

Cancer and Diagnostic Apprenticeships

Employer Guidance



A guide to Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiography, Sonography and Mammography Apprenticeships

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About Cancer and Diagnostic Apprenticeship's

Cancer and Diagnostic Apprenticeships are an employment-based route into the professions. To undertake an apprenticeship learners must be employed within a department that allows them to practice and use their skills, this could be a radiography department or an oncology service for example. Typically, apprenticeships combine extensive workplace learning and practice within your department, supported by academic learning at university and distance learning.

Context

Apprenticeships are a key Government and HEE priority. With 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**
- **Mammography Associate**
- 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 freshen up their workforce. 86% of employers say apprenticeships develop skills relevant to their organisation and 78% reported improved productivity.

Increased flexibility of the workforce

Develop your existing workforce

Apprenticeships have lower attrition rates

Attract and recruit from a wider pool of people in your local community

Recruit a more diverse and local workforce

Improve retention

Reduce training and recruitment costs

Create a flexible training route

Recruiting a more local workforce to improve staff retention

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

Course Details

Diagnostic Radiographer Degree Apprenticeship

Level: 6

Integrated degree apprenticeship

Typical duration: 36 months *(some learners will be able to take a shortened course if they have previous experience and qualifications)*

Maximum levy funding band: £24000

The broad purpose of the Diagnostic Radiographer Apprenticeship is to train learners to provide excellent patient care by obtaining images of a high diagnostic quality using a range of imaging equipment. This will include imaging using x-rays and cross-sectional imaging methods, fluoroscopy and Interventional Radiology and will be able to assist in other imaging modalities such as Ultrasound, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Breast Imaging and Nuclear Medicine.

The programme aligns with the HCPC SOPs and SETs as well as the occupational standards. On completion of the apprenticeship candidates will achieve BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography.

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

Therapeutic Radiographer Degree Apprenticeship

Level: 6

Integrated degree apprenticeship

Typical duration: 36 months *(some learners will be able to take a shortened course if they have previous experience and qualifications)*

Maximum levy funding band: £24000

The broad purpose of the Therapeutic Radiographer Apprenticeship is to train learners to provide excellent care to patients diagnosed with cancer by delivering high quality and accurate radiotherapy, using a variety of forms such as:

- external beam radiotherapy
- brachytherapy
- stereotactic radiotherapy/radiosurgery
- proton therapy
- superficial skin radiotherapy

The programme aligns with the HCPC SOPs and SETs as well as the occupational standards. On completion of the apprenticeship candidates will achieve BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography

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

Sonographer Degree Apprenticeship

Level: 6

Integrated degree apprenticeship

Typical duration: 36 months

Maximum levy funding band: £19000

The broad purpose of the Sonographer Degree Apprenticeship is to train learners to conduct diagnostic and screening ultrasound examinations. The programme aligns with the following professional recognition:

- Society and College of Radiographers for Sonographer
- British Medical Ultrasound Society for Sonographer

On completion of the apprenticeship candidates will achieve one of the following:

- BSc Honours Ultrasound.
- BSc Honours Medical Ultrasound.
- BSc Honours Diagnostic Imaging.
- BSc Honours Diagnostic Ultrasound.
- BSc Honours Medical Imaging (Ultrasound).
- BSc Honours Ultrasound Imaging.

Mammography Associate Apprenticeship

Level: 4

Typical duration: 12-18 months

Maximum levy funding band: £5000

The broad purpose of the Sonographer Degree Apprenticeship is to train learners undertake routine mammography on individuals with symptoms of breast disease. 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 learners achieve Level 4 Certificate in Mammography Associate from Institute of Apprenticeships and will be able to produce mammography images of consistently high quality to meet rigorous NHS Breast Screening Programme (NHSBSP) standards.

Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship

Level: 5

Typical duration: 18 months

Maximum levy funding band: £12,000

Assistant Practitioner is a job title applied to a very wide variety of roles that have been developed locally by employers to meet individual service need – the apprenticeship can be contextualised to train Radiography Assistants.

Upon successful completion of apprenticeship, individuals will achieve an accredited level 5 qualification such as a Foundation Degree, other Level 5 Diploma of Higher Education or the Level 5 Diploma for Assistant Practitioners in Healthcare.

For Assistant Practitioners who wish to progress into Registered Practice, the apprenticeship can provide credits into some Higher Education programmes aligned to professional registration. Read a case study [HERE](#), where the Midlands region successfully upskilled Assistant Practitioners to become Diagnostic Radiographers in 18 months.

Typical entry requirements

Entry requirements will be stipulated by individual universities and training providers. **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
- They should have achieved and can evidence level 2 in English and Maths (GCSE C or grade 4)
- Have previous study, such as a Foundation Degree, Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship or A Levels
- The university may also consider experience and evidence of readiness for level 4 study for existing staff who lack traditional academic qualifications

Typical entry criteria for mammography associate apprentices could include:

- Be 18 years or older
- Be employed in Breast Screening Units or symptomatic units
- 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 provider about their specific requirements.*

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 existing workforce, and some 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 in they have a gap that cannot be evidenced through APEL/RPL.

APEL Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is the process where credit is sought for learning which has not previously been assessed and awarded credit by an academic institution or professional organisation. It is learning which has taken place from a range of experiences and is often unstructured, personal and unconsciously gained.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) allows you to convert relevant knowledge, skills, and experience into credits you can put towards a qualification. Credits are a standard way of

measuring learning. RPL means you can start your course at the appropriate level and reduce the number of credits you need to study to gain a qualification.

Procurement

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

This 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, and as a result employer 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) 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 procurements for Diagnostic and Therapeutic Degree Apprenticeships and Mammography Associate. These providers have been quality assured by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust and an expert panel.

Diagnostic Radiographer Degree Apprenticeship Providers

Some course start dates are subject to HCPC approval, please contact the universities below for exact detail:

University	Delivery Location	Start Date
<i>Birmingham City University</i>	Midlands	Apr 2022
<i>Canterbury Christ Church University</i>	South East	Sep 2021
<i>Coventry University</i>	National	Current
<i>London South Bank University</i>	London	Sep 2022
<i>Sheffield Hallam University</i>	National	Jan 2022
<i>Teesside University</i>	North East & Yorkshire	Sep 2021
<i>University of Brighton</i>	South East	Sep 2022
<i>University of Cumbria*</i>	North East & Yorkshire and North West	Feb 2022
<i>University of Derby</i>	Midlands	Sep 2021
<i>University of Exeter</i>	South West	Current
<i>University of Gloucestershire</i>	South West	Jan 2022
<i>University of Plymouth</i>	South West	Jul 2022
<i>University of the West of England</i>	South West	Nov 2021

* Note – this programme is designed at those with existing AP qualifications

Therapeutic Radiographer Degree Apprenticeship Providers

Some course start dates are subject to HCPC approval, please contact the universities below for exact detail:

University	Delivery Location	Start Date
<i>Birmingham City University</i>	Midlands	Apr 2022
<i>London South Bank University</i>	London	Sep 2022
<i>Sheffield Hallam University</i>	National	Jan 2022
<i>University of the West of England</i>	South West	Nov 2021

Sonographer Degree Apprenticeship Providers

The Sonography apprenticeship is currently undergoing a funding band review. Once the review is completed a national procurement will be run and this guidance updated to include sonography apprenticeship providers.

Mammography Associate Apprenticeship Providers

Training Provider	Delivery Location	Start Date
<i>South Thames College group in partnership with St George's National Breast Education Centre London</i>	National	Current
<i>Health Education England in partnership with Nightingale Centre, Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</i>	North West	Current
<i>Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with Jarvis In Health (Jarvis Breast Screening Centre)</i>	London & South East	Current

Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Providers

The Assistant Practitioner apprenticeship, with contextualised Radiography content will be tendered for nationally in Winter 2021, after which this guidance updated to include assistant practitioner apprenticeship providers.

Until this list is available you can contact your regional HEE Apprenticeship Relationship Manager for local information about contextualised radiography assistant practitioner apprenticeship providers.

Find your regional Apprenticeship Relationship Manager [HERE](#)

Case Study

The team at Doncaster & Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation identified a workforce need for apprenticeships due to recruitment challenges and high vacancy rate for AfC Band Radiographers and combined this with a clear ambition to widen participation, develop existing staff, and serve as an anchor institution to their local community.

In a rapid timeframe with a new Level 6 Degree Apprenticeship programme starting at a local university (Sheffield Hallam University), the team were able to quickly plan and identify existing AfC Band 2 Radiography Department Assistant staff who could go on to undertaking the degree apprenticeship. Planning ahead has since led to two Level 6 degree apprenticeship training posts being ringfenced each year. In addition to this, next year the department hope to support two additional staff members to undertake the Level 5 Assistant Practitioner apprenticeship. At the organisation, the policy is to fund degree and higher level apprenticeships on the AfC banding of the end-point role via Annex 21.

As a result of supporting existing staff to upskill, the team have found a wealth of local applicants applying for AfC Band 2 Radiography Department Assistant posts made vacant through staff progression. An internal AHP apprenticeship group has since been established connecting together the Vocational Education Manager with AHP leads across the organisation.

Sara Elliott, Head of Medical Imaging, Doncaster & Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust & Kelly Turkhud, Vocational Education Manager, Doncaster & Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Frequently Asked Questions

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.

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 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.

Links and Resources

[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](#)

[Initial assessment and recognition of prior learning guidance](#)

[RPL / APEL guidance](#)

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

[Navigating the Assistant Practitioner standard](#)

[Procurement](#)

[Achieving the benefits of apprenticeships](#)

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

[Supporting disabled apprentices and those with LDD](#)

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

[steps to expanding placement capacity](#)

[employer approaches to building placement capacity](#)

[Collaborating on apprenticeships](#)

[Using the levy to embed apprenticeships across the trust](#)