

NCG Apprenticeship Policy

<u>Policy Title</u>	NCG Apprenticeship Policy	
<u>Policy Category</u>	Complaint	
<u>Owner</u>	Adrian Pegg – Assistant Director Quality (TLA)	
<u>Group Executive Lead</u>	Steve Wallis – Executive Director, Quality	
<u>Date Written</u>	August 2019	
<u>Considered By</u>	Apprenticeship Council	
<u>Approved By</u>	Executive Board	
<u>Date Approved</u>	September 2020	
<u>Equality Impact Assessment</u>	The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics	
<u>Freedom of Information</u>	This document will be publically available through the Groups Publication Scheme.	
<u>Review Date</u>	September 2022	
<u>Policy Summary</u>	The policy sets out the requirements for NCG's apprenticeship provision in all Colleges regardless of scope and scale. It builds upon the Institute for Apprenticeships' definitions and core principles in defining a non-negotiable standard for implementation by senior leadership teams.	
<u>Applicability of Policy</u>	<u>Consultation Undertaken</u>	<u>Applicable To</u>
Carlisle College	Yes	Yes
Professional Services	Yes	Yes
Kidderminster College	Yes	Yes
Lewisham College	Yes	Yes
Newcastle College	Yes	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form College	Yes	No
Southwark College	Yes	Yes
West Lancashire College	Yes	Yes
<u>Changes to Earlier Versions</u>		
<u>Previous Approval Date</u>	<u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u>	
Feb 2020	Changes made to the unplaced learner produce linked to the new funding rules and the validation of NCG apprenticeship to ensure an EPAO has been approved prior to approval	
<u>Linked Documents</u>		
<u>Document Title</u>		
NCG Unified Tutorial, Progress and Attainment Policy	It is the responsibility of Colleageal leaders to ensure that a designated course lead/tutor is appointed to manage the learner journey for a defined course(s) or programme.	
Safeguarding Policy	Highlights actions in place to keep apprentices safe from harm	
TLA Policy	Sets out arrangements for the teaching, training and assessment of learners and apprentices across NCG	
NCG Standard Operating Procedure for Apprentices	Procedure for operationalising the contractual, data and information aspects of this policy, in line with ESFA regulatory arrangements	
Attendance Management Policy	Arrangements for monitoring the regular attendance of learners and apprentices	

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1. Scope and Purpose of Policy

This policy sets out the requirements for NCG's apprenticeship provision in all colleges regardless of scope and scale. It builds upon the Institute for Apprenticeships' definitions and core principles in defining a non-negotiable standard for implementation by college senior leadership teams.

The term **apprentice** is used to include all apprentices whether on frameworks or standards, regardless of sector and level.

The term **teacher** is used to describe all teaching and training staff, including teachers, lecturers, instructors, skills trainers, learning support practitioners and coaches.

The term **Delivery Team** refers to the wider group of staff involved in the apprentices training – i.e. a collection of **teachers** and **business support staff**.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) relates to the Principal and senior leaders in each college

NCG Apprenticeship Council – a formal meeting chaired by a designated Executive member and including all college apprenticeship leads to review and improve the Group's approaches to apprenticeships.

2. Policy Statement

2.1. Definition of an apprenticeship

An apprenticeship is a job with training to recognised industry standards – specifically it will follow the apprenticeship specification in either a **framework** or **standard** format. It should be concerned with entry to a **recognised occupation**, and involve a substantial programme of **on and off-the-job training**. In the case of a **standard**, the apprentice's occupational competence should be tested by an **independent, end point assessment**.

Recent apprenticeships are entirely **employer-led** – this refers to both design and procurement. Employers now set the standards, create the demand for apprentices to meet their skills needs, part fund the apprenticeship (directly or indirectly through the **Levy**) and are responsible for employing and training the apprentice. The needs of the apprentice are equally important: to achieve competence in a skilled occupation, which is transferable and secures long term earnings potential, greater employment security and the capability to progress in the workplace.

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Not all employer-based training is an apprenticeship. Work experience, short duration training for a job, attending a course on-site, or assessing and certificating an employee who is already working competently in the their occupation, are all positive forms of learning and/or accreditation at work **but they are not apprenticeships.** NCG pledge support to **delivering only** apprenticeships that **provide substantial new skills and knowledge**, and in doing so set out this **Framework for Apprenticeship Quality.**

2.2. NCG Apprenticeships

NCG Apprenticeships will be built upon an agreed partnership, formalised within an **Apprenticeship Agreement and Commitment Statement** including:

- An **employer** with the intention and capability of employing the apprentice to completion of their training and end-point assessment and securing their longer term future.
- An **apprentice** who is motivated to learn and work diligently to complete their apprenticeship.
- Training and support delivered by the **Group's colleges** and a small number of **trusted partners** who are aligned to the principles of this framework.

2.3. The Requirement for off-the-Job training

- **NCG apprenticeships** will provide entry to a recognised occupation which can be transferred to other relevant employers and is sufficiently skilled to require employment and training of at least a year's duration.
- **At least 20% of the off the job training will take place within contracted hours.** The standard operating procedure will provide additional guidance on what OtJ is acceptable, what isn't and how the total can be calculated.
- **NCG apprenticeships** will follow either a defined and approved framework or standard as approved by SASE and now the Institute for Apprenticeships. The specification will define the occupation in terms of the responsibilities and tasks involved and the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to achieve competence. Following national policy review there will be no new framework starts in the academic year 2020/21 onward.
- **NCG teachers** will follow the arrangements in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.

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2.4. The requirement for the Apprenticeship to be a job

- Employment in a **job** with legal and contractually acceptable terms and conditions.
- The job role, together with the off the job training, provides opportunities to cover the **full occupational profile** and learning all of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required.

2.5. The Training Programme

- The training programme must be sufficiently challenging to stretch the apprentice and be delivered with the active involvement of the employer(s), which uses a range of **effective on and off the job training methods** as well as work itself.
- The workplace must be **motivating and supportive** with coaching and mentoring support for the apprentice and continuous assessment of progress; **NCG apprentice must not be placed in a workplace that does not offer sufficient scope to acquire new knowledge, skills and personal development required** of the apprentice framework or standard.
- **An extended period of on and off the job training** which develops not only the knowledge and skills required but also the additional transferable skills which allow an apprentice to deal with new employers, situations, problems and equipment. Arrangements for planning and calculating off the job are contained in the standard operating procedure.

2.6. End-point Assessment and Certification – Standards only

- **NCG apprentices** will understand the **requirements** of **assessment** at the **very start** of their programme (whether it be competency or knowledge based) and where and how they will be assessed (extending to end-point assessment).
- NCG colleges will enter into appropriate arrangements with the end point assessment provider through a **service level agreement** to **deliver** the assessment.
- NCG apprenticeships will ensure that the appropriate level of **English and maths**, any **digital skills** required and other specified components of the Apprenticeship, signed off by the employer, are achieved prior to end-point assessment, or in the case of frameworks, apprenticeship certification.

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2.7. NCG Quality Indicators

NCG will adopt the **Institute for Apprenticeships' Quality Statement** as a reference point for our work on apprenticeships and we expect all stakeholder to consider the following when testing the feasibility and suitability of an apprenticeship contract or programme. Apprenticeships will meet the **skills needs of employers and apprentices** by reflecting the range of occupations and skill levels in our diverse economy. NCG will measure this by:

1. Assurance that all apprentices have **access to high quality off-the-job training** in line with expectations; apprenticeship courses must be validated against this non-negotiable requirement.
2. NCG will ensure that we work to support a high proportion of delivery to 16-23 year-olds; particularly those progressing from study programmes and at the Level 3 and higher level.
3. The robustness of the **initial and ongoing assessment** of the apprentice's skills and knowledge prior learning and the job role, against the framework or standard. Skill scanning at the start of the apprenticeship must be robust to a) understand the learner entry and b) discount the training costs if applicable.
4. The **development of maths and English skills for all apprentices**, and the development of **digital skills** where applicable.
5. The **quality** of training and progress review must be high to monitor and report on the development of **new skills and knowledge**.
6. The **quality of assessment** and **feedback** to apprentices to support their further development.
7. **Retention** rates over the planned duration of the apprenticeship.
8. The **achievement rates** of apprentices within planned timescales.
9. **The destinations** of apprentices remaining employment in the apprenticeship occupation (with the training employer or with a different employer). This will typically be at least 2 terms for a positive destination.
10. The extent to which apprentices know how to keep **themselves safe**, including risks from **radicalisation and** their knowledge associated with the **common values in modern Britain**.

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2.8. Accountability and Compliance

Accountability for adherence to this framework rests with the Principal who will ensure that internal control policies provide **internal assurance** that this policy is fully embedded; local board members must seek further assurance that this is the case.

Collective **responsibility** rests with staff at all levels – specifically the, senior management team, operation management team, employer partners and all staff with a teaching or training role within the organisation.

Group QA and Business Assurance (including use of external audit experts) will undertake desk and field-based **assurance** review of practice to assure the agreed process and standards. This will extend to a review of apprenticeship planning, and delivery methods, apprentice and staff forums, observation of practice (visits to the workplace and off-the-job training – including subcontractors), review of adherence to relevant policies and procedures.

Group DIS are **responsible** for the operating procedures and management of the ILR file working with college MIS/apprenticeship leads.

The Apprenticeship Council is both an **advisory group** to the NCG Executive, a forum for sharing best practice and policy updates, and most recently a secondary approval board for new standards. The latter due to the shared accountability and contribution to the Group's apprenticeship performance and published rates.

2.9. Apprenticeship Terms and Conditions

2.9.1. The Learning Plan

All apprentices will have a written Learning Plan specific to the apprenticeship framework standard to which they are contracted. The document is crucial to the administration process and are the basis for ensuring the programme is appropriate, legal, consistent and personalised. The apprenticeship agreement is a written statement displaying the employer's duty as meeting the Employment Rights Act 1996.

Apprenticeships follow set learning guidelines outlined within either a framework or standard based on both practical and academic skills. Apprentices will be required to attend both off-the-job training and the workplace to attain these goals. Attendance patterns will vary considerably depending on the sector and employer requirements which must be agreed with the employer before programme commencement.

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Apprentices are required to complete all elements of the apprenticeship specification (whether framework or standard) to achieve the apprenticeship framework; in most cases this will incorporate.

- Skills training – or competency/vocational training - incorporating a specified qualification in some frameworks and standards.
- Academic or theory training – incorporating a specified qualification in some frameworks and standards.
- Training and learning in mathematics – to a defined level, usually level 2, but with aspiration of at least GCSE grade 9-4.
- Training and learning in English – to a defined level, usually level 2, but an aspiration of at least GCSE grade 9-4.
- Digital skills were specified or required - incorporating a specified qualification in some frameworks and standards.
- Training and competencies associated with personal, social and employer-related skills.

2.9.2. Apprenticeship wage and hours of employment

GOV.UK provides regular guidance on the statutory apprenticeship wage. A minimum wage is in place for apprentices aged 16–18 and additionally for 19 year olds engaged in the first year of an apprenticeship.

The training period for an apprentice must not be less than 12 months.

Apprentices must be in paid employment for at least 30 hours per week. If the apprentices work fewer than 30 hours a week then the expected duration of the apprenticeship on the ILR (pro rata) must take account of this. Apprentices must be paid for off-the-job training away from the workplace as part of their normal, paid hours. The mode of which will be defined in the learning plan and will usually be day/block release or evening study. Apprentices who attend off-the-job training in hours that exceed their contracted hours must be paid in full. There are additional restrictions for apprentices aged

It is the responsibility of staff engaging with employers to ensure that the advice they provide to employer and prospective apprentices is accurate; support in providing such information should be provided by specialist staff where required. GOV.UK has comprehensive information relating to the employment of apprenticeships and post regular updates for training providers, employers and apprentices.

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www.gov.uk/ [search apprenticeships].

2.9.3. Validation and approval of NCG Apprenticeships

All apprenticeship will be formally validated by the college in line with existing arrangements which must be approved by a senior manager with delegated responsibility and the appropriate records maintained.

The college apprenticeship lead will concurrently follow the NCG Standard Approval Model (SAM) for approval by the NCG Apprenticeship Council. On successful approval, the standard will be added to the NCG Apprenticeship Prospectus (held on the apprenticeship portal). The college and SAM approval will focus on:

- The basis for approval [employer demand, Local market intelligence, links to agreed strategy].
- Arrangements for delivery high quality training and the mode of off the job training
- The apprenticeship standard reference and basic detail
- The relevant components [skills and knowledge, qualifications, English, mathematics, digital skills, personal development and employer-related].
- Associated funding bands and potential discounts for agreed prior learning. Considerations for minimum group size and sustainability.
- Confirmation of an approved EPAO has been linked to the standard otherwise no funding can be claimed

SLT must ensure that apprenticeship programme design facilitate progression for learners completing study programmes or courses for adults. Secondly senior leaders will assure themselves, wherever possible, that apprentices have progression to further and higher training or sustainable employment destinations once completing the programme.

Apprentices may start at any time during the academic year and leaders will specify entry points throughout the year to facilitate enrolment outside the traditional academic cycle. Students transferring from mainstream courses will require authorisation from a delegated senior management to minimize unintended disruption to their planned learning.

2.9.4. Securing apprenticeship opportunities

All NCG staff are encouraged to take an active role in the process of securing apprenticeship opportunities with high quality employers; this may be as simple as signposting a new start-up employer in the area, or

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by referring a personal business contact who has stated an interest in employing an apprentice.

The process of securing the college vacancies will be led by a designated senior leader against agreed strategies and curriculum priorities.

The sectors in which the college operates apprenticeships is driven by college strategy, developed in partnership with local board members, devolved sub-regional authorities, labor market intelligence and employer partners and influential business clusters.

2.9.5. Apprenticeship Recruitment

Apprentices are usually recruited by one of the following methods:

- Employer pledge and targeted recruitment using the college expertise and resource
- Employer recruitment (directly through their own processes)
- Conversions from study programme or adult provision following successful work placement

The role of the employer is crucial to the process and will require consultation and participation at all stages of the recruitment process.

College leads must ensure that employers are aware of their requirements/obligations to digital apprenticeship service, including arrangements for contracts and payments. The apprenticeship should not continue until obligations are fulfilled.

The recruitment process is tailored to suit individual employer requirements, although a number of consistent features are present in the recruitment process:

- Confirmation of the apprenticeship type (sector, level, standard).
- Confirmation of the skills and knowledge required, both at the start and end of the apprenticeship.
- Promotion of the vacancy by recruiting teams (business services or similar) through the find an apprenticeship microsite of gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
- Initial Assessment of English and mathematics.
- Skills and knowledge testing (for example skill-scan, skills-audit, trade-tests, questionnaire, scrutiny of prior learning).

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- Pre-Interview and suitability screening.
- Communication of provisional / firm offers of employment.

2.9.6. Enrolment

The bespoke nature of apprenticeship recruitment will ensure that enrolment is ongoing throughout the academic year although periods of particularly high activity are June-August [for progressing apprentices] and August-October [for new apprenticeship starts].

It is the responsibility of the employer-facing teams that information collated is accurate and timely and complies with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

2.9.7. Apprenticeship Induction

Apprentices require a specific induction due to the additional complexities associated with employment legislation, health and safety in the workplace and the specific policies that relate to apprenticeship training.

Designated delivery teams and associated teachers will ensure that the learning plan fields and associated evidence is completed at the point of enrolment and documented in the learning plan and first review. This will include as a minimum:

- Health, safety, insurance and welfare compliance assurance
- Safeguarding and Prevent training, with explicit contextual examples of potential risk
- Learner review
- Assessment of competency
- Overview of Apprenticeship rights and responsibilities
- A check and record of GCSE results / prior attainment
- Overview of the relevant programme
- Introduction to training and teaching staff
- Introduction to the provider, including a tour/familiarisation of training facilities
- A timetable or course plan
- Arranges for regular progress review of skills and knowledge
- Access to personal services, including IAG, progress

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- Distribution of Personal Protective Equipment
- Regulations relating to health, safety and equalities
- Accident reporting
- Reinforce any employer expectations / procedures

2.9.8. Compliance & Learner Review

All colleges will comply with relevant legislation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of apprentices in employment. The college will use only competent persons to assess the Health & Safety suitability of all external learning locations prior to any work based learning taking place. This is a legal duty arising from the Health & Safety at Work 1974 Act and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The compliance will be recorded formally and stored for compliance monitoring.

If the employer is new to the college or if any elements of the employer file have expired, then designated Health & Safety professional or delivery team (where qualified) will make the necessary arrangements to ensure the employer premises is appropriately vetted and processed.

At no time should an apprentice be placed with an employer if the employer file is incomplete. In doing, so the member of staff would place the apprentice, employer, College and Group at risk. This would be deemed by the Group to be grossly negligent.

Where appropriate, DBS checks will be carried out prior to commencement of the apprenticeship start – the requirements for this will be set out in college procedure and will be mandatory for all apprentices aged 16-18 and vulnerable adults in placement where they are likely to be supervised and have primary contact with a single person, rather than team of persons. Additional legal requirements are in place for sectors such as health and education which will be followed at all times.

At no time should an apprentice be placed with an employer if the disclosure process is required and has not been followed. In doing, so the member of staff would place the apprentice, employer, College and Group at risk. This would be deemed by the Group to be grossly-negligent.

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Delivery Teams will ensure that apprentice receives a formal induction in the workplace in addition to the College induction. This will be noted on the Learning Plan.

The content of the induction will vary depending on the nature of employment and organisation but as a minimum must contain:

- Specific health and safety arrangements, including prohibitions if applicable.
- Company specific policies and procedures.
- Details relating to wage, terms and conditions.
- The job role and expectations.
- Details of supervision and key personnel.
- Arrangements progress review, including format and timescales.
- Clear instruction with regard to safeguarding and Prevent.

Apprentices must be reviewed by an assessor or academic member staff every 4 to 6 weeks - the learner review cycle should be personalised, hence some apprentices who require additional support should be visited more regularly. As a guide the following review cycle should be adhered to:

Within...

- 2 weeks [following the employer induction] – to focus on settling, well-being, initial assessment, prior skills and knowledge
- 6 weeks - internal census ahead of qualifying period – to check suitability, well-being, realign targets and first progress check

College principals must assure themselves that they have a process in place to effectively monitor health & safety compliance, employer liability insurance, DBS clearance and learner review.

2.9.9. Apprenticeship Management

With a significant number of apprentices following different frameworks and standards in locations throughout the region and sometimes the country, it is important that the college adopts a formal process for the ongoing coordination, review and evaluation of the provision.

Senior leaders must implement a process by which key operation managers provide assurance that apprentice progress is understood and coordinated. In doing so a senior manager will be delegated to chair an

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apprenticeship review team/panel, or similar. This will be a formal meeting to monitor:

- that the College is fully compliant in terms of Health and Safety and Safeguarding in relation to apprenticeship provision.
- that apprenticeship contractual compliance in terms of apprenticeship administration including initial assessment, learning support, progress review and timely claim of achievement, unplaced learners, exams, data capture.
- To receive and interrogate team progress reports on matters associated with success.
- To receive and interrogate business team reports on matters associated with employment opportunities/recruitments of apprentices.
- Inform the team of strategic initiatives and developments that are likely to impact on the College provision in the short and medium term.
- Prepare for continuous improvement review, internal business assurance visits and external audit and receive reports for the purpose of development and continuous improvement.

2.9.10. Completion and claiming the apprenticeship framework

It is the responsibility of the Colleges to report achievement, only after obtaining apprenticeship certification (ACE) or end-point assessment results in line with prescribed local procedures. This is to ensure frameworks are claimed as 'timely' and that the apprentice subsequently receives their apprenticeship certificate and formally completes the training. The Apprenticeship Programme Team will follow this closely and action non-certification.

2.9.11. Unplaced Learner Procedure

It is the responsibility of the designated tutor/trainer to notify apprenticeship administration with regard to apprentices that have become unplaced. This will be recorded formally and will feature on the Apprenticeship Review Team agenda.

Additional responsibility, providing there is commitment from the apprentice, is to provide ongoing interventions with tangible outcomes to support the apprentice [see Annex B].

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An apprentice has to be employed continuously for the duration of the apprenticeship. If their employment is terminated, the individual cannot continue with their apprenticeship (with the exception of redundancy) where the break has been longer than 30 days. When employment or an apprenticeship agreement has ended (resignation, dismissal or any other action by the apprentice or the employer that results in the apprenticeship agreement ending) and new employment hasn't commenced within 30 days, you must notify ESFA that the apprentice has left in line with P285 of the funding rules. Where a new employer is found and employment starts within 30 days, you must manage this using a break in learning to ensure funds are not paid when the apprentice is not employed.

Apprentices who are made redundant through no fault of their own within 6 months of their expected end date can complete their apprenticeship framework without a new placement/employment.

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Annex A – Typical Roles & Responsibilities

College Senior Leadership Team

- Responsible for developing the apprenticeship offer in line with strategic priorities.
- Implementing procedures to maintain compliance to health and safety, wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Maintaining compliance with the key aspects of this policy.
- Make arrangements so that the progress of apprentices is comprehensively understood.
- Monitoring the contract profile and ensuring remedial measures are in place to achieve agreed performance metrics.

Head of Department

- Responsible for leading the delivery teams to ensure provision and resources are in place to meet the apprenticeships recruitment targets.
- Develop, implement and monitor a training programme that is line with standard and framework requirements.
- Ensure the department delivers high quality teaching, training and learning in the class, laboratory, and applied learning workshop/salons/kitchens to ensure the employer receives the value for money.
- Liaise with the administrative support to ensure apprenticeship contracts are set-up and claimed in a timely and effective way.
- Liaise with employer-facing staff on matters associated with recruitment, transitions, IAGC, learning support pastoral care through Progress Reviews and tutorial.
- Maintain consistent and current communication channels with employer partners and ensure frequent, informal reports are provided as good practice.
- Monitor the quality of provision and intervene where provision is seen to be less-than-standard for the college.

Head of Employer-facing Team

- Ensure the apprenticeship revision is coordinated across the college with regard to statutory duties relating to health & safety and contractual obligation relating to learner reviews and high quality, timely assessment.

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- Provide leadership to the employer-facing team; offer assurance that contractual requirements are regularly met, that efficiencies between employer-focused staff are achieved and provide support to departmental managers on matters associated with assessment.
- Have a proactive role on matters associated with quality assurance relating to apprenticeship practice with the aim of improving outcomes.

Apprenticeship Administration

- Working with employer-facing and training staff to ensure that all systems and records are compliant with contract and quality procedures.
- The team is encouraged to be proactive and ensure close links with exams and with departmental delivery staff is maintained.
- The team is responsible for ensuring management reports and financial information to the senior leadership team is accurate and timely.

Delivery Staff (including tutors, teachers, skills trainers, instructors, assessors, learning support)

- Responsible for monitoring attendance, progress review, course management, initial disciplinary actions, reporting achievements and progressions to intended destinations. It is the responsibility of the Delivery Team and associated teacher to ensure that the Learning Plan is regularly reviewed and updated by members of the Delivery Team.