

## Level 4 Employability Practitioner Apprenticeship

### Guidance for Line Managers (2020/2021)

Serco is an approved provider to deliver the **Level 4 Employability Practitioner Apprenticeship** developed by a group of employers which included Serco and based on standards and an assessment plan approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and the Department for Education.

The Apprenticeship is normally a 24-month programme (longer for those whose contracts are for less than 30 hours per week) open to a range of practitioners employed in England, including:

Advanced practitioners and key workers	Career or employment Coordinators	Case managers
Careers advisors		
Case workers	Coaches or consultants	
Community support advisors	Employability tutors	
Employment advisors	Employment coach	
Employment consultant Housing officers	IAG advisors	
Job coaches	Lead IAG advisors	
Lead or senior employment advisors	Personal advisors	
Senior or lead job coaches	Careers advisors	
Senior student support workers	Student support workers	
Training advisors		

There is no age limit and the vast majority of employability practitioners will already have experience of working with individuals who are distanced furthest from the labour market and helping them to address and overcome obstacles to securing suitable and sustainable employment. Employability Practitioners may specialise in working with a specific group of individuals and will devise strategies to address and overcome the multiple and complex barriers to employment, and to improve their employability prospects, with the end goal being to find employment or to progress in work if they are already employed.

#### Benefits to the employer will include:

- Professional staff member who will enhance the management of your organisation
- An employability practitioner who understands the importance of their role and its scope
- Increased ability of the employability Practitioner to devise strategies to address and overcome the multiple and complex barriers to employment
- An employability Practitioner who can take a holistic approach to the service user

#### Successful apprentices will achieve:

- On-the-job experience
- A professional pathway for future development
- IfATE apprentice certificate
- Level 2 in mathematics and English (if you do not already have these qualifications)
- An increased ability to devise strategies to address and overcome the multiple and complex barriers to employment

With practical work-based activities developed for employability practitioners, the employer 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 Employability Practitioner Apprenticeship are committing themselves to a 24-month (or longer contract is for less than 30 hours per week) programme of study, plus end-point assessment which follows the study period. They are supported by a coach, a tutor, their line manager/mentor and also through peer support via online group forum areas and networking opportunities at face-to-face workshops.

Each applicant will complete a self-assessment prior to being accepted onto the apprenticeship so that we can identify whether this is the right programme for them. We encourage the line manager to participate in the self-assessment as this also provides you with an opportunity to review your employee's ability and learning needs. Using the self-assessment, we will develop an individual learning plan (ILP) which is then agreed with both the applicant and the line manager or mentor. They will begin their academic studies, developing a portfolio of evidence of the skills and knowledge of an employability practitioner.

Each unit usually begins with a face-to-face workshop, 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 (up to 8 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 Apprenticeship, the apprentice will complete an end-point assessment with an external assessor once they have completed all activities. This takes place within a 3-month window after the practical learning period.

### **Structure**

The apprenticeship studies will typically take 24 months to complete unless the apprentice is contracted to work less than 30 hours a week, in which case the apprenticeship is extended although the individual will remain with his/her cohort to complete the unit studies. They will then be given additional time at the end of their studies to complete their portfolio of evidence. It is possible for apprentices working less than 30 hours a week to complete the apprenticeship in 24 months.

The apprenticeship must include 20% off-the-job training (which includes attendance at workshops and coaching sessions, etc.).

The programme will cover:

- Holistic Assessment & Reviews
- Integrated Services
- Coaching & Mentoring
- Legislation
- Challenging & Complex Caseloads
- Safeguarding, Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

In addition to the above, it is a requirement that the apprentice is able to evidence that they are working at Level 2 in Mathematics 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.

## **Cost**

If you are a levy paying organisation then the cost of the apprenticeship 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. Please ensure that your finance/procurement dept. are aware of the apprenticeship and that funding is available for it via the levy.

As long as there are sufficient funds in your/ digital apprenticeship account (DAS) then there is no additional cost for the programme delivery. If you are a non-levy paying organisation 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 note that training providers are only allowed to recruit a small number of apprentices who are from non-levy paying organisations, so we operate on a policy of first come, first served basis. If we have already used the ESFA allocation for non-levy funded apprentices, your employee may have to wait until this funding is increased by the ESFA.

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

## **Time Commitment (line manager/ mentor)**

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 apprenticeship.
- 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 in the workplace. 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 learning opportunities (as appropriate) for them to develop their skills.
- Support us in contextualizing the apprenticeship for your employee to ensure that s/he gains the most from the programme resulting in a greater effectiveness in the workplace.

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.

A requirement of the apprenticeship is that the employer **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 practitioner 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 Employability Practitioner Apprenticeship seems to be the right way forward for a member of your team and you are confident that they are committed to their studies, then they will need to complete an application form which can be accessed via [www.serco-education.com](http://www.serco-education.com). 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 (skill 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 Employability Practitioner 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 then returned to Serco. 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. These documents are required by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to enable payment of the levy funding.

Employability Practitioner cohorts will be offered termly, using several regional locations for the workshops. There is also an opportunity to deliver local cohorts if applicant 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 apprentices please contact us: [employability@serco.com](mailto:employability@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 assessment activity with the understanding that they can make up the time at a later date.

Please go to our website: [www.serco-education.com](http://www.serco-education.com) for more details about this programme including FAQs.

**Further information:**

[www.serco-education.com](http://www.serco-education.com)

**Enquiries:**

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

01452 341829 (office hours)

Produced by Serco Employability  
Team

Gloucester GL2 2AT  
Feb 21