

Employer Engagement Practice & Procedure – Apprenticeships

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1. Guiding Principles

The University of Roehampton has a thriving employer network, primarily within the greater London region, and reaching nationally and internationally. Employer engagement can support organisations in a number of ways: providing skilled apprentices; through work experience for students and graduates; facilitating research and knowledge exchange; and forming part of their supply chain. Successful employer engagement is dependent on the management of employer relationships and the benefit these activities can bring.

However, as a University we understand there is a wider impact on those we engage with – on people, society, business, the environment. Our commitment to employer engagement is that this activity should not only support our internal aims, but reflect the importance, externally, of Roehampton's value to the local economy and society and how we can in turn benefit our employer networks.

This document sets out the University's processes for working in partnership with employers across our apprenticeship programmes. Its aim is to ensure employer engagement meets the needs of our partners and of our apprentices, and that engagement is meaningful, clear and enables a continuous route for monitoring and evaluation.

Our employer engagement is led by our Director of Alumni, Development and Careers who sits within the Chief Operating Officer's Department and is accountable for the strategy, engagement and ongoing support for working with employers at Roehampton.

2. Working with employers in our sectors

We work closely with employers and local regional and national networks in both nursing and teaching sectors which is where we want to expand our existing undergraduate programmes into apprenticeships. This is our planned approach in direct response to the needs of partners and employers and the strategies set out by the professional sector and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) in each sector.

Both sectors and the occupational areas that we are preparing to deliver are struggling to fill capacity, particularly across London and wider South East, where skills shortages remain a critical issue. This issue predates the pandemic which has simply exacerbated demand from employees, but also increased interest from individuals and caused a gap in regional capacity in delivery.

We already deliver occupational undergraduate programmes for both sectors, working with employer groups. We will deliver at our main campus for teaching and nursing, with the addition of at our new state of the art nursing simulation suite at the Croydon University Centre. This faculty mirrors our simulation suite on main campus but is much closer to our main recruitment and employer area. This provides a much needed improvement in access for students and apprentices; closer to home and work – for example, it is next door to one of our key NHS Trust employers.

Our ambition for both programmes is to provide an employer and learner centric and flexible programme. For the Teacher apprenticeship we are working with or example, a key national teacher employer on the development of our programme who supply high volumes of trained and in training teachers to many small schools, in addition to our own existing schools. This programme is critical to the capacity in our region and our planned start is for September 2021. For nursing our trajectory is from early 2022. We work closely with our existing employers and as part of the pan-London employer and provider networks and our planned

expansion to our new delivery site is in direct response to demand and capacity closer to our apprentices and employers and was developed with their input. Our plan is to offer a range of options for nursing professionals to encompass Registered Nurse and Nursing Associate, Advanced Clinical Practitioner, District Nurse and Community Public Health Nurse. We have expanded our capacity in the Schools to prepare for this wider programme and with the additional extra capacity are now able to deliver to meet demand.

3. Employer Engagement as part of University Strategy

The commitment to employer engagement, including supporting and working in partnership with our apprenticeship employers, sits firmly within the University's three Enabling Strategies.

i. Student Education:

- a) Build new partnerships with external organisations to provide opportunities for students to study, volunteer and develop the connections they need to be successful graduates.
- b) Embed work experience and work placement opportunities in all on-campus courses.
- c) Build experiential learning and professional development opportunities into curriculum design.
- d) Embed advanced digital literacy into the curriculum.
- e) Close the BAME attainment gap and ensure learning resources reflect the diversity of our student community.

ii. Research and Knowledge Exchange

- a) Develop partnership models for academic-led partnerships and collaborations.
- b) Provide clear and open communication channels for potential collaborators and users of our research to approach the University and access staff expertise.
- c) Provide dedicated support for innovation and ideas incubation.
- d) Provide opportunities, including internships, for undergraduate and postgraduate student participation in research projects that are aligned to strategic priorities.

iii. Sustainability

- a) Develop sustainable corporate partnerships that drive income and align with our values.
- b) Introduce new industry, cultural and sporting partnerships that provide placements for our students, engagement opportunities for our staff and which grow our reputation.

4. Embedding Employer Engagement into the University

Employer insight and contribution is evident through both governance and broad university wide activity. We already work closely with employers in the sectors that we initially intend to deliver, for example with the NHS and teaching employers. Our engagement includes, but is not limited to:

- i. Membership of discipline based Advisory Boards and forums. Employers advise on programme design and development, industry trends and

forecasts, and employability routes for students.

- ii. Membership of the School Apprenticeship Board and the University Apprenticeship Board, who are accountable for the apprenticeship programme performance and risk, and for challenging and supporting university staff to deliver high quality apprenticeships.
- iii. Membership of Council. Employers may sit on the University's senior governing body as independent members.
- iv. Placement development and delivery and other employability activity.
- v. Development of bespoke programmes with employers, co-developing programme content including for apprenticeships. Through the TNA, discussions on content and the Standards and the specific focus in their roles and organisation we will establish a programme that meets individual employer needs. We can then work with employers on a whole closed programme for them exclusively, or simply incorporate changes into the flexible delivery model that we apply to our main scheduled programmes. We aim for example to offer start dates that best suit the sector.
- vi. All training for apprentices will be recorded on university systems, and used to update the ILR every month, working with employers to match information with their Apprenticeships Service account. We will provide support for employers to set up their accounts and, where employers ask us to do so, set up and manage their apprentice entries. We will also support employers to set up their apprentice recruitment processes, providing briefing materials and information to check eligibility as part of their recruitment processes and offering support to access and advertise vacancies.
- vii. We will maintain our Course Directory entries to ensure that employers and individuals are aware of our apprenticeship offer, and work with employers to use Find Apprenticeship Training to search for appropriate solutions across all of their identified skills needs. Though the use of the Apprenticeship branding promote apprenticeships to employers through all of our employer engagement activities across the university, for example to our placement employers, at our regular employer events and through our relationships with our professional bodies and local employer networks.

5. Building new apprenticeship partnerships

- i. The University will actively seek to engage new partners both through the development of new apprenticeship programmes and through broader employer engagement for other areas of University activity, such as the university's framework of Advisory Boards, placements, CPD or knowledge exchange. Employers will sit on our Apprenticeship Boards.
- ii. Marketing and promotion of the Apprenticeship Programme to employers is managed through creating relevant sector and occupation networks and links

with key professional bodies, both nationally and regionally. We work with each School/Department to identify a strategy to engage employers in line with our growth plans, for example through running key business networking events to showcase programme benefits, though working with regional employer partnerships (such as the Pan London Health network) and using alumni employer support to match and promote our provision, alongside working with our existing employer contacts.

- iii. We already work closely with professional bodies, sector bodies and local / regional networks in developing and delivering skills programmes. We have co-developed and delivered programmes for example in nursing with (and for) sectors partners, and we engage through our Schools, in employer forums at regional and national level. Where necessary, we have to seek and successfully pass formal approval from the regulatory bodies e.g. the Nursing and Midwifery Council prior to delivery, which we are extending for our apprenticeships.
- iv. Information about the broad range of services the University provides to employers is located on the [Collaborate](#) area of the website. Initial enquiries about apprenticeships will be triaged through the apprenticeships team at: apprenticeships@roehampton.ac.uk
- v. All opportunities for apprenticeship provision will have a detailed marketing plan, which will be developed at programme scoping stage, informing programme approval.

6. Engaging Employers with Programme Development, Approval and Delivery

As part of our work with employers we will provide information, advice and support to enable employers to understand how skills can improve their business and develop their capacity and capability.

- i. The University is committed to ensuring that all activity to secure employer partners to deliver apprenticeships will be subject to the University's quality and standards policies and procedures.
- ii. The University will first work with the employer to diagnose the business issue, identify the appropriate support, if there is a training need and whether an apprenticeship is the right solution.
- iii. We will provide a comprehensive set of information about the programmes and services that we offer, including about our apprenticeships, to help employers match needs to possible solutions.
- iv. We will use the work we do with employer industry boards, with PSRBs and sector groups locally, regionally and nationally to inform the development and design of our programmes, to shape mode and sequencing to mirror the day to day requirements of the sector and occupations. We will use this to inform

employers about best practice and how investing in skills can support growth and productivity, and support retention and recruitment.

- v. We will work with employers to understand their eligibility for the range of training programmes available, and to clarify their apprenticeship funding status, and likely charges and incentive or support payments. We will ensure that their access to support, including for apprenticeships and other government programmes, is set out and confirmed as part of the initial employer eligibility checks. This will enable employers to undertake their Training Needs Analysis with confidence, knowing how to budget for their training plan.
- vi. We will conduct a training needs analysis to identify the opportunities for support, whether training or not. We will ensure that employers have access to the range of services we and our partners can provide, and where other solutions are more appropriate, help employers seek advice on these solutions for example through the Find Apprenticeship Training portal and other national regional and local government advice on available programmes and support.
- vii. Where apprenticeships are the chosen solution, we will offer support for employers to recruit an apprentice, including advertising on the National Apprenticeship Services Find an Apprenticeship vacancy matching service. We will also offer information on eligibility for candidates, about apprenticeships and the specific apprenticeship programmes chosen as part of our employer recruitment pack. This will enable employers to fully brief candidates, and most importantly their line managers, about their responsibilities and the opportunities to be gained from an effective partnership within an apprenticeship programme.
- viii. The University is committed to the co-creation of programmes with employers to ensure employer and industry skills needs are met and to provide flexibility for both employer and apprentice, and that both line manager and apprentice are prepared for their apprenticeship. This support and shared development includes:
 - a) An initial assessment and agreement of the programme development with the employer. This includes timescale, price, any reduction for prior learning and mode of delivery.
 - b) Agreeing the most appropriate schedule and mode for off the job training and ensuring that employers can provide 20% off-the-job training time in order for the apprentice to engage with learning at the University or its academic partner.
 - c) Off the job training: mapping the job roles to options for training and with apprenticeships to the available standards and confirming the priorities for work based on the job experience as part of the learning plan.
 - d) Identifying gaps and needs and how these can be met, agreeing assessment methods, timescales, apprenticeship induction.
 - e) Apprentice learner support – the university and employer will define and agree the apprentices' learning journey including assessor visits, any

- need for coaches or mentors, individual learning plans and forms of assessments.
 - f) Progress review - the relationship manager and their team will help prepare for termly progress review; sharing assessment grades, discussing progress in the workplace and at university, supporting the employer to prepare for their role in the EPA, and their role as a mentor.
 - g) End point assessment – EPA assessor, process and timeframe agreed.
- ix. Approval for an apprenticeship programme with an employer will require both parties to sign an Apprenticeship Employer Contract, and when the apprentice has been selected, to prepare the employer for the mandatory documentation and briefings for apprentice and line manager.
- x. If an existing employer wishes to enter into a new apprenticeship programme a subsequent Apprenticeship Employer Contract should be completed and submitted to the apprenticeships team.

7. Continuous Relationship Management

The University is committed to clear and supportive relationship management. This is vital to the successful delivery of apprenticeships and will ensure the needs of employers and apprentices are met.

- i. As part of the partnership agreement process, the employer will be notified of the name of their relationship manager, who working with the Apprenticeships Hub, will respond to day-to-day queries, and support the communication process to and from our employers.
- ii. The team will also maintain and develop the employer and apprentice information and resources on our website including advice and guidance on queries and on the detail of our apprenticeship programmes.
- iii. As a partner, the employer will be offered support throughout the entire process of development and delivery. This will include support for the line manager, their involvement in apprentice applications, appropriate sharing of information, recruitment, using the Apprenticeship Service and supporting employers at the director/CEO level. We will support, through our Apprenticeship Hub team, briefings for line managers, to help them prepare for their role in the apprenticeship. For smaller employers without HR functions, support can include setting up their apprenticeship service digital account.
- iv. The relationship manager and the employer will agree the detail and timeliness of communications such as frequency of reviews, evaluation and monitoring, and shape the programme to meet their employee needs through our initial needs assessment skills scan.
- v. Complaints and appeals procedures and other university policies are provided on our website for easy access and provided to the employer as part of the contract. Any employer complaints will be managed by the Apprenticeship Hub, working with the employer engagement team to resolve any issues as quickly

as possible. All complaints are tracked as part of the Apprenticeship Board KPIs and Risk Register, to ensure that any learning is part of our Quality Improvement Plan.

- vi. Employer contact information will be held securely at the University in accordance with University data management policies.
- vii. A record of discussions and decisions with employers regarding any aspect of the apprenticeship programme will be kept through a University customer relationship management (CRM) system. These records may also be required by external regulatory bodies as part of a review or audit process.
- viii. We will support all employers through their programme. Meeting at least annually to review progress against the contract and look at future skills needs.
- ix. All employers will be invited to participate in our annual employer surveys. This is reviewed by the apprenticeship hub and the employer engagement teams, to identify programme improvements, improvements in our service and how we can best prepare employers and their staff for their responsibilities.

8. Participating in Learning and Progress Reviews

An apprenticeship is a partnership between the employer, their employee-apprentice and the university, and through the termly Tri-partite reviews employers are an essential part of the successful apprenticeship:

- i. We will support line managers to carry out their responsibilities by setting out these clearly in our line manager handbook.
- ii. We will help employers to prepare for the Tri-partite review with information on progress and templates to help thinking and collate feedback on apprenticeship progress to be shared at the review.
- iii. Collating notes and sharing action plans after the review, taking prompt actions to address points raised and to implement any support agreed, helping the line manager to understand and implement actions needed at work.

9. Monitoring and Reviewing Employer Engagement

- i. We will share the outcomes of our surveys, our SAR and QIP with employers and involve them in the production of both documents. We will use survey and review information from the Tri-partite review, the contract review as part of the review of the apprenticeship in our School and University Apprenticeship Boards, both of which will include employer representatives.
- ii. The University's Apprenticeship Board will include employer engagement as a Key Performance Indicator, tracking feedback, repeat engagement and wider

engagement in other university activities, alongside wider reviews of complaints and qualitative feedback from reviews. Monitoring of these KPIs is part of our risk and performance framework and will enable us to quickly respond to any trends. All concerns will be escalated where needed from the Apprenticeship Board to the university's senior management governance through the Provost.

- iii. These outcomes will also be fed into the university's committee framework via Learning and Teaching Quality Committee. Employer feedback is a key element in the development of our annual quality processes, the Self Assessment Reports and our Quality Improvement Plan for apprenticeships. The outcome of all reviews will be fed back to employer industry groups and into future development of the apprenticeship programmes led by the Apprenticeship Board.
- iv. Any formal complaints from employers and apprentices are managed through our complaints processes, published on our website. These are tracked as part of the monitoring of employer engagement KPIs.
- v. At the end of each apprenticeship, after the final employer and apprentice surveys, we will work with employers to celebrate their success, collate and collect case studies to help inform future apprentices and employers and involving employers in the proportion and support for apprenticeships and in the development of our guidance tools.
- vi. Apprentices and employers will be invited to the university graduation ceremonies. Recognition for successful apprentices will be made through these ceremonies and through additional events. Our aim is also to support employers to promote and celebrate apprenticeship achievements. Through our case studies and KPI measurements we will capture and publicise the contribution that apprentices make at work, for example through projects and assignments and help employers and apprentices recognise the longer-term value of apprenticeships as a route for skills and training.