



# Apprenticeships an employer guide

**THE CHARTERED BODY FOR THE  
PROJECT PROFESSION**



## **Contents**

<b>Page 4</b>	Foreword
<b>Page 5</b>	Introduction Apprenticeships and project management
<b>Page 6</b>	What is an apprenticeship? Benefits of apprenticeships
<b>Page 7</b>	How are apprenticeships changing?
<b>Page 8</b>	Apprenticeship funding
<b>Page 9</b>	The levy
<b>Page 12</b>	What employers need to know
<b>Page 14</b>	Useful links
<b>Page 16</b>	Case studies



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**"Companies of all sizes and disciplines can benefit from the project management apprenticeships available"**

## Foreword

As the Chartered body for the project profession, the Association for Project Management (APM) is committed to attracting and developing the best, brightest and most diverse talent now and for the future.

While we aspire to live in a world where all projects succeed, we need to ensure that project management becomes a first-choice career to meet the demands of today's economy and society. With the new apprenticeship levy, we want to help employers recruit and retain the next generation of project professionals from as wide a background as possible.

The purpose of this guide is to help employers navigate the new apprenticeship levy, and explain how they can make the best use of the resources available from APM.

Apprenticeships provide an accessible entry point for individuals considering a career in project management, but companies of all sizes and disciplines can benefit from the project management apprenticeships available.

As well as attracting a more diverse workforce, apprenticeships provide a way to recruit and retain individuals who are more likely to remain with the organisation for longer, giving you a greater return on your investment in training. For apprentices, they provide a route to acquiring relevant skills and experience for a successful career in a given profession.

Central to apprenticeships in project management is the APM Project Management Qualification (PMQ), which apprentices study for as part of their programme. This qualification is a recognised mark of quality both in the UK and internationally.

APM was an early adopter of the government's shift to employers designing new apprenticeship standards, 'trailblazers'. We have worked with a pan-sectoral group of major corporates, training companies and universities to develop the new **Associate Project Manager Apprenticeship Standard**, which was launched in January 2017.

**John McGlynn**  
Chairman, APM



## Introduction

This guide aims to help employers navigate the apprenticeships landscape in two key ways: first, by explaining the value of apprenticeships to the project profession, as well as detailing APM's involvement with development of new employer apprenticeship (trailblazer) standards; second, by helping employers understand the apprenticeship levy and how to make best use of the resources that APM is able to provide.

## Apprenticeships and project management

Apprenticeships are enjoying an increased profile across project management and related professions, as companies of all sizes and disciplines realise the benefits they bring and the part they play in a multifaceted approach to recruitment.

**"Apprenticeships are a key component of our profession's drive to attract new talent, providing an accessible entry point"**

Apprenticeships are a key component of our profession's drive to attract new talent, providing an accessible entry point and attracting those who might not have considered a career in project management in the past. They also set individuals on the professional qualifications pathway – providing a sound base for a successful career.

Although historically apprenticeships have proven to be an untapped resource across our industry, things are changing. The Higher Apprenticeship has been providing new entrants to project management since 2012, with more than 750 Higher Apprenticeship starts across the project management sector between 2012 and 2016.

The Treasury's Project Management Growth Action Plan recognised the role apprenticeships will play in the future of our profession, and project management was an early adopter of the government's shift to employers designing new apprenticeship standards as part of employer trailblazer groups. Since 2015, APM has been actively involved with leading employers in the development of new trailblazer standard apprenticeships (see below).

Employers value the contribution of a Chartered professional body in this context. As more employers look to recruit school leavers and apprenticeships increase within our profession, we want to support this with a published guidance document, which aims to provide assistance to businesses operating in our sector, highlighting the value of apprenticeships and suggesting how best to utilise them. This guidance also provides details on the forthcoming apprenticeship levy – an intervention that represents a significant change in skills and skills funding policy.

APM is committed to supporting the profession in attracting the best, brightest and most diverse talent for the future, as well as developing those already in the sector.

There are two project management apprenticeships currently available. The Associate Project Manager standard at level 4 is available in England, and the Higher Apprenticeship Framework at level 4 is available in Scotland and Wales.

Central to apprenticeships in project management are professional qualifications with each apprenticeship, including a full professional qualification. Apprentices will study for their professional examinations as part of their programme. The Associate Project Manager standard includes the APM qualification, PMQ – chosen by employers because it is widely recognised by project management recruiters, both in the UK and internationally.

### TO HELP FIRMS TO NAVIGATE THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE, WE HAVE AN APPRENTICESHIPS UNIT

APM has established a dedicated Apprenticeship Unit to assist employers with their queries both on the levy and apprenticeships in general – as well as the project management trailblazer apprenticeship. The unit is contactable either by telephone on 0845 458 1944 or via email at [stephen.miller@apm.org.uk](mailto:stephen.miller@apm.org.uk)

## What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes from levels 1 to 8, lasting at least 12 months. They allow apprentices to combine employment and training – earning and learning – providing both on and off-the-job (20 per cent) training. In addition to delivering transferable skills and competency in English and maths, apprenticeships lead to full competency and capability in an occupation, demonstrated by achievement of an apprenticeship standard.

## Benefits of apprenticeships

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**“For employers, apprenticeships provide a way to recruit and retain individuals who are more likely to remain with the organisation for longer”**

Apprenticeships are valuable for both the apprentice and the employer. For employers, apprenticeships provide a way to recruit and retain individuals who are more likely to remain with the organisation for longer. This allows employers to create a more diverse workforce, while realising a greater return on investment in training. For apprentices, they provide a route to acquiring relevant skills while providing experience and helping to form attitudes and behaviours necessary for a successful career in the given profession. Data from the Centre for Economics and Business Research shows that, for every £1 that is spent on apprenticeships, the national economy gains £21.

Training providers (private providers, colleges or universities) may help to take the stress out of the setup process, and how to access all the available funding. Apprenticeships are available in more than 170 sectors, including project management. Awareness of apprenticeships in our sector is at an all-time high.

## How are apprenticeships changing?

### The road to quality – changing perceptions

“Apprenticeships must be about the relationship between an employer and an apprentice”

An independent review of apprenticeships conducted in 2012 argued for a redefinition of apprenticeships in order to “focus on where they can add most value, to strengthen the brand and to raise our level of ambition”. The review recommended a sharper emphasis on quality and rigour – so that training is both trusted and transferable – while emphasising that, at their core, apprenticeships must be about the relationship between an employer and an apprentice. In addition to challenging government to put employers at the heart of the system’s design and delivery, the review recommended that government should focus on outcomes, or what apprentices do at the end of their apprenticeships.

The government moved to protect the term “apprenticeship” in the *Enterprise Act 2016*, making it an offence for any person, business or training provider to provide or offer a course or training as an apprenticeship if it is not a statutory apprenticeship (where a statutory apprenticeship is an “approved English apprenticeship” – standard or framework) and an apprenticeship agreement is not in place between an employer and an apprentice.

Following the 2012 review, the government moved to create trailblazers – or groups of employers working together to design new apprenticeship standards and assessment criteria for occupations in their sectors. (The group must consist of at least 10 employers, which must include at least one small- or medium-sized enterprise representative.) These standards will replace existing ‘frameworks’ by 2020. The new apprenticeship standards are short (one/two pages), accessible documents, describing the level of knowledge, skill and behaviours required to do a particular role well, ie describing full competence for the role. All new standards have to relate to a specific role or occupation (for example, Associate Project Manager) and provide a pathway to a career in the sector.

## Moving from frameworks to standards

### The difference between SASE Frameworks and new trailblazer apprenticeships



\*Funding for SASE frameworks will end by 2020 though this date may change

Source: City & Guilds, *Apprenticeship Reform Guide* (March 2017)

**"A levy fundamentally alters the UK's approach to skills funding – lessening the cost to the public purse and transferring the cost burden to employers"**

## Apprenticeship funding

In his summer budget in July 2015, then chancellor George Osborne announced the introduction of a levy to fund three million apprenticeship starts by 2020. The introduction of a levy fundamentally alters the UK's approach to skills funding – lessening the cost to the public purse and transferring the cost burden to employers. This policy intervention seeks to address the perception that firms' investment in talent is on a downward trend, and was to form a key pillar of Osborne's productivity plan, entitled *Fixing the Foundations: Creating a More Prosperous Nation*, which he published immediately after the budget. A consultation was then launched regarding the apprenticeship levy before the government announced the rate and scope of the levy in the *Spending Review and Autumn Statement* in November 2015.

Since November 2015, while the government has taken on board the concerns of many businesses, training providers and interest groups, details surrounding the apprenticeship levy have not been universally understood. A City & Guilds report showed that just months from the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, two in five employers were unaware whether they would even be paying the levy.

### Awareness of the apprenticeship levy by job role

Not aware ■ Aware ■



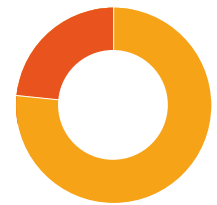
**Total**  
Aware 66.80%  
Not aware 33.20%



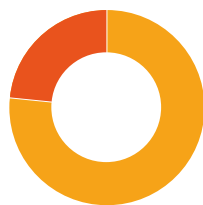
**Middle manager / professional**  
Aware 57.60%  
Not aware 42.40%



**Senior manager / professional**  
Aware 66.90%  
Not aware 33.10%



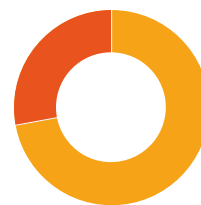
**HR director / manager**  
Aware 76.30%  
Not aware 23.70%



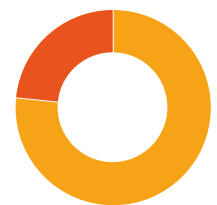
**Head of Apprenticeships**  
Aware 76.80%  
Not aware 23.20%



**Head of training**  
Aware 54.50%  
Not aware 45.50%



**Director**  
Aware 73.20%  
Not aware 26.80%



**Business owner**  
Aware 76.30%  
Not aware 23.70%

Source: City & Guilds, *Skills Shortage Nation: the Importance of Employer Commitment to Apprenticeships* (February 2017)



## The levy

### Who pays the levy – and how much will it be?

Since 6 April 2017, employers in all parts of the UK have been required to pay a levy of 0.5 per cent of their annual pay bill exceeding £3m. 'Pay bill' is defined as total employee earnings subject to class 1 secondary National Insurance contributions.

An allowance of £15,000 means that only those employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3m will have to pay and report the levy, as this allowance eliminates a levy liability up to a pay bill of £3m.

A pay bill of less than £3m may attract a levy liability where an employer operates multiple payrolls, or has more than one HMRC reference, or is a connected company or charity, as only one allowance is available.

### How do employers report their levy?

Employers will report their levy liability monthly on the Employer Payment Summary, as they do other Pay As You Earn (PAYE) liabilities. The first declaration was on 1 May 2017 for April's pay bill.

### How is the levy collected?

The levy will be collected monthly by HMRC through the employer's PAYE, and will be payable alongside income tax and National Insurance. Similarly, the annual allowance of £15,000 will be deducted on a monthly basis (£15,000 divided by 12 months).

### How do employers access their levy funds?

Once employers have declared the levy to HMRC, they will be able to access funding for English apprenticeships through their account with the Apprenticeship Service (AS). Account registration opened in January 2017.

### What else does the AS enable employers to do?

Through the AS, employers will be able to:

- select an apprenticeship framework or standard;
- choose the training provider or providers they want to deliver the training;
- choose the organisation that will assess their apprentices; and
- access post-apprenticeship vacancies.

Employers will also be able to set the price they have agreed with their selected training provider, and pay for apprenticeship training and assessment. Importantly, should an apprentice stop training or take a break, employers will also be able to stop or pause payments through the AS.

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**"An allowance of £15,000 means that only those employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3m will have to pay and report the levy"**

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**"Should an apprentice stop training or take a break, employers will also be able to stop or pause payments through the AS"**

**"The value of digital vouchers will correspond to the proportion of the pay bill paid to employees living in England"**

#### How much will employers be able to spend?

The amount appearing in an employer's AS account will be calculated using data that HMRC already holds about the home addresses of employees, so that the value of digital vouchers will correspond to the proportion of the pay bill paid to employees living in England.

After the levy fund has been multiplied by the proportion of the employer's pay bill paid to their workforce living in England, it will then be subject to a 10 per cent government top-up to this amount.

#### What happens to the levy funds paid for employees in the devolved nations?

As skills policy has been devolved, governments in each of the devolved nations will receive a 'population share' of the apprenticeship levy.

The Office for Budget Responsibility's latest apprenticeship levy forecast (published in March 2016) is as follows:

<b>Population share of the levy funding (£m)</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Scottish Government	221	230	239
Welsh Government	128	133	138
Northern Ireland Executive	76	79	82

#### How can funds be spent?

Digital vouchers will be valid for 24 months and can only be spent on apprenticeship training – and not the wider associated costs of apprenticeships – eg apprentices' salaries. If an employer has registered to become a provider in their own right, they may be able to use their levy funds more widely.

“Employers will be expected to negotiate a price for their apprentices' training and assessment”

#### What happens to unspent vouchers?

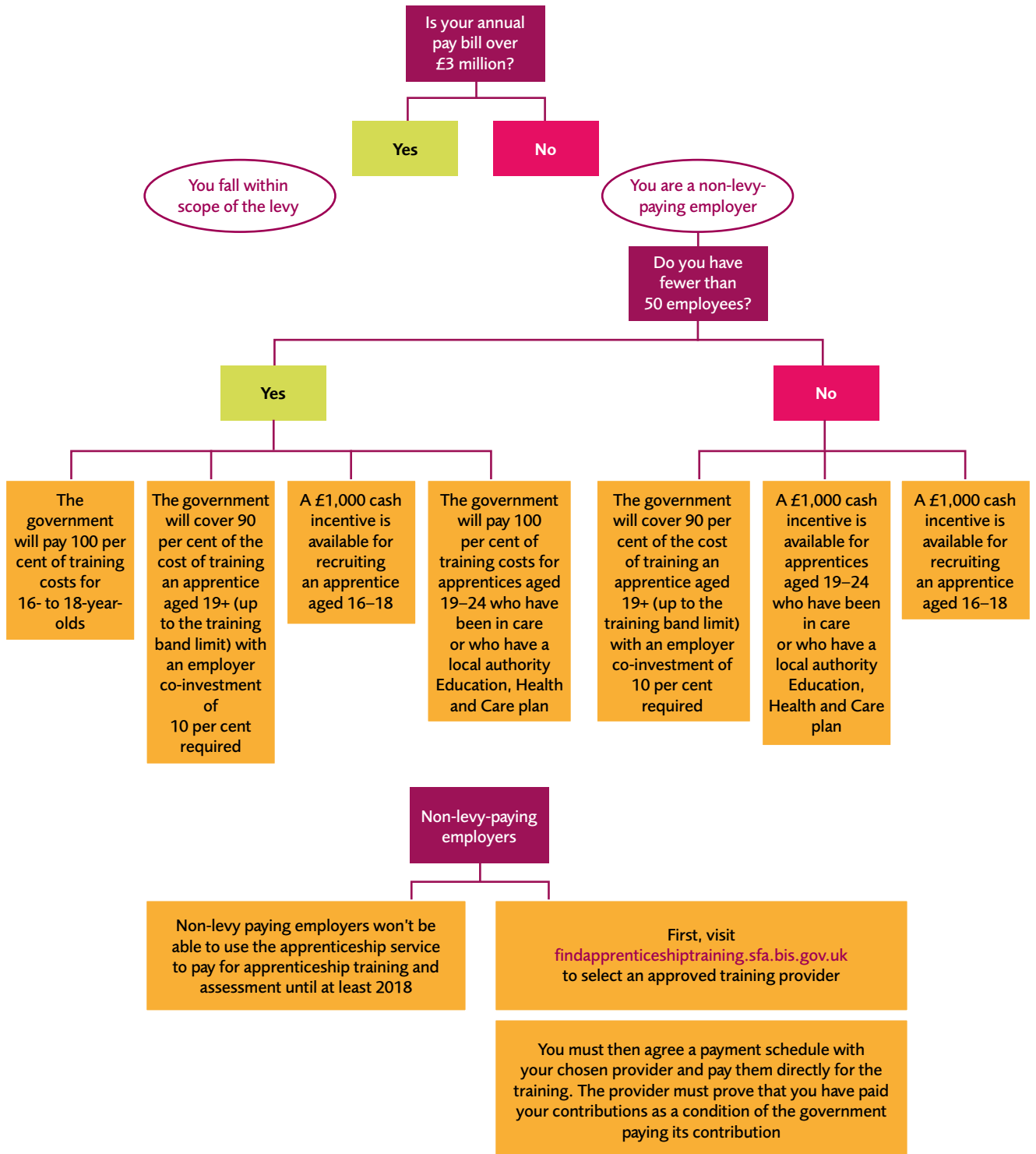
The new apprenticeship funding system will comprise 15 funding bands. Employers will be expected to negotiate a price for their apprentices' training and assessment in the knowledge that there is a maximum that government is prepared to commit from its funds for the off-the-job training and assessment for each apprenticeship.

Band	Band upper limit/cap
1	£1,500
2	£2,000
3	£2,500
4	£3,000
5	£3,500
6	£4,000
7	£5,000
8	£6,000
9	£9,000
10	£12,000
11	£15,000
12	£18,000
13	£21,000
14	£24,000
15	£27,000

Source: Department for Education, *Apprenticeship Funding in England from May 2017* (October 2016)

**What happens to funding for apprenticeships commenced before 6 April 2017?**

Apprenticeships that commenced before this date will continue with the current funding arrangement.



## What employers need to know

### Step 1: Identify the need

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**"Once you have made the decision to hire an apprentice, you will need, in most cases, to find an approved training provider"**

Before recruiting an apprentice, you should identify a clearly defined role for them in your business. It could be that you are looking to develop an existing member of staff or that you see a future need, which an apprentice could be trained to fill. Taking on an apprentice is a commitment that should not be entered into lightly. Once you have made the decision to hire an apprentice, you will need, in most cases, to find an approved training provider.

APM can help you find the training provider that is right for you – email [APM's Apprenticeship Unit](#) for the latest list of providers that can deliver in your area. A training provider will deliver the apprenticeship at your place of work, and will work with you throughout the programme, providing regular feedback – leaving you free to focus on your core business. Training providers will be able to assist you with managing the apprenticeship funding process. Providers will also support you with recruitment, developing training plans and programme evaluation (see below).

### Step 2: Recruit and enrol

There are a number of ways of recruiting an apprentice, and how you do this will depend on the age of the apprentice you are looking to recruit.

You could:

- Advertise and recruit in the same way you would any employee – eg using your company website or local media, or a specialist recruitment company and a formal selection process. Some employers include the training provider in this process, as they know what makes a good apprentice. An increasing number of employers are recruiting apprentices in September/October, following the publication of exam results.
- Liaise with the National Apprenticeship Service and use its vacancy matching service.
- Use [APM's job board website](#).
- Recruit directly from schools/colleges. This is helpful if you have developed a good relationship with a particular institution.

When looking to recruit a younger apprentice (16–18), you should remember that they will have little, if any, work experience, and so this should be a consideration when designing your recruitment process. In some cases, extra financial support is available to employers taking on a 16- to 18-year-old apprentice.

Once you have made your recruitment decision, apprentices will have a formal contract of employment that should reflect the fixed-term nature of the apprenticeship.

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**"Once you have made your recruitment decision, apprentices will have a formal contract of employment"**

There is a national minimum wage for apprentices, though many employers choose to pay their apprentices more than this.

### Step 3: Induct

Apprentices should receive a full and comprehensive induction – as you would give to any new member of staff. Introducing them to their new colleagues helps an apprentice feel part of their new team. A discussion about expectations, their role in the company and learning objectives should be at the heart of the induction, so that the apprentice has a clear understanding of what to expect. Finally, the induction plays a role in providing the apprentice with a good impression of their new employer and a chance to understand the structure, values and culture of the company.

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**"Apprentices should have clear work plans and should receive ongoing feedback and coaching from their manager"**

#### **Step 4: Develop and manage**

For all parties to receive maximum benefit from the programme, you, as the employer, will need to provide the relevant support mechanisms. In the case of apprentices already with your company, these will be substantially fewer than for a new joiner. In addition to the support from the training provider on the programme, apprentices should have clear work plans and should receive ongoing feedback and coaching from their manager. They are there to learn and gain the skills to succeed in our profession, and so the tasks they undertake should reflect this. They have made a big commitment in undertaking the apprenticeship, and it is your responsibility as an employer to support them. An apprenticeship is a foundation for a professional career, and the role should reflect this. As well as a manager/mentor who has responsibility for the apprentice, you should also consider assigning a buddy to them. This person could be junior to the manager and able to offer informal support and help. Having a buddy and mentor system offers an opportunity to develop the management skills of other staff.

#### **Step 5: Feedback and evaluate**

It is good practice to hold regular feedback sessions with the apprentice and the training provider. Apprenticeships are a collaborative learning process, and companies should always take the time to review progress and make any required improvements. A total of 70 per cent of employers say that apprentices provide improved product or service quality.

#### **Step 6: What happens next?**

The majority of those completing an apprenticeship remain with their employer – repaying the investment of time and money, as well as becoming committed members of staff. The end of an apprenticeship does not signal the end of that individual's development.

## Useful links

[Apprenticeships – ESFA General Information and Guidance](#)

[Institute for Apprenticeships](#)

[Institute for Apprenticeships operational plan](#)

[Apprenticeship Funding](#) (updated March 2017)

[Apprenticeship Service](#)

[Guidance for Trailblazers](#)

## APM Apprenticeships

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## Case studies



### Jenna Moran, Sellafield Ltd

#### PROJECT MANAGEMENT HIGHER APPRENTICESHIP

##### Why did you choose a project management apprenticeship?

I had originally applied for an electrical apprenticeship with Sellafield Ltd, but the company felt my skills were better matched to a new scheme they were running, the Project Management Higher Apprenticeship. When I was offered a place on the scheme, I was working part-time at McDonald's and looking for opportunities to progress.

##### How has your training experience been so far?

I wasn't sure what to expect, but since I began the scheme a year ago, the ball hasn't stopped rolling. I have been enjoying my time and challenging myself every day, which can be quite stressful, but really rewarding. I feel I'm getting a real insight into what project management is actually all about.

##### What's the best thing about being an apprentice at Sellafield Ltd?

I'm now in the final year of my apprenticeship, and my training experience with Sellafield Ltd has been brilliant so far. There is a good team bond between the apprentices here – we are always looking to help each other out.

##### What would you say to someone thinking about applying for an apprenticeship?

Go for it! I believe young people have a lot to offer both the nuclear and project management industries. We bring a new way of approaching things.

##### What are your future aspirations?

In the short term, I am a 'buddy' for some of the new project management apprentices. This will help me to develop my mentoring skills and pass on my learning.

I'm excited about the next steps, completing my apprenticeship, gaining more experience on the job and furthering my education with our Project Academy, leading to me ultimately becoming a competent project manager.





## **Joanne Sharples, BAE Systems**

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT HIGHER APPRENTICESHIP,  
MILITARY AIR & INFORMATION, WARTON**

**What made you choose an apprenticeship, why did you join BAE Systems and what is your current role?**

I have always known about the Project Control Foundation Scheme at BAE Systems, as it was promoted at my high school. Two of my older peers from school also completed the scheme, and I knew they rated it highly. I liked the idea of learning at college and then applying my knowledge at work – not to mention getting paid to learn! I am currently a contract delivery manager at BAE Systems Military Air & Information, working in a high-pressure environment as part of a team liaising with an overseas customer, which also involves trips to the Middle East.

**What is your typical day like?**

My days typically involve several videoconference calls with colleagues based in the Middle East. We are currently in an exciting period of the project as we head into the mobilisation phase. However, this does mean that we are currently under a lot of pressure to deliver everything required. I compile reports for senior management and manage a very tight delivery schedule. My role also requires strong communication and influencing skills, applied to a wide variety of stakeholders, and so I have to be flexible and continually adapt to the current situation.

**Tell us about a project you have been working on recently**

Prior to working on this project, I was based at RAF Coningsby in Lincoln, working alongside our RAF customer. While I was there, I was a contract change project manager for the Typhoon and Tornado contracts. This involved following the change process from start to finish for any changes or upgrades to the fleet requested by the RAF. Again, this was a high-pressure and demanding environment, but it was very exciting to be a part of.

**What is your favourite thing about working for BAE Systems?**

The projects – both those that I'm directly involved with and those I get to witness going on all around me. My office is located next to the airfield, so throughout the day I see various aircraft test-flying, doing loop-the-loops and making fast touchdowns, on and off the runway. I also like how much the company values its people and the many benefits you get for working here. I have also been fortunate enough to travel with BAE Systems, visiting RAF bases in the UK, as well as Munich.

**What advice would you give to a candidate interested in joining BAE Systems?**

It's important to do your research and decide which career suits you best. I also think it's important to contact someone currently on the scheme you want to apply for. That's what I did, and it really helped me out. I asked the person lots of questions about their experiences, and it made me realise how much I wanted to apply. It also made the application and interview process much easier.



## **Connor Dixon, Sellafield Ltd**

### **PROJECT MANAGEMENT HIGHER APPRENTICESHIP**

#### **Why did you choose a project management apprenticeship?**

I believed it would allow me to work in various environments and progress through different career pathways.

#### **How has your experience been so far?**

I have thoroughly enjoyed it, as it has allowed me to learn a great range of skills and absorb knowledge from different disciplines associated with project management. Over the course of my apprenticeship, it has become more challenging and testing, but also more rewarding. I have been given more responsibility as I have progressed, and I have been able to help deliver scopes of work.

#### **What is the best thing about being an apprentice at Sellafield Ltd?**

The opportunity to work in different and ever-changing project environments, and to learn from a wide array of mentors.

#### **What would you say to someone who is thinking about applying for a project management apprenticeship?**

If you are interested in a career that will allow you to progress through various project management-based roles, and also to move around within the project management industry and experience different projects, then this apprenticeship is for you.

#### **What are your future aspirations?**

To keep on improving and progressing in the field of project management. Currently, I am in my final year and acting as a sub-project manager for a package of work on a multimillion-pound major project that plays a big part in the site strategy. I'm very proud of my current role; I have been given a great deal of responsibility and would like to continue with this package and help to drive it through the delivery phase of the project.

Following this, I would like to further my project management knowledge through the Project Academy for Sellafield, and add to the foundation degree in project management that I have already achieved as part of the apprenticeship. I will continue to challenge and test myself in various different environments with the end goal of hopefully project managing a multimillion-pound project myself one day.



## Association for Project Management

Ibis House, Regent Park,  
Summerleys Road,  
Princes Risborough,  
Buckinghamshire HP27 9LE

**Tel (UK)** 0845 458 1944  
**Tel (Int)** +44 1844 271 640  
**Email** [info@apm.org.uk](mailto:info@apm.org.uk)  
**Web** [apm.org.uk](http://apm.org.uk)