

Modern Apprenticeship Conditions and Specification Frequently asked questions

This document is solely for questions related to the published MA Programme Conditions and Specification. For further information on FAQs related to COVID 19 please refer to the COVID 19 MA FAQs on the [SDS website](#).

Updated 12th October 2021, 12th April 2022, 20th May 2022, **25 June 2022**

Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the MA Programme Conditions and the MA Programme Specification. The MA Programme Conditions and Specifications are published on the Training Provider area of the [Skills Development Scotland website](#) and on [Apprenticeships.Scot](#) together with supporting documentation:

The MA Specification and MA Conditions include a version history which highlights changes to the documents since first publication.

Questions have been clustered under the following sections:

1. MA Offer
2. Policies, procedures and systems
3. MA Eligibility
4. MA Programme entry
5. MA Apprentice Progress Reviews
6. MA Payment Plans
7. MA Programme Delivery – other (including exit)
8. MA Conditions
9. Miscellaneous enquiries

Each updated version will show latest additions in **green**.

If you have any further questions, please direct them via your Skills Investment Adviser in the first instance.

1. MA Offer

Q1.1 What are the different assignment types used on FIPS?

A1.1 Paragraph 2.3 of the MA Programme Specification 2021/22 refers.

Examples of Assignment Type allocation and funding

Example	Assignment Type	Funding
Apprentice has completed MA Construction Building and then wishes to undertake MA Construction Technical within 3 years	New Start	Full funding aligned to age group when starting the new MA framework
Apprentice has completed MA at SCQF 6+ and remains with same employer then wishes to undertake an SCQF level 5	Not eligible as Apprentice has achieved higher level MA	Not eligible as Apprentice has achieved higher level MA
Apprentice has completed SCQF L5 Administration prior to their 20 th birthday and then wishes to start SCQF L6 Administration after their 20 th birthday	Progression	Funding will be the progression funding of £350. (20-24 L6 £1,200 less 20-24 L5 £850)
Apprentice has completed SCQF L5 Hospitality and then wishes to start SCQF L7 Hospitality Supervision & Leadership	New Start	Full funding
Apprentice has completed SCQF L7 Hospitality Supervision & Leadership and then wishes to start SCQF L8 Hospitality Technical Apprenticeship	New Start	Full funding
Apprentice has completed SCQF L5 Construction Operations and then wishes to undertake SCQF L5 Plant Operations	Not eligible as only one pathway within a framework is fundable	Not eligible as only one pathway within a framework is fundable
Apprentice has partially completed SCQF L6 and is re-entered at SCQF L5 within 3 years	Re-entrant	No deduction to funding
Apprentice has completed Construction Management awards at SCQF levels 8 and/or 11 and then wishes to undertake Management Modern Apprenticeships at SCQF level 7, 9 or 11	Not eligible as Apprentice has gained the required qualifications to work within the construction industry	n/a

Apprentice re-enters the same MA framework, within 3 years of leaving the previous assignment, and has moved from 16-19 to 20-24 age category	Re-entrant	The balance of funding from the previous age group will be applied
Apprentice has partially completed Light Vehicle Maintenance pathway and re-enters within 3 years to Heavy Vehicle Maintenance.	Re-entrant	Milestones and the value from the previous assignment will be removed.
Apprentice achieved or partially achieved MA greater than 3 years from the start date of the new assignment	New Start	Full Funding
As of 1st of April 21 - Apprentice has completed MA Digital Applications and then wishes to undertake MA Digital Marketing or Business and Administration at the same SCQF level within 3 years	Not eligible.	Not eligible

Q1.2 When did MA Specification paragraph 2.4.4 (Customer Service MA framework) come into effect?

A1.2 As of the 1st of April 21 Apprentices who are working in retail or hospitality sectors are not eligible to start the Customer Service framework either as a New Start or Re-entrant.

Q1.3 If a Participant discloses a disability or care experience after they have started on the MA Programme can a Provider claim the enhanced funding retrospectively?

A1.3 No. The 16 -19 contribution rate will not be back dated retrospectively to when the Apprentice started on their MA. Enhanced Funding rate will start from the date when the approved Appendix 4 is uploaded onto FIPS. That is what we mean by pro-rata.

Enhanced Funding will only apply to those Apprentices that meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the MA Specification and appendix 4. The process on how to apply for Enhanced funding has changed for 20/21. It's a new form and a new process.

Enhanced funding will now apply to:

New Starts;

Existing Apprentices (Apprentices who have started their MA see example below);

Progressions.

Provider must complete the new Appendix 4 and follow the new process outlined in Appendix 4 and in the MA Specification.

Example;

Existing trainees (Apprentices in training) -Where the Apprentice self discloses to their provider that they have a disability and/or care experience when they have started their MA (for example this could range from 1 month into their apprenticeship or two years into the apprenticeship) The provider must ensure that the Apprentice completes the self-disclosure part on appendix 4. The provider must identify and detail the type of

support they will put in place to help the Apprentice achieve and sustain their apprenticeship and complete Appendix 4.

The provider must follow the new process as detailed in Appendix 4 and in the MA Specification and once the form has been approved by the Equalities Team and the approved form has been uploaded to FIPS the contribution rate will change and start on the date that the approved form has been uploaded on to FIPS.

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. Further information is detailed in the MA Specification section 2.9 and in the **Enhanced Funding Guidance**.

Q1.4 What is the definition of care experienced for accessing the enhanced funding?

A1.4 The term care experienced refers to anyone who has been or is currently; in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short.

In care means you are or were formally looked after by a local authority, in the family home (with support from social services or a social worker) or elsewhere, for example, in foster care, residential/secure care, or kinship care (with family friends or relatives).

Q1.5 Have there been any changes to the process for claiming the Enhanced Funding Contribution (EFC)for 22/23?

A1.5 No. The process has not changed for the contract year 22/23.

Q1.6 Have there been any changes to Appendix 4 – EFC form for 22/23?

A1.6 Yes, the form has been reviewed and updated with new text for 22/23. For details on how to complete the Appendix 4 EFC Form please refer to the MA Specification and the **Enhanced Funding Guidance**.

Q1.6 Has there been a change to the travel and subsistence policy for 21/22?

A1.6 No. Providers must follow the process detailed in the MA Specification 2.8 Providers must make claims for reimbursement within two accounting periods of the actual journey or accommodation being taken. The travel and lodging claim form is available from **macontracts@sds.co.uk** as it is no longer an appendix within the MA Programme Specification.

Q1.7 What is ATP?

A1.7 ATP is The Apprentice Transition Plan service. This is additional support for Apprentices for whom their employment status has changed on or after 1 April 2021, because of redundancy.

To be eligible to receive the ATP Service, the redundancy must be for the following reasons only:

- The employer has ceased, or intends to cease, continuing the business, or
- The requirements for employees to perform work of a specific type, or to conduct it at the location in which they are employed, has ceased, or diminished, or are expected to do so.

For more information, please refer to the **SDS web page**

2. Policies, procedures and systems

Q2.1 What is the difference between mandatory and exemplar documents?

A2.1 All documents, forms and processes are mandatory unless they expressly state that they are exemplars. Any proposed changes to a mandatory document require official dispensation via the dispensation process, any changes to exemplar documents can be approved by the SIA with an accompanying email as long as the document meets the minimum requirements outlined in the MA Programme specification for 2021/22. For further clarification please refer to Condition 15.1 of the MA Programme Conditions.

Q2.2 In what format are the MA documents published?

A2.2 Some of the documents are published as editable pdfs. We have removed all security from the editable pdf documents for 21/22. This allows Providers to combine documents together and to convert documents to Microsoft Word on their own. As such, we will not be providing Word versions of editable pdf documents for 21/22. Providers must ensure that no information is edited, removed, or added to the mandatory documents.

Some of the documents are published as word documents due to the complexity of the content required

Q2.3. Are there any resources we can access to get help and support with self-assessment and the delivery of the MA programme?

A2.3 Yes, you will find a range of good resources to support quality delivery and continuous improvement on our **Work based learning Quality assurance and improvement hub**. The Hub includes access to 20 e-learning modules, case studies, effective practice, tips from other providers, delivery guidance and analysis reports from our formal quality assurance activity. You can also find out about Provider events that are coming up.

We also have resources on our insightQ system to support providers with completion of their self-assessment and quality action plan. This includes an excellent recorded webinar recently delivered by our partners at mesma. This includes some great insights, hints and tips gathered working with hundreds of providers to help providers ensure that self-assessment has the greatest impact for learners. For further information about CPD resources please email **ProgrammeEnhancementNTP@sds.co.uk**

Q2.4 What does SDS mean by “signature”?

A2.4 SDS has updated the detailed information on signatures in paragraph 3.9 of the MA Programme Specification. If you are unable to provide signatures as detailed in the MA Specification you can apply the COVID interim measures for signatures as outlined **here**.

Q2.5 If I use an editable pdf form does this mean they can be filled in electronically rather than handwritten?

A2.5 Yes, you can fill in the forms electronically. Dependent on the technology you use as part of your business, you may need to print them off to obtain the relevant signatures required as part of the MA Programme Contract (e.g. some software packages ‘lock down’ the text boxes as soon as any signature field has been saved to ensure that the document cannot be edited further once it has been signed). Please refer to your software package for more information on how to sign documents/forms.

You also have the option of printing a blank form for filling in by hand. All the SDS documents and forms need to be signed as applicable. Please see paragraph 3.9 of the MA Programme Specification further information on signatures.

Q2.6 Is there a facility to spell check editable pdf forms?

A2.6 Yes. There is a spell check function accessed through “check spelling” in the “Edit” option on the tool bar at the top of the screen. Providers should be accessing the forms using Adobe reader <https://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/> which can be downloaded for free from this link.

Q2.7 Why do some of the tick boxes not show up on the forms when I open them from the SDS website?

A2.7 If the forms are opened on an internet browser, they do not always show the full functionality that is available. Providers should be accessing the forms using Adobe reader <https://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/> which can be downloaded for free from this link.

3. MA Eligibility

Q3.1 What is the criteria for main employment and business premises?

A3.1 The employer must have a physical location in Scotland, and this must be where the Apprentice is based.

Q3.2 Can an Apprentice work outside Scotland during their MA programme?

A3.2 Modern Apprenticeships have been developed by Scottish Government to support and enhance the Scottish labour market. To this end it is the location of employment that is the essential criteria for eligibility rather than the domicile of the Apprentice. Paragraph 4.1.1 of the MA Programme Specification for 21/22 refers.

We understand there are instances where Apprentices occasionally work outside Scotland. For example;

- Modern Apprentices may work outside of Scotland as part of their programme for a period of time
- Oil and Gas Apprentices work offshore in international waters in their 3rd and 4th Years
- Modern Apprentices attend induction, training courses and work-based events outside of Scotland

These examples do not constitute a change to the Apprentices main employment and normal working premises.

Q3.3 Is an individual who is employed by an agency eligible for the MA Programme?

A3.3. No. Please see Paragraph 4.1.1 of the MA Programme Specification 21/22.

Q3.4 Is an individual who is currently in education eligible for the MA Programme?

A3.4 To avoid double funding, an individual is not eligible for the MA Programme if they are in any, employment, education, training, or enterprise programme funded by any UK or Scottish Government department or by us.

As of the 1st of April, 21 An individual is not eligible for the MA Programmes if they are enrolled in education at university, further education college or school, participating in Pathway, Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships, Community Jobs Scotland, or Kickstart. We have several data sharing agreements in place which allow us to undertake sample checks of eligibility.

Q3.5 I have received an application from a 15 year old and want to know if they are able to leave school. What is the statutory school leaving age that applies in Scotland?

A3.5 The official statutory school leaving dates for Scotland only are:

Statutory summer school leaver date -31st May

If an individual's birthday is on or between 1st March to 30th September, they are a statutory summer leaver.

Statutory winter school leaver date is 23rd of December or at the start of the winter holidays in that school year depending on each local authority area.

If an individual's birthday is on or between 1st October and end of February, they are a statutory winter leaver.

If a birthday is out with these dates, they are **not eligible** to start a Modern Apprenticeship prior to those school leaving dates detailed above.

Further information on official school leaving dates for Scotland can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school>.

Q3.6 Would residents outwith Scotland be eligible for MAs in Scotland?

A3.6 SDS MA funding is for individuals who are contractually based and work in Scotland for the duration of their apprenticeship. Further information on employing an apprentice out with Scotland can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/employing-an-apprentice/get-funding>

4. MA Programme entry

Q4.1 I know that it is mandatory to enter the Apprentice's email address in FIPS, what do Providers do if the Apprentice does not have an email address?

A4.1 If the Apprentice does not have a personal email address then the Provider must assist the Apprentice to set one up. The email address must be unique, current, and active.

Q4.2 What do you mean by "unique" email address?

A4.2 Employer Representative email address.

This will be the up to date email address that is available exclusively to those Employer personnel who are authorised to access/process the information exchanged through that address.

General email address such as **info@admin.co.uk** or **admin@sds.co.uk** or **manager@abc.co.uk** can only be used provided all personnel who access/process information exchanged through that email address are **authorised by the Apprentice.**

Apprentice email address

This will be the up to date email address for all communication between SDS and the Apprentice, that the Apprentice has provided.

We would remind you of your information security obligations and details of how personal data will be used which are set out in **Appendix 4 of the MA Conditions** and the **MA Privacy notice**

Q4.3 Have there been any changes to the Training Agreement (TA) from 1st April 2022?

A4.3 NO

Q4.5 Can I make a claim for an individual who has a temporary NI Number auto generated by FIPS?

A4.5 No, if the Apprentice is assigned an auto-generated, temporary NI Number via FIPS, you will be unable to make milestone claims on that Assignment until their formal NI Number has been updated on FIPS. We are aware that there are currently some delays for a small number of individuals applying for an NI Number due to the Coronavirus pandemic

Q4.6 Have there been any changes to the Equality Monitoring Form for 22/23?

A.4.6 NO

Q4.7 Some of my Apprentices have received a letter from SDS. What is in the letter that SDS send to new Apprentices?

A4.7 SDS send an automatically generated welcome letter to all confirmed MA Apprentices from FIPS. The letter welcomes them to the MA Programme, emphasises the importance of the validation process and signposts them to apprenticeships.scot for further information on fair work practices (e.g. wage rates for Apprentices and the national minimum wage). We would encourage Providers to inform Apprentices that they will receive this welcome letter as part of their induction.

Q4.8 In some of the documentation you refer to the “Employer” and in others the “Employer representative”, what is the difference?

A4.8 The “Employer” is the name of the organisation that employs the Apprentice. The “Employer representative” is the name of the person that is acting on behalf of the Employer. Best practice is that the “Employer representative” is someone who has a supervisory role with the MA e.g. line manager, buddy, mentor.

Q4.9 If the Provider is also the employer do you require a signature in both places?

A4.9 Where the Provider is also the employer, SDS require a signature in both places on the Training Agreement as there are different undertakings for each role. For Apprentice Progress Reviews, SDS expect to see a signature in both places but in exceptional cases, if it is the same individual, only one signature would suffice for payment assurance purposes. Best practice is that the “employer representative” signature would be someone who has a supervisory role with the MA and the “Provider” signature would be someone involved in the training element of the MA.

Q4.10 Why do Apprentices and Employers have to validate their email address once they have been entered to FIPS?

A4.10 SDS key performance levels require that email addresses of the apprentice and the apprentice's employer are entered and remain accurate at all times on FIPS. These must be in accordance with paragraph 4.2 of the MA Programme Specifications. To help support you with this we have introduced some improvements to FIPS, making use of latest technology to create an improved financial control environment which strengthens our payment process and data protection. More information can be found within the '[Information on the FIPS MA email validation process](#)' which is situated within the [FIPS Quick-Start Guides](#) Miscellaneous section on the SDS Provider web pages.

5. MA Apprentice Progress Reviews

Q5.1 Do all 3 parties (Apprentice, employer and provider) have to be present at the APR meeting and do all APRs need to be carried out face to face?

A5.1 For an effective high-quality review discussion to take place all 3 parties should have an opportunity to input. We understand that it is not always possible for all 3 parties to meet face to face at the same time in the required timescales.
If you are on a **SOAR Payment Plan** and the employer representative is unable to attend the review meeting, the employer representative can add their contribution and signature within 3 weeks following the review date.
If you are on a **QPR Payment Plan**, all signatures must be gained within the 6-week review window.

For more detailed information on the Apprentice Progress Review process please refer to the [APR SDS Exemplar Guidance](#) and the e- learning module. You can access this module by following the link the Quality Assurance Learning Management System [LMS](#).

Q5.2 Do APRs need to be carried out face to face?

A5.2 No, APRs do not need to be carried out face to face but you must ensure that all 3 parties are involved, engaged and contribute to the process, regardless of whether the review is completed remotely or in person

Q5.3 I am following a QPR Payment plan - When an apprentice achieves their MA, can I make a claim for reviews that have been missed in the past?

A5.3 No, if you have missed reviews whilst the apprentice was undertaking their apprenticeship, you cannot claim for these reviews on completion of their MA.

However, if an apprentice achieves their MA before their expected end date, you can claim for any future reviews that are yet to take place. Please see Part 4.1.1 of MA Specification.

6. MA Payment Plans

Q6.1 What is the purpose of Appendix 3 – Payment Plan Milestone Evidence?

A6.1 Appendix 3 is to assist Providers in identifying the correct payment plan and associated documentation requirements for each MA framework.

Q6.2 Has there been a change to the Payment Plan for Automotive framework and what paperwork do I need to use if I am delivering this framework?

A6.2 The Automotive Framework changed in 20/21 to the Summary of Achievement Record (SOAR) payment plan.

The SOAR is used to gather the evidence for the Automotive Framework and to support a claim for payment. It will detail the Apprentice progress against the ROP matrix in the payment plan. All the evidence requirements for the Automotive framework are set out in the payment plan. It must be signed by the subject assessor and the Apprentice.

For starts prior to 1 April 2020, Providers will continue to use their existing Records of Progress (ROP). SDS have provided a word version of a **ROP** for Providers to use.

There is a SOAR Exemplar available specifically for Automotive frameworks and a list of minimum requirements has been added to the MA Specification 21/22 should Providers wish to use their own.

For more detailed information please refer to the guidance on the SOAR and the Payment Plan for **Automotive and Bus Maintenance here**.

7. MA Programme Delivery – other (including exit)

Q7.1 Is there a time limit to an Apprentice's absence?

A7.1 No. This is dependent on the Employer's HR policies. Consideration of the Apprentice's absence must on a case by case basis and discussed with SDS. For more detailed information please refer to the MA Programme Specification paragraph 4.6

Q7.2 If an Apprentice changes employer do they need to exit from the MA Programme?

A7.2 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 certain conditions are met. See paragraph 4.7.2 of the MA Specification for further details.

Q7.3 Has there been a change to the FIPs Leaving Codes for 22/23?

A7.3 NO

Q7.4 If an Apprentice leaves the MA programme without completing, I sometimes struggle to find the most appropriate leaving codes, can you offer guidance?

A7.4 The MA leaving codes have been reviewed and updated for 21/22 to offer more clarity for providers and ensure consistency across the other programmes within the Apprenticeship family. We recognise that circumstances vary so we have provided

some examples below to illustrate the most appropriate options. If you are unsure of other codes, please contact your SIA in the first instance.

Reason	Main Leaving Code	Sub Leaving Code
Inactivity	Difficulties with Course/attendance	Not achieving in line with training plan
Paid off or terminated due to lack of work	Unemployed	End of Employment Contract
Change of job role	Difficulties with course	Course no longer relates to plans

Q7.5 Is a new Training Agreement required if there is a change of Awarding Body?

A7.5 If there is a change to the Apprentice’s Date of Birth or NI Number you must update the original TA. If there is a change to the Apprentice’s Start Date or Qualification (for MA Engineering framework only) you must ensure that a new TA is completed. If there is a change to the MA framework or Qualification (excluding those on the MA Engineering framework), the Apprentice must exit the programme. If there is a change to any other information in the TA (such as awarding body, email addresses or contact phone numbers for the Apprentice or employer representative or expected end dates), you do not need to update the TA or complete a new TA but you must ensure the changes are updated on FIPS and recorded at the Apprentice Progress Review.

If there is a change to the Provider and/or Employer this is treated as a transfer, see paragraph 4.7 of the MA Specification.

Q7.6 How do I update FIPS when the Apprentice has chosen a different Engineering pathway?

A7.6 Using the FIPS Change of Circumstance – Qualification process as outlined in the FIPS Quick Start Guide. As of 25 June 2022 the Change of Circumstance – Qualification process can only be used for changes to Engineering pathways. All other requests will be rejected. For those who have claimed a start payment through the Payment Model Pilot please note that the Change of Circumstance process cannot be used. For further information please see [Payment Model Pilot Guidance](#).

Q7.7 What do I do if an Apprentice and their Employer request a different MA framework?

A7.7 If there is a change to the Apprentices MA framework then the Apprentice will have to leave the programme and then be put through as a new start on the correct MA framework.

Q7.8 What do I do if the Apprentice has been entered into FIPS using the incorrect VQ reference number?

A7.8 As of 25 June 2022, if there is a change to the Apprentices qualification (excluding those on the MA Engineering framework) then the Apprentice will have to leave the programme and then be put through on the correct qualification as a new start or re-entrant (as defined in the MA Specification paragraph 2.3).

8. MA Conditions

Q8.1 Have any of the MA Conditions changed for 22/23?

A8.1 Yes, the Performance levels have changed for all the KPLs. There is new text added to the Records, Audit Access and General Assistance and Appendix 1,2 and 3. Please refer to the version history in the **MA Conditions** document for all the updates.

Q8.2 Who will issue Provider passwords in line with the MA Conditions Appendix 4 SDS Information Security Policy for NTP Providers?

A8.2 Passwords have been generated for all MA Providers and will be issued via your SIA.

Q8.3 I am unable to open/send/receive files encrypted using AES-256 as specified in the MA Conditions Appendix 4 SDS Information Security Policy for NTP Providers?

A8.3 You must use 7-zip to open these files. (Right click on the encrypted file, select 7-zip then open in archive you will be asked to insert your password). If you do not have 7-zip, you can download 7-zip for free from this link **<https://www.7-zip.org/>**. If this does not resolve the issue, please discuss this further with your SIA.

Q8.4 When can the paperwork be destroyed relating to an apprentice.

A8.4 You can only destroy the paperwork if it has been 3 years from the end of the contract schedule of the final claim made against that apprentice.

If you have tagged Apprentices for ESF you must adhere to and follow the instructions on ESF document retention as detailed in Appendix 7 – ESF Audit Requirements.

Please refer to the MA Conditions section 28 for further information.

Example.

An Apprentice who started in 17/18 contractual year (November 2017), on a 4-year apprenticeship. The claim for the final milestone is made in December 2021 (21/22 contractual year). The Provider would be required to retain all records for this Apprentice until end of March 2025.

9. Miscellaneous enquiries

Q9.1 What is the HMRC definition of an Apprentice in Scotland?

A9.1 HMRC have a data sharing agreement with SDS. For HMRC, with regard to national minimum wage, Apprentices in Scotland are considered to be Apprentices with effect from the date their full details are registered on SDS's Funding Information and Processing System (FIPS). Your attention is drawn to **Guidance on calculating the minimum wage from HMRC**. Please note that this guidance may be updated by HMRC from time to time, and you should periodically check the webpage for any updated information.

Q9.2 Have there been any changes made to Appendix 7 – ESF Audit requirements for 22/23?

A 9.2 Yes, Appendix 7 has been updated for 22/23. The SDS ESF team will contact Providers directly that this applies to and your Skills Investment Adviser is also kept informed of any changes to the evidence requirements for 22/23.

Q9.3 Where do I find the correct ESF Logos?

A9.3 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.

Q9.4 Does SDS fully fund the MA Programme?

A 9.4 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. This is a contribution rate and SDS does not fully fund the MA Programme. The contribution rate that SDS will pay towards each Modern Apprenticeship framework is outlined in **Appendix 1** to the MA Specification. Information on the approved **MA frameworks** can also be found on our SDS Provider Web Pages.

Q9.6 I have an Apprentice who will have to stop their MA due to maternity leave how do I record this on FIPS.

A9.6 Section 4.6 of the MA Specification - Temporary Interruptions to Training, gives you detailed information on the process for recording an Apprentice who is going on Maternity/Paternity leave. Also, there is a specific leaving code on FIPS for Maternity/Paternity Period. Information on the leaving codes is detailed in the MA Specification section 4.8.1. You must immediately update FIPS as soon as you are aware of this. For further information to support your apprentice on this please refer to the guidance available www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/equality-and-diversity/equality-guides-and-resources/

Q.9.7 I have an Apprentice under 22 who travels by bus to the college for off the job training. Can I continue to claim expenses for this apprentice?

A9.7 If the Apprentice has signed up for the government scheme and has been issued their NEC card you can't claim travel costs for this apprentice if they take the bus to college. The Scottish Government have now introduced a new initiative for all young people and children aged 5-21 years in Scotland where they can apply for a card to access the Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel Scheme, which began on 31 January 2022. You should ensure all your Apprentices are aware of this government scheme and encourage them all to apply.

Each Apprentice will need a National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot NEC with the valid free travel entitlement. For more information, please see www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/young-persons-free-bus-travel-scheme/

Q9.8 Where do you find out about employer recruitment incentives and can MA employers' access these?

A9.8 You can find out more information on employer recruitment incentives through Local Employability Partnerships and www.findbusinesssupport.gov.scot. Each recruitment incentive will have its own eligibility criteria.

Employer recruitment incentives are NOT recognised as an exclusion under section 4.1.4 of the MA Specification (*A proposed apprentice is not eligible to begin or continue a MA if at any time they are: - in any, employment, education, training, or enterprise programme funded by any UK or Scottish Government department or by us (subject to any exceptions published by us from time to time)*)

There is also information available to support employers on **OurSkillsForce** web page. For more information on employer incentives please contact the Employer Engagement team on **OurSkillsforce** webpage **support request form**.