

Foundation Apprenticeships

Product Specification

Oct 2020



Document control

Version history

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0.2	Includes 'definitions' of employer' and 'work placement' Revised text to reflect incorporation of customised units	Frank Quinn	9th October 2020

Terms and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
SSC(s)	Sector Skills Councils
FA(s)	Foundation Apprenticeship(s)/Apprentice(s)
MA(s)	Modern Apprenticeship(s)/Apprentice(s)
GA(s)	Graduate Apprenticeship(s)/Apprentice(s)
SAAB	Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SQA	Scottish Qualification Authority
NPA	National Progression Award
NC	National Certificate
HNC/D	Higher National Certificate/Diploma
UCAS	University and Colleges Admissions Service
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
WBL	Work Based Learning

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1. FA Product Specification

1.1 What are Foundation Apprenticeships?

Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) are work-based learning qualifications at SCQF L6, available to senior phase pupils in school (S4, S5 and S6). They are incorporated within the senior phase timetable, and taken alongside other subjects including National 4s, 5s and Highers. All offer continued learning and progression pathways into work including Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships, Higher or Further Education. FAs are recognised, accredited and certificated by a national awarding body.

1.2 Why do we need Foundation Apprenticeships?

The Scottish Government's Youth Employment strategy was very clear in its intent in developing the Foundation Apprenticeship to help improve post-school outcomes for young people. It advocates collaboration between schools, colleges and employers to deliver a greater choice of subjects within the senior phase, blending the provision of academic and work-based routes for young people.

Strong international evidence from economies that perform well suggests that softening the divide between academic and work-based learning (WBL) is pivotal to the design of future skills systems. Foundation Apprenticeships address this by offering a blend of academic and work-based learning for young people in the senior phase of secondary school. They are designed to foster seamless pathways between academic and work-based learning opportunities, and multiple progression routes on completion.

Foundation Apprenticeships have been developed to help young people gain valuable, real-world work experience and access work-based learning while they're still at school. This is achieved by aligning classroom or workshop theory, to a period of sustained accredited work-based learning. In addition to developing the young persons' 'work readiness', progression pathways from school are enhanced supporting continued learning through work, higher or further education pipelines. For employers, it's the chance to identify and attract highly motivated and committed young people who are willing to learn and right for their business.

As school pupils Foundation Apprentices are not paid employees but young people embarking on a world of work qualification from school. The integration of the achievement of skills, knowledge and competence results in young people who are ready to work at the level required by industry when they complete their course.

1.3 Scottish Apprenticeship Design Principles

The Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) have developed the following core design principles for all Scottish apprenticeship models. These have been approved and ratified with Scottish Government via the Deputy First Minister. There are as follows:

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1. Apprenticeships and Employment
 - All post-school apprentices are employed¹.
2. Apprenticeships and Occupational Pathways
 - Each apprenticeship is a programme of work-based learning designed to develop competence in a defined occupation and apprenticeship pathway.
3. Availability and Investment
 - Apprenticeships are available across a wide range of sectors where there is demonstrable industry demand.
4. Diversity and Inclusion
 - Apprenticeships support inclusion and diversity and are designed to ensure there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.
5. Relationship to Occupational and Professional Standards
 - Apprenticeship frameworks are based on occupational standards and integrate professional standards where necessary.
6. Framework Design Process
 - The requirements of an Apprenticeship are set out in a framework document defined by industry which adapts to emerging and future needs.
7. Qualifications and Pathways
 - Apprenticeships offer internationally recognised, accredited or externally quality assured vocational, technical and professional qualifications at SCQF Levels 5 to 12 with clear pathways for progression.
8. Framework Content and Assessment
 - Each apprenticeship framework describes the required learning content and method of learning and assessment
9. Ensuring Transferability: Common and Specific Elements
 - The qualifications included in apprenticeship frameworks are designed to develop transferable skills across the sector.
10. Supporting the Apprentice in the Workplace
 - Each Apprentice is supported in the workplace by a competent mentor and in their learning and assessment by a qualified trainer/ educator/ assessor.
11. Types of Learning and Duration
 - Apprenticeship learning is delivered to fit the requirements of the apprenticeship framework, the needs of the business and the individual's pace of learning.

¹ Foundation apprentices are non-employed status. They agree and sign a work-based employer contract that sets out the terms of the work-based elements of their FA qualification.

12. Apprenticeship Agreement

- Employers and apprentice roles and responsibilities are clearly set out in an apprenticeship agreement.

13. Quality Assurance

- Apprenticeships are underpinned by robust quality assurance processes from design to delivery.

14. Documentation

- Apprenticeship Framework documentation is clear, accessible and in an easy to understand format.

1.4 The Principles and Criteria of Foundation Apprenticeships

Although FAs are not 'post-school employed' apprenticeships, they share the overarching core principles outlined above. FAs are WBL qualifications, delivered within the senior phase curriculum alongside participants other national qualifications. They are intended to enhance positive destination opportunities into work, FE or HE and are aligned to pathway progression within each sector. The development of 'meta-skills' is core to each FA, building the young person's capacity to integrate and interact within a workplace environment. Enhancing communication, collaboration, problem solving and team working skillsets.

All Foundation Apprenticeships will:

- lead to achievement of a SCQF Level 6 qualification
- be aligned to regional industry need and backed by employers
- lead to multiple progression pathways namely into work, higher or further education
- be built on the principles and practice of work-based learning
- be based on a partnership between employer and the learning provider in the programme design, delivery and assessment and quality assurance
- have industry engagement thoroughly integrated into programme design, delivery and assessment and review
- ensure that apprentices have achieved necessary industry knowledge, skills and competence
- ensure that learner support mechanisms exist designed to maximise achievement
- support individualised learning and progression towards their preferred learning pathway
- ensure that apprentices have acquired a range of transferable and generic knowledge and skills
- have processes and opportunities for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) where relevant upon entry and on progression

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- have a clear set of goals and aspirations in support of equality and diversity
- develop learning through the process of reflection on work practice and reviewing and learning from experience
- be recognised nationally across the sector by all employers

Lead providers proposing to deliver a Foundation Apprenticeship should detail how they will meet the principles and criteria of the Foundation Apprenticeship in the design and delivery of the programme.

1.5 The Composition of Foundation Apprenticeships

All FAs share two distinct but related learning components,

- **Knowledge:** a classroom/workshop element offering young people the underpinning industry theory and process. This element is either a full National Progression Award (NPA) or National Certificate (NC) at SCQF L6
- **Skills:** accredited work-based learning designed to contextualise the knowledge element through applied learning and contextualisation. This is typically a series of accredited vocational units, aligned to learning outcomes assessed and verified by the employer and learning provider.

To achieve the FA, young people must complete the full NPA or NC plus the mandatory vocational units specified within each Framework.

The overall FA delivery model, mixing school with the learning provider and the workplace, offers young people the opportunity to significantly develop skills beyond those in the course content. Exposure to industry, project working, real work activities and workplace etiquette, builds confidence, communication, decision making, team working and problem solving. These 'meta-skills' are critical to developing the resilience required of fast changing industry environments.

1.6 The Purpose of Foundation Apprenticeships

The primary aim of Foundation Apprenticeships is to ensure that young people have enhanced work readiness from school through exposure to sustained work-based learning during their senior phase. Through such engagement, industry has the potential to access and develop future talent pipelines into employment including MA and GA. In addition, pathways to higher or further education are directly aligned. FAs at SCQF 6 will be achieved alongside the young persons' supporting senior phase options choices.

The skills, knowledge and competences learned will be based on the needs of employers in the sector and not only the needs of one employer. Foundation Apprenticeships will also enable individuals to develop a range of transferable skills, knowledge and competence to support their employability across a range of different roles and in different settings. They will equip the

apprentice with generic skills, knowledge and competence in areas such as leadership, problem solving, team working and decision making.

1.7 Requirements to deliver Foundation Apprenticeships

To deliver Foundation Apprenticeships learning providers must ensure the following prior to commencement:

- approval from respective regulatory awarding bodies for the Framework units/groups awards
- compliance with all relevant quality indicators, including systems for internal and external scrutiny by assessors and verifiers
- competent in work-based learning, and assessment/verification of work-based learning units
- delivery staff are inducted on the objectives of FAs and the integral role of employer engagement throughout the learning
- statutory or compliance requirements for individual industries are in place prior to the pupil starting the workplace element of the award (for example PVG checks; safety; equipment)
- an individual learning plan is in place for each pupil
- availability of resources to deliver learning components and support assessment of work-based learning activity
- process and procedures to support the learner journey towards positive achievement and progression

1.8 The Role of Employers

Foundation Apprenticeships exist to meet the needs of industry and as such are built on a partnership between employers, learning providers and regional skills agents. Employers should have 'end-to-end' involvement in supporting the programme, from recruitment to achievement and progression.

Several industry engagement initiatives should be utilised supporting the central work-based learning component of Foundation Apprenticeships. These include site visits, industry talks and industry challenge projects. As a significant and central part of the qualification, the work-based learning component exists to provide the young person with real work activity and exposure, aligned to the accredited learning outcomes of the qualification. Through this contextualised learning style, employers play a driving role in developing the young persons' skills, knowledge and competence.

In discussion with learning providers, employers will agree an individual learning plan detailing suitable tasks and activities during work placement. These will be directly mapped to the accredited learning outcomes of respective vocational units.

Employer commitment to supporting the work-based learning component, is captured via a tripartite agreement between the learner, learning provider and employer.

1.9 Definitions

“The Workplace”:

The workplace is defined as the location where the learner is conducting activity on behalf of their host employer. This includes both the physical workplace environment, such as an office or site, or any other location where work-based activity is being managed via digital and online platforms.

The workplace environment is where learners would use organisational equipment or processes and procedures under commercial and business operating conditions (including timescales, adverse conditions, responsibilities). The learner would also be required to comply with organisational regulations and policies.

Where applicable, any machinery, tools, materials, equipment and resources typically used must be representative of industry standards and there must be sufficient available for each learner to demonstrate their competence individually.

“The Employer”:

For the purposes of the Customised Units, the employer is defined as follows:

External Employer: This is where the learner is paired with an employer external to the delivering centre. This employer will be required to host the learner for the duration of their work placement, providing real work activities aligned to the performance criteria within each unit, supporting the assessment and development of knowledge, understanding and competence. This applies irrespective of whether the learner attends the physical workplace or attends remotely as outlined above.

Internal Employer: This is where the learner is paired with an internal operational or functional department of the learning provider/centre institution. In this circumstance the learning provider is required to fulfil the same duties and requirements of external employers as outline above.

“Real Work Activity”:

To be considered ‘real work activity’, employers should be providing learners with tasks and activities that are required by the employer to support current or future operational needs. The activity should be aligned to the overall organisational goals and objectives.

1.10 Aligned Progression Pathways

Foundation Apprenticeships are based on the standards required by industry and offer clear pathways to multiple progression and continued learning opportunities. These are as follows:

- Modern Apprenticeship: All FAs have a directly relevant MA pathway and common or aligned learning outcomes within the same industry sector.
- Graduate Apprenticeships: GA frameworks exist across multiple FA industry areas. Young people achieving the FA reflects their suitability to contextualised learning through work. This combined with the exposure to industry offers competitive advantage for GA places straight from school.
- Employment: If entering employment directly, the learning style and significant exposure to industry from school equips young people with enhanced work readiness
- Higher Education:
 - University: All FAs are recognised as an entry qualification to university as no less than a Higher, in some cases as more than one Higher. Young people can therefore add the FA to their other school qualifications within the application process through UCAS.
 - College: All FAs are recognised as an entry qualification for Higher National Certificate/Diploma (HNC/D) provision within the same subject area. Young people can therefore use the FA alongside other supporting qualifications to apply.

1.11 Equalities

Lead Partners are expected to be aware of the protected characteristics under equalities legislation. At each stage, from recruitment through to achievement and progression, Lead Partners must demonstrate this awareness, outlining measures being taken to positively address inequalities. This should include conducting equalities impact assessments and implementation of identified actions.

Equalities evaluation will be an integral component of the FA Quality Assurance processes.

References

Apprenticeship.scot:	www.apprenticeship.scot
SCQF alignment:	https://scqf.org.uk/media/1110/scqf-diagram-2017-a6-web.pdf

Awarding Bodies

SQA:	https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/79474.html https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/InformationForCentresFoundationApprenticeships.pdf
AAT:	https://www.aat.org.uk/deliver/why-offer-aat/become-aat-approved-training-provider
ACCA:	http://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/learning-provider/approved-learning-partner.html
EAL:	http://eal.org.uk/become-an-eal-centre
REHIS:	https://www.rehis.com/community-training/become-an-approved-training-centre

Progression Pathways:

FA to College:	https://www.apprenticeships.scot/media/3116/table-fa-to-coll.pdf
FA to University:	https://www.apprenticeships.scot/media/3117/table-fa-to-uni.pdf
FA to Work:	https://www.apprenticeships.scot/media/3105/fa-to-ma-graphic.pdf

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