



# Line Manager and Mentor Guide

**Information for line managers and  
mentors of apprentices at Manchester  
Metropolitan University**

# Welcome to Manchester Met

As a line manager or mentor, you play a crucial role in shaping your apprentice's journey. We have been running degree apprenticeships since 2015 and have picked up some useful tips along the way on how you can best support your apprentices at work. Drawing on this knowledge, we have developed a handy toolkit to assist you, regardless of your level of experience.

## What makes an Apprenticeship?

### Standards

Your apprentice is commencing a programme with specifically crafted standards to match their industry. For a deeper dive into these standards, [visit the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's \(IfATE\) website\\*](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/) for detailed information.

Each standard comes with an occupational profile: a snapshot of what the role involves and any specific duties it includes. Plus, Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs) that the apprentice will be developing and evidencing throughout the programme:

- **Knowledge (knows and understands):** This part is all about what they're learning in their formal apprenticeship qualification.
- **Skills and Behaviours (able to do and demonstrate):** These are the hands-on skills and behaviours they're developing in the workplace, with some support from academic assignments.

Our programmes use a well-designed approach that combines classroom learning with real-world experience.



TOP TIP

Familiarise yourself with the KSBs your apprentice is focusing on, to enable you to effectively support them in achieving these goals and monitor their progress.



### Reviews

Review sessions happen roughly every 12 weeks, aligning with ESFA regulations, and are flexibly tailored to suit the delivery needs of each programme. Your Skills Coach will lead the way, but we need both the apprentice and you as line managers/mentors to join in too. It's all about keeping everyone in the loop and making sure we're on track. Reviews will be conducted both online using MS Teams as well as face-to-face in your workplace.

In each review, we'll go over the following key areas, and of course, we're here to address any extra support you or your apprentice might need:

- Monitoring of KSB progress
- Discussion of development needs and opportunities in the workplace
- Target setting, using SMART objectives
- Discussion of application of academic learning in the workplace
- Assignment feedback and academic support
- Evidence and portfolio development
- EPA questions to support development



TOP TIP

Prepare notes in advance of each review to support the discussion. For example, recent progress, potential training or shadowing ideas, next steps, and targets for future reviews.

## Off-the-job time

Off-the-job training is a vital component of apprenticeships. During this training time, apprentices are released from their regular duties to participate in sessions that are directly relevant to the knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed for their apprenticeship completion. It was previously linked to working hours, but now the requirement is a minimum of six hours per week, and it can be spread out flexibly throughout the programme. Our Skills Coach team will help apprentices accurately record all their off-the-job training sessions using our online portfolio systems.

To count as off-the-job training, the activity should involve developing skills or learning something new. It needs to relate to the knowledge, skills, and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard and must be delivered within an apprentice's working hours. Off-the-job activities include University attendance, online study sessions, undertaking research, workplace projects, completing assignments, shadowing, mentoring, workplace training, and industry visits.



Plan off-the-job time with your apprentice early on, supporting them to organise it. Use regular reviews with your Skills Coach to ensure the approach benefits everyone.

## Good examples of off-the-job time



University attendance



Online learning/study



Completing assignments



Reading and research



Projects



Shadowing and mentoring



Relevant/mandatory training



Study skills



Industry visits



Outreach activities

## Portfolio

Throughout the duration of the apprenticeship, your apprentice will need to evidence how they are meeting the KSBs. Apprentices will be required to build a portfolio that showcases their best academic pieces, workplace achievements, and feedback from yourself and other colleagues to demonstrate occupational competency at end-point assessment (EPA).

Your Skills Coach will guide your apprentice on what to include and how to make it shine, both through discussion in reviews and bespoke workshop sessions for their cohort.

## Projects

In most of our apprenticeships, apprentices are required to implement a live project. Line managers/mentors are crucial in these projects and can help them in many ways:

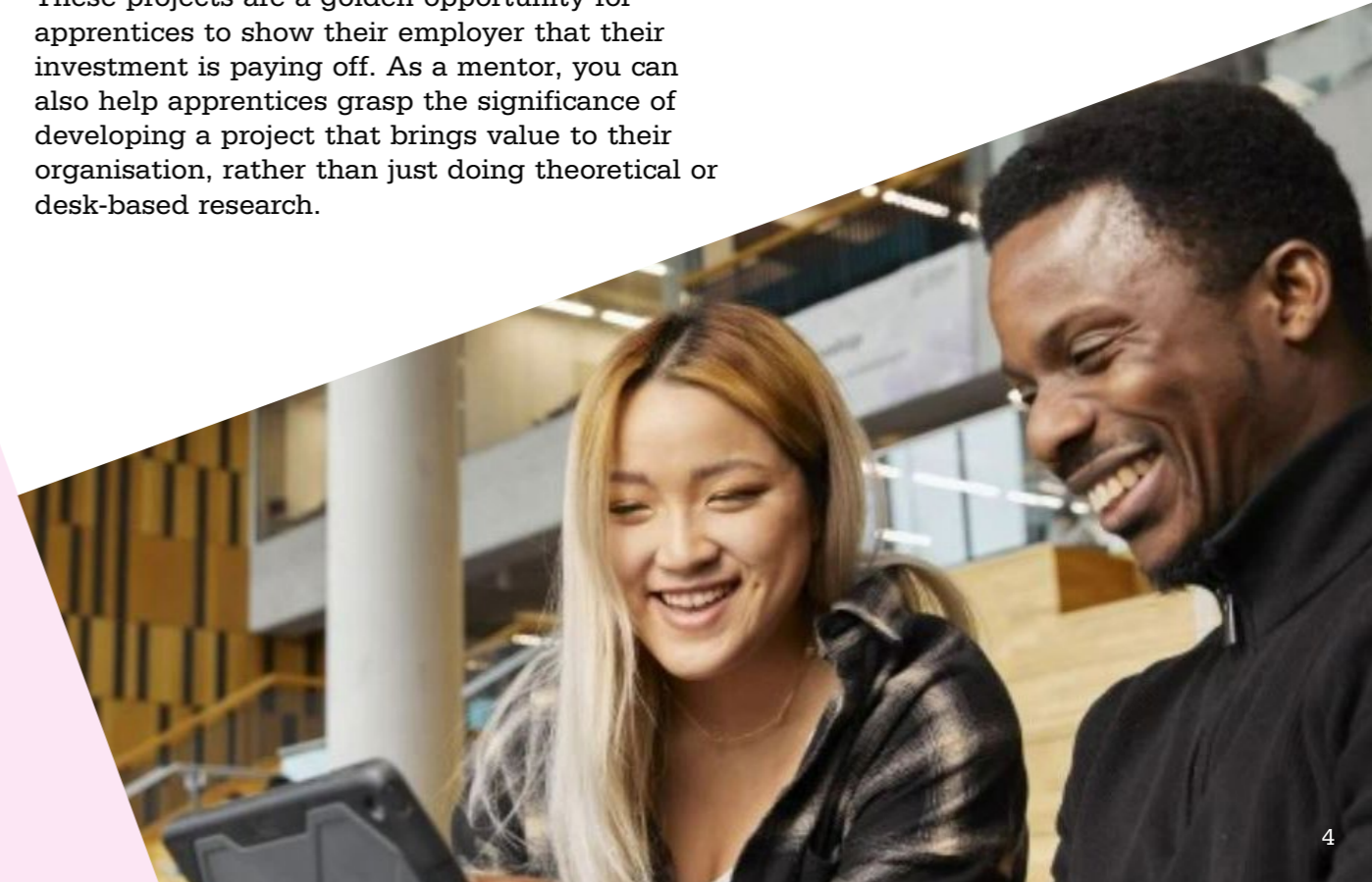
- Assist apprentice in finding the right project area.
- Help align the project with the bigger picture of the organisation's strategy and needs.
- Guide them through managing the project while it's happening.
- Support them in reflecting on its impact and what it means for the future.

These projects are a golden opportunity for apprentices to show their employer that their investment is paying off. As a mentor, you can also help apprentices grasp the significance of developing a project that brings value to their organisation, rather than just doing theoretical or desk-based research.



Explore ways to offer development and training opportunities such as organising training sessions, allowing shadowing experiences, or assigning significant tasks.

Use your organisation's strategic plans to draw in ideas for your apprentice's project to ensure everyone reaps the benefit.



## End-point assessment (EPA)

While the degree component of the apprenticeship is assessed throughout the programme, the apprenticeship is not formally assessed until the end of the programme, during the end-point assessment (EPA) process. The EPA assesses occupational competency and ensures that all KSBs have been met.

The assessment methods vary based on the apprenticeship standard, but typically include:

- **Apprentice Portfolio of Evidence:** a record or log of workplace evidence and examples demonstrating occupational competency.
- **Synoptic project:** a final-year project that allows the apprentice to demonstrate their application of KSBs in a large-scale project.
- **Project presentation (or showcase):** a presentation on the project, followed by questioning.
- **Competency-based interview:** a structured interview designed to test occupational competency.
- **Professional discussion:** a more loosely structured discussion exploring development across the apprenticeship

We offer extensive support and guidance leading up to the EPA, and you can find more resources on our employer resources pages and the apprentice's Moodle page. We also hold mock EPAs and presentation skills workshops to help apprentices prepare.



If applicable, request a copy of the mock EPA questions from your skills coach to quiz your apprentice and help them prepare for their live assessment.

# Role of a line manager/mentor

Managers are key players in setting apprentices up for success. Here's what you can do to ensure they thrive:

### Keep an eye on progress

Track how your apprentices are doing with their KSB standards and off-the-job time. This is best done through regular one-on-one meetings.

### Organisation and planning

Look at submission deadlines in line with peak business periods to identify any pinch points early on and create a plan of action.

### Spot opportunities for growth

Pinpoint areas where apprentices can boost their skills and find chances for workplace exposure and development in line with the standards.

### Offer hands-on support

Give practical help and supportive advice when apprentices face challenges.

### Encourage reflection

Urge apprentices to think about their academic feedback and learn from their work experiences.

### Stay approachable and positive

Be there for apprentices and make them feel confident about coming to you for help.

### Be proactive and show up for reviews

Get ready for and actively participate in reviews to give apprentices the feedback and support they need.

### Contribute to the onboarding process

Help apprentices new to the team to settle in (check out our handy checklist at the end of this document) or adjust workloads for existing team members.

### Support apprentices to complete their skills scans

Help them identify competency level and development opportunities.

### Escalation

Assist with any escalation processes that Skills Coaches implement when apprentices are off track.



# Guidance and support for you

We understand the crucial role you play in your apprentice's journey and offer a wealth of resources and guidance to support you:

- Annual line manager/mentor workshops: these sessions contain all essential information and resources you need to support your apprentice.
- Skills coaches: our coaches offer personalised guidance and feedback to both apprentices and managers, facilitating skill enhancement for all involved.
- Tripartite progress reviews: conducted every 12 weeks, these reviews enable you to monitor progress and ensure apprentices remain on track.
- [Employer Resource Page](#)\*: access to all pertinent information.

# Guidance and support for your apprentice

We'll also help you to point apprentices in the right direction for support and development:

## Disability Advisers

Assess student need; draw up appropriate personal learning plans; facilitate applications for Disabled Students' Allowances; work with academic departments to ensure support requirements are met

## Student Experience Officers

Support the development of learning communities by: organising induction activities; helping with student societies; developing and maintaining peer mentoring and social media platforms; promoting student surveys.

## Academic and Study Skills Tutors

One-to-one study skills support; academic and study skills workshops/webinars/online support; bespoke, in-curricular sessions for programmes; support for students with specific learning difficulties.

## Student Hub Services Student Advisers

Non-academic related queries including: student finance and Met Card queries; exceptional factors claims support; support for student engagement; personal emergency evacuation plans; referral to specialist services

## Student Wellbeing Advisers

Professional wellbeing support for students with low to moderate mental health and anxiety issues; a triage service to identify students who need more specialist support; a proactive approach to wellbeing; support for students with specific learning difficulties.

## Counsellors and Mental Health Advisers

One-to-one and group-based counselling; management of students with high risk and complex mental health conditions; liaison with NHS and other external therapeutic providers.

## MMU Sport

Free sport and fitness classes via Active Campus; various sports clubs to join; gyms and facilities including Manchester Aquatics Centre at a discounted rate.

## Chaplaincy

Chaplains provide support to students of faith and of no faith; access to volunteering schemes and activities that provide development and support opportunities; new chaplaincy spaces, including refurbished Muslim prayer rooms



\*[mmu.ac.uk/study/apprenticeships/resources](http://mmu.ac.uk/study/apprenticeships/resources)

# New apprentice onboarding

## Checklist for line managers

### Preparation

- Prepare a dedicated workspace to welcome your new apprentice.
- Gather all the necessary tools and equipment, ensuring everything is ready for their first day.
- Extend a warm welcome by introducing the apprentice to the team either via email or in a team meeting.

### Induction

- Ensure the apprentice receives a comprehensive job description and a clear employment contract.
- Kickstart their journey with a welcome programme, providing any essential workplace training.
- Introduce the apprentice to key team members and departments, making them feel part of the team from day one.
- Show them around your workplace, pointing out the places where they'll spend their time and highlighting key areas.
- Discuss your company culture and expectations.

### Policies and procedures

- Familiarise the apprentice with essential policies, including: health and safety, GDPR, emergency procedures, and IT policy.
- Explain HR policies and procedures, such as: reporting absence, annual leave, pay schedules, and issue escalation, and disciplinary procedures.

# All apprentices onboarding

## Checklist for line managers

### Training and development

- Attend dedicated Line Manager/Mentor workshops delivered by Manchester Met.
- Tailor your apprentice's tasks to align with their apprenticeship curriculum.
- Block out dedicated training days and other off-the-job activities in diaries, allowing them to focus on their growth without distractions.
- Attend the Manchester Met Skills Coach review meetings approximately every 12 weeks, showing your commitment to their development.
- Clarify their role and responsibilities, setting them up for success.

### Communication

- Schedule regular check-ins to connect and support them through their journey.
- Keep the lines of communication open and welcoming, encouraging them to reach out with any questions or concerns.

### Feedback and reviews

- Schedule performance reviews, providing constructive feedback to help them thrive.
- Offer consistent feedback, recognising their progress and efforts.
- Celebrate their achievements, both academic and skills based.

## Get in touch

Our growing portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate apprenticeships include programmes in the following areas:

- digital and technology
- digital marketing, creative design and UX
- health and social care
- leadership, management and HR
- sustainability and corporate responsibility

If you think one of our programmes could work for your organisation, please get in touch. We will be happy to provide further information and guide you through the next steps.

### Apprenticeships team

E: [apprenticeships-employer@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships-employer@mmu.ac.uk)

T: 0161 247 3720

W: [mmu.ac.uk/apprenticeships](http://mmu.ac.uk/apprenticeships)

✕ @mmuapprentice

 Degree Apprenticeships at Manchester Metropolitan University

 Degree Apprenticeships at Manchester Met

We are committed to ensuring that all of our materials are accessible. This brochure is available in a range of formats, such as large print, on request via [apprenticeships@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@mmu.ac.uk)

