

Written 20 May 2020

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME RESPONSE

Guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations in response to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19).

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response?utm_source=df7cee49-94a8-491e-bb5d-1ff1066c2886&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

The Government states this is a difficult time for apprentices, employers and providers of apprenticeship training, assessment and external assurance. The government is committed to supporting apprentices, and employers continue to build the skills capabilities the country needs now and in the future.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responding by taking steps to ensure that, wherever possible, apprentices can continue and complete their apprenticeship, despite any break they need to take as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), and to support providers during this challenging time.

The support they are providing includes:

- / supporting employers, providers, and apprentices to work together to mutually agree where and how this training takes place. This includes in the workplace where a provider is able to do so safely and where that workplace meets new 'coronavirus secure' guidelines on ensuring the workplace is safe
- / confirming flexibilities to allow furloughed apprentices to continue their training and to take their end-point assessment, and to allow existing furloughed employees to start a new apprenticeship, as long as it does not provide services to or generate revenue for their employer
- / encouraging training providers to deliver training to apprentices remotely, and via e-learning, as far as is practicable
- / allowing the modification of end-point assessment arrangements, including remote assessments wherever practicable and possible - this is in order to support employers, providers and end-point assessment organisation (EPAOs) to maintain progress and achievement for apprentices
- / clarifying that apprentices ready for assessment, but who cannot be assessed due to coronavirus issues, can have their end-point assessment rescheduled
- / apprentices whose gateway is delayed can have an extension to the assessment time frame
- / enabling employers and training providers to report and initiate a break in learning, where the interruption to learning due to coronavirus is greater than 4 weeks

- / confirming that, where apprentices are made redundant, it is the ambition to find them alternative employment and continue their apprenticeship as quickly as possible and within 12 weeks
- / confirming that where apprentices are made redundant and are ready to go through gateway, that providers and EPAOs are able to make the necessary assessment arrangements to support these apprentices
- / confirming that they are extending the transition period onto the apprenticeship service. Funds available for new starts on non-levy procured contracts can now be used until 31 March 2021. All starts will be through the apprenticeship service from 1 April 2021

The Government are keeping the developing situation, and guidance, under review and will continue updating this guidance as new information is available and/or the situation evolves.

The information should be read alongside the government's COVID-19 guidance and support for businesses, in particular the salary support for furloughed employees, which also applies to apprentices.

They have also broken down some of this guidance into articles for employers, training providers and EPAOs, as well as articles for apprentices. These can be found on the Apprenticeship Service Help page.

Employers, training providers and EPAOs: <https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb>

Apprentices: <https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/sections/360003798540-Apprentice>

Read guidance from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) on the delivery of assessment here: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/response-to-covid-19/>