



Employer's Guide

Apprenticeships at Cranfield

Department: Apprenticeships Office

Date: July 2022



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Welcome to Cranfield and MK:U

Introduction

This handbook provides information for employers of students studying as part of an apprenticeship programme, either for an undergraduate (Level 6) award through MK:U or a postgraduate (Level 7) award with Cranfield University. Cranfield University is the Apprenticeship Training Provider, registered with the ESFA for both level 6 and 7 awards. This Handbook is also applicable to employers of apprentices studying on a non-award-bearing apprenticeship.

Students studying for a Level 6 undergraduate award as part of an apprenticeship programme with MK:U are registered students at Cranfield University. Students studying for a Level 6 apprenticeship with MK:U are bound by Cranfield's rules and regulations, as set out in this and other Senate Handbooks. Any functions or duties or processes referred to in this Handbook (or other relevant Handbooks) may be undertaken by Cranfield staff on behalf of MK:U.

The Postgraduate Students' Handbook or Undergraduate Students' Handbook should be the apprentice's primary source of information and guidance on being a student at Cranfield and MK:U. In addition, the Assessment Rules for Postgraduate Taught Courses and the Undergraduate Awards Handbooks provide information on the University's assessment rules and the expectations placed on apprentices on award bearing courses.

These should be read in conjunction with the Apprenticeships Handbook, which provides specific information relevant only to apprenticeship students.

An apprenticeship is a job with training. Through their apprenticeship students will gain the technical knowledge, practical experience and wider skills and behaviours they need for their immediate job and future career. As an apprentice they will gain this through formal off-the-job training and the opportunity to practise these new skills in a real work environment (on-the-job training). Their apprenticeship programme at Cranfield/MK:U has been developed to meet the requirements of an Apprenticeship Standard. Apprenticeships have different and additional regulatory requirements to meet the needs of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

Each Standard sets out the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for the occupation, and is accompanied by an Assessment Plan, which describes how they will be assessed against the Standard. Full details of all Apprenticeship Standards and their Assessment Plans can be accessed via the [IfATE website](#) (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education).

All Standards define:

Skills & Competencies: The Standard will define the range of skills and competencies that the apprentice needs to practise and acquire in order to do the job to a specified standard. These skills are largely acquired and practised in the workplace. The employer will sign off these skills prior to the End Point Assessment.

Knowledge & Understanding: The Standard will define the knowledge and understanding that an apprentice will need to acquire and apply in order to carry out the role effectively and become occupationally competent. Cranfield University, as the Training Provider, will provide the apprentice with the taught academic elements of their apprenticeship qualification.

Behaviours: The Standard will define the behaviours the apprentices will need to demonstrate in order to become occupationally competent. This may include behaviours such as leadership techniques, emotional intelligence, reflection, and valuing diversity, etc.

It is a requirement of the apprenticeship that the employer contractually agrees to facilitate off-the-job training – this is the calculated minimum amount of time that should be spent on occupational off-the-job training during the apprenticeship. Prior to August 2022 this was 20% of the apprentice’s contracted hours. For new starts from August 2022, the calculation is based on 6hrs per week. This can include lectures, online-learning, simulation exercises, shadowing, mentoring, industry visits, learning support and writing assignments. It does not include: progress reviews; training outside of paid working hours; exams; or study required in connection with achieving separate Level 2 English and Maths qualifications.

The Apprenticeships Office is the team responsible for the regulatory and compliance aspects of all apprenticeship programmes (the things that differentiate an apprenticeship from a standard undergraduate or postgraduate qualification), and are the primary source of advice, information and guidance regarding all apprenticeships (both undergraduate and postgraduate). They will be able to advise employers on apprenticeship eligibility, funding, changes in circumstances, Gateway and End Point Assessment.

Specialist student support services and academic guidance are provided by the various teams across the University in line with core academic programmes and as described in the Postgraduate Students’ Handbook and Undergraduate Students’ Handbook.

Apprenticeship Journey

Apprentices all complete an On Programme element that delivers the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours required by the apprenticeship standard they are completing. If it is a standard that requires the completion of credits towards an academic award this will be achieved here.

Once an apprentice has completed the On Programme requirements, they will be at Gateway. Gateway confirms they have met all the requirements, have a suitable Evidence Pack and are eligible to be put forward for their End Point Assessment.

End Point Assessment checks if the apprentice has met all the requirements of the apprenticeship. If all requirements have been met, they will be awarded their apprenticeship certificate along with any academic awards they have achieved.



Financial and Legal Matters

Cranfield University contracts with employers for the delivery of apprenticeship programmes. Funding for apprenticeship programmes is via the Apprenticeship Levy and, in some cases, a top up paid by employers.

Levy-paying employers will use funds available in their levy pot. Non-levy employers will co-fund the apprenticeships with the government. All contracts (Apprenticeship Training Services Agreements, Apprenticeship Agreements and Commitment Statements/Training Plans) are required to be in place prior to an apprentice's registration and commencement of their programme. Any changes in circumstances that impact on an apprenticeship programme will be discussed with employers as the contracting partner.

Agreements

Our Legal Team will issue an Apprenticeship Training Services Agreement (ATSA) between the employer and Cranfield University, a Commitment Statement or Training Plan, for the apprentice, employer, and provider to sign, and a template Apprenticeship Agreement. All these documents will need to be returned prior to the start of the apprenticeship. In the instance they are not returned, we will have to defer the apprentice's start to a future intake.

Cranfield University asks that all employers sign our contract for services. This is to ensure that we can provide a consistent and fair level of delivery to all our employers and apprentices.

Commitment statements (Training Plans) and apprenticeship agreements must be kept up to date to reflect any changes in circumstances. The employer is legally obligated to inform the training provider of any changes that impact on a learner's eligibility or willingness to continue with their apprenticeship. As apprenticeships are funded through public money, we are required to terminate the registration of any learner that becomes ineligible for that funding. Employers would be liable for outstanding fees not covered by ESFA, and ESFA may claim reimbursement from them if funds have been mis-used.

Copies of the agreements can be found on our [website](#).

Connecting on the Apprenticeship Service

To pay for an apprenticeship, employers must connect to Cranfield via the Apprenticeship Service. Employers can set up the connection on the Apprenticeship Service to connect with Cranfield as a provider. The Government has created a helpful [video](#) showing step by step how to do this. We can add the apprentices on behalf of the employer; if you would like us to do this, please select '**I would like my provider to add apprentices**'. Our UKPRN is **10007822**.

Non-levy paying employers

If an employer is a non-levy paying employer, they will need to reserve funds, guidance on how to do this can be found on the [Government's Apprenticeship webpages](#). It is imperative that a non levy employer reserves the funds prior to the apprentice starting their apprenticeship with us. **We are not able to backdate payments for their apprenticeship and if funds are not reserved, they will be moved to a later start date.**

Application Process

Applicants must complete their apprenticeship application via the link provided to the employer. Any links found on course pages of our website are for self-funded/sponsored academic programmes. The application process from the apprentice side is as follows:



Induction for Apprentices

Apprentices are required to attend an Induction as part of their Registration with Cranfield. This is often part of their first day of study with us and covers a variety of topics.

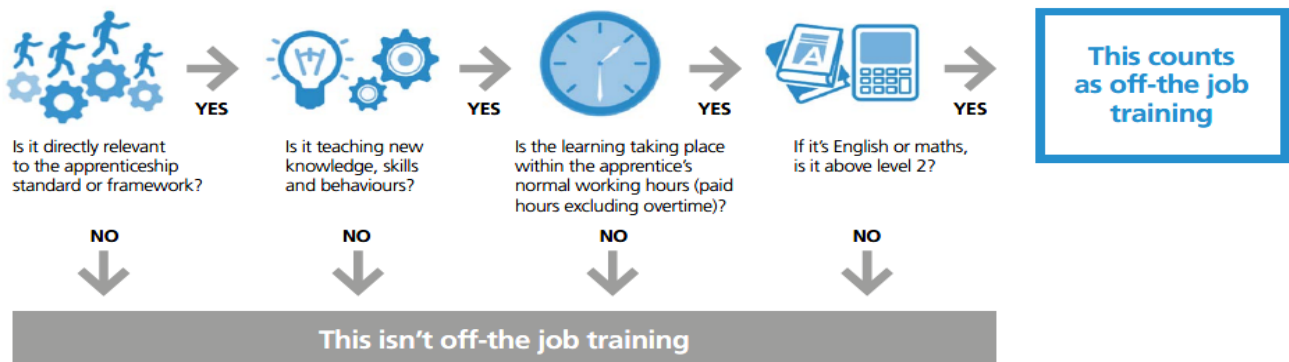
- Welcome to Cranfield
- Welcome to the course
- Student and Academic Support Team introduction
- PebblePad Introduction (e-portfolio tool)
- Apprenticeship Introduction
- Registration with Cranfield
- Research Skills
- Library Skills
- Writing Skills

We have many apprentices starting with us who have not previously attended Higher Education; we are here to support all of our apprentices to ensure they have a positive experience and feel confident studying for their apprenticeship here at Cranfield.

Off the Job Training

The Education and Skills Funding Agency require all apprentices at all levels to complete a minimum of 6hrs per week on off-the-job training (new starts from August 2022, prior to this it was 20% of contracted hours). Below is a flow chart covering what counts toward Off the Job Training (OTJ).

Off-the-job training: steps to help you determine whether an activity counts as off-the-job training



Key facts

1

Off-the-job training must make up at least 20% of the apprentice's normal working hours (paid hours excluding overtime) over the planned duration of the apprenticeship.

2

You can deliver off-the-job training in the apprentice's normal workplace or at an external location.

3

Progress reviews and on-programme assessment do not count towards 20% off-the-job training.

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Service

You can find further details about off-the-job training including best practice examples in the [apprenticeship funding rules 2019 to 2020](#), and the [apprenticeships: off-the-job training guidance](#) on GOV.UK

Off the Job (OTJ) training cannot take place outside of the normal contracted hours, therefore doing OTJ in overtime, even if paid, does not count.

The apprentice's minimum amount of OTJ is listed in their Commitment Statement/Training Plan, which both they and their employer sign prior to the start of the apprenticeship. The majority of the OTJ training will take place through study with us here at Cranfield/MK:U. This can be online or face to face. The remainder of the time should be met through shadowing or learning opportunities in the workplace.

OTJ can change if the apprentice's circumstances change impacting the programme length. We encourage any apprentice who thinks their circumstances are changing to get in touch with us. We ask that employers contact Cranfield as soon as they are aware of any changes to an apprentice's circumstances.

Maths and English Requirements

All Higher Level (levels 3-7) Apprentices in England are required to provide suitable evidence of level 2 maths and English achievement by the time they reach Gateway and prior to End Point Assessment. Please see list for details of acceptable qualifications [List of acceptable qualifications](#).

All apprentices will be required to sit an initial assessment of their maths and English to determine current working level. Those that are assessed as working at or above Level 2, and have provided acceptable evidence of achievement of a Level 2 qualification (as per list of acceptable qualifications above) are not required to undertake further study.

If apprentices do not have acceptable evidence of achievement or are assessed as not currently working at level 2 they will be required to sit a diagnostic test to establish areas of focus and they will be required to undertake a functional skills qualification in maths and/or English. Please note that there are no additional charges to the employer for maths and English support but charges will be passed on to the employer where apprentices do not adhere to the cancellation policy for functional skills tests.

Please note that Degree certificates (unless the words 'mathematics' or 'English' are in the title) and IELTS certificates are not deemed acceptable by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The above requirements are set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cranfield are required to obtain and record the evidence as described and are not able to offer any flexibility, however we can offer advice on obtaining evidence where it is missing.

Tripartite Reviews

Tripartite Reviews are regular planned on-programme evaluations involving the training provider, the employer (usually the line manager or mentor) and the apprentice. The ESFA requires these to be scheduled at 8-12 weekly intervals. These formal review opportunities allow each party to discuss progress towards developing and achieving the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours required by the Standard, preparation for Gateway & End Point Assessment and plan the next steps required before the next meeting. The Tripartite conversation also includes the apprentice's wellbeing, safeguarding and understanding of British Values, Off the Job training experiences and application of maths and English skills.

The apprentice will prepare for the review using the e-portfolio tool, PebblePad and this will be displayed during the meeting. It is important that views from the training provider and employer are documented to ensure the meeting record is a true and accurate reflection of what has been discussed, including the clear actions and targets to be reviewed at the next opportunity. The active engagement of the employer in this process is essential to a positive and enriched experience for the apprentice.

The evidence accumulated within Tripartite Reviews will reassure and motivate the learner and employer by having a view of what has been achieved throughout the on-programme element of the apprenticeship. Consistent and meaningful Tripartite Review conversations will provide greater confidence for all parties on the approach to Gateway and End Point Assessment.

Apprenticeship Tutors and Apprenticeship Coaches

Apprenticeship tutors or coaches support apprentices on a one-to-one basis, attend Tripartite Review meetings and advise on quality of evidence accumulated and Gateway & End Point Assessment preparation. Tutors coach and support each apprentice helping them to consider their academic learning in terms of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours required by the Standard and discussion of work-based activities that will develop and demonstrate competency.

E-Portfolio

Cranfield University has PebblePad as the e-portfolio tool that apprentices use to document their apprenticeship progression and completion. It is structured towards recording the on-programme requirements, the Standard's End Point Assessment styles and includes information direct from the End Point Assessment Organisations. The apprentice is the primary user of PebblePad and it is encouraged that they share links to their individual portfolio with their line manager or mentor and the apprenticeship tutor or coach. As training provider, Cranfield can access PebblePad to monitor engagement with the system to assure employers that their learners are making timely progress and raise any concerns if required.

Employer Support / Supporting your Apprentice

The employer must make sure the apprentice is taking part in learning throughout the apprenticeship, has regular progress reviews that involve line manager/mentors and is receiving and recording the Off the Job training opportunities.

The employer Apprenticeship Key Contact should keep abreast of their learners' progress by liaising with both the learner and their line manager regularly, and if required report any changes to the learner's employment and/or concerns to the Apprenticeship Office. They are also responsible for ensuring the required documentation is up to date, has appropriate approvals and the management of the Apprenticeship Service system.

The employer line manager/mentor is responsible for the learner's day to day management, holding one to one conversations and attending Tripartite Reviews. They should understand the apprenticeship Standard in order to recognise improvements in performance in the workplace in line with Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours and be mindful of the individual's wellbeing and Off the Job training commitments.

Where necessary, the employer is required to provide time within the working week for the apprentice to work on their functional skills requirements – this is in addition to their apprenticeship 'off the job' hours.

Changes in Circumstance

If any circumstances occur that affect the original agreement between the employer and Cranfield, this must be reported to the Apprenticeship Office at Cranfield. Circumstances can include but are not limited to:

- Changes to the learners Levy eligibility
- Changes to contract or working pattern including threat of redundancy
- Changes to line management support
- Breaks in learning of more than 28 days duration
- Deferral of Gateway and EPA.

The Apprenticeship Office can provide information, advice and guidance on the next steps required in the event of changes in circumstance. The majority of these will require amendments to the Commitment Statement/Training Plan, Apprenticeship Agreement and the Apprenticeship Service handling. It is recommended that any change should be communicated at the earliest opportunity to avoid any retrospective data reporting.

Gateway

Gateway is the check point before an apprentice is presented for End Point Assessment (EPA). Here Cranfield as Training Provider and the apprentice's Employer check to make sure the apprentice has completed their learning, have met the minimum requirements of the apprenticeship set out in the apprenticeship standard, and are ready to take the assessment. The Employer will sign a declaration statement that confirms readiness on the apprentice's behalf and that is submitted to the End Point Assessment Organisation as part of the required Gateway documentation.

While there are some standard requirements (e.g., Level 2 English and maths), the supporting evidence required to clear gateway can differ between apprenticeship standards. Cranfield will advise apprentices in each case what is required for their specific Gateway process.

End Point Assessment

End-point assessment (EPA) is the final stage of an apprenticeship. It is an independent assessment of whether the apprentice has developed the knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard. Unique to each standard, EPA essentially demonstrates the competence of an apprentice in their role.

The EPA is carried out by an independent End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) selected by the apprentice or employer at the start of the apprenticeship journey. The Independent Assessors supplied by the EPAO are all specialists in the field covered by the apprenticeship standard, with recent industry experience. For integrated degree apprenticeships, Cranfield operates as the EPAO, and Cranfield recruits and trains independent assessors to fulfil this role.

Cranfield will work with EPAOs and apprentices to arrange the EPA for each apprentice.

Ofsted

On the 1st of April 2021, The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) became responsible for ensuring the quality of apprenticeship provision at levels 6 and 7 (undergraduate and post-graduate levels). All training providers offering these programmes are expected to be visited by Ofsted within 24 months of this date. We have put together this briefing to explain what this means for you as an employer of apprentices at Cranfield University.

The Inspection process involves the Ofsted team gathering evidence about the quality of the apprenticeship training that we deliver. A most important part of this evidence gathering is to talk to employers and apprentices about their own individual experiences to build a picture of how our programmes operate.

Cranfield University seeks to provide its apprentices with the best possible training experience. We set and maintain high standards for teaching and learning across all our programmes, supported by robust quality assurance policies and procedures. For this reason, we welcome the opportunity the Ofsted Inspection will give us to learn about how the service we provide meets the needs of employers and how we can improve in the future.

Please see the Ofsted Employer Briefing document for full information. This briefing document explains what happens if the inspectors select you as an employer they would like to speak to.

British Values

The University has a responsibility to promote British Values as part of its educational offering to all apprentices, to ensure that they leave the University prepared for life in modern Britain and become valuable and responsible members of society who treat others with respect and tolerance, regardless of their background.

The four definitions of British values are:

Democracy

A culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities.

The rule of law

The need for rules to make a happy, safe and secure environment to live and work.

Individual liberty

Protection of your rights and the rights of others around you.

Mutual respect & tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

Understanding that we all don't share the same beliefs and values. Respecting those values, ideas and beliefs of others whilst not imposing our own onto them.

British Values are in harmony with the University's Objects, Values and policies. They are embedded in our culture, customs and practice. As such they are part of everything we do, including the way we design and deliver our training. Our apprentices leave Cranfield with the sensibilities associated with being part of a culture that espouses these Values.

Safeguarding

Our university Safeguarding policy can be found in the Senate Handbook on Student Welfare and on the University [website](#). The policy outlines our commitment to protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and safeguard those who are unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This includes our responsibility to report and work with others where an individual is considered at risk. Our central student welfare support service, the Student Advice Centre, can offer guidance on general safeguarding matters, and assist in contacting, supporting and escalating a case where a student is considered at risk. Information on the services available, policies and contact details (emergency and non-emergency) can be found on our webpage; '[Worried about a student?](#)'. For general inquiries or to report a safeguarding incident, disclosure or concern about a student, please email studentadvice@cranfield.ac.uk.

Prevent

Our Prevent Duty statement can be found on our [website](#). It outlines our duty of care to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism. The threat of terrorism and extremism in the UK can involve the exploitation of others to involve them in terrorism or activity in support of terrorism, and the promotion of extremist views or ideology. The University therefore manages concerns about the radicalisation of individuals as part of its overall approach to student and staff welfare. Our central student welfare support service, the [Student Advice Centre](#), can offer information and advice where a student is considered of concern. Information on the services available, policies and contact details can be found on our webpage; '[Worried about a student?](#)' For general inquiries or to disclose a concern about a student, please email studentadvice@cranfield.ac.uk.

Complaints Process

Whilst we work hard to ensure that all of our learners and employers have a positive experience, we are aware that occasionally we may fall below your expectations. Employers can raise any query or concern through contacting Bridget Dix, Head of Apprenticeships (bridget.dix@cranfield.ac.uk) in the first instance. Full details of our Apprenticeship Complaints Policy are available on the [website](#).

Apprentices should raise any complaints through the [Students Complaints](#) process.

Contact Details

Bridget Dix, Head of Apprenticeships

bridget.dix@cranfield.ac.uk

Building 45
Cranfield University
Cranfield
Bedfordshire
MK43 0AL

Apprenticeships Office

apprenticeships@cranfield.ac.uk