



Apprenticeships Line Manager eToolkit

A guide to supporting your apprentices



Welcome

Here at Arden University, we are committed to helping our students become work-ready, lifelong learners. As pioneers in transformative higher education, you play a vital role in our fulfilment of this goal.

When someone makes the key life decision to embark on an apprenticeship with Arden University, they are setting out on an important path of learning, skills development, and professional advancement. Of course, they will also have to manage the balance between their work, family life, and other important commitments. This is where you have a valuable role to play in supporting, guiding, and mentoring them as they progress through their degree apprenticeship studies.

I look forward seeing how you help our apprentices flourish and achieve the success they deserve.



Carl Lygo

Vice-Chancellor &
Chief Executive Officer
Arden University



Your responsibilities as a line manager

This line manager e-toolkit has been designed to help you and all line managers of apprentices understand your role and how you can best support your employee as they start, progress and complete their apprenticeship. As a line manager, you play a key role in your apprentice's success and experience throughout their learning journey. You are the person they will look to for support and guidance, so a committed line manager will help to ensure a committed apprentice.

Your responsibilities as a line manager

As a line manager, you will act as a professional mentor, supporting and guiding your apprentice through their learning journey and supervising them in the workplace. You'll set objectives for the apprentice in the workplace and ensure they are linked to the successful completion of the apprenticeship. You will regularly discuss and help implement an action plan with the apprentice and Arden University to track progress, development and exposure to new skills.



Responsibilities



1 APPRENTICE

Follows the learning plan and programme structure agreed upon by Arden and the line manager.

Meets the minimum required hours of off-the-job learning and home study.

Achieves the goals set by the line manager and Arden and demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and behaviours developed during the apprenticeship programme.

2 HR/L&D

Offers a deeper insight into the line manager's responsibilities toward their apprentice and clarifies expectations within your organisation.

Monitors the apprentice's progress through our real-time progression dashboards.

Helps identify potential learners that can upskill in line with organisational needs.

Maintains consistent communication between the line manager and Arden.

3 ARDEN

Monitors the apprentice's development and provides personalised support.

Delivers and oversees the training of apprentices to ensure they benefit from the programme.

Maintains communication and provides feedback through reviews with both the apprentice and line manager.

Ensures the agreed-upon learning plan is being followed and resolves any concerns.

Steps to Success

Supporting your apprentice



1

Right person, right programme - Course selection and support

Starting an apprenticeship should be a decision that you and your employee make together. The key to choosing the right apprenticeship is to identify the right new knowledge, skills and behaviours your employee wants to gain for their personal and professional development in line with their job role. Choosing the right apprenticeship for your employee and their role will ensure they can build the essential skills to benefit their career and your department. Your apprentice should know what they want to achieve personally and professionally, and how this fits with the overall departmental or organisational goals.

Actions:

- Think about your organisation's strategic reasons for using apprenticeships for people development. What impact do you want your employee to have through their participation?
- Discuss with your employee whether this is the right choice for them and help them to identify the new knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) they want to acquire to support their personal and professional development. Remember that these KSBs must be aligned with their job role.
- Assess the level of commitment required - for example, the allocation of protected learning time during working hours. Make plans for any changes you may need to make to facilitate this.

2

Programme exploration & engagement

Once you have helped your team member identify the new knowledge, skills and behaviours they want to gain through an apprenticeship, you can explore the options and work together to select the right apprenticeship to support their development goals. The core of what an apprentice will learn is the Apprenticeship Standard - which details the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will be taught through the apprenticeship. Training providers like Arden create programmes to deliver every element of the standard. As a line manager, your role is to support your apprentice on their learning journey and help them apply it to their work.

Actions:

- Attend Arden's introductory meetings to understand the apprenticeship.
- Attend Arden's on-boarding meeting where you will be required to review and sign your apprentice's learner commitment statement, apprenticeship agreement, and the apprenticeship standard to know what they will learn and commit to providing the necessary support for success.
- Note important dates in your calendar.

3

New skills - Help the apprentice implement what they learn

Practical workplace application, the “doing”, as highlighted earlier, is critical to ensuring that your apprentices are acquiring and building proficiency in skills to be productive and deliver lasting impact in the workplace early on. As a line manager, your responsibility is to help them to achieve this.

Actions:

- Review the learning programme and identify opportunities for your apprentice to apply their learning to add value in the workplace. This helps the apprentice convert workplace experiences into learning opportunities and learning experiences into business value.
- Identify subject matter experts in your organisation or wider field who your apprentice can shadow and learn from
- Help your apprentice link their acquired knowledge to your organisation’s goals, opportunities, and challenges.
- Understand the tasks or projects assigned to your apprentice and consider how they can be applied in your organisation.

4

Enable off-the-job training

The government requires employers to provide apprentices with a minimum of six protected hours per week of off-the-job training. This training is received by the apprentice during the normal working week to enable them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours as set out in the Apprenticeship Standard. It consists of Arden University’s delivered activities and those prearranged at the workplace. Time away from day-to-day work enables apprentices to absorb fresh knowledge, consider new ideas and experiment with innovative ways of doing things. Helping to schedule off-the-job training demonstrates your support and full commitment to their success.

Actions:

- Collaborate with your apprentice and their coach to organise off-the-job training, specifying the provisions offered by Arden and the ones that will be held within your company.
- Help identify opportunities within your organisation where your apprentice can learn things that count as off-the-job training.
- Ensure your apprentice maintains a record of their off-the-job training activities.
- Remind your apprentice that they need to complete six hours of off-the-job training every week and that you are available to assist them.

5

Performance & development support

The apprenticeship will be a big part of your employee's work life and one of the most important things they'll do to grow. Apprentices and their line managers should connect the apprenticeship with organisational performance management, personal development, and operational planning processes.

Actions:

- Ensure your apprentice's personal development plan aligns with and supports their apprenticeship.
- Support your apprentice in aligning their apprenticeship and work priorities, for example by identifying key projects or tasks that will aid their development.
- Take an active role in the regular progress reviews of your apprentice by preparing for, attending, and providing support towards the implementation of the action points from these reviews, alongside their Arden coach.
- Provide regular feedback to the apprentice regarding their progress and celebrate their successes.

6

Work-Based Project

At the end of the apprenticeship, your apprentice will need to complete a significant work-based project. They will need your help to pick a suitable project, get your organisation's support, and make it happen.

The project should be meaningful to both the organisation and the apprentice and boost their personal and professional confidence and development.

Actions:

- Encourage your apprentice to talk to senior stakeholders and find a project that aligns with your organisational needs and strategy.
- Support your apprentice in using the project to build their reputation and connections within your organisation.
- Share the results and added value of the project in your area or organisation.

7

Gateway and EPA support

Supporting the apprentice with end-point assessment starts right at the beginning – with the design of the curriculum and how it is delivered. This gives a great opportunity for you to help shape the curriculum and delivery of the training.

Actions:

- You are expected to attend the Gateway and End Point Assessment Planning Meeting which takes place towards the end of the apprenticeship.
- At this meeting, you will have an influential role in determining if your apprentice is prepared to proceed with their End Point Assessment (EPA), which is the method used to evaluate the apprenticeship.
- It is essential to provide your learner with support and ensure that the timescales agreed upon with them and the End Point Assessment organization are met. Ensure that they have sufficient time to complete their assessment and only cancel it in

8

Continue to encourage and support a growth mindset

Encourage your apprentice to use their new skills by joining new projects, taking on more tasks, and suggesting improvements in your team and organisation.

Actions:

- Continue to encourage your team member to be an autonomous self-driven learner with a growth mindset. How can they continue to improve themselves through stretching and challenging experiences?
- Challenge your apprentice to mentor others within your organisation by sharing their knowledge and expertise to enhance their peers' abilities within the organisation
- If your apprentice desires to progress, foster their development. It is advantageous for your team and your organisation as a whole.

Key Area Spotlight

This spotlight area highlights four key areas in which you, as a line manager play a significant role and where you can really influence the success of the apprenticeship. We've provided some top tips for success.

1 Your relationship with your Arden University coach

The coach is the Arden University representative who will provide the most support for you and your apprentice. It is advisable to establish a relationship with your coach early on. The coach acts as a guide and the key link between the theoretical knowledge acquired and evidencing its practical application in the workplace. The coach supports each apprentice and the line manager in finding opportunities to apply the learning in the workplace, as well as providing an appropriate level of stretch and challenge for your apprentice to continually encourage and develop a growth mindset. The coach helps each apprentice to take responsibility for their own actions and development.

Coaches are pivotal for learner progress, facilitating communication among learners, mentors, and Arden University. Their responsibilities include:

- Monthly support and review, ensuring KSB achievement
- Sustaining active engagement
- Hosting and leading learner progress reviews between the three of you every 10-12 weeks
- Guiding to additional Arden support avenues
- EPA preparation assistance

2

Your responsibilities during progress reviews

Quarterly reviews between the Arden University coach, the line manager, and the apprentice are a mandatory funding requirement, and operationally pivotal for apprentice success. It is essential that the line manager is present and actively involved in these reviews.

During these reviews your Arden University coach will:

- Provide you and your apprentice with an update on their learning engagement and progress (including % of OTJ hours completed)
- Support in monitoring KSB achievement
- Support in monitoring Functional Skills achievement if relevant
- Assist in outlining the current learning objectives along with any required workplace exposure to practice and evidence new KSBs
- Set and gain agreement on the next set of objectives
- Check on your apprentice's wellbeing and provide guidance on any special requirements

Line manager engagement in reviews offers opportunities to:

- Discuss any overarching expectations that are relevant to your organisation's strategy or your apprentice's job role
- Aid your apprentice in effectively managing their time by assisting them in aligning workplace priorities with their apprenticeship learning objectives.
- Help identify opportunities for your apprentice to gain their KSBs through wider exposure to new people and projects both inside and outside of your organisation.
- Provide skill gap support
- Provide your apprentice with feedback and the opportunity to celebrate successes special requirements

3 Monitoring progress – The apprenticeship portfolio

To successfully complete their apprenticeship, your team member must create a portfolio throughout their apprenticeship that evidences their newly gained KSBs and their experience of applying these in the workplace. The portfolio of evidence showcases apprentice achievements throughout the programme and is submitted to the panel at the EPA for review as part of the final assessment.

As the line manager your engagement in the below will greatly enhance the experience of your apprentice and the likelihood of their successful completion:

- Assisting with developmental opportunities in the workplace like training or shadowing
- Supporting your apprentice to ensure all evidence is uploaded to the portfolio monthly
- Monitoring progress of the portfolio against the KSBs in collaboration with your Arden University coach
- Ensuring that your apprentice is taking at least six hours of protected time each week to undertake learning, attend virtual classes and workshops, practise their skills in the workplace, and collate and upload evidence for coach review and sign-off





Your role in supporting the apprentice's off-the-job learning

Apprentices are required to undertake at least six hours per week (equivalent) of off-the-job training during their working hours. This training aims to enable the apprentice to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours required for their apprenticeship. Off-the-job training must deliver new learning that is directly relevant to the apprenticeship. It can take place at the apprentice's normal place of work, but it must not be part of their normal working duties.

Below are examples of what can be counted as off-the-job learning. Your Arden University coach and internal L&D/HR teams will help support with any off-the-job queries you have.

Off-the-job training activities



*The 6 hours is the minimum amount the employer must provide. There will be the requirement of additional hours of self guided study due to the Academic level of Higher Apprenticeship

Helpful Tips

Preparation

Juggling studies and professional responsibilities can be challenging. Make sure that your organisation understands the requirements of participation for both you and your apprentice as to manage expectations. Tasks may need to be allocated to other colleagues or timelines moved while the apprentice is on programme. Remember that in the long run, both you and your organisation will reap the benefits of the skills developed during the apprenticeship programme.

Academic Challenges

Returning to study while working can be daunting. Some apprentices may even be returning to education after many years which can present challenges. Conversations regarding priorities, expectations and support resources may be the difference between programme withdrawal and programme completion. Apprentices are not expected to research every aspect of a topic but to take away key points that will benefit the areas of their work. Coaches and the Study Skills Team are available to help anyone who feels that they are struggling academically.

Mental Health Support

The mental health and wellbeing of your apprentice is extremely important. You may wish to ask how your apprentice is coping during your regular meeting and be prepared to help find a resolution should they require extra support. We encourage you to also speak with your apprentice's coach to make the necessary adjustments to preserve their mental health.

Breaks In Learning

We understand that unavoidable circumstances may arise after your apprentice starts their course causing a need for a break in learning. We encourage that you and your apprentice hold a meeting to discuss options before making the BIL request. Your assigned coach should also be a part of this conversation to ascertain if accommodations can be made before entering the formal process.

We help your apprentices gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need, for the career they deserve

Arden University has a proud heritage of providing flexible and accessible higher education. We've grown and evolved from our beginnings in 1990 as the chosen online learning partner for universities across Britain, to offer a new kind of learning experience, and meet the changing needs of modern life.

We strive to do things differently and believe in doing things better. We recognise that higher education providers must proactively respond to the current and future needs, trends, and expectations of employers, as well as a global evolving economy, to create a better world for everyone. We are proud to offer our students the chance to gain life-changing degree qualifications no matter their background or personal circumstances.

As active champions of equality, diversity, and inclusion, we believe that higher education is a force for both social and economic change. Through bringing the power of technology together with the potential of a university education, we are revolutionising the traditional university model to remove unnecessary barriers to learning.



Contact Us:

degreeapprenticeships@arden.ac.uk

More information:

arden.ac.uk/for-business/apprenticeships/for-employers
