Guidance
Providing apprenticeships during the COVID-19 pandemic

Updated 7 July 2022

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Details

This guidance is for apprenticeship training providers (providers), employers, end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) and apprentices.

It describes:

- how and when apprentices can safely train and undertake assessment in the workplace, education and assessment settings
- the temporary flexibilities which apply during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

This document should be read alongside:

- the safe working guidance
- the Further Education (FE) operational guidance
- the apprenticeship training and assessment COVID-19 guidance and support for businesses
- the apprenticeship funding rules
- the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education guidance
- The public health guidance to support events from January 2022

Our aim is to help employers and apprentices to continue, complete and transfer their apprenticeships wherever possible.

Some of this guidance can be found on the Apprenticeship Service news page for employers, providers and apprentices, as well as in a blog for apprentices.

Updates

All apprentices can attend on-site training and assessment.

Once Step 4 of the Roadmap out of lockdown commences, all apprentices will be able to attend the workplace.

Apprenticeship training and assessment

Apprenticeship training and assessment usually takes place in education and training, assessment centres (including community settings), and the workplace. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic we have had to restrict where training and assessment can take place.

All apprentices can attend on-site training and assessment in educational settings in line with safe working.

Providers, employers and EPAOs should operate in line with the relevant guidance to continue to judge the appropriate balance of on-site and remote training and assessment.

Training and assessment in educational settings

Apprenticeship delivery can vary flexible, and it is up to training providers, employers and EPAOs to agree:

- how apprenticeship training is delivered
- how assessments are undertaken
- whether to use more than one delivery method
- the appropriate balance of on-site and remote training based on the apprenticeship and the apprentice's ability to train remotely

Where apprentices are in training settings, providers should follow the Further Education (FE) operational guidance. HE providers should follow the HE guidance.

Apprentices undertaking EPA and FSQ assessment

All apprentices can undertake EPA and FSQ in all settings.

EPAOs should continue to determine the appropriate balance of on-site and remote assessment based on the apprenticeship and the apprentice's ability to take their assessment remotely.

Where the EPA takes place onsite, the guidance on delivering exams within the Further Education (FE) operational guidance must be followed.

Where face-to-face assessment is undertaken remotely, guidance from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) must be followed.

Apprentices in the workplace

Once Step 4 of the Roadmap out of lockdown commences, all apprentices will be able to attend the workplace. Until then, apprentices should only attend workplaces if they are able to do their apprenticeship safely. Training, EPA and FSQ assessment for apprenticeship training and assessment can be delivered in the workplace provided that workplace meets COVID-secure guidance.

Disruption to training

Breaks in learning

Apprentices may be unable to attend training because of illness, caring responsibilities and operational disruption, or training providers may be unable to deliver training.

Apprenticeship funding rules state that for disruption in learning of:

- less than one full week – neither the employer nor the training provider needs to report the interruption, the end-date for the apprenticeship remains the same and there is no change to the payment of funding
- more than 4 weeks – employers and/or training providers must report a break in learning to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute). The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) reserves the right to recover funding which was claimed for and paid to the provider but for which the provider was found not to be eligible

Providers:

- will not be paid more for rescheduling off-the-job training and bringing it forward. The normal monthly payment profile will apply over the length of the apprenticeship. Providers should not profit from the disruption caused by the pandemic
- may need to revise the price of their apprenticeship if the delivery method is changed, or if the amount of training needed to complete the apprenticeship is reduced. Employer and provider if any changes occur to the agreed delivery method that result in a change in price, then this should be discussed and amended
- may need to revise and record any material changes in costs, but it may not be possible to do so immediately

Disruption to assessment

All apprentices can undertake EPA and FSQ in all settings.

EPAOs should continue to determine the appropriate balance of on-site and remote assessment based on the apprenticeship and the apprentice's ability to take their assessment remotely.

Remote tests

If an assessment requires face-to-face engagement, this can be conducted remotely, provided the following conditions are met:

- arrangements are covered in advance by the EPA provider
- the apprentice's identity is verified
- remote tests are supervised by an appropriately trained invigilator or assessor who has relevant occupational knowledge, training or experience and who has been briefed on the requirements of the EPA and the role of the invigilator or assessor
- apprentices technology and systems are in place
- the impact that remote assessment may have on apprentices is taken into consideration, including the potential disadvantage of remote assessment for apprentices

Where alternatives are not appropriate, practical and reasonable, might be necessary to postpone the EPA. Providers should work with their EPAO and employer to agree a date for EPA. But it must be logged and shared with ESFA providers and the Institute.

Tests must only be carried out in a supervised, controlled environment. EPAOs must ensure that the EPA is fair, reliable and consistent with the details of regulatory arrangements and guidance for conducting EPA.

Rescheduling EPA

Apprentices who are deemed ready for assessment but cannot be assessed due to issues relating to COVID-19 can have their EPA rescheduled. If the EPA timeline needs to be extended because of COVID-19 disruption, the Institute and training providers (TPs) are responsible for agreeing extensions to timelines. EPAOs should work with ESFA providers to ensure that quality is maintained.

Extensions to the end-point assessment (EPA) may cause no done remedy. When a special circumstance affecting a learner's EPA is recorded, it is recorded against the learner's EPA. Learners who are affected by COVID-19 should be given the EPA grade profile, any code 9 in the Institute for apprenticeships. The calculation of assessment plan grade will be based on the grade profile and the learner's data.

If an apprentice is unwell, or in a period of self-isolation and unable to attend their EPA, they should contact their training provider as soon as they are able to inform them. The maximum time for re-schedule.

Apprentice whose gateway is being delayed are allowed a break in learning, with an extension to the assessment timeframe. The training provider is required to record this in the ILR and keep EPAOs informed.

EPA facilitations

To maintain progress, achievement and delivery of EPA, the Institute have introduced flexibilities and allowances to assessment plans. These allow apprentices to complete their EPA during the pandemic.

All EPA facilitations and allowances put in place due to COVID-19 have been extended until at least 31 August 2022. The Institute will give 12 weeks' notice if any changes are announced to existing facilities before EPAOs will have to deliver them.

In addition to the facilitations set out by the Institute, ESFA provides 'two additional allowances' to the delivery of EPA which apply to more than 500 apprenticeship standards.

ESFA provides remain responsible for ensuring consistency and quality of assessment. ESFA provides are responsible for ensuring that the assessment plan is met and that assessment options have been accounted for in the simulated assessment. Where assessment options are not available, ESFA provides are responsible for ensuring that methods providing they do not compromise quality or the intention of the assessment plan. ESFA provides are responsible for ensuring that the EPA is fair, reliable and consistent, proposals should be shared with and approved or denied by subsidiary organisations, ESFA provides.

The Institute works with ESFA providers to understand where standards require measures to be put in place and regularly updates the list of standards. The Institute publishes a list of standards affected by COVID-19 on GOV.UK. The list is ready to US that EPA. Where this is not the case, the EPA should be rescheduled.

Payments to EPAOs

Apprenticeship training providers will continue to be paid retrospectively for the training they have delivered even when delivered on a remote basis. Providers should continue to pay EPAOs in line with their contractual arrangements for assessment. Providers should not profit from the disruption caused by the pandemic. Providers and EPAOs should agree payment schedules and audit checks. The payment schedules should include an accurate record of the cost of EPA.

ESFA reserves the right to recover funding which was claimed for and paid to the training provider, but for which the training provider was found not to be eligible, such as where an EPA has not taken place.

If apprentices take breaks in learning, training providers must report this in line with the apprenticeship funding rules and EPAOs will not receive payments for apprentices who are on breaks in learning.

OFQUAL guidance for EPAOs

Ofqual have published guidance for EPAOs where they are the EQA provider.

Qualification certificates

If awarding organisations are unable to issue qualification certificates confirming apprentice achievement, they should provide a letter, through gateway, or confirmation of an engagement via support tracking providers and employers in accepting a confirmation letter as evidence of the apprentice's achievement of a framework. For qualifications details must contain the following information:

- apprentice details
- certification cut-date
- unique number

The awarding organisation will issue the formal certification when they are able to do so.

Apprenticeship certificates

We have introduced a temporary flexibility to allow apprenticeship certificates to be issued to the employer, rather than the apprentice, if the employer requests it because the employer's office is closed. The flexibility also applies to requesting a replacement certificate.

Disruption to employment

If apprentices are required to work in their usual job at their usual place of work, they could:

- engage in off-the-job training within the workplace at a convenient time within their agreed working hours
- engage in digital or distance learning at a convenient time within their agreed working hours
- take a break in learning on site mentor support
- take a short pause in their learning of less than 4 weeks while still completing their planned end-date
- take a break in learning of 4 weeks or more and re-calculate their planned end-date upon their return to learning

If apprentices cannot attend their usual place of work, they could:

- engage in digital or distance learning at a convenient time within their agreed working hours
- take a short pause in their learning of less than 4 weeks while still completing their planned end-date
- take a break in learning of 4 weeks or more and re-calculate their planned end-date upon their return to learning

If apprentices take breaks in learning, training providers must report this in line with the apprenticeship funding rules and EPAOs will not receive payments for apprentices who are on breaks in learning.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccination

Employers are encouraged to support their employees to attend vaccination appointments and, where they are eligible, complete their coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination.

Apprentices that have been made redundant, or think they might be made redundant, can find jobs on apprenticeship support for employers. They can also engage with Jobcentre Plus. Once they create an apprenticeship opportunity, it will be advertised on Find apprenticeships. Employers can then review applications from candidates who have vacancies skills and experience that apprenticeship.

Employers who would like to recruit a redundant apprentice or offer new apprenticeship opportunities, should create an apprenticeship vacancy on gov.uk. Employers can also contact apprenticeships. Once they create an apprenticeship opportunity, it will be advertised on Find apprenticeships. Employers can then review applications from candidates who have vacancies skills and experience that apprenticeship.

Changing employers

Apprentices who have been made redundant, or who are at risk of redundancy, can find a job using the apprenticeship vacancies service and be taken permitted to start training for and training with their new employer. Where an apprentice had planned to start with a new employer, but the job offer has been withdrawn, they should be able to do so. Any gaps between employers due to COVID-19, they will remain eligible for support on their return.

Universal Credit for apprentices

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has confirmed that where an apprentice has been made redundant, they may be eligible for Universal Credit. Apprentices who receive Universal Credit (UC) may be eligible for other benefits. In most cases, they will be better off being on UC and undertaking work related activity – for example, being available and looking for work alongside their study.

If study is worthwhile, this may be accepted as work preparation activity. This is dependent on the individual's circumstances. Work coaches will be able to provide more information on whether this is relevant. Work coaches will also be able to offer advice and support and signposting to other sources of support.

Functional skills requirements

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has confirmed that where an apprentice has been made redundant, they may be eligible for Universal Credit (UC) if they are claiming Universal Credit (UC) if they are claiming benefits. In most cases, they will be better off being on UC and undertaking work related activity – for example, being available and looking for work alongside their study.

If study is worthwhile, this may be accepted as work preparation activity. This is dependent on the individual's circumstances. Work coaches will be able to provide more information on whether this is relevant. Work coaches will also be able to offer advice and support and signposting to other sources of support.

Training for employers

Redundant apprentices

Redundancy is a difficult, complex process. Employers may not be able to offer apprenticeships training, based on their circumstances.

If an apprentice is made redundant, the main provider must help the apprentice find another employer to continue their apprenticeship as quickly as possible. When a provider is unable to find a new employer for an apprentice, they should work with their employer to offer support, EPAO and provider to provide recommendations and support. Apprentices and training providers to return information on employers for the apprentice to consider.

Funds are available to support redundant apprentices who complete their apprenticeship if they are at least 75% of their way through their apprenticeship at the point of redundancy. Funding rules are updated on 1 October 2020 to 30 October 2020 that are based in the ESFA funding.

We've updated our apprenticeship funding rules to require providers to make a record of apprenticeship pure commitment. Providers to agree this with their employer and the apprentice because they have been unable to find a new employer.

Support for redundant apprentices

If an apprentice is made redundant but wants to continue their apprenticeship and training with their employer, the employer may be eligible for a redundancy payment and funding to continue training the apprentice, in line with the eligibility criteria and the funding rules for main providers.

Situation 1: Apprentice was made redundant on or after 1 August 2020 but before 15 October 2020 who, on the day of redundancy, was within 6 months of the final step of their apprenticeship

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the main provider and the previous employer, up to the funding band maximum.

If the apprentice, within this 6 month period:

- finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs

Situation 2: Apprentice was made redundant on or after 15 October 2020 and who, on the day of redundancy, was within 6 months of the final step of their apprenticeship

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the main provider and the previous employer, up to the funding band maximum.

If the apprentice, within this period:

- finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs

Situation 3: Apprentice does not fit into any category above and is more than 12 months away from the final step of training

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the main provider and the previous employer for a maximum of 12 months.

If, within this 12 week period:

- the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs for up to 12 weeks

Situation 4: Apprentice does not fit into any category above and is more than 12 months away from the final step of training

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the main provider and the previous employer for a maximum of 12 weeks.

If, within this 12 week period:

- the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs for up to 12 weeks

Employers may be eligible for a redundancy payment and funding to continue training the apprentice, if they meet the eligibility criteria and the funding rules for main providers.

Apprentices that have been made redundant, or think they might be made redundant, can find jobs on apprenticeship support for employers. They can also engage with Jobcentre Plus. Once they create an apprenticeship opportunity, it will be advertised on Find apprenticeships. Employers can then review applications from candidates who have vacancies skills and experience that apprenticeship.

Employers who would like to recruit a redundant apprentice or offer new apprenticeship opportunities, should create an apprenticeship vacancy on gov.uk. Employers can also contact apprenticeships. Once they create an apprenticeship opportunity, it will be advertised on Find apprenticeships. Employers can then review applications from candidates who have vacancies skills and experience that apprenticeship.

Case studies - Examples of furlough and furlough

Redundancy support service for employers

Apprentices who have been made redundant, or who are at risk of redundancy, can find jobs using the apprenticeship vacancies service and be taken permitted to start training with their new employer.

The service provides advice to apprentices on their redundancy, their options and next steps. It also provides information on how employers can find and recruit apprentices and, where they are eligible, complete their coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination.

Apprentices that have been made redundant, or think they might be made redundant, can find jobs on apprenticeship support for employers. They can also engage with Jobcentre Plus. Once they create an apprenticeship opportunity, it will be advertised on Find apprenticeships. Employers can then review applications from candidates who have vacancies skills and experience that apprenticeship.

Employers who would like to recruit a redundant apprentice or offer new apprenticeship opportunities, should create an apprenticeship vacancy on gov.uk. Employers can also contact apprenticeships. Once they create an apprenticeship opportunity, it will be advertised on Find apprenticeships. Employers can then review applications from candidates who have vacancies skills and experience that apprenticeship.

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Funds are available to support redundant apprentices who complete their apprenticeship if they are at least 75% of their way through their apprenticeship at the point of redundancy. Funding rules are updated on 1 October 2020 to 30 October 2020 that are based in the ESFA funding.

We've updated our apprenticeship funding rules to require providers to make a record of apprenticeship pure commitment. Providers to agree this with their employer and the apprentice because they have been unable to find a new employer.

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If an apprentice is made redundant but wants to continue their apprenticeship and training with their employer, the employer may be eligible for a redundancy payment and funding to continue training the apprentice, in line with the eligibility criteria and the funding rules for main providers.

Situation 1: Apprentice was made redundant on or after 1 August 2020 but before 15 October 2020 who, on the day of redundancy, was within 6 months of the final step of their apprenticeship

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the main provider and the previous employer, up to the funding band maximum.

If the apprentice, within this 6 month period:

- finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs

Situation 2: Apprentice was made redundant on or after 15 October 2020 and who, on the day of redundancy, was within 6 months of the final step of their apprenticeship

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the main provider and the previous employer, up to the funding band maximum.

If the apprentice, within this period:

- finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs

Situation 3: Apprentice does not fit into any category above and is more than 12 months away from the final step of training

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the main provider and the previous employer for a maximum of 12 months.

If, within this 12 week period:

- the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs for up to 12 weeks

Situation 4: Apprentice does not fit into any category above and is more than 12 months away from the final step of training

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the main provider and the previous employer for a maximum of 12 weeks.

If, within this 12 week period:

- the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs for up to 12 weeks

Employers may be eligible for a redundancy payment and funding to continue training the apprentice, if they meet the eligibility criteria and the funding rules for main providers.

Apprentices that have been made redundant, or think they might be made redundant, can find jobs on apprenticeship support for employers. They can also engage with Jobcentre Plus. Once they create an apprenticeship opportunity, it will be advertised on Find apprenticeships. Employers can then review applications from candidates who have vacancies skills and experience that apprenticeship.

Employers who would like to recruit a redundant apprentice or offer new apprenticeship opportunities, should create an apprenticeship vacancy on gov.uk. Employers can also contact apprenticeships. Once they create an apprenticeship opportunity, it will be advertised on Find apprenticeships. Employers can then review applications from candidates who have vacancies skills and experience that apprenticeship.

Claiming as an 18-year-old

If an 18-year-old redundant apprentice training at level 3 or below plans to claim prior to 1 September 2021 following their 19th birthday, their eligibility will be based on how long they train for and whether they meet the appropriate eligibility criteria.

If an apprentice is 18 or over and training full-time (more than 12 hours a week), they can claim if any of the following apply. If they:

- live with their partner and are eligible for UC
- are responsible for a child, either as a single person or as a couple
- are disabled and entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and have limited capability to work
- are in further education, are 21 or under and do not have parental support, for example they're estranged from their parents and they're not under local authority care

If a redundant apprentice does not meet the criteria above but is studying more than 12 hours a week, then they would not claim UC, but their parents would be able to claim the child element of UC (if eligible) and Child Benefit instead, up until (but not including) the 1st September following their 19th birthday.

If a redundant apprentice does not meet the criteria above and is studying 12 hours a week or less, they can claim UC in their own right if they are 18 or over. If they are under 18, they have no entitlement, and their parents are not able to claim the child element of UC or Child Benefit.

Exceptions for 16 and 17-year-olds

In most cases an individual must be 18 or over to claim UC, however there are some exceptions which allow a 16 or 17-year-old to apply. If a redundant apprentice is under the age of 18, they may be eligible to claim UC if they are training at level 3 or below and they:

- have limited capability for work or have medical evidence and are waiting for a Work Capability Assessment
- are caring for a severely disabled person
- are responsible for a child
- are in a couple with responsibility for at least one child and their partner is eligible for Universal Credit
- are pregnant and it's 11 weeks or less before their expected week of childbirth
- have had a child in the last 15 weeks
- do not have parental support, for example they're estranged from their parents and they're not under local authority care

More information is available on Universal Credit: Eligibility. If there is any discrepancy between that webpage and this, the Universal Credit: Eligibility webpage takes precedence.

Apprentices unable to return to work in England

Apprentices who have been unable to return to England due to the pandemic but have been able to train and work remotely will still be eligible for funding. If an existing apprentice spends more than 50% of their working time, over the duration of their apprenticeship, outside of England due to COVID-19, they will remain eligible for support.

Functional skills requirements

Temporarily suspending the requirement for Level 2 apprentices to attempt Level 2 FSQs

For level 2 (intermediate) apprenticeships, apprentices must achieve a level 1 in both English and maths functional skills qualifications (FSQ) to complete their apprenticeship. Intermediate apprentices are also usually required to study towards and attempt the functional skills assessments at level 2. However, apprentices who have a planned end date of on or before 31 December 2021 do not have to work towards and attempt the level 2 functional skills English and maths assessment and can move through to gateway to sit their EPA. For apprentices with a planned end date after 31 December 2021, the normal (pre- COVID) rules and requirements for level 2 apprentices apply. Main providers should retain evidence if an apprentice did not take the level 2 assessments and add a dated note to the evidence pack for the apprentice explaining that the test was not taken due to revised guidance during COVID-19.

This temporary suspension will allow apprentices, employers, training providers and EPAOs to focus on other key requirements for completion of a level 2 apprenticeship.

A level 2 apprentice will still require a level 1 functional skills in English and/or maths to complete their apprenticeship. The temporary suspension applies to both apprenticeship standards and frameworks.

There will be no requirement for those apprentices who are passed through gateway to go back and take the level 2 functional skills test. However, if the apprentice would like to attempt the level 2 functional skills English and maths assessment, they should be allowed to do so. This should not be a barrier to them progressing to EPA, as the (optional) level 2 FSQ assessment can be taken before, alongside or after EPA.

Apprentices undertaking a level 3 or higher apprenticeship are still required to hold or achieve an approved level 2 functional skills English and maths qualification before they can successfully complete their apprenticeship.

Flexibility permitting EPA prior to FSQ achievement

A temporary flexibility introduced on 23 February 2021 allowed eligible apprentices who were ready to take their FSQ assessments in English and maths to start their EPA on or before 31 May 2021 and return to complete FSQ assessment within three months of starting their EPA.

Providers must continue to ensure that apprentices who have used the flexibility take their FSQ assessment within three months of beginning their EPA.

Where this flexibility has been used, apprentices can still only complete their apprenticeship once they have passed their EPA and achieved their FSQ in English and/or maths as required. After these achievements have been confirmed by the EPAO, apprentices can request a completion certificate. Training providers must provide prompt confirmation of the apprentice's FSQ results to EPA organisations once these have been awarded, to allow certification to be issued.

Assessment Arrangements for FSQs

Alternative assessment arrangements are available for those apprentices who are unable to take their FSQ assessment, either face to face in a safe setting or remotely.

Audit

Obtaining signatures

If training providers already have a digital or electronic signature process, they must continue to use their existing processes in accordance with the respective funding rules.

If a provider has no system or process in place to capture a digital or electronic signature, then a wet signature is normally required for recruitment and evidence of continuing learning. A wet signature is created when a person physically 'marks' a document.

If training providers cannot obtain wet signatures due to the COVID-19 restrictions, confirmation or evidence can be obtained through email.

For audit evidence, a record of acknowledgement or adoption of a genuine electronic message or document is required. Acceptable alternative evidence includes:

- an email from the apprentice and/or employer's email address with details of the confirmation and their typed name at the end of the message
- a typed name on an electronic form or document emailed from the apprentice and/or employer
- a signed scanned document attached to an email from the apprentice and/or employer
- a photo taken on a camera or digital medium of the signed document attached to an email from the apprentice and/or employer

Training providers can only use this type of electronic confirmation during the period of restrictions due to COVID-19 if no other useable digital or electronic processes exist. This is not to be used as alternative evidence as part of a provider's business as usual process once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

Training providers using alternative evidence must resume their usual process for obtaining wet signatures when restrictions are removed. Training providers must ensure that all alternative evidence replacing wet signatures received during the COVID-19 restrictions is genuine and irrefutable, and the evidence is retained for audit.

Contact us

We cannot address individual scenarios or circumstances. For queries not covered by this guidance, please contact the apprenticeship service helpline by:

Telephone: 08000 150 600

Email: helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk

Annex A - Examples of Furlough payment

Our worked examples show how to calculate whether the furlough payment equates to less than the appropriate minimum wage entitlement for time spent training.

Example 1:

18-year-old first year apprentice is on a 37 hours per week contract and has been furloughed. They are continuing to train for 1 day per week (7.5 hours per week).

In terms of the National Minimum Wage (NMW) regulations they are entitled to £4.15 for every hour they train. (Note that the NMW legislation does not apply to time not in work or training).

Over the 3-week furlough period (the pay reference period) this amounts to a NMW entitlement of £93.38 (£4.15 x 7.5 hours x 3 weeks).

The 80% furlough payment that they have received from their employer is £368. This furlough payment provides sufficient money to cover these training hours.

From September 2020, where the level of grant from the government has been reduced to below 80%, the employer must substitute the contribution the government is currently making, ensuring that staff continue to receive at least 80% of their salary, up to £2,500 a month.

Example 2:

22-year-old second year apprentice is on a 37 hours per week contract and has been furloughed. They have agreed, with their employer and provider, to train for 4 days per week (7.5 hours per day) (to cover as much off-the-job training as possible during this period).

In terms of the NMW regulations they are entitled to £8.20 for every hour they train. (Note that the NMW legislation does not apply to time not in work or training).

Over the 3-week furlough period (the pay reference period) this amounts to a NMW entitlement of £738 (£8.20 x 7.5 hours x 4 days x 3 weeks).

The 80% furlough payment that they have received from their employer is £728.16. This furlough payment does not provide sufficient money to cover these training hours and the employer would need to top up the difference (£9.84).

From September 2020, where the level of grant from the government has been reduced to below 80%, the employer must substitute the contribution the government is currently making, ensuring that staff continue to receive at least 80% of their salary, up to £2,500 a month. This is in addition to the £9.84 calculated above.

Note in both cases above the apprentice, prior to furlough, was paid at/close to the NMW.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

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