

Apprenticeships Briefing for the Legal Services Sector December 2011

Background

An Apprenticeship is essentially a set of qualifications and training called a 'framework'. These are developed by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). SSCs are licensed by government to work with employers to develop National Occupational Standards and design Apprenticeship frameworks for the industries they represent.

The Advanced Apprenticeship for the Legal Sector framework is intended to provide a package of training and qualifications for those working in a legal environment who are involved in the provision and practice of Legal Services and Legal Advice but who are not Lawyers. This is a rapidly-growing group of occupations delivering a wide range of legal services in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

1 An Apprenticeship includes the following components:

Component	What it does
Competence Based Element	Assess practical skills and knowledge eg. an NVQ.
Knowledge Based Element <i>(traditionally called a technical certificate)</i>	Develop knowledge and skills within a particular area.
Functional Skills <i>(replace key skills)</i>	Develop generic skills in English, Maths and ICT that are transferable.
Personal Learning & Thinking Skills <i>(replace wider key skills)</i>	Develop skills in creative thinking, independent enquiry, reflective learning, team working, self management, effective participation.
Employee Rights & Responsibilities	Provides an introduction to the particular sector, organisation and role to which the framework relates.
Minimum of 280 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) per year (at least 30% off the job)	This is any learning that is led by a tutor, manager or mentor. GLH can be on and off the job. It ensures that apprentices receive a thorough programme of learning & development.

The length of an Apprenticeship varies depending on prior skills levels of the apprentice, the qualifications being obtained and the industry sector. Generally Apprenticeships take between one and four years to complete. In the Legal sector, we anticipate that it will take between 18 months and two years to complete.

Like all employees, apprentices must still receive a wage. The National Minimum Wage for apprentices is £2.60 per hour. However, as skills develop, many

employers tend to increase wages – in fact research suggests that apprentices earn an average of £170 net pay per week.

There is also the cost of the supervision, support and mentoring that you will need to put in place to support the apprentice. These associated costs are not insignificant – however the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) will match employers' commitment to hiring apprentices by covering in full, or in part, the training costs.

2 So what financial support does NAS provide?

NAS covers the cost of training of apprentices depending on their age:

Candidates aged 16-18- fully funded

Candidates aged 19-24- part funded

Candidates aged 25 and over- part funded with lower initial funding (so slightly lower rate than 19-24 age bracket)

Indications are there will be a change of policy from April 2013, when funding will be based on a loans system for candidates aged 23 and over. Further details to be confirmed by the Government. Further information can be found on the BIS website <http://www.bis.gov.uk/newchallenges>

The government provides the funds to cover the full cost of the mandatory training required to complete the framework as determined by the relevant SSC for a young person aged 16-18 on an Apprenticeship. If employers or providers choose to deliver additional qualifications or courses as part of the delivery of the overall framework, these courses will not be funded and will need to be paid for by the provider or employer.

3 How often do apprentices attend college or training sessions?

This varies from programme to programme. Some of the training can be in the workplace and other sessions could be in college or with a learning provider. Depending on the type of job being done, or the elements of training being undertaken, it could be one day a week or block release.

4 What is the role of the learning provider?

A learning provider is usually a local college or specialist training organisation responsible for an apprentice's off-the-job training. When you take on an Apprentice they will appoint an assessor who will work with you to make sure that the training is well planned. Once the apprentice begins, the assessor will follow their progress and deal with any issues that may arise.

5 Delivery models

An Apprentice must be employed and this could be by a law firm or the Apprentice could be employed by third party.

- **A knowledge based element**

Can be delivered in house by employers (the relevant Awarding Organisation would come and audit this) one day a week or block release to external learning provider.

- **A competence based element**

A Learning Provider would provide someone to come in to the workplace and assess the candidate in the workplace. The provider acts as verifier if the employer has trained assessors who make the assessment decisions.

- **Transferable or 'key skills'**

Delivered by assessor or by day release away to learning provider. Level can be set to meet needs of employer so Number, Literacy and IT can be set at up to level 3 for the apprentice dependent on business need.

- **A module on employment rights and responsibilities**

Delivered by assessor or by day release away to training provider.

6 Process to develop an Apprenticeship pathway

When developing an Apprenticeship framework the developer will need to make sure the Apprenticeship framework is compliant with the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards (SASE) and is a quality product.

Framework developers are more likely to produce compliant and quality frameworks if they have:

- a clear idea about why the Apprenticeship framework is being developed and what it is expected to achieve;
- a process in place by which to quality assure what they are doing.

The development of all Apprenticeships starts with the identification of an occupation/job role on which an Apprenticeship framework will be based upon. Next the framework developer will need to establish and construct a rationale for the Apprenticeship framework. This will focus on why it is needed and the impact it will have in the sector. Finally any gaps in provision will need to be identified and new Functional Maps, National Occupational Standards and qualifications developed where appropriate. At all stages of development consultation with stakeholders is important. Therefore, achieving a quality framework is dependent on a robust and transparent development process that encourages effective collaboration between all the different stakeholders.

7 Benefits of an Apprenticeship

For a return on investment calculation on employing an Apprentice, please see here:

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/ROI-Tool.aspx>

The most relevant apprenticeship is business administration. Please note that these calculations do not take on board fee-earning capabilities of paralegals.

8 Timescales*

National Occupational Standards (basis of all apprenticeships)

National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Paralegal functions Project

First set of draft NOS	May 2012
6 week consultation of draft NOS	May-June 2012
NOS sent for approval	August 2012.

Apprenticeships for paralegals

Advanced Apprenticeship Framework for 'paralegals' launched (public prosecution pathway)	April 2012
Commercial Apprenticeship Pathways being developed	July 2012
Pathways approved	Spring 2013
1st commercial paralegal national apprentices employed	Summer 2013

*These timescales are indicative and could be subject to change.