

Apprenticeship Programme Guidance 2027

Degree Apprenticeships



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. One of Medr's Strategic Aims is to 'create a flexible and joined-up tertiary system where everyone can acquire the skills and knowledge they need for a changing economy and society'. We have committed to deliver apprenticeship provision that responds to the Welsh Government's skills priorities and meets the needs of learners, employers, and the economy. This is grounded in our strategic duty to contribute to the development of a sustainable and innovative economy in Wales.
- 1.2. The new Apprenticeship Programme commences on 1 August 2027 and will be funded through grant arrangements with recipients (referred to as "providers") throughout the Medr documentation suite identified through an application and assessment process. This new approach aligns with Medr's funding arrangements for all other tertiary provision, supporting our aim for a more joined-up and coherent sector.
- 1.3. This programme guidance outlines the aims and objectives of the programme but allows providers to decide how best to deliver the programme to meet the learners' needs. The programme design, and implementation through a grant funding model, is intended to balance stability with flexibility, allowing the programme to respond to changing priorities whilst maintaining continuity for learners and employers.

Grant award approach

- 1.4. There are three strands within the Apprenticeship Programme for which grant awards will be made:
 - Apprenticeship Programme, including Shared Apprenticeships (delivery of frameworks leading to regulated qualifications at levels 2-5);
 - Degree Apprenticeships (delivery of frameworks leading to degrees at level 6 awarded by universities);
 - Supported apprenticeships (all levels).
- 1.5. Initial grant awards will be for a period of four years. Minor changes may be made to the programme guidance during the first four years to respond to changing circumstances. If providers continue to meet the programme's grant conditions and continue to be compliant with the requirements of Medr's regulatory framework, they will continue to receive funding following the initial award.
- 1.6. There will be a formal review of the programme at the four year point which may lead to programme changes. It will also be an opportunity for further providers to apply and receive grant funding under the programme, subject to programme conditions and budget availability.
- 1.7. This document provides information and guidance for learning providers delivering the Degree Apprenticeship strand. It should be read in conjunction with the Grant Application documentation, and [Medr's regulatory framework for tertiary providers](#) and the [conditions of grant and funding](#).
- 1.8. Separate guidance documents are available for the Apprenticeship Programme (delivery of frameworks leading to regulated qualifications at levels 2-5) and Supported Apprenticeships.

Degree Apprenticeships (delivery of frameworks leading to degrees at level 6 awarded by universities)

- 1.9. Degree apprenticeships are an integrated programme of learning and training resulting in an apprenticeship and degree level qualification demonstrating the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers in Wales recognise and value. Degree apprenticeships in Wales, therefore, include an integrated bachelor's degree qualification as part of the requirement of an Apprenticeship Framework.
- 1.10. Degree apprenticeship delivery is led by universities, as they are responsible as the degree-awarding body for the qualification which is the central element of the programme at this level. Medr encourages a collaborative approach between universities and other tertiary education providers in the delivery of degree apprenticeships, building on the current delivery models. Collaborative provision can reach a wider range of learners, support more pathways and extend the geographical reach of provision.
- 1.11. Applicants are expected to apply to deliver provision on a regional basis with partners and employers. Applicants that submit proposals to work outside their region will need to make a clear case to support this. That case will need support from the employers, together with evidence that the providers in the region were unable to meet the employer and apprentice needs. Any approval will be on an exceptional basis.

2. The Apprenticeship Programme

- 2.1. *“A Welsh apprenticeship is paid employment with training. Apprentices earn a wage, gain experience, learn new skills, and gain industry-recognised qualifications and competence (from level 2 up to degree level). The learning is defined through an apprenticeship framework.”*
- 2.2. An apprenticeship is delivered as a partnership between the provider, the employer, and the learner.
- 2.3. Our vision is for an Apprenticeship Programme that:
- Is inclusive for all learners.
 - Expands opportunities for learners to undertake part or all of their apprenticeship in Welsh.
 - Is flexible and agile, with clear expectations of outcomes rather than rigid processes, enabling providers to innovate and achieve positive results through meaningful accountability.
 - Delivers high-quality provision and positive outcomes for learners and employers.
 - Meets the needs of the economy and supports changing skills demands.
 - Promotes strong learner engagement and participation.
 - Offers coherent pathways and progression routes across the tertiary sector, enabling learners to follow a path that works for them.
 - Achieves parity of esteem between vocational and academic pathways, supporting a fully integrated tertiary education and training system.

High-level principles

- 2.4. The Apprenticeship Programme is underpinned by the following high-level principles:
- Provides an all-age programme for individuals aged 16 and above.
 - Delivers high-quality apprenticeships from Level 2 to Level 6.
 - Responds to changing skills demands across the economy and regional skills needs.
 - Responds to the Welsh Government’s skills priorities, including emerging technologies and green skills.
 - Meets the needs of learners and supports their progression through the tertiary education system and into and throughout their chosen careers.
 - Is agile and responsive, ensuring that the right qualifications and skills are delivered to meet the needs of employers, learners and the economy.
 - Delivers inclusive apprenticeships which are accessible to learners from a range of backgrounds including those with protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage.
 - Increases opportunities for all apprentices to develop, maintain and use their Welsh language skills throughout their training and employment, equipping them to contribute to an increasingly bilingual workforce.
 - Offers high-quality provision that strengthens learner attainment and improves outcomes.

Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022

- 2.5. The commencement of the apprenticeship provisions in Part 4 and Section 104 (financial support for apprenticeships) of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 (TER(W)) is due to transfer relevant functions to Medr in August 2027.
- 2.6. Welsh Ministers are developing a new Specification of Requirements for Approved Welsh Apprenticeships under section 115 of TER (W). The Requirements will replace the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales (SASW) and will be in place on 1 August 2027.
- 2.7. Prior to final policy decisions, the Welsh Government will be consulting on the new Requirements in the Autumn 2026. The Requirements will maximise flexibility for the delivery of apprenticeships within a clear statutory framework. They will specify what must be included in an Apprenticeship Framework for learners to undertake the learning pathway and be approved as completing a Welsh apprenticeship for the purposes of Part 4 of the Act.
- 2.8. Medr's design of the new Apprenticeship Programme reflects the greater flexibility expected under the new Requirements.

Apprenticeship Frameworks

- 2.9. An Apprenticeship Framework sets out the programme of learning and qualifications required to complete a Welsh apprenticeship. All pathways within a framework consist of:
- A competence and knowledge qualification or a combined qualification.
 - Essential Skills Wales qualifications (where required) in:
 - Communication
 - Application of number
 - Digital literacy
 - On and off the job training.
 - Other industry competency/standards requirements.
- 2.10. From August 2027, 18 sector frameworks will be available across Wales.
- 2.11. Degree apprenticeships are available in:
- Engineering.
 - Manufacturing.
 - Construction and the built environment.
 - Digital.
- 2.12. Providers can formally request amendments to pathways/frameworks or propose the development of new frameworks on the apprenticeship framework library. This function will be live on 1 August 2027. Separate guidance on the new library and certification systems will be issued before the start of the programme.

Sector priorities and regional need

- 2.13. The programme must be able to respond to and meet regional economic and Welsh Government skills priorities, including responding to changing technologies and the need for green skills. The programme recognises that skills needs are continually evolving. Emerging technologies, demographic change, economic transition, decarbonisation and changing employer demand all require an apprenticeship system capable of adapting over time. Medr will continue to monitor demand for degree apprenticeships in other sectors.
- 2.14. Typically, provision should be delivered on a regional collaborative basis between a university, any other delivery partners and employers.

Medr's regulatory framework

- 2.15. Providers delivering the funded activity for the Apprenticeship Programme will be required to comply with Medr's regulatory framework and conditions of funding. Compliance monitoring will be through Medr's provider risk assurance process, which will be developed and implemented during 2026/27.
- 2.16. Further details of the requirements of the regulatory framework are set out on Medr's website.

Conditions:

[Financial Sustainability \(Initial and ongoing\)](#)

[Governance and Management \(Initial and ongoing\)](#)

[Quality and Continuous Improvement \(Initial and ongoing\)](#)

[Staff and Learner Welfare \(Initial and ongoing\)](#)

[Welsh Language \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Learner Protection \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Learner Engagement Code \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Equality of Opportunity \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Complaints Procedures \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Regard to Advice and Guidance \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Information, Assistance and Access \(Ongoing\)](#)

Engagement and Monitoring

- 2.17. In addition to the reporting requirements of Medr's regulatory framework, providers will be required to regularly engage with Medr, so that Medr can monitor the use of

grant funding and the delivery of funded activity against the programme aims, including:

- Programme demand and take up, including from individuals from a range of backgrounds and protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantages.
- Patterns of delivery in sector priority areas, and alignment with regional skills needs.
- Engagement with employers, including the effectiveness of increasing the number and breadth of employers recruiting apprentices.
- Quality of the learner experience and learner outcomes.
- Take up of Welsh medium opportunities.

2.18. The insights gained from this monitoring will be used to support providers to improve their individual performance against the expectations of the programme guidance and will be used to identify areas where changes may need to be made to the programme as a whole, including additional development activity led by Medr.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Provider

- To maintain compliance with Medr's conditions of funding and other requirements of Medr's regulatory framework.
- To ensure that all apprentices are compliant with the Apprenticeship Programme eligibility requirements.
- To deliver provision that is of good quality, as evaluated through Estyn inspections/QAA reviews (as appropriate).
- To help employers understand the investment required from them through employing an apprentice, including resources, time commitment, and requirements throughout the period of learning.
- To support employers with the recruitment of the apprentice.
- To provide the employer and learner with information about the structure of the apprenticeship and clear definition of roles and responsibilities between the provider, employer and learner.
- To undertake an initial assessment of the learner, as set out in paragraphs 4.3 – 4.4.
- To complete an effective induction of the apprentice, including completion of an apprenticeship learning agreement.
- To complete an effective induction for employers to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities and are informed as to the implications of these obligations.
- To undertake regular learning reviews, including learners' progression, what they have achieved to date, the further learning required, including readiness for assessments and how close they are to completion, to help employers and learners plan more effectively.
- To ensure all aspects of the funded provision are delivered in compliance with the framework requirements.
- To expand their employer network, particularly to include SMEs.
- To provide ongoing guidance and advice to the employer/apprentice throughout the duration of the apprenticeship, and to keep both parties informed of progress and fully involved in the programme delivery.
- To provide employers with mentoring, guidance and support in the recruitment, delivery, and outcomes processes to ensure a high-quality learner experience that leads to successful outcomes and sustained employment or self-employment.
- To provide learners with effective assessment, delivery, and support processes to enable successful outcomes not only in terms of qualification achievement but also in terms of career progression and learner wellbeing.
- To ensure that they have in place robust systems and processes to support and evidence compliance with all requirements of the programme as specified.
- To ensure that their provision is inclusive and accessible for learners from a range of backgrounds and with protected characteristics and to ensure that they actively encourage staff and learners to participate in any schemes and initiatives available to increase uptake, participation and success.
- To increase the number of ethnic minority people starting and completing apprenticeships, in line with the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP) and Employment and Skills 2024 review.

- To undertake equality impact assessments to understand the impact of processes and policies on all people with protected characteristics.
- To promote and celebrate the Apprenticeship Programme.
- To create an environment in which the Welsh language is actively promoted and encouraged across the training provider's activities, so that apprentices and staff can develop, maintain, and use their Welsh language skills in their day-to-day learning and work.
- To actively promote inclusive and accessible Welsh-medium apprenticeship opportunities and encourage staff and learners to participate in relevant schemes and initiatives that help increase demand for, and participation in, Welsh-medium training and assessment.
- To provide Medr, or a person authorised by Medr, with such information, assistance and access to the provider's facilities, systems and equipment as Medr may reasonably require to undertake its functions.
- (Shared apprenticeships only) It is the responsibility of the lead organisation/employer to pay the apprentices their wage and reclaim wages from the host employers.

3.2 The Employer

- To employ and, as a minimum, to pay the apprentice in accordance with National Minimum Wage requirements – for both off and on the job training.
- To ensure that the apprentice is allowed time to attend off the job training as appropriate.
- To ensure conformity with UK immigration law in respect of each of the apprentice's right to live and work in the UK and to keep records of the checks.
- To undertake legal responsibilities for the health and safety of the apprentice.
- To ensure conformity with equal opportunities legislation and good practice.
- To ensure that sufficient time and resources are made available for the apprentice to fulfil their learning and assessment needs, including to ensure that the apprentice attends work and training for at least sixteen hours per week.
- To support and actively contribute to the apprentice's learning and delivery of the Apprenticeship Programme.
- To ensure that the apprentice has access to an appropriate named mentor within the organisation who will act as the nominated point of contact during the programme.
- To actively contribute to and promote the ongoing development of the Medr Apprenticeship Programme employer toolkit.
- To work with providers in meeting their obligation to take all reasonable steps to promote and encourage the use of Welsh, and increase demand for, and participation in, Welsh-medium training and assessment where available, so that apprentices can develop, maintain, and use their Welsh language skills in practice.

3.3 The Learner

- To apply themselves to their learning and assessment by attending courses and other on or off the job learning events, being prepared for assessment, and actively participating in the planning and reviewing of their programme. .

- To take responsibility for their own learning and development.
- To behave in a considerate and responsible manner, with due regard to their own and others' equality of opportunity and to the health and safety of others and themselves in the working and learning environment
- To work for the employer to the best of their ability and in accordance with the employer's policies and procedures.
- To engage positively with opportunities, where available, to develop, maintain, and use their Welsh language skills as part of their training and employment, recognising the benefits this brings to an increasingly bilingual workforce in Wales.

4. Key programme elements

Welsh Apprenticeship Agreement

- 4.1. A learner must have a Welsh Apprenticeship Agreement which sets out in writing the terms and conditions of their learning with the provider and employer before, or at the point at which, the learner starts the Apprenticeship Framework.
- 4.2. The learner must be notified prior to any changes being made to the Welsh Apprenticeship Agreement, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Induction and learning assessment

- 4.3. Providers will be required to work with the learner and the employer to undertake and document a robust induction and assessment process for all learners and to produce an Individual Learning Plan, tailored to the individual and employer needs. This assessment should be available in the learner's language of choice of either Welsh or English.
- 4.4. While providers can devise their own assessment process and documentation, this must include consideration of:
 - Effective assessment, delivery, and support processes to enable successful outcomes, not only in terms of qualification achievement, but also in terms of career progression, including preparation for self-employment, where appropriate.
 - Identification of any potential barriers to learning and additional support requirements, including any Additional Learning Needs.
 - Relevant recognised prior learning (RPL).
 - An assessment of Welsh language skills and plan for how provision and delivery can take all reasonable steps to offer opportunities to develop, maintain and use the learner's skills based on that assessment.
 - Qualifications, as set out in the Apprenticeship Framework, to be completed
 - On and off the job training to be completed.
 - Learner's start date and duration of training.
 - Entrepreneurship support for learners that may be entering self-employment at the end of the apprenticeship.
 - Employability skills to be developed.

- Learner wellbeing including taking into account individual barriers such as caring responsibilities that might require more flexibility of delivery or support.

Learner outcomes

- 4.5. Providers are required to use their best endeavours to ensure that each learner secures sustainable employment at the end of their Apprenticeship Programme (this includes self-employment). It is unlikely to be in an apprentice's best interests to be placed with an employer that, from the outset, is only offering temporary employment for the duration of the apprenticeship. Such an arrangement would only be appropriate where there is sufficient evidence to indicate that, once qualified, the apprentice will be able to secure sustained employment or self-employment elsewhere. Where self-employment is considered a reasonable option, we would expect providers to support their learners in their transition into self-employment.
- 4.6. Providers will be expected to monitor and report to Medr the numbers of learners achieving the following outcomes:
- Successful completion of all elements of the relevant apprenticeship framework and certification.
 - Timely completion of programme – defined as completion of the programme within assessed target duration.
 - Entry to sustained employment within four weeks of leaving.
 - This information will be used by Medr to record the progress and outcomes achieved by the Apprenticeship Programme.
- 4.7. In line with Medr's regulatory framework, providers will also be expected to demonstrate outcomes across a broader range of measures, including learner progression into further learning, learner experience, and equality of opportunity for learners from a range of backgrounds, including protected characteristics.

Welsh Language

- 4.8. [An apprenticeship provider registered with or funded by Medr must publish and maintain a Welsh Language Strategy.](#) This strategy should set out how the provider will take all reasonable steps to:
- promote and encourage greater use of the Welsh language across the provider, so that people – including staff and learners – can use the language naturally in their daily lives;
 - increase demand for, and participation in, tertiary education delivered through the medium of Welsh.
- 4.9. To help them meet these requirements, providers are encouraged to work with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (the Coleg) as one of the institutions responsible for strategic planning in relation to the Welsh language in tertiary education. The Coleg works with Welsh Government, Medr, and providers to support growth in Welsh-medium and bilingual study and training opportunities. In the context of apprenticeships and the National Plan for the Welsh Language in Tertiary Education, the Coleg will support and advise providers as they develop and implement their Welsh Language Strategies, helping to identify practical ways to increase demand for, and participation in, Welsh-medium apprenticeship provision. This includes support in relation to the tertiary education workforce and

encouragement and support for learners. The Coleg also supports Medr by providing strategic advice on the implementation of the Welsh Language condition, contributing to discussions on priorities, and sharing good practice across the sector to support real improvement in provision.

- 4.10. The National Institute for Learning Welsh (formerly the National Centre for Learning Welsh) is also likely to offer relevant opportunities for support in implementing providers' Welsh Language Strategies. Within the context of the National Plan for the Welsh Language in Tertiary Education, providers' Welsh Language Strategies, and the strategic planning and support provided by the Coleg, the National Institute will play an important role supporting the development of the Welsh language skills and confidence of the tertiary education sector workforce, with the aim of building capacity to deliver Welsh-medium provision.
- 4.11. Medr will monitor providers' performance against their Welsh Language Strategies and will use its established regulatory and grant management processes to drive continuous improvement and challenge in areas where progress is insufficient.

Quality and continuous improvement

- 4.12. The provider must comply with Medr's regulatory and funding [quality and continuous improvement condition](#). This requires providers to demonstrate that their provision is of good quality and that they engage with continuous improvement. They are required to take account of Medr's [Quality Framework](#).
- 4.13. Providers should have in place self-assessment systems to evaluate the quality of delivery and use these to drive continuous improvement in the learner experience. These systems should be informed by data and by the views of learners. Providers should have systems for monitoring the impact of actions taken as a result of self-assessment activity.
- 4.14. Providers are expected to use innovative and flexible delivery mechanisms. This includes taking advantage of existing and new technologies, using a variety of learning and teaching practices and responding to learner needs, including for those under-represented in Tertiary Education, including those with protected characteristics. Provision should respond to changes in industry and sector practice and needs.

Assurance

- 4.15. All providers are required to comply with Medr's Governance and Management condition.
- 4.16. Medr applies an end-to-end assurance approach to monitoring the Apprenticeship Programme. Medr's role is to assure the integrity of the apprenticeship system through systematic review and validation of evidence, data and provider processes across the full learner and programme lifecycle.
- 4.17. Medr recognises that different processes will be appropriate to different types of providers and, while outline guidance is provided, it is for providers to determine, identify and monitor the efficiency of the systems of control and processes suitable

for their organisation and to submit to Medr as requested. Any processes used must be robust and accessible. Providers are expected to undertake an annual programme of internal and external audit. Medr reserves the right to review processes and receive audit report findings or summaries.

5. Funding and Payments

Funding model

- 5.1. Medr's Degree Apprenticeship funding is provided to meet the cost of delivery for tertiary education providers. Any individual student support funding for which Degree Apprentices may be eligible, is separate to this, and is administered by the [Welsh Government](#) through the Student Loans Company.
- 5.2. The maximum allocation for the delivery of the requirements for a degree apprenticeship is £27,000. Funding is paid on the basis of credits completed, at a rate of £75 per credit (based on a typical credit value of 360 credits for a bachelor's degree).
- 5.3. Allocations for new starts are based on £9,000 per apprentice per year, based on an assumption of the shortest course duration. Where the duration is longer, payments are made based on credits completed. Funding will not be award for credits recognised as prior learning, or the costs of the recognition process.

Grant allocations

- 5.4. Medr will provide a baseline grant allocation to providers meeting the programmes conditions to enable them to plan resources and provision for the future and support financial viability. The grant allocation will be subject to Medr's budget allocation from Welsh Government.
- 5.5. The grant allocation will be based on:
 - Number of continuing learners based on numbers provided by each provider with funding based on the funding rate according to the expected length of course.
 - New learner starts based on £9,000 per apprentice; a minimum of five new starts is allocated to each provider; additional new starts are allocated proportional to new starts delivered in the previous year.
 - Future regional sector demand, based on labour market intelligence, will also be considered during the allocation process, subject to budgetary constraints.
- 5.6. A combined maximum budget for both new and continuing apprenticeships is allocated, so that the Degree Apprenticeship Programme can be managed flexibly by providers and between frameworks and qualifications to meet employer demand. Providers will be able to manage their allocation flexibly to enable them to meet the expectations set out in the programme guidance.
- 5.7. Where necessary to protect continuity of apprenticeship provision, Medr may use other funding mechanisms to achieve the Programme outcomes.

Payment Processes and Reconciliation Timetables

5.8. Two payments will be made to providers each financial year, this will consist of:

- a) First payment of 60% of total overall funding allocation in October.
- b) The remaining up to 40% paid in March of the following year.

5.9. Adjustments to the second payment will be calculated as outlined below:

- Funding will be based on the number of completed credit values submitted through the Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES) return. Funding could be adjusted downwards based on modules not completed, withdrawals or if the number of credits for the whole course is less than 360 credits due to recognition of prior learning (RPL).
- Funding awarded will be monitored using the HESES recruitment data collected for new starters usually by 1 March each year and continuing learners from previous years.

5.10. Funding awarded in each academic year will be monitored using the HESES recruitment data collected for new starters up to 1 March of the latest academic year and continuing learners from previous years. HESES data will be collected and verified in February of each year.

5.11. The Medr Apprenticeship Team will contact providers in October and December each year to confirm their spend to date and identify any forecast underspend for return and redistribution.

5.12. The final adjustment of payment to the provider will be made by the end of the academic year in which the HESA data was submitted for verification to Medr. Any payments for additional recruitment will be subject to budget availability.

6. Learner Management

Eligibility

- 6.1. This section sets out the rules on learner eligibility for apprenticeship funding in Wales together with guidance on evidencing learner eligibility, to assist providers in their induction processes.
- 6.2. To assist providers in keeping the learner eligibility administration burden to a minimum, most learners will simply need to confirm on their enrolment form that they have the right to live and work in the UK and have legally lived in the UK for the three previous years. For the small number of eligible learners who do not meet this requirement, providers must take steps to satisfy themselves that the learner is legally resident in the UK. To assist providers and funding auditors, further advice on compliant evidence of learner eligibility is set out in [Residency Requirement](#).
- 6.3. When considering learner eligibility, the key determinant is the country where the participant works. Cross border funding responsibilities are shown in the table below:

Participant's residence	Employer base	Main country where participant works	Time spent working in main country	Funding
Wales or England	Wales	Wales	More than 51%	Medr Funding and priorities.
Wales or England	England	Wales	More than 51%	Medr Funding and priorities.
Wales or England	England	England	At least 50%	Financial arrangements and priorities of the UK Government.
Wales or England	Wales	England	At least 50%	Financial arrangements and priorities of the UK Government.

- The determining factor for those employers situated close to/on the border between England and Wales is the location of the office/site or where their Business Rates are paid at which the learner is primarily based.
- **NB:** Where a learner progresses from any activity undertaken in respect of the programme to a higher level, without a break in learning of more than eight calendar weeks, the original eligibility status remains extant.

- 6.4. Individuals are eligible for entry onto a degree apprenticeship if they, at the point of entry:

- Are not of compulsory school age in Wales; or attending school or college full-time as a pupil or student; or in full-time higher education;
- Meet the residency eligibility criteria as listed in the [Schedule to the Education \(Fees and Awards\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2007](#);
- Are not in custody or on remand in custody;
- Are not taking part in any other employment or enterprise programme funded directly by the UK Government or the Welsh Government;
- Are not taking part in any other UK Government or the Welsh Government funded vocational learning programmes; and
- Will, as a minimum, be undertaking the competency element of an identified framework.

Employment status

- 6.5. Apprentices must be employed for a minimum of 16 hours per week. Where learners hold a contract for less than this minimum, providers must retain robust evidence to demonstrate that they routinely meet this requirement.

Self-employment

- 6.6. Self-employed learners are eligible for entry to the Apprenticeship Programme if all other entry eligibility requirements are met. When considering learners who are self-employed for entry to the programme, providers must ensure that the learner has sufficient support whilst on-the-job to develop through their framework. The provider must assure itself that all self-employed apprentices work in compliance with Health & Safety standards, particularly in respect of supervision.
- 6.7. The self-employed apprentice must be effectively supervised by an industry qualified person in the apprenticeship occupation. The supervisor must have appropriate experience, knowledge, and qualifications to provide support. The self-employed apprentice must have proper sign-off of qualification tasks/competencies by a competent industry person or employer.
- 6.8. The provider should ensure that the apprentice does not undertake any activities that they are not trained or qualified to undertake during the apprenticeship other than under direct supervision from an industry qualified supervisor (see above), and then only if the activities do not contravene any legal requirement for competency.
- 6.9. Self-employed **construction** workers must:
- Have a minimum of three years' relevant experience in the construction industry prior to commencing an apprenticeship, within the five years preceding the commencement of the apprenticeship.
 - Be supervised by an experienced person in the apprenticeship occupation. The supervisor must be an individual who has sufficient training, experience, and knowledge to provide appropriate support.
 - Ensure that all tasks and competencies are signed off by a competent industry professional or employer. In this context, competency may be evidenced through, for example, professional qualifications, chartership, an appropriate-level CSCS card, or an industry-regulated Electrical, Heating, and Ventilation certification.
 - Receive Health & Safety training and hold an appropriate CSCS card i.e. an apprentice CSCS card.

- Not undertake any activities for which they are not trained or qualified during the apprenticeship, except where they are under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified industry supervisor, and only where such activities do not breach any legal competency requirements.
- Please note: These requirements apply not only to learners who are self-employed at the start of their programme but also to those who become self-employed during the apprenticeship.

6.10. Eligibilities will be regularly reviewed and may be subject to change.

Withdrawals

- 6.11. A learner is considered to have withdrawn from the Apprenticeship Programme where they are known to have decided to withdraw from the programme, confirmed in writing by any one of the learner, the assessor, or the employer. The withdrawal date must reflect the last date where evidence of learning was in place, or the start date of suspension if applicable.
- 6.12. Providers must have robust systems in place to ensure that learners who are at risk of early withdrawal are identified and offered additional support and/or mentoring to help them to remain on the programme.
- 6.13. Where withdrawal is confirmed, providers must retain evidence of assessment and notification of withdrawal.

Redundancy

- 6.14. Where an apprentice is made redundant, or otherwise ceases employment with their employer, the provider is expected, as a minimum, to support the learner by:
- Contacting other relevant employers that they work with to identify whether any suitable alternative vacancies are available.
 - Identifying and facilitating other appropriate support.
- 6.15. The primary focus should be to enable the apprentice to continue their apprenticeship wherever possible.

Suspensions

- 6.16. A suspended period of learning should only be applied where the learner is off work for an extended period, e.g. as result of ill health, maternity, adoption, paternity etc. or (in exceptional cases) where the learner's circumstances necessitate a one-off break in their learning programme. Where a suspension occurs, the provider is required to assure itself that the learner is committed to returning to learning after the period of suspension and that the employer is keeping their position open.
- 6.17. A suspension will only apply where a learner is absent from their place of work for an extended period and plans to continue learning once they return to work. In exceptional circumstances where a learner is temporarily unable to undertake their normal role within their employment and is unable to continue their Apprenticeship

Programme, a suspension may be appropriate assuming all other conditions are met.

6.18. Acceptable reasons for suspension are:

- i. Learner illness.
- ii. Maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
- iii. Personal reasons which result in a period of employment absence e.g. bereavement, caring responsibilities, extended holidays.
- iv. Termination of employment (where the provider is unable to continue the Apprenticeship Programme delivery).
- v. Other reason for suspension - should only be used where none of the other valid suspension categories apply (e.g. paternity leave in line with employers' terms and conditions, or suspension from work initiated by the employer).

6.19. Suspension must not exceed:

- 26 weeks, or
- 52 weeks (in the case of maternity or adoption leave).

6.20. Providers are expected to have a system in place to ensure that the duration of learner suspensions is actively and frequently monitored. In exceptional circumstances, Medr's approval may be sought for suspensions longer than 26 weeks for reasons other than maternity or adoption leave.

6.21. The apprenticeship must be terminated if there is no likelihood of a return to learning. Should the learner not return to learning at the end of the period of suspension the learner will be deemed to have terminated learning. This will take effect from the last working day for which there is evidence that the learner attended a programme of learning.

7. Data and systems requirements

Information security requirements

7.1. Providers must hold and maintain demonstrable assurance against a recognised information security standard appropriate to the nature, scale, and sensitivity of the funded activity and learner data processed. As minimum, providers must submit to Medr evidence of certification, accreditation, or an independently verified assessment against a recognised information security standard, framework or scheme such as ISO/IEC 27001, Cyber Essentials Plus, the IASME Governance Standard, Cyber Assessment Framework or equivalent security standards, framework or schemes.

7.2. Accreditation or assurance must be current, relevant to the funded activity, and supported by auditable evidence of compliance. Providers are required to make such evidence available to Medr on request and to promptly address any identified deficiencies to ensure ongoing assurance of their security systems.

Personal data

- 7.3. Providers must comply with all applicable and current UK data protection legislation, including the [DPA 2018](#), [UK GDPR](#) (as defined under section 3(10) of the DPA 2018), and the [Data \(Use and Access\) Act 2025](#), together with any associated regulations or statutory guidance.
- 7.4. Providers are responsible for ensuring that personal data is processed lawfully, fairly and transparently, and is protected against unauthorised access, loss, destruction or damage through the implementation of appropriate technical and organisational measures. This includes maintaining robust information governance arrangements, ensuring data accuracy and minimisation, and supporting the rights of data subjects.
- 7.5. Compliance must be demonstrable through auditable evidence in accordance with the accountability principle. Providers must take prompt and proportionate remedial action in response to any identified risks, incidents or personal data breaches, including notification to relevant authorities, including Medr, and affected individuals where required by law.

HESA data submissions

- 7.6. Providers are required to complete HESA returns and submit other data to Medr as requested with reliable and accurate information on the apprentices it has enrolled and the credit values associated with those apprentices, and with any other data required whether for calculating funding or for other reporting and analysis purposes.
- 7.7. The definitions used in the data returns are set out in [Medr's Higher Education Students Early Statistics \(HESES\)](#) and [End of Year Monitoring \(EYM\)](#) of Higher Education Enrolments surveys and also in the HESA record manuals. The provider must comply with the [code of practice](#) for higher education data collections.
- 7.8. Providers must ensure that all data submitted is accurate, complete, and timely and, are responsible for putting in place and maintaining a sufficient level of appropriately skilled resource, systems, and internal controls to support the effective collection, validation, and submission of data.

Medr

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