

# Level 4 School Business Professional Apprenticeship

## Guidance for Line Managers

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The SBM Partnership (Serco, Adfecto and ISBL) is an approved provider to deliver the **Level 4 School Business Professional Apprenticeship**, a new apprenticeship developed by a group of employers which included the SBM Partnership and based on standards and an assessment plan approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and the Department for Education.

The additional qualification within the apprenticeship, the Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers, is accredited by the Institute for Leadership & Management (ILM), and is an optional extra.

The Level 4 School Business Professional (SBP) Apprenticeship is normally a 21-month programme (longer for those on term-time only contracts) suitable 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 school business managers (SBMs) 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:**

- Professional staff member who will enhance the management of your school
- A school business professional who understands the importance of their 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:**

- An optional Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers (ILM), currently available at £171 (+ VAT)
- 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 activities developed for school business professionals, the senior leadership team employing an SBP apprentice should quickly see tangible benefits in the workplace as the apprentice demonstrates their learning and skills.

### **Programme Overview**

Applicants wishing to join the Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship are committing themselves to a 21-month (or longer if on term-time only contracts) programme of study, plus end-point assessment which follows the study period. They are supported by a coach, a facilitator, their line manager/mentor and also through peer support via online group forum areas and networking opportunities at face-to-face workshops.

**Note:** part-time/term-time only applicants will have the duration of their apprenticeship learning extended pro rata beyond the 21-month period.

Each applicant will complete a **self-assessment**, with their line manager's input, prior to acceptance on the programme to enable us to confirm their eligibility and develop an **individual learning plan** (ILP) which is then agreed with their line manager or mentor. They will begin their academic studies, completing the Level 4 Diploma for SBMs and developing a portfolio of evidence of the skills and knowledge of a school business professional. Each unit usually begins with a face-to-face workshop (final workshop covers two units) 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 visits and support from their coach (5 x workplace visits plus 2 x touch-point phone support calls) 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.

In order to successfully complete the Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship, the apprentice will complete a one-day assessment centre (end-point assessment) with an external assessor once they have completed all activities (normally two to three months after learning has been completed). This takes place within a 3-month window after the practical learning period.

### **Structure**

The apprenticeship studies will typically take 21 months to complete (NB: part-time or term-time only [TTO] employees are eligible for an extended apprenticeship period) and must include **20% off-the-job training** (which includes attendance at workshops and coaching sessions, etc.).

The programme includes units on:

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

The programme will develop and examine the knowledge, skills and behaviours of these activities associated with the role of school business professionals.

In addition to the above, it is a requirement that the apprentice is able to evidence that they are working at Level 2 Maths and English. Should your apprentice not have these GCSE Level 2 qualifications (or their equivalent) or be unable to find their original certificates, then we will provide additional support to help them gain these qualifications (at no extra cost).

### **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 and confirm their Apprenticeship Agreement and Individual Learning Plan details 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.

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## Cost

If you are a levy paying school then the cost of the SBPA is covered by the apprenticeship levy (funding band up to £6,000 – this cost may be reduced depending upon previous experience and qualifications of the apprentice). You should have a digital apprentice account (DAS) or be able to provide us with the contact details for the parent organisation holding the account; this may be the local authority for example. Please ensure that your employer (usually the organisation on payslips) or employer's finance/procurement dept. are aware of the apprenticeship and that funding is available for it.

As long as there are sufficient funds in your/ your employer's digital apprenticeship account (DAS) then there is no additional cost for the programme delivery. If you are a non-levy paying school then you will be invoiced for 5% (£300 + VAT) of the total cost of the programme in advance (the remaining 95% paid via the central apprenticeship levy fund, conditions apply).

Please be aware that the apprentice will be required to attend a regional face-to-face workshop at the beginning of each unit (5 x one-day workshops in total) and although workshops are situated in the closest location for the majority of participants within the cohort, your employee may have to travel. You will need to agree with your employee whether your school will cover the cost of travel. It is unlikely that your apprentice will require accommodation but we recommend that you confirm what your school will cover prior to the programme commencing.

## Time Commitment (line manager)

The line manager, or mentor identified by the 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. This is also an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the SBP.
- 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.
- 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. The focus of the project will be agreed by you, your apprentice and the coach. 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 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 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** (full-time and part-time employees); this includes workshops and meetings with their coach but it also includes any learning or development activities that their role requires, for example meetings with you to discuss their work, work based dialogue between colleagues, attendance at SBM meetings etc. Study time should be flexible, recognising the work commitments, for example, it could be 1 hour at the beginning or end of each day or a morning/afternoon twice a week etc.

### **Next Steps**

If the Level 4 SBP 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 accessed via [www.sbmpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sbmpartnership.org.uk). Once submitted they will have 5 working 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. Applicants will then be asked to complete a self-assessment (Skills Scan), with your assistance, to identify their prior knowledge.

We may invite applicants to participate in a phone-based interview as part of the selection process. Applicants will receive confirmation of their place on the Level 4 SBP 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.

Successful applicants will be sent an **Apprenticeship Agreement** and an **ILR** (Individual Learner Record), by email, after the application round has closed. The Apprentice Agreement is usually completed and signed by you, the line manager, and your apprentice, and the original, hard copy returned to Serco Education. The ILR is completed by the apprentice.

Further documents will also be sent to you and the apprentice, e.g. **Training Services Agreement** (employer to complete), **Commitment Statement** and **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)** which you, or appropriate colleague, will need to review and sign.

The first Level 4 Apprenticeship cohort started in April 2018 and national cohorts are offered termly, using several regional locations for the 5 x one-day workshops. There is also an opportunity to deliver local cohorts if student numbers allow. The application round will remain open throughout the year with published deadlines for each cohort. Should you be interested in setting up a local group of SBP apprentices please contact us:

[sbmpartnership@serco.com](mailto:sbmpartnership@serco.com)

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 can make up the time at a later date.

Please go to our website: [www.sbmpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sbmpartnership.org.uk) for more details about this programme including FAQs.

### **Further information:**

[www.sbmpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sbmpartnership.org.uk)

**Enquiries:**

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