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Help, advice and guidance concerning the recruitment and employment of apprentices is available from the University Apprenticeship website at: www.apprenticeships.ox.ac.uk

1. Introduction

University of Oxford Apprenticeships provide skilled talent for support and management roles, at an appropriate level, across the University. Coordinated centrally by Personnel Services, Apprenticeships access a wide breadth of government-funded training frameworks that provide highly effective development pathways for new and existing staff to support the skills required by the University.

An Apprenticeship is a work-based learning programme available to people of all ages, which enables the apprentice to be employed by the University, whilst studying towards a specific, recognised qualification. Apprenticeships are supported by selected external Training Providers with training funded wholly or partly by the government. Apprenticeships:

a) are of different lengths, depending on the skill types and levels required, from one to four years;

b) allow a very wide range of professional areas to be supported with over 1,500 frameworks currently available;

c) have flexible entry levels, dependant on the role;

d) are available to existing employees, not just to new recruits.

The overall strategic aim of University Apprenticeships is to meet the University's requirement for both, mainstream and highly specialist roles, by recruiting and retaining the best possible talent and developing the skills, experience and behaviours that departments need.

The University's objectives are to:

1. Increase both, the scale and the variety of Apprenticeships, to meet the longer term talent pipeline for the University’s skill requirements.
2. Improve equality and diversity in our workforce whilst enhancing community engagement and recognising our potential regional impact.
3. Maximise external funding opportunities to support the development of new and existing staff.
4. Ensure high standards of quality learning from our external training providers.
5. Provide consistency and equality of Personnel practice across the University for the management of Apprenticeships.
6. Support the introduction of government-backed Traineeship placements for students, where appropriate.
7. Encourage departments to incorporate Apprenticeships into their strategic workforce planning.
2. Recruitment and Employment of apprentices

There are a wide range of government-funded training frameworks available to support the needs of the University. A framework is the term used to describe a collection of qualifications that an apprentice must complete in order to complete their Apprenticeship. The levels and the final qualifications they provide vary; however, they fall into three main groups, which are listed below.

The table shows the level of Apprenticeship and the equivalent level of the final qualification that can be expected at the completion of the Apprenticeship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Apprenticeship</th>
<th>Equivalent Qualifications on Completion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate (Level 2)</td>
<td>GCSE Grades A-C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced (Level 3)</td>
<td>A Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher (Level 4)</td>
<td>Certificate of Higher Education or Degree</td>
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**Eligibility:** Apprenticeships are available to applicants of all ages, although they are mostly intended to support the employment, training and development of recent school leavers. The amount of government funding available depends on the age of the applicant and on the level of any previous government-funded training the individual has undertaken. For example, a person who has already received a university degree-level education is unlikely to receive government funding for an Apprenticeship. In cases where an apprentice is not eligible for the full government-funded training, departments will be required to make a contribution to make up the shortfall.

**Entry Level:** Required entry qualifications, as well as the length and selection of the most appropriate framework of training will be agreed for each Apprenticeship on a case-by-case basis, and will also depend on the specific job role and the department’s needs. It is important that the entry qualifications meet the needs of the Apprenticeship being offered so as to inform the shortlisting process.

Details of the qualifications to be undertaken will be set out in an Apprenticeship Learner Agreement, which will be issued with the Apprenticeship Agreement.

**Framework length:** Apprenticeships can last between one and four years, depending on the level and complexity of the framework being undertaken. For example, a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Customer Service could be completed in one year, whereas a Level 4 in Engineering would require four years. The length of an Apprenticeship should be set in accordance with the anticipated time required for the apprentice to gain enough job experience, their qualification(s) and work-place learning, which will eventually enable them to carry out the full duties of the post, at the required standard.

**Contractual Conditions:** Apprentices are appointed under the terms and conditions specified in their Apprenticeship Agreement and their Apprenticeship Learner Agreement.
Agreement. Apprentices are also bound by the Handbook for Support Staff, with the exception to their pay progression and the policy on fixed-term contracts.

Whilst in the period of their Apprenticeship, individuals are not permitted to apply for or take up paid employment in any other University department or division, unless they are within the last six months of their Apprenticeship. Further guidance related to managing apprentices as they approach the end of their Apprenticeship is outlined in Appendix A.

Appointment to an Apprenticeship carries with it no commitment to a subsequent appointment with the University.

**Poor performance:** Failure to achieve the agreed learning milestones or any other disciplinary issue should be addressed through the normal HR processes detailed in the Support Staff Handbook. However, the University Apprenticeship Manager must be consulted in all such cases, before any formal process is followed. Whilst the normal HR processes for University Support Staff apply to apprentices, there may need to be special consideration given in respect of the Apprenticeship and the University’s commitment to provide training to that apprentice.

Periods of probation apply to apprentices as to any other member of University Support Staff.

**Changes in the time period** of an Apprenticeship are possible for a number of reasons, such as:

- Exceptional performance and early completion of any training frameworks may reduce the overall time to completion of the Apprenticeship.
- Sickness, changes in personal circumstances, failure to achieve any academic milestones, or any other unforeseen circumstances, may result in an extension to an Apprenticeship being granted. The University Apprenticeship Manager should be contacted for further advice in all such cases.

**Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave:** The entitlement to the family leave schemes applies equally to apprentices as to any other member of staff, subject to satisfying any qualifying criteria, whether for statutory or contractual benefits. Arrangements to suspend, extend or delay a course of training to enable this leave to be taken will also be made with the Training Provider(s), as appropriate, to enable the member of staff to complete their Apprenticeship.

**Salary:** Apprentices are initially recruited at the first point within the Apprentice Grade. As an apprentice progresses through their Apprenticeship programme, subject to meeting the milestones, they will be promoted to the next Apprentice Grade point (as outlined below), and will be expected to take on more duties of their role accordingly. Towards the end of the Apprenticeship, it is expected that an apprentice will have gained the necessary experience and training to carry out the full duties of the post.

Apprentices will progress as follows:

- On appointment apprentices should be paid at: Apprentice Grade Point 1
- On successful completion of their first year and agreed milestone qualification this should rise to: Apprentice Grade Point 2
On successful completion of the second year and milestone qualification this should rise to: Apprentice Grade Point 3

Where an Apprenticeship lasts longer than three years, successful apprentices may then be able to progress as follows:

On successful completion of the third year and milestone qualification this should rise to: Apprentice Grade Point 4

For current rates of pay see: 
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/payroll/scales/

Courses of Study: Day or block release (during normal working hours) to attend the course of study associated with the Apprenticeship will be agreed and granted in advance. This forms part of the apprentice’s working time and is included in their working hours. For an Apprenticeship to qualify as a government-backed Apprenticeship there needs to be a minimum of 30 hours’ work a week. An apprentice will not be paid in addition to their agreed salary in order to undertake any additional necessary self-study or for study hours required at a Training Provider that take place outside of their normal working hours.

Fees and Expenses: The government’s priority group for Apprenticeships is 16 to 18 year olds and funding is prioritised for that group. Generally, government funding is provided as follows, with the balance made up through employer or individual contributions;

16-18 year olds 100% of training costs
Over 19 Up to 50% of training costs

It may be that funding is available for certain types of Apprenticeships via the relevant Sector Skills Council or that a Training Provider will reduce or even waive contributions, where due. Some providers will count ‘in kind’ contributions such as provision of equipment or use of a training room.

As with many aspects of Apprenticeships, what it means for each post specifically depends on what type of an Apprenticeship is being undertaken and the age of the apprentice. Departments should contact the University Apprenticeship Manager in the planning stages of setting up an Apprenticeship, who can help to ensure that early contact is made with a recognised and recommended Training Provider, which is crucial for setting up and establishing an Apprenticeship. The knowledge and contacts of the University Apprenticeship Manager will help departments understand what an Apprenticeship means for them specifically.

Additionally, the apprentice’s department will normally be responsible for the direct payment or the reimbursement of any course and examination fees. The employing department is also responsible for the provision of the relevant books and equipment that may be necessary for the study of any approved subjects.

Travel expenses incurred by the apprentice to attend their Apprenticeship training course(s) at a college or similar, which are over and above the costs of their normal travel to work, will usually be reimbursed by the employing department.

Through the work of the Apprenticeships Manager, as directed by the Apprenticeship Development Group, University Personnel Services (Recruitment and Staff
Development) support departments that employ apprentices and ensure sustainable development of Apprenticeships across the University. To support this activity departments will be asked to contribute a nominal sum based on the number of apprentices they have on the 1 June each year.

**Supervision and Mentoring:** All apprentices must have an assigned line manager, who at the start of the Apprenticeship will be required to organise, with the support of the Training Provider, a programme of work-based training which will enable the apprentice to successfully attain any agreed qualifications.

An apprentice should also have a supervisor appointed by their department, who will normally be an established and an experienced member of staff, and who will be responsible for the apprentice’s day-to-day work-based training.

It can be particularly useful for an apprentice, who may have limited experience in the workplace, to be assigned a mentor who is not ordinarily involved in the apprentice’s day to day work. This person can be an ideal sounding board to offer advice and guidance in a wide range of matters.

The line manager, supervisor and the mentor should not be the same person.

If the apprentice is assigned to more than one department (or section within departments) a supervisor should be appointed within each of those areas.

The line manager and the supervisor both have a vital role in supporting the apprentice and the Training Provider in developing and evidencing opportunities for learning and assessment in the work place, in order to enable them to meet the agreed learning outcomes.

Training in the Coaching and Mentoring of apprentices is available to new supervisors, and is arranged termly by the University Apprenticeship Manager. New supervisors are encouraged to attend this course. Please contact the University Apprenticeship Manager for further details.

**Appointment beyond Apprenticeship:** At the successful completion of an Apprenticeship, (ie having gained a formal qualification and performing at the required level in the role), Personnel Services will issue a certificate formally recognising this achievement. Whilst the University cannot and does not guarantee a subsequent appointment with the University following the completion of an Apprenticeship, the employing department may be able to offer further employment to their apprentice, for which the apprentice may qualify and progress into automatically. In order to qualify for an automatic appointment (where one is available) to a post in the department, the apprentice must normally have:

- completed the appropriate training period;
- attended the course of study and attained the appropriate qualification(s); and
- demonstrated satisfactory competence in the role.

If there is a suitable post available and the apprentice has satisfied the division/department as to their competence to perform at the requisite grade, they may be considered for Appointment to a post without the post being advertised more widely.
In such cases, departments should follow the University’s guidance on ‘Recruitment without advertising (‘direct appointments’),’ found at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/recruit/recruitproc/planapprove/noadvert/#d.en.39666

Where a suitable post is available to which the apprentice is successfully appointed, a new, standard contract of employment should be issued to the individual. Where there is no break in continuous service with the University between the appointments, the start date of the Apprenticeship will be used as the date of the continuous service with the University. Continuous service is used for the purposes of certain entitlements, such as the University’s sick pay scheme and calculating the entitlement to family leave benefits, e.g. maternity pay.

3. Developing Existing Staff through an Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship training frameworks can also provide an exciting opportunity to train and develop existing staff. Apprenticeships are open to staff of all ages and experience, who may have:

1. moved to a new role within their existing employment; or
2. taken on new responsibilities; or
3. seen changes to the work they are required to perform; and
4. been employed for at least three months and demonstrated a satisfactory level of performance.

Existing staff may qualify for government funding to cover the cost of their training. However, it should be noted that funded training frameworks for existing staff tend to be of the shorter, one year duration. Early consultation with the University Apprenticeship Manager and the Training Provider will establish eligibility for an Apprenticeship and funding.

The need for this training and development should be identified either at the time an existing member of staff takes on a new role or additional responsibilities, or through the effective use of the Personal Development Review (PDR) process. These training needs can then be incorporated into a departmental training plan. The University Apprenticeship Manager can advise on suitable training pathways.

Apprenticeships for existing staff are arranged in the same way as for externally recruited apprentices, and Section 4 - ‘The Straightforward Route to Recruiting an apprentice’ below should be used for guidance when recruiting to an Apprenticeship.

4. The Straightforward Route to Recruiting an apprentice

Planning: Departments should consider how Apprenticeships may help to address any difficulties that may have been experienced in relation to recruitment and retention within the department, for example, hard-to-fill posts, roles with high staff turnover, or highly specialist areas of work. These needs should be considered as part of the department’s Strategic Workforce Planning.

The University Apprenticeship Manager should be contacted for advice on the appropriate level of an Apprenticeship and to help a department identify the most suitable training framework and Training Provider.

Once a suitable Apprenticeship opportunity has been identified, the University’s standard recruitment processes should be followed when recruiting an apprentice, available at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/recruit/recruitproc/.
In order to enable a consistent and a fair approach to Apprenticeship recruitment, departments should use the Apprenticeship Job Description template, available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/templates/. The Apprenticeship Manager can assist with the writing of the job description for an apprentice.

**Advertising and Attracting the best Candidates:** Once approval to recruit an apprentice has been given, in partnership with the Training Provider, the Apprenticeship job should be advertised. Apprenticeships should be advertised through the usual University routes and appear on the University's recruitment web pages. Additionally, the Training Provider can access the National Apprenticeship Service and local Oxfordshire Apprenticeships recruitment websites, where the job could also be advertised. Other advertising sources may be available for specialist posts. Further advice on placing advertisements should be sought from the University Apprenticeship Manager.

Advertisements should be appealing and inspiring, whilst clearly highlighting the opportunities available. Apprenticeship job adverts should accurately reflect the job, by stating the specific duties of the post. Accurate, thorough and well-written adverts will help to attract suitable applicants, with the skills and knowledge at the appropriate level for the Apprenticeship being advertised.

If required, the Training Provider can assist departments in the identification of suitable candidates during the recruitment exercise, which may enable a more efficient shortlisting process.

**Selection and Appointment:** The advice on selection and appointment should be followed, and can be found at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/recruit/recruitproc/interviews/. In addition, departments need to take into account that many apprentices are recent school leavers, who tend to be new to the workplace, so the selection process can be as much about introducing them to what you do, as well as selecting the best candidate. Departments should consider running a small assessment day; the University Apprenticeship Manager can advise on the various ways that this can be done.

Once the most suitable candidate, who meets the needs of the role as set out in the essential criteria in the job description, has been identified, an offer should be made and the Offer Letter should be issued in the normal way. All standard and appropriate pre-employment checks should be completed in line with the University's policy on pre-employment screening. Further details are available at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/recruit/preempcheck/.

All apprentices should be issued with an Apprenticeship Agreement, which contains specific terms and conditions that apply to apprentices and should be produced via CoreHR.

Apprentices are also bound by their Apprenticeship Learner Agreement, which sets out the details of their study, the qualification(s) they will achieve and the timescales of their milestones. The template for this is available at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/templates/, and should be issued with every Apprenticeship Agreement.

The University Apprenticeship Manager can assist with the completion of the documents above.
Apprenticeships – End of Contract (Guidance for Departments)

As the end of the Apprenticeship approaches, departments need to think about the next steps and the course of action for their apprentice. Departments should provide support to their apprentices accordingly towards the end of the Apprenticeship.

The appropriate HR contact (eg the HR lead) within the department should meet with the apprentice three months before the end date of their Apprenticeship, in order to explain what support and guidance can be offered to them by their department.

Whilst the University cannot and does not guarantee a subsequent appointment following the completion of an Apprenticeship, it is hoped that the skills and experience the apprentice has acquired throughout their Apprenticeship, can be retained within the department. Where an apprentice successfully attains their qualification(s) and can demonstrate satisfactory competence in their job, and where the opportunity exists, they can be directly appointed into the job for which the Apprenticeship was intended, by following the guidance above, in the section ‘Appointment beyond Apprenticeship’.

In cases where a subsequent appointment cannot be offered with the University, departments need to think about the ways in which they can assist their apprentices in finding new employment opportunities, where possible. The department may wish to consider providing general support with job searching to their apprentice, in areas such as CV writing skills, and how to apply for positions, either within the University or externally. The apprentice’s mentor or supervisor, or the department’s HR lead may be the most appropriate individuals to assist with these activities.

Whilst apprentices are placed into fixed-term Apprenticeship appointments, they are not considered to be fixed-term employees, and are excluded from the provisions of the Fixed-Term Employee Regulations. Therefore, the University’s procedure for the end of fixed-term contracts does not apply to apprentices. More information about fixed-term contracts can be found at: www.gov.uk/fixed-term-contracts/what-counts-as-a-fixedterm-contract.

Apprenticeships – End of Contract (Guidance for apprentices)

As the end date of the Apprenticeship approaches, apprentices should be encouraged by their department to think about their future career, and whether they wish to pursue it within the University. Apprentices should meet with the HR lead within the department three months prior to their contract end to establish whether there is an opportunity to remain in employment with the University after the end of their Apprenticeship.

The HR lead will normally be the apprentice’s nominated facilitator to guide them through this process. At this meeting the HR lead should discuss the likelihood of there being a position available to the apprentice within the department following the completion of their Apprenticeship. If there is a suitable job available to the apprentice, then the normal procedures for evaluating the job and offering employment should be followed.

In cases where there is no further employment available to the apprentice, the HR lead should explain this clearly, and support should be offered in helping to redeploy the apprentice into another position within the University, if possible. The department should explain to the apprentice what support and guidance can be offered to them, eg assistance with CV writing and the job search and applications for other positions.