Skills Funding Agency) requirements.

What is the role of my line manager?

We will only accept applications from individuals who have the support of their line manager. Your line manager will be asked to sign registration documents to confirm their commitment and support to your programme and to confirm their agreement to take part in the review process.

Your line manager may wish to identify a mentor to support you throughout your programme of study rather than undertake this themselves.

Funding and Costs

The DfE funding band for the SBPA is capped at £6,000, however the cost of the programme may be reduced slightly depending upon previous experience and qualifications (plus separate cost for ILM accreditation, payable at the current rate advised by the awarding body. Please contact apprenticeshipapplications@serco.com to enquire regarding current pricing. If selected, your employer will be invoiced separately).

If you are working for a levy-paying employer, then the cost of the Level 4 SBPA will be covered by the apprenticeship levy. As long as your employer has sufficient funds in their digital apprenticeship account (DAS), there is no additional cost for the programme delivery.

If you work for a non-levy employer, they will be invoiced for 5% of the total cost of the programme. Your employer must reserve funds on their digital apprenticeship account to cover the remaining 95%.

Regardless of whether your employer is levy or non-levy, they must be registered on the Government's Digital Apprenticeship Service. Please visit the link below for more information:

[Funding an apprenticeship \(apprenticeships.gov.uk\)](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk)

Face-to-face workshops will be held at the most convenient location for the majority of learners in a cohort to minimise travel and the need for overnight stays. You will need to agree with your employer whether they will cover these additional costs.

Time Commitment (line manager/mentor)

The line manager, or mentor identified by the line manager, will be required to:

- join the first meeting between you and your coach to ensure that all key parties are aware of the requirements of your training plan
- actively contribute to all of the coaching sessions held with yourself (they will not be required to attend the full session).
- observe you undertaking certain activities such as giving a presentation and complete a proforma confirming observation of certain skills and behaviours, which will be included in your portfolio
- attend and contribute to an annual review of progress with you and your coach
- ensure that you are given time to attend the above meetings and the face-to-face workshops. This must not be deducted from your annual leave allowance. Please note: the workshops, web conferences and coaching/assessment sessions are mandatory elements of the apprenticeship that provide essential information and support for you to successfully complete the programme
- support you in your studies, identifying opportunities for you to develop your skills alongside your learning.
- allow you a minimum of 20% of your working hours to complete off-the-job training activities (see below)

Study time

Apprentices must be given time to study. Study time should be flexible to minimise the impact in the workplace. This should be agreed between you and your line manager prior to the start of the programme. As an apprentice, you must be allowed at least 20% of your work time towards off-the-job training activities. This includes any learning or development activity which your role requires and is relevant to the apprenticeship standard. For example, attendance at SBM meetings, shadowing, mentoring, etc. The 20% off-the-job training must be logged to meet ESFA compliance.

Next Steps – the application process

If the Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship seems the right way forward for you, then you will need to:

1. Complete an application form which can be accessed via www.serco-education.com – navigate to the Level 4 School Business Professional web page.

2. Once your application form is submitted and acknowledged, you will be requested to complete a skills scan and workplace audit. This will allow us to determine your strengths and areas of improvement prior to enrolment and assess the suitability of this apprenticeship to your development needs. You will also be requested to provide proof of ID and a copy of GCSE/Level 2 certificates.
3. We will contact you via email to arrange an interview which will take place on Microsoft Teams. This will allow us to discuss your interest in the SBPA programme. Confirmation that a place has been reserved will be sent out following the interview. *Please note: Should you be unsuccessful in your application, you will be offered feedback, recommendations to help prepare you to study the programme at a later date, or signposted to suitable alternative options that may be available.*
4. You will then be sent your registration documents for you and your line manager to review and sign.

Start dates

Termly intakes (with regional locations for the 5 x face-to-face workshops) will be offered each year. See www.serco-education.com for latest start dates.

Please read this document in conjunction with the following documents available on the Level 4 SBPA web page:

- SBPA FAQs (frequently asked questions)
- SBPA Terms & Conditions

Further information:

www.serco-education.com

Enquiries:

apprenticeshipapplications@serco.com