Skills Development Scotland



SAAB | Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board

Modern Apprenticeship in The Water Industry at SCQF Level 5

Overview

This apprenticeship has been designed to support the development of apprentices working in the Water Industry, offering three pathways in specialist occupations:

- Drinking Water Supply
- Network Construction Operations (Water)
- Sewerage and Drainage Maintenance

The goal of this apprenticeship is to develop competence and the range of knowledge, experience and skills required to perform and deliver within the chosen pathway.

Duration

The expected completion time for this apprenticeship is 2 years.

Level

SCQF Level 5. More information on SCQF can be found **here**.

Qualification achieved

Apprentices will achieve one of the following qualifications:

- SVQ in Drinking Water Supply at SCQF Level 5 (GZSU 22)
- SVQ in Network Construction Operations (Water) at SCQF Level 5 (GC08 22)
- SVQ in Sewerage and Drainage Maintenance at SCQF Level 5 (GTIS 22)

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Introduction

Apprenticeships aim to provide a mixture of on-the-job (in the workplace) and off-the-job (through day or block-release) learning to enable people to develop the knowledge, skills and expertise required by businesses today.

Designed by employers to attract new talent, tackle critical skills shortages and develop existing workforces, apprenticeships can both help people to enter the world of work and develop the skills of those already in work

About Scottish Apprenticeships

Scottish Apprenticeships are for everyone and reflect the Government's commitment to promoting a world-class, inclusive, work-based learning system. They are administered by **Skills Development Scotland,** the National Skills Agency. Skills Development Scotland has a remit to contribute to the nation's economic growth and it does this by supporting individuals and businesses alike to develop and apply their skills in the workplace.

The Scottish Apprenticeship system focuses on three specific key elements:

- the **learning outcomes** aligned to the specific work situations of an apprentice's job;
- the **knowledge, skills and behaviours** that will be developed by apprentices, enabling them to work competently and confidently;

  and
- the **meta-skills** that will be developed by apprentices to help them to manage themselves, collaborate with others and interact with change.

Throughout their apprenticeship, apprentices will be supported and guided by their employer, mentor and learning provider, and will have their growing competence measured by an assessor to ensure they can perform their job to the standard required. On successful completion, apprentices will be awarded nationally recognised competence-based and/or professional qualifications in their chosen field.

About this standard and framework document

Working in partnership with businesses and stakeholders, this standard and framework document has been written to provide apprentices and employers with an overview of the key features of this apprenticeship.

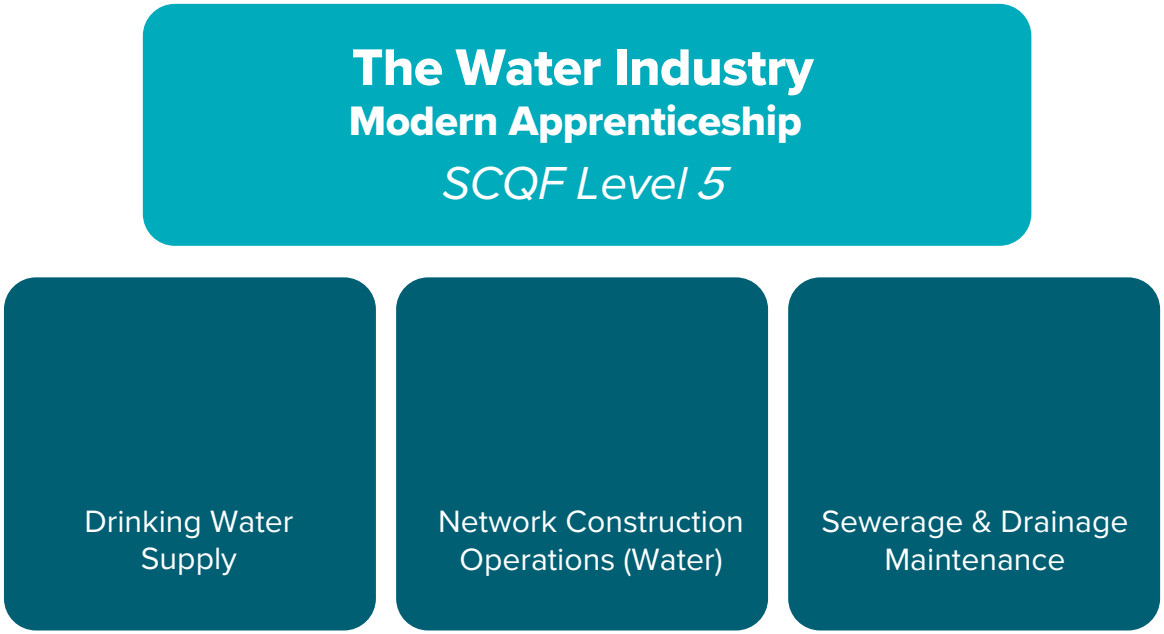
Find further information on apprenticeships here!

Apprenticeship Pathways

The Water Industry Pathways

This apprenticeship is designed to support apprentices within the Water Industry and contains three specialist occupational pathways in Drinking Water Supply, Network Construction Operations (Water) and Sewerage and Drainage Maintenance.

Each pathway will provide apprentices with the skills and knowledge required to become competent in their chosen job role and includes a balance of technical, business and interpersonal skills areas, designed to ensure apprentices have an appropriate set of skills to operate in today's water industry.



Click on the specialist pathway you would like to learn more about!

Drinking Water Supply

This apprenticeship is designed to support the development of individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in Drinking Water Supply roles in the Water Industry.

This pathway will provide apprentices with the skills and knowledge required to become competent in their chosen job role and includes a balance of technical, business and interpersonal skills areas, designed to ensure apprentices have an appropriate set of skills to operate competently in today's Water Industry.

Apprentices will be expected to achieve the following **core learning outcomes** by the end of their apprenticeship.

- Make sure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety
- Carry out valve operations on the drinking water distribution network
- Take samples and measurements for quality assurance purposes
- Set out, operate and remove signing, lighting and guarding for highway / roadway works

In addition, apprentices are expected to achieve **four** of the following **optional learning outcomes.**

- Confirm performance of specified parts of the distribution network
- Provide and maintain emergency drinking water supplies
- Respond to unplanned events in the water industry
- Cleanse water mains
- Disinfect water mains
- Communicate with customers in the utlities sector
- Collect and analyse data to identify water network issues
- Identify the location of water loss
- Prove the integrity of district metered areas on the distribution network
- Work with colleagues, suppliers, contractors and stakeholders in the utilities sector
- Work in an efficient and effective way in the utilities sector
- Ensure your own actions aim to protect the environment when working in the utilities sector

Drinking Water Supply

This apprenticeship is designed to develop apprentices' careers by developing their knowledge and understanding of their role, by increasing their skills and by enhancing their behaviours.

Employers across the sector have helped to identify the key knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices working in the Water Industry need to develop. Throughout their apprenticeship, apprentices should be regularly assessed to ensure they can demonstrate both know-how and ability in their chosen pathway, a high-level summary is provided below.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours below are common to the Drinking Water Supply pathway.

Knowledge

- Health, safety, environmental and regulatory requirements
- Risk assessment and safe working practices
- Drinking water quality, hygiene and contamination prevention requirements
- Drinking water distribution network operations and infrastructure
- Valve operations, network fittings and flow control principles
- Sampling, measurement and quality assurance requirements
- Worksite safety, traffic management and public safety requirements
- Communication, customer and organisational procedures

Skills

- Working safely and following approved procedures
- Carrying out valve operations on the distribution network
- Taking samples and measurements for quality assurance purposes
- Maintaining drinking water quality and hygiene standards
- Setting up and maintaining safe work areas and traffic management measures
- Collecting and recording operational information and data
- Carrying out drinking water distribution network activities
- Communicating and working effectively with customers, colleagues, stakeholders

Behaviours

- Safety conscious
- Professional
- Responsible
- Attentive to detail
- Reliable
- Collaborative
- Adaptable
- Customer-focused

Network Construction Operations (Water)

HOME

This apprenticeship is designed to support the development of individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in Network Construction Operation roles in the Water Industry.

This pathway will provide apprentices with the skills and knowledge required to become competent in their chosen job role and includes a balance of technical, business and interpersonal skills areas, designed to ensure apprentices have an appropriate set of skills to operate competently in today's Water Industry.

Apprentices will be expected to achieve the following **core learning outcomes** by the end of their apprenticeship.

- Work with colleagues, suppliers, contractors and stakeholders in the utilities sector
- Work in an efficient and effective way in the utilities sector
- Locate and avoid supply apparatus for utilities network construction
- Excavate and maintain excavations and trenches for utilities network construction
- Operate powered tools, equipment and small mobile plant for utilities network construction
- Maintain a safe and secure working environment in utilities network construction
- Set out, operate and remove signing, lighting and guarding for highway / roadway works
- Joint materials by mechanical means on water networks

In addition, apprentices are expected to achieve **three** of the following **optional learning outcomes.**

- Backfill and reinstate excavations, trenches and surfaces during utilities network construction operations
- Joint materials by electro-fusion processes
- Joint materials by butt fusion processes (up to 150mm nominal bore or 180mm polyethylene)
- Joint materials by butt fusion processes (between 150mm-300mm nominal bore or 180mm-315mm polyethylene)
- Joint materials by butt fusion processes (above 300mm nominal bore or 315mm polyethylene)
- Ensure your own actions aim to protect the environment when working in the utilities sector
- Prepare work areas and materials for water network activities
- Install pipes and fittings in water networks (up to 150mm nominal bore or 180mm polyethylene)
- Install pipes and fittings in water networks (between 150mm-300mm nominal bore or 180mm-315mm polyethylene)
- Install pipes and fittings in water networks (above 300mm nominal bore or 315mm polyethylene)
- Restore water network assets to operational condition
- Conduct hydrostatic pressure testing of water networks
- Install new domestic water services
- Install commercial water services
- Communicate with customers in the utilities sector

Network Construction Operations (Water)

HOME

This apprenticeship is designed to develop apprentices' careers by developing their knowledge and understanding of their role, by increasing their skills and by enhancing their behaviours.

Employers across the sector have helped to identify the key knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices working in the Water Industry need to develop. Throughout their apprenticeship, apprentices should be regularly assessed to ensure they can demonstrate both know-how and ability in their chosen pathway, a high-level summary is provided below.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours below are common to the Network Construction Operations (Water) pathway.

Knowledge

- Health, safety, environmental and environmental requirements
- Risk assessment and safe working practices
- Utility apparatus identification, location protection requirements
- Excavation, trenching and worksite safety requirements
- Plant, tools and equipment operating requirements
- Water network materials, components and jointing methods
- Water quality, hygiene and installation requirements

Skills

- Working safely and following approved procedures
- Locating and protecting utility apparatus
- Excavating and maintaining excavations and trenches
- Setting up and maintaining safe work areas and traffic management measures
- Operating powered tools, equipment and small plant
- Installing and jointing water network pipes and fittings
- Preparing materials and carrying out network construction activities
- Communicating and working effectively with colleagues and stakeholders

Behaviours

- Safety conscious
- Professional
- Responsible
- Attentive to detail
- Reliable
- Collaborative
- Adaptable
- Customer-focused

Sewerage & Drainage Maintenance

This apprenticeship is designed to support the development of individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in Sewerage Drainage Operations roles in the Water Industry.

This pathway will provide apprentices with the skills and knowledge required to become competent in their chosen job role and includes a balance of technical, business and interpersonal skills areas, designed to ensure apprentices have an appropriate set of skills to operate competently in today's Water Industry.

Apprentices will be expected to achieve the following **core learning outcomes** by the end of their apprenticeship.

- Restore sewerage or drainage assets to a serviceable condition
- Prepare and use high pressure jetting equipment for sewerage or drainage maintenance
- Maintain a safe and secure working environment in utilities network construction
- Work in an efficient and effective way in the utilities sector

In addition, apprentices are expected to achieve **one** of the following **optional learning outcomes.**

- Carry out inspection and operational maintenance on sewerage or drainage assets
- Carry out maintenance of sewerage pumping plant and equipment

Apprentices should also achieve t**wo additional optional learning outcomes**, allowing further development of skills and knowledge aligned to their job role, employer requirements and area of specialism.

- Monitor sewerage or drainage assets
- Work with colleagues, suppliers, contractors and stakeholders in the utilities sector
- Ensure your own actions aim to protect the environment when working in the utilities sector
- Mitigate risk in response to emergency events in the water industry
- Locate and avoid supply apparatus for utilities network construction
- Set out, operate and remove signing, lighting and guarding for highway / roadway works

Sewerage & Drainage Maintenance

HOME

This apprenticeship is designed to develop apprentices' careers by developing their knowledge and understanding of their role, by increasing their skills and by enhancing their behaviours.

Employers across the sector have helped to identify the key knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices working in the Water Industry need to develop. Throughout their apprenticeship, apprentices should be regularly assessed to ensure they can demonstrate both know-how and ability in their chosen pathway, a high-level summary is provided below.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours below are common to the Sewerage and Drainage Maintenance pathway.

Knowledge

- Health, safety, environmental and regulatory requirements
- Risk assessment and safe systems of work
- Sewerage and drainage asset types, systems and infrastructure
- Inspection, maintenance and fault identification requirements
- Plant, tools, equipment and high-pressure jetting operations
- Worksite safety, traffic management and public protection requirements
- Pollution prevention, waste management and environmental protection requirements
- Organisational procedures, reporting and communication requirements

Skills

- Working safely and following approved procedures
- Inspecting sewerage and drainage assets
- Restoring sewerage and drainage assets to serviceable condition
- Preparing and using high-pressure jetting equipment
- Identifying and reporting defect, faults and damage
- Using tools, plant and equipment for maintenance activities
- Recording and reporting work activities and outcomes
- Communicating and working effectively with colleagues and stakeholders

Behaviours

- Safety conscious
- Professional
- Responsible
- Attentive to detail
- Reliable
- Collaborative
- Adaptable
- Environmentally aware

Defining Meta-skills

Meta-skills are a key component of every Scottish apprenticeship framework. They sit alongside and complement occupational/technical knowledge, skills and behaviours. **As technology, society and the way we work change at an ever-increasing pace, so Meta-skills are the over-arching and future-focused attributes that enable other skills to be developed through consideration, reflection and implementation.** Meta-skills support improved performance and productivity in the workplace enabling greater adaptability and resilience to change. For apprentices, Meta-skills are a critical asset, supporting their ability to cope and excel in the face of change, to solve problems, to collaborate with others and to create successful futures.

Meta-skills are grouped into three complementary broad categories: self-management (focus, integrity, adapting initiative), social intelligence (communication, empathy, collaboration, leading), and innovation (curiosity, creativity, sense-making, critical thinking).



Meta-skills are developed by all apprentices and are consistently supported across every apprenticeship and quality assured against clearly set-out requirements as detailed in the Guidance for Meta-skills delivery in the Modern Apprenticeship Programme strengthening the credibility and readiness of apprentices, building their confidence, employability, and reinforcing the value of Meta-skills within the apprenticeship. The apprenticeship certificate formally recognises employer-endorsed Meta-skill development upon achievement of the apprenticeship.

Developing Meta-skills in The Water Industry

Self Management

A clear **Focus** is required during standby call-outs to swiftly resolve issues affecting the public's water supply; **Integrity** is essential when following the correct health and safety procedures. **Initiative** plays a key role in handling and sorting a problem when first encountering it to prevent jobs from escalating into major issues; and **Adaptability** is critical when new technology is introduced or systems change.

Social Intelligence

Clear and effective **Communicating** is vital when working with various contractors and colleagues, and assisting Project Managers with major infrastructure. **Collaboration** is essential for working with various internal teams, including Electricians and Fitters; strong **Interpersonal Awareness and Empathy** are required when showing empathy towards colleagues and supporting them during stressful situations, skills in **Leadership** are demonstrated through supporting new employees, leading them around site and providing on-the-job training to apprentices.

Innovation

Curiosity is important when looking into problems onsite to see if they can be resolved quickly; **Creativity** supports innovation when thinking of new ways to make tasks safer and discovering new things or easier ways to do tasks to help everyone. **Sense Making** is critical for for acting rationally and making sense of the situation; **Critical Thinking** underpins effective problem solving and noticing issues quickly, and is needed to come up with resolutions if simple fixes are not apparent.

Key roles and responsibilities

A number of different parties will be involved in the delivery, management and assessment of a successful apprenticeship. As well as the apprentice, key roles include employer, mentor, learning provider and assessor. Each has a specific set of responsibilities during the apprenticeship.

Apprentice Responsibilities

In their day-to-day roles, apprentices have the same responsibilities to their employer as any other employee but they have additional and specific responsibilities for their own learning and development too.

- Agreeing a learning/ development plan with all parties involved and following it through
- Committing to learning throughout the duration of apprenticeship
- Participating in progress meetings with employer and learning provider representatives
- Participating in off-the-job learning where required
- Reflecting on performance and on development of skills, knowledge and behaviours required of the role
- Agreeing new goals to progress learning with all parties involved

Employer Responsibilities

- Providing apprentices with a contract of employment, a job description and an induction Programme
- Paying apprentices in line with company policy, current legislation, fair work principles, and equality and diversity expectations
- Ensuring a working environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment
- Agreeing learning needs and a learning and development plan with the learning provider and apprentices including
    - agreeing when off-the-job learning will be required and releasing apprentices for this as required
    - making on-the-job learning arrangements
    - identifying additional support requirements and agreeing actions to implement these
- Providing a quality work-based learning environment for apprentices, including the facilities and training necessary to demonstrate competence and succeed in the apprenticeship
- Providing the support of a mentor, who has relevant industry experience and is familiar with the employer's business, to support apprentices' development
- Contributing to the ongoing assessment of occupational competence, including observing performance, verifying evidence and profiling meta-skills
- Meeting with apprentices and learning providers to review apprentices' progress and set future goals
- Providing an environment that supports apprentices to take responsibility for their own learning and development
- Supporting and encouraging apprentices during their apprenticeship
- Recognising the achievements of apprentices in career management and progression
- Providing constructive feedback to the learning provider on the quality of their service delivery to inform continuous improvement of both the Scottish Apprenticeships system and apprentices themselves

Key roles and responsibilities

Mentor Responsibilities

- Helping new apprentices orientate into the workplace
- Providing information, advice and guidance relating to the learning and assessment aspects of the apprenticeship
- Supporting apprentices to define Meta-skills in their shared work context
- Working with apprentices, employers and learning providers to ensure problems are resolved quickly
- Acting as an expert witness for apprentices
- Providing support to apprentices as they adjust to the workplace and progress in their career

Learning Provider Responsibilities

- Providing an appropriate apprenticeship programme for apprentices and employers
- Agreeing the learning needs of the apprentices with both the apprentice and the employer
- Agreeing when off-the-job learning will be required and defining roles and responsibilities for this with relevant parties
- Ensuring apprentices have access to the best quality learning opportunities available
- Ensuring apprentices and employers fully understand the principles and processes of competence-based assessment
- Registering apprentices through MA Online and with relevant awarding bodies, sector skills organisations and Skills Development Scotland as appropriate
- Compiling and agreeing learning and development plans and assessment plans with apprentices and employers
- Completing assessment records and submitting records and evidence for verification/moderation
- Reviewing apprentices' progress at regular intervals with the employer
- Supporting apprentices to develop their reflective practice
- Advising apprentices who to approach for support, advice and encouragement both within and outwith the workplace
- Seeking and providing feedback from and to employers and apprentices to inform continuous improvement of the Scottish Apprenticeships system and apprentices themselves

Assessor Responsibilities

- Meeting with apprentices, mentors and employers to plan learning and review progress
- Monitoring apprentices' progress against learning and development plans
- Observing and assessing apprentices in the workplace and judging whether their work meets the competence requirements set by the qualification awarding body
- Assessing different types of evidence from apprentices
- Providing constructive feedback on performance and offering suggestions for improvement
- Maintaining current knowledge of industry standards and seeking innovative new methods of work-based learning delivery

Before the apprenticeship starts

The recruitment of apprentices is primarily the responsibility of the employer and, before an apprenticeship starts, consideration should be given to entry requirements and also to ensuring that the workplace adheres to fair work, inclusion and diversity principles.

There are no specific academic entry requirements for the SCQF Level 5 Modern Apprenticeship. However, individuals should be able to demonstrate an interest in the Water Industry, a commitment to health, safety and environmental responsibility, and the motivation to learn and develop new skills. Apprentices should be able to work effectively both independently and as part of a team, demonstrate reliability, adaptability, problem-solving ability and customer focus, and be comfortable using digital technologies in the workplace. Where required by their role, apprentices may also be expected to undertake National Water Hygiene training and comply with any health screening requirements necessary to obtain an EUSR National Water Hygiene Card for working on operational water assets.

Being open to alternative assessment methods and relevant experience, instead of qualifications, can help to broaden the pool of potential applicants. Consideration should be given to the use of existing employability options to support recruitment. Examples of these are available here.

Employers should consider existing workplace skills and experiences, where apprentices are either changing careers or upskilling. Being open to alternative assessment methods and relevant experience, instead of qualifications, can help to broaden the pool of potential applicants.

Other routes to entry can include:

- Local employability services Local Employability Services in Scotland

Recognition of Prior Learning

Individuals applying for an apprenticeship will undergo selection be accepted for entry onto the programme based on the employer's existing HR processes. Learning providers should take account of this and liaise with employers to be accepted for entry onto the programme.

It is recommended that a flexible approach to RPL is adopted, on case-by-case basis, with all relevant experience as well as any previous qualifications considered. Learning providers should always consider how they can best recognise apprentices' prior learning to minimise repetition of content.

You can find more information on RPL **here**.

Apprenticeship agreement and employment status

All post-school apprentices must hold a contract of employment for the period of the apprenticeship.

In addition, an apprenticeship agreement, confirming the commitment of the employer, the apprentice and the learning provider to the agreed apprenticeship must be signed by all parties. This agreement forms part of the individual employment arrangements between the apprentice and the employer; and of the learning arrangements between the learning provider, the employer and the apprentice.

Registration and certification

Registration and certification of apprenticeships is undertaken through Modern Apprenticeship Online.

It is the responsibility of the learning provider to ensure that the registration of apprentices is completed within four weeks of the start of their apprenticeship.

Fair work, inclusion and diversity

The Scottish Apprenticeships system aims to embed fair work principles. Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's flagship policy for driving high quality and fair work across the labour market in Scotland by applying fair work criteria to grants, other funding and contracts being awarded by and across the public sector, where it is relevant to do so. Through this approach the Scottish Government is asking employers to adopt fair working practices, specifically:

- appropriate channels for effective voice, such as trade union recognition;
- investment in workforce development;
- no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts;
- action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace; and
- payment of at least the minimum Living Wage.

Further guidance on Fair Work First is available from here.

The design and development of Scottish Apprenticeships aims to embed these principles in practical ways by including opportunities for feedback from apprentices as well as the availability of clear pathways into future opportunities beyond the apprenticeship itself.

Protected characteristics
The Equality Act 2010 includes nine protected characteristics, which are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex and sexual orientation. It is against the law to discriminate based on these protected characteristics. Skills Development Scotland is a Corporate Parent and, to that end, includes 'care experienced' in a similar way to protected characteristics in all its funded programmes and services.

Attracting the best people into apprenticeships involves ensuring that barriers are removed. Receiving the right support at the right time unlocks the potential of people who could otherwise be denied the opportunity to go on and become valued employees. Supporting people to feel confident about disclosing their protected characteristics in a safe and respectful way allows employers and learning providers to put the right conditions in place to unlock that potential; the right time for this is often at the start of an apprenticeship or even at the recruitment stage. In practice, it might involve ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate apprentices, where that is possible and to help them make the most of their apprenticeship journey. Examples might include (but are not limited to supporting people with sensory impairments, supporting people for whom English is not their first language and supporting people who are care experienced (for example, through fostering, adoption or residential care.

Diversity in the Water Industry

The Water Industry serves diverse communities and depends on attracting talent from all backgrounds. While progress is being made, women remain significantly under-represented in many operational, engineering and technical roles. Barriers to participation and progression can also be experienced by disabled people, neurodivergent people, care-experienced individuals, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with caring responsibilities and others who may face disadvantage in accessing employment and learning opportunities.

Water Industry Apprenticeships are committed to creating inclusive, accessible and welcoming pathways into skilled careers. Employers and training providers should ensure that recruitment, learning and workplace experiences are free from discrimination and actively support the diverse needs of apprentices. This includes making reasonable adjustments where required and fostering environments where everyone is treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

By widening participation and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, the water industry can challenge occupational stereotypes, attract a broader range of talent, strengthen innovation and better reflect the communities it serves, helping to build a skilled and sustainable workforce for the future.

Employers and training providers should ensure that recruitment, learning and workplace experiences are free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and support the diverse needs of apprentices. This includes adopting inclusive recruitment practices and drawing on resources such as Skills Development Scotland's Inclusive Recruitment Guides to identify and remove potential barriers to participation.

Available Support for Apprentices

Everyone needs support from time to time. There are a number of readily available resources that can be accessed during the apprenticeship.

Mental wellbeing support for apprentices

Work can contribute positively to mental wellbeing by providing things such as friendships, meaningful activity and learning opportunities. However, sometimes work brings pressures which can either create or add to problems with mental health. When experiencing difficulties with mental health, work can sometimes feel like an additional pressure even if there are no direct issues at work. When working towards an apprenticeship, the challenges of combining studying for a qualification alongside work may at times add to those pressures. Skills Development Scotland, working in partnership with Penumbra, have developed a number of resources that aim to support apprentices in seeking help for mental health difficulties. More information is available from

https://www.apprenticeships.scot/become-an-apprentice/mentalhealth-resource

Fair working conditions

Working conditions should always be fair. Fair work is work that offers all individuals an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect. Find out more about fair work while you're working as an apprentice in Scotland from

https://www.apprenticeships.scot/support-during-apprenticeship/fairworking

Disability support

The Equality Act 2010 protects disabled people. Employers, colleges, universities or learning providers:

- Cannot treat an apprentice less favourably than others for any reason connected to a disability
- Must make reasonable adjustments to make sure apprentices are not seriously disadvantaged during the course

More information on the sources of disability support that is available to apprentices is available from

https://www.apprenticeships.scot/support-duringapprenticeship/disability-support

Money and funding

Apprenticeships allow an apprentice to work for an employer and earn a wage. More information on money or funding is available at

https://www.apprenticeships.scot/support-during-apprenticeship/money-and-funding

Support for care-experienced apprentices

Support is available for care-experienced apprentices. More information including insights from apprentices who have experience of the care system is available from

https://www.apprenticeships.scot/support-during

During the apprenticeship

Once the apprenticeship starts, there are a number of key considerations, tasks and milestones that apprentices, employers, learning providers, mentors and assessors should undertake to optimise a successful outcome for all parties.

Work-based Learning

Work-based learning – aligned to and assessed against both the **learning outcomes** and the **knowledge**, **skills and behaviours** of the apprenticeship – is the central and most significant component of an apprenticeship and is based on apprentices' real-life experiences in the workplace. Work-based learning is a partnership between apprentice, employer and learning provider and all apprentices must have the support of a mentor in the workplace.

Get more information on work-based learning here.

Meta-skills Development

This apprenticeship provides opportunities to develop Meta-skills. To effectively develop the Meta-skills outlined earlier, apprentices must first understand what they are and how they might apply them in their role. This will allow apprentices to consider their own Meta-skills and which ones they might need to develop or apply to perform well in the workplace. Setting development goals, action planning and regularly reflecting on progress will help apprentices to develop their Meta-skills. Naturally occurring opportunities to discuss and reflect on Meta-skills might include induction, performance reviews and career development sessions.

Delivery of Training

The majority of training undertaken in any apprenticeship is focused on skills developed in the workplace. However, in some apprenticeships there is a requirement for elements of structured formal taught learning/training to be delivered outside the normal workplace, for example, in a college or training centre which might include classroom and or development of skills in a workshop. We often describe this as "off-the-job" training.

There is no mandatory requirement for off-the-job formal taught learning in this apprenticeship, however, some employers may choose to deliver elements of training in a college or training centre to enhance the quality of the learning experience for their apprentices.

An initial assessment and learning plan should be developed at the outset with input from the apprentice, employer and the learning provider, to identify any additional needs and provide apprentices with the appropriate support or adaptations required to successfully complete their apprenticeship.

Approaches to Assessment

Apprentices are expected to provide evidence of meeting the learning outcomes and the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of this apprenticeship; also, evidence to demonstrate that they are competent in the workplace. It is important for apprentices to recognise how they have developed skills and understanding along the way, and where these still need to be developed.

Holistic Assessment
The holistic approach allows larger pieces of work to evidence a number of learning outcomes, rather than a piecemeal process of finding separate evidence for each outcome and/or its associated knowledge, skills and behaviours. Work-based projects or problem-based activities often provide the richest opportunities for holistic assessment. Assessment of the common learning outcomes will be done in parallel with assessment of technical skills.

Assessment should be undertaken both in a controlled environment and through work related activity depending on what is being assessed, however most assessment should take place in the workplace.

Quality assurance

Skills Development Scotland is responsible for making sure all funded learning is of high quality and benefits the apprentice. A quality assurance framework is in place to cover the delivery of work-based learning in an apprenticeship and is designed to demonstrate how effectively learning providers and employers support this by ensuring apprentices:

- Receive appropriate support and guidance to enable them to become successful apprentices and confident individuals;
- Receive quality learning and develop their skills to achieve their learning goals;
- Are treated with dignity and respect in a way that promotes equality and inclusion; and
- Work towards successful outcomes, leading to future employment or further appropriate career progression.

The relevant awarding and accreditation bodies will undertake the quality assurance of the assessment of competence-based and professional qualifications.

Assessment methods	Guidance
Evidence of prior learning	Previous course/qualification assessment and certification should be made available.
Multiple choice/short answer questions - online or paper-based	Completed at a centre or remotely. If delivered remotely online invigilation must be in place.
Observations via physical or virtual tests	Practical assessment and any oral reasoning. Virtual visits can help with evidencing infrequent or unseasonal activities.
Personal statements	Evidence of an apprentice's activities and progress, could be demonstrated via online blog which is kept up to date during the apprenticeship.
Portfolio of evidence	Photographs, videos, case studies.
Presentation	A brief oral presentation on a specific and relevant topic. This could be followed by oral questioning.
Product evidence	The output of Apprentice performance.
Professional discussion	A structured conversation between the Assessor and Apprentice, where the candidate is an active participant rather than simply responding to questions.
Realistic simulation via scenarios and/ or questionnaires	Where the achievement of valid and reliable assessment calls for evidence of performance under workplace conditions, but where it will be difficult and/or unsafe to assess through normal working practice.
Reflective account	An accurate description by the candidate of work they carried out (linked to performance evidence where possible) and/or their knowledge.
Witness testimony	From line managers and relevant others.

Qualification Requirements

Competence-based qualification

Through their apprenticeship, apprentices must complete one of the following qualifications.

- SVQ in Drinking Water Supply at SCQF Level 5 (GZSU 22)
- SVQ in Network Construction Operations (Water) at SCQF Level 5 (GCO8 22)
- SVQ in Sewerage and Drainage Maintenance at SCQF Level 5 (GTIS 22)

This qualification brings together the development and assessment of all the learning outcomes and knowledge, skills and behaviours required of the role in a single qualification. It includes Meta-skills development and assessment, which are integrated with technical skills.

Other awards, qualifications or training programmes

There are no mandatory enhancements within this apprenticeship.

Optional outcomes

To continue the development of apprentices there is an opportunity to continue with their learning journey and assist development within the current role or preparation for other roles and encouragement should be given to supporting that development.

- Modern Apprenticeship in The Water Industry at SCQF Level 6
- National Progression Award - An Introduction to Water Operations at SCQF Level 5
- National Progression Award - Water Operations at SCQF Level 6
- Emergency First Aid at Work at SCQF Level 6
- RQF Level 2 Award in working in low risk confined spaces
- RQF Level 2 Award in working in medium risk confined spaces
- RQF Level 2 Award in working in high risk confined spaces
- SHEA Water Passport Course
- National Water Hygiene Course
- Water Skills Mains Connections Course
- Registration and Operation against Lloyds Register Water Industry Registration Scheme (WIRS)

Core Skills

Core Skills are broad transferable skills, which can be used in addition to Meta-skills, to help apprentices learn how to manage and adapt how they respond to a changing society.

The five Core Skills are: Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Problem Solving and Working with Others.

Core Skills at SCQF Level 4 are embedded within this Framework therefore no separate certification is necessary.

At the end of the apprenticeship

Pathways and Progression

A successfully completed apprenticeship, including the achievement of competence-based and professional qualifications, opens the door to a number of opportunities for progression in both work and further learning.

Career advancement

The Water Industry Modern Apprenticeships provide clear and flexible progression opportunities, enabling apprentices to develop occupational competence, progress into increasingly responsible roles and continue their professional development throughout their careers. The frameworks have been designed to support both immediate workplace competence and long-term career advancement within Scotland's water industry.

SCQF Level 5 Modern Apprenticeship

This apprenticeship is designed for roles within water distribution and sewer networks that require practical skills in operating and maintaining network assets, interpreting network information, responding to incidents, and protecting water quality and the environment. Success also depends on strong health and safety awareness, problem solving, teamwork and effective communication with customers and colleagues.

Typical career opportunities may include:

- Network Service Operator roles
- Leakage Network Service Operator roles
- Repair and Maintenance Operations roles in both water supply and sewer network
- Technical Support and Specialist roles
- Operational Team Coach and Leader development opportunities

Further study

Options for those wishing to pursue further professional learning and development include:

- Further vocational qualifications and specialist training relevant to role including HNC in Water Operations

Professional Registration

Institute of Water: Membership offers UK water professionals, regardless of qualifications, experience, discipline or department, opportunities to broaden their knowledge, widen their network and develop within the sector.

Society for the Environment (SocEnv): Meets criteria for Entry-Level Environmentalist (ELEnv) application.

On completion of the apprenticeship individuals become eligible to apply for ELEnv, confirming that the necessary requirements have been met. To gain this status, applicants must also be a member of a professional body licensed by the SocEnv.

ELEnv is awarded for up to a maximum of three years, during which registrants are expected to progress, supported by their professional body, to a competency registration (REnvTech, REnvP, or CEnv).

Information & Guidance: The Water Industry - Modern Apprenticeship - SocEnv

Amendments

Version Number	Date	Description
Version 1	Approved at AAG 01/10/2026	New version of apprenticeship