



Modern Apprenticeship Programme Specification 2020-2021

Version History

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2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of the Enhanced Funding for Disabled and/or Care Experienced Apprentices (1.3.2.1, 2.9) • Information on the SDS Provider newsletter in the Promotion of other SDS services (3.6.4) • Clarification on what SDS will accept as an original signature (3.9) • Clarification on the process for recording changes to the Training Agreement (4.2.1) • Information on transfer to another employer (4.2.1; 4.7.1; 4.7.2; 4.8) • Information on the ESF Requirements including logos (4.2.6) • Clarification on the APR process(4.3) • Removed 2 MA frameworks – Jewellery and silverware manufacturing (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) • Addition of a MA framework -Community development (Appendix 1 and Appendix2) • Clarification that the Automotive MA Framework has moved to a SOAR payment plan (Appendix3) • Added Appendix 4, 5, 6 and7 	Fiona Stewart	01/04/2020
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Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
AAG	Apprenticeship Approvals Group
ATP	Apprentice Transition Plan
APR	Apprentice Progress Review
ESF	European Social Fund
FA	Foundation Apprenticeship
FIPS	Funding Information and Processing System
IA	Initial Assessment
ITA	Individual Training Account
ITT	Instructions to Tenderers
MA	Modern Apprenticeship
QPR	Quarterly Progress Reviews
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SCN	Scottish Candidate Number
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SIA	Skills Investment Adviser
SOAR	Summary of Achievement Record
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSO	Sector Skills Organisation
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
TA	Training Agreement
VQ	Vocational Qualification

Contents

1. [Context](#)

1.1 [The Apprenticeship family](#)

[1.1.1 Modern Apprenticeships](#)

[1.1.2 Foundation Apprenticeships](#)

[1.1.3 Graduate Apprenticeships](#)

1.2 [MA Services](#)

1.3 [Priorities for Modern Apprenticeships](#)

[1.3.1 Funding Priorities](#)

- 1.3.2 [Advancing Equalities](#)
 - 1.3.2.1 [Disabled and/ or Care experienced \(MAs aged 20-29\)](#)
- 2 [MA Offer](#)
 - 2.1 [Funding Contribution](#)
 - 2.2 [Funding Model](#)
 - 2.3 [Funding Allocations](#)
 - 2.3.1 [New Starts](#)
 - 2.3.2 [Re-entrants](#)
 - 2.3.3 [Progression](#)
 - 2.4 [Sector specific funding information](#)
 - 2.4.1 [Hospitality MA framework – SCQF Level 5](#)
 - 2.4.2 [Engineering](#)
 - 2.5 [Additional Funding Criteria for 25+](#)
 - 2.6 [Common unit\(s\)](#)
 - 2.7 [Rural Uplift](#)
 - 2.8 [Travel and Subsistence for Apprentices Resident in Specified Areas](#)
 - 2.8.1 [Eligibility Criteria](#)
 - 2.8.2 [What is eligible for support?](#)
 - 2.8.3 [Funding and evidence requirements](#)
 - 2.9 [Enhanced Funding for Disabled and/or Care Experienced Apprentices](#)
 - 2.10 [Apprentice Transition Plan Services](#)
 - 2.10.1 [Content and Duration](#)
 - 2.10.2 [Funding](#)
 - 2.10.3 [ATP Entry, Claims and Payments](#)
 - 2.10.3.1 [ATP Entry](#)
 - 2.10.3.2 [For Stages 1, 4 and 5 Claims](#)
 - 2.10.3.3 [For Stages 2 and 3 Claims \(continued certification\)](#)
 - 2.11 [Individual Training Accounts](#)
 - 2.12 [Apprentice Employer Grant](#)
- 3 [Policies, Procedures and Systems](#)
 - 3.1 [Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures](#)
 - 3.2 [Reporting and Investigation of Incidents](#)
 - 3.3 [Funding Information Processing System](#)
 - 3.4 [Information Security Policy And Procedures](#)
 - 3.5 [Promotion of Fair Work Practices Policy](#)
 - 3.6 [Promotion of other SDS Initiatives](#)
 - 3.6.1 [Apprenticeships.scot](#)
 - 3.6.2 [My World of Work](#)
 - 3.6.3 [Foundation Apprenticeships and Graduate Apprenticeships](#)
 - 3.6.4 [Other SDS Products and Services](#)

- 3.7 [Quality Assurance](#)
- 3.8 [Provider Controls and Assurance](#)
- 3.9 [Signatures](#)
- 3.10 [Awarding Body notification and reports](#)
- 4 [MA Programme Delivery](#)
 - 4.1 [Eligibility Criteria for MA Funding](#)
 - 4.1.1 [Employment](#)
 - 4.1.2 [Age](#)
 - 4.1.3 [Demonstrable Need](#)
 - 4.1.4 [Exclusions](#)
 - 4.2 [Programme Entry](#)
 - 4.2.1 [Training Agreement](#)
 - 4.2.2 [Equality Monitoring Form](#)
 - 4.2.3 [Entering an Assignment on FIPS](#)
 - 4.2.4 [Validation](#)
 - 4.2.5 [Registration with Awarding Body/Sector Skills Organisation](#)
 - 4.2.6 [ESF Requirements](#)
 - 4.2.6.1 [ESF Logo](#)
 - 4.2.6.2 [ESF Audit Requirements](#)
 - 4.2.7 [Initial Assessment and Learning Plan](#)
 - 4.2.8 [Induction to the MA Programme](#)
 - 4.3 [Apprentice Progress Review Process](#)
 - 4.4 [Payment Plans and Claims Process](#)
 - 4.4.1 [Payment Plan by Quarterly Progress Review](#)
 - 4.4.2 [Payment Plan by Summary of Achievement Record](#)
 - 4.5 [Completion of the MA Programme](#)
 - 4.6 [Temporary Interruptions to Training](#)
 - 4.7 [Transfer of an Apprentice](#)
 - 4.8 [Programme Exit](#)
 - 4.8.1 [Leaving Codes](#)
 - 4.9 [MA Delivery Process chart](#)

Appendices (which are posted individually on SDS Provider Web Pages)

Appendix	Description
1	Contribution Rates
2	MA Frameworks by Occupational Grouping and Age Group
3	Payment Plan Milestone Evidence
4	Eligibility Declaration for Enhanced Funding for Modern Apprentices aged 20-29 years (Disability and Care Experienced)
5	Training Agreement
6	Equality Monitoring Form
7	ESF – List of audit evidence requirements

1. Context

1.1 The Apprenticeship Family

1.1.1 Modern Apprenticeships

Modern Apprenticeship (MA) training offers individuals in paid employment the opportunity to develop and learn new skills from SCQF level 5 to up to level 12 which includes technical, professional levels and training to support upskilling new and existing staff.

SDS administers the public sector's funding contribution towards the costs of training and/or assessment for employees that employers wish to support through an approved MA framework. MA frameworks are devised by Sector Skills Organisations (SSOs) in consultation with relevant employers and are based on National Occupational Standards. The Apprenticeship Approvals Group (AAG) approves the frameworks for delivery in Scotland. The type and level of framework must be appropriate to the job role undertaken by the Apprentice. Only those approved will be deemed eligible MAs for the purposes of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) MA Contracts.

The dual purpose of the MA Programme is to support individuals to learn while in work; and encourage economic growth across Scotland. MAs are a joint investment between employers and the Scottish Government. Employers invest the greater amount through wage costs and on-going support and public funding contributes towards the cost of training.

In Scotland, there are at present over 85 different MA frameworks within 17 Occupational groupings and they are each designed to provide the training that meets minimum standards of competence as agreed by AAG, following consultation with employers.

They each contain 3 key components: -

- A relevant Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) or alternative work-based qualification
- Core Skills (except for technical and professional apprenticeships where this component is 'Career Skills')
- Industry linked training

Details of AAG approved MA frameworks are published on [Apprenticeships.Scot](https://www.apprenticeships.scot.nhs.uk/) and [SDS website](https://www.skillsdevelopment.scot.nhs.uk/).

SSOs in conjunction with employers and key stakeholders in their industry develop MA frameworks to meet the skills needs of employers.

Awarding Bodies such as the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) provide work-based qualifications, which are an integral part of the MA training.

1.1.2 Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs)

FAs provide work-based learning opportunities for secondary school pupils in their senior phase. They create strong links between education and employers to help school pupils make informed choices about their post school destinations including

vocational pathways. They represent a fundamental change in the approach to offering work-based learning in the senior phase of education – providing valuable skills and real qualifications. Based on existing and successful MA frameworks, FAs enable pupils entering S5 to complete elements of a MA framework. Delivered in partnership by schools, employers and learning providers, such as colleges, Local Authorities and learning providers, a FA usually takes two years to complete (although there are shorter duration delivery models FA Frameworks available).

SDS reserves the right to make deductions from the contribution rate for any relevant, prior achievements from MA starts who have undertaken a FA.

More information on FAs can be found at

<https://www.apprenticeships.scot/become-an-apprentice/foundation-apprenticeships/>

1.1.3 Graduate Apprenticeships

SDS has developed Graduate Apprenticeships as a way for individuals to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and competence required by Scottish industries. By building on the success of SDS's existing Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship programmes, Graduate Apprenticeships give individuals an opportunity to be in paid employment while gaining qualifications from DipHE up to Master's level from SCQF Level 8 to 12. These have been developed with employers which ensures that learners gain the necessary knowledge and skills required for their chosen area of work.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.apprenticeships.scot/become-an-apprentice/graduate-apprenticeships/>

1.2 MA Services

This document is the MA Specification that applies to the delivery of MA services by providers ("you") between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 and the principles that sit behind the publicly funded support of the delivery of the MA programme.

You must operate within all the terms and conditions of your MA contract, including the ITT, Specification and Conditions. If you break any of your obligations under your contract, including any of the conditions, you are in breach of having broken the contractual arrangements with SDS.

SDS will be entitled to take action against you, which may include putting a hold on your ability to make claims, recovering sums paid to you, withholding payments claimed by you, withdrawing volumes awarded to you, SDS requiring you to complete and fulfil an action/improvement plan and/or suspending or terminating your MA Contract with SDS.

As a provider, you must also:

- ensure that all (contractual obligations), administrative and compliance requirements, by SDS and of the awarding bodies and SSOs are met before the commencement of delivery and throughout the duration of your MA contract;
- be or be working with an approved centre which is registered with the relevant awarding bodies and SSOs to deliver the MA frameworks you are bidding for in your ITT response;

- ensure that the statutory and compliance requirements for individual industries which are set out in the MA Framework documents for Scotland are in place prior to delivery. These are published on [Apprenticeships.Scot](#);
- have staff that are competent in delivering work based learning, assessments and verification of Vocational Qualification (VQ) units as set out by the relevant awarding bodies, quality assurance and [SDS Quality Assurance and Improvement framework- Self-Assessment Guidance](#);
- ensure the delivery of your MA programme meets the needs and expectations of the Apprentices, employers and stakeholders. To help you consider the effectiveness of your approaches to planning delivery of your skills provision refer to [SDS Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework – Self Assessment guidance](#) ;
- ensure your delivery staff, employers and the employees of these organisations that are directly involved in the delivery of MA Programme are inducted on the objectives of the MA programme, understanding the needs of the Apprentice and the integral role of employer involvement throughout the delivery of your MA contract;
- **not charge any Apprentice for any of your Services including training costs**
- ensure each Apprentice receives the necessary training to meet the requirements of their MA Framework as set out in the MA Framework Documents on Apprenticeships.Scot and provide advice and guidance to support each Apprentice and assessment to achieve their MA. Information on how to deliver quality work base learning can be found on [SDS Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework – Self Assessment guidance.](#);

1.3 Priorities for Modern Apprenticeships

1.3.1 Funding priorities

- young people aged 16 to 24 across all sectors including key and supporting sectors;
- higher level frameworks (SCQF 6 and above) and to those in STEM occupations across the 16 to 24 year old age group;
- increasing the focus on the offer of MA opportunities for those aged 25+ in key and supporting sectors in response to industry need;
- increasing the number of Social Services (Children and Young People) MAs subject to demand;
- providing support to public sector organisations to promote the uptake of Apprenticeships;
- increasing opportunities for those young people progressing from a FA;
- aligning funding with the Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments;
- maximising opportunities for the wider availability of higher-level Apprenticeships; and
- contracting with organisations that have the capacity to deliver MA services and achieving positive outcomes for individuals, have a fair work practice culture and actively promote equality of opportunity and achievement.

As outlined in the Letter of Guidance from Scottish Government to SDS, Apprenticeships deliver against the Scottish Government's dual aims of supporting economic growth and addressing youth unemployment. They support growth and STEM sectors while providing real employment for individuals and take account of demographic change and employer demand. SDS will contract in line with the Scottish Government's commitment to increase MA starts, including Graduate Apprenticeships, gradually each year to achieve 30,000 starts by 2020/21.

Funding decisions and MA allocations are also informed by consultation with employers through demand statements from SSOs and bodies, Industry Leadership Groups, Skills Investment Plans, and Regional Skills Assessments. Further information on Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments can be found at <https://www.ourskillsforce.co.uk/spotlight-on-industry/>

In addition, there are overarching Scottish Government and SDS priorities which the MA Programme aims to contribute to, as follows:

- encouraging greater participation from small and micro businesses;
- encouraging delivery in island and rural communities to support inclusive growth;
- increasing the participation of individuals from under-represented groups, including disabled people;
- people from a black minority ethnic background,
- people who have experience of being in care,
- people who live in disadvantaged areas and
- addressing gender imbalance in frameworks where this exists; and
- promoting Fair Work Practices.

Should Scottish Government priorities change then SDS shall reflect these within our funding priorities.

1.3.2 Advancing Equalities

SDS is committed to supporting equality and diversity within education and working environments and the best possible outcomes for young people. We recognise the importance of MAs as an integral part of an individual's journey to and within employment for people from all backgrounds.

You must actively encourage equality of opportunity within your MA provision. To help advance equality of opportunity within the MA programme, you will be expected to:

- demonstrate activity undertaken and planned activity in relation to underrepresented groups as part of your delivery of MA starts, progressions and achievements;
- provide evidence of how you measure, analyse and evaluate the impact of your activity in relation to underrepresented groups using your equality monitoring information and other data sources for example using customer consultations/satisfaction surveys;
- demonstrate how this evaluative information improves your delivery of your MA provision for those underrepresented groups as part of your quality assurance (continuous improvement) process.

1.3.2.1 Disabled and /or Care Experienced (MAs Aged 20-29)

SDS recognise that disabled and/or care experienced people can face challenges in their career journey and may require additional support to enable them to sustain and successfully complete a Modern Apprenticeship.

Enhanced funding is available to enable you to offer additional support to disabled and/or care experienced people aged 20 -29 as defined in section 2.9 of the MA Specification. You will now receive the highest level of MA Programme funding (16 to 19 contribution rate) for Enhanced Funding.

2 MA Offer

2.1 Funding Contribution

SDS administers the public sector's funding contribution toward the cost of training for employees that employers wish to support through an approved MA framework.

The contribution rates for 2020/21 are outlined in Appendix 1 to this MA Specification.

In line with the funding priorities outlined in paragraph 1.3.1, you will find a list of the supported MA Frameworks by Occupational Grouping and Age Group in Appendix 2 to this MA Specification.

The approved MA frameworks can be found on our SDS Provider Web Pages.

<http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/our-products/modern-apprenticeships/modern-apprenticeship-frameworks/>

2.2 Funding Model

MA funding is based on three different types of payment: start payment; milestone payment; and output payment. An individual Payment Plan is assigned to an Apprentice when they are registered on Funding Information and Processing System (FIPS) and is determined by the age of the Apprentice; the MA Framework they are undertaking; and any previous apprenticeship experience. The evidence required to support milestone payments is dependent on the individual Payment Plan and is summarised in Appendix 3 to this MA Specification.

2.3 Funding allocations

This section sets out the definition of New Starts, Re-entrants and Progressions and the associated funding allocation. Apprentices re-entering or progressing will be subject to manual approval in FIPS and remain at the discretion of SDS.

2.3.1 New Starts

Definition – Apprentices are treated as a New Start from your contracted volumes under the following New Start conditions and are automatically approved in FIPS.

New Start condition	Funding allocation
Apprentice is a first-time entrant with no prior engagement in an MA programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full funding for current age group
Apprentice is starting a different MA framework within 3 calendar years of leaving the previous MA assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full funding for current age group• 16-19 year old will receive a start payment
Apprentice is progressing from an MA framework to a higher level but in a different MA framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full funding for current age group• 16-19 year old will receive a start payment
Apprentice is starting the same or new MA framework at any level greater than 3 calendar years since the previous assignment leaving date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full funding for current age group• 16-19 year old will receive a start payment

2.3.2 Re-entrant

Definition - Apprentice is re-entering the same MA framework at any level within 3 calendar years of the previous MA assignment. A re-entrant is someone who was previously registered as a start on an MA framework.

An Apprentice who has received SDS funding in the preceding three years and who falls under any of the re-entrant conditions as described below will have the assignment reviewed at Manual Approval status by the SDS Contracts Team and will be classified as a Re-entrant and will have the individual Payment Plan amended accordingly. These assignments will be counted against the Re-entrant category and will not count against New Starts within the contract.

Apprentices re-entering remain at the discretion of SDS.

Re-entrant condition	Funding allocation
Apprentice re-enters in the same or new age category from the previous assignment and is re-starting the same qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No start payment will be paid for 16-19 year old Balance of funding from the previous assignment (milestones & outcome) will be applied to the new assignment
Apprentice started their MA but did not achieve any milestones under the previous assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding will be the contribution rate set for the current year and age at new start date No start payment will be paid for 16-19 year old irrespective if you are a new provider as a start payment will have previously been paid for this age group
Apprentice re-enters the same MA framework, having not completed their MA at this level, and re-enters at a lower level MA than the previous assignment. This only applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Apprentice who has moved to a different employer and the job role is at a lower MA level An Apprentice who remains with their existing employer and their job role has changed and the MA at the higher level no longer applies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No deductions will be made
Apprentice working in Retail or Hospitality sector or who has achieved MA in Retail or Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding is not available to undertake a Customer Service MA at any level
Apprentice has previously achieved Hospitality Supervision & Leadership SCQF level 7 and wishes to undertake a new MA with the same employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If wishing to undertake a Management MA, this must be at SCQF level 8+ If moving to a new job role within the employer e.g. in Accounts, then this would be treated as a new MA framework – see definition for a new start

Apprentice wishes to undertake more than one pathway, having achieved the first one, within the same MA framework and at the same SCQF level within 3 years of completing their first pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprentices will not be eligible to receive funding for more than one pathway within the same MA and SCQF level
Apprentice has partially completed one pathway in MA Framework and then re-enters a different pathway in same MA framework within 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No start payment for 16-19 Milestones and the value from the previous assignment will be removed
Apprentice has completed level 6+ and stays with the same employer and then wants to undertake SCQF level 5 from any other framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No funding available as higher level has been achieved

2.3.3 Progression

Definition - Apprentice is progressing to the same MA framework at a higher level and within 3 calendar years of the previous leaving date.

An Apprentice who has received SDS funding in the preceding three years and who falls under any of the progression conditions as described below will have the assignment reviewed at Manual Approval status by the SDS Contracts Team and will be classified as a Progression and will have the individual Payment Plan amended accordingly. These assignments will be counted against the Progression category and will not count against New Starts within the contract.

Apprentices re-entering remain at the discretion of SDS.

Progression condition	Funding allocation
Progression from a MA framework SCQF level 5 to SCQF level 6 or SCQF level 6 to SCQF level 7 within the same framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprentices who have achieved SCQF level 5 or 6 will have the value of level 5 or 6 deducted from SCQF level 6 or 7 using current year contribution rate and the current age group of the Apprentice Apprentices who have not achieved the full SCQF level 5 or 6 and are progressed to level 6 or 7 will have payments deducted in line with level 5 or 6 claimed payments A second start payment is not payable for 16-19 however the value of the start payment will be distributed across the milestones
Apprentice is progressing from SCQF level 5 to SCQF level 7 where no MA framework is in place at SCQF level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The full value of SCQF level 7 will be applied to the assignment. <p>Eligible frameworks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aquaculture Design Facilities Services/Management Freight Logistics (Logistics Operations)

Apprentice is progressing to SCQF level 8 and above in the same MA framework	• No deductions will be made for the previously achieved frameworks at SCQF level 5, 6 or 7
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2.4 Sector specific funding information:

2.4.1 Hospitality MA framework – SCQF level 5

For clarification, SDS will only provide financial support for one pathway, within 3 years, as set out within the MA framework.

2.4.2 Engineering

SDS will not make a deduction from the Engineering individual Payment Plans if the Apprentice has previously achieved Performing Engineering Operations SCQF level 5.

2.5 Additional Funding Criteria for 25 +

Appendix 2 to this MA Specification sets out the frameworks supported for the 25+ age group. If you are contracted to deliver 25+ starts you should be aware that some frameworks at 25+ are only funded for specific priority sectors that the employer is operating within. You are responsible for assessing and confirming 25+ eligibility.

2.6 Common Unit(s)

In some occupational areas, there are units which can be part of the SCQF Level 5 framework but may also be in the SCQF Level 6 framework. In cases where an Apprentice progresses from one level to the next SDS will not remove milestones from individual Payment Plans. You should claim payments in line with the published Payment Plan utilising non-common units in the first instance and the remaining milestones should be claimed prior to claiming the outcome related funding. No reduction in funding will be applied as a result of common units.

2.7 Rural Uplift

In support of our desire to encourage provision in the island and rural areas, the application for rural funding will be applied to Apprentices where their main employment and normal working hours are based in the following areas: Argyll and Bute; the Isle of Arran, and the Orkney, Shetland, and Western Isles.

For all other areas in Scotland, if the employer's postcode is classed as "Remote Rural" or "Remote Small Towns" in the Scottish Government's classification outlined in the post code lookup below.

https://sds.qualtrics.com/CP/File.php?F=F_eRlxdM6EZfgq4F7

The funding can only be claimed whilst the Apprentices are either in training or when the Apprenticeship certificate has been achieved. The funding is as follows:

- i. longer MA frameworks with between 12 and 16 milestones e.g. engineering and construction (including electrical and oil and gas frameworks) will attract a supplement of £1,000 paid as follows:

- when start has been confirmed on FIPs, you claim first payment - £500
- when claiming output based funding for the MA - £500
- ii. medium length frameworks with 6 to 11 milestones will attract £500 uplift paid when claiming output based funding for the MA
- iii. shorter length frameworks with 2 to 5 milestones will attract £250 uplift paid when claiming output based funding for the MA

The supplement will be additional to the contribution rate and will be claimed through FIPS.

2.8 Travel and Subsistence for Apprentices Resident in Specified Areas

2.8.1 Eligibility Criteria

These criteria are to support those Apprentices, who as part of the MA, are required to **attend structured and formal off-the-job training** (which is not conducted by or on behalf of the Apprentice's employer or any Group Company of the employer) as set out within the requirements of the MA framework and for mandatory outcomes only. This may require them to travel and where appropriate require overnight accommodation.

Staying in overnight accommodation – this should apply only to those Apprentices who are attending formal off-the-job training out with normal daily travel arrangements.

Apprentices resident in the following specified areas are eligible:

Argyll & Bute; Highland; Moray; Orkney; Shetland; Western Isles; Isle of Arran; Isle of Great Cumbrae and the Isle of Little Cumbrae.

New Start Apprentices from 1 April 2020 and those registered previously as a start on FIPS prior to 1 April 2020 will be eligible.

You are responsible for confirming the eligibility of each Apprentice seeking travel and/or lodging costs and should do so in advance of any travel. Eligible Specified areas postcodes can be checked in advance using: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

2.8.2 What is eligible for support?

At all times, you must seek the most cost-effective travel and accommodation costs.

The following costs are eligible to be reimbursed:

2.8.2.1 Travel Costs

- Ferry fares – full cost of ferry fare – Note: Island residents are entitled to concessionary rates
- Air fares – full cost of air fare – Note: air travel only to be used if no alternative option such as ferry travel is available
- Train fares – full cost of standard train fare
- Bus fare – full cost of bus fare
- Taxi – only in exceptional circumstances and which require to be detailed when making claims

- Mileage – 22p per mile. Note: Where there is no or limited access to public transport or timetabling would require an overnight stay or journey times are reduced; car travel is permitted. If the cost of using public transport for the journey is less than mileage; payment will be restricted to the lesser amount. You must cost these options. If more than one Apprentice is traveling in the car only the car owner is eligible to make a claim.

2.8.2.2 Lodgings

The contribution towards overnight accommodation will be as follows:

- Employers employing **less than 250 employees** – SDS contribution will be up to a maximum of £35 per night.
- Employers employing **more than 250 employees** – SDS contribution will be up to a maximum of £25 per night.
- If nightly accommodation is secured for less than the minimum rates for employer size then the actual cost should be claimed. Example – employer employs less than 250 people and nightly cost is £30 then £30 only can be claimed.

The size of employer should be based on all groups, departments, divisions or sites operated by the employer and not the single site where the Apprentice is based.

2.8.3 Funding and evidence requirements

You will be allocated a sum of funds within existing contracts that allows them to make claims against agreed eligibility as outlined above.

You must retain evidence of costs to be reimbursed – i.e. copy of travel costs (tickets, receipts) along with accommodation costs (hotel, B&B invoices and receipts) clearly showing the date of the journey or accommodation.

Apprentices and/or employers must be reimbursed prior to a claim being made to SDS.

You will be required to provide evidence that Apprentices and/or employers have been reimbursed for their costs. Such evidence will be subject to monitoring by SDS.

You must make claims through FIPS for reimbursement within two financial periods of the actual journey or accommodation being taken.

Claims should be made through the Bulk Expense and Expense Claims area within FIPS and using the Travel & Lodging Claim Form. Further guidance on the process is set out within the Travel & Lodging Claim Form which is available on request from macontracts@sds.co.uk.

2.9 Enhanced Funding for Disabled and/or Care Experienced Apprentices

Enhanced Funding is an enhanced funding rate payable as an alternative to (and not in addition to) the standard funding rate, to enable you to offer additional support to disabled and/or care experienced Apprentices aged 20 -29.

Enhanced funding applies to;

- 1) New Starts;
- 2) Existing Apprentices; or
- 3) Progressions;

in each case, where (i) the Apprentice discloses that they have a disability and/ or have been care experienced and (ii) the balance in the rate of funding between the standard rate and the enhanced rate is required as a result of that disability and/ or care experience, to enable the Apprentice to sustain and complete their Apprenticeship.

You will be required to produce evidence on the additional activities and adaptations required for the Apprentice as a result of the disability and/or care experience. Where applications are approved, you will receive the highest level (16 -19 funding contribution) for the individual's chosen MA Framework.

Enhanced funding is available across all MA frameworks. Where an Apprentice is progressing to the same higher-level framework, the funding shall only be available at SDS's discretion.

(For further information on Enhanced Funding refer to the Enhanced Funding for Modern Apprenticeship Guidance)

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/equality-and-diversity/>

For you to be able to claim the Enhanced Funding, all of the following must apply:

- The Apprentice has disclosed being disabled and/or care experienced and requires support from you as the Provider (as defined in Appendix 4 -Eligibility Declaration for Enhanced Funding for Modern Apprentices (Disability and/or Care Experienced aged 20 -29)
- The full balance in the rate of funding between the standard rate and the enhanced rate is required by you (i) as a result of the disability and/ or care experience (as applicable), and (ii) to provide additional activity and adaptations to enable the Apprentice to sustain and complete their apprenticeship
- You have clearly detailed all the aforementioned additional activity and adaptations required to enable the Apprentice to sustain and complete their apprenticeship in the Enhanced Funding form contained in Appendix 4.
- The Apprentice has disclosed and signed each statement in the form that applies to them
- You must have (i) applied for the Enhanced Fund by sending the completed form to the Equality Team at the email address – Equality.Apprenticeship@sds.co.uk and (ii) received formal approval from SDS in the form of written confirmation from the Equality team from the email address above (SDS will aim to confirm whether the form is being approved or rejected no later than 5 working days from receipt of the completed form)
- The completed and signed form must have been uploaded on to FIPS once it has been approved (refer to Enhanced Funding Guidance for more detailed information on this process)
- The original signed hard copy of the form must be retained securely by you for audit purposes in accordance with MA Condition 28 (Records, Audit Access and General Assistance) and Appendix 4 (Information Security policy in the MA Conditions).
- Completion of and signature to any such statement or statements in the form must be voluntary.

- You must have fully explained the content of the statements in the form to the Apprentice prior to the Apprentice signing the statements and be satisfied that the Apprentice fully understands the purpose of Enhanced Funding and agrees with the statement(s) and the required support you will put in place as set out in the form. You must not have coerced or bribed any Apprentice into completing and/or signing any such statement.
- funding for the additional adaptations and activities identified is not available to you from any other source.

If the Apprentice discloses a disability and/ or care experience **after** they have started their MA and their live assignment has been approved on FIPS, the Provider must follow the process outlined above. The Enhanced Funding Contribution will be on a pro rata basis. **Pro-rated means that following approval of an application, the enhanced funding rate will apply from the date the approved form was received on FIPS, for the period of the Apprentice's Apprenticeship remaining during the period of this MA Contract and shall not be applied retrospectively.**

If the support requirements, activities and adaptations significantly change during the duration of the Apprentice's apprenticeship you must complete a Change of Support Requirements Form (CSR Form). You must follow the instructions detailed in the form and refer to the process outlined above and in the [Enhanced Funding for MA Guidance document](#)

Where SDS has approved and/or made enhanced funding payments to you or any other provider in respect of any Apprentice previously, and that contract has expired or terminated, you will require to submit a fresh application in respect of the Apprentice (if they are continuing with their apprenticeship) in accordance with the provisions set out here, if you wish to be considered for enhanced funding. Approval and/or payment under any previous scheme does not guarantee approval and/or payment under the conditions that apply under this MA Contract.

SDS reserves the right at any time, whether prior to, or subsequent to approval, and whether any enhanced payment has been made or not, during the period of your MA Contract to withdraw the enhanced funding with effect from such date as SDS determines ('effective date').

Where the enhanced funding rate is withdrawn: -

- SDS will email you to advise you of the withdrawal, and the effective date;
- the rates of funding for all apprentices approved for Enhanced Funding shall with effect from the effective date, revert to the standard rates set out in Appendix 1 to this MA Specification.
- No new Enhanced Funding applications can be submitted.

2.10 Apprentice Transition Plan (ATP) Services

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ATP Service should be offered to your Apprentices who have been registered in FIPS, and for whom their employment status has changes on or after 1 April 2020, due to one of the following reasons:

- The Apprentice has been made redundant as a result of the economic downturn;
- The Apprentice is unemployed because the employer ceased trading or was unable to continue employing to Apprentice due to a shortage of work.

Apprentices who agree to participate in the ATP Service will receive support from you, or from a third party provider if you are unable to deliver ATP services, to create an individual plan that will quantify and credit their learning and experience, with the aim of optimising the Apprentices chances of success of moving in to a positive destination.

The ATP Service is not for Apprentices who have been dismissed by their employer for reasons not listed above, or for Apprentices who choose to leave their employment for reasons not listed above.

ATP Service information can be found at

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/apprentice-transition-plan-atp-service/>

2.10.1 Content and Duration

The type of support offered will be determined by:

- The progress of each Apprentice at the point they have been made redundant; and
- The career goals of the Apprentice, which may involve a change of direction.

The ATP Service has five stages as summarised below:

Stage 1	Assess achievements and gaps in knowledge, skills and behaviours required of their apprenticeship.
Stage 2	Design alternative learning and assessment plan (continued certification)
Stage 3	Implement revised learning and assessment plan (continued certification)
Stage 4	Support the Apprentice through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) benchmarking activity to create a Record of Achievement.
Stage 5	Provide appropriate guidance, support and signposting to the next stage of the learner journey (employment or other learning).

Apprentices can engage in the 5 stages where it is appropriate to do so. It is envisaged that Apprentices will fall in to one of the two groups identified below. Apprentice participation in ATP Service related activity must not exceed 16 hours per week. You should endeavour to complete the planned activities within the timescales suggested below:

Apprentice Group	ATP Stages Available	Timescales
Individuals within 26 weeks of their expected end date who could, assessment strategy and Awarding Body permitting, complete part of, or their whole apprenticeship and be certificated in the normal way. RPL may also be offered.	All stages	Within 26 weeks
Individuals at any stage of learning who cannot complete certificated learning out with the workplace due to the nature of the assessment strategy or are not within 26 weeks of completion at the time they were made redundant.	Stages 1, 4 and 5	Within 12 weeks

You should inform us, in writing (by email to atpsupport@sds.co.uk), if there is likely to be a delay in completing the ATP and update the expected completion date in FIPS accordingly. There is a guidance document available for the completion of the ATP document and it can be found at this link <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/47282/atp-documentcompletionguidancefinaldec20.pdf>

Where Apprentices are engaging in Stage 4 and successfully complete, you will provide them with a Record of Achievement, which includes:

- A record of all certificated learning gained from the apprenticeship;
- A quality assured benchmarking statement to indicate the SCQF level for the transferable skills help by the Apprentice;
- A technical skills statement of the Apprentices competence in skill areas which have not been formally assessed or certificated.

When the ATP is complete, you must hold a discussion with the Apprentice which will help them agree their next steps including signposting to appropriate learning, employment and/or other specialist support services.

You must only use the mandatory forms provided by SDS for the ATP document which can be found at <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/apprentice-transition-plan-atp-service/> The Record of Achievement will be shared with ATP providers when ATP Services commence.

2.10.2 Funding

Providers will receive a single payment of £400 for providing ATP Services for Stages 1, 4 and 5. For Stages 2 and 3 of ATP Service delivery, payments will revert to the original MA Contract.

2.10.3 ATP Entry, Claims and Payments

There is a FIPS Quick Start Guide on the ATP Registration and Claims Process available which can be found at this link <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/47281/atp-registration-and-claims-process-fips-quick-start-guide.pdf>

2.10.3.1 ATP Entry

After an Apprentice has been made redundant and the leaving code is entered into FIPS, the ATP Service should be discussed with the Apprentice. If they wish to participate, an initial discussion should cover how ATP services will be delivered and consider which stages of the ATP service are best for their individual situation. The discussion must include checks to confirm that they meet the eligibility criteria for entry to ATP services. From this discussion, appropriate stages in ATP should be agreed between you and the Apprentice. The leaving code on FIPS should then be updated to reflect one of the new ATP specific leaving codes (see 4.8.1). Please note this can not be updated in less than a 24 hour period from entering the initial redundancy code. You should complete Part A of the ATP document with the Apprentice and email this, along with evidence of redundancy, where possible, to confirm eligibility

to atpsupport@sds.co.uk for approval. We will review this and send email confirmation direct to you allowing you to complete the ATP with the Apprentice.

2.10.3.2 For Stages 1, 4 and 5 Claims

Prior to making a claim, you must submit the evidence below for quality assurance checks and approval, by email, to ATPSupport@sds.co.uk:

- Completed ATP document which is signed by the Apprentice;
- Record of Achievement which is signed by the Provider, the Apprentice and where possible, the employer and related completed evidence which demonstrated that the stage 4 process has been appropriately complied with:
 - Describing Your Skills templates;
 - RPL Benchmarking Grid;
 - Internal Reviewer templated for the Technical Skills Statement and Benchmarking Grid.

Within 5 working days of submitting your evidence, you will receive a response email to confirm whether you can make your claim.

2.10.3.3 For Stages 2 and 3 Claims (continued certification)

You should follow the normal claims process for milestones and/or outcome based payments where Apprentices are eligible to continue with their MA qualification, see Part 4.4. These payments will continue to be made under the original MA Contract. For any claims which normally require employer input or action (i.e. Apprentice Progress Reviews), we withdraw the employer requirement.

2.11 Individual Training Accounts

SDS Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) - and any replacement programme - cannot be used by Apprentices to fund training that forms part of the Apprentice's MA framework or for any elements of their MA training. Further, Apprentices participating in the MA Programme will be ineligible to apply for SDS ITA funding and any replacement programme until their Apprenticeship is complete.

2.12 Apprentice Employer Grant

In response to the COVID -19 pandemic, the AEG is available to employers in all sectors that follow apprenticeship funding frameworks who are either:

- Recruiting new Apprentices between 1 December 2020 and 25 March 2021; or
- Using the MA Programme to upskill existing employees already in the work place and who have moved into a new role

The funding available is dependent on the age of the Apprentice and whether they are disabled, care experienced or from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background. The funding is limited to a maximum of 10 Apprentices per employer.

You must administer the AEG to the Employer for which you will receive a management

fee of £150 for each successful claim made through FIPS.

Full details of the eligibility, employers responsibility, application and claim process are included in the AEG Rules available on the SDS website as well as the AEG application form and AEG FAQs.

3 Policies, Procedures and Systems

There are several policies, procedures and systems which you must adhere to, complete and have in place prior to recruiting eligible proposed Apprentices to the MA Programme which you are always expected to apply. These include: -

3.1 Equal Opportunities policy and procedures:

Under the Equality Act 2010, SDS has a Public Sector Equality Duty to promote equality of opportunity in its products and services, including the MA programme. This applies to all protected groups under the legislation. In addition, SDS has specific actions to address the under-representation of ethnic minority groups, disabled people, and care experienced people, and to address the gender imbalance within particular frameworks. You must ensure that in delivering the MA programme no acts of discrimination take place (as defined within the Equality Act 2010), and that you take steps to ensure equality of opportunity with respect to the recruitment and achievement of different customer groups.

You must include at least one equality action within your quality action plan which outlines how you intend to improve the diversity of your MA's. For example: in supporting the more diverse recruitment of Apprentices to your programme; by providing staff with relevant development in equality topics and/or by providing diverse support needs of Apprentices. You should seek to continuously improve your equality outcomes via your action plan and be able to demonstrate impact of your actions. For more detailed information on identifying key actions and providing evidence to support equality actions please refer to the Equality Support guide.

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/45855/ntp-equality-support-guide-2019.pdf>

3.2 Reporting and Investigation of Incidents

You will immediately notify all Reportable Incidents to the relevant authority as required by RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). If a Reportable Incident occurs whilst an Apprentice is conducting activities identified in their Apprentice Progress Review or which are relevant to the MA Programme you must ensure that SDS is informed immediately by contacting the SDS assigned Skills Investment Advisor (SIA) by telephone (leaving a message containing brief details, if unanswered,) and email, and in each case, if re-directed to an alternative contact, by advising such contact.

These conditions are without prejudice to any statutory duty of any person to make notification of a death, injury, case of disease or dangerous occurrence.

3.3 Funding Information and Processing System (FIPS)

Funding for each MA Programme will be administered through FIPS in accordance with SDS requirements. You must, through duly authorised and appropriately qualified staff, ensure that all the information collected for FIPS and input to FIPS is up to date, is accurate,

is entered in to FIPS timeously and complies with SDS FIPS Guidance (as amended from time to time). This relates directly to the Key Performance Levels set out in MA Conditions 10.5.

In order to use FIPS as prescribed in the MA Contract awarded, you will be required to obtain annually for the period of the MA Contract, a User Permission for each user of the FIPS software. All information relating to each User Permission including the applicable terms and conditions, applicable charges and guidance on the process for requesting/granting/amending. User permissions will be made available by SDS to you or, at SDS' discretion, set out in SDS Provider Web Pages available through <http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/fips-funding-information-and-processing-system/>.

You will complete a FIPS Delegated Authority form on an annual basis and notify SDS of any changes thereto in accordance with the User Permission guidance. You will always adhere to the security guidance issued by SDS and ensure that FIPS passwords are reviewed regularly and updated for changes in staff and/or contacts.

3.4 Information Security Policy and Procedures

You will have due regard to data protection and the security of information and will comply with SDS Information Security and Data Handling Requirements as stated in Appendix 4 of the MA Conditions as amended by SDS from time to time, including the encryption of data being transferred electronically.

3.5 Promotion of Fair Work Practices Policy

The Public Sector in Scotland is committed to the delivery of high-quality public services, and recognises that this is critically dependent on a workforce that is well rewarded, well-motivated, well-led, has access to appropriate opportunities for training and skills development, is diverse and is engaged in decision making. These factors are also important for workforce recruitment and retention, and continuity of service. Public Bodies in Scotland are adopting Fair Work Practices. The Scottish Government has set out a Fair Work Action Plan <https://economicactionplan.mygov.scot/fair-work/> .

Further information on SDSs' Fair Work Practices is as follows: -

SDS's Corporate Plan includes SDS's ambition to become an exemplar of Fair Work, in line with the work of the Fair Work Convention. <http://www.fairworkconvention.scot/> This includes our commitment to fair pay and reward as a Scottish Living Wage accredited employer <http://scottishlivingwage.org/> and https://scottishlivingwage.org/accredited/skills_development_scotland/;

In order to ensure the highest standards of service quality in the MA Contract, you will take a similarly positive approach to fair work practices when performing its Services, as part of a fair and equitable employment and reward package and will comply with all undertakings provided in your ITT response in relation to fair work practices (subject to any amendments agreed by the parties and reflected in the award letter and/or any formal variation).

You will take appropriate action when marketing your MA services to both employers and Apprentices, to promote the benefits of employers operating fair work practices. Best practice guidance is available at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/10/2086/0> or such

alternative website as SDS may advise from time to time.

You are expected to include within this promotional activity, reference to any wage rates agreed by relevant industry bodies (e.g. the arrangements referred to in <http://sbatc.co.uk/documents.php>) and <http://www.snijib.org/members/documents/SNIJIB2016.13Gradedrates> or such additional or alternative examples as we may advise from time to time).

3.6 Promotion of other SDS Initiatives

3.6.1 Apprenticeships.scot

You will use your best efforts to promptly post all MA vacancies on www.apprenticeships.scot and raise awareness of this with employers you work with so that they may post appropriate vacancies.

3.6.2. My World of Work

You will use your best efforts to encourage each Apprentice to register on the SDS My World of Work web service at <http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/> (or such alternative address as SDS may use from time to time) during the Apprentice's induction to the MA Programme and if unsuccessful at that time, during the Apprentice's training. From time to time, SDS will carry out checks to compare the number of your Apprentices registered on FIPS against the number registered on My World of Work;

3.6.3 Foundation Apprenticeships and Graduate Apprenticeships

You will use your best efforts to promote SDS' Foundation Apprenticeship and Graduate Apprenticeship programmes to employers and Apprentices where appropriate.

3.6.4 Other SDS Products and Services

Stay up to date with the latest news from SDS by signing up to our Provider newsletter <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/>

You will use your best efforts to promote other relevant SDS products and services which we will bring to your attention from time to time.

3.7 Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework sets out standards which are designed to assess the extent to which you will deliver quality learning and assessment services which are focused on the needs of the Apprentice and employers. You are required to meet minimum standards and take action to strive for improvements in your delivery. A copy of the current SDS Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework is available on the SDS Provider Web Pages <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/quality-assurance-framework/>. The Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework may be amended from time to time by SDS. Any amended version will be available on the SDS website.

You will submit to SDS **no later than 30th April 2020**, a Self-Assessment and Quality

Action Plan for review and acceptance by SDS, the format of which will be determined and made available by SDS, to evidence your achievement and planned improvement actions against the Quality Standards referred to within the Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework. The Quality Action Plan should include your contribution to meeting the targets contained within SDS's Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan and their broader contribution to improving the diversity in Apprenticeships uptake and success. Subject to any alternative arrangements which SDS may advise in writing, SDS staff will periodically visit you to review supporting evidence held by you.

Except where otherwise confirmed, SDS will use your Self Assessment and additional appropriate evidence, to assess you against each of the Quality Standards. SDS may examine a range of evidence as indicated within the SDS Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework. SDS will routinely monitor you on an ongoing basis in relation to the Quality Standards. SDS will also undertake formal reviews of Providers using a risk-based approach. SDS may not formally review you during the period of this MA Contract. SDS may publish its findings on each such review, on the SDS website. Where you are subject to any alternative quality standard assessment process, for example, Education Scotland thematic reviews of MAs or '*How Good is Our College?*', you will be required to meet the requirements of that process.

Education Scotland publish a national report for each thematic review of MAs which they undertake. Each Provider involved in the sample for the review receives a report for their organisation to inform their own continuous improvement. All national thematic reports will be published on Education Scotland's website and SDS will also publish links to the reports on the SDS website and Apprenticeships.scot

You should ensure your Quality Action Plan is kept up to date and liaise with your SDS assigned SIA on the progress of improvement actions. If, however, following a quality assurance visit, a material change is required to the Quality Action Plan, this must be agreed with your Quality Assessor before returning to your SIA for ongoing quality assurance monitoring.

If you fail to achieve a grade of at least satisfactory in relation to any of our quality standards at any time (whether established through SDS's own examination, or through such alternative quality standard assessment), this will be deemed a breach of the MA Contract.

This includes failure to submit a Self-Assessment and Quality Action plan which is acceptable to SDS; an SDS formal quality review or an Education Scotland Thematic review which has one or more grades at weak or unsatisfactory.

In addition to SDS' other rights and remedies, you should be aware that performance against the quality standards may be included as a minimum requirement and/or evaluation criterion in future MA contracts.

3.8 Provider Controls and Assurance

You will always have in place management processes and controls to ensure: you are meeting your contracted obligations; all of your staff involved with the MA Programme are aware of all the MA Programme requirements; you promptly identify and disclose to SDS any actual or potential conflict of interest; and you ensure that there is clear segregation of duties that provide a check that the MA Programme Specification and Conditions are followed. You should, on request, present to SDS an accurate record of your controls in a format determined by SDS, and ensure that the record reflects any dispensations agreed

by SDS in accordance with the MA Conditions.

SDS will be entitled to assess your controls (during and after the period of the MA Contract), (accessing your and any sub-contractor premises as deemed appropriate by SDS) and take such action as SDS deems appropriate to establish the extent to which the controls are (or were, as appropriate) operating satisfactorily. You will co-operate fully with SDS in each such assessment and/or action.

In the event that you are no longer providing training or assessment services to Apprentices and have no outstanding claims for payment under the terms of the MA Contract, you will comply with your contracted obligations for the duration of the remaining retention period set out in the Records, Audit Access and General Assistance condition contained in the Conditions.

If you had an MA Contract at any time during the period between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 and SDS issued you with an action/improvement plan, any such action/improvement plan will continue to apply to you under your current MA Contract, unless SDS advises you otherwise in writing in the form of an email from the SDS assigned SIA.

3.9 Signatures

You must ensure that all required signatures are original on all SDS documentation. You must also ensure that all systems and processes are robust with key controls in place to ensure that all signatures on all forms and documentation are genuine.

By original we mean a signature captured by the hand of the person it represents and used where there is knowledge of and an intent to sign a specific document. This can be the traditional method of pen to paper or electronically by using a stylus, finger, touch pad or mouse.

Copies (including scanned copies) of the original document or form with the required signatures are acceptable for payment assurance purposes.

For the avoidance of doubt, SDS will not accept a typed signature in any font or any saved image of a signature.

Any irregularity in required signatures may be deemed a breach of the MA Provider Contract.

3.10 Awarding Body notification and reports

You must notify your SDS SIA immediately when either of the following arise:-

- any hold is placed on accreditation you have with an Awarding Body
- any sanction is imposed on you by an Awarding Body which may impact on an Apprentice achievement

Each Awarding Body External Verifier's Report must be made available to the appointed SDS SIA, for quality monitoring and compliance purposes, within 7 calendar days of your receipt of the report if the report contains any formal actions, and otherwise, immediately on demand by SDS.

4 MA Programme Delivery

4.1 Eligibility Criteria for MA Funding

To be eligible to participate in an approved MA framework, an Apprentice must satisfy the criteria set out below. You will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the Apprentice meets all the eligibility criteria.

In determining eligible persons for recruitment to the MA Programme, you will apply such additional and/or alternative eligibility criteria (as applicable) as SDS may advise from time to time in accordance with the Conditions.

4.1.1 Employment

Each Apprentice's main employment and normal working premises, during the period of their MA, will be located in Scotland.

Each Apprentice must during the period of their MA, fulfil the requirements of the legal right to work in the UK (details of which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checklist>) and be employed by an employer:-

- for whom they are working as an employee to consolidate the skills acquired during their MA framework;
- by whom the Apprentice is directly managed by appropriately experienced staff whilst performing their Apprenticeship tasks on a daily basis with the Apprenticeship tasks being undertaken as part of the Apprentice's employment during working hours;
- and under a contract of employment relevant to the MA referred to in the TA.

SDS may, in exceptional circumstances, and entirely at SDS's discretion, authorise completion of any part of an Apprentice's MA, if the Apprentice's employment status changes. You may apply to SDS for such authorisation in accordance with the Conditions.

Each Apprentice following a MA framework must be subject to the same policies and procedures as other employees of the organisation with which they are employed, and you must use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that each Apprentice is informed by their employer of their rights as an employee, including those relating to the national minimum wage and working hour directives.

For the avoidance of doubt, an Apprentice cannot be self-employed.

You will include the time spent by the Apprentice in off the job apprenticeship training (including the time required to prepare and undertake assessment) as time spent at work.

4.1.2 Age

At the commencement of the MA, an Apprentice must have reached the Scottish statutory minimum school leaving age and be: -

- an individual aged 16- 24 who intends to follow an approved MA framework. For the avoidance of doubt an individual aged 15 is eligible if they have met the statutory school leaving age that applies in Scotland;
- an individual aged 25 or over who intends to follow an approved MA framework in any of the specified sectors listed in Appendix 2 of this MA Specification.

4.1.3 Demonstrable Need

The proposed Apprentice must have a demonstrable need to acquire significant new knowledge and skills to fulfil their job role and the MA framework selected for the proposed Apprentice must be the most appropriate learning programme generally available to that proposed Apprentice, providing such knowledge and skills.

4.1.4 Exclusions

A proposed Apprentice will not be eligible to commence or continue (as applicable) the MA if the proposed Apprentice is at any time: -

- subject to an employment restriction on their stay in Great Britain;
- subject to any funding restriction which would apply to MAs;
- in custody as a prisoner or on remand in custody; or
- in any, employment, training or enterprise programme funded by any UK and/or Scottish Government department or by SDS (subject to any exceptions published by SDS from time to time). For the avoidance of doubt Community Jobs Scotland is a Scottish Government funded employment programme and Kickstart is a UK Government funded employment programme.
- participating in Pathway, Foundation or Graduate Apprenticeships

4.2 Programme Entry

A proposed Apprentice will not become an 'Apprentice' until you have properly completed all your obligations in relation to the Apprentice set out below and when an assignment has been approved on FIPS.

Any financial obligation on SDS in respect of the proposed Apprentice in terms of the MA Contract will not arise prior to the proposed Apprentice being properly entered by you, approved by SDS and validated by the Apprentice (or employer as outlined in paragraph 4.2.4) as a 'Start' on FIPS in accordance with this Specification.

4.2.1 Training Agreement (TA)

Within 4 weeks either side of the Apprentice's Start Date as entered on FIPS, the TA (a copy of which is available at Appendix 5 to this MA Specification) must be fully completed, agreed between the Apprentice, you and the employer. The TA must be completed and signed before any information is input on FIPS.

For each Apprentice, you must:

- fully and properly explain the eligibility criteria
- make a copy of SDS's current Privacy Notice (available on the SDS Provider Web Pages), available to the Apprentice and ensure the Apprentice has an appropriate opportunity to consider its contents prior to signing the TA.
- ensure the Apprentice and employer accurately complete, sign and date the TA

You will not be permitted to use any form of TA other than the form of TA made available by SDS.

If there is a change to the Apprentice's:

- Date of Birth;
- and/or NI Number

then you must ensure that the original TA is updated and initialed immediately by you and the Apprentice and the changes are updated timeously on FIPS using the Change of Circumstance process (as outlined in FIPS Information Page of the SDS website).

If there is a change to the Apprentice's:

- Start Date;
- and/or Qualification

then you must ensure that a new TA is completed and signed immediately by the Apprentice, you and the employer and the changes are updated timeously on FIPS using the Change of Circumstance process (as outlined in FIPS Information Page of the SDS website).

If there is a change to any other information contained in the TA such as email addresses for Apprentice or employer representative or contact telephone numbers or expected end dates, you must ensure that the changes are updated on FIPS and recorded at the Apprentice Progress Review (as outlined in paragraph 4.3).

If there is a change to the Provider and/or Employer this is treated as a transfer, details of which are outlined in paragraph 4.7.

4.2.2 Equality Monitoring Form

The Equality Monitoring Form in Appendix 6 to this MA Specification must be given to all Apprentices to complete at the same time as the TA. This should be recorded and disposed of in accordance with the requirements set out in Appendix 6 to this MA Specification.

4.2.3 Entering an assignment on FIPS

As soon as the TA has been completed, agreed, signed and dated by all parties, the Apprentice details required in FIPS must be entered by you, including without limitation, the mobile/telephone number and unique email addresses of the Apprentice, and the employer representative. A unique email address is a personal email address used and accessed only by the intended recipient. The employer details entered on FIPS must be in relation to the Apprentice's main employment and normal working location in Scotland. This relates to a Key Performance Level as outlined in Conditions 10.5.

You will not register a proposed Apprentice as a Start on FIPS unless you (and/or relevant Permitted Sub-contractor) hold a current accreditation relevant to the proposed Apprentice's MA, from the relevant Awarding Bodies.

4.2.4 Validation

The mandatory validation process starts when an Apprentice is registered on FIPS. An e-mail or SMS text (depending on the preferred method of contact the Apprentice

has requested) is sent to the Apprentice using their unique (as outlined in paragraph 4.2.3) email address/SMS asking them to verify that they have commenced their training. If no response is received from the Apprentice, an email will be sent to the Apprentices employer representative for validation purposes.

Failure to comply with the mandatory validation process will result in a breach of your MA contract as outlined in Condition 23.2.

The mandatory validation process will continue throughout the duration of the Apprentices' training for every claim made through FIPS.

Further details of the validation process requirements are outlined in FIPS Information Page of the SDS Provider Web Pages.

<http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/fips-funding-information-and-processing-system/>

4.2.5 Registration with the Awarding Body/Sector Skills Organisation

You will register each Apprentice with an Awarding Body, and with the appropriate SSO, identifying which Qualification the Apprentice will work towards during the period of their training, before any Milestone claims are made. The Apprentice must be entered for the group award as well as the relevant units for the Qualification. Unit registration alone is not acceptable. A Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) is also required to be entered onto the Apprentice TA. For SQA Qualifications the SCN must be entered prior to claiming the first Milestone.

Staged registration with the Awarding Body may be acceptable for the VQ where this is in line with the approved MA framework provided the Apprentice is registered with the SSO as a Modern Apprentice. For the avoidance of doubt, no claims may be submitted for any stage for which the Apprentice is not specifically registered.

Formal evidence of registration/entry, from the Awarding Body/SSO, including confirmed date, will be held by you on file prior to making a claim and retained for audit purposes.

4.2.6 ESF requirements

4.2.6.1 ESF Logo

When requested to use an ESF logo, you must visit the website using the link below to view the publicity guide which clarifies the rules around the use of the ESF logo - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/esif-publicity-requirements-2014-2020/>. The following link takes you directly to different formats of the ESF logo available for download - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/esif-logos/>. You must ensure you use the **ESF Logo in English and NOT the ERDF or Gaelic logos**. If you wish to use the Gaelic logo, then this must be added in addition to the English version.

4.2.6.2 ESF Audit Requirements

If a representative from SDS's ESF team emails you to confirm that any Apprentice is being supported by ESF you must additionally adhere to the audit evidence requirements set out in Appendix 7 to this MA Specification.

4.2.7 Initial Assessment and Learning Plan

Each Apprentice (including new start, re-entrant and progression) must undergo an Initial Assessment (IA) to demonstrate that they have good prospects of success in completing the selected MA, with the appropriate training and support from you and from the employer. This is a mandatory requirement for all Apprentices.

The IA should take account of the Apprentice's job role and the employer's business and skills requirements. During the IA, you should utilise relevant evidence (e.g. from aptitude and/or skills test, interview, prior learning, CV, application form, FIPS (for re-entrants), and from the Apprentice, information from their Careers Management Skills Assessment and Career Development Plan and any other information provided by SDS work/careers coach or other agency worker). Other areas which should be considered are the Apprentice's potential, interests and motivation, the suitability of the job role to the learning opportunity, digital skills, learning difficulties, personal effectiveness and personal circumstances. If any Apprentice is disabled and/or care experienced and requires additional support (the criteria for which are set out in Appendix 4 to this MA Specification), and the Apprentice agrees to complete and sign the statement set out in Appendix 4 to this MA Specification confirming which of the applicable criteria apply, you may be eligible to receive enhanced funding. Enhanced funding is relative to the Apprentice and as such, should be treated as confidential.

Should the IA process identify that the Apprentice has a disability which means they require additional specialist equipment or support to undertake their apprenticeship then you should advise them to apply for funding and support through Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) Access to Work scheme Further information and guidance on this can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>.

The results of the IA should help to develop a tailored Learning Plan for the Apprentice and be shared with them and where appropriate, the employer. The findings of the IA and the learning plan should be consistent with the TA, inform the planned training and support the Apprentice Progress Reviews.

When documenting the IA, you should ensure the following: -

- the Apprentice's prior learning is adequately reflected (if the Apprentice has previously completed all accreditations required for any Milestone claim);
- the Apprentice needs are assessed and any support required is documented (for example, support required due to a disability or caring responsibilities);
- a duration is specified which is reasonable in light of the Apprentice's assessed needs;
- the support provided, and the nature and level of any Qualification aimed at are specified;

When developing the Learning Plan, you should ensure the following: -

- the content of the Learning Plan corresponds to the findings of the IA;
- goals and objectives are set which relate to progression towards the completion of the MA framework and these are made clear to the Apprentice and documented by you;
- the Apprentice plays a key role in the development of their learning plan and is able to contribute to their plan, understand their goals and reflect on their achievements;

- the employer contributes to the Learning Plan with consideration of the job role, wider company objectives and the workplace environment.

Due to the wide variety of needs and requirements across industries and in each MA framework, we do not require specific SDS templates to be used for the IA and Learning Plan stage, however, you must retain the documents you use to evidence that you have undertaken this activity and for your own quality assurance purposes, and be able to provide this to SDS if requested. The IA and Learning Plan must be completed within 4 weeks either side of the Apprentice's start date.

All re-entrants and progressions (as outlined in paragraph 2.3.2 and 2.3.3) to the MA Programme follow the normal process for entry including completion of a new Training Agreement, Initial Assessment, Learning Plan and any other associated paperwork.

4.2.8 Induction to the MA Programme

It is essential that you carry out an induction to the MA programme with the Apprentice to ensure they understand their commitment and contribution to the completion of the qualification, as well as their employers', SDS' and the Providers.

Induction should include, for quality purposes:

- A meaningful and informative introduction to the MA framework and programme, i.e. what is it, how does it work, what does it mean to be an 'Apprentice'
- Familiarisation to the MA programme, i.e. how this will be delivered, their main contacts
- Behaviours and expectations from all parties involved
- Ensuring the Apprentice is aware of your equal opportunities policy and the actions they should take if they feel they are being bullied or discriminated against

To ensure you are fulfilling your obligations as an MA provider, an induction should also include, but is not limited to the following:

- Ensuring the Apprentice and employer are aware of the role of SDS relating to the MA programme, including details of financial contribution by SDS for the relevant MA framework
- Informing the Apprentice of the mandatory validation process (as outlined in paragraph 4.2.4) request and encourage full co-operation by an Apprentice and/or employer in/at any observation, visit, meeting, online correspondence, survey and/or telephone call with SDS relating to the operation of the MA Programme.
- Ensuring the Apprentices and employers unique (as outlined in paragraph 4.2.3) email address and contact telephone numbers are accurate and up to date at all times

The above list is supplementary to the employer's role and responsibility to all employees in the workplace.

4.3 Apprentice Progress Review (APR) Process

You must comply with SDS Quality Assurance (as outlined in paragraph 3.7). You should focus on the needs of each Apprentice and provide the necessary support to achieve the objectives of each Apprentice's IA and learning plan. When planning the programme delivery for each Apprentice, you must demonstrate how you will work with the Apprentice and ensure that delivery of all support is fully recorded in each APR (as described below).

The Apprentice's progress must be regularly reviewed and assessed. You must carry out APRs with the Apprentice and employer every 13 weeks, as a minimum, for the duration of the MA, until the MA leaving date is recorded and evidenced on FIPS. If the APR is not carried out face to face then this must be agreed in writing, in advance by your SIA. The APR is a mandatory requirement for all Apprentices and all MA Frameworks. The information recorded in the APR should relate to the activity undertaken at the IA and learning plan stage and should act as a review against the findings, with particular focus on the goals and objectives set out initially in their learning plan. You must ensure that the APR is recorded on the appropriate SDS Apprentice Progress Review Exemplar or your own appropriate documentation which has been approved in advance and in writing by your SIA and must, as a minimum requirement, include the following areas:

- ESF logo (see [paragraph 4.2.6](#) for further information)
- SDS Logo
- Apprentice Name
- Review Date
- Next Review Date
- Period Under Review
- Achievements as detailed in the Apprentice portfolio
- Activities completed against goals/targets set at IA and planning stage
- Goals/Objectives for next review
- Areas in which Core Skills and/or Career Management Skills have developed
- Any additional training that has taken place, including optional units and off the job training
- Employer representative comments on progression and achievement
- Apprentice comments on progression and achievement
- Provider comments on progression and achievement
- Changes (including contact information, i.e. Phone number, address, email and milestone and expected end date changes)
- Apprentice Signature and date signed
- Provider Name, Provider Signature and date signed
- Employer Representative Name, Signature and date signed

Where a MA framework follows a QPR Payment Plan (outlined in Appendix 3 to this MA Specification), APR's must also include:

- Milestone Number
- the following statement at the top of the document in bold type **"This document is to support a milestone claim on a quarterly basis."**

Alternatively, you can use SDS' APR Exemplar for QPR Payment Plan document to record this information. All exemplar documents will be made available to you on the SDS Website.

All APR records must be signed and dated by the Apprentice, the Provider and the employer. Where Apprentices are participating in full-time off the job training at the time of the APR, SDS will accept the contribution and signature of an independent representative

involved in the delivery of the off the job training, (e.g. a college) as an alternative to the employer's contribution and signature.

A copy of each completed APR should be made available to the Apprentice and the employer (for the employer's information) after each review.

For changes to the Apprentice's date of birth, National Insurance Number, Qualification and Start date, you must follow the FIPS Change of Circumstances process as outlined in paragraph 4.2.1. Any other changes to information recorded on FIPS should be updated immediately on FIPS and recorded at the APR on the appropriate APR form, signed and dated by the Apprentice, Employer Representative and Provider. This relates directly to a Key Performance Level as outlined in Conditions 10.5.

4.4 Payment Plans and Claims Process

The Payment Plans (Appendix 3 to this MA Specification) are set against the VQ listed in the MA framework and set out the programme requirements to make a Milestone claim.

Milestone payments can be claimed when you have fulfilled and complied with your obligations within the MA Contract as detailed in the Payment Plan. Evidence to support the milestone claim must be held in advance of any claim being made and must be retained for audit purposes.

4.4.1 Payment Plan by Quarterly Progress Review (QPR)

Where the Payment Plan is by QPRs, you must ensure that an APR is completed to support the claim of the relevant milestone. The APR can be your own documentation as long as it meets the minimum requirements guidelines, as outlined in paragraph 4.3. The document must also include:

- Milestone Number and
- the following statement at the top of the document in bold type **"This document is to support a milestone claim on a quarterly basis."**

This document must be approved for use, in advance and in writing, by your SIA.

APR's required to support the milestone claim for QPR Payment Plans must be completed during the six-week period commencing three weeks before and ending three weeks after the last date of each quarterly period for the duration of the MA Contract, as defined in the individual Payment Plan. Only one milestone can be achieved per quarterly period, irrespective of the Apprentice progress during that quarterly period. Milestone claims based on this individual Payment Plan should be submitted as soon as possible following the completion of the APR.

Where an APR has been conducted outwith the 6 week review window, a claim cannot be submitted and must be declined unless exceptional circumstances exist. Where exceptional circumstances exist, you may apply to your SIA for dispensation to allow the claim to be submitted. In such circumstances, advance approval must be obtained in writing (email) from SDS prior to the claim being made.

Where an APR has not taken place a milestone claim cannot be made, and the claim must be declined by you on FIPS. For clarification, this means that the milestone value is also removed from the individual Payment Plan and the overall funding is reduced by that amount.

For Apprentices who achieve their full MA prior to their expected end date, any remaining unclaimed milestones can be claimed once you have all the evidence of the MA Certification from the appropriate SSO (as outlined in paragraph 4.5).

4.4.1.1 Review Schedule and Evidence Requirements

Milestone No.	Achievement Due	6 Week Review Window	Evidence Requirements
1	Week 13	Week 10 – Week 16	Review of Apprentice progress undertaken and recorded on an APR form within the 6-week review window (see paragraph 4.4.1.2) and signed and dated by the Apprentice, the reviewer and the employer.
2	Week 26	Week 23 – Week 29	
3	Week 39	Week 36 – Week 42	
4	Week 52	Week 49 – Week 55	
5	Week 65	Week 62 – Week 68	
6	Week 78	Week 75 – Week 81	

4.4.1.2 Example of 6-Week Review Window

Apprentice Start Date: 07/08/2017			
Milestone 1	Earliest date APR can be completed	16/10/2017	M1 6-week review period
	Last date of 1st Quarter period	06/11/2017	
	Latest date APR can be completed	26/11/2017	
Milestone 2	Earliest date APR can be completed	15/01/2018	M2 6-week review period
	Last date of 2nd Quarter period	05/02/2018	
	Latest date APR can be completed	26/02/2018	
Milestone 3	Earliest date APR can be completed	16/04/2018	M3 6-week review period
	Last date of 3rd Quarter period	07/05/2018	
	Latest date APR can be completed	28/05/2018	
Milestone 4	Earliest date APR can be completed	16/07/2018	M4 6-week review period
	Last date of 4th Quarter period	06/08/2018	
	Latest date APR can be completed	27/08/2018	

The above dates are calculated by the Start Date on FIPS and 13-week APR's are always calculated from the Start Date, regardless of when the last review took place.

4.4.2 Payment Plan by Summary of Achievement Record (SOAR)

When the Payment Plan milestone payment is by unit achievement then this must be evidenced. You must ensure that this is recorded on appropriate documentation which has been approved in advance and in writing by your SIA and must, as a minimum requirement, include the following areas:

- ESF Logo (see [paragraph 4.2.6](#) for further information)
- SDS Logo
- Milestone Number (as per Payment Plan)
- Number of Units (as per Payment Plan)
- Apprentice Name
- MA Framework
- VQ Level
- VQ Reference
- VQ Title
- Unit Title

- Unit Code
- Date Achieved
- Date Claimed
- Apprentice Signature with date
- Assessor Signature with date
- Assessor Name

Alternatively, you can use SDS' SOAR Exemplar to record this information. This can be found at on the SDS website.

This must be signed and dated by the Apprentice and for you, by a qualified subject assessor. Progression recorded on the SOAR or alternative should reflect achievements detailed in the Apprentice portfolio.

As outlined in paragraph 4.3 of this MA Specification, every Apprentice regardless of Payment Plan must undertake an APR, as a minimum, every 13 weeks.

In order to ensure that Awarding Body records of Apprentices results are up-to- date and accurate, you must enter unit achievement to the appropriate Awarding Body database/system as soon as reasonably practicable after completion by an Apprentice of each Milestone, and additionally, when an Apprentice leaves, no later than 14 calendar days after the Apprentice's leaving date.

The Apprentice portfolio must be made available immediately on request by SDS.

You can only make a claim after the Start date entered on FIPS. Any variation from the Payment Plan requires the prior agreement of SDS, to be granted entirely at SDS' discretion. Prior agreement must be in the form of (i) an email from the SDS assigned Contracts Executive and/or (ii) confirmation by SDS in the Payment Plan, and/or (iii) confirmation by SDS in FIPS. No deviation from the Payment Plan will be permitted without such prior agreement.

4.5 Completion of the MA Programme

You must hold evidence of achievement of the full MA from the SSO including evidence of achievement of the full VQ or work based qualification from the Awarding Body, prior to submission of a claim to SDS for output based funding. This must be formal SSO evidence. Apprentices will remain on the relevant MA Programme until all the documentation required to make an application for the final MA Qualification has been collated, and an application made, in line with the framework and the actual end date is entered on to FIPS.

For any Payment Plan by QPR where the APR is not due to take place until after the date of issue of the evidence from SSO of achievement of the full MA, you may claim that payment when claiming payment for the said output based funding.

4.6 Temporary Interruptions to Training

You must inform SDS immediately in writing (via an email to the SDS assigned SIA) if an Apprentice's training is interrupted temporarily for any reason (e.g. extended sick leave, suspension, extended compassionate leave) and update FIPS records immediately if there is any change to the TA.

Whilst the training for any Apprentice on maternity/paternity leave will be considered by SDS to be temporarily interrupted (and for the avoidance of doubt, the Apprentice will not be considered to have left the training), the Apprentice assignment on FIPS must be updated as if the Apprentice had left the Programme and you must enter the relevant leaving code (as outlined in paragraph 4.8.1) to identify the status of the Apprentice as on maternity/paternity leave. Once the Apprentice returns to work the Apprentice must be treated as a re-entrant to the MA Programme and the original individual Payment Plan will continue.

4.7 Transfer of an Apprentice

4.7.1 Transfer to another Provider

All transfer to another Provider arrangements are subject to SDS's prior written agreement to be provided at SDS's entire discretion, on an individual basis in the form of an email from the SDS assigned SIA. SDS reserves the right to amend the remaining individual Payment Plan for any transfer of an Apprentice.

If you are materially failing to provide the training in accordance with the Apprentice's Learning Plan and as a consequence, SDS determines that the Apprentice will transfer to another provider, and/or the employer and SDS agree for any reason that the Apprentice should transfer to another provider, you will co-operate fully with SDS.

The original Provider must at its own expense, ensure that the organisation to which the Apprentice transfers is timeously provided with all necessary documentation to support any follow-on activity and ensure a smooth transition. All relevant documentation to support claims made up to the transfer date must be retained by the original Provider and provided immediately to SDS (or SDS' nominee) on request.

4.7.2 Transfer to another Employer

If an Apprentice changes employment and their new role and new employer supports the continuation of their MA Programme they are able to remain on the MA Programme if all of the following conditions are met:

- a new TA is fully completed, agreed between the Apprentice, you and the new employer, in accordance with paragraph 4.2.1. The TA must be completed and signed before any information is updated on FIPS.
- the new TA must retain the original Start Date on the MA framework which will ensure that there is no disruption to the APR process. The date of transfer to the new employer must be recorded at the next Apprentice Progress Review.

4.8 Programme Exit

An Apprentice is regarded as having left the MA Programme if:

- the aim of their Learning Plan has been achieved and you have received all supporting evidence of the MA framework; or
- all supporting evidence of the MA framework has been collated and certification applied for; or
- the Apprentice states they have left the MA Programme; or
- the Apprentice ceases their employment with their employer for any reason, except when, (a) after notification from the employer that the Apprentice has been made redundant, the Apprentice is engaged in a period of formal training at college. In this case, the period may be extended at our discretion and subject to our written approval in the form of an email from the SDS appointed SIA or as confirmed by us on FIPS or (b) the Apprentice is employed by another employer and is able to continue their MA programme with no break in employment, or (c) a redundant Apprentice is being supported to complete an Apprentice Transition Plan.

Once an Apprentice has left the MA Programme, you must enter the leaving details immediately on FIPS using the leaving codes in 4.8.1. This relates directly to a Key Performance Level (MA Condition 10.5).

If any Apprentice has been made redundant, you must use your best efforts to support the Apprentice in a search to secure alternative employment with training making use of the Apprentice Transition Plan (see 2.10) and Adopt an Apprentice Initiatives where appropriate. For more detail on Adopt an Apprentice, see <https://www.ourskillsforce.co.uk/invest-in-young-people/adopt-an-apprentice/>. This must include working with relevant SSOs to identify opportunities. The input of the relevant leaver code in 4.8.1. to identify the Apprentices status as redundant is the trigger for extra SDS support to the Apprentice.

4.8.1 MA Leaving Codes

Main heading	Sub-heading
Employed	Employed Self-employed Modern Apprenticeship Progression to higher level Modern Apprenticeship Graduate Apprenticeship
Education and Training	College University Other training
Personal and health issues	Health Issues Serious injury or accident at work/placement Homeless Detained in custody Financial Reasons Called up to armed forces Relocated/moved away Parental/caring responsibilities Travel difficulties Pressure from parent/guardian Other personal reasons
Unemployed	Business ceased trading Dismissed by company End of employment contract/placement Made redundant Temporary layoff ATP < 6 months to expected end – milestones/outcome to claim ATP < 6 months to expected end – milestones to claim ATP – RPL only
Employer engagement	Employer ended involvement in programme Assessor has no access to candidate
Difficulties with course/attendance	Poor time-keeping Poor attendance Course no longer related to plans Disliked the course content Was not ready to undertake course Not achieving in line with training plan Difficulties with workload
Death	Death
Maternity/Paternity Period (temporary leave)	Maternity/Paternity Period (temporary leave)

4.9 MA Delivery Process Chart

MA Delivery Process Chart

