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England: Level 3 Apprenticeship Standards

Last updated

10 April 2018

Last verified

10 April 2018

Level 3 apprenticeship standards (including assessment plans) as designed by Trailblazer groups and approved by Institute for Apprenticeships.

Country

England

Learners in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland may have achieved a privately-funded Level 3 apprenticeship standard.

Purpose of framework/standard

The move away from apprenticeship frameworks has been led by groups of employers – Trailblazers – approved by government to design an apprenticeship standard, or set of standards, each of which has gone through detailed external scrutiny, for occupations in their sector. Trailblazers have developed these standards, which set out the knowledge, skills, and behaviour expected in an occupationally competent and capable individual. All standards will have the same minimum level of occupational competence.

Standards are being developed with employers at the heart of the design process, ensuring the carefully drafted standards are closely aligned to the needs of business. As of spring 2017, over 215 employer groups have stepped forward through the Trailblazer programme to develop over 490 new apprenticeship standards. 158 of these are now 'approved for delivery'. This compares to 4,661 Ofqual regulated qualifications in 597 pathways through existing frameworks.

As from April 2017, the **Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA)** is responsible for regulating the quality of apprenticeship standards and assessments.

The **Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)** will continue to be responsible for the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), and maintaining the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO), as well as running the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). The ESFA will continue to fund the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships throughout England.

Ofsted will continue to inspect training providers and sample inspect employers.

Ofqual will continue to regulate any qualifications included as part of an apprenticeship standard and offer one model of external quality assurance (EQA) for some standards.

View the Ofqual EQA document.

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The Institute will convene an Apprenticeship Quality Group, with representatives of ESFA, NAS, Ofsted, Ofqual, the Office for Students, and the QAA, with a remit to monitor quality across the sector, and intervene where necessary to ensure quality standards.

How apprenticeships prepare learners for progression to higher level study

Apprenticeship standards are employer, driven with the emphasis on a consistent and transferrable skill set. To achieve, this the Training Provider (TP), will need to be on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), and work with the apprentice and employer to ensure the knowledge, skills, and behaviours around that role are developed.

All apprentices must be functionally literate in English and mathematics to a minimum of Level 2, or working towards achieving that level.

- Duration of Level 3 apprenticeships can range from 12 to 48 months.
- As employees, apprentices work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills, as well as studying for knowledge and competence-based qualifications with an approved TP.
- Off-the-job learning makes up a guaranteed 20% of each week, and gives the learner time to develop the technical skills and knowledge of theoretical concepts in relation to their job role in a range of differing contexts. Off-the-job learning may include individual and group teaching, coaching, distance learning, e learning, feedback and assessment, guided study, peer, networked, and collaborative learning, and mentoring.
- On-the-job learning is the time taken to develop practical skills in the context of the job role. For this, the apprentice should be guided while undertaking normal activities, which provide opportunities to learn, develop, and practice skills.
- Off and on-the-job learning is to be reviewed regularly by the TP and employer to assess progress and next steps. Access, when required, will be given to the apprentice, and all actions will be delivered during contracted working hours.
- In addition, learners on apprenticeships are encouraged to develop the personal learning and thinking skills valued by both higher education and employers.
- The assessment plan will have been developed after the standard has been agreed with the Trailblazer group, and prior to commencement of the apprenticeship. The End Point Assessment (EPA) will be carried out by a body listed on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO), and none of these organisations will have taken any role in the delivery of the standard. The EPA may take the form of a portfolio, theoretical, interview, practical, test, or a mixture of some or all.

Employers, apprentices, and the government expect outcomes to be reliable and consistent between each organisation, regardless of when and where an assessment is completed. External quality assurance (EQA) provides additional checks on the consistency with which EPAs are conducted by different assessment bodies.

Employer groups have been given a choice between four options for delivering EQA when they submit their assessment plan:

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- An employer group-designed approach
- EQA delivered by a professional body
- EQA delivered by Ofqual
- EQA delivered by the Institute (as a last resort).

As a result, all apprentices who have completed a Level 3 apprenticeship standard should be occupationally competent in their field, with the foundation of knowledge, skills, and behaviours that could support a related programme of higher education in that sector.

Combined competence and knowledge-based qualification

Unlike apprenticeship frameworks, which comprise different qualifications, the inclusion of qualifications in apprenticeship standards are not encouraged unless they are deemed essential by the sector, and meet one of the criteria outlined in the Trailblazer Guidance. Trailblazer Groups are required to provide substantial evidence to support the inclusion of any qualification when they submit their standard for approval. As a result, some apprenticeship standards do not contain any qualifications.

All apprenticeships standards contain an independent Endpoint Assessment (EPA) which all apprentices need to pass to successfully complete their apprenticeship. Although the EPA varies in terms of the method of assessment as identified in the section 'How apprenticeships prepare learners for progression to higher level study', to be approved, they all need to be considered sufficient and appropriate to test the 'skills, knowledge, and behaviours' set out in the apprenticeship standard to which they relate.

Example of Level 3 units

Level 2 in English and maths is a prerequisite, although completion of these can be achieved during the apprenticeship. The rest of the course will follow the standard as set down aiming towards the EPA.

Most schemes have a grading system going from pass to distinction, however, a small number have received grading exemptions meaning that these apprentices cannot achieve anything above a pass.

Below are three L3 units as examples of diversity:

- Land-Based Service Engineering (LBSE)
- Hospitality supervisor
- <u>Science Manufacturing Technician</u>

Additional requirements of apprenticeship

As each standard is different and the requirements are diverse, each has its own additional requirements to ensure successful completion of the chosen course. This could be additional modules, or around the apprentice's own development in preparation for the next step after completion of the course.

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Estimated duration of apprenticeship

Apprenticeships can last anything between 12 and 48 months, however, actual duration can depend on the individual's prior work experience, qualifications, and the employer requirements (12 months being the absolute minimum).

Designed to support progression

Successful progression is that apprentices fit into the workforce seamlessly once their course is complete.

It is hoped that this is seen as a springboard to take their education further, should that be through their employer, college, day release or higher education. Apprenticeships will give apprentices the knowledge, skills, and behaviours expected from occupationally competent and capable individuals, then allow them to decide the direction they want to follow.

Degree apprenticeships now provide a progression pathway from Level 3 apprenticeships that did not previously exist.

Additional information for HE

As not all apprenticeships are graded, those applying to HE are encouraged to ensure they put their grade in the body of the application, identifying whether it was Pass, Merit, or Distinction, or whether only Pass grade was available.

More information on <u>how employers can develop new apprenticeship standards through</u> <u>Trailblazer Groups can be found online. View the list of approved apprenticeship standards</u>.

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Northern Ireland: Level 3 Apprenticeships

Last updated

11 January 2018

Last verified

11 January 2018

Level 3 ApprenticeshipsNI employer-led training provision.

Country

Northern Ireland

Purpose of framework/standard

In Northern Ireland ApprenticeshipsNI is an employer-led training provision – with employers creating apprenticeship opportunities in line with their business needs and employing the Apprentice in paid employment from day one on the programme. Training is shared by the employer and a Training Contractor. Training with the Contractor is known as directed training. It is usually carried out on a day-release basis with a Training Contractor who is contracted by the Department for the Economy to ensure apprentices receive training towards recognised qualifications.

Apprentices, in paid employment from day one, follow a national training framework which leads to the attainment of industry approved competence and knowledge based qualifications, at Level 2 or 3, in conjunction with Essential Skills qualifications of application of number, communications and ICT (where appropriate).

The Framework sets out the relevant national occupational standards and qualifications.

Any qualifications specified in an apprenticeship framework must be:

- Regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations (Ofqual)
- Underpinned by National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- Approved by the relevant Industry Representative

Apprentices, in paid employment from day one, follow a national training framework which leads to the attainment of industry approved competence and knowledge based qualifications, at Level 2 or 3 (GCSE and A Level equivalent), in conjunction with Essential Skills qualifications which must include Communication, Application of Number and ICT, where appropriate.

How apprenticeships prepare learners for progression to higher level study

The ApprenticeshipsNI programme enables mobility within a sector and across the wider economy by including a breadth of training beyond the specific needs of a job through both on and off-the-job training.

An apprentice who has achieved a Level 2 framework can progress to a Level 3 framework.

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An apprentice who holds a recognised vocational qualification appearing on a current apprenticeship framework but lacks the requisite practical skill to support their transition to the higher level framework can undertake a Level 3 with a Level 2 en route. Upon completion participants can often progress into a Higher Level Apprenticeship - an apprenticeship with a targeted qualification between Level 4 (HNC equivalent) to Level 8 (PhD equivalent).

Combined competence- and knowledge-based qualification

Under ApprenticeshipsNI each Level 3 framework for the specific occupational area is agreed with the relevant industry-led representative body and comprises of directed training, related knowledge, appropriate Essential Skills, and structured workplace training.

Example of Level 3 units

There are currently 91 Level 3 frameworks (as per above). A list of all current Level 3 frameworks offered in Northern Ireland can be found <u>here</u>.

Additional requirements of apprenticeship

Differing entry criteria across frameworks. For some apprenticeships there are minimum entry requirements, for example electrical or plumbing.

Estimated duration of apprenticeship

The duration depends on the level of programme being followed. An apprenticeship at Level 2 **or** at Level 3 can last up to 130 weeks. If both levels are required it can last up to 260 weeks. The training may be completed in a shorter period depending on the learner's ability, prior learning and experience.

Designed to support progression

The ApprenticeshipsNI programme supports progression to Higher Level Apprenticeships and also supports career progression and job satisfaction within their employment.

Additional information for HE

Contact details

Scotland: Foundation Apprenticeships Group Award (SCQF level 6)

Last updated

3 October 2018

Last verified

17 April 2018

Foundation Apprenticeships Group Award (SCQF level 6) are available in:

- Accountancy
- Business Skills
- Civil Engineering
- Creative and Digital Media
- Financial Services
- Food and Drink Technology
- ICT Hardware
- ICT Software
- Scientific Technologies
- Social Services (Children and Young People)
- Social Services (Healthcare)
- Software Development plus in addition
- Engineering aeronautical, electrical, electronic, systems, fabrication and welding, manufacturing, measurement and control, mechanical (SVQ units are at SCQF level 5 but NC units are at level 6. Group Award issued at SCQF level 6)

Country

Scotland

Purpose of framework/standard

One of the key recommendations of Sir Ian Wood's review on Developing the Young Workforce was to "develop better connectivity and co-operation between education and the world of work to ensure young people at all levels of education understand the expectations of employers, and that employers are properly engaged" (Scottish Government response to "Developing the Young Workforce"; 2015). One of the ways this is being achieved is through the development of Foundation Apprenticeships.

The qualification comprises SVQ units and National Progression or National Certificate units. Foundation Apprenticeships are **not** apprenticeships in the traditional sense and the young people who undertake them are **not** in employment.

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All aspects of the Foundation Apprenticeships are done at school in partnership with colleges. There is no part of the Foundation Apprenticeship that is not part of the qualification and the SVQ elements are integrated throughout the programme with the national units. The size of the qualification represents all of the notional learning hours required for completion and learners will be allocated placements to help them achieve the SVQ units. Foundation Apprenticeships allow pupils to gain vocational qualifications that combine sector specific skills alongside the knowledge that underpins these skills in a workplace setting while still at school.

By combining both elements in a Group Award structure, SDS is responding to the ambition of 'Developing the Young Workforce' while ensuring robust, quality assured qualifications for pupils in Scotland. The frameworks are offered in all Scottish local Authorities with the ambition being that by 2020 there will be 20000 pupils doing Foundation Apprenticeships.

Foundation Apprenticeships are at SCQF level 6. This signals the importance of the programme in providing a comparable vocational pathway for pupils at a level consistent with a Scottish Higher. Foundation Apprenticeships range in size from 48 to 65 SCQF credits (480 to 650 notional learning hours – by comparison a Scottish Higher is 24 SCQF credits or 240 notional learning hours).

Each Foundation Apprenticeship is credit rated and certificated by SQA as a Group Award.

How apprenticeships prepare learners for progression to higher level study

Learners are prepared for progression to higher level study firstly by having completed a qualification which has a minimum of 48 credits (480 notional learning hours) and is credit rated at SCQF level 6. In addition, the Foundation Apprenticeship will give the learner a range of, job and core skills to enable them to study at a higher level. This includes autonomy, self-reliance, problem solving, confidence and team working.

Feedback from HE

The Foundation Apprenticeship programme started in September 2016, therefore feedback from HE on entrants to HE who have completed the Foundation Apprenticeship is not yet available. Evidence from a recent procurement exercise for admission to Graduate Level apprenticeships in Scotland is that all universities (highlighted as ** in section 'Additional information for HE') have accepted Foundation Apprenticeships for entry to a Graduate Programme.

Additionally, Skills Development Scotland has spoken with all the universities listed in that section about admissions to general programmes. Feedback from Heriot Watt is that they will use the Foundation Apprenticeship as providing added value in areas where there are high volume applications. Other universities indicate they will operate similarly where there is a direct link between a faculty and a particular Foundation Apprenticeship (e.g. in the field of Teacher Education where there is a requirement for individuals to have experience of working with children, universities consider the placement element of 'Social Services (Children and Young People)' to add value to the admission profile).

Combined competence and knowledge-based qualification

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A Foundation Apprenticeship is a group award that combines both knowledge and competence requirements and is certificated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

To be defined as a Foundation Apprenticeship a programme must:

- Deliver the full group award comprising the national units and SVQ units.
- Deliver the necessary knowledge for the industry it relates to, based on defined national occupational standards at a level of complexity (National Occupational Standard) defined in the existing Modern Apprenticeship Framework for the sector.
- Support skills and knowledge development by using existing qualifications or a composite of units directly derived from and mapped to national occupational standards for the sector. This will have been agreed by the appropriate sector skills council or standards setting body.
- Provide real work experience, as part of the overall group award for a period that allows participants to demonstrate competence in an industry appropriate workplace and which fully meets the requirements of the assessment strategy for the SVQ.

Foundation Apprenticeships have been constructed using existing or newly developed national units and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ). The Foundation Apprenticeship Group Awards comprise National Progression Award (NPA) or equivalent SCQF level 6 units and SVQ, SCQF level 6 units which comprise a partial SVQ. The National units are intended to provide the knowledge based qualification and the SVQ units additional applied knowledge and competence.

Example of SCQF Level 6 units

Foundation Apprenticeship in Food and Drink Operations at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Accounting at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Information Technology: Hardware / System Support at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Information Technology: Software Development at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services (Children & Young People) at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Scientific Technologies (Laboratory Skills) at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Financial Services at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Engineering at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering at SCQF 6

Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills at SCQF 6

Additional requirements of apprenticeship

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There are no additional requirements of the apprenticeship, but some subjects must be done as complementary subjects, e.g. in the Engineering and Technology Industries where Higher maths is required alongside the Foundation Apprenticeship. Other requirements are in line with SVQ assessment strategies which stipulate embedded core skills of communication, numeracy, problem solving, working with others and IT.

All Foundation Apprenticeships must meet the SCQF requirements of:

- knowledge and understanding (mainly subject based);
- practice (applied knowledge and understanding);
- generic cognitive skills (e.g. evaluation, critical analysis);
- communication, numeracy and IT skills; and
- autonomy, accountability and working with others.

Estimated duration of apprenticeship

The notional time taken to complete a Foundation Apprenticeship ranges from 480 and 650 notional hours, dependant on the choice of programme. Foundation Apprenticeship will normally be completed over two academic years namely in the fifth and sixth year of school (Senior Phase in Scotland). The suggested time allocation for the delivery of the Foundation Apprenticeship is seven hours per week in the first year and ten hours per week in the second but this will vary by programme and delivery partner. What does not vary, however, are the notional learning hours allocated to it. In some cases the programme will be delivered over one year. Where this happens the same number of notional learning hours is required to achieve the award. As the assessment of competence is a required component of the qualification, this time includes placement hours. As indicated earlier these learners are not in work so no 'in work' hours should be discounted in the calculation.

Designed to support progression

Foundation Apprenticeships are designed to support young people

- to progress from a school into a related job, or
- to complete a Modern Apprenticeship, or
- to continue on to further or higher education.

Additional information for HE

As of September 2017 the following universities are accepting Foundation Apprenticeships for admissions to any programmes (*except for law, medicine, veterinary medicine at present). Those with ** accept Foundation Apprenticeships plus any necessary associated Highers as entry to their Graduate Level apprenticeship programmes (e.g. for teacher education Higher English, for engineering/IT Higher maths/physics)

- University of Glasgow*(plus**)
- University of Edinburgh*

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- Heriot Watt University**
- Robert Gordon University**
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee**
- University of Stirling**
- University of Highlands and Islands**
- Edinburgh Napier University**
- Abertay University**
- Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
- Glasgow Caledonian University**

Different universities are providing a different Insight tariff for Foundation Apprenticeships: some are accepting it as a minimum of one Higher at varying levels depending on the offer to the individual until the programme is better established – pending the Scottish Government review of Insight tariff – while others are accepting it as two Highers.

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Scotland: Modern Apprenticeships at SCQF Level 6

Last updated

15 November 2018

Last verified

15 November 2018

Modern Apprenticeships at SCQF Level 6 as approved by the Modern Apprenticeship Group (MAG) on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Country

Scotland

Purpose of framework/standard

Modern Apprenticeships (MA) offer those aged over 16 paid employment combined with the opportunity to train for jobs.

MAs are available to employees aged 16 or over. Employees need to demonstrate to their employer that they have the potential to complete the programme. All Modern Apprentices must have a demonstrable need to acquire significant new knowledge and skills to fulfil their job role. The framework selected for the employee must be the most appropriate learning programme generally available to that individual, providing such knowledge and skills.

Employers use MA frameworks as part of their workforce development to train new employees and up-skill existing members of staff. They can be (and often are) used regardless of whether financial support is available from the delivery body who currently provides a 'contribution' towards the cost of delivery. However, only approved MA frameworks will be eligible for funding support from Skills Development Scotland who should be contacted to establish the availability and level of support for each MA framework.

How apprenticeships prepare learners for progression to higher level study

Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks are driven by employer needs although either a Sector Skills Council or a Standards Setting Organisation develops the framework. At SCQF Level 6, MA frameworks must include as a mandatory component, a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) or an alternative competence-based qualification (CBQ). The framework also includes Work Place Core Skills (Communication, Numeracy, ICT, Working with Others and Problem Solving). SQA Accreditation must accredit the SVQ/CBQ and Work Place Cores. Any awarding body, which has been approved by SQA Accreditation, can make a submission for accreditation for the relevant qualifications.

The frameworks can also include other qualifications, either as a mandatory enhancement or as an optional enhancement. There is currently no requirement for SQA Accreditation to accredit any qualification included as an enhancement.

As the national accreditation body for Scotland, SQA Accreditation regulates the awarding bodies that it has approved and the qualifications submitted by them for accreditation. In turn,

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the awarding bodies carry out quality assures each of its accredited qualifications and the providers that it has approved to deliver the accredited qualifications. SSCs/SSOs must approve providers as MA Centres. Where the providers wishes to draw down public funding, then it must also have successfully gained a contract from Skills Development Scotland.

Frameworks can comprise of both on-the-job and off-the-job training. There is currently no mandatory requirement for off-the-job training nor is there a mandatory minimum duration for an MA framework, although SSCs/SSOs are required to specify what the typical duration will be for the framework. Both these issues are to be included in a forthcoming consultation with regards what constitutes an apprenticeship framework.

On-the-job training is the time taken to develop practical skills in the workplace. This will include coaching and/or mentoring of the apprentice, as well providing the apprentice with an opportunity to practice and develop his/her practical skills.

Qualified assessors will visit the apprentices in their workplace and will observe the apprentice's progress against the requirements of the qualification(s). When the employer and the assessor are of the view that the apprentice has consistently met the required standard, then an assessor will undertake an assessment of the apprentice against the qualification. This may result in the candidate achieving a unit from the qualification or provide evidence that one or more performance criteria from a unit are met.

Each provider will have an internal verifier who will sample a range of evidence from across all of its assessors to ensure that there is consistency in assessment.

Awarding bodies conduct external verification to providers and some or all of this activity will consider the assessment and internal verification records. Where an external verification visits results in a positive outcome then the provider will be permitted to continue to request certification for successful qualification outcomes.

SQA Accreditation, as part of its regulatory activity, conducts visits to a sample of each approved awarding bodies' providers on an annual basis to ensure that the awarding bodies' systems remain effective. In addition, SQA Accreditation audits all awarding bodies within a three-year cycle based on the risk profile of each approved awarding body. SQA Accreditation produces a report for both of these activities, with the final report published on its website. Where issues are found as a result of visits to providers or from the audit, then an action plan is agreed between SQA Accreditation and the awarding body. This action plan is also published on its website.

The quality assurance activities carried out by providers, awarding bodies and SQA Accreditation ensure that all apprentices meet the necessary standards of the qualifications. As a result, all apprentices that have completed an MA at SCQF Level 6 will be occupationally competent in their chosen occupational role, and will also have the necessary underpinning knowledge and understanding that could support a related programme of Higher Education in that sector.

Combined competence and knowledge-based qualification

As mentioned earlier, each MA framework must have, as a mandatory component, either an SVQ or an alternative competence based qualification. Both qualifications must be based on Security Marking: Public Page Document Owner: Qualifications Service Delivery Partner

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the relevant National Occupational Standard. Although these qualifications assess the competence of the apprentices, there is also a requirement for assessors to assess the underpinning knowledge i.e. to ensure that the apprentices not only can perform to a competence standard in the workplace but they also know how and why to perform to those standards.

Some sectors have elected to include knowledge-based qualifications as a mandatory component in the framework. For example, the Supply Chain Management framework at SCQF Level 6 includes a range of knowledge based qualifications e.g. CILT Level 2 Certificate in Logistics and Transport.

Example of Level 3 units

Three examples of units from 3 different frameworks are listed below:

- Plan and co-ordinate food services
- Plan and evaluate livestock accommodation
- Creatively style and dress hair

Additional requirements of apprenticeship

As each framework is designed to meet the needs of a sector, some frameworks will have additional requirements. As described, earlier, it is possible for additional qualifications to be added as either a mandatory enhancement or an optional enhancement.

Estimated duration of apprenticeship

There is no current, mandatory minimum duration for an apprenticeship although SSCs/SSOs are required to set out the expected minimum duration for each framework. This varies from one year through to four years.

Designed to support progression

The main aim of a Modern Apprenticeship is to equip an apprentice with the skills, knowledge and competence to be a successful and valued employee. In so doing, the apprenticeship will assist the apprentice to consider where their career could potentially take them in terms of career progression. This could include undertaking Further or Higher Education qualifications.

Additional information for HE

The SCQF Level of an MA framework is determined by the level of the main mandatory qualification ie either the SVQ or an alternative competence based qualification. Due to the design rules for these qualifications, it may be the case that not every unit in the SVQ (or alternative competence based qualification) sits at SCQF Level 6. However, the majority of SCQF credit in the qualification will be at SCQF Level 6.

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