



**NOTTINGHAM
COLLEGE**

Apprenticeship Student Engagement, Recruitment and Initial Assessment Policy December 2021





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Summary	The purpose of this document is to set out the approach to engagement, recruitment and initial assessment for apprentices at Nottingham College.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Nottingham College is committed to enabling independent lives by providing outstanding opportunities through education into employment. We will do this through an open and transparent admissions process that considers all applicants on their individual circumstances and gives them the best possible opportunity to study with us. We aim to offer the broadest possible range of courses and opportunities for apprentices of all abilities and aspirations. The underlying principle of the Apprenticeship engagement, recruitment and Initial assessment policy is that all students choosing to apply to Nottingham College will be offered an opportunity to study with us, on the most appropriate programme.

2. Objective

- 2.1 This Policy governs the admission or progression of individuals to the College as apprenticeship students.

The College's approach is:

- To operate a fair, open and transparent admissions process
- To provide accurate and timely information, and impartial advice and guidance to applicants and potential applicants to enable them to make the right choices for their future and that the chosen apprenticeship route matches students interests and/or career aspirations.
- To build a College community that values inclusivity, diversity and the contributions of a wide range of apprentices.
- To have a robust admissions process to safeguard our students, staff and partners
- To ensure that Nottingham College's apprenticeship student engagement, recruitment and initial assessment process from initial enquiry through to enrolment provides appropriate information, advice and guidance at all stages.
- To ensure that the process is open and transparent and that employers, applicants and staff understand the respective requirements and commitments at each stage.
- To ensure that the right student is placed on the correct apprenticeship with a suitable employer and are given appropriate support so that they have every opportunity to complete the qualification and progress.
- This guidance provides additional information to support initial assessment of prior learning in accordance with the policy intent and the ESFA apprenticeship funding rules. Ensuring recognition of prior learning is part of the student eligibility assessment and all the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard should be considered in reviewing the prior learning of the apprentice.
- To comply with the Education & Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) apprenticeship funding rules set out for main providers.



3. Risk assessment and Safeguarding duty

- 3.1 The college has a duty to ensure that all students, apprentices and staff feel safe and protected whilst at College and will work with statutory and other local agencies to ensure their safety.
- 3.2 The College will undertake a risk assessment or a Fitness to Study assessment on applicants, students or apprentices who disclose potential risks.
- 3.3 Where there is an identified risk, the College may share information regarding the risk with statutory and other agencies in order to ensure the safety of its staff and students.
- 3.4 The College reserves the right to refuse entry to the College, if following the risk assessment process (which may include a Safeguarding Panel led by the Director of Customer Experience) the College feels the risks attached to the applicant are too high.
- 3.5 Apprentices have the right to appeal against the decision to refuse admission.

4. Criminal convictions

- 4.1 Applicants are asked to disclose 'relevant' and 'unspent' criminal convictions or court proceedings on their application form. Further information will be sought from applicants who disclose and risk assessments will be undertaken by a member of the Safeguarding Team
A panel to review the application will be held if the risk rating within the risk assessment exceeds the appropriate thresholds.

5. Objectives of the service

- 5.1 Applicants for apprenticeships are assessed to provide the College with information in relation to their eligibility, starting point, learning style and any additional needs they may have in order to ensure that they are on the right Programme of Study. This will be carried out using a variety of methods including online assessments, face to face meetings or written activities.
- 5.2 To maximise students achieving their chosen apprenticeship pathway within the agreed timeframe and to enhance completion and progression rates.
- 5.3 To increase the conversion from enquiry to application to enrolment.
- 5.4 To provide a clear process for staff to follow, to enable fairness, consistency and transparency.
- 5.5 To provide a clear process for external customers and/or other stakeholders, to ensure fairness and consistency.
- 5.6 To provide excellent customer service to applicants, employers and other stakeholders throughout the recruitment process.
- 5.7 To identify and maximise the employer's return on investment (ROI), by ensuring that a suitable applicant is placed based on business objectives.
- 5.8 To ensure the College helps the employer develop a suitable job description and person specification and to agree an appropriate Apprenticeship programme for the job role.



6. Key Responsibilities

6. The Business Engagement Team

- The Business Engagement Team (BET) sits within the Employer Services department that is managed by the Executive Director Employer Services
- The Business Engagement Team (BET) is managed by the Head of Employer Service who reports to the Executive Director Employer Services. Head of Employer Services directly line manages the Operations Manager and The Strategic Business Partner's who are responsible in ensuring the Apprenticeship Engagement and Recruitment Policy is adhered to.

Business Engagement Team In dealing with applicants, BET will:

All applications relating to apprenticeship opportunities are facilitated through the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team who will undertake initial screening assessments and assist with securing suitable employment opportunities.

- Create an applicant record once an application has been submitted within the CRM
- Follow up any additional needs identified and refer to the appropriate staff/ support agencies, e.g. LLDD, Looked After Child and applicants with criminal convictions prior to placing onto an apprenticeship.
- Document any prior learning, work experience or relevant qualifications that have been achieved by the applicant that may affect their apprenticeship programme and funding.
- Create an applicant file to include applicant's application form, diagnostic results, interview paperwork, PLR checked or copies of qualification certificates if presented.
- To follow any processes agreed by individual curriculum areas dependent on the subject specialism.
- Maintain correspondence throughout the application process including the chasing up of non-attendees and rearranging interview times.
- Support curriculum teams in contacting absentees and/or late applicants before closing date of vacancy.
- To work in conjunction with other agencies, e.g. Futures, NAS, Nottingham Hub, ESFA, D2N2.





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Business Engagement Team In dealing with employers, BET will:

- To deal with employer enquiries timely and appropriately using key college staff in line with our service standards to ensure a quality experience.
- The BET will respond to enquiries within 48 hours of receiving.
- Visit all employers on site where able to complete an organisational needs analysis and identify key goals and objectives to be achieved.
- To ensure that employer requirements are explored, understood and appropriately actioned.
- To ensure that all necessary checks have been carried out with an employer before agreeing to provide a service.
- To ensure an employer vacancy is appropriately managed (where applicable) within the parameters of current legislation.
- Where an employer has a student already in place to ensure the Apprenticeship is appropriate, covers the range required and ensures that the student meets the minimum entry requirements. Where prior learning has already been achieved including work experience, industry competency and additional qualifications will be considered to ensure the minimum duration of 12 months plus the 20% off the job is required. If this is deemed to not be the case apprenticeship funds will not be used and alternative methods of training will be discussed.
- Log enquiries and discuss the detail with the relevant Apprenticeship manager if required.
- Arrange meetings between BET and Curriculum Specialists/Apprenticeship managers to discuss requirements (new business), to ensure the appropriateness of the placement, job role and identified apprenticeship framework/standard (if required).
- Record the 'employer suitability' decision made by the Curriculum Specialist (e.g. failure to complete Health & Safety actions, previous experience with employer).
- Assist the Curriculum Specialist in understanding/documenting the employer requirements.
- The Recruitment co-ordinator will manage the vacancy on behalf of the employer. The Skills Solution Consultant will keep the employer updated throughout the recruitment procedure.
- Keep the employer and Curriculum Specialist updated on the progress.
- Provide the employer with key information on fees, grants, employer responsibilities to taking on an apprentice, on/off training required.
- To ensure that employers receive all relevant information and guidance to support their business requirements and students whilst on programme.



The Employer will (In accordance with the signed Training Services Agreement):

- Provide relevant and accurate information to detail their requirements including vacancy details e.g. job description, essential/desirable criteria, linked to a specific standard.
- Provide relevant and accurate information to detail their employer liability insurance and health and safety documentation.
- Participate in the interview process and carry out any scheduled interviews.
- To offer a work trial (as part of the interview process) if necessary and provide feedback to BET prior to offering the placement.
- Feedback to BET on both successful and unsuccessful interviews and work trials.
- Assist Nottingham College in completing all necessary checks e.g. Health & Safety and complete any identified actions in a timely manner.
- Return any required correspondence prior to the Apprentice starting employment; this includes evidencing a copy of the apprentice's contract of employment prior to enrolment.
- Inform Nottingham College of any changes, including recruitment needs, job role or conditions of service once the apprentice is recruited.
- Return any outstanding paperwork in a timely manner in order to meet deadlines. Where any deviation from the recruitment process happens this must be agreed by curriculum and at no point can an apprentice be offered a placement without curriculum authorisation.
- Identified who will support the apprentice as a mentor throughout the programme and review progress and make decisions regarding readiness for the end point assessment.

The Applicant will:

- Complete the National Apprenticeship Service or College application form on the online portal. Where a CV/application is not available BET to help support in developing one.
- Provide relevant and accurate information in support of their application including any prior learning in relevant qualifications, skills and experience.
- If requested by the employer provide reference details.
- Attend any scheduled interviews and/or contact the BET if unable to attend.
- Return any required correspondence as requested by the college.
- Attend the dates provided through the process, e.g. Taster events, diagnostic tests, interviews, information, advice and guidance and enrolment.
- Provide certificates of prior qualifications at IAG stage to be discussed with recruiter before enrolment takes place.



Assessors/Skills trainers will work with apprentices and employers to:

- Complete the enrolment process with the employer and apprentice.
- Assess whether the individual still needs an apprenticeship with a minimum duration of 12 months with at least 20% off-the-job training. If this is not deemed to be the case, this amount of training will not be necessary for the individual so the student is ineligible for the apprenticeship programme and an alternative should be considered.
- Use all the initial assessment information as the curriculum specialist to assess the starting point for the apprentice and agree with the employer how the programme will be delivered by the employer and college to reflect the apprentice's existing competency of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB) and plan opportunities in developing new KSB's to achieve occupational competence.
- Develop the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and commitment statement with employer and apprentice to set out key milestones to enable points to review progress.

Apprenticeship managers in dealing with Employers, will:

- Respond to availability requests sent from the employer/BET in a timely manner.
- Update BET on any potential employer opportunities and outcomes of meetings.
- Provide BET with all relevant information to enable them to effectively manage job vacancies.
- Complete all necessary checks (including follow ups) and paperwork e.g. Health & Safety assessment, skill scan checks, prior learning and any reductions and additional learning support mechanisms before placing a student with an employer. Any reductions to funding must be fed back to the BET team prior to enrolment so that they can update the payment schedule accordingly for employers.
- Carry out further Health & Safety checks (If required) and inform BET of the outcome.





The Operations Manager and the Strategic Business Partner's will:

- Ensure the Apprenticeship profile targets are achieved and that enough pipeline business is secured to achieve those targets.
- They will flag any areas of key risk to the Head of Employer Engagement and work closely to pull together a recovery plan to mitigate risk.
- Work with Apprenticeship Managers and Faculty Area Managers to build high quality, employer responsive apprenticeship provision that meets the needs of employers.
- Ensure that all financial payments for apprenticeships are paid in a timely manner through; DAS system. Ensuring any co funded fees are also collected via invoice.
- Ensure employer invoices are raised in a timely manner and paid within the 90 day period.
- Working closely with finance on any overdue invoices and debt collection.
- Help inform the curriculum planning stage with Head of Employer Services to ensure the curricula accurately reflects the local market.
- To continuously Self-Assess through quality assurance of staff, recruitment feedback surveys from employers and staff, results of College annual survey.

The Head of Employer Services and Head of Operations will:

- Heads of Operations have a responsibility for ensuring that Curriculum staff understand and comply with this policy.
- Work with MIS to ensure that suitable management reports are available showing applications and enrolment numbers and annual comparisons of data.
- Ensure that the Apprenticeship Engagement, Recruitment and Initial Assessment Policy is adhered to.
- Provide the college's management team with accurate and comparative admissions data.
- To continuously Self-Assess and lead the implementation of the action plan to ensure continuous improvement of the service and the provision.
- Ensure all employer and student complaints are handled effectively, through to resolution and the relevant changes to practice are implemented.



7. Applicant/ Apprentice student initial assessment and recruitment procedure

- 7.1 This procedure sets out a framework within which all Nottingham College will work, this includes with staff from other agencies such as Futures, Schools, National Apprenticeship Scheme (NAS) and employers to assist applicants in finding an apprenticeship/course that meets their requirements. Opportunities for apprentices to view some teaching facilities and gain a clearer insight into an apprenticeship prior to the commencement of a programme may be organised through the holding of 'Open Days', 'Taster Events', 'Enrolment Events' or by arranged visits.

Application stage

- 7.2 All applicants are required to complete an application form via the National Apprenticeship Scheme (NAS) website (www.apprenticeships.org.uk) or by using a Nottingham College application form. There is an expectation that the applicant has adequately researched into the job and the employer who is providing the vacancy.
- 7.3 If an applicant wants to make an enquiry, an online enquiry form can be submitted (www.nottinghamcollege.ac.uk) before the completion of an application form. Alternatively, applicants can call the BET (0115 945 7260) or email business@nottinghamcollege.ac.uk. A member of BET will respond to all enquiries within 2 working days of receipt. Please note that an application form will still need to be completed and submitted after an enquiry has been dealt with.
- 7.4 Applicants should make every effort to fully complete an application form. If an application form is not fully complete it will delay the application process. BET will make every effort to contact applicants to fill in missing information. (Please note that Nottingham College reserves the right to request references and/or school reports for a potential student depending upon the apprenticeship they are applying for.) All information submitted as part of an application may be shared with the relevant employer unless this is otherwise stated in line with data protection guidance. The Nottingham college application form confirms personal details and eligibility to progress onto an apprenticeship.
- 7.5 Entry requirements (including job specific criteria) will vary between vacancies and programmes of study. Each vacancy or programme will have a clear statement on entry requirements, which is displayed in the vacancy details and course information. Entry requirements need to be met in order for the application form to move on to the next stage. If an application does not meet the entry requirements, the BET will explain this to the applicant and suggest a lower level alternative or refer the applicant to one of the College's Careers Progression Advisors to discuss alternative routes. In some cases, there may be additional entry requirements e.g. practical assessments that have to be achieved. Please note in extremely busy periods whilst every effort is made to contact all applicants, it may not be possible for us to alert all applicants to them being unsuccessfully short listed. Therefore, please assume that no communication within 2 weeks deems you as unsuccessful for that apprenticeship vacancy, this does not however mean you would automatically be unsuccessful if you were to apply to another.



The following entry criteria should be applied: _____

Intermediate Apprenticeships

GCSEs at grade D (9-3) or above including English and/or Maths (as specified by the Curriculum team), or agreed equivalents.

Initial Assessment Results: Working towards Level 1 in English, Maths & ICT (where appropriate).

Advanced Apprenticeships

GCSEs at grade C or (9-4) above including English and/or Maths (as specified by the Curriculum team), or agreed equivalents (including an Intermediate Apprenticeship).

Initial Assessment Results: Working towards Level 2 in English, Maths & ICT.

Higher Apprenticeships

Relevant Level 3 qualification including GCSE Grade C or above in English and Maths, or agreed equivalents.

Initial Assessment Results: Level 2 in English, Maths & ICT.

Note:

- a. A trade skills test may be applied as part of the entry criteria according to vacancy/curriculum requirements.
- b. Any additional entry requirements set by curriculum may be subject to change and must be adhered to by BET.





Initial Assessment Process

- 7.6 If the application has fully satisfied the entry criteria, the applicant will be invited to a telephone interview or a face to face meeting at a Nottingham College Campus. Initially, BET will assess the applicant's suitability for an apprenticeship. The applicant will also be required to complete a diagnostic assessment in English, Maths and ICT.
- 7.7 Maths and English and ICT assessments will be carried out using online forskills diagnostic tool this will demonstrate the student's profile and highlight any key areas for development on the programme. IA results and the skill levels will be discussed and recorded following IA and diagnostic assessment to share with the curriculum specialist to use at the enrolment stage when developing the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- 7.8 In the event that the applicant has met the entry criteria and Nottingham College's interview expectations but does not meet the required levels in their diagnostic testing, the applicant may be required to complete a four week intensive programme of study to help them improve their skills in any of the identified areas from their diagnostic report before their application can progress to the next stage. (Unless permission from a Head of Operations or Apprenticeship Manager is given to enable the applicant to proceed to the next stage without completing the intensive programme.)
- 7.9 Applicants will also undertake an assessment (Cognassist) to help identify any potential learning support needs and to determine the additional learning support the college would be required to put in place in order to support the student's journey (See appendix 1 on ALS process)..
- 7.10 Recruitment officers will use the individual ULN from the completed application form to obtain the Personal Learning record which lists the learning events and achievements from awarding bodies with grades and attainment dates. Also reviewing any other prior education, training or associated qualification(s) in a related sector subject and any previous apprenticeship undertaken.

This is to ensure that potential applicants receive information, advice and guidance in the consideration of the individual's personal learning record for previous accredited attainment and qualifications in the eligibility in undertaking a specific apprenticeship. The initial assessment checks that the apprenticeship (both the job role and the training) is an appropriate programme for the individual.

Also to ensure Apprentices are not spending paid time doing training they do not need, apprenticeship funding should not be used to pay for, or accredit, existing knowledge, skills and behaviours.



- 7.11 An initial skills scan is undertaken to assess individuals' current employment status, length, role and remit other work/voluntary experience and any previous apprenticeship study undertaken and any previous qualifications or training relevant to the job role/occupational profile. Also to enable the individual to self-assess previous experience and skills relevant strengths and areas for development.

Assessing prior learning is required to acknowledge previous work experience paid/unpaid (this is particularly important if the apprentice is an existing employee to ensure that this is a new role and/or significant new knowledge and skills to be developed linked to the occupational profile and apprenticeship standard);

If the applicant/student is already in employment, to ensure the apprenticeship will be fit for purpose, meet the goals and objectives of the student, and company the job role will be evaluated and individual skills scan completed. This will cover the full occupational profile and identify areas of further learning of all of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to complete the apprenticeship successfully.

- 7.12 All initial assessment diagnostics, discussions, evidence of prior learning to establish baseline of competencies and informs how much of the apprenticeship training content the individual requires and is all documented in the IAG form.





Initial advice and guidance

- 7.13 Commitments of programme, apprenticeship programme learning and assessment aims and objectives linked to the knowledge skills and behaviours in the occupational profile. Further English and maths study requirements and development opportunities.
- 7.14 If the applicant is applying for an apprenticeship vacancy then there would be discussion around the apprenticeship role/vacancy, job role realities, travelling to work and apprenticeship wages and self-assessment of confidence in interviews.
- 7.15 Discuss career aspirations and how the apprenticeship will support individuals in their own personal and professional development. And discuss and identify any additional support needs in employment and learning.
- 7.16 Recruitment co-ordinator's will complete information advice and guidance (IAG) with all students and to inform them of the next steps in the process. Recruitment co-ordinator's will analyse the initial assessment results, check for student support, check for criminal convictions and ensure all safeguarding procedures are followed in accordance with the College's safeguarding policy.
- 7.17 Recruitment co-ordinator's will provide alternative options within the college such as full-time courses and the option of advice/guidance with careers advisors at the college.





Applicant apprentice vacancy interview

- 7.18 If the applicant has met all required expectations from Nottingham College, the applicant will be included in the final shortlist for the employer's selection and interview process. The successful candidate will ultimately be selected by the employer and a formal job offer will be made and a start date agreed.
- 7.19 Where an applicant is unsuccessful at the initial/second interview, they will be alerted to the reasons why so that the Recruitment co-ordinator's can continue to support their development and work towards a successful outcome on the next attempt.
- 7.20 Applicants unsuccessful at employer interview stage can apply for other vacancies without having to repeat the assessment and college interview process. They will be also be given the option to be referred to one of the College's Career Progression Advisors who will provide the applicant with advice/guidance and help them to identify an alternative programme of study that may be more suitable if this is required.
- 7.21 All offers of places and enrolments on programmes are made on the basis of:
- There being sufficient demand for the programme offered
 - There being sufficient spaces available on the programme concerned
 - An applicant meeting the entry requirements of the chosen programme as specified in the vacancy / course information.
 - An applicant meeting interview conditions
 - Appropriate employment being secured
 - Employer agrees to training contribution costs
- 7.22 If for any reason the apprenticeship programme needs to be closed due to demand Nottingham College will support both the student and employer to find an alternative provider.

Dismissal from apprenticeship on medical grounds:

- 7.23 Learner will be invited into the Assessment Centre for a meeting with the Recruitment co-ordinator's for them to feel reassured that the condition is no longer an ongoing issue that would result in dismissal again moving forward due to incapability to complete the role due to high levels of sickness.
- 7.24 If the condition is ongoing but is felt that it is managed by medication and support from the college then a referral must be made by the Recruitment co-ordinator's to the Operations Manager who will discuss with the learner and if necessary involve other parties such as the Apprenticeship Manager, Assessor and the additional learning support team.
- 7.25 A final decision will be made if possible. Failure to draw a conclusion at that level must result in the query being escalated to the Head of Operations (Lindsey Smith, or in her absence the Head of Operations- Maxine Blake) for a final decision.



Enrolment and Developing the ILP and Commitment Statement

- 7.26 At the start of the apprenticeship programme an apprenticeship agreement will be put in place between the College, employer and the apprentice. (Please note if an applicant is awaiting results they may be offered a conditional place i.e. on obtaining certain results.)
- 7.27 All IAG documentation and evidence is passed to the Curriculum team to enable the assessor to use this information and to carry out further in depth initial assessment through professional discussion or occupational skill scan is carried out with the apprentice to discuss knowledge, skills and behaviours gained in previous roles against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship and recorded on a RPL record and summarised in the My Learning Plan and commitment statement. Any changes will be communicated to the BET team to adjust contracts and the payment schedule.
- 7.28 Agreeing with the employer how the programme will be delivered to reflect starting points from any relevant existing competence in the occupational profile of knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- 7.29 Complete the My Learning Plan to record key milestones to review progress and competence, agreed employer training and support, how the 20% off the job will develop the skills gaps of the KSB's how the apprenticeship on-programme learning and assessment both on and off the job will address these

Links to other college policies

- Nottingham College Safeguarding Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- FE and Apprenticeship Admissions Policy



Appendix 1 Additional Learning Support Process:

Nottingham College welcomes applications from people with disabilities and learning disabilities, people with literacy, numeracy and language difficulties.

Where an applicant is identified as having a diagnosed learning support need or has evidence of prior support, which may impact on their learning at Nottingham College, this will be followed up by the College's Additional Learning Support (ALS) team. Further information may be sought from the applicant to enable an assessment to take place before any support plan or arrangements are agreed.

The Additional Learning Support team will:

- Provide guidance to tutors and teams to enable appropriate support at the taster or meet the team sessions.
- Support applicants at the sessions, if required
- Provide tutors with information on the differentiation required for learning
- Provide guidance on suitability for chosen courses and any necessary reasonable adjustments, or alternative programmes.
- Make necessary arrangements to assess the student on acceptance of an offer to assess their specific needs and agree a support plan (which may or may not include ALS provision)
- Ensure that the student has appropriate access to a range of support options, such as assistive technology and exam access arrangements.



