



APPRENTICESHIPS QUALITY EXPECTATIONS & PROCEDURE FOR MONITORING THE QUALITY OF APPRENTICE TRAINING OUTCOMES

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement of Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding that apprenticeship training providers have in place appropriate processes and policies to manage the quality requirements of apprenticeships.

1.1 Purpose

This document outlines the process which the University undertakes to evaluate the quality of training and outcomes.

1.2 Scope

This procedure covers the University's expectations for high quality training and the process for monitoring of quality for all apprenticeship programmes. It operates within the context of the national quality accountability arrangements for Apprenticeships.

2. The University's Expectations of Apprenticeship Quality

Apprenticeships are a key strategic activity in the University's [Vision for Education](#) and are embedded in the key pillars:

- The Keele Fundamentals
- The Keele Difference
- The Distinctive Keele Curriculum and,
- The Keele Offer

Our quality principles for apprenticeships are underpinned by the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IfaTE) Quality Statement, which drives our apprenticeship design process. Employer engaged design and development from the apprenticeship standard are cornerstones of our expectations for the development of any apprenticeship programme.

Apprenticeships are designed in collaboration with employers, service user care groups (in the case of Nursing), students and the apprenticeships team to ensure that requirements are met. The University has a Curriculum Design Framework that sets out the key principles that define good programme design and emphasises inclusive, collaborative curriculum design, digitally enhanced learning, and embedded employability.

The University's processes for programme approval ensure that programmes are academically appropriate and robust, in line with strategic aims, are financially viable, and underpinned by the necessary resources. There are specific programme approval criteria for higher and degree apprenticeship provision. Additional contextual documents are required as part of the validation of any apprenticeship programme, identifying how the programme will meet the operational requirements of apprenticeships and identifying that the programme fully meets the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the apprenticeship standard. Where relevant, mapping documents are also aligned with the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, such as the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), and, for Academic Professional, to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

Learning is planned to meet Off the Job Learning requirements for apprenticeships and is monitored through Aptem, our end-to-end solution for apprenticeships.

KPIs for recruitment are set through the Apprenticeship Business Plan, which is annually reviewed. Retention and completion KPIs are set at programme level to align with disciplinary norms within the University and sector norms through our benchmarking group of Universities.

These are monitored through quarterly data reporting provided by Corporate Planning to the Apprenticeships Management Group, the University's senior governance group for apprenticeships.

The group also receives reports on compliance from the Apprenticeships Team. The group uses data and quarterly reporting to take remedial action where necessary and to update the institutional Self-Assessment and Quality improvement plan.

The Apprenticeship Management Group is Chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor Education and reports into both Education Committee and Student Recruitment and Admissions Group. These groups provide a route of escalation for any risks and performance management issues.

The Head of Apprenticeships and Experiential Learning provides an annual report on apprenticeship performance and development, to inform leaders and governors.

3. PROCEDURE

Related University policy and process

The University offers three formal processes across apprenticeships and all programmes: Module Evaluation, the Annual Programme Review and Internal Quality Audit. It is also subject to External Quality Audit.

3.1 Module Evaluation

A module evaluation is completed by all apprentices for each module of their programme. The purpose of module evaluation is twofold: firstly it should provide assurances to the University that provision at modular level is robust and meeting student expectations. The core questions have been designed with this purpose in mind. Module evaluation should also be an enhancement tool, enabling programme teams to engage in reflective practice, and for this purpose, to evaluate any

changes to the module they have introduced. In addition, by inviting students to feed back in a more narrative way on their experience on the module, it allows programme teams to identify excellence and areas for further development.

3.2 Annual Programme Review

Education Committee (on behalf of Senate) mandates that an Annual Programme Review is undertaken for every taught programme delivered by the University. Programme Directors are responsible for convening the review meetings.

The guiding principles for Annual Programme Review for apprenticeships are as follows:

- to review the apprentice learning experience and provide assurances that the programme(s) under review meet sector-recognised standards;
- to identify and reflect on the key findings from information relevant to the programme, such as: external examiner reports; apprentice, staff and stakeholder feedback; and quantitative data on areas such as entry standards, academic attainment and student retention;
- to assess the health of the programme, identify any causes for concern and use the review to drive forward improvements;
- to agree an action plan arising from the review that facilitates improvement and enhancement.

Annual Programme reviews include programme stakeholders, including feedback from employers and apprentices.

A template for the meeting ensures that all evidence is assessed as part of the Programme Review and action plans are monitored and progress reports given at School and Faculty Education Committees. These are shared with Student Staff Voice Committees.

Each School must compile an action plan based on the outcomes of programme review meetings, which is supplied to Quality Assurance and reviewed by Education Committee.

3.3 Internal Quality Audit

The University operates a five year cycle of Internal Quality Audit (IQA).

The IQA process at the University is built on a foundation of supportive peer review, externality and student (apprentice) involvement as the underpinning principles.

The current edition of the University's process of periodic Internal Quality Audit takes account of:

- The strategic aims which underpin the University's Strategic Vision.
- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education which sets out UK-wide agreed expectations for quality and standards. In particular, the IQA process draws on the Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ), subject benchmark statements, and the guidance relating to programme monitoring and evaluation - all available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

- The need for the University to demonstrate institutional oversight over the quality and standards of its provision at programme level.

For apprenticeships, employers as stakeholders and apprentices will be involved in IQA.

3.4 External Examiners

The University operates an external examining system which is a key element for setting, maintaining and assuring academic quality standards at Keele University which is outlined in the [Code of Practice on External Examining](#). Externality also informs the programme approval process, annual programme review, and the periodic internal quality audit process.

The aims of the procedures for external examining are to provide the University with assurances whether or not:

- it maintains the academic standards it sets for its awards in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and applicable subject benchmark statements;
- the assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of programmes and are conducted in line with the University's policies and procedures;
- the academic standards and the achievement of students are comparable with those in other UK universities.

External Examiners produce an annual report, which are key documents in assuring the academic standards of the University's awards. In addition to core content in relation to standards and student achievement external examiners are invited, in their reports to:

- confirm that sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled;
- state whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to their satisfaction;
- highlight good practice and evidence of enhancement;
- address any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body;
- comment on any meetings with students and the insight gained, and
- give an overview of their term of office (when concluded).

3.5 Development and approval of programmes

Apprenticeships at Keele play an important role in supporting the skills and training needs of key employers and the locality. All our apprenticeships are developed in collaboration with employers so that we can ensure that our programmes meet the requirements of the business and work-based learners.

We continue to develop our offer in collaboration with employers to offer training to support priorities identified in the locality and, in some specialisms, nationally. Our apprenticeships are closely linked to our local Keele Deals, with skills aligned to plans to support local recovery.

All apprenticeship programmes are approved through the University's programme approval process. This is a robust process involving an assessment of core information with approval based on principles of risk management and proportionality. Processes are designed to ensure that any new or significantly revised programmes are academically appropriate and robust, in line with the University's and local strategic aims, financially viable, and underpinned by the necessary resources.

The University's processes for programme approval, modification and withdrawal or suspension are informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance themes on 'Course Design and Development' and 'Monitoring and Evaluation'.

Proposal documentation includes a mapping of curriculum content against the apprenticeship standard as our apprenticeship programmes are driven by the apprenticeship standard and a contextual document, which provides detail about how the programme will run to meet the quality expectations of the University and the funding rules for apprenticeships.

Following initial approval, programme documentation is produced by the programme team and detailed scrutiny takes place. Following this, final versions of programme documentation are produced for consideration and approval by the University's Standing Validation Panel on behalf of the Quality and Academic Standards Sub-Committee.

3.6 Monitoring of Progress

For apprenticeship programmes, relevant data, testimony and participation will be sought or provided as part of the APR and IQA processes.

The Apprenticeship Management Group reviews apprenticeship reports at quarterly intervals, which includes data on programme occupancy. Any concerns or risks are escalated through the University governance structure. The Apprenticeship Management Group is Chaired by the PVC Education and reports into University Education Committee and the strategic Student Recruitment & Admissions Group.

A dedicated Apprenticeship Data Officer monitors attendance, attrition and attainment and any concerns are raised through the joint account management function between the Apprenticeships team and Programme leads.

In addition to the formal University processes for managing programme quality, for apprenticeship programmes, the relationship between the apprentice, Programme Director and employer is also critical in raising any concerns.

Destination data sourced from national sector data returns, completer surveys and ongoing employer relationships will additionally inform about outcomes of programme participants.

3.7 Informal Feedback

Informal feedback is garnered from a number of sources, which may include the following:

- Direct to the Apprenticeship team or programme staff from the apprentice or employer;
- Through tri-partite review meetings which will identify any actions and issues;

- Through ad-hoc employer meetings;
- Through stakeholder surveys.

3.8 Formal Feedback

Formal monitoring information and feedback is gathered through the following mechanisms:

- Student Voice representatives from apprenticeship programmes will feed back through the University Student Voice processes;
- Module review questionnaires;
- Contract management meetings;
- Operations group meetings for each programme.
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3.9 Addressing concerns

Where a concern which can be remedied with immediacy has been raised by an employer or apprentice, the programme team and apprenticeships team (as appropriate) will seek to resolve the issue as soon as possible and report the outcome to the employer. This might typically include amendments to support or programme enhancements which can be made without material change to the course.

Where a change is required to an apprenticeship programme, this is done through the major or minor modification process. All programme changes must have a clear and sound rationale and consultation on changes should take place with current apprentices, external examiners, employers and relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies before a change is submitted for approval using the Programme Modification Form.

Concerns can be raised more formally through the Apprenticeships Complaints Procedure, whereby the process described will apply.

The University seeks to work with all stakeholders to ensure a high quality apprenticeship experience and operates an open dialogue to raise and remedy any concerns on programme.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Apprenticeship Team and Programme Team will share any feedback raised by stakeholders which can inform programme delivery. These will be raised and recorded through the appropriate channels.

The School will work with the Quality Assurance Team to apply existing quality processes to apprenticeship programmes.

This policy forms part of the University's Apprenticeships Code of Practice which is the key document for staff about apprenticeship programmes, implemented and communicated through the University's key committees for apprenticeships. The themes of the document are reflected in our employer and apprentice handbooks.

5. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION:

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