

UCL Academic Manual 2021-22

Chapter 11: Degree Apprenticeships Framework

Chapter 11 is UCL's regulatory framework for the management, delivery and quality assurance of apprenticeship programmes at UCL.

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1 UCL's Approach to Degree Apprenticeships

1. UCL aims to use its world class academic excellence to tackle real world problems at a grand scale, often in collaboration with partners in public and private sector industries. The range of activity resulting from this is broad and typically includes a combination of research, education and knowledge transfer in order to disrupt the status quo and bring about lasting change. Degree apprenticeships represent a valuable means through which to apply our existing strengths in research and education to address skills gaps and broader workforce development challenges as an enabler for such lasting change.
2. The development UCL's portfolio of degree apprenticeships draws on the established expertise in academic departments and supports the application of that existing expertise in new ways. Each degree apprenticeship will use this expertise to address a clear strategic need identified with employers and other industry partners and should usually focus on occupations requiring the higher-level skills and competences that UCL is particularly well-placed to deliver.
3. UCL's strategic intent is best suited to the more focused, specialist nature of level 7 provision. This will enable apprentices to benefit from the synergies with our wider postgraduate taught student community, many of whom are already established in their careers and embarking on professional development. By defining the scope of our provision in this way, UCL is able to develop a policy and support infrastructure that is fit for purpose.
4. Successful completion of an apprenticeship at UCL must always lead to a credit-bearing qualification as set out in Chapter 2 of the Academic Manual, but there are fundamental differences in the design, delivery, management, regulation and funding of apprenticeships compared to UCL's traditional provision.
 - UCL is regulated as a single Apprenticeship Training Provider and is required to operate as such with a coherent framework for managing its apprenticeship provision.
 - Where an academic department proposes to deliver an apprenticeship, it recognises and agrees to operate wholly within this framework comprising unified policies, processes, systems and ways of working, in order to secure UCL's ongoing compliance with its regulatory obligations.
 - UCL is early in its development as an Apprenticeship Training Provider and the development of its framework for managing apprenticeships will be iterative, which in turn will require academic departments and professional services to iteratively review and ensure the continued alignment of their practice.
5. The regulations and policy of UCL as set out in the Academic Manual shall apply in full to apprentices as to any other registered student enrolled on a UCL programme, except where a specific provision is made in the Academic Manual to accommodate the specific requirements of apprenticeships.
6. Where UCL's regulations are found to be incompatible with the external regulation and funding rules of apprenticeships, a request to suspend the regulations may be made according to procedure in Chapter 6, Section 7 as an interim measure ahead of Student and Registry Services proposing a permanent regulatory solution.

2 Glossary¹

Term	Definition
Apprenticeship	An apprenticeship is a job with training to industry standards. It should be about entry to a recognised occupation, involve a substantial programme of on and off-the-job training and the apprentice's occupational competence should be tested by an independent, end point assessment.
Apprenticeship Training Provider	An organisation that has been approved by the ESFA to be eligible to receive government funding to train apprentices.
Apprenticeship Standard	Apprenticeship standards are developed and proposed employer groups known as 'trailblazers' to set out what apprentices must be doing on a degree apprenticeship programme delivered by an Apprenticeship Training Provider. Apprenticeship Standards are approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.
Commitment Statement	A tri-partite statement that must be signed by each apprentice, the Apprenticeship Training Provider and employer before training can start. The commitment statement must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the planned content and schedule for training • what is expected and offered by the employer, the training organisation and the apprentice • how to resolve queries or complaints
Degree apprenticeship	A higher-level apprenticeship where successful completion results in the award of a level 6 or 7 academic qualification.
Employer Contract	A contract between UCL and the employer for the delivery of a degree apprenticeship programme that must be signed before the programme can start.
ESFA	The Education and Skills Funding Agency, an executive agency of the Department for Education responsible for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults, including apprenticeships.
Individual Learning Plan (ILP)	Apprenticeship Training Providers must create an ILP for each apprentice based on their initial assessment of the apprentice. The ILP personalises the curriculum for each apprentice, taking into account their prior learning, career aspirations, additional learning requirements and any bespoke training required by the employer. The ILP will include objectives for the apprentice as well as information on their off-the-job-learning and opportunities for feedback.

¹ Sources: Education and Skills Funding Agency website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency>; Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education website: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>

Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, a non-ministerial department responsible for inspecting services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. Since 01 April 2021, this has included responsibility for inspecting apprenticeships provision at level 6 and 7.
Tripartite Reviews	Tripartite reviews are a standardised way of monitoring an apprentice's progress through the degree apprenticeship programme and take place regularly, as set out in the ILP, between the apprentice, the employer and the Apprenticeship Training Provider.

3 Roles, Responsibilities and Governance

3.1 Institutional Oversight

Governance

1. Though the responsibilities delegated by Academic Committee, Academic Board and Council, the Education Committee has oversight of educational policy, standards and quality, including for degree apprenticeships.
2. The Education Committee determines the academic policy and regulations setting out UCL's academic standards and expectations with regards to the quality of apprenticeship training, and puts in place a framework governance and quality assurance to secure the consistent implementation of these standards and expectations.
3. Each academic year, the Education Committee considers the recommendations of its sub-committees together with the range of evidence available on the quality and outcomes of apprenticeship training, to reach an informed view on the maintenance of academic standards, the quality of apprenticeship training, risks to compliance with UCL's regulatory obligations as an Apprenticeship Training Provider, and the areas of focus for continuous improvement or risk mitigation going forward.
4. The Education Committee includes its informed view on degree apprenticeships and the effectiveness of the related governance and quality assurance when reporting on the quality and standards of UCL's higher education provision to Academic Committee, Academic Board and Council, including through the Annual Accountability Return on Quality Assurance.

Degree Apprenticeships Steering Group

5. Responsibility for institutional oversight of UCL's degree apprenticeship provision has been delegated by the Education Committee to its Degree Apprenticeship Steering Group.
6. The Degree Apprenticeship Steering Group (DASG) is responsible for overseeing and recommending policy on all aspects of degree apprenticeship delivery at UCL, including strategy, overall performance of the provision including setting expectations, operational matters, compliance, financial arrangements and quality assurance, as set out in the DASG's Terms of Reference.
7. The DASG may set up working groups and other sub-groups to manage specific aspects of degree apprenticeship delivery and external compliance.
8. The DASG oversees the annual production of an institutional self-evaluation of the quality, standards and compliance of degree apprenticeships and uses this to inform

an annual report to Education Committee setting out its recommended priorities for continuous enhancement and mitigating risk in the following year.

Other sub-committees of Education Committee

9. The following sub-committees of the Education Committee have responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement across all of UCL's higher education provision, including degree apprenticeships:
 - Degree apprenticeship programmes are subject to approval by the Programme and Module Approval Panel (PMAP) in accordance with Chapter 7 of the Academic Manual.
 - The monitoring, review and enhancement of the quality of degree apprenticeships is undertaken as part of the framework overseen by the Quality Review Sub-Committee.
 - Academic regulations and policies relating to degree apprenticeships are overseen by the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee.

3.2 Department Roles and Responsibilities

1. Heads of Department have accountability for ensuring effective oversight, quality assurance and enhancement of degree apprenticeship programmes through their education governance structures, including the Department Teaching Committee (DTC). Departments are required to report regularly to the DASG on the delivery and management of their degree apprenticeships.
2. Heads of Department must ensure that the degree apprenticeships developed and delivered within the Department are appropriately resourced and supported by the department management and operational structures. This will include appointing a Programme Director and a lead administrator to each degree apprenticeship programme and ensuring that they are able to fulfil their responsibilities in line with the guidance set out in Annex 11.6.
3. Heads of Department must seek assurance that the Department is able to deliver each degree apprenticeship programme in accordance with the applicable Apprenticeship Standard(s), the approved programme proposal and the applicable UCL regulations. There must be mechanisms within the Department for the ongoing monitoring of its compliance with the relevant requirements related to degree apprenticeship delivery, and risks to compliance or quality should be included in the department's regular reporting to the Faculty and Degree Apprenticeships Steering Group.

3.3 Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

1. Faculty Tutors in each Faculty that delivers degree apprenticeships must ensure that degree apprenticeships are included in the standard education governance structure of the Faculty and that oversight of the Faculty's degree apprenticeship provision is maintained by the Faculty Teaching Committee (FTC).

3.4 Central Services Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Registrar nominates one or more senior staff to fulfil the following institutional roles responsible for leading and managing degree apprenticeships at UCL:
 - a. A **Lead Officer** to provide strategic support to the Degree Apprenticeships Steering Group, coordinate the operational management of degree apprenticeships at an institutional level and represent UCL in day-to-day engagement with external bodies regulating degree apprenticeships.

- b. An **Inspection Nominee** to be the main link with the inspection team during Ofsted inspections of UCL's degree apprenticeships.
 - c. A **Designated Safeguarding Lead** with responsibility for the implementation of UCL's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure (Staff and Students) in relation to apprentices.
2. The responsibilities of central professional services for supporting apprentices and the delivery of degree apprenticeship programmes will usually be the same as for traditional degree programmes, noting specifically that:
- a. Admissions and applications, including the assessment of entry requirements, must be managed collaboratively between the academic department and Admissions in Student and Registry Services in line with Chapter 1 and this chapter of the Academic Manual.
 - b. Statutory returns must only be compiled and reported by Academic Services in Student and Registry Services, including reporting the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
 - i. For non-integrated degree apprenticeships, academic departments must procure the services of and manage the relationship with an appropriate End Point Assessment (EPA) organisation, in consultation with Academic Services and Legal Services, and must register apprentices with the EPA organisation in line with the requirements of the signed contract.

4 Quality Assurance of Degree Apprenticeships

4.1 Overview

1. UCL's normal quality assurance processes described elsewhere in the Academic Manual, and specifically in Chapters 7 and 9, apply to degree apprenticeships alongside the specific provisions set out here.
2. In addition to the regulatory requirements and external reference points that govern our approach to assuring the academic standards and quality of our higher education qualifications, apprenticeships and UCL as an Apprenticeships Training Provider are subject to additional regulatory requirements as set out by the Department for Education, Education and Skills Funding Agency, and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. Furthermore, Ofsted inspect the quality of apprenticeship training at all levels against the criteria set out in their Education Inspection Framework. UCL's internal quality assurance procedures for degree apprenticeships, as set out below, are designed to fulfil these various requirements and ensure that apprentices benefit from a high-quality learning experience and successful outcomes.

4.2 Approval and amendment

1. In the first instance, anyone wishing to propose a new degree apprenticeship programme should liaise with their Head of Department, Faculty Tutor and Dean of Faculty to secure initial endorsement and support for the proposal. The proposer must have commitment from the employer(s) they wish to work with and have identified the Apprenticeship Standard they are proposing to deliver.
2. Once the initial proposal has Department and Faculty management endorsement, the proposer must complete a Feasibility Assessment (Annex 11.1) to be reviewed and approved by the DASG.
3. Following approval from the DASG for the Feasibility Assessment, the proposer can begin the programme approval process in line with Chapter 7 of the Academic Manual, overseen by PMAP.
4. Degree apprenticeship programmes should be designed in collaboration with the employers committed to enrolling apprentices on the programme.
5. The programme approval process, documentation and timelines for degree apprenticeships is the same as for any other degree programmes at UCL with the addition of the following steps:
 - The proposer must submit a completed Degree Apprenticeship Annex for Programme Approval with the other programme proposal paperwork. The Annex will include a mapping of the programme to the applicable Apprenticeship Standard.
 - In line with the guidance provided in the Degree Apprenticeship Annex for Programme Approval, the proposer must identify an Apprenticeship External Scrutineer for the proposal. The Apprenticeship External Scrutineer should provide a brief statement assessing how robustly the proposed programme aligns to the applicable Apprenticeship Standard and any other applicable external competency frameworks.
 - The Apprenticeship External Scrutineer should also comment on the other responses in the Degree Apprenticeship Annex to confirm that the proposed processes for managing the degree apprenticeship are in line with sector best practice and the standard expectations of the relevant government bodies.
6. Amendments proposed to degree apprenticeship programmes are also subject to the applicable provisions in Chapter 7 of the Academic Manual.
7. Following the approval of a degree apprenticeship programme and before any applicant is permitted to begin their application to the programme, there must be a signed contract in place with their employer.

- a. UCL has a set, institutionally agreed template for Employer Contracts that is held by Academic Services and must be used as a starting point with all employers.
- b. Draft contracts must be submitted for review by Academic Services before they are signed by either party.
- c. A finalised contract will be recommended by Academic Services to the appropriate authorised signatories for Employer Contracts for degree apprenticeships, as set out below within the Council-approved delegated authorisation limits:

Value of the agreement	Signatory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated value of the Employer Contract over its full term over £2m and up to £10m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated value of the Employer Contract over its full term over £250k and up to £2m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice-President (Operations); or • Director of Finance and Business Affairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated value of the Employer Contract over its full term up to £250k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar

4.3 Annual Monitoring

1. All academic departments undertake quality monitoring through the Annual Student Experience Review (ASER) as described in Chapter 9: Quality Review Framework, whereby matters relating to degree apprenticeships are fed into the Department's overall Evaluative Report and Development and Enhancement Plan.
2. A programme-level evaluation must be produced each year for each degree apprenticeship programme capturing feedback from employers and apprentices, using the template provided in Annex 11.3, in order to inform the continuous improvement of the programme and to enable explicit consideration of degree apprenticeships in ASERs.
3. Departments must include programme-level evaluations in the evidence base for their ASER, in addition to the standard evidence set out in Chapter 9.
4. Completed programme-level evaluations must be reviewed and refined at the relevant Student Staff Consultative Committee and Department Teaching Committee before being shared with the Faculty Tutor and the DASG, normally during Term 1 for the previous Academic Year.
5. The DASG, in collaboration with QRSC and with support from Academic Services, will appoint a review group from the DASG and QRSC memberships to review the submitted programme-level evaluations, produce an institutional analysis and identify cross-cutting priorities for the continuous improvements of quality.

4.4 Periodic Review

1. Degree apprenticeship programmes are subject to the standard UCL Internal Quality Review (IQR) process described in Chapter 9 the Quality Review Framework.
2. In addition to the standard IQR requirements, the appended Degree Apprenticeship Guidance for Internal Quality Review (Annex 11.2) applies to IQRs carried out in Departments delivering degree apprenticeships. The Guidance includes provisions for appointing an External Degree Apprenticeship Adviser for the Review Team and for including apprentices and employers in the IQR process as well as templates and

questionnaires relating to degree apprenticeships for the Department to complete and submit to the Review Team as part of the IQR evidence pack.

5 Employer Engagement

1. Degree apprenticeship provision at UCL is developed to meet sector challenges and employer needs using insight from Industry Advisory Boards, existing relationships with employers and alumni. Evidence of employer and industry engagement in degree apprenticeship design is reviewed and approved via PMAP and DASG.
2. UCL departments work with employers in the design and delivery of degree apprenticeships, including setting clear expectations of the apprentices to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs). Throughout the delivery of the degree apprenticeship, UCL departments will collaborate with and support the employer to ensure apprentices stay on track and develop KSBs to achieve well on the degree apprenticeship programme and beyond. The template for an Employer Handbook can be found in Annex 11.7.
3. The employer voice is heard in all quality assurance processes relating to degree apprenticeships at UCL to capture continuous improvement. Employer feedback also informs institutional governance of degree apprenticeships to provide oversight of the employers' experience of delivering degree apprenticeships with UCL departments.

6 Apprentice Support and Success

1. Every apprentice will benefit from an integrated package of support that identifies their specific needs, adapts their apprenticeship training and programme to those needs, and supports them to fulfil their potential in achieving a successful outcome.
2. Academic departments must design degree apprenticeship programmes to incorporate this package of support, using the requirements set out below as a baseline.

6.1 Initial Assessment

1. Apprenticeship funding should not be used to pay for, or accredit, existing knowledge, skills and behaviours.
2. Initial assessment checks that the degree apprenticeship is an appropriate programme for the apprentice and ensures they will not undertake training they do not need.
3. Before an apprenticeship is planned and begins, the academic department must undertake an initial assessment of an applicant's prior learning to establish their starting point, or baseline, and inform how much of the apprenticeship training and the programme they require.
4. In addition to assessing the applicant's prior learning, the academic department must also collect evidence that the applicant has a qualification in Maths and English at level 2 at a minimum.
5. The process and template for initial assessment in Annex 11.4 should always be used unless otherwise agreed by Academic Services for a particular programme.
6. Staff with responsibility for undertaking initial assessments on behalf of UCL must be familiar with and operate with the boundaries of UCL's policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning in Chapter 1, Section 2.8 of the Academic Manual.
7. Where prior attainment, knowledge and skills are identified, the costs of training must be adjusted.

6.2 Planning Apprenticeship Training

1. Prior to an apprentice commencing their apprenticeship training, the following must be developed, agreed and added to the apprentice's file:
 - a. A **Commitment Statement**
 - b. An **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**
2. UCL's standard templates for Commitment Statements and Individual Learning Plans (Annex 11.5) should be used unless otherwise agreed in advance with Academic Services.
3. Where a signature is required, this must be supplied before a document can be considered to be in place and active.
4. To enable apprenticeship training to be planned in line with the expectations of the apprentice's employer and UCL, an **Employer Contract** must be signed in advance of any applications being received and must be valid for the duration of the apprenticeship training being planned.
5. Where a change in circumstances, such as a break in learning and interruption of study, impacts an apprentice's ability to complete their apprenticeship training according to their Commitment Statement and Individual Learning Plan, their training should be replanned, and updated versions of these documents agreed and added to their file.

6.3 Progress Monitoring and Tripartite Reviews

1. The engagement and progress of individual apprentices must be monitored through robust departmental systems and support structures, which should be designed in advance of the programme being delivered and regularly evaluated through quality monitoring and review processes.

Tripartite Reviews

2. Tripartite reviews between the apprentice, employer and UCL ensure that all parties are clear on the apprentice's progress towards the targets set out in their apprentice commitment statement and learning plan.
3. Tripartite reviews should provide an opportunity for apprentices and employers to offer feedback on their experience of the degree apprenticeship programme and the apprenticeship training more generally.
4. Tripartite reviews may identify and should note concerns about the quality of the employer's training or support for an individual apprentice, including the time being protected for off-the-job training, but there must also be a mechanism for collating and addressing such concerns through regular corporate-level engagement between the academic department and the employer.
5. Tripartite reviews must be held every three months throughout the degree apprenticeship programme and apprentices are required to engage with each review fully.
6. Tripartite review meetings should be held in-person where possible or alternatively online via a video call where this is not possible, but they must always be 'face-to-face' to enable a more comprehensive review of the apprentice's progress, engagement and wellbeing.
7. All apprentices are required to engage with regular tripartite reviews throughout their programme.

8. A summary of each tripartite review must be agreed with all parties and documented in the Apprentice File, and should include any areas of concern and the actions agreed to address these areas of concern ready to be monitored through subsequent reviews.
9. It is the responsibility of UCL and the academic department to plan, arrange and document tripartite reviews.

6.4 Gateway and End-Point Assessment

1. UCL offers two types of degree apprenticeship:
 - a. **Integrated degree apprenticeships** where UCL is both the apprenticeship training provider and the end-point assessment organisation.
 - b. **Non-integrated degree apprenticeships** where UCL is the apprenticeship training provider but contracts with another end-point assessment organisation.

Gateway

2. The assessment strategy for each degree apprenticeship programme must define the requirements to be met before an apprentice can proceed to the end-point assessment and the process for confirming that these requirements have been met, known as the Gateway.
3. The Gateway must meet the requirements of the assessment plan for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and confirm the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is already consistently working at or above the level of knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the occupational standard.
4. An apprentice must only be allowed to proceed to the end-point assessment once they have met the requirements of the Gateway, including evidence that they have competence in Maths and English at level 2 at a minimum.

End-Point Assessment

5. Each degree apprenticeship programme concludes with a holistic and independent assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been developed throughout an apprenticeship, known as the end-point assessment (EPA).
6. The end-point assessment is specified in the assessment plan for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and must not be deviated away from.
7. The end-point assessment is administered by an end-point assessment organisation.
8. For integrated degree apprenticeships, UCL is the end-point assessment organisation.
 - a. The assessment strategy for the degree apprenticeship programme must be designed to ensure that the final assessments meet the requirements of the assessment plan for the relevant Assessment Standard, and this should be confirmed through the programme approval and amendment process.
 - b. Assessments that contribute to the end-point assessment must be conducted by someone who has not been involved in the delivery of the apprenticeship.

- c. By meeting the requirements for the award of the intended qualification, the apprentice should have met the requirements to pass an integrated degree apprenticeship, and the Boards of Examiners should assure itself of this.
9. For non-integrated degree apprenticeships, the academic department must secure the services of a third-party provider included on the ESFA's register of end-point assessment organisations.
 - a. A contract must be in place with the end-point assessment organisation in good time before the first apprentices are due to pass through the Gateway.
 - b. Academic departments are responsible for procuring the services of and leading UCL's engagement with the end-point assessment organisation within the requirements of relevant UCL policies, including those on procurement and data protection.
 - c. Academic Services and Legal Services must be consulted on the draft contract.

6.5 Apprentice File

1. Alongside the core Student Record held in Portico and the apprentice's assessments, the following form part of the Apprentice File that must be maintained for each apprentice by their academic department:
 - a. Initial Assessment
 - b. Apprenticeship Agreement between the employer and apprentice
 - c. Commitment Statement and Individual Learning Plan
 - d. Tripartite Review Forms
2. The apprentice and/or employer must confirm the information they provide is correct when it is collected and the Apprentice File must include evidence of this, such as a signature, in a scanned or digital format.
3. Employer Contracts and contracts with end-point assessment organisations must be retained and stored by academic departments alongside Apprentice Files.
4. Apprentice Files, Employer Contracts and contracts with end-point assessment organisations must be kept up to date, readily available for audit and inspection and retained within the parameters of UCL's Records Retention Schedule.
5. Apprentice Files Employer Contracts and contracts with end-point assessment organisations constitute the evidence pack required by the ESFA.