

School Leader Master's Degree Apprenticeship (SLMDA) for SENCOs 2020/2021

Guidance for Line Managers

Serco Education is an approved provider to deliver the **Senior Leader Master's Degree Apprenticeship (SLMDA) for SENCO's**. It is based on the Senior Leader Master's Degree apprenticeship developed by a trailblazer group of employers and based on standards and an assessment plan approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and the Department for Education. The qualifications within the SLMDA for SENCOs apprenticeship (MBA and the National Award for SEN Co-ordination) are validated by the University of Wolverhampton.

The SLMDA for SENCOs is aimed at SENCOs with management experience who are looking to gain a full master's degree qualification and increase their knowledge in senior leadership. It is open to SENCOs who wish to achieve the National Award for SEN Co-ordination and those that have already gained the award with Serco Education. With practical work-based assignments customised for the SENCO role, the line manager and employer of a SLMDA for SENCOs apprenticeship should quickly see tangible benefits in the workplace as the apprentice demonstrates their learning and skills.

The SLMDA for SENCOs will take up to 27 months to complete, depending on whether the applicant has already gained the NASENCO Award. See Terms & Conditions for detailed eligibility conditions.

What are the benefits to the school, academy, MAT etc?

Research has shown that apprentices increase innovation and drive quality. The SLMDA for SENCOs will help learners to develop job-specific skills that will benefit the school. For example, the apprentice will gain the knowledge to offer professional support for all students with learning needs and disabilities, either directly or training colleagues working with these students. This will increase the school's, academy's, MAT's etc educational profile, achieving raised standards, reputation and possibly their Ofsted rating. Employers offering opportunities for higher level qualifications, such as the SLMDA for SENCOs, attract and retain high-calibre individuals with the potential to progress.

Programme Overview

Applicants signing up to the SLMDA for SENCOs are committing themselves to a 27-month programme of study although prior learning and/or experience may allow fast-tracking and reduce the amount of time it will take to complete the apprenticeship.

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 1 block and 1 work based project a term (6 blocks in total). Each block and work based project will begin with a 1-day face-to-face workshop at a regional centre, with the remainder of their studies delivered 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 termly 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. This is supplemented with further support from the coach via Skype and email. At the end of year one there will also be an annual review between the line manager, apprentice and coach.

In order to successfully complete the SLMDA for SENCOS the apprentice will also be required to complete a Portfolio of evidence. Once they have completed their MBA studies alongside the apprenticeship requirements, they will be invited to an End Point Assessment (EPA). This is a remote assessment and successful completion will result in the award of an apprenticeship certificate.

Structure

The apprenticeship studies will typically take 27 months to complete (part-time or term-time only employees may be eligible for additional time to complete their studies). Apprentices must be given the opportunity to take 20% off-the-job training (which includes attendance at workshops and coaching sessions, etc.).

The full list of learning blocks:

Block 1

Operations Management & Work based project (Masters Learning)

Block 2

Finance Management & Work based project (Research Methods)

Block 3

Strategic Management & Work based project (Research Proposal)

Block 4

Orientation and Perspectives on SEN and Inclusive Practice & Work based project (working on project)

Block 5

Evidence Based Practice and Inclusion & Work based project (working on project)

Block 6

Whole School Development: Enabling Inclusion & Work based project (working on project)

For apprentices that have already successfully completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination, the structure will be as follows:

Block 1

Operations Management & Work based project (Masters Learning)

Block 2

Finance Management & Work based project (Research Methods)

Block 3

Strategic Management & Work based project (Research Proposal)

Block 4

Leading and Change & Work based project

Block 5

Work based project and completion of Portfolio of Evidence.

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

In addition to the above, it is a requirement of ESFA (the funding agency for apprenticeships), that the apprentice can evidence that they are currently working at Level 2 in both Maths and English. Should your apprentice not have these GCSE qualifications (or their equivalent) or be unable to find their original certificates, then they will need to complete Functional Skills, formal tests with City & Guilds alongside their apprenticeship. We will provide additional support to help them gain these qualifications.

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, ILR and ILP 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.

The line manager/mentor will be expected to support the apprentice to complete a skills scan which will help identify their current knowledge and skills. This will form the basis of an individual learning plan (ILP). Before the learner completes a block of study, the coach will discuss the content with you and the apprentice to enable you to identify opportunities to support the apprentice in the workplace, for example, shadowing a member of SLT. You may wish to provide the apprentice with opportunities to take on additional tasks in the workplace to evidence their skills and learning. These activities may be considered part of the 20% off the job requirement.

Cost

The cost is currently £18,000 for the full programme. If you are a levy paying school then the cost of the SLMDA for SENCOs can be covered by the apprenticeship levy (if sufficient funds are available). You should have a digital apprentice account (DAS) and be able to provide us with the contact details for the parent organisation holding the account; this may be the local authority or trust for example. Please ensure that funding will be available.

As long as you have sufficient funds in your digital apprenticeship account (DAS) then there is no additional cost for the programme delivery itself (although dialling in to WebEx conference calls may be charged depending on the phone provider and your apprentice may incur travel costs to the workshop).

If your apprentice has already completed the National Award for SENCO's (NASENCO) then the length of the programme may be reduced to 18 months. This will also reduce the fee payable for the apprenticeship. For further details, please refer to our programme FAQs located online or contact us.

If you are a non-levy paying school then you will be invoiced for 5% of the total cost of the programme in advance, as outlined by the government's employer co-investment scheme (the remaining 95% paid via the central apprenticeship levy fund, conditions apply). **Please note that the ESFA plan to change this system in 2020. We are awaiting further details.**

Please be aware that the apprentice will be required to attend nine x 1-day regional face-to-face workshops throughout the apprenticeship, this will be reduced to seven if the apprentice has already successfully completed the NASENCO programme. Although workshops are situated in the closest location for the majority of participants within the cohort, your employee may have to travel some distance and stay in overnight accommodation. You will need to agree with your employee whether your school will cover the cost of travel and accommodation (if required).

Time Commitment

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 SLMDA for SENCOs programme.
- 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 may 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 facilitator. 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.

It is an apprenticeship requirement that you (as line manager/employer) are required to allow the apprentice a minimum of **20% of their normal working hours** to study (full-time and part-time employees) across the 2 years; 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 relevant 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 SLMDA for SENCOs seems to be the right way forward for your SENCO 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.serco-ese.com/serco-education . Once submitted they will have 5 working days to complete a **personal statement** which we also require you as their line manager to review and 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 be required to participate in a phone-based interview as part of the selection process. Applicants will receive confirmation of their place on the programme approximately 5 to 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 a formal offer letter, and, once they accept, both the line manager and apprentice will be required to sign an **Apprenticeship Agreement, Commitment Statement** and an **ILR** (Individual Learner Record), before the programme starts. They must be signed by you and your apprentice and returned to Serco Education.

Further documents will also be sent to you and the apprentice, e.g. **Training Services Agreement** (usually FAO your funding manager), an **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)** which you, or appropriate colleague, will need to review and sign.

We have two intakes of SLMDA for SENCOs each year. 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 can make up the time 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 have to adhere to ESFA guidance and requirements.

Note: the term 'schools' used in this document applies to both maintained and independent schools as well as academies, multi academy trusts, etc

Please visit our website: www.serco-ese.com/serco-education for more details about this programme including FAQs and full T&Cs.

Further information:

www.serco-ese.com/serco-education

Enquiries:

sencoaward@serco.com

01452 341829 (office hours)

Produced by Serco Education

December 2019