

# ESFA Funding Compliance Policy

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the process for the university's managing and monitoring of apprenticeship funding. Apprenticeships in England are funded by the Department for Education (DfE), and funding compliance is regulated through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), an executive agency of the DfE.
- 1.2 All providers of apprenticeships must comply with rigorous [ESFA Funding Apprenticeship Funding Rules](#). The rules are updated at least annually, therefore, to remain informed of these changes the Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement is responsible to ensure the university and key stakeholders are aware of the latest requirements.

## **2.0 Employer and Learner Evidence Pack**

- 2.1 The evidence pack is the description used by ESFA for the collection of documents and information that brings together and forms a single point of evidence relating to an apprentice's training and end-point assessment (EPA). Consequently, the content of the pack provides evidence to the ESFA that the apprentice and employer is eligible for funding of the apprenticeship and EPA.
- 2.2 Therefore the university will hold an evidence pack for each employer and apprentice, which will be stored in line with university Data Protection Policies and latest UK legislation.
- 2.3 The Apprenticeship Office (AO) is responsible to communicate the requirements of the evidence packs to Schools, employers and apprentices.
- 2.4 Schools support the AO to ensure evidence is collected timely; in line with ESFA requirements; and university Apprenticeship Policies and Processes.
- 2.5 The AO will monitor the content of evidence packs, and audit documents contained in them, quarterly in line with the ESFA funding year (August – July).
- 2.6 Where the contents of the evidence pack do not meet the minimum funding rule requirements the AO will work with the School and or Head of Department (professional services) and or employer representative and or apprentice to meet funding compliance requirements.

### **3.0 Funding Eligibility Evidence Documents**

- 3.1 To ensure employers and apprentices are eligible for funding there are a number of specific evidence requirements required prior to the apprenticeship commencing. If employers or potential apprentices are unable to evidence these documents in advance of the start date of the apprenticeship programme, it may result in the apprenticeship start date being delayed or deferred until appropriate evidence obtained.
- 3.2 Schools are required to advise Registry Services and the AO of predicted apprenticeship start dates 12 weeks prior to commencement. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g., due to short notice employer demand, Schools must advise Registry Services and the AO at the earliest opportunity.

### **4.0 Evidence Pack Checklist**

- 4.1 To monitor evidence collected (from apprentices and employers) a checklist document can be found in annex A of this policy.
- 4.2 The checklist identifies the funding eligibility evidence required prior to commencing on the apprenticeship, and throughout the lifetime of the apprenticeship, including the EPA.
- 4.3 ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules are subject to change therefore any updates will be communicated by the AO on a regular basis to Schools, Registry Services, Finance, and when applicable employers and apprentices.

### **5.0 Format and Storage of the Evidence Pack**

- 5.1 Evidence collected for each employer and apprentice will be in digital form, saved in digital folders or held on digital learning platforms or management information systems. Digital evidence will be stored in line with university Data Protection Policies and latest UK legislation.
- 5.2 University master templates are in place for ESFA funding documents and should be used accordingly. Any amendments to master templates will be made by the AO and approved by the Apprenticeship Programme Sub-Committee.
- 5.3 Apprentices and employer evidence will be stored locally within the Apprenticeship SharePoint site, in individual folders, and be 'up-to-date' in order to be available at short notice (ready for internal or external audit).
- 5.4 If evidence is paper based it should be filed in locked fireproof cabinets.

5.5 In line with university and ESFA audit requirements evidence packs must be stored in an accessible digital format for up to 6 years after the apprenticeship ends.

## **6.0 Audit of Evidence Packs**

6.1 AO audits will fall into the following categories:

- Prior to Commencement
- On Programme
- End of Programme
- Exceptional i.e., where there appears to be a gap in evidence available

6.2 The purpose of AO audits is to ensure the information in evidence packs is accessible, collected timely and meets ESFA and university requirements.

6.3 The AO audit scope will also review evidence against data that is returned to the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) via the Individual Learner Record (ILR). This will be completed by cross referencing evidence packs against data held in Schools, Finance, Admissions and Registry Services.

6.4 All apprentices and employers will be subject to a 'Prior to Commencement' audit. Failure to obtain ESFA Funding and or course entry documents in advance of the start date may result in the apprenticeship start date being delayed or deferred until evidence is available.

6.5 Once on programme up to 25% of apprentices and employers will be audited quarterly (in line with ESFA funding year – August to July). Unless there are known areas of concern, a sample of evidence packs will be randomly selected from across all programmes, and all Schools delivering apprenticeship programmes.

6.6 The AO will keep an audit register to monitor and manage the selection of 'on programme' audits.

6.7 All apprentices will be subject to an 'End of Programme' audit, and this will take place on completion of Gateway. Therefore, Schools will be required to advise the AO a minimum of 8 weeks of the predicted Gateway date.

6.8 Where there appears to be a gap in evidence the AO will carry out an 'exceptional' audit of the area of concern. This may take place outside of the internal quarterly dates cycle.

## **7.0 ESFA Funding Compliance - Performance Management**

- 7.1 Performance will be measured against Operational ESFA Compliance Key Performance Indicators.
- 7.2 Performance will be reported, as a minimum, quarterly to the Provost, Pro Vice Chancellor (where Schools or Departments are delivering apprenticeships), Heads of School, Professional Services Senior Management, and the Apprenticeship Programmes Sub-Committee (APSC) which reports to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC).
- 7.3 Where there appears to be a gap in evidence, the School and / or relevant department will be advised by the AO and an action plan agreed to address the gap/s identified. Examples of good practice will also be captured and used to help inform the university's annual Apprenticeship Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement plan.
- 7.4 Where there is consistent under-performance the AO will develop an Improvement Plan with the School and / or department.
- 7.5 An annual University Apprenticeship Self-Assessment Report will also be reported to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee in December of each year. An executive summary will be included in the Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards for Academic Board and Board of Governors.
- 7.6 University of Worcester Academic Board, which reports to the Governors, has overall responsibility for the quality of UW Apprenticeships.

## Annex A

### 2023/24 Employer and Apprentice ESFA Compliance Checklist

<b>Employer Name:</b>			
<b>Apprentice Name and / or Cohort:</b>			<b>ULN:</b>
			<b>Student Number</b>
<b>Start Date:</b>		<b>Predicted end date</b>	
<b><u>Evidence Type</u></b>	<b><u>Source to review completion</u></b>	<b><u>Obtained</u></b>	<b><u>AO Approved</u></b>
<b><u>*Mandatory Document Requirements Prior to Apprenticeship</u></b>			
*1. UW online Application / Registration Confirms Completion of ESFA Funding Paperwork and ID	Registry SITS / SOLE		
*2. UK Resident for last 3 years and or Right to Work Evidence	Registry SITS / SOLE		
*3. Level 2 English and Maths appropriate evidence of qualification	Registry SITS / SOLE		
4. Unique Learner Number Generated / Known	AO		
*5. Employer/ Provider Agreement for Contract of Services	AO		
*6. Employer / Apprentice Agreement (T&C's)	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		
*7. Current Training and Individual Learning Plan, including off the job learning calculation.  Where applicable also to include Additional Learning Needs	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		
*8. If employer recruiting apprentices as new posts evidence that the employer has been offered UK Government 'recruit an apprentice' service	AO		
*9. Evidence of Interview/ Selection Process carried out with the employer and apprentice	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		
*10. Evidence of the apprentices Initial Needs Assessment (INA) against apprentice standard KSB's	Registry SITS / SOLE		
*11. Evidence of agreed total negotiated price with employer – to be included on INA document  If RPL confirm ESFA reduction calculation applied	Registry SITS / SOLE		
*12. Workplace Risk Assessment and Insurance Documents (Public and Employers Liability)	School (secure digital folder)		

<b>Employer Name:</b>			
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			<b>Student Number</b>
<b>Start Date:</b>		<b>Predicted end date</b>	
<b>Evidence Type</b>	<b>Source to review completion</b>	<b>Obtained</b>	<b>AO Approved</b>
<b>*Mandatory Document Requirements Prior to Apprenticeship</b>			
	or If applicable Placement Support Team		
13. Learner Progress Reviews (throughout lifetime of the programme) taking place as a minimum of every 12 weeks	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		
14. Employer Reviews (throughout the lifetime of the programme) taking place as a minimum every 12 weeks	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		
15. Delivery of Additional Learning Support (ALS) (plan and evidence of delivery, needs assessment).  Review of additional learning support impact on learning included in Learner Review	Student Services and School via Individual Learning Plan (SOLE / secure digital folder)  School via Individual Learning Plan (secure digital folder)		
16. SEN statement / EHC Plan (Special Education Needs / Education, Health, and Care)	Review with AO if required		
17. Self-Declaration (Where a self-declaration is needed, this must state the apprentice or employer's details and describe what is being confirmed e.g. a learning difficulty).	Review with AO if required		
18. *If applicable for job role DBS and / or health check and / or immunisation confirmation from Employer	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		
19. Break in Learning / Return to Learning / Withdraw: Learning activity evidence in the month change in circumstance occurred	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		
20. On Completion: Gateway Approval signed by employer, apprentice, and School representative.  If number of off the job (OTJ) hours vary from original planned OTJ signed statement from employer confirming they are satisfied with the quality of OTJ, and that they agree the number of OTJ hours recorded are correct	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		

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<b>Start Date:</b>		<b>Predicted end date</b>	
<b>Evidence Type</b>	<b>Source to review completion</b>	<b>Obtained</b>	<b>AO Approved</b>
<b><u>*Mandatory Document Requirements Prior to Apprenticeship</u></b>			
21. Independent End point assessment (EPA): arrangements for apprentice to complete / results / ESFA certificate number	Apprenticeship Sharepoint (secure digital folder)		
22. Evidence of EPA organisation paid	AO and Finance (secure digital folder)		
23. Integrated EPA: Gateway Board and Exam Board Transcript Evidence ESFA certificate claimed and number	Registry SITS/SOLE		

***\*Mandatory Document Requirements Prior to Apprenticeship***

**Key:**

**Green: compliant**

**Amber: partially compliant / evidence not available or accessible**

**Red: gaps in evidence**