



Department
for Education

Apprenticeship Funding Rules

August 2025 to July 2026

Summary of Changes – Version 1

May 2025

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Introduction

Skills are crucial to this government's mission to grow the economy under our Plan for Change. We have committed to offering more flexibility and choice over how apprenticeship levy funds can be spent, while simplifying the system for employers and providers.

With the introduction of the Growth and Skills Offer, we will provide this flexibility while continuing to offer high-quality apprenticeships that unlock economic growth and break down barriers to opportunity.

New training options, products and funding rule changes will grow the programme, increase quality and boost opportunities for young people.

Foundation apprenticeships will give young people a route into careers in critical sectors. They will enable them to earn a wage whilst developing vital skills and provide employers with a pipeline of new talent essential for driving growth.

We will also provide greater flexibility over the current apprenticeship offer by reducing the minimum duration from 12 to 8 months, where appropriate, for specific industries or individuals with significant prior learning. These **shorter duration apprenticeships** will enable learners to achieve occupational competence more quickly and promote growth and acceleration in their sectors.

In February 2025, the Government announced improvements to apprenticeship assessment and has published a new set of assessment principles. These principles set out that the **assessment process** will be streamlined by enabling more design and delivery flexibility so that:

- Assessment is more proportionate to the competency being tested and removes any duplication
- Where appropriate, assessment plans can be designed to allow assessment to take place on programme
- Where appropriate, training providers will be able to deliver elements of the assessment. End-point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) will continue to shape the assessment and ensure the validity of outcomes.

These changes will apply to all apprenticeships at all levels, with existing assessment plans being rewritten on a standard-by-standard basis from April 2025.

We're continuing to review the funding options for **level 7 apprenticeships** and how it aligns with our skills priorities. The Department for Education will make decisions about affected apprenticeships in due course, with updates published [here](#).

To reflect this, we have made a number of changes to the funding rules for 2025/26. We have worked in partnership with a range of stakeholders including AoC, AELP, UVAC and our Expert Provider Group who have helped us to make the policy changes and clarifications set out in the tables below. The changes include:

- **Amending the off-the-job training (OTJT) policy.** We have undertaken a review of the existing policy, in the light of the change to the minimum duration, the introduction of new products and feedback from the sector. We have made the following changes (for new starts):
 - We will publish a minimum OTJT figure on each standard (as a temporary measure, due to IfATE's transition to Skills England, this information can be found in Annex C). This minimum figure will replace the need for the provider to calculate the OTJT minimum hours requirement for each learner. We considered a range of information when setting the figure including current durations (both the IfATE typical duration and actual time on programme) and the volume of planned and actual hours being reported in the ILR by providers. 2025/26 is a transition year in which we will continue to collect delivery information and work with partners to assess if the volumes are reflective of actual delivery.
 - The policy will remain an absolute policy for 2025/26 and so to be eligible for government funding an apprentice with no relevant prior learning must receive at least the published volume of OTJT hours for the standard (or a reduced figure for evidenced RPL). Funds are at risk of recovery if the published OTJT volume for the standard (or a reduced figure for evidenced RPL) is not met.
 - We are removing the delivery link between OTJT and time on programme, This means that providers will be free to deliver the OTJT hours over whatever time-frame they choose (subject to meeting the minimum duration requirement). If the duration on programme increases or decreases, there will no longer be an impact on the minimum OTJT requirement.
 - Finally, in a change of approach for part-time learners, providers will no longer need to automatically extend durations for part-time learners.

These changes will reduce bureaucracy around the OTJT calculation and provide increased flexibility in the delivery of off-the-job training.

- **Confirming English and maths requirements and active learning.** We have provided further details around evidence and gateway requirements for apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training and stipulated

that active learning for English and maths must take place in line with the training plan, for all apprentices who study English and maths.

- **Foundation apprenticeships.** We have included a new section within the rules following the announcement of foundation apprenticeships. The rules in this section only cover those aspects that differ from other apprenticeships (i.e. from non-foundation apprenticeships). All other rules and evidence requirements within the funding rules document still apply in order for the apprentice and foundation apprenticeship to be eligible for funding.
- **Additional payments.** We have provided details of when the final payment will be made for those apprentices who are on a foundation apprenticeship or who are on an apprenticeship standard which has a published typical duration of less than 12 months.
- **End-point assessment.** In line with the announced reforms to apprenticeship assessment in February 2025, and the published [assessment principles](#), we have reflected changes at **Annex B** where assessment plans for apprenticeship standards have been revised. For apprenticeship standards where the assessment plan has not yet been revised, the rules for end-point assessment remain as set out in the main funding rules.

We will provide separate guidance on the new approach to apprenticeship assessment to supplement these rules which we expect to publish in Summer 2025.

- **Annex A Residency eligibility criteria (who we fund).** We have clarified that those with Pre-Settled Status through the EU Settlement Scheme are eligible for funding (as their Pre-Settled Status is automatically extended by the Home Office). We have also clarified that asylum seekers are not eligible for funding.

Purpose

We are publishing the apprenticeship funding rules for 2025 to 2026.

This document sets out amendments to the following document:

- Apprenticeship funding rules: August 2024 to July 2025 version 2

These funding rules apply to:

- Main providers and employer-providers receiving funding for delivering apprenticeship training and on-programme assessment in England; and
- Employers of apprentices who are accessing funding for apprenticeships in England.

These funding rules will apply to all apprenticeships starting on or after 1 August 2025 unless stated otherwise.

We have identified the rules that have changed from the 2024 to 2025 funding rules in the tables below. Note that evidence requirements have been updated in line with any rule changes.

This document is intended as a summary of changes and does not replace the funding rules themselves. You should refer to the main funding rules document for the complete rules.

Summary of changes

Introduction and purpose of the document

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: We have clarified that the rules on redundancy and changing to a new version of a standard apply irrespective of the apprentice's start date and will include existing learners who started their programme in previous funding years.	4	
Policy update: Those providers and employers who are delivering apprenticeship standards where the assessment plan has been revised under the new apprenticeship assessment principles must refer to Annex B of these rules.	10	Working with IfATE, Ofqual, the Office for Students and other regulatory bodies we are continuing to develop the policy and process to inform the implementation of revised assessment plans. We will provide separate guidance in Summer 2025.
Policy update: We have removed references to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) throughout the document following the decision to bring its functions into the Department for Education.	-	

Learner eligibility

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: Shareholder / directors can also be called 'persons of significant control', so we have added this terminology.	27.3	

Recognition of prior learning and experience

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Clarification: Text updated to align with the changes in the off-the-job training policy (i.e. the prior learning reduction now references the published hours for the minimum volume of off-the-job training delivery and recognises that the link between off-the-job training and duration has been removed).</p>	33	

Apprentices who need access to learning support

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Clarification: Confirmation that where we refer to English and maths requirements that this also includes learners aged 19+ who have opted in to this learning.</p>	34.1	

Support for English and maths training

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Clarification: We have clarified that providers must use the initial assessment to determine whether apprentices aged 19+ will be studying English and /or maths during the programme.</p>	41	
<p>Clarification: We have clarified that the employer holds overall responsibility for the decision to opt-in their 19+ apprentices to study a standalone English and / or maths qualification.</p>	41.2	
<p>Clarification: We have clarified the difference between a standalone English and / or maths qualification and where it may be a mandatory requirement of the standard.</p>	41.2.1	
<p>Clarification: We have clarified that for 19+ apprentices who are not studying English and / or maths, they are not required to undertake the diagnostic assessment portion of the initial assessment, nor provide evidence of prior attainment.</p>	42.1	
<p>Policy update: We have introduced the requirement for providers to ensure that apprentices who are studying English and / or maths must carry out active learning in line with the signed training plan. This is separate to OTJT active learning, as stipulated in the glossary definition. Providers must comply with both active learning rules separately where English and / or maths funding is being accessed.</p>	43.2/44.2	

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: We have clarified that providers must not use ASF or any other DfE funded programmes, whilst claiming from the apprenticeship budget.	51	

The outcome of the initial assessment

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: That the provider must evidence that the individual requires significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to be occupationally competent in their job role, and that the training required meets the funding rules.	57	This text was removed from the rules in 23/24 as part of the simplification exercise but we have received feedback to suggest it should be reinstated.
Clarification: The provider must give the learner the opportunity to declare their eligibility for the care leavers' bursary.	58	

Apprenticeship agreement (between the employer and the apprentice)

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: The apprenticeship agreement must be extended if the programme is extended.	64.4	Note that this is already on the gov.uk template and has been copied to the funding rules for completeness only.

Minimum duration and employment hours

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Policy change: For new starts from 1 August 2025, the minimum duration has reduced to 8 months (from 12 months).	71	The legislation required to implement this change is expected to be in force by 1 August 2025.
Clarification: The new minimum duration has been reflected in this paragraph in relation to learners subject to redundancy.	72.1	
Policy change: As a result of the changes to the off-the-job training policy, there is no longer a requirement for the provider to automatically extend the expected duration of the apprenticeship if, at the beginning of the apprenticeship, the apprentice works fewer than 30 hours a week or has a zero-hours contract. However, the provider must still consider the working hours, in setting the duration, so that training expectations are realistic.	73	

Off-the-job training

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: When we say English and/or maths is excluded from off-the-job training we mean stand-alone qualifications rather than where English and/or maths has been embedded into the occupational content of a standard.	77.2	

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy change: Providers will no longer need to calculate the minimum off-the-job training hours for each apprentice; the minimum requirement (for an apprentice with no prior learning) will be published on each standard.</p>	78	Temporarily, due to the transition of the Institute's website to Skills England, the published hours information can be found in Annex C.
<p>Policy change: To be eligible for government funding, an apprentice with no relevant prior learning must receive at least the published volume of off-the-job training hours for the standard. This figure can only be reduced if there is evidence of relevant prior learning. The resulting programme, with a corresponding price reduction, must not fall below 187 hours of evidenced delivery or 8 months in actual duration. Funds are at risk of recovery if the off-the-job training minimum requirement (reduced where applicable for prior learning) is not met.</p>	79	
<p>Policy change: We are simplifying the off-the-job training policy and removing the delivery link between the minimum required hours and the apprentice's planned (or actual) time on programme. We believe that this will allow for increased delivery flexibility. A provider can deliver the published minimum required hours, reduced where appropriate for relevant and evidenced prior learning, over any timeframe (subject to meeting the minimum duration of 8 months) without it impacting of the volume of off-the-job training required.</p>	80	

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy change: There will no longer be a distinction between a full-time and a part-time apprentice in relation to off-the-job training delivery. This means that providers will no longer have to automatically extend the programme for part-time apprentices. However, when setting the duration, the provider must consider working hours so that training expectations are realistic.</p>	80.3	
<p>Policy change: The planned hours documented for each learner must be at least the published figure on the standard/Annex C, or a reduced figure if there is evidence of relevant prior learning.</p>	82	
<p>Clarification: The provider is ultimately responsible for the delivery of all required off-the-job training, to enable the apprentice to reach full occupational competence against the standard, even if another party (e.g. subcontractor, employer, learner) delivers this training.</p>	84	
<p>Clarification: The learning end date must only be recorded when the last piece of learning has been delivered (irrespective of who has delivered the training).</p>	84.3	
<p>Clarification: In this section, active learning has been renamed as OTJT active learning, to distinguish it from the new English and maths active learning requirement. Providers must comply with both active learning rules separately where English and maths funding is being accessed.</p>	85-88	

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy change: As we are publishing a minimum off-the-job training hours requirement for each standard and removing the delivery link between off-the-job training hours and duration, there is no longer a need to obtain an employer statement where the actual hours delivered are less than the planned hours. We have therefore removed this section.</p>	-	

The training plan

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Clarification: References to English and/or maths have been updated to make it clear that we mean stand-alone qualifications rather than where English and/or maths has been embedded into the occupational content of a standard.</p>	91.7	

What can be funded

Overview

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Clarification: We have made it clear that in the case of integrated standards the responsibility for setting EPA costs is with the provider. In the case of non-integrated standards the responsibility for setting EPA costs is with the EPAO and the provider role is to agree these costs.</p>	94.2	

Additional payments for employers, providers and care leaver apprentices

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: To confirm the age range includes those apprentices whose 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August, and that eligibility includes those who are still in care.	103	
Clarification: Confirmation of the process to follow if the care leavers' bursary entitlement is not recorded in time.	103.4	
Clarification: To confirm that the care leavers' bursary is tax free and not treated as income for Universal Credit calculations.	103.5	
Policy update: Confirmation of when the final additional payment will be paid for those apprenticeship standards who have a published typical duration of less than 12 months, and for foundation apprenticeships.	104.2.1	
Policy update: Confirmation of when the final care leavers' bursary payment will be paid for those apprenticeship standards who have a published typical duration of less than 12 months, and for foundation apprenticeships.	105.3.1	
Clarification: Updated to reflect what happens when an apprentice completes their apprenticeship early.	106.1	

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Evidence requirements: Updated to reflect that confirmation of the care leaver status from the local authority does not require a particular format, and that within their signed declaration the apprentice confirms that they have not previously received this care leavers' bursary.</p>	-	

End-point assessments

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy update: In February 2025, the Government announced reforms to apprenticeship assessment and published a new set of assessment principles. These changes will apply to all apprenticeships, at all levels. Existing assessment plans will be rewritten on a standard -by- standard basis to reflect these changes, starting from April 2025</p>	-	<p>Updates to reflect the reforms to apprenticeship assessment are provided separately at Annex B.</p>
<p>Policy update: We have removed reference to the entire duration of the apprenticeship standard being a minimum of 372 days to be eligible for funding.</p>	-	

Foundation apprenticeships

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy update: This is a new section that has been added to the funding rules following the launch of foundation apprenticeships. The rules in this section only cover those aspects that differ from other apprenticeships (i.e. from non-foundation apprenticeships). All other rules and evidence requirements within this document still apply in order for the apprentice and foundation apprenticeship to be eligible for funding. Please see Annex B for the funding rules that apply to the assessment of foundation apprenticeships.</p>	125-153	

Funds in an employer's apprenticeship service account

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Clarification: We have clarified that the cash value of the employer co-investment must be reported on the ILR by the main provider's final ILR submission within the academic year that the apprentice completes.</p>	158.2	

Employer Co-investment

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: Text updated to make it clearer what the impact is on new employers for cases where an apprenticeship started prior to 1 April 2024 and there is a subsequent change of employer.	182	
Clarification: Confirmation that the full co-investment amount must be collected and recorded by the providers final ILR submission relating to the academic year that the apprentice completes in.	184.4	

Qualifying days for funding

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: We have clarified that where the apprentice does not meet the relevant qualifying period, we will also recover any funding paid for learning support.	188	
Clarification: We have clarified that where applicable, funds will be returned to the employer's apprenticeship service account.	188	

Subcontracting

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy change: Main providers and employer-providers must not enter into a subcontracting agreement with any organisation under the £100,000 de minimis arrangement (i.e. with a subcontractor not on APAR), if the subcontractor has engaged the 'Funding higher risk organisations and subcontractors policy'.</p>	226.4.2	
<p>Policy change: A temporary exemption has been made for Initial Teacher Training. Main providers and employer-providers can use a subcontractor who is not on the published APAR where that subcontractor will only deliver apprenticeship training for the Level 6 Teacher apprenticeship standard and will deliver less than £100,000 of apprenticeship training and on-programme assessment, under contract across accredited initial teacher training main providers and employer-providers between 1 August and 31 July each year. The subcontractor must have a current UKPRN, cannot deliver full apprenticeship standards and must not have engaged the 'Funding higher risk organisations and subcontractors' policy.</p>	226.5	
<p>Clarification: The wording in this section has been updated to align with the text in the Post-16 subcontracting guidance. This includes the new email address to send exemption requests to.</p>	243	
<p>Clarification: The glossary definition for a new provider has been updated.</p>	252	

Prisoner apprenticeships

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Policy update: We have updated the rules to reflect that prisoner apprentices may undertake end-point assessment prior to release. This applies to prisoner apprentices who are enrolled on an apprenticeship whilst on Release on Temporary Licence (RoTL) and prisoner apprentices enrolled on an apprenticeship in the closed estate whose release date is within 2 years.	259.1	

Change of circumstance

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Policy update: We have clarified the actions providers must take where a 16–17-year-old apprentice is at risk of becoming a NEET (not in education, employment or training).	266	

Breaks in learning

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: Active learning has been renamed as OTJT active learning, to distinguish it from the new English and maths active learning requirement.	269	

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy update: To reflect the final additional payment for those apprenticeship standards who have a published typical duration of less than 12 months, and for foundation apprenticeships.</p>	273	
<p>Policy update: To reflect the final care leavers' bursary payment for those apprenticeship standards who have a published typical duration of less than 12 months, and for foundation apprenticeships.</p>	273	

Annex A

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
Clarification: We have updated the text to refer to the UK and Islands rather than Crown Dependencies.	317	
Clarification: We have clarified the text in relation to EEA and Switzerland nationals in the UK with Pre-Settled Status.	323	
Clarification: We have clarified the text in relation to family members of EEA or Swiss Nationals.	324.3	
Clarification: We have clarified the text in relation to family members of an eligible person of Northern Ireland.	327.4	
Clarification: We have clarified the information relating to joining family members under the EU Settlement Scheme.	328	
Clarification: The information relating to asylum seekers has been updated.	331	
Clarification: We have clarified the text in relation to individuals who are not eligible for funding.	336	

Annex B

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy update: We have included this annex to reflect the reforms to apprenticeship assessment. Where assessment plans have been revised in line with the apprenticeship reform principles published in February 2025, assessment may take place on programme rather than all at the end, so that assessment can happen at the right time and place.</p>	340-352	<p>For apprenticeship standards where the assessment plan has not yet been revised, the rules for end-point assessment remain as set out in the main funding rules.</p>

Annex C

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Policy update: In relation to the OTJT changes, for new starts from 1 August 2025, the spreadsheet published as Annex C shows the <u>minimum</u> OTJT hours for each standard. This replaces the need for providers to calculate the volume of hours that would comply with the OTJT policy.</p>	NA	<p>Please note that Annex C is published separately to the main rules document and is a temporary arrangement due to the transition of the Institute's website to Skills England.</p> <p>In due course these figures will appear on the actual standards.</p>

Glossary

Change	Paragraph number(s)	Additional notes / rationale to support the change
<p>Note added/amended definitions of the following terms: Accelerated apprenticeship, Active learning, Adult Skills Fund, Apprenticeship service record, Apprenticeship Technical Funding Guide, Care leaver bursary, Complete early, Employer incentive payment, End-point Assessment, Final day, Foundation apprenticeship, Gateway requirements, (The) Institute, New provider status (APAR), Off-the-job training, Person of significant control, Prior learning, Prison leaver, On-Programme End-point Assessment, Published typical duration, Summary of training document, Total negotiated price (TNP).</p>	-	-



Department
for Education

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