

Graduate Level Apprenticeships

SCQF level 10 Product Specification

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Document control

Version history

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Terms and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
GLA(s)	Graduate Level Apprenticeship(s) / Apprentice(s)
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SSSC	Scottish Social Services Council

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1. Product Specification at SCQF level 10

1.1 What are Graduate Level Apprenticeships?

Graduate Level Apprenticeships (GLAs) are work-based learning programmes at SCQF levels 8, 10 or 11 that lead to degree-level qualifications. These are nationally recognised, accredited and certificated by a national awarding body. In the case of Graduate Level Apprenticeships at SCQF level 10 or 11 they lead to a higher education degree or postgraduate award.

1.2 Why do we need Graduate Level Apprenticeships?

Graduate Level Apprenticeships support the education and development of employees so that they acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and competence necessary to work and progress in the sector. These apprenticeships have several advantages and benefits when compared with traditional learning based primarily in an educational establishment.

In a Graduate Level Apprenticeship, work-based learning is learning delivered and assessed in the workplace. Employees learn and reflect through working with others on real life challenges. The curriculum and the methods of delivery and assessment are based on what employers have identified as their current and future needs. Thus Graduate level apprenticeships deliver on the needs of industry.

Graduate Level Apprentices are paid employees. They continue in employment while working towards a qualification. The integration of the achievement of skills, knowledge and competence results in graduates who are ready to work at the level required by industry when they complete their award.

1.3 The flexible curriculum and employers needs

As part of Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) enhancement themes programme for higher education the flexible curriculum was identified as a key need of employers and employer bodies.

The needs of employers and employer bodies in respect of flexible curricula are:

- programmes align with employer strategic objectives and goals
- partnership working is developed and sustained with employers
- programmes align with standards e.g. national occupational and professional body standards
- programmes and associated qualifications offer cross-border mobility
- partnerships and joined-up approaches are developed and sustained with educational providers
- employees are supported by employers and institution, using e.g. mentoring
- programmes develop employability-related skills
- work-related learning opportunities are developed that are cost-effective and efficient

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- work-based learning offers flexible delivery

These employer needs have been recognised in the development of the GLA principles and criteria.

1.4 The principles and criteria of Graduate Level Apprenticeships at SCQF level 10?

All Graduate Level Apprenticeships at SCQF level 10 will:

- lead to an honours degree with a minimum of 480 SCQF credit points
- be built on the principles and practice of work-based learning
- have work based-learning thoroughly integrated into the programme design, delivery and assessment
- Ensure work based learning is a consistent feature of the programme (this means GLAs at SCQF level 10 are 100% work based programmes. The work based learning is inextricably part of the design of the programmes and distributed across it as a whole. It is neither front nor end loaded except where this is necessary for induction. Providers and employers will negotiate a minimum required attendance on campus but this should always be a proportionately smaller time than that spent learning at work)
- be based on a partnership between employer and the learning provider in the programme design, delivery and assessment and quality assurance
- ensure that graduates have achieved necessary industry knowledge, skills and competence
- ensure that graduates can achieve necessary professional/ regulatory body standards
- ensure that graduates have acquired a range of transferable and generic professional knowledge and skills
- ensure that graduates have developed graduate attributes including research capabilities
- have processes and opportunities for the Recognition of Prior Learning as an integral part of the degree
- have 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
- be transferable across employers and industry

Learning providers proposing to deliver a GLA should detail how they will meet the principles and criteria of the GLA at SCQF level 10 in the design and delivery of the programme.

1.5 Purpose of GLAs at SCQF level 10

The aim of GLAs is to ensure industry has a supply of highly skilled and qualified individuals. This will be achieved through degree programmes which equip individuals with the required subject specific knowledge, skills and competence for their chosen profession. These apprenticeships will prepare the graduate to work across the sector and to meet the needs of a range of employers. The skills, knowledge and competences learned will be based on the needs of employers in the sector generally and not only the needs of one employer. GLAs will also enable individuals to develop a range of transferable skills, knowledge and competence to support their employability across a profession in a range of different roles and in different settings. They will equip the graduate with generic skills, knowledge and competence in areas such as management, leadership and problem solving. In these ways GLAs will not only qualify the graduate to enter the profession but will also open opportunities for future professional career development. The GLA will also be built on the standards of the relevant professional and/or regulatory body. Thus the individual on graduating will be in a position to apply for the formal recognition of that body wherever the requirements of the professional body make that possible.

1.6 Work-based learning and the role of employers

Graduate Level Apprenticeships at SCQF level 10 are built on a partnership between employers and learning providers. The work-based learning component of Graduate level apprenticeships is a significant and central part of the degree. This is based on real life experience in the workplace. The apprentice will undertake a programme leading to a degree on a part time basis. Their work setting will be central to the contextualisation of their learning. Skills, knowledge and competence will be integrated.

Learning providers and employers will establish partnerships specifically for the purpose of delivering a work-based degree. Employers have an equal role in the delivery and assessment of the programme. Employers will also have a role in the selection and ongoing support such as mentoring and in the range of quality assurance systems and processes.

1.7 Standards and professional bodies

Graduate Level Apprenticeships are based on the standards required by industry. They are also based on the standards of professional or regulatory bodies. Graduates have a clear pathway to professional recognition.

Professional or regulatory bodies vary across occupations in terms of registration, regulation, certification and qualifications. In some professions it is necessary to belong to a professional body in order to practice. In others it may not be necessary but membership in that body may support career development. Professional bodies may have a range of different levels of membership depending on the achievement of specific awards or status.

Subject specific knowledge, skills and competence is identified by the relevant professional or regulatory body or bodies for that profession or occupation, and by the universities that deliver qualifications in that subject area. Government legislation and policy also contributes to the

professional requirements. All of this contributes to the professional standard of any occupation or profession. The standard encompasses all of the skills, knowledge and competence which an individual must be able to have and do in order to qualify to act in that professional role.

It will be possible in some sectors for graduates to gain professional body recognition immediately on graduation, while in others graduates will need gain additional learning or to spend a given amount of time in practice. However, because the curriculum of the GLA ensures that the learning outcomes of the degree align with professional standards these graduates will be in a strong position to apply for professional recognition. In addition because of the pivotal role of the work-based learning experience on the GLA and because employers are partners in the design, delivery and assessment of the curriculum graduates will be well placed to meet the requirements of employers and the standards of professional bodies.

1.8 Individualised learning, advanced entry, and recognition of prior learning

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) concerns learning which has its source in experience. It can be formative and can help learners identify skills and knowledge which they have gained through a variety of informal and non-formal situations and experiences. RPL can also be for credit through a summative process whereby the learning is assessed and credit given, for example, for entry to a formal programme of learning or for credit towards a qualification (SSSC 2008).

Within a GLA at SCQF level 10 the RPL process may be used for access to the programme or to assess and give credit for current competence developed in the workplace. The RPL process can also form the basis of individualised learning which is designed to achieve the standards and the learning outcomes of the work-based curriculum.

It will be for providers to establish GLA programmes that provide for appropriate progression through SCQF levels 7, 8, 9 and 10.

1.9 Graduate attributes

Graduate attributes have been defined as being 'the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts'.

Scottish learning providers have all developed statements on graduate attributes, and common threads have been identified. These are: lifelong learning, research scholarship and enquiry, employability and career development, global citizenship, communication and information literacy, ethical social and professional understanding, personal and intellectual autonomy, and collaboration teamwork and leadership. (QAA 2011)

In line with QAA's enhancement themes for Higher Education the GLAs will support the development of graduate attributes including research capabilities.

1.10 Equalities

Learning providers and their partners are expected to be aware of the protected characteristics under equalities legislation. Programme developers will promote equality and take steps to avoid discrimination by taking positive action to increase the uptake by underrepresented groups in work and training in the relevant sector.

When developing the GLA, learning providers and partners should undertake an equalities impact assessment to ensure appropriate measures have been addressed. Evaluation will be built into ongoing quality assurance processes.

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www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk