

Everything you need to know about apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a great way for people to train whilst being employed. The programmes can offer significant benefits to businesses, including enhanced productivity and reduced staff turnover¹.

Since 2010, more than 1.5 million people have started an apprenticeship², and these figures are likely to continue rising as the Government bids to invest a further £1 billion into the programmes and deliver three million apprenticeships by 2020³.

Dental health apprenticeships

Brand new apprenticeships will soon become available to dental businesses. Of those highlighted below, apprenticeship standards for Dental Technicians, Dental Laboratory Assistants and Dental Practice Managers have all been approved and are ready for delivery. These standards and assessment plans can be found on the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

- **Dental Laboratory Assistant**

This entry-level role will take a minimum of 18 months to attain and will give successful apprentices a Level 3 Diploma in Dental Technology Techniques. A maximum funding contribution of £3,000 has been allocated to this apprenticeship for the training and assessment of each apprentice⁴.

- **Dental Technician**

The three-year apprenticeship scheme, awarded £18,000 maximum core Government contribution, will allow individuals to gain a Level 5 Foundation Degree in Dental Technology. On completion they will also be able to apply to register with the General Dental Council (GDC) and work as a professional dental technician⁵.

- **Dental Practice Management**

This level 4 apprenticeship will give successful individuals an ILM Certificate in Leadership and Management. The programme will take approximately 24 months to complete and has been assigned a £6,000 core Government contribution funding cap⁶.

- **Dental Nursing**

This level 3 apprenticeship will take an average of 18-24 months to complete. Upon successful completion individuals will attain a level three diploma in dental nursing and be able to register with the GDC⁷.

- **Dental Laboratory Manager**

This scheme will take an average of three years to complete. On completion the laboratory manager will be responsible for managing team members by providing support and direction to enhance performance, skills and knowledge of all staff.

Newly reformed

All of these exciting dental health apprenticeships are part of the newly reformed system that has seen significant improvements, including enhanced quality and relevance of training through the re-routing of Government funding and employer-led programmes.

To ensure apprenticeships meet the needs of employers, the Government enlisted the help of so-called Trailblazers – groups of employers who have come together to design standards and assessments for the apprenticeships within their particular sector. Heading the dental health apprenticeships is Mustafa Mohamed – Chair of the Trailblazers in Dental Health, and owner of Genix Healthcare and Sparkle Dental Labs.

The eventual goal is for all apprentices enrolled on the 2017/18 academic year to follow these newly created standards and assessments.

Funding

To give employers control over the funding of apprenticeship training, a new simplified funding model is being trialled for apprenticeships based on standards starting in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years. The key elements include:

- A single Government co-investment rate for core funding – for every £1 employers contribute to the external training and assessment cost of an apprentice, the Government will pay £2.
- This applies to a clear cap for each standard (set at £18,000, £8,000, £6,000, £3,000 or £2,000).
- Three additional payments will be available for:
 - Small businesses (less than 50 employees) worth between £500 and £2,700
 - When taking on a 16-18 year old apprentice (£600 to £5,400) and
 - Successful completion (£500 to £2,700).
- There will also be funding for English and maths at level's 1 and 2 (up to £1,000 per apprentice)⁸.

Employers will be in complete control of apprenticeship funding, meaning they can choose the most effective training for their apprentices. By liaising directly with the training provider, rather than the government setting the price of training centrally, employers will be able to negotiate to acquire the best value for their company. The funding will be provided through a digital Apprenticeship Voucher, which will be trialled before implementation in 2017.

In addition, dental laboratories and practices may be entitled to apply for an Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds (AGE 16 to 24). This grant is worth £1,500 per apprentice and is available from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). To be eligible, businesses must not have taken on an apprentice in the past 12

months, have no more than 1,000 employees and be looking to take on an apprentice or apprentices aged between 16 to 24 years old⁹.

The current minimum wage for apprentices is £2.73 per hour, however this only applies to apprentices aged 16-18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. All other apprentices are entitled to the national minimum wage for their age, which can be up to £6.50 for those aged over 21 years. Normal working hours are a minimum of 30 hours per week and training that is part of the apprenticeship is usually completed over one day per week. Apprentices are entitled to at least 20 days paid holiday per year, plus bank holidays.

If you are considering taking on an apprentice, NAS or GOV.UK should be your first port of call. Both provide a huge amount of information on apprenticeships and members of their specialist teams are always on hand to support employers through the process.

For additional information from the National Apprenticeship Service, please visit www.apprenticeship.org.uk.

¹ Apprenticeships. About Apprenticeships. Available online:

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/the-basics.aspx> [Accessed 16th April 2015].

² Department for Business, Innovation & Skills. New figures show record number of apprentices. Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-figures-show-record-numbers-of-apprentices> [Accessed 16th April 2015].

³ The Guardian. David Cameron vows to create 3m apprenticeships. Watt, N. Published online 20th October 2014: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/oct/20/3m-apprenticeships-david-cameron-welfare-cuts> [Accessed 16th April 2015].

⁴ GOV.UK. Apprenticeship standard: dental laboratory assistant. Available online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standard-dental-laboratory-assistant> [Accessed 16th April 2015].

⁵ GOV.UK. Apprenticeship standard: dental technician. Available online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standard-dental-technician> [Accessed 16th April 2015].

⁶ GOV.UK. Apprenticeship standard: dental practice manager. Available online:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/372191/DENTAL_HEALTH_Dental_Practice_Manager.ashx.pdf [Accessed 16th April 2015].

⁷ GOV.UK. Apprenticeship standard: dental practice manager. Available online:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411720/DENTAL_HEALTH_-_Dental_Nurse.pdf [Accessed 16th April 2015].

⁸ HM Government. Briefing: Trialling our new apprenticeship funding model on starts based on new standards in the 2014/15 academic year. Available online:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/324526/Apprenticeship-Funding-Reform-Briefing.pdf [Accessed 16th April 2015].

⁹ Apprenticeships. Employer Incentive (AGE 16 to 24). Last updated 11th September 2014, link

<http://bit.ly/1eNSyWP> [Accessed 16th April 2015].