

Level 3 School Business Administration Apprenticeship Frequently Asked Questions: Guidance 2020

Who is the programme for?

The School Business Administration Apprenticeship is aimed at anyone employed in a school or academy working in a school administration function and whose role involves developing, implementing, maintaining and improving administrative services.

Through this apprenticeship, School Business Administrators will develop key skills and behaviours to support their own progression towards school business management, should they aim to do so. With practical work-based assignments customised for the schools sector, the line manager and employer of a School Business Administration Apprentice should quickly see tangible benefits in the workplace as the apprentice demonstrates their learning and skills.

What are the benefits to my school?

Research has shown that apprentices increase innovation and drive quality. The School Business Administration Apprenticeship will help learners to develop job-specific skills that will benefit the school. This apprenticeship may also be a gateway to further career opportunities, such as school business management or senior support role. Successful apprentices wishing to further development their career may then consider a Level 4 SBM qualification / apprenticeship.

What topics will I study?

The programme includes units on:

- The principles of school business administration
- Administration in the educational environment
- Personal and professional development
- Managing performance
- Your organisation
- Communication in a school business environment
- Project management
- ICT for school business

The programme will develop and examine the knowledge, skills and behaviours of activities associated with the role of school business administrator and in addition to the above units, the learner will complete a work-based project or process improvement.

When will the programme start?

We are aiming to run a pilot group starting late 2020. Following this, we expect to have new programmes (with regional centres) starting twice a year.

What's the cost?

The fee for the programme is a maximum of £5,000 depending on previous skills and experience. The training costs are covered as part of the Government Levy, provided your school/academy are contributing to the apprenticeship levy. Your school/employer should have a digital apprentice account or be able to provide us with the contact details

for the parent organisation holding the account; this may be the local authority or academy trust for example (your employer is usually indicated on your payslip).

As long as your school/ organisation have sufficient funds in their digital apprenticeship account (DAS) then there is no additional cost for the programme delivery, other than the registration fees with City & Guilds (optional) for the Level 3 Diploma.

If you are a non-levy paying school then you can be funded through the Employer Co-investment scheme and your school will be invoiced for 5% of the total cost of the programme (please contact us for further details of this option). An updated scheme for non-levy employers was introduced in early 2020.

City & Guilds accreditation for the Level 3 Diploma for the Business Administrator can be selected as an option at £88 + VAT (2020 price - tbc)

How do I pay?

Providing you are from a levy-paying school, then, as a general guide, 80% of the apprenticeship cost is split into monthly payments to the provider, with the remaining 20% payable on completion. (This is a simplified example of the payment process). Serco Education will start to claim monthly payments from your levy fund soon after you start the programme.

How will the School Business Administration Apprenticeship for Schools benefit me?

Successful apprentices will achieve:

- A Level 3 Diploma for the Business Administrator (we are currently seeking accreditation by City & Guilds)
- On-the-job experience
- A professional pathway for future development
- Level 2 in maths and English (if you do not already have these qualifications)

What is the content of the programme?

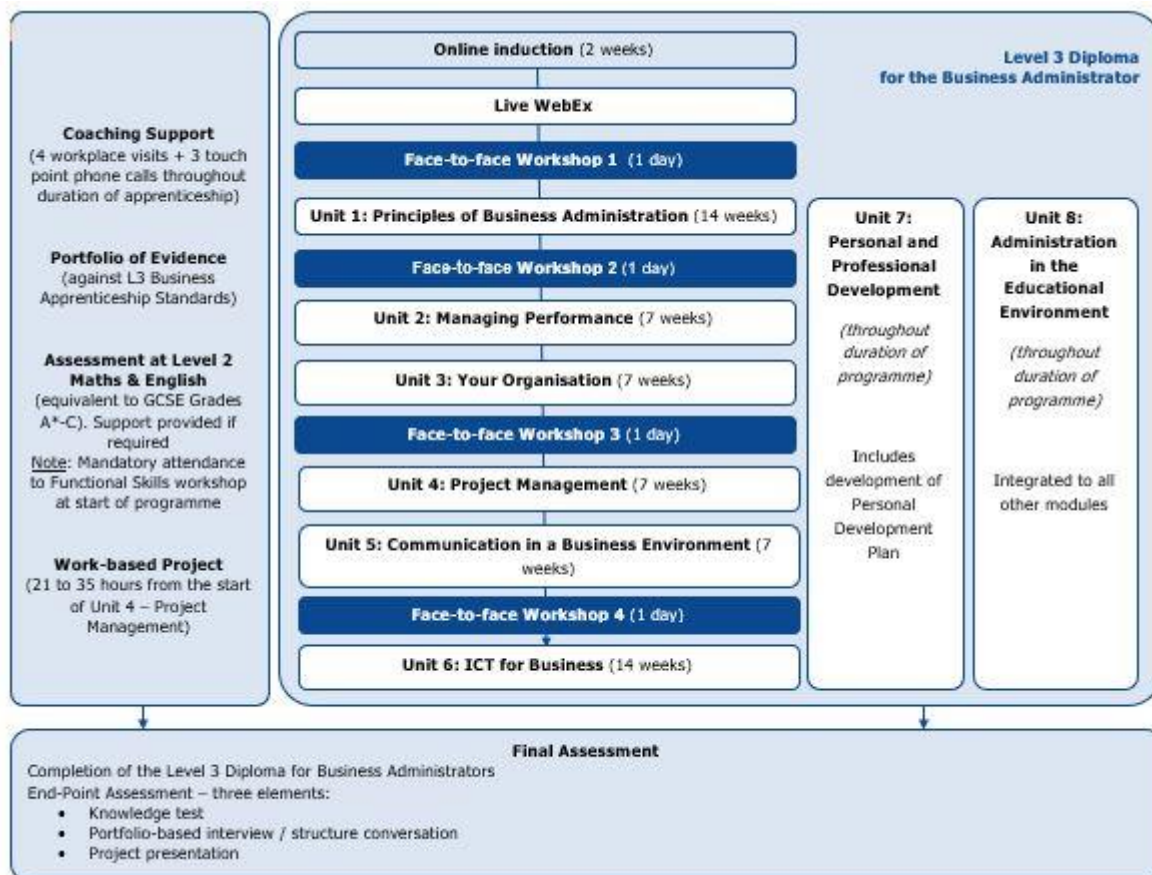
There are 8 units to complete in total. A brief summary is given below:

- *Unit 301 - Principles of school business administration*
This unit aims to encourage the learner in developing an understanding of the organisation and the effect of external factors on it. It will aim to develop the learner's understanding of the fundamental of business and of stakeholder management. Finally, the learner will develop knowledge and understanding of how to manage a project from identifying the principles of project management to what makes a successful project.
- *Unit 302 - Personal and professional development*
This unit aims to underpin the development of knowledge and skills required to improve personal and professional development. The learner will identify their role and responsibilities, strengths and weaknesses, business and personal goals, both short and long terms. The learner will produce a development plan, seeing feedback and updating it as required. This unit will be worked out through the whole programme.
- *Unit 303 - Managing performance*
This unit aims to develop the professional skills and knowledge of a learner to enable them to complete tasks to a high standards, taking responsibility for own learning and development and setting a positive example.
- *Unit 304 - Your organisation*
This unit aims to develop the learner's understanding of own organisation and the value of the contribution of their own skills. The learner will identify organisational processes where improvements are necessary, then apply and support a solutions-based approach to implement the improvement.

- **Unit 305 - Communication in a business environment**
This unit aims to develop the learner’s ability to communicate effectively, whether face-to-face, on the telephone, in writing or on digital platforms. The learner will be able to demonstrate flexibility and confidence in communications, carrying authority appropriately.
- **Unit 306 - Project Management**
This unit aims to ensure the learner can demonstrate understanding of project management principles and tools. The learner will be able to plan, manage, review and evaluate projects.
- **Unit 307 - ICT for business**
This unit aims to enhance the knowledge and skills required to use ICT for business purposes. The learner will be able to understand advanced ICT for business platforms and packages and the most suitable package to meet a business need. This unit is linked to the “Communication in a business environment” unit.
- **Unit 314 – Providing administration in the educational environment**
This units aims to develop knowledge and skills required to provide administrative support in the educational environment. Upon completion of this unit, learners will have developed an understanding of administration within the educational environment and will be able to provide administrative services. Learners will also be able to operate administrative systems and procedures.

How long will it take to complete the programme?

A programme structure diagram is included below:



The School Business Administration Apprenticeship is expected to take 18 months to complete. Once you have successfully completed the Level 3 Diploma and a portfolio of evidence, you will move to **end-point assessment**

stage, i.e. a series of assessment tasks with an external assessor. This end-point assessment (EPA) should take place within 8-12 weeks of the successful completion of your apprenticeship studies.

Can I study the School Business Administration Apprenticeship if I already have a Level 3 qualification?

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

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 initial functional skills assessment. If you do not have these qualifications, we can help you gain the Level 2 requirements during your studies. If you already have Level 2 in maths and English qualifications, we will need to see your original certificates (you will still need to take the short diagnostic assessment).

The apprenticeship is suitable for all individuals working in an administration support function within a school or academy, and whose role involves developing, implementing, maintaining and improving administrative services.

It is essential that all applicants have the support of their line manager as the apprenticeship will involve attendance at one-day workshops at the beginning of each unit (or set of units). Your employer must also commit to **20% off-the-job training** time for you (this is an essential part of all apprenticeships). We will require a statement from your line manager supporting the application (see separate Line Manager Guidance and the Personal Statement and Line Manager Support documents). Applications will not be accepted without the line manager's support.

What is the application process?

Please note that at this stage, we are seeking expression of interests from potential applicants. To express an interest, **please email sbaa@serco.com**. Once we have gathered sufficient interest, we will launch an application round and will contact you.

The subsequent application process will be in three parts:

- Online application form
- Personal Statement & Line Manager Support (within 5 days of submitting your application or by application closing date, whichever is the earliest)
- Skills scan (self-assessment conducted with the help of your line manager)

In addition to the online application form, we require a personal statement (submitted within 5 working days of receipt of the application form) that recognises the commitment required along with a statement from the line manager confirming support. Applicants may then be invited to participate in a phone interview.

Applicants are then asked to complete a **skill scan self-assessment** so that we can consider previous qualifications and/or learning and ensure that the applicant meets the requirements of the ESFA for apprenticeship funding. The self-assessment must indicate that there is sufficient scope for development across all areas of the apprenticeship.

A formal offer of an apprenticeship will be sent to successful applicants around 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 or signposting alternative opportunities.

Successful applicants will also need to complete an **Apprenticeship Agreement**, a **maths & English online initial assessment**, a **skill scan self-assessment**, a **Commitment Statement** and **Individual Learner Plan**, and confirm funding/payment details before the start of the apprenticeship. Please check with your local authority or MAT apprenticeship or HR team that you have approval from them for funding.

How will I be assessed?

For each unit studies, you will be required to either complete an on-line multiple choice test or to complete a portfolio of evidence – as detailed below:

- Unit 301 – Principles of school business administration: on-line multiple choice test
- Unit 302 – Personal and professional development: portfolio of learning
- Unit 303 – Managing performance: portfolio of learning
- Unit 304 – Your organisation: portfolio of learning
- Unit 305 – Communication in a business environment: portfolio of learning
- Unit 306 – Project Management: portfolio of learning
- Unit 307 – ICT for business: portfolio of learning
- Unit 314 – Providing administration in the educational environment: portfolio of learning

You will also be required to develop a **portfolio of evidence** as part of the apprenticeship, in order to demonstrate evidence of the skills, knowledge and behaviours outlined in the [Level 3 Business Administrator Standards](#) that underpin the whole apprenticeship. There is a final end-point assessment which will be conducted by an external assessor once you have completed all elements of the School Business Administration Apprenticeship. This will take place within 8 – 12 weeks from the successful completion of your studies.

Can I apply to study the School Business Administration Apprenticeship if I work outside England?

Levy funding is only available to apprentices who live or work in England. If you are based outside of England but interested in studying for the apprenticeship please contact us for more details.

What qualification will I achieve?

Upon completing the apprenticeship, you will gain a Level 3 for the Business Administrator (we are currently seeking accreditation by City & Guilds), if you elect to be registered with City & Guilds for this qualification. All students will gain an apprenticeship certificate from the Institute for Apprenticeships.

How do I apply?

Initially, please express your interest by emailing sbaa@serco.com. Then, once the application round is opened, 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. You will need to consult our website to start the application process: <https://www.serco-ese.com/serco-education>.

What if I leave my employer after I have started the apprenticeship?

Your apprenticeship will be terminated if you leave your current employer before completion unless you move to another employer who is willing to let you continue your studies with us. If you are made redundant then you will

be given 12 weeks to find employment in order to continue your studies. If you haven't got a level 2 in Maths and/or English then as long as you have started your studies for these qualifications with Serco, you are able to continue until you complete them.

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

You may be able to defer (or suspend) your studies for up to a year, depending upon circumstances.

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

You will be able to defer (known as Break in Learning) from the programme for up to a year.

How will the training be delivered?

Predominantly online and in the workplace, but also with regular face-to-face workshops (one-day sessions) – please refer to the programme structure diagram. A facilitator and coach will help guide your learning.

At various points throughout your apprenticeship, you will receive visits from your coach at your workplace. You will also have several opportunities to have touch point phone calls with your coach. Your coach will support you in developing the portfolio of evidence and offer pastoral support as required.

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 unit you study will have a start and end date and you may have one or two milestones during the units, 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 with your coach will be at your place of work or by phone. Please note that, depending on the Covid-19 situations, face-to-face workshops may be replaced by online webinars.

Do I have to attend every training event and coach meeting?

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

What is the time commitment needed from participants?

It is difficult to estimate the time commitment for each apprentice as study habits differ considerably. We anticipate that approximately 7 hours a week, on average, will be required in addition to the workshops and meetings with your coach. The amount of time required will vary depending upon your stage of learning.

Throughout the programme, apprentices will keep a portfolio of evidence which will be supported by 360 degree feedback. As an apprentice your employer must agree to let you spend 20% of your time studying for the School Business Administration Apprenticeship; Please note that this includes a range of activities attached to your day job and that it is not a requirement to spend 1 day a week studying. You will be required to maintain a log of your off-the-job training hours (further information will be provided).

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 including shadowing, reading, attending workshops, completing a project and preparing your portfolio of evidence etc. You should 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 per week (calculated over the full 52 weeks per year) then the length of time in which you study will be extended pro rata to reflect your normal working hours. If you work full time in term time only, then your study time will also be extended pro rata. You will follow the same learning and assessment schedule as everyone else in the same cohort but will have an extended time to complete your portfolio and prepare for your end-point assessment. (It may be possible to complete earlier than your extended end date, but only if you are ready).

All 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. Many of the required onboarding documents and forms are necessary to meet ESFA requirements.

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

Further information:

www.serco-ese.com/serco-education

Enquiries:

sbaa@serco.com

01452 341829 (office hours)

Produced by Serco Education, Gloucester, GL2 2AT

July 2020