

Operations Manager Apprenticeship (OMA) - External

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the content of the programme?

The programme is aimed at managers whose work base is in England and who have responsibility for managing teams and/or projects and resources.

The programme will include:

- **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 decision making** (*this unit is about using, presenting and communicating data that supports decision making*)
- **Managing team and individual performance** (*this unit is about the management of individual and team performance and how to improve performance*)

When will the programme start?

The first intake for the Operations Manager Apprenticeship started in October 2017. Further intakes will follow in 2018/19 - see our main website www.serco-education.com for dates.

What's the Cost?

There is no cost at all to the individual. The training costs are usually covered as part of the Government Apprenticeship Levy. However, this does not cover the cost of travel expenses or accommodation (if needed). Your employer may be willing to cover these costs for you, please check with your line manager. Salaries will not be covered.

Who is the programme for?

The programme is targeted at anyone responsible for managing teams and/or projects or resources. Applicants' responsibilities may include creating and delivering operational plans, change management, finance and resource management, talent management, coaching and mentoring.

How will the Operations Manager Apprenticeship benefit me?

You will gain:

- A high quality Level 5 qualification – the Level 5 Diploma in Management and Leadership
- Membership of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) – with the option to apply for Chartered Management Status if eligible
- Support to put your learning into on-the-job experience
- Professional pathway for future development
- Structured and reflective approach to your personal and professional development
- Regular assessment of your progress

How long will it take to complete the programme?

The Operations Manager Apprenticeship is an 18-month (approx.) programme.

What are the Entry Requirements?

You will be required to demonstrate that you are working at a minimum of level 2 (same level as GCSE Grade A*-C) in English and Maths through the completion of a web-based functional skills assessment. If you do not have these qualifications, we can help you gain the Level 2 requirements during your studies.

The apprenticeship is suitable for all employees with relevant responsibilities, including those who already have a Level 5 qualification in disciplines other than business.

It is essential that all applicants have the support of their line manager as the apprenticeship will involve attendance at workshops as well as potential shadowing, observations etc. In addition apprentices will be required to complete job-related assignments that may require them to have greater access to management activities. We will require a statement from your line manager supporting the application. Applications will not be accepted without the line manager's support.

What is the Entry Process?

Performance and development reviews provide an opportunity for individuals to discuss their development with their line manager. This is an opportune time to identify whether the Operations Manager Apprenticeship will help support individuals to develop their leadership skills, knowledge, self-awareness and behaviours.

If the Operations Manager Apprenticeship is the agreed way forward, then the next step is to complete the two-part application process which consists of an application form with details of current role as well as previous experience and qualifications. In addition we require a personal statement that recognises the commitment required along with a statement from the line manager confirming support. Applicants may then be invited to attend a telephone interview.

A formal offer of an apprenticeship will be sent to successful applicants at least 6 weeks prior to the apprenticeship commencing. Unsuccessful applicants and their line managers will be notified and offered guidance and support to enable them to join the programme at a later date.

Note that apprenticeship funding is managed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Government agency accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults. As an apprenticeship training provider our activities and processes have to adhere to ESFA guidance and requirements.

What is the time commitment needed from the participants?

Learning will be vocational with flexible delivery. There is no block release but apprentices will be required to attend a workshop at the beginning of each unit – there are 5 units. There will also be web conferences usually an hour in length, a maximum of two per module. In addition to this, apprentices and a nominated manager (usually their line manager) will attend a quarterly meeting with the apprentice's coach and an end of year review at the student's workplace.

Throughout the programme, apprentices will keep a portfolio of evidence which will be supported by 360 degree feedback.

It is difficult to estimate the time commitment for each apprentice as study habits differ considerably. We anticipate that a minimum of 4 hours a week will be required in addition to the workshops and meetings mentioned above. The amount of time required will vary depending upon your stage of learning. Apprentices will probably

spend more than 4 hours a week completing the formal assignment attached to each unit but may spend less than this when reading through materials or undertaking research.

What happens if I only want the Level 5 Diploma and not the apprenticeship?

The apprenticeship levy can only be used for recognised apprenticeships (which include the Operations Manager Apprenticeship). It is a requirement of this funding that all applicants complete the apprenticeship.

How will I be assessed?

The Level 5 Diploma in Management & Leadership: Each unit includes a formal assignment. All assignments will be completed and submitted electronically according to set deadlines for each unit. They are submitted online as reports, assignments or as shorter assessment tasks for each unit. You will receive guidance and support from your facilitators to help prepare you for the assessment process. If, for any reason, a participant does not achieve a pass for the first submission of an assignment, then they are able to resubmit a few weeks later.

The Operations Manager Apprenticeship: Throughout the programme, you will collate a portfolio of evidence (to include a Continual Professional Development log) to demonstrate that you have been able to apply your learning to your role and your workplace. Your portfolio will also contain evidence of a work-based project completed during your studies. The portfolio will form the basis of the end-point assessment where you will give a presentation on your work-based project and participate in a panel interview.

Do I have to be new to my role to become an apprentice?

No, the apprenticeship is open to existing managers of any age who have responsibilities for managing teams and/or projects/resources

Is becoming an apprentice a backward step in my career path?

Not at all. This is a new opportunity for individuals at all levels to gain a recognised business qualification along with on-the-job experience, a professional pathway for future development and the potential for Chartered Management status. The Operational Managers Apprenticeship enables you to undertake recognised qualifications at no charge for the training and without taking a break from your career.

Can I study the Operations Manager Apprenticeship if I already have a Level 5 qualification?

Yes, as long as it is in a different discipline (i.e. not business).

Can I apply to study the Operations Manager Apprenticeship if I work outside England?

Levy funding is only available to apprentices who live or work in England.

What qualification will I achieve?

Upon completing the apprenticeship you will gain a Level 5 Diploma in Management & Leadership and membership of the CMI.

How do I apply?

You should first discuss with your line manager whether this apprenticeship is appropriate for you based on your role and its demands, the support they can provide and the amount of time you can dedicate to study. We require a personal statement that recognises the commitment required along with a statement from the line manager confirming support. Applicants may then be invited to participate in a telephone interview. Please go to our website: www.serco-education.com to start the two-part application process.

What if I leave my current employer after I have started the Operations Manager Apprenticeship?

Your apprenticeship will normally be terminated if you leave your current employer before completion. (In certain circumstances, options may be available for you to continue – please discuss with us if the situation occurs.)

What if I have to suspend studying due to ill-health or other circumstances beyond my control?

You may be able to defer for up to a year from the Operations Manager Apprenticeship depending upon circumstances.

What if I become pregnant once I have started the programme?

You will be able to defer for up to a year from the programme.

How will the training be delivered?

Predominantly on-line and in the workplace, but with a regional face-to-face workshop at the start of each unit (there are 5 units in total). A facilitator and coach will help guide your learning.

Please note that, whilst your learning will be guided, with support from your facilitators (at the workshops and online) and your coach, you will be expected to work through the learning materials via our learning platform. Each block of modules which you study will have a start and end date and you may have one or two milestones during the module, but aside from these it will be up to you to determine the pace at which you study and the amount of additional reading you do. This may be a different style of learning to your previous experience and it relies on your own motivation to succeed.

Where will the training be delivered?

The location of workshops will be based on the location of the majority of participants in your learning group so some travel may be involved. Your reviews/assessments will be at your place of work.

Do I have to attend every training event and assessment?

Yes, 100% attendance is mandatory. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to ensure you have a 100% attendance record.

Will I be given time off work in order to study?

You will need to discuss this with your line manager before applying to join the apprenticeship to ensure that you are both content and timings are workable. The programme will contain 20% off the job training although this may include shadowing, reading, attending workshops, completing a project and preparing your learning portfolio etc. You will be given time off work to attend workshops and review meetings. You may be able to negotiate additional study time and we encourage line managers to consider this.

What if I work part-time?

You are still eligible to join the programme, however, if you work fewer than 30 hours then the length of time in which you study will be extended pro rata to reflect your normal working hours.

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See diagram over page

What is the structure of the programme?

