



This fact sheet relates to higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships delivered by higher education institutions (HEIs) for the 2015 to 2016 academic year.

An apprenticeship is first and foremost a job with substantial training and the development of transferable skills. It is a way for people of all ages to earn while they learn, gaining a qualification and a real future. Apprentices will be aged 16 or over, must be in paid employment for the duration of their apprenticeship, and will combine working with studying for a work-based, academic or combined qualification. Typically, higher apprentices study part time at college, university or with a training provider, often sat alongside students studying full time for the same qualifications.

Higher apprenticeships and the new degree apprenticeships are part of the apprenticeships family. In the last academic year over 9,000 people started a higher apprenticeship and numbers are growing rapidly.

Employers in England (a study by ICM Research shows) rate qualified higher apprentices as 25 per cent more employable than those who took an alternative route into work. Government wants to make higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships available to more businesses to secure these benefits and has provided an additional £10m to fund higher education qualifications within higher and degree apprenticeships.

We set out a quick-start guide for HEIs interested in delivering higher and degree apprenticeships on the back page of this leaflet.

What are higher apprenticeships?

Higher apprenticeships refers to all apprenticeships which includes the achievement of academic and vocational qualifications and learning from level 4 up to bachelor's and master's degrees at levels 6 and 7 respectively. All levels can include vocational qualifications and academic qualifications.

What are degree apprenticeships?

Degree apprenticeships are the latest model to be developed as part of higher apprenticeship standards, seeing apprentices achieving a full bachelor's or master's degree as a core component of the apprenticeship. Degree apprenticeships combine both higher and vocational education and fully test both the wider occupational competence and academic learning, either using a fully-integrated degree co-designed by employers and HEIs, or using a degree plus separate end-test of professional competence. Table 1 below sets out how higher and degree apprenticeships link together.

Table 1 - The levels and coverage of degree and higher apprenticeships



The new degree apprenticeship model has a number of benefits for employers, prospective apprentices, and universities.

- Employers can attract new talent, particularly high-calibre school-leavers who are keen to earn a full bachelor's or master's degree in a work-based environment. It will allow them to acquire the graduate/post-graduate level skills they need, where the training costs, including the degree, are co-funded by government.
- The apprentice, like any other apprentice, will be employed and paid a wage throughout, will gain a full degree (bachelor's or master's), and gain a head-start into their chosen profession compared with many of their counterparts.
- Universities can strengthen links with local employers and offer more degree programmes that meet employer needs and are accredited by professional bodies, while also having a new product to offer to prospective applicants

How are higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships structured?

There are two kinds of higher apprenticeship currently available for delivery – **apprenticeship frameworks** and **apprenticeship standards**. Over time, all apprenticeship frameworks will be replaced by the new apprenticeship standards, and all of the new degree apprenticeships will be developed using the apprenticeships standards model. In the 2015 to 2016 academic year the following higher and degree apprenticeships are available for delivery.

- **Higher apprenticeship frameworks** – You can find the full list of **apprenticeship frameworks** including higher apprenticeship frameworks on the [Apprenticeship Frameworks Online](#) website. Each framework document lists the qualifications which are eligible for delivery within the apprenticeship.
 - HEIs wishing to have their own qualifications included in an existing apprenticeship framework can apply to the relevant framework issuing authority. Additional advice on this process for HEIs will be available shortly.
- **Higher apprenticeship standards** - The first two **higher apprenticeship standards** are available for delivery now, with more scheduled for release in April 2015 and throughout the 2015 to 2016 academic year.

- **Degree apprenticeship standards** - The first five **degree apprenticeship standards** are also available for delivery now. Future new degree apprenticeship programmes will be structured either as:
 - a fully-integrated apprenticeship degree course which delivers and tests both academic learning and the vocational skills needed by the job role
 - a degree programme to deliver the academic knowledge requirements, plus additional training to meet the full apprenticeship and a separate test of full occupational competence at the end of the apprenticeship (for example, delivered by a relevant professional body)

You can find the latest list of higher and degree apprenticeships approved for delivery on the [apprenticeship standards](#) page on the GOV.UK website. As new higher apprenticeship and degree apprenticeships become available for delivery they will be published on GOV.UK and a full list of all higher and degree apprenticeships will also be available on the [higher and degree apprenticeship](#) webpage on GOV.UK.

How can HEIs get involved in delivering higher and degree apprenticeships?

To deliver a higher apprenticeship an HEI must be either be:

- listed on the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Register of Training Organisations (ROTO) and already receive funding for apprenticeship delivery from the SFA
- a subcontractor to another HEI or FEI listed on the SFA's Register of Training Organisations who is in receipt of funding for apprenticeships from the SFA
- successful applicants to an SFA HEI expression of interest for higher and degree apprenticeship delivery as outlined below

Any HEI who already holds an SFA funding agreement which contains an apprenticeships allocation can go ahead and deliver higher and degree apprenticeships.

For HEIs who do not hold an existing contract to deliver apprenticeships with the SFA, the SFA is currently running the first expression of interest (EOI) round for HEIs with a clear plan for higher and degree apprenticeship delivery as part of their offer to employers; this complements the additional £13m which government allocated to further education institutions (FEIs) in late 2014 to expand their higher apprenticeship provision. HEIs are invited to register and submit an EOI to the SFA by 5.00pm on Wednesday, 25 March. You can find further information by registering on the SFA's [procurement portal](#).

HEIs may wish to deliver the whole apprenticeship directly or, act as the lead apprenticeship provider, sharing the delivery by subcontracting with other HEIs or FEIs. The current EOI invites HEIs to take either option.

The SFA is also offering automatic entry onto the ROTO to HEIs meeting specific criteria.

1. Those in receipt of direct public grants for HE.
2. Those including institutes of the University of London.
3. Those who have the right to award one or more types of UK degree
4. and those who have not had any material concerns raised as part of the HEFCE process of financial risk assessment.

How long does a higher apprenticeship or degree apprenticeship last?

Both frameworks and standards must last a minimum of one year and degree apprenticeships in particular will last longer, typically up to four years, though there is no fixed maximum duration. The framework or standard documentation will usually set out a typical expected duration. The funding value set for an apprenticeship covers the total delivery costs regardless of the apprenticeship length.

How do I know whether my qualification is included in an existing framework or standard and is eligible for funding through the Skills Funding Agency?

We will publish a digest containing the list of higher and degree apprenticeship standards and frameworks funded by the SFA on the [higher and degree apprenticeship](#) webpage on GOV.UK shortly and we will update it monthly.

Who is developing the new apprenticeships?

All new apprenticeships are being developed in the reformed apprenticeship system by employer-led trailblazers. Those in development will continue to be listed on the [apprenticeship standards](#) GOV.UK website. The five currently live include degree apprenticeships in the automotive sector which leads to a BSc in engineering. Additional degree apprenticeships are currently in development in several areas, including electronic systems, nuclear and civil engineering and chartered surveying.

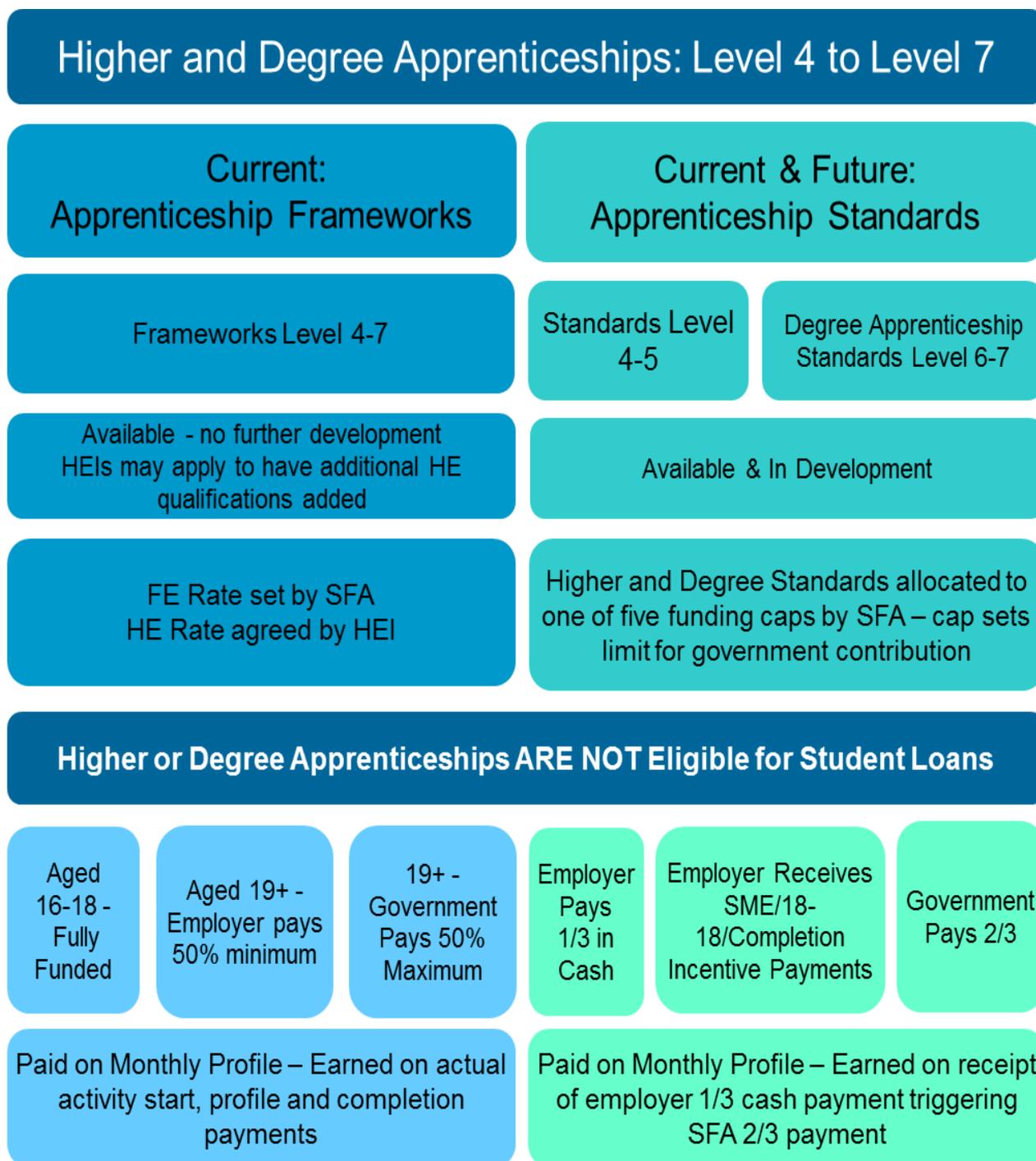
How are higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships funded?

For the 2015 to 2016 academic year, apprenticeship frameworks are funded differently to the new apprenticeship standards. Over time, all new apprenticeship starts will be funded through a single new funding model for apprenticeships. In the interim, once an apprenticeship has started it will stay on the funding model that it was linked to and will not change when the new funding model is introduced.

As with all apprenticeships, apprentices must not pay the costs of training or assessment and should not be charged student fees within their apprenticeship.

The table below summarises funding and delivery models for both apprenticeship frameworks and standards and sets out the funding contribution from government and from employers.

Table 2 – How higher and degree apprenticeships are structured and funded



All apprenticeships, regardless of the level or the age of the apprentice, can be fully funded by an employer. The SFA also funds apprenticeships for eligible apprentices and employers. The level of funding or co-funding from the SFA varies depending on age and programme and is for the costs of delivery and assessment only. In summary, funding for each is organised as follows.

- For **higher and degree apprenticeship standards only**, the cost of the further and higher education learning programmes and any additional external training and assessment will depend on the price(s) agreed between employers and universities/ training and assessment providers. In the funding model under trial for apprenticeship standards during 2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016, the government contributes two-thirds of the total agreed price, up to a cap, with employers contributing the other third in cash, all paid to the lead provider in a payment schedule agreed with the employer.
 - In addition there are three available employer incentive payments (for taking on a 16- to 18-year-old, for small businesses and for successful completion).
 - All standards are allocated to one of the five funding caps – for the highest cap, government will contribute up to £18,000 based on an employer cash contribution of £9,000. You can find further information in the [Trailblazer Apprenticeship Funding Rules 2014 to 2015](#).

- For **apprenticeship frameworks** that include higher education courses, the SFA will agree a price with the HEI for the delivery of the apprenticeship, (and the HE element within) at the point of agreeing a funding allocation.
 - Funding contribution from employers and government varies depending on age and employer size and the difference must be funded by the employer.
 - You can find further detailed information in the [Funding Rules 2014 to 2015 version 2](#) but in summary; if the apprentice is 19 or over there is a maximum 50% government contribution and contribution paid by government reduces further for larger employers (those with more than 1,000 employees).

How will an HEI receive payment for higher and degree apprenticeship delivery?

New HEIs successfully bidding through the EOI process will be offered an SFA Grant funding agreement with an adult skills budget allocation specifically for higher and degree apprenticeship delivery. This allocation is ring-fenced for the delivery of higher apprenticeships only. This will be paid monthly against a standard profile for grant-funded providers. Any unused funding can be returned at the performance points during the year. The same performance points can be used by HEIs to request growth to meet demand.

Funding is earned against actual activity as follows.

- **For frameworks**; the funding earned is through monthly on-programme payments linked to the specific qualifications being delivered plus a payment on successful completion of the apprenticeship. Apprentices aged 16 to 18 require completion of an individual learner record (ILR) file to draw down funding.

- **For standards;** all apprentices require completion of an ILR file. Payments are earned by the HEI confirming through the apprentice's ILR record that they have received the latest employer one-third payment against their agreed payment schedule. ILR completion triggers the government two-thirds payment.

We will add further guidance on allocation, funding claims and other operational arrangements for HEIs delivering apprenticeships to the [higher and degree apprenticeship](#) webpage shortly.

What are the Skills Funding Agency rules governing higher and degree apprenticeship delivery for HEIs?

All higher and degree apprenticeships must be delivered in accordance with the SFA funding rules and guidance for providers. For the academic year 2015 to 2016, because the two different funding models for apprenticeships will continue to be used, there will be two separate published funding rule documents. The current 2014 to 2015 academic year versions of these documents are available now; one for the new apprenticeship standards ([Trailblazer Apprenticeship Funding Rules 2014 to 2015](#)) and one for the existing apprenticeship frameworks ([Funding Rules 2014 to 2015 version 2](#)).

The funding rules document for each programme governs the way in which aspects of the higher and degree apprenticeship programme must be managed by apprenticeship providers including HEIs, for example, that all 16 to 18-year-old apprenticeships require an ILR to be completed.

The funding rules also set out the requirement for employer and apprentice to have an apprenticeship agreement and for the apprentice to be paid a wage for both the on- and off-the-job elements of their apprenticeship. These, and other rules and requirements, set out in both Funding Rule documents, are core principles of the apprenticeships programme and apply to every apprenticeship.

The 2015 to 2016 academic year is the first time that there will be a substantial group of HEIs in the apprenticeships delivery network, and in preparation, the SFA is working with HEFCE and other key HE stakeholders (and soon with HE representatives) to review the current funding rules and streamline the differences in processes between HE and FE delivery, where possible. This work is initially focussing on three aspects and we will provide further guidance on each later in 2015.

- Quality and inspection.
- Audit and review.
- Data / records and payment processing.

Further Information

For all higher and degree apprenticeships enquiries please email:

higherapprenticeships@sfa.bis.gov.uk

For further information for HEIs on higher and degree apprenticeships please refer to:

[higher and degree apprenticeship](#) web page on GOV.UK.

For further information on the expression of interest for delivering higher and degree apprenticeships please go to the SFA procurement portal:

skillsfundingagency.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml

Three additional advice documents for HEIs are being prepared for publication to follow shortly:

- Operational guidance on funding and data for HEIs delivering higher apprenticeships
- Adding HE qualifications into higher apprenticeships frameworks and standards
- The Higher and Degree Apprenticeships Digest

On the new apprenticeship standards

- **Developing reformed apprenticeships (apprenticeship standards)**
www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-guidance-for-trailblazers
- **Apprenticeship standards approved for delivery**
www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards
- **Apprenticeship standards in development**
www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standards-in-development
- **Apprenticeship frameworks approved for delivery**
www.afo.sscalliance.org

On the funding model for the new apprenticeship standards

- **Funding model for the new apprenticeship standards for 2014 to 2015**
www.gov.uk/government/publications/trailblazer-apprenticeship-funding-requirements-for-employers
www.gov.uk/government/Trailblazer-Funding-Rules-2014-to-2015
- **Funding model for the existing apprenticeship frameworks for 2014 to 20115 and 2015 to 2016**
www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-rules-2014-to-2015.

Getting involved - getting started: a quick guide for HEIs

1. Establish which frameworks or Standards you could deliver

- See **Apprenticeship Frameworks Online** for detailed framework documentation setting out which qualifications are included and see the apprenticeship standards page on GOV.UK for the content of the standards available for delivery.
- If needed, request via the Issuing Authority listed on **Apprenticeship Frameworks Online** that your qualification is added as eligible for inclusion with in an existing framework.
- Consult the standards list on **GOV.UK** to see which new standards are under development for the future, including degree apprenticeships.

2. Consider your preferred delivery model

- Consider whether you want to establish yourself as a lead provider, and to deliver alone or with other partners (as subcontractors).
- Make contact with existing/new FE or HE partners you want to or need to work with - consider whether you want to subcontract out to another partner - you may need to do this for the apprenticeship standard end test or for the competence element of a framework
- Consider whether you want to be a subcontractor to another lead provider.
- Consider the price to charge employers for delivery.

3. Establish whether you need to join the SFA Register of Training Organisations

- If you want to deliver as a lead partner you will need to apply to join the SFA Register of Training Organisations (ROTO).
- There is automatic entry available for HEIs meeting specific criteria. See the **SFA's Procurement Expression of Interest** for these criteria.
- HEIs can also apply through the normal ROTO process - the next opportunity is later in 2015.
- If you want to deliver as a subcontractor working to another HEI or FEI you have to make a successful application to the ROTO if your combined contracts total over £100k.

4. Confirm your Funding Allocation

- Check the **SFA Digest** to confirm that your qualification and standard or framework are available for delivery - email the SFA if needed.
- If you already have an SFA Adult Skills Budget allocation you can deliver immediately but do still register for the SFA higher apprenticeships workshops for new HEIs in June.
- If you don't have an SFA allocation, submit an Expression of Interest before 25th March deadline EOI round OR look for an alternative HE or FE partner with an SFA allocation with whom you can subcontract.

5. Prepare for Delivery

- Familiarise yourself with the apprenticeship **Funding Rules for 2014 to 2015** for apprenticeship frameworks and the separate **Funding Rules for Trailblazer Apprenticeship Standards for 2014 to 2015**
- Register for one of the SFA's new HEI workshops in June - covering the latest on policy, Funding Rules and operational advice on getting started.
- Confirm your delivery plan and schedule with the SFA and get ready for delivery.