



PRIORY
APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeship off-the-job training

Frequently Asked Questions

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DEFINITION OF OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

The definition of 'off-the-job training' is set out in the ESFA apprenticeship funding rules and is reproduced below:-

“Off-the-job training is a statutory requirement for an English apprenticeship. It is training which is received by the apprentice, during the apprentice’s normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the approved apprenticeship referenced in the apprenticeship agreement. By normal working hours we mean paid hours excluding overtime.

“It is not on-the-job training which is training received by the apprentice for the sole purpose of enabling the apprentice to perform the work for which they have been employed. By this we mean training that does not specifically link to the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship.”

Q&A

1 “Why must off-the-job training be conducted during the apprentice’s normal working hours?”

An apprenticeship is a work-based programme. The training is required to help the apprentice become fully occupationally competent in the workplace. Therefore, it is reasonable that the apprenticeship should be delivered during the apprentice’s normal working hours. It is not appropriate, and would be unfair, to expect an apprentice to undertake the apprenticeship in their own time, in addition to their job role.

If training must, by exception, take place outside of the apprentice’s normal working hours, e.g. in an evening or at a weekend for an apprentice that normally works Monday to Friday between 9-5, we would expect this to be recognised, for example through time off in lieu or by an additional payment to the apprentice.

Illustrative Example:

Sarah is undertaking an apprenticeship in professional accounting. Her training provider informs her of a lecture taking place on Wednesday evening; this will cover some of the knowledge that is fundamental to the apprenticeship standard that she is working towards. The lecture is taking place outside of Sarah’s core hours of Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Sarah’s training provider contacts her employer and they agree that if Sarah attends the two hour lecture on Wednesday evening, she can leave two hours early on Friday to make up the time.

2 *“Why is overtime excluded from the definition of off-the-job training?”*

Overtime, by its very nature, is unplanned as it is often related to the pressure requirements of the business e.g. peak periods. It would therefore be difficult to plan a training programme on this basis and the expectation must be that the apprentice can complete their apprenticeship, including all the required off-the-job training, within their normal working hours. In short duration apprenticeships, including overtime would also increase the amount of off-the-job training to be delivered.

3 *“What does the following mean ... ‘It is not on-the-job training... for the sole purpose of enabling the apprentice to perform the work for which they have been employed?’”*

It is reasonable to expect that some individuals might require training, in addition to their apprenticeship, to enable them to perform particular aspects of their job role, especially if they are new to the job role. However, training for knowledge, skills and behaviours that are not covered in the apprenticeship standard must not be included as off-the-job training.

For example: an apprentice baker, following the advanced baker standard, might need to understand the equipment, machinery and process limitations within their organisation and also how to maintain and repair the machinery which they use. The maintenance and repair of the machinery is not listed within the advanced baker standard, it is a requirement of the employer (i.e. it is training that is exclusively (solely) needed to perform the job). Therefore maintenance and repair is not off-the-job training and should not be included in the off-the-job training calculation.

4 *“Why must an apprenticeship teach **new** knowledge, skills and behaviours?”*

Off-the-job training is about upskilling an individual to reach full occupational competency, not accrediting their existing skills. If it is not new learning (i.e. the apprentice already has the knowledge, skills and behaviours at the required level), then it is not off-the-job training. Instead, it is prior learning.

5 *“What can be included in off-the-job training?”*

The apprenticeship funding rules state that off-the-job training can include the following:

“The teaching of theory (for example: lectures, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning or manufacturer training),

“Practical training: shadowing, mentoring, industry visits and participation in competitions,

“Learning support and time spent writing assessments / assignments.”

Q&A

6 *“Why is learning support included as off-the-job training?”*

The ESFA is committed to ensuring that the apprenticeship programme is open and available to all individuals. This means making sure that the right level of support is available, to remove barriers to education and training, so that learners can make the most of their potential. To be successful, learners may need a range of approaches and support, which should be targeted appropriately. As well as material assistance, such as physical adjustments or access to accessibility software, some apprentices may benefit from additional time, revision classes or personal support from their training provider, to help them to stay on track and to achieve specific knowledge, skills and behaviours. It is appropriate that these additional inputs are recognised.

Additional funding may be available when learning needs are identified and further guidance can be found in the apprenticeship funding rules.

7 *“Why is the time spent on assignments included in the off-the-job training definition?”*

New knowledge, skills and behaviours can be learnt and developed through individual or group assignments. For example, an apprentice may learn new theoretical material in a classroom environment. They may then be asked to produce an analytical / reflective assignment to consider how the theoretical knowledge applies to their workplace. They are therefore continuing to learn through this process.

8 *“If it is unclear whether an activity is off-the-job training is there an easy way to check?”*

Yes, there are four key tests:

- Is the person signed up to the apprenticeship programme?
- Is the activity directly relevant to the apprenticeship?
- Is the activity teaching new knowledge, skills and behaviours?
- Is the learning taking place in the apprentice’s normal working hours?

If the answer to all four questions is ‘yes’ then the activity can be regarded as off-the-job training.

9 *“Can research, networking events and seminars be included as off-the-job training? What about shadowing others and time spent in the supply chain?”*

Yes, these can be included but only if the activity is imparting new learning to the individual, which will help them to achieve the required knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in their apprenticeship.

10 *“If health and safety training is included in the apprenticeship, but it is also a company / statutory requirement for all employees, is it off-the-job training?”*

Yes, this can be included but only if the activity is imparting new learning to the individual, which will help them achieve the required knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in their apprenticeship. It is irrelevant that non-apprentices are also completing the same health and safety training in the workplace.

Illustrative Example:

Lisa is an engineering apprentice. She has weekly training on how to use a particular piece of equipment. This forms part of the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for her apprenticeship and so counts as off-the-job training.

Lisa works with Dave who is a fully qualified engineer. As this particular piece of equipment is new, Dave is also receiving the same training. The fact that Dave is receiving the same training as Lisa is irrelevant; the training is part of Lisa's apprenticeship.

11 *“Can an employer induction program count towards off-the-job training e.g. manual handling, conflict resolution and corporate induction?”*

Yes, but again it can only be included if the activity is imparting new learning to the individual, which will help them achieve the required knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in their apprenticeship.

A generic company induction, which might include a tour of the office and picking up a building pass, will not be relevant. However, inductions can sometimes include an educational element that will provide some generic skills that are core to the apprenticeship. This would count as off-the-job training.

Important note: the apprentice must be engaged on the apprenticeship programme for any learning to be included as off-the-job training; an employer induction can often happen at the beginning of employment and this may be prior to the individual's enrolment on the apprenticeship programme.

12 *“Can reflective learning and self-evaluation type activities be included?”*

Off-the-job training must be about gaining new skills. If the reflective learning and self-evaluation is imparting new knowledge, skills and behaviours, this would be relevant. However, if it is being used as a temperature or progress check then no, this would not be off-the-job training.

13 *“Can a live environment be used for off-the-job training?”*

Off-the-job training must be separate from the productive / normal day-job. However, this is not to say that a live environment isn't sometimes required in order to check transferability of knowledge. For example, it would be difficult for an apprentice in a retail / customer service environment to practice skills without customers or an apprentice bus driver to develop their skills without any interaction with passengers.

A live environment should not be used for all off-the-job training as essentially this means the apprentice is performing productive work and isn't being released from their job role. Learning in a live environment can only count as off-the-job training while the individual is learning new knowledge, skills and behaviours; once they have these skills, it is no longer off-the-job training.

14 *“What must be excluded from off-the-job training?”*

The apprenticeship funding rules state that off-the-job training does not include:

“Training to acquire knowledge, skills and behaviours that are not required in the standard or framework;

“Progress reviews or on-programme assessment required for an apprenticeship framework or standard,

“Training which takes place outside the apprentice’s normal working hours, or

“English and maths (up to level 2) which is funded separately.”

Q&A

15 *“Why is “training to acquire knowledge, skills and behaviours that are not required in the standard or framework.”.... excluded from the definition?”*

Off-the-job training must teach new knowledge, skills and behaviours that will contribute to the successful achievement of an apprenticeship. Whilst the individual might receive other training, if it is not directly relevant to the apprenticeship then it should not be included in the off-the-job calculation and apprenticeship funding must not be used.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours listed in the apprenticeship are those that the trailblazer groups, who designed the standards, have deemed that an individual requires, in order to be fully occupationally competent at the level of the apprenticeship.

16 *“Why are progress reviews and on-programme assessments excluded from the definition?”*

A progress review is the regular tripartite discussion that should take place between the employer, training provider and apprentice, to review the progress of the apprentice in relation to the planned programme of learning set out in the commitment statement.

An on-programme assessment is a periodic or modular assessment that might be required for a qualification that is being delivered as part of the programme.

Neither of these activities impart new learning to the apprentice and this is why both are excluded.

17 *“Why can’t training take place outside of the apprentice’s normal working hours?”*

An apprenticeship is a work-based programme. The training is required to help the apprentice to become fully occupationally competent in the workplace. Therefore, it is reasonable that the apprenticeship should be delivered during the apprentice’s normal working hours. It is not appropriate, and would be unfair, to expect an apprentice to undertake the apprenticeship in their own time, in addition to their job role.

If training must, by exception, take place outside of the apprentice’s normal working hours, e.g. in an evening or at a weekend for an apprentice that normally works Monday to Friday

between 9-5, we would expect this to be recognised, for example through time off in lieu or by an additional payment to the apprentice.

18 *“Is training that happens prior to enrolment excluded?”*

Yes, any training that takes place before the start of an apprenticeship cannot be included in the off-the-job calculation. However if it was relevant training (i.e. that would count towards the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship) then it should be recognised as prior learning and both the length of time needed on the programme and the price to the employer should be discounted. The funding band maximum is based upon the apprentice requiring the full training content of the apprenticeship.

19 *“Can English and maths (up to level 2) be included in the off-the-job training calculation if the apprenticeship specifically requires it?”*

Apprenticeships are designed to have sufficient stretch to require at least 20% off-the-job occupational training. They are designed on the basis that an apprentice already has the required levels of English and maths and therefore training for English and maths must be on top of the minimum 20% off-the-job training requirement.

English and maths is funded separately to off-the-job training. Also, it may not be required by all learners. It would be unfair if two learners received the same time away from their jobs but one of those learners used up a high percentage of this time studying English and maths, to the detriment of any occupational upskilling that their colleague was receiving.

Illustrative Example:

Zoe and Imran both have the same employer. They are working towards their level 3 dental laboratory assistant apprenticeship. Their training provider has agreed the same programme of off-the-job training for both apprentices with their employer, to teach them the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they will need to successfully achieve their apprenticeship.

Imran already has a GCSE in English and maths, but Zoe needs to pass level 2 qualifications in English and maths before she can take her end-point assessment.

Both apprentices spend equal amounts of time doing their off-the-job training, getting an equal opportunity to learn the core elements of their apprenticeship. Zoe studies for level 2 English and maths on top of this.

20 *“If an employer has identified training as essential for a specific job that the apprentice is doing, but the training is not outlined in the framework / standard, can it still be included as off-the-job training?”*

No, off-the-job training is the training required to complete the apprenticeship. Employees may well require other training to enable them to do their job effectively (see example in paragraph 3) but this isn't something that should be paid for using apprenticeship funding.

21 *“Does travel time for block release count as part of the 20% (e.g. if the apprentice travels the day before and is therefore not in work)?”*

No, 20% off-the-job training is about learning new skills. This can't be accomplished during periods of travel to and from a training provider.

WHY IS THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING SET AT 20%?

22 The apprenticeship funding rules state:

“To be eligible for government funding at least 20% of the apprentice’s normal working hours, over the planned duration of the training period within the apprenticeship (for standards this is called the practical period, which ends at the gateway for end-point assessment), must be spent on off-the-job training. Apprentices may need more than 20% off-the-job training.”

23 It should be noted that the 20% is the minimum amount of off-the-job training that should be delivered to an apprentice, over the time they are engaged on the programme. A higher delivery amount may be necessary to reach occupational competency.

Q&A

“Does the 20% off-the-job training requirement apply to all levels of apprenticeships?”

Yes, there is no differential based on the level of the programme. At levels 2, 3 and 4 some employers are arguably more accustomed to a day-release type of model, which equates broadly to the 20% minimum.

The eligibility criteria for the apprenticeship programme is the same regardless of level, i.e. that the individual requires significant upskilling to be occupational competent. Therefore the input of training, and how and when it is delivered, is also the same, regardless of the level of apprenticeship.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

OVERVIEW

- 24 An initial assessment is necessary for all apprentices before the apprenticeship starts. The purpose of the initial assessment is to establish eligibility, both of the apprentice and of the programme, to check alignment of the job role with the proposed training and to assess the starting point of the individual. The initial assessment should be documented on the commitment statement.
- 25 The commitment statement is the tripartite agreement between the employer, the training provider and the apprentice which documents the commitment of each party to the apprenticeship; it also details the planned training programme.

ESTABLISHING ELIGIBILITY

- 26 The initial recipient of the apprenticeship funding (a main provider or employer-provider) is responsible for establishing learner and programme eligibility and keeping the associated evidence in the learner pack. Full eligibility criteria can be found in the apprenticeship funding rules.
 - 26.1 Learner eligibility criteria includes age and residency conditions.
 - 26.2 Programme eligibility criteria includes confirmation that the apprenticeship is the most appropriate programme; that the job pays a lawful wage and allows the individual the opportunity to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours; that the training programme meets the minimum training duration and off-the-job criteria; and confirmation that the apprentice is not contributing towards the cost of the apprenticeship.

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE JOB ROLE WITH THE APPRENTICESHIP

- 27 This is important because if the apprentice is studying an apprenticeship at too low a level they will likely become bored with the content. Also, from a funding perspective, they may be ineligible if they do not require significant upskilling. Equally, if they are studying an apprenticeship at too high a level they may disengage from the programme as the content may not be relevant to their job role and / or may be too stretching.
- 28 An apprentice will spend up to 80% of their normal working hours in their productive job role and some of this time must be about consolidating the new knowledge, skills and behaviours, gained from off-the-job activities, so that they are fully occupationally competent at the end of the programme. If there is a mismatch between the apprenticeship and the job role this will be harder to achieve.

THE STARTING POINT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

- 29 The initial assessment must consider whether the individual already possesses any of the training content e.g. the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the apprenticeship. It is important to know the apprentice's starting point so that the training plan does not duplicate

prior learning and so that progress, which is the distance travelled once in training or the value added by the programme, can be measured.

- 30 The requirements of relevant apprenticeship framework or standard should be used as the basis for initial assessment.
- 31 It is useful to ask a number of questions when assessing the starting point of the individual:-
- What is the goal / What is the apprentice trying to achieve?
 - Where are they currently against this goal?
 - How much of the content in the apprenticeship programme is new to them?
 - Do they require significant new learning?
 - Do they meet the eligibility criteria?
(This is particularly important for existing staff who are starting any apprenticeship aligned with their current job role).

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

- 32 The apprenticeship funding rules state:

“Funds must not be used to pay for training for skills, knowledge and behaviours already attained by the apprentice. We may take action to recover apprenticeship funding where this happens.

“You must account for prior learning and experience when negotiating a price with an employer. You must reduce the content, duration and price, where the individual has prior learning necessary to achieve occupational competence.

“Where you account for prior learning and the reduction of content would mean the apprenticeship would take less than the minimum training duration to complete, or fail to meet the requirement for the apprentice to spend 20% of their time in off-the-job training, the apprenticeship is ineligible for funding.”

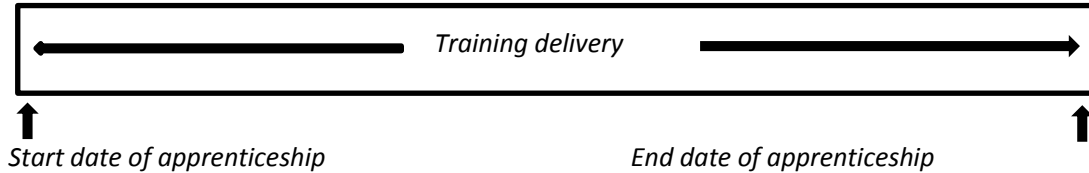
- 33 In recognising prior learning, the following should be considered against the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard, or the qualifications within an apprenticeship framework:
- 33.1 Work experience (this is particularly important where the apprentice is an existing employee);
- 33.2 Prior education, training or associated qualifications in a related sector subject area (this should not be limited to English and maths); and
- 33.3 Any previous apprenticeship undertaken.

CALCULATING OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

TIMEFRAME FOR THE CALCULATION

Apprenticeship frameworks

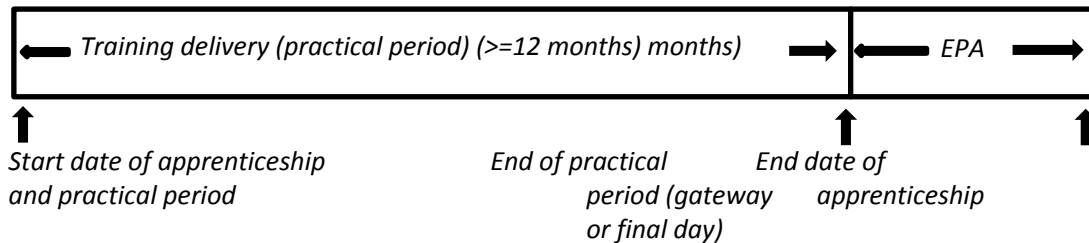
Figure a: Apprenticeship frameworks



- 34 In the framework model shown above (figure a), the entire apprenticeship is about the delivery of new knowledge, skills and behaviours, in the form of qualifications. Therefore the relevant timeframe, for the calculation of off-the-job training, is the entire apprenticeship. At least 20% of the apprentice's time, from the start date of the apprenticeship to the planned end date of the apprenticeship, should be spent on off-the-job training.

Apprenticeship standards

Figure b: Apprenticeship standards



- 35 In the apprenticeship standard model shown above (figure b), the full apprenticeship is split into two distinct parts: the practical period and the end-point assessment.
- 36 The practical period is the training delivery period, where new knowledge, skills and behaviours are delivered by a training provider.
- 37 The end-point assessment period is where the training delivered within the practical period is independently assessed by an end-point assessment organisation.
- 38 The meeting point between these two distinct parts - the end of the practical period and the beginning of the end-point assessment period - is generally known as the gateway. (Note: legally the last day of the practical period is called the 'final day').
- 39 Therefore, the relevant timeframe within a standard, for the calculation of off-the-job training, is the practical period only, which begins at the start of the apprenticeship and finishes at the planned final day / gateway. The end-point assessment period should not be

included in the off-the-job calculation as new learning is not delivered in this part of the apprenticeship.

40 *“If the apprentice fails end-point assessment, and has to undertake some further training, does this count towards the minimum 20% off-the-job training?”*

If the apprentice has reached gateway, in order to take the end-point assessment, then they should already have achieved the minimum 20% off-the-job training requirement. However, if further training is required, this can still be regarded as off-the-job training and can be funded (funding band permitting). However it should not be included in the 20% calculation as this should already have been met.

RECOGNISING ANNUAL LEAVE

41 The apprenticeship funding rules state:

When calculating the required amount of off-the-job training, the apprentice’s statutory leave entitlement should be deducted. Employees who work a 5-day week receive at least 28 days paid annual holiday (this is the statutory leave entitlement referred to in this paragraph and is the equivalent of 5.6 weeks of holiday). You should pro-rata this for part time workers. It should be clear to all parties how you have worked out the amount of off-the-job training required and you must record this in the evidence pack.”

THE CALCULATION

42 The 20% off-the-job requirement is based on the apprentice’s normal working hours, over the planned duration of the training period of the apprenticeship (for standards this is called the practical period). By normal working hours we mean paid hours excluding overtime. Off-the-job training is measured over the course of the full apprenticeship (as opposed to an academic year) and excludes end-point assessment for standards.

43 Each apprenticeship has a recommended ‘typical’ duration. This is an estimate of how long the apprenticeship should take to deliver if the apprentice requires all of the training content.

44 The minimum duration of each apprenticeship is based on the apprentice working at least 30 hours a week, including any off-the-job training they undertake. If the apprentice works fewer than 30 hours a week, the duration should be extended using the formula in the apprenticeship funding rules.

45 If, as part of the initial assessment and eligibility check, there is prior learning to consider, this should be discounted and the remaining learning must still meet the minimum 20% off-the-job training and the minimum duration rules.

46 In Annex A there are some helpful example calculations which show how the off-the-job training hours can be calculated for full-time and part-time apprentices, who need both the full apprenticeship content and a reduced programme of learning (after prior learning has been recognised).

- 47 The ESFA will monitor where actual and planned end dates are significantly different for a number of apprentices at any one training provider. This may indicate an issue with the initial assessment process and the setting of planned end dates. Planned end dates should take into account individual circumstances.

Q&A

- 48 *“If an individual completes their modules earlier than the planned duration i.e. a level 4 24 month planned duration but the apprentice completes all modules in 18 months, is this acceptable to the ESFA?”*

Yes, if the apprentice has, for whatever reason, been able to complete in a quicker timescale, then so long as: a) the full content of the commitment statement has been delivered and b) the minimum training duration threshold of 12 months has passed then this is acceptable. The implication is that either the apprentice is a ‘fast learner’ or more than 20% has been delivered to the individual over a shorter timeframe.

- 49 The commitment statement sets out the tripartite agreement being made between the training provider, the employer and the apprentice and records key details of the apprenticeship, including the training content to be delivered. It is a working document and should be amended during the apprenticeship as required.
- 50 All planned off-the-job training must be recorded on the commitment statement. It is important that this training is quantified so that a check can be made as to whether there is sufficient content to establish eligibility for apprenticeship funding.
- 51 It is also important that all three parties are in agreement as to the content and timescales of the programme.

WHEN SHOULD OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING TAKE PLACE?

“If planned off-the-job training is unable to take place as scheduled, you (training provider) and the employer must ensure this is re-arranged so that the full complement of training set out in the commitment statement can still be delivered. All off-the-job training must take place during normal working hours.

“Apprentices may choose to spend additional time on training outside of these hours, but this must not be required to complete the apprenticeship and must not be included in the 20% calculation.”

Q&A

- 52 *“Why must all off-the-job training, including where it has been re-arranged, take place during normal working hours?”*

An apprenticeship is a work-based programme. The training is required to help the apprentice become fully occupationally competent in the workplace. Therefore, it is reasonable that the apprenticeship should be delivered during the apprentice’s normal working hours. It is not

appropriate, and would be unfair, to expect an apprentice to undertake the apprenticeship in their own time, in addition to their job role.

The delivery of the apprenticeship content is flexible. It is up to the employer and the training provider to decide at what point during the apprenticeship the training is best delivered. This could be a proportion every day, one day a week throughout, one week out of every five or some other variation. This will depend on what is best for the organisation and the apprentice.

Illustrative Example:

Joe is undertaking an apprenticeship to become a creative venue technician. He attends college for one day per week. This time covers some of his off-the-job training and meets his English and maths requirements.

In addition to this time, Joe's training provider agrees with his employer that he is given 5 hours per week to complete course work, assignments and online learning activities. These activities are flexible and take place when Joe and his line manager agree, on a weekly basis, they will be least disruptive to Joe's day-to-day role. Joe also has one-to-one sessions once a quarter with his mentor. This time ensures that the all of the necessary off-the-job training is delivered, in addition to Joe's English and maths training requirements.

53 *"If an apprentice chooses to undertake training in their own time can this be included in the minimum 20% off-the-job training requirement?"*

No, we recognise that some apprentices may want to undertake study or training outside of their normal working hours for their own personal reasons. However training undertaken outside of these hours cannot be counted towards meeting the 20% requirement.

Extra work can sometimes be the difference between a pass and a distinction, but the final decision for doing any additional study must rest with the apprentice. There must be no pressure or expectation that the apprentice will undertake training in their own time to complete the apprenticeship.

WHERE SHOULD OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING TAKE PLACE?

- 54 As set out in the apprenticeship funding rules, off-the-job training can take place at an employer's workplace or off-site (e.g. in a classroom or from home via distance learning). It can even take place at the apprentice's normal workstation. It is the activity, rather than the location, that determines whether the training meets the definition set out in the apprenticeship funding rules.

Here are some examples of compliant delivery models:



One retail training provider has a programme of training that is not suited to the classroom as it includes till-work and visual merchandising. Therefore they deliver off-the-job training at the employer's premises (but away from the apprentice's day-to-day duties), using the employer's environment to develop the relevant practical skills.



One automotive training provider provides off-the-job training at the employer's workplace as the equipment that they need is specialised and not available anywhere else. While the apprentice is receiving off-the-job training they are not doing productive work for their employer.



Many construction training providers deliver training off-site as the environment is safer. They provide appropriate and relevant tools, resources and support to develop the apprentice's skills before they are applied in the workplace. This model allows more time, more intense direction and support and the opportunity for the apprentice to learn outside of the commercial constraints of the employer.

DELIVERY MODELS

- 55 It is up to the training provider and the employer to decide how the off-the-job training is delivered. The delivery model should be discussed and agreed at the start of the apprenticeship and should take note of the type of activities that can and cannot be included as off-the-job training.
- 56 As individuals have different learning preferences, good off-the-job training could have more than one delivery method (e.g. a combination of face-to-face delivering, on-line learning, mentoring).
- 57 "Can off-the-job training be delivered via distance learning?"

Yes, ESFA recognises two types of distance learning:

- Self-directed distance learning (where the apprentice is working on their own with no real-time support); and

- Interactive online learning (virtual classrooms where the learner is able to receive support, in real time, from their training provider).

Off-the-job training can be delivered using both methodologies. However, an apprenticeship must not solely be delivered by self-directed distance learning. This would make for a poor learning experience for the apprentice, as the learning is not supported in real-time by the training provider and there is no opportunity to give or receive feedback on progress.

Illustrative Example

Ayo is employed as an apprentice software development technician. The majority of his job is desk-based at his computer. He has a suite of on-demand learning available to him, including high-quality videos, animations, quizzes, case studies and external resources. This is also supported by face-to-face learning at his training provider.

Ayo's employer likes that they can track his progress on-line. He learns at his own pace and has the flexibility to use quieter work periods to access his distance learning. Ayo's distance learning is automatically recorded, so his training provider can also monitor progress and evidence his training.

Illustrative Example:

Sarah is an apprentice solicitor and some of her apprenticeship is delivered by online distance learning. She attends a two day tailored induction at her university every year and attends university for two days per term to consolidate learning and assess progress. She also participates in a dedicated weekly virtual forum with her peers, where she can share experiences and discuss project work.

She has been assigned a work based trainer who provides support and observes her working practices, which informs her academic learning and assessment processes.