

Speech and Language Therapist Apprenticeship

Employer Guidance



*A guide to the Speech and Language Therapist
Degree Apprenticeship*

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About the Speech and Language Therapist Apprenticeship

The Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) apprenticeship is an employment-based route into the profession. To undertake an apprenticeship, learners must be employed within a department that allows them to practice and use their skills. Typically, apprenticeships combine extensive workplace learning and practice within your department, supported by academic learning at university and by distance learning.

Context

Apprenticeships are a key Government and HEE priority since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and Reforms in 2017. Specifically, HEE has been mandated to contribute to the development of apprenticeship standards in health and to date has worked with colleagues at the Institute for Apprenticeships and Skills for Health, as well as Trailblazer Chairs to develop over 80 health specific apprenticeship qualifications – including 12 AHP degree and masters level apprenticeships for employers and students to use.

Since 2016, employer led trailblazer groups have been designing degree and master level apprenticeship qualifications for the AHP workforce. As a result, the following professions all now have a degree apprenticeship training route:

- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist
- **Speech and Language Therapist**
- Diagnostic Radiographer
- Therapeutic Radiographer
- Sonographer
- Operating Department Practitioner
- Paramedic
- Podiatrist
- Arts Therapist
- Dietician
- Prosthetist and Orthotist

In addition to the afore mentioned degree apprenticeships, employers can also utilise the following apprenticeships for the recruitment and development of support staff:

- Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship
- Senior Healthcare Support Worker – Therapies Support Pathway

What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes which are designed to help employers train people for specific job roles. At the same time, apprentices get a paying job with valuable training while they work towards a nationally recognised apprenticeship standard or framework.

Apprenticeship qualifications or standards range from levels 2-7. This is the equivalent of GCSE level up to master's degree level.

Anyone in England aged 16 years old and above, whether employed, unemployed or leaving school, can do an apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit. However, where there is a statutory or professional body requirement for people in a particular role to be aged 18 or over, a minimum age limit would apply.

What are the benefits?

Apprenticeships bring a number of tangible benefits to NHS and other organisations. They can create skilled, motivated, and qualified employees and, if used properly, can help to address skills shortages across the workforce. Apprenticeships allow employers to diversify and energise their workforce. 86% of employers say apprenticeships develop skills relevant to their organisation and 78% reported improved productivity.



Apprenticeship Funding

How to access funding for apprenticeships

There are three ways to access funding to pay for apprenticeship training. This funding does not cover salary costs; you will have to fund the apprentice's salary.

- 1. Apprenticeship Levy** Employers with a pay bill over £3 million each year pay the apprenticeship levy. Levy-paying employers can spend their apprenticeship levy funding on apprenticeship training.
- 2. Reserve government co-investment** If you don't pay the apprenticeship levy you can reserve funding, where the government pays 95% of the training costs and the employer pays the remaining 5%.
- 3. Levy Transfers** Levy-paying employers can transfer some of their annual levy to other employers. These transfers cover 100% of the training costs of the apprenticeship (you still need to cover salary).

Apprenticeship levy explained

The apprenticeship levy was introduced as a government scheme to fund apprenticeships. Employers with a payroll of more than £3 million must pay a 0.5% levy on their total payroll. The levy is paid monthly through PAYE, alongside income tax and national insurance contributions.

Levy contributions appear in a digital account which can be used by the employer to arrange and pay for apprenticeship training. The funds can only be spent on apprenticeship training.

After 24 months any unused levy funds expire and return to the government.

Organisations who don't pay apprenticeship levy

Employers with a payroll under £3 million don't pay the apprenticeship levy, they are called "non-levy-paying employers". Non-levy-paying employers can still access apprenticeship funding, though, they can pay 5% of the apprenticeship course cost, and the government will cover the remaining 95% through the process of 'co-investment'.

Course Details

Speech and Language Therapist Apprenticeship Degree Apprenticeship

Level: 6

Integrated degree apprenticeship

Typical duration: 48 months (*some learners will be able to take a shortened course if they have previous experience and qualifications*)

Maximum levy funding band: £25,000

The broad purpose of the SLT apprenticeship is to train learners to improve the quality of life, health and well-being for people with communication difficulties and/or dysphagia. They will apply evidence-based science to clinical practice to assess and improve outcomes for people who have speech, language, communication needs (SLCN), voice, fluency, and/or eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties.

On completion of the apprenticeship candidates will achieve BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy. The apprenticeship also aligns with Health and Care Professions Council for 6 professional recognition.

Where the apprentice already holds a level 6 honours degree, some universities may deliver the apprenticeship with a pre-registration MSc in Speech and Language Therapy. Please check with your university.

Typical entry requirements

Entry requirements will be stipulated by individual universities. **Please discuss individual entry criteria with your provider of choice.**

As an example, typical entry criteria for degree apprenticeships could include:

- Learners must be employed in a setting where they can gain and practice their competencies
- Some universities will expect apprentices to have 3 A levels or an equivalent Access qualification. Some universities also stipulate a science subject at A level

- Learners should have achieved, and be able to evidence, level 2 in English and Maths (GCSE C or grade 4)
- Some universities may also consider experience and evidence of readiness for level 4 study for existing staff who lack traditional academic qualifications

APEL and RPL

When recruiting apprentices, it is vital you work with your provider to set out each of your requirements and expectations for the entry criteria to the apprenticeship. For example, your potential apprentices may be recruited from the existing workforce and may not have typical academic entry criteria. In this instance you would need to work with your provider to recognise their work experience and in-house training. The university may also offer a bridging module if the potential apprentice has a gap that cannot be evidenced through APEL/RPL.

Procurement

To support the implementation of the AHP apprenticeship standards, the HEE Talent for Care Team facilitates a Managed Procurement Service. This service is managed and owned by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust and aims to deliver a range of support for employers to increase their uptake of Apprenticeships.

The Managed Procurement Service has facilitated several national and regional robust quality procurement exercises to secure the development of a strong provider market which meets quality ambitions for AHP apprenticeships. As a result, employers have started to use AHP apprenticeships to enhance their workforce supply.

There is no requirement for Trusts to use this framework, as some Trusts may have already run their own procurement. This framework is designed to enable those who haven't already procured (or who want to contract new providers) to do so with minimum effort. **If you wish to use the framework, please contact Sft.commercial@nhs.net.**

Course Providers

The following providers were awarded as part of a national procurement for SLT. These providers have been quality assured by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust and an expert panel.

Some course start dates are subject to HCPC approval. Please contact the universities below for exact details:

University	Delivery overview	Start Date
Birmingham City University	<p>The apprenticeship will run over four years. A blended approach to learning will be used.</p> <p>There will be a combination of day and block release. For example, one day a week may be delivered online, as well as some blocks of face to face teaching on campus. This will improve accessibility for those who have to travel further.</p>	Sep 2022
University of Sheffield	<p>Can deliver in the North East and Yorkshire. Sheffield is also willing to have conversations with North West employers about the potential of delivering in this region.</p> <p>Remote learning methods will be used wherever possible. Face to face learning, with the exception of some clinical skills sessions, is delivered in home trusts or on university premises. This depends on the partner's request in an attempt to minimise learner travel and associated travel time/costs.</p>	Sep 2023
University of Essex	<p>The proposed SLT programme is under development using a 2+2 approach. This means the first two years will be undertaken within our existing Healthcare Assistant Practitioner Higher Apprenticeship with Foundation degree in health sciences.</p> <p>The first two years will be delivered one day a week on campus, including a newly approved 'introduction to SLT module' and two-week full-time placement at the end of</p>	Oct 2022

Frequently Asked Questions

Can part time staff undertake the apprenticeship?

Yes, part time staff can undertake the apprenticeship. If an apprentice works less than full time, the apprenticeship duration will be extended accordingly.

Can I use apprenticeship funding to pay for my apprentices' salary?

Apprenticeship levy funding, reservations, and transfers do not cover salary costs. Your organisation will need to fund the apprentice's salary.

What does “off the job training” mean?

20% off the job training is the minimum amount of time that should be spent on occupational off the job training during an apprenticeship. Off-the-job training is a statutory requirement for an apprenticeship. This is training which is received by the apprentice during their normal working hours. The purpose is to support the apprentice in achieving the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of the approved apprenticeship referenced in the apprenticeship agreement.

Links and Resources

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) has published guidance for universities and employers to support them in developing quality apprenticeships for the profession. [Download the guidance document \(PDF\)](#)

The RCSLT have also created a business case template to use when making a case for an apprenticeship. [Download the business case template \(Word\)](#)

[Healthcare Apprenticeship Standards online \(HASO\)](#)

[How to have Apprenticeship conversations with your board](#)

[What apprenticeships are and how to use them](#)

[Allied Health Professional apprenticeships](#)

[RPL / APEL guidance](#)

[Small employers – how to reserve funding](#)

[Procurement](#)

[English and maths functional skills guidance for employers](#)

[What is 20% off the job training](#)

[steps to expanding placement capacity](#)