

Operations Manager Apprenticeship (OMA)

Guidance for Line Managers

'To be the best managed business in our Sector... we've got to have the best managers.' Rupert Soames

Serco Education is soon to begin delivery of the **Operations Manager Apprenticeship**, a new apprenticeship developed by a group of employers led by Serco and based on standards and an assessment plan approved by the Department for Education. The programme will be accredited by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

The Operations Manager Apprenticeship is an 18-month programme suitable for any England-based Serco employee with responsibility for managing teams and/or projects/resources. It will benefit individuals of any age, new to Serco or existing staff. The Operations Manager Apprenticeship will support participants in developing their management and leadership capabilities, enable effective use of information in decision-making, planning marketing activities and resource management. Successful apprentices will achieve:

- A level 5 Diploma in Management & Leadership
- CMI membership (with the option to apply for Chartered Management status if eligible)
- On-the-job experience
- A professional pathway for future development
- Level 2 in Maths and English (if they do not already have these qualifications)

With practical work-based assignments customised for Serco, the line manager of an Operations Manager apprentice should quickly see tangible benefits in the workplace as the apprentice demonstrates their learning and skills.

Programme Overview

Applicants signing up to the Operations Manager Apprenticeship are committing themselves to an 18-month programme of study.

Once accepted onto the programme, each apprentice will agree an individual learning plan with their coach and their line manager or mentor. They then begin their academic studies, completing 5 units throughout the duration of the programme. Each unit will begin with face-to-face workshops but the remainder of their studies will be online, maximising the flexibility of learning to suit not only the individual's needs, but also the needs of the workplace.

In addition, the apprentice will receive quarterly visits from their coach who will ensure, with their line manager's support that the learning is put into practice and help the apprentice develop a portfolio of evidence. At the end of the programme, the apprentice will be required to complete a work-based project as part of the Level 5 Diploma.

In order to successfully complete the Operations Manager Apprenticeship, the apprentice will attend a one-day assessment centre once they have completed all activities.

Benefits to Serco

The Operations Manager Apprenticeship is one of the Trailblazer apprenticeships designed by employers. Serco has been involved in the design of this apprenticeship right from the beginning, welcoming the opportunity to expand both the practical and theoretical experience of our managers. The theory behind the qualification will develop management and leadership skills, knowledge, self-awareness and behaviours.

The units of the Level 5 Diploma will cover:

- **Introduction to Management & Leadership** (*this unit is about the foundation skills and knowledge of a middle manager and leader*)
- **Organisational financial management** (*this unit is about financial management systems and controls and the impact of external factors on organisational financial management*)
- **Conducting a management project** (*this unit is about identifying, researching and producing a work-related project and evaluating its impact*)
- **Information-based decisions** (*this unit is about using, presenting and communicating data that supports decision making*)
- **Managing teams and individual performance** (*this unit is about the management of individual and team performance and how to improve performance*)

This theory has to be put into practice in order to successfully complete the apprenticeship, with the expectation that each apprentice will deliver impact, behave ethically and demonstrate their commitment to continual learning and development.

What is my role as a line manager of an apprentice?

We will only accept applications from individuals who have the support of their line manager. You will be asked to provide a written statement in support of their application so that we are satisfied that each party understands the commitment being made. You will also be asked to sign to confirm that you have read this guidance.

You may wish to identify a mentor to support the apprentice throughout their programme of study rather than undertake this yourself. Regardless of whether you will be offering direct support or providing a mentor, we require a written statement from the line manager.

Cost

The cost of the training programme is covered by the apprenticeship levy. However the apprentice will have to attend face-to-face workshops at the beginning of each module. Workshops will be situated in the closest location for the majority of participants within the cohort so your employee may have to travel. You will need to agree with your employee whether your business unit will cover the cost of travel. It is unlikely that they will require accommodation but we recommend that you confirm what your business unit will cover prior to the programme commencing.

Time Commitment

Line manager or mentor identified by line manager will be required to:

- join the first meeting between the apprentice and coach for approx. half an hour to ensure that all key parties are aware of the requirements of the individual learning plan.
- actively contribute to the regular coaching/assessment sessions held with the apprentice – you will not be required to attend the full session. Some of these sessions will be observations by the coach of the apprentice undertaking certain activities. It is unlikely that you will be required to attend these events unless they are part of your daily work activities.

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- possibly observe your apprentice undertake certain activities such as chairing a meeting or giving a presentation, for example. You will be required to complete a proforma confirming that you observed certain skills and behaviours and the apprentice will include this proforma in their portfolio of evidence.
 - attend an annual review of progress between the coach, apprentice and yourself. This should not exceed 2 hours.
 - support the apprentice by providing a room within their normal place of work for the above meetings to take place in confidence
 - ensure that the apprentice is given time to attend the above meetings and the face-to-face workshops. This must not be deducted from their annual leave allowance. Please note that the workshops, web conferences and coaching/assessment sessions are mandatory elements of the apprenticeship. The apprentice cannot successfully complete the programme without full attendance.
 - support the apprentice in their studies, identifying opportunities for them to develop their skills alongside their learning
 - provide the apprentice with support when identifying their work-based project. You will also be expected to help ensure that the apprentice has appropriate access to other staff, documents etc in order to carry out their agreed project.
 - In addition to the above mentioned workshops etc, apprentices should be given time to study. Study time should be flexible to minimise the impact in the workplace. This should be agreed between you and the apprentice prior to them starting the programme. As an apprenticeship, you are required to allow the apprentice 20% of their work time to study; this includes workshops and meetings with their coach. Timing should be flexible to recognise the work commitments, for example, it might be 1 hour at the beginning or end of each day or a morning/afternoon twice a week etc.

Next Steps

If the Operations Manager Apprenticeship seems to be the right way forward for a member of your team and you are confident that they are committed to beginning their studies then they will need to complete an application form which can be found at www.leadershiplearningcentre.com. Once submitted they will have 5 days to complete a personal statement which we also require you as their line manager to sign. Your signature is required to confirm that you have read this guidance document and fully support the applicant. We will not consider applications unless we receive a personal statement which is also signed by the line manager.

We may invite applicants for interview as part of the selection process. Applicants will receive confirmation of their place on the Operations Manager Apprenticeship approximately 6 weeks prior to the start date. Should an applicant be unsuccessful in their application they will be offered feedback and recommendations to help prepare them to study the programme at a later date.

Operations Manager Apprenticeship cohorts will start in January, May and October each year and the application round will remain open throughout the year with published deadlines for each cohort.

Please remember that you have a key role in helping your apprentice successfully complete their programme of study. Without your support, encouragement and interest they will struggle to achieve this challenging programme. You can make a huge difference through offering them an additional hour or two to complete an assignment with the understanding that they make up the time at a later date.

Please go to our website: www.leadershiplearningcentre.com for more detail about this programme including FAQs.