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# **Degree Apprenticeships:** Developing outstanding leaders and managers

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This guide aims to highlight potential challenges and provide advice on putting in place a management degree apprenticeship programme that brings value for both apprentice and employer.

## What is a management degree apprenticeship?

Management degree apprenticeships provide an exciting opportunity for employers and apprentices. They enable apprentices to study for a bachelor's or master's degree while earning a wage and gaining valuable workplace skills. And they help the employer develop high-level homegrown talent and a robust management and leadership pipeline for the future. They are also intended to help address the UK's skills and productivity gaps.

The new era of apprenticeships has the potential to link business more closely with academia and vice versa which can only be a good thing for all of those involved. Management and leadership skills are fundamental to every organisation and management degree apprenticeships will become instrumental in building the next generation of leaders. Closer collaboration between all the parties involved, therefore, will ensure that programmes deliver value for employers, individuals as well as UK plc and the UK economy.

A management degree apprenticeship represents a major commitment and employers will have a number of decisions to make before they embark on running a programme. As well as decide on an education partner, it is down to the employer to choose the end-point assessment organisation (EPAO). Execution and management of the 20% 'off-the-job' requirement of an apprenticeship programme also needs to be carefully considered.

In most cases, the employer is paying for the apprenticeship through the apprenticeship levy (or through a 5% co-investment for smaller employers) so they should have an active role in ensuring a quality programme and experience for the apprentice. This guide aims to highlight potential challenges and provide advice on putting in place a management degree apprenticeship programme that brings value for both apprentice and employer.



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## What do you want to achieve?

Employers must consider their organisational needs and decide how a degree apprenticeship can address these. At the end of the degree apprenticeship you should have a motivated and loyal individual who sees a genuine and fulfilling career path at your organisation. The role must, therefore, have sufficient scope and structure for the period of the degree and ensure there is a relevant management position for the individual at the end of it. It is important to consider the long-term needs and aims of the business as well as the current ones.

Throughout the degree apprenticeship, the employer must ensure the individual feels supported in their studies and work and a valued part of the organisation. This will play a major part in retaining the individual and seeing a return on your investment in them.



## Working with a University

The 20% off-the-job requirement has raised concerns in the minds of some employers who wrongly believe they will effectively lose that employee from the workforce for lengthy periods of paid time.

Degree apprenticeships are a partnership not just between the employer and apprentice but also the university or higher education institution (HEI) where the apprentice will undertake their studies. The employer works with the university/HEI to build in work-based components and off/on-the-job training and must clearly communicate their needs in terms of skills and ensure the university/HEI understands their expectations. The two sides must also clearly define their roles and responsibilities.

The 20% off-the-job requirement has raised concerns in the minds of some employers who wrongly believe they will effectively lose that employee from the workforce for lengthy periods of paid time. Working closely with the university/HEI to design work-based projects, however, will help to ensure the time away from day-to-day tasks and responsibilities still delivers value for the organisation (also see how the EPAO can help below).



Employers should seek a true work-based degree, not just a full-time degree turned into a part-time course. Before committing to the university, they should be satisfied that the student will be able to apply their learning in the workplace and that this will benefit the business as well as the individual.

Employers should also explain their practical requirements such as when the apprentice will undertake their studies. If they are putting a full cohort of learners through, they should be able to influence the delivery structure of the programme to best suit their business needs.

The employer should continue to engage with the university throughout the degree programme to ensure it is delivering on its promises.

## The importance of the end-point assessment (EPA) organisation

All apprentices undertaking a programme on the latest professional standards must complete an end-point assessment to finish their apprenticeship.

The end-point assessment organisation, therefore, is a critical part of the process. They must remain completely independent of the on-programme part of the apprenticeship. This does not mean that you cannot use the same organisation (for example, delivering ILM qualifications as part of on-programme training and using ILM for EPA), but it does mean that the EPAO must have no vested interest in whether or not the apprentice passes their EPA. The EPAO cannot, for example, have been involved in any on-programme assessment of the apprentice.

The employer and university should agree a schedule of process reviews that supports the learner to make the 'gateway' requirement of the assessment.

Degree Apprenticeships enable learners to not only develop their knowledge and understanding of leadership and management but apply this knowledge in the workplace to add real value.





## Jargon buster

Here is a short guide to help you understand the most commonly used apprenticeship terms:

### Apprenticeship standards

Developed by employer groups (which used to be called Trailblazer groups), the term 'standard' relates to a specific occupation. Standards are short documents that set the skills, knowledge and behaviours required by the standard. The standard also lists the recommended duration of the apprenticeship, any qualifications that are a mandatory requirement and any maths and English requirements. They can be found on the Institute for Apprenticeships website.

### 20% off-the-job training

All apprentices need to complete a minimum of 20% off-the-job training during their paid, contracted working hours. The rules around this are very specific and are governed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). While it is not a condition of reaching gateway, it is audited by the ESFA.

### On-programme

Describes the learning and development stage of the apprenticeship. The on-programme stage continues until apprentices are ready to start the end-point assessment. As a minimum this phase must be 366 days, but standards can specify a longer learning phase.

### Gateway

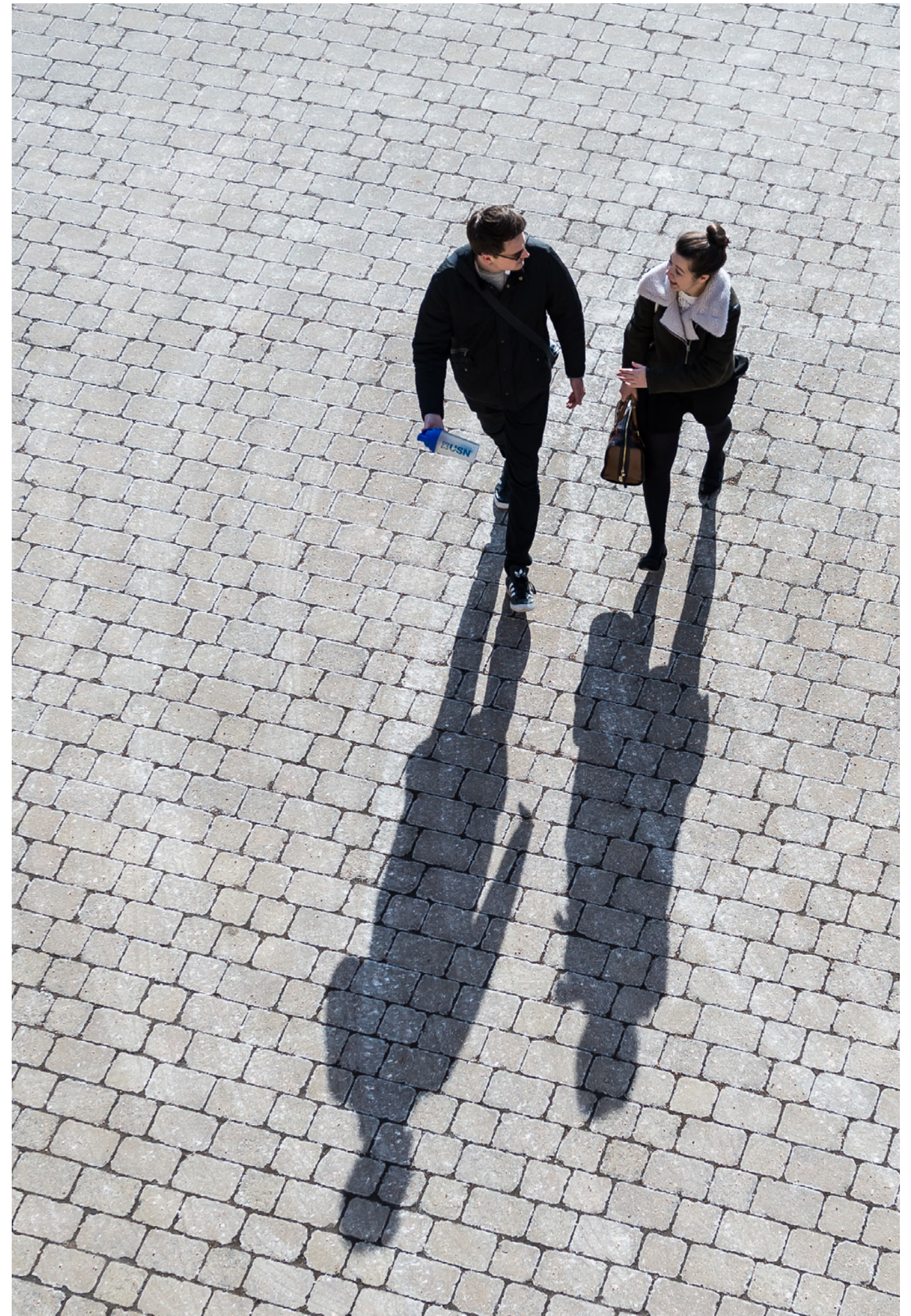
This is a stage in all apprenticeship standards where the employer and provider have to sign and declare that the apprentice is ready to start the end-point assessment of their apprenticeship. An assessment organisation needs this signed form before they can start the end-point assessment booking process. Each form has been tailored to the requirements set out by their industry.

### End-point assessment (EPA)

End-point assessment is the series of assessments done at the end of an apprenticeship to test full occupational competence. There is often a combination of assessment methods that have been set by employers to assess the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been developed throughout the apprenticeship. It is this final stage of the apprenticeship journey that will determine the overall result for the apprentice.

### End-point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs)

These are organisations that appear on the register of end-point assessment organisations that are able to offer a service connected to assessing end-point assessment. Any organisation that can prove they are financially viable and have the appropriate infrastructure to support End-point assessment can apply to become an assessment organisation. The register is open to all interested organisations, not just awarding organisations. Training providers and colleges can also apply however they must be able to prove that any assessors are independent of the apprentices they are assessing.





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We believe that great leaders can come from anywhere. With the right support, anyone can grow and develop to make a real difference to their team and organisation.

Which is why we help individuals from all levels to realise and apply their potential, so that the organisations they work for can reap the benefits.

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