

Bridging Programme

Employer Guidance



*A guide to the Bridging Programme - Level 3
Certificate in Bridging Skills for Higher Education
to assist progression to degree apprenticeships*

Context:

The Level 3 Certificate in Bridging Skills for Higher Education is a nationally recognised qualification, accredited by OCN London, which helps learners to develop the academic study skills that will be required for higher level apprenticeships, particularly degrees. The course includes the following five mandatory units:

- a. Extended Academic Essay and Report Writing Skills for Higher Study.
- b. Essential Skills for Academic Study.
- c. Extended Project Skills for Academic Study.
- d. Finding and Reading Information Skills for Academic Study.
- e. Understanding Opportunities in Higher Education.

Following discussions with a number of Higher Education Institutes, HEE have gained agreement that they will accept the Level 3 Certificate in Bridging Skills for Higher Education within their entry criteria for some degree apprenticeships, for example Occupational Therapist degree apprenticeship, under specific circumstances. The Bridging Course is aimed at existing NHS staff who do not meet the traditional UCAS entry requirements but who are felt to be suitable for a degree apprenticeship.

Background:

In 2021 HEE ran a pilot in London in partnership with North East London Health and Care Partnership, the pilot was available in pan-London only. Following discussions with Coventry University, University of Hertfordshire and University of East London, we gained agreement that they will accept the Level 3 Certificate in Bridging Skills for Higher Education within their entry criteria for the Occupational Therapy (OT) degree apprenticeship (under specific circumstances). HEE agreed to part fund a pilot Bridging Course which delivered this certificate for staff employed by NHS Trusts.

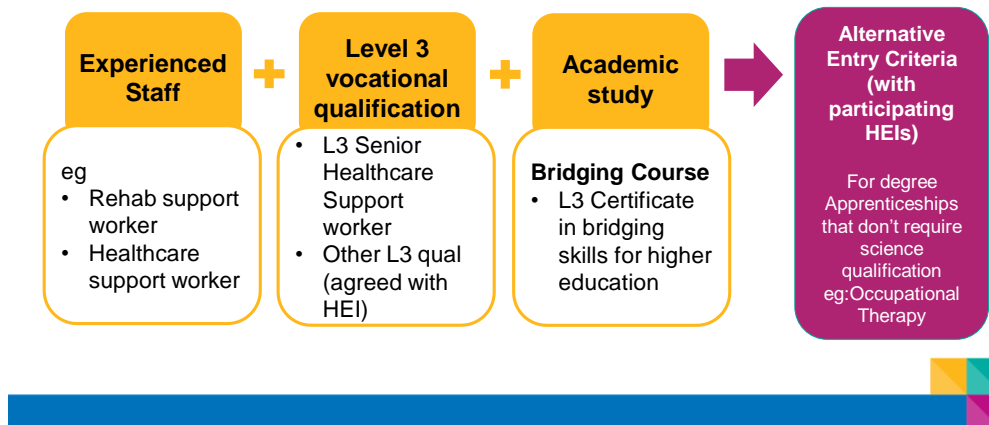
There were limited places on this first pilot course, which started in May 2021 and finish in August 2021, the course enabled 10 participants to progress to the OT degree apprenticeship who started in September 2021.

HEE have now run a mini-competition tender to identify training providers in England who can offer this course, details of the training providers and the costs can be found on page 5 and 6 of this document. The cost of this course will not be covered by HEE, therefore NHS and health and social employers or the candidates will have to cover the cost/study leave of the programme.

Using the Level 3 Certificate in Bridging Skills for Higher Education to assist progression to degree apprenticeships:

The course can be used simply to help individuals to develop their academic study skills, but it can also be used as part of a progression route to degree apprenticeships where a staff member does not meet the traditional entry requirements set for the degree apprenticeship e.g. UCAS points, because they do not have the required level 3 academic qualifications. The course was piloted with participating universities as part of a package that was agreed as alternative entry criteria.

Bridging pipeline



Universities supporting the pilot bridging programme agreed that if the individual met all 3 criteria above this would form alternative entry criteria to the traditional UCAS points and applicants would therefore be eligible to join the Occupational Therapy degree apprenticeship (which was the target for the pilot), subject to the university interview.

Things to consider if you want to use the Bridging course to support staff to progress to a degree apprenticeship:

Target degrees:

This programme is intended to feed into those degree apprenticeship programmes where traditional entry criteria is blocking individuals that employers want to support to staff to join.

Different universities have different entry requirements for different degree apprenticeships. Some degrees have additional entry requirements such as science qualifications in which case the bridging qualification will be insufficient. The bridging programme as depicted in the chart above will not suffice in this case. Some degrees already have flexible entry requirements, in which case this programme is not needed as method of supporting progression.

Occupational Therapy is an example of a degree apprenticeship for which this programme might provide a useful alternative entry criteria.

Does your chosen university support this programme as alternative entry criteria?

Before you support staff to join a bridging course it is essential to be sure that the university you have selected has agreed that this programme can be used as an alternative entry requirement. The decision regarding entry requirements sits with the university and it is advised you seek a formal agreement with the university that staff meeting the 3 components in the chart above will be considered as meeting entry requirements and invited to interview. You can use the sample progression agreement template (appendix 1) with your university. Check with your HEE Talent for Care Relationship manager first as a progression agreement might already be in place.

Gaining the Level 3 Certificate in Bridging Skills for Higher Education does not guarantee a place on a degree apprenticeship:

It's important to manage expectations to ensure that employers/staff do not purchase this course thinking that once they gain the qualification, they are guaranteed a place on the target degree apprenticeship. In addition to the agreement with the university (appendix 1), progression depends on

- a) the employer making the decision to support an agreed number of staff on the degree apprenticeship
- b) the staff member in question being selected to go forward to the university recruitment process.

Cost of the qualification:

This qualification is not funded by HEE, therefore cost of this qualification needs to be covered by the employing organisation or the learner themselves.

Qualification Details:

Level 3 Certificate in Bridging Skills for Higher Education

[https://www.ocnlondon.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/OCN%20London%20Qualification%20Guide/Unit%20Guides/OCNLR_Level_3_Certificate_in_Bridging_Skills_for_Higher_Education-\(QCF\).pdf](https://www.ocnlondon.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/OCN%20London%20Qualification%20Guide/Unit%20Guides/OCNLR_Level_3_Certificate_in_Bridging_Skills_for_Higher_Education-(QCF).pdf)

Procurement:

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.

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 or see the full bids from the training providers, please contact Sft.commercial@nhs.net**

HEE Support:

If you have any questions, please contact your Regional Relationship Manager for Apprenticeships:

- London – Jennie Stone – jennifer.stone@hee.nhs.uk
- East of England – Rob Brooks – rob.brooks@hee.nhs.uk
- South West – James Orpin-Wright – james.orpin-wright@hee.nhs.uk
- South East – Elaine Lancaster – elaine.lancaster@hee.nhs.uk
- North East & Yorkshire – Fay Lane – fay.lane@hee.nhs.uk
- North West – Gemma Hall – gemma.hall@hee.nhs.uk
- Midlands – Liz Sahu – liz.sahu@hee.nhs.uk

Course Providers:

Training Provider (and contact for course)	Delivered Level 3 Certificate in Bridging Skills for Higher Education (L3 CBSHE) before	Accredited by OCN London to deliver L3 CBSHE	Delivery Model	Length of course	Min/Max Cohort	Cost to the employer/learner	Start dates	L3 CBSHE available from
Lifetime Training Group Limited Hayley.barrett@lifetimetraining.co.uk	Delivering the embedded Bridging Certificate since March 2022 and will be delivering the standalone certificate from August 2022	In progress	Blended learning – online, self-study and remote visits	3-4 months Standalone Duration of Level 3 SHCSW apprenticeship if completed during apprenticeship	No min. or max. numbers required	Standalone - £1000.00 No additional cost if delivered as part of Senior Healthcare Support Worker Level 3 Apprenticeship Standard	Roll on/off	August 2022
Impact Futures Training Ltd gareth.reichers@impactfutures.co.uk	No	Yes	Fully online	12-week (standalone) or 26-week programme (embedded in level 3 vocational qualification)	No min. or max. numbers required	Individual learner = £2,225.00 Or optional cohort delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 – 9 learner cohort = £600.00 per learner 10+ learner cohort = £400.00 per learner 	Roll on/off	Immediately
Buckinghamshire College Group LMilton@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk	No	In progress	Blended, attendance required at Aylesbury and/or Amersham Campuses	16 weeks	Min. 10 per course. Max. 30 per course.	£724.00 (in line with advanced learner loan)	September and February start dates	Sept 2022
Dynamic Training UK Limited Caron.keys@dynamictraining.org.uk Claire.gardner@dynamictraining.org.uk	Yes - 98.68% success rate	Yes	Online	12 weeks	Min. 10 per course. Max. 15 per course.	£775.00 per learner (Based on a cohort of 10)	Roll on/off	Immediately

Luminate Education Group Lee.pryor@luminare.ac.uk	No	TBC	Blended learning. Course can be delivered 100% online, or delivery at the University Centre campus in Leeds, 50% online/50% face to face.	18 weeks	Min. 10 per course. Max. 40 per course.	£724.00 per learner	Roll on/off or set dates for cohorts	Sept 2022
University of Bedfordshire John.mccarthy@beds.ac.uk	No	Yes	The programme will be delivered from Luton (Park Square) campus but subject to agreement the proposal is to deliver this item virtually to fully accommodate the applicants.	10 weeks	Min. cohort 6	£771.00 per learner	Proposed start & ends dates are: Jan 2023 June 2023 Sept 2023 Jan 2024 June 2024 Sept 2024	Jan 2023

Appendix 1

Template for Progression Agreement

PROGRESSION AGREEMENT TEMPLATE - For Universities to put onto headed paper
Blue text = comment/guidance and should be deleted

Progression Agreement

This progression agreement enables learners to **progress** onto **higher education** (HE) courses as specified below. This particular progression agreement was created for employed staff seeking to progress to apprenticeship training programmes.

INSERT UNIVERSITY NAME agrees the following progression arrangements for all learners applying for the courses specified in the table below.

Entry criteria for progression agreement – the learner will have <u>all</u> of the following:	If criteria are met, the learner will be offered a place on the following courses:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Confirmation from their employer that they are felt to be suitable for the degree apprenticeship and that the employer will support them to start the degree apprenticeship if they meet the remaining criteria.2. A minimum of 1 years' experience as a healthcare support worker or rehab support worker in a relevant department3. A relevant level 3 qualification eg Senior Healthcare Support worker apprenticeship4. Level 3 certificate in bridging skills for higher education5. A successful university interview for the degree apprenticeship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupational Therapist (Integrated degree) apprenticeship standard, Level 6• Any other degree apprenticeships? INSERT IF YOU WISH

This progression agreement will be shared with all employers and/or training providers that wish to support staff to take up the specified university degree programmes, as well as individuals wanting to progress to these programmes.

If the learner/employer are using the progression agreement, this will be made explicit to the university from the outset and in advance of the recruitment process.

It may be that the university interview takes place before the learner has achieved all entry criteria highlighted in the table above. In such cases, the university may choose to make a conditional offer of a place, subject to the learner achieving all criteria.

It should be noted that achievement of all elements of the criteria are necessary to progress to the target degree apprenticeship. Achievement of the qualifications alone do not guarantee a place.

Signed on behalf of **XXXXUNIVERSITY NAME**

Name:	Job Title:
Signature:	Date: