Skills Development Scotland

Learner/Parent and Carer Information on Foundation Apprenticeships

What is an **IT: Software Development** Foundation Apprenticeship?

SQA

Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

What is an IT: Software Development Foundation Apprenticeship?

A Foundation Apprenticeship in IT: Software Development can give you a head start on a career in a rapidly growing sector. Jobs like software or web developer, database administrator and network manager are among the many exciting roles on offer.

Foundation Apprenticeships provide you with work-based learning qualification which includes the following attributes known as meta skills:

- Good communication skills
- Team working skills
- Ability to think creatively
- Problem solving

Meta skills are important in working life and important in Foundation Apprenticeships to provide:

- Transferable skills that will help you to tackle challenges in your learning, work, and life

During your apprenticeship you will:

- Reflect on how you approached a project or task and
- Consider how it went and if you improved the outcome.

What makes your Foundation Apprenticeship in IT: Software Development different from other school subjects?

- The difference is the industry insight and work experience you will gain as you spend time out of school attending college or a training centre and at an employer
- Attendance depends on whether you are on a 1 year or a 2-year programme:

    - 1 year = 1 day with employer and 1 day or 2 half days at college or training centre
    - 2 years = 1st year – 1 day a week at college or training centre with some employer input
                = 2nd year = 1 day a week at work placement

- Your Foundation Apprenticeship requires the same level of effort as other school subjects and will require more time.
- You will be expected to prepare and reflect on tasks you study before, during and after your lessons, just like other school subjects.
- Your work placement attendance and passing your assessments is essential for achievement of your Foundation Apprenticeship.

How will my work be assessed?

You will:

- Gather evidence of the work you have done for your Foundation Apprenticeship.
- Assessment may involve candidates completing multiple choice tests, the creation of a portfolio of completed tasks as well as practical computer-based tasks. These practical and knowledge-based assessments will be completed under a combination of closed and open-book assessments.

This means there is no need for a final exam as:

- The qualifications that make up your Foundation Apprenticeship are designed to develop and assess skills and knowledge in the chosen vocational area.
- They link to National Occupational Standards, that specify UK standards of performance that people are expected to achieve in their work.
- Every piece of work earns you credits, and it all contributes towards getting your final Foundation Apprenticeship qualification.
- You will receive continuous feedback on your progress from your learning provider as you work through all your tasks and assignments.

You must make sure you complete all your tasks fully and on time for your Learning Provider to assess your work and submit what you have achieved. This is important as the Foundation Apprenticeship qualification can support your future pathway into further learning and/or employment.

How does a Foundation Apprenticeship compare to a Higher?

As a Foundation Apprenticeship has the same level of learning an SQA Higher (SCQF Level 6), the Foundation Apprenticeship can be used to support progression to employment, College, or University. But it is important that you understand that as the method of learning is different from a Higher, your workload will be greater as it involves industry experience through your work placement and assessment of industry knowledge. You'll be learning and being assessed in different ways, and you will be able to evidence your experiences in the workplace whilst still at school.

What challenges can I expect and how can I get support?

Pressures develop at certain times and the work you need to do for your Foundation Apprenticeship and school subjects can be more challenging. This can include:

- There are more hours of learning involved in the IT: Software Development Foundation Apprenticeship than in a Higher.
- There are different kinds of assessment experiences involved, with more of a focus on the workplace or a vocation.
- Learning from different learning providers when you study your Foundation Apprenticeship and Highers.
- Prelims and exam can put extra pressure on the time you have available to study.
- Changes to your timetable if you are on a 2-year Foundation Apprenticeship programme.

You should:

- Make sure you set enough time aside to focus on the learning opportunities in your Foundation Apprenticeship.
- Talk to your learning provider about what to expect from your assessments.
- Talk to your learning providers about your experiences as part of your reflective practice and developing your meta skills.
- Manage your workload as you do other school subjects and remember travelling time.
- Use your study leave in a way that also considers what is required for your Foundation Apprenticeship.
- Seek support if you are feeling overwhelmed.
- Speak to guidance staff to address any timetabling challenges.

If you need support or advice, you should at the earliest opportunity speak to your school contact and your Foundation Apprenticeship Learning Provider. Don't try and solve any issues alone, there is a lot of support available. You can also use the guidance on **skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk** to support your own mental health and well-being.

Do pupils get support with travel?

Yes, travel costs and arrangement are supported whilst you are participating in a Foundation Apprenticeship. You should also be aware that you can apply for free nationwide bus travel at **freebus.scot**. Your Learning Provider can provide any support or advice you may need on travel arrangements.

What will I learn on an IT Software Development Foundation Apprenticeship?

Find out more about what you will learn at **apprenticeships.scot**.

What activities will I do on a Foundation Apprenticeship in IT Software Development?

When you are in your work placement, you will be able to contribute to activities that are essential to the employer such as: conducting manual lab tests on samples and recording results in an appropriate and agreed format and using safe practices and appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) when undertaking work activities.

Find out about other exciting activities at this page on **skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk**.

How can a Foundation Apprenticeship support me into further learning and/or employment?

Explore your post-school options at **apprenticeships.scot**.

Your school careers advisor can support you when considering your future pathways and developing your career management skills. Speak to them at school or via our helpline: **0800 917 8000.**