

The Mammography Associate Practitioner Apprenticeship

About the Apprenticeship

An apprenticeship in mammography at an associate level is a new route for the development of a mammography associates' role to undertake routine 2-view mammography.

Mammography Associates work within multi-disciplinary teams within a hospital or in a community setting (e.g. mobile breast screening units and medical centres), undertaking mammography of individuals as part of a breast screening programme.

Individuals in this role will be technically skilled in operating specialised mammography equipment and be responsible for producing mammography

images of consistently high quality to meet rigorous NHS Breast Screening Programme (NHSBSP) standards.

The apprenticeship will provide candidates with understanding of breast anatomy, physiology, and pathology, including clinical signs and symptoms of breast cancer, and they will be able to apply knowledge of ionising radiation regulations.

On completion of the apprenticeship candidates will be technically skilled in operating specialised mammography equipment and be responsible for monitoring equipment function and performance.

How the Mammography Associate apprenticeship is helping to address shortages in the breast imaging workforce

The breast imaging workforce faces big challenges in attracting, training and retaining the right mix of professions and skills.

The breast training units, key stakeholders and other professionals from around the country began working together to find a solution.

Health Education England (HEE) also responded by providing £5million to support a thorough training and development programme through the NBIA.

Since its initial launch in January 2019, the mammography associate apprenticeship has made significant progress; with programmes running in London, Surrey, Manchester and Nottingham.

Grow your team

How to plan, recruit and develop apprentices

Step 1

Assess your workforce development need

Identify the skills gaps of your workforce and their current qualification level relating to their role. Think about any vacancies that could be considered as a future apprentice role. Estimate how much salary funding you have to spend on apprenticeship roles.

Step 2

Identify your apprenticeship experts

Your Trust will have an 'Apprenticeship lead', they normally work within the Training or HR functions of Trusts. Your apprenticeship lead will be able to help you access apprenticeship levy and start apprentices on programme. If you can't identify your lead, you can contact your regional HEE relationship manager who can also support you. You can contact them [HERE](#).

Step 3

Access Funding

Either via levy (if you have a wage bill over £3million), reserve government co-investment or find a levy transfer.

Step 4

Choose an apprenticeship training provider

Find a training provider who will offer the right apprenticeship qualification and assess your apprentice over the duration of their qualification. ***More details of the current mammography training providers are provided within this booklet.***

Step 5

Advertise a vacancy or identify existing staff

You can work with your training provider to help with advertising and shortlisting. They can also help you identify an existing employee as well as recruit new apprentices.

Step 6

Provide ongoing support for the apprentice

Including, helping new apprentices to adjust to the workplace and planning workload to provide the necessary opportunities to complete practical tasks in line with training goals.

How can I access funding?

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 will still need to cover salary).

Course Details

Typical Course duration

12 - 18 months

Apprenticeship standard

The apprentices will achieve the following qualifications:

- Level 4 Mammography Associate
- Functional Skills in Maths and English Level 2 (if candidates do not hold GCSE grades A-C or equivalent).

Typical Entry requirements

- Be 18 years or older
- Be employed in Breast Screening Units or symptomatic units
- Be legally allowed to work in the UK
- Have lived in the UK for the last three years
- Level 2 in English and Maths*

**some training providers will expect learners to have level 2 English and Maths on entry to the programme others will expect them to study and achieve it by the end of the apprenticeship. Please speak to your course provider about their specific requirements.*

Course Content

- Clinical Mammography
- Mammography Science
- Professional Practice
- Quality assurance
- Communication and Team Working
- Health and Safety

Course Providers

Please Note: that a national procurement is in progress, therefore this provider list may change. Please contact talentforcare@hee.nhs.uk for the most up to date provider details

South Thames College group in partnership with St George's National Breast Education Centre London

Find out more about the course [here](#)

Health Education England in partnership with Nightingale Centre, Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Find out more about the course [here](#)

Contact breastacademy@mft.nhs.uk for more details

Health Education England working across the North East in partnership with Nottingham Breast Institute

Find out more about the course [here](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

How will the role contribute to my service?

Mammography associates work within multi-disciplinary teams. The apprentices will be trained to use specialised mammography equipment and produce mammography images of consistently high quality to meet rigorous national programme standards. On completion of the 12 to 18-month apprenticeship, the mammography associate practitioners will be qualified to do routine 2-view mammography.

What is the length of time on course?

The typical course duration is 12 to 18 months.

Can part time staff undertake the apprenticeship?

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

What is a DAS account?

A DAS account is a “digital apprenticeship service” account. You use your DAS account to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment costs and manage apprenticeship learners. If your organisation pays levy, they will have already set up an account and you should speak to your apprenticeship lead. If you haven't set up a digital account, you can find out how to [HERE](#).

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

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

What qualification will the learners receive on completion?

On completion of the apprenticeship candidates will be technically skilled in operating specialised mammography equipment and be responsible for monitoring equipment function and performance and will attain a Level 4 Certificate in Mammography Associate from the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education. Learners will also obtain Functional Skills in Maths and English Level 2 (if they do not already hold GCSE grades A-C or equivalent).

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. It is training, which is received by the apprentice, during the apprentice's normal working hours for the purpose of achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the approved apprenticeship referenced in the apprenticeship agreement.

Does the apprentice need a mentor in the workplace?

Each apprentice should have a mentor in the workplace. Mentorship is important and if planned right from the outset, you can minimise the impact this has on team resources. Mentoring or supervising apprentices also provides a development opportunity for existing staff. Time given to support apprentices in the initial stages will reap rewards later and help apprentices get up to speed more quickly.