

THE GREAT APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY...

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS



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1. WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

Employers are at different stages of their apprenticeship journey and for some it is still pretty new, so there are no silly questions ...

1.1 Apprenticeships

- ✓ Are based on 'standards' designed by employers that include the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed in the workplace
- ✓ Are relevant for all types and sizes of employers
- ✓ Can be used to train new and existing staff
- ✓ Are proven to deliver business return on investment

95%

OF THE COST OF
APPRENTICESHIPS IS PAID
FOR BY THE GOVERNMENT
FOR EMPLOYERS THAT
DON'T PAY THE LEVY

1.2 Apprentices

- ✓ Are treated as employees of the business and paid – at the very least – an apprenticeship wage
- ✓ Must have a genuine need for a minimum of 12 months' training (the average digital apprenticeship lasts 18-24 months)
- ✓ Train on-the-job for the most part, but also spend 20% of their time learning off-the-job
- ✓ Are assessed at the end of the apprenticeship through an 'end-point assessment' – a bit like taking a driving test – and are graded e.g. pass, merit or distinction

1.3 Paying for apprenticeship training and assessment

- ✓ Large employers with a pay roll of over £3million must pay 0.5% of their annual pay bill into a levy that can only be used to invest in apprenticeships
- ✓ The government will pay 95% of the cost of apprenticeships for employers that don't pay the levy
- ✓ The government foots the full apprenticeship bill for employers with fewer than 50 staff if, for example, they employ apprentices that are 16-18 years old

More details for can be found from the government website: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employer/how-much-is-it-going-to-cost

2. THE GREAT APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY...

There is a combination of key elements that often stand out in some of the most successful apprenticeships offered by employers, so here's some food for thought:

2.1 Start with the end goal

Like all business decisions, planning for apprenticeships is no different. You will need a business case detailing why an apprentice will be employed, what their role needs to deliver and how it will be managed. It will make a real difference to the outcome, if careful thought is given to the areas in which apprenticeships will be most effective for the organisation right at the start.

There is a vast array of apprenticeships available to employers, which provides the luxury of looking at roles right across your business. It may be that new talent needs to be brought in, or existing talent could be developed – the great thing is you can do either, or both, depending on your business needs.

It is useful to ask questions when deciding on what apprenticeships your business will use. What are the short to long-term goals of the business? What future skills needs are anticipated? What skills does the business already boast? Where are the short to medium-term skills gaps? What roles are important to deliver the objectives now? And who, with additional learning, can take the next step to help achieve them?

All businesses have to justify spend to demonstrate return on investment, so once you know what skills need developing and what apprenticeships are most relevant to the business, it's also a good time to set your metrics. Will the apprenticeships support a recruitment drive, help retention, increase motivation, improve productivity? – And how will you measure these things to report to the wider business?

Creating your own apprenticeship strategy will help ensure your apprentices have a positive experience and your business can evidence a return on investment.

20%

OF AN APPRENTICE'S TIME IS SPENT ON OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

2.2 Know what the apprenticeship is about

One of the challenges BCS has found, is that when some apprentices come to the assessment at the end of their digital apprenticeship, they have not had the opportunity to develop the full range of skills and knowledge in the workplace.

Therefore, in choosing the apprenticeships that are right for your business, it's worth taking the time to look at the available standards and assessment plans, to make sure that what they cover is aligned with the skills your new recruits (or existing staff) can develop in the workplace.

Apprenticeship standards and assessment plans can be found here: www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/

Digital standards that BCS endpoint assess can be found here: www.bcs.org/apprenticeship-standards

2.3 Get help when you need it

Despite the perception, apprenticeships should not be a complicated offer. The fundamental principle is that apprentices are trained and assessed to prove a standard of competence that will enhance their career prospects and deliver your skills needs.

However, like so many things, the acronyms, policy and processes start to cloud the real opportunity. Some employers want to manage the whole process themselves and can do so by registering to be an 'employer-provider'; although, most chose to work with one of the many excellent training providers whose expertise will help guide you through the whole process.

You may already be working with a training provider, college or university, but when choosing one, it is worth digging deep to see how it will work with your business to help deliver your apprenticeship ambitions. Many businesses have found that taking the time to find a provider with the 'right fit' for their business has paid off in the long term.

All providers must be on the Register of Apprenticeship Training providers¹, which means they are approved by government. You can find a list of providers that work with BCS to deliver digital apprenticeships here: www.bcs.org/providers/apprenticeships

2.4 It may be a cliché but it's all about teamwork

The best apprenticeships are those driven by an engaged team – that includes everyone in your organisation and any of the external delivery partners you use. For larger businesses, engaging colleagues across different departments and business units can be challenging and requires an internal communication strategy that can secure buy-in. Many companies have done this very successfully, but one campaign is not enough; it takes ongoing communication to keep all staff engaged and committed to the purpose of the programme.

Things that help include:

- › Taking the best approach in your organisation to get top level buy-in for the apprenticeship
- › Setting out what the big aim is, as well as the added value of apprenticeships to the business
- › Making sure staff understand what an apprenticeship is. Some still have the perception of it as a 'youth training programme' for the less accomplished; it's far from that, and there's plenty of case studies around to help demonstrate so
- › Presenting the opportunities and improvements it can make for staff across the business
- › Making sure everyone is clear on their role and responsibilities
- › Keeping a channel of communication open if staff are challenged with their part in delivering and managing apprentices
- › Showcasing apprenticeship champions and celebrating success

If you are a smaller business, the same principles apply, but you will have other challenges; namely spinning a number of plates and wearing several different 'hats'. Therefore, it's important to get help from your training provider, who can support the integration of the apprenticeship within your business.

In most cases, providers will have worked with a range of employers and will have best practice ideas of internal engagement to help the apprenticeship flourish in your business.

1957

BCS HAS BEEN
CONTRIBUTING TO LIFE-
LONG LEARNING FOR
OVER 60 YEARS

2.5 Planning your training

Before an apprentice starts on the programme, they will have an initial assessment. This is an incredibly important first stage of the journey, as it determines the extent to which an apprentice needs training in order to meet the apprenticeship standard. All apprentices must require a minimum of 12 months' training to be eligible for an apprenticeship, but they don't need to repeat training they've already undertaken.

As a business, you probably already deliver some in-house training, so take that into consideration when you are deciding what training to purchase and discuss this with your training provider. You may, for example, want your provider to help you map out your current training provision against the apprenticeship standard, so it's clear which aspects of external training need to be paid for.

2.6 20% off-the-job learning

There are many myths about 20% off-the-job learning. One thing to be clear about is that off-the-job does **not** have to mean out of the workplace – and it certainly doesn't have to be 'day release classroom learning'. With the support of the training provider, it's up to the business to work out how best to plan the 20% to both fit business needs and create a positive learning experience for the apprentice. The most important thing is that it enables the learning of new skills that meet the standard.

The government has produced guidance which can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training

2.7 80% on-the-job training

Apprenticeships are an exciting mix of learning, most of which takes place during the apprentice's real-life working activities. Your provider will help you ensure that any on-the-job learning meets the apprenticeship standard; from an employer's perspective, this type of training (when planned and structured) helps apprentices get up to speed and quickly learn how to apply their skills in a real work context. Find out more here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training

2.8 Have you heard of Pluralsight?

BCS has collaborated with Pluralsight, giving apprentices registered with us 12 months' access to its highly regarded technology skills platform. The platform helps apprentices keep up to speed with the pace of digital change, work smarter and faster, gain knowledge in areas like cloud, security, software development, IT and data – and track their progress, so it counts towards their 20% off-the-job learning.

2.9 Your end-point assessment organisation

BCS is a registered end-point assessment organisation for digital apprenticeships. Our offer is based on two key areas: we want to provide a **best in class service**, and we want to help **add value** to your business and apprentices.

Best in class means that we have worked hard over the past two years to be operationally effective, meaning that not only do we ensure end-point assessments are turned around efficiently, but most importantly, your apprentices are assessed by competent end-point assessors who are specialists in their field.

As the Chartered Institute for IT, a quality outcome is important to us. It fits with our overarching agenda *to lead the IT industry through its ethical challenges, to support the people who work in the industry, and to make IT good for society.*

We don't underestimate the importance of end-point assessment. Therefore, we endeavour to give both providers and employers the added value they need to support apprentices. On a quarterly basis, we run an open forum for our providers; we also work on a strategic basis, helping to facilitate important conversations around digital skills and apprenticeships with government and other stakeholders. BCS also runs a series of best practice webinars and industry events, which you can find out more about here: [bcs.org/events](https://www.bcs.org/events)

Whichever end-point assessment organisation you work with, it's important that it is another trusted partner, alongside your provider, to give your apprentices a positive apprenticeship experience.



'IT'S NOT A TAX, THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY HAS A PROVEN ROI – *71% OF EMPLOYERS WE SURVEYED AGREED.'

Levy-paying employers who take a planned strategic approach to apprenticeships can reap significant returns on their investment, plug their digital skills gaps and build a talented pipeline for the future.

Our end-point assessment service will do just this. BCS assessors are trusted professionals who ensure apprentices are fully competent before they take the next step in their professional career.

Find out more

[bcs.org/apprenticeships](https://www.bcs.org/apprenticeships)

*BCS apprenticeship employer survey 2019

Guide your apprentices beyond their end-point assessment and lead them to become the future of **digital excellence**

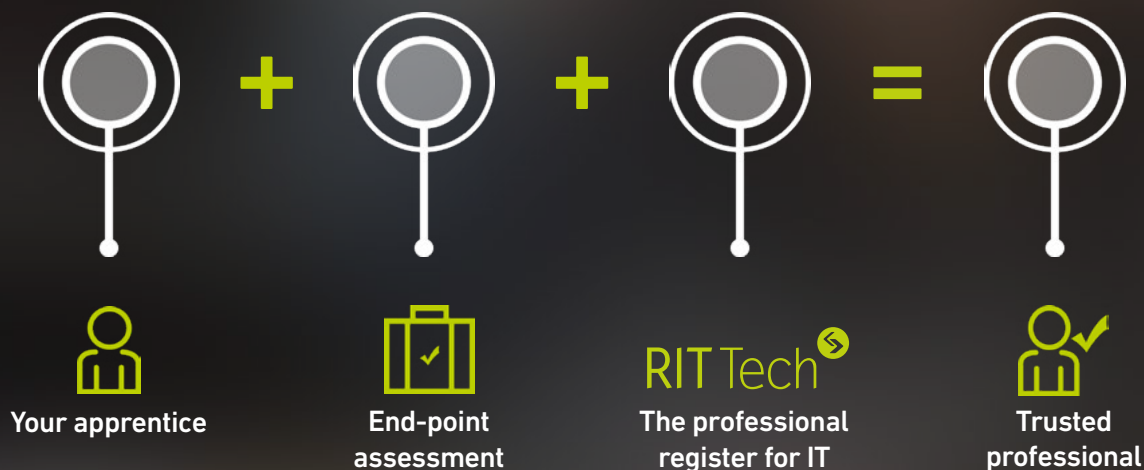
Talk to us about

- ✓ End-point assessment - a service already used by over 3000 digital apprentices
- ✓ The public register of IT professions - RITTech

73%

of employers said it is important post-apprenticeship to appear on a professional register of IT competence

BCS employer apprenticeship survey 2019



2.10 Can't beat end-to-end apprentice support

A supportive, engaged employer who is actively involved in their apprentice's training, development and performance review will make all the difference to their result – this has been proven time and time again.

Your involvement in the end-point assessment is also critical. Together with your training provider, it makes such a difference if you ensure that any apprentices have completed all the required training, have had adequate time and resources to complete the components of their end-point assessment (such as the portfolio and project) and have had the opportunity to take part in practice activities. The digital end-point assessment includes an employer reference; what you say really supports and adds value, so by keeping this in mind and preparing for it from day one, both you and the apprentice will benefit.

Lastly, the concluding assessment interview takes apprentices to the very final stage of their journey. This should be a really positive experience, where they are confident in what they have learned and feel secure that their employer and provider are also confident in their ability. Like a driving test, the interview is very much where the apprentice 'goes it alone', but our assessors are not there to catch them out, they are waiting to see them shine.

2.11 The end of the apprenticeship is just the start

BCS' commitment is to life-long learning. As the Chartered Institute, a professional body for over 60 years, it's what we are about.

Professionalising digital skills doesn't stand still for a moment – blink and we'll miss it! So, progressing skills in line and at the rate at which businesses are transforming is imperative. To help keep individuals moving along the track, we are giving all apprentices registered with BCS the opportunity to join our 60,000 existing professional members and to appear on the RITTech register for technical professionals, at the end of their apprenticeship.

We want to do more to help apprentices that have come to the end of their journey to learn progressively and continue to develop through their professional life. A key part of this is hearing from you as their employer, so your views on what's important really count. Register to take part in the discussion and give us your views: forms.bcs.org/apprenticeship-updates

2.12 Be part of the big picture

The government in England has created apprenticeships to be employer driven. It's important that businesses of all shapes and sizes have the opportunity to have their say on the form, content and funding of apprenticeships, to share your experiences and to hear from others. The Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education (IfATE), is responsible for apprenticeships and works with groups of employers to develop the apprenticeship standards and assessment plans. For further information and to get involved with the work of trailblazers, go to: www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/contact-us/

Or, for other ways to get involved and find out more go to: apprenticeships.gov.uk/register-interest

3. SOURCES

1. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers>



BCS Insights 2019

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