



Skills
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Scotland




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Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future

Graduate Apprenticeships

Information for learning providers

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Document control

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Terms and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
GA	Graduate Apprenticeship
PO	Purchase order
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
FIPS	Funding Information Processing System

If you need any further information please contact: newapprenticeships@sds.co.uk

Contents

Section A: General information	4
Background.....	4
1. Qualifications offered	5
2. Eligibility.....	8
3. Entry requirements.....	10
4. Funding.....	11
5. Recruitment	13
6. GA development.....	15
Section B: Learning provider information	16
7. Procurement	16
8. Payments.....	17
9. Change to cohort numbers.....	23
10. Quality assurance	24
11. FIPS	25
12. Employer relationships.....	26
13. Communications and marketing.....	27
14. Further information.....	27

Section A: General information

Background

72% of employers in Scotland have reported a lack of technical, practical or job specific skills in job applicants¹.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has developed Graduate Apprenticeships as a way for individuals to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and competence required by Scottish industries.

By building on the success of SDS's existing Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship programmes, Graduate Apprenticeships give individuals an opportunity to be in paid employment while gaining qualifications from DipHE up to master's level. And because they have been developed with employers, they ensure that learners gain the necessary knowledge and skills required for their chosen area of work.

Since 2015 SDS has been developing Graduate Apprenticeships in partnership with industry representatives and universities/colleges. This work has focused on highly skilled sectors that have been identified as requiring a new approach to education and skills development. From January 2017 Graduate Apprenticeships will be delivered across Scotland in partnership with employers, universities and colleges.

¹ UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2013 (Scottish sample)

1. Qualifications offered

1.1. What Graduate Apprenticeship courses are available?

Framework	SCQF Level
Accounting	10 and 11
Business Management (which incorporates the former Business Management: Financial Services pathway)	10
Civil Engineering	8
Civil Engineering	10
Construction and the Built Environment	10
Cyber Security	10
Cyber Security	11
Data Science	10
Early Learning and Childcare	9
Engineering: Design and Manufacture	10
Engineering: Instrumentation, Measurement and Control	10
IT: Management for Business	10
IT: Software Development	10

1.2. Who is delivering Graduate Apprenticeships?

Our current university and college delivery partners are as follows:

- Edinburgh Napier University
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Glasgow Kelvin College
- Heriot-Watt University
- Open University
- Queen Margaret University
- Robert Gordon University
- University Glasgow of University
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- University of St Andrews
- University of Strathclyde
- University of the Highlands and Islands (with Inverness College)
- University of the West of Scotland (with Ayrshire College, Glasgow Clyde College and New College Lanarkshire)

1.3. What qualification(s) can a Graduate Apprentice gain?

GAs are currently available from SCQF level 8 (Dip HE) through to SCQF level 11 (Master's degree Level). The qualification an apprentice receives at the end is the same as the one they would get after a conventional degree programme with a further or higher education institute. For example, if a Graduate Apprentice completes a "Graduate Apprenticeship in IT Software Development" at SCQF level 10 they will receive a BSc (Hon) degree from their University, that will also recognise the Graduate Apprenticeship award.

1.4. How will the learning element of the GA work in practice?

Graduate Apprentices are first and foremost employees. It is anticipated that apprentices will spend around 80% of their time in work and 20% of time with a university or college.

However, the exact split between work and learning will be agreed by the employer with their delivery partner. For example, some employers may agree to have their apprentices attend university or college 1 day a week, whilst others may opt for more online learning or block release learning for several weeks at a time throughout the year.

This integration of work and learning means that the work apprentices carry out in their employment counts towards their qualification.

1.5. How long does it take to complete a GA?

A graduate apprentice in full time employment studying a GA at SCQF level 10 (honours degree level) will usually take 4 years, at SCQF level 8 (Dip HE level) 2 years, and at SCQF level 11 up to 18 months to complete. Some individuals may complete the GA in a shorter period of time because the working year is longer than the university year meaning the overall time may be reduced.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Is there an age limit on who can apply for a GA?

To apply to become a GA the employee should be a minimum of 16 years of age. There is no maximum age set on who can become a Graduate Apprentice.

2.2 If someone has an existing qualification in the same subject as a GA they apply for, are they still eligible for funding?

Yes, if the Graduate Apprenticeship is a higher level of qualification than the one the individual already holds in the same area.

2.3 If someone has an existing qualification at the same level in a different subject, are they still eligible for funding?

Yes. If, for example, someone holds a degree in Business Management but they can still apply for a Graduate Apprenticeship in Software Development.

2.4 Do employees need to be resident and working in Scotland?

Yes. The employee must be resident in Scotland at the start of the Graduate Apprenticeship. In addition to this, their employers working premises must also be located in Scotland. When applying to become a Graduate Apprentice the individual will be required to satisfy the employer that they have the right to live and work in Scotland.

2.5 Can an employer access GAs if their business is registered or has its head quarters out with Scotland?

Yes. As long as the employees they want to put on a GA course are living and working in Scotland.

2.6 Can a small or medium sized business take on a GA?

There is no restriction on the size of organisation that can employ a GA. However, a smaller organisation would need to be able to provide their Apprentice with the following:

1. employee's wage
2. time required away from work for learning
3. mentoring support
4. benefits package (pension and other normal benefits open to other staff)
5. a consistent work load that would allow progression and breadth of opportunity and assessment of day to day practice

2.7 Can an apprentice change employer during their GA?

The individual must inform their learning provider if they are considering changing employers whilst continuing with their GA. Any new job role and employer would need to be assessed by the learning provider to ensure alignment with the GA the individual is currently studying. This would include ensuring that any new employer is adequately supported and aware of their role in delivery and assessment.

3. Entry requirements

3.1 What qualifications are required to apply for a GA?

The learning provider delivering the GA will decide the formal entry requirements when developing the course. However, RPL and APEL processes should be used to offer flexibility to non-traditional entrants with experience and/or other industry and professional body qualifications.

3.2 Do GAs have flexible “entry and exit points”?

Yes. Graduate Apprenticeships have flexible entry and exit points in the programme so that apprentices can begin and end their study, at the right point. For example, an apprentice who has already attained a relevant qualification at SCQF level 8, prior to enrolling on a GA at SCQF level 10, may be able to have a percentage of their GA qualification recognised as being achieved already. This may shorten the amount of time they require to complete the course.

Similarly, if an apprentice doing a GA at SCQF level 10 (honours degree level) exits before completing their course, they may be able to leave with a GA qualification at SCQF level 8 or 9 providing they have attained the required credit level.

3.3 What if the employee/applicant does not meet the entry requirements?

If an applicant does not have required academic qualifications the employer and the delivery partner can assess whether the individual would be able to develop the skills and behaviours required to complete a degree programme.

Where there is an existing employee who does not already hold the required qualification(s), they can undertake a process for recognition of prior learning (RPL), for skills and knowledge gained in the workplace at an equivalent level. This could involve creating a portfolio or writing a piece of work that allows the individual to evidence their skills. The university or college may also interview the individual.

Each university or college should outline a method for RPL and they will lead on this section of admissions.

4. Funding

4.1 How are Graduate Apprenticeships funded?

For GA courses starting up to the end of September 2020, the full duration of a Graduate Apprentice's' learning costs will be funded by Skills Development Scotland. This will cover up to 2 years of funding for a GA at SCQF level 8 or 11, up to 3 years of funding for a GA at SCQF 9, up to 4 years of funding for a GA at SCQF level 10, up to 5 years of funding for a GA at SCQF level 10 and 11. SDS's financial contribution to Graduate Apprenticeships is currently supported by funding from the European Social Fund.

4.2 What is the employer contribution?

We recognise that a significant investment is made by employers when paying and training an apprentice. As such, GA learning costs for cohorts starting up to the end of September 2020 will be paid for by SDS for the duration of the course.

4.3 How much should graduate apprentices be paid?

As GA apprentices are employees their employer will be expected to pay their salary. This salary is not set by SDS but we do encourage all employers to pay the Living Wage. The employer will be expected to employ the apprentice and provide them with full access to the employers' facilities and benefits.

4.4 How will the Apprenticeship Levy impact GAs?

Following on from the recent consultation on the apprenticeship levy, Scottish Government has reaffirmed its committed to the expansion of work-based learning opportunities through Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships.

Scottish Ministers are committed to increasing the number of Modern Apprentices, including Graduate Apprentices to 30,000 by 2020, and have expressed their strong support for the expansion of Foundation Apprenticeships, as an important part of its Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) youth employment strategy.

The Scottish Government, SDS and its partners understand the level of investment and commitment needed to meet the scale of ambition. We're confident that, by working with industry, employers, FE colleges and universities, will become an embedded part of Scotland's skills landscape by 2020 and beyond.

For more information please visit <https://www.apprenticeships.scot/take-on-an-apprentice/apprenticeship-levy/>

4.5 Does an employer receive any payment from SDS for taking on a GA apprentice?

SDS will pay the full learning fees of those apprentices starting in prior to and by September 2020 but employers will not receive any direct payments for taking on a Graduate Apprentice.

4.6 Is there other funding open to the employee?

As a GA is a full time employee they will not be entitled to any SAAS funding. The university or college delivering the GA course can advise whether there are any other grants/bursaries available to the apprentice.

4.7 If an apprentice leaves the GA programme early can I continue receiving funding for that place?

The funding model for GAs does not permit learning providers to continue to receive funding in subsequent years for early leavers after they have left (through dropping out or completing the course early) or to reallocate these places to other individuals. This is managed through the SDS grant variation process.

For example, if two students drop out during year one, the learning provider cannot claim money for those two (now vacant) places in subsequent years. Similarly, the two places cannot be reused to provide advanced entry to two new GA students joining in year 2. This is because the funding for these places follows the students who registered at the beginning of the course.

4.8 Will SDS provide additional funding to support students with disabilities (such as scribes for exams etc)?

An apprentice will have employed status and as such should qualify for the Access for Work fund. Individuals must apply to the Access for Work fund themselves at <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>. Access for Work will review the resources of the employer and based on the size of the employer will either fully or partially fund support.

5. Recruitment

5.1 How are GA apprentices recruited?

The normal steps to recruit a GA are as follows:

1. the employer will contact the university/college delivering the course they are interested in
2. the employer and university/college will discuss entry requirements, course content and assessment methods
3. the employer will create the job description (including entry requirements and a closing date) and discuss recruitment timelines with the university
4. the employer will advertise the GA vacancy on www.apprenticeships.scot
5. the employer will be sent all job applications received
6. the employer will liaise with the delivery partner throughout recruitment process, with support provided at interview stages

Note: Steps 3 to 6 may not apply if the employer is putting an existing member of staff on the GA

5.2 What is expected of GA employers?

Typically, the following would be expected:

- meet with the delivery partner (university/college) to agree the structure of the GA programme – this will include assessment methods, time spent at university, and projects that will need to be supported in the workplace
- attend quarterly meetings with the delivery partner and the GA apprentice (employee)
- mentor the GA apprentice and involvement in training and assessment elements as agreed with the delivery partner

The role of the employer will depend on the individual partnership between the employer and the university and/or college. In the first instance you can find a list of all the partners we are current working with and the GAs they are offering in this document or at

www.apprenticeships.scot.

5.3 What happens if the apprentice is unable to meet the academic demands of the course?

If the Apprentice's academic work is not meeting the required standard, they will be offered resits as per university or college policy. If the Apprentice is not successful in resits but has successfully completed other elements of the course, they will be awarded a certificate or diploma at the last level they achieved.

5.4 What happens if an apprentice is made redundant before they complete their GA?

If the employer can no longer keep the individual in employment, the apprentice will be offered the option to continue their apprenticeship with another employer, where available, or to join a related course with the university or college who is delivering their learning. SDS would be involved to provide support.

5.5 When can employers recruit GAs?

This would be agreed between the employers recruiting the GAs and the universities/colleges providing the GA.

5.6 Where relevant, are GAs accredited by professional bodies?

In most cases, the GA courses have been mapped to professional body standards so apprentices will be able to use the evidence that they have gained within their apprenticeships to apply for membership to the professional body relevant to their industry at the conclusion of their programme.

5.7 What happens if an individual is dismissed by their employer while on a GA?

If the apprentice is dismissed by their employer before completing their GA, SDS will offer the individual an appointment at their local careers office to discuss their options.

6. GA development

6.1 How are GAs developed?

GAs are developed through ongoing consultation with employers, universities, professional bodies and qualifications authorities in the form of technical expert groups (TEGs). The TEGs act as an advisory group on behalf of the sector and are based on the premise that industry provides the expertise to identify the skills and knowledge they need for a competent graduate workforce. The academic representatives develop the programme, quality standards and alignment to professional accreditation required for delivery of the award.

6.2 What new courses will be developed?

SDS is currently undertaking research to determine industry demand for additional GAs by subject and level. Information about future developments will be posted on

www.apprenticeships.scot.

Section B: Learning provider information

7. Procurement

7.1 How do you become a delivery partner for a GA?

SDS will run a competitive procurement exercise for each new phase of GA delivery.

Learning providers can submit a tender to deliver one or more GA frameworks. Contracts will be awarded based on the quality of the tenders submitted.

Bids will typically take the form of:

- A university/college bidding in the role of lead bidder with the intention of using sub-contractors to provide some of the requirements
- A university bidding as the lead bidder of a consortium/partnership (e.g. of colleges)
- A university or college bidding as a sole bidder.

7.2 Can an employer be paid as a sub-contractor in the delivery of a GA?

Yes, if they are a training provider, accredited to deliver the award.

7.3 Can a college become a delivery partner for a GA?

Yes, if they are accredited to deliver the award.

7.4 How much time is allowed for delivery partners to submit a tender?

It is usually four weeks from going live on Public Contract Scotland.

7.5 How many rounds of procurement will take each year place and when?

Procurement will be dependent on future funding decisions but would be expected to run once a year.

8. Payments

8.1 Will SDS pay delivery partners development funding for new courses awarded?

No SDS will not be paying any development funding going forward.

8.2 What are delivery payments for and how are they calculated?

Delivery payments are annual payments that are made to delivery partners based on student numbers registered on a GA course. The payments, calculated on a per head basis, are based on annual Scottish funding council rates for similar courses and are fixed for the duration of the programme.

8.3 How do I claim my delivery payments?

In order to claim your delivery payments you must ensure that all students on your GA course have completed the relevant evidence documentation (Appendix 3) and that these are returned to SDS. Once these have been received and processed the necessary delivery payments will be made.

8.4 What happens if a GA student transfers to a different delivery partner (e.g. due to relocation)?

The remaining delivery payments associated with the student will move with them to the new delivery partner.

8.5 As a delivery partner can I claim payments for GA student registrations from both SDS and the SFC?

No. The learning provider cannot claim any additional SFC funding for their GA students because SDS pays the student fees directly to the university or college.

8.6 Can I change my cohort start date?

Yes. As long as your start date is not later than the specified cut off date for all cohort starts in a given phase. The cut off start dates are provided within the procurement documentation for each phase. SDS must be informed in advance so that a contract variation can be applied.

Information for learning providers

8.7 Can I vary the mix of GA entry levels I have on my GA programme?

SDS has contracted for the delivery of a fixed number of students with an agreed maximum delivery cost with each Phase 1 learning provider partner. However, you can vary the mix of GA entry levels (e.g. L7s and L9s) per year as long as you are within your overall yearly contracted cohort number.

If a partner is able to leverage prior learning to enable accelerated completion for some of their GA students, then the level of delivery funding will vary accordingly through a reduced number of milestone payments (please see an explanation of the milestone payments below).

8.8 How are the milestone payments structured?

There are five potential milestone payments that can be paid to delivery partners, depending on the length of the GA:

Milestone 1. is for cohort starts in year 1

Milestone 2. is for cohort starts in year 2

Milestone 3. is for cohort starts in year 3

Milestone 4. is for cohort starts in year 4

Milestone 5. is an additional end-of-year-4 cohort payment for graduation

Table 1 SCQF Level 10 payment schedule

Mile Stone	Descriptor	Del.	Evidence or Report
1	Programme start	25%	Programme start and cohort registration
2	Year 2 start	25%	GA Progress Report
3	Year 3 start	25%	GA Progress Report
4	Year 4 start	12.5%	GA Progress Report
5	Year 4 end.	12.5%	GA Destination Report

Information for learning providers

Table 2 SCQF Level 8 and 11 payment schedule

Mile Stone	Descriptor	Del.	Evidence or Report
1	Programme start	50%	Programme start and cohort registration
2	Year 2 start	25%	GA Progress Report
3	Year 2 end	25%	GA Destination Report

Table 4 SCQF Level 10 and 11 payment schedule

Mile Stone	Descriptor	Del.	Evidence or Report
1	Programme start	20%	Programme start and cohort registration
2	Year 2 start	20%	GA Progress Report
3	Year 3 start	20%	GA Progress Report
4	Year 4 start	20%	GA Progress Report
5	Year 5 start	10%	GA Progress Report
6	Year 5 end.	10%	GA Destination Report

Information for learning providers

Milestone 1 will only be paid once the cohort registration forms have been received for the agreed number of starts.

For each delivery payment, a percentage is paid of the full delivery costs per apprentice on the programme.

For example, if the programme consists of 20 apprentices in an IT: Software Development framework and is a four year programme at £7,203 per apprentice per year, the Year 1 end payment is:

$$25\% \text{ of } (4 \times £7,203 \times 20) = \mathbf{£144,060}$$

8.9 If students starts at the 2nd or 3rd year stage of a GA (due to recognition of prior learning), how are the delivery payments affected?

For year 2 entry

If a participant is selected for entry directly into year 2 or year 3 of a GA, based on the delivery partners Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, the following will apply:

- for year 2 entry, a total of three years of funding will be available for the course
- the second milestone will require the same evidence as for the full cohort start
- the distribution of the total GA funding will then take place according to the schedule below

Table 3 Year 2 entry payment schedule

Milestone	Variable Cost
	Expressed as a percentage of the total delivery cost over 3 years, based on cohort size
1	33%
2	33%
3	17%
4	17%

For Year 3 entry

- a total of two years of funding will be available for the course
- the second milestone will require the same evidence as for the full cohort start
- the distribution of the total GA funding will then take place according to the schedule below

Table 4 Year 3 entry payment schedule

Milestone	Variable Cost Expressed as a percentage of the total delivery cost over 2 years, based on cohort size
1	50%
2	25%
3	25%

8.10 If a student drops out of their GA course mid-year, how will this affect my payments?

The SDS payment schedule provides advance payment for each year of study based on the registration forms received. If a student drops out of a GA course during the year, the delivery payment for that individual, for the year that they were registered, will not be claimed back. However, the place itself cannot be allocated to a new student.

8.11 What happens if a student must suspend their enrolment in a GA programme due to extenuating circumstances?

There is an option for an apprentice to suspend their studies for up to one year. This should be dealt with on a case by case basis by the learning provider. If an apprentice needs to suspend their studies due to extenuating circumstances (such as medical reasons) their learning provider should inform SDS as soon as possible. In any scenario the apprentice must still be in employment and their employer must be in agreement to support them through the remainder of the GA programme.

8.12 How long do we need to keep our GA programme records?

In order to comply with ESF funding rules, records must be kept for a minimum of 7 years after the individual completes the course.

8.13 Who is the SDS contact person for any questions about the grant?

Please contact the GA team via the GA mailbox: newapprenticeships@sds.co.uk

You will be issued a full list of key SDS contacts that will be supporting the GA programme, along with a description of their roles and responsibilities after being awarded a GA delivery contract.

9. Change to cohort numbers

9.1 **If a delivery partner does not achieve the minimum declared cohort size for the start of the programme, will the partner still be expected to run the programme?**

This is ultimately a business decision for each delivery partner. SDS will not expect a delivery partner to start a course with a cohort that is below the minimum number they declared. However, we will require a detailed report of:

- what activity has taken place to try to recruit students and employers for the GA course
- the reasons why this was not successful
- whether any of the development funding will remain unspent

SDS will require part of the development funding to be returned to SDS. This is a discussion that will be held on a case by case basis.

9.2 **If, during the delivery of a GA, a delivery partners cohort size drops below the minimum viable cohort number will SDS provide payments to cover the minimum viable cohort size?**

If your cohort numbers drop below your minimum declared cohort size at any time during delivery (due to circumstances out with your control, such as redundancy, employer bankruptcy, apprentice changing jobs, employer workload etc), we recommend that you contact SDS to discuss the course.

9.3 **When is the latest that we can register our cohort in 2019?**

The latest that a cohort can be registered is by September 30th, 2019. SDS encourages all delivery partners to adhere to the proposed cohort start dates in their bidding documentation. Please inform SDS as soon as possible if you expect a delay in your start date.

9.4 **When is the latest that a GA course can finish?**

You must complete your GA delivery by the end date stated in your grant. The end date in your grant is set at 3 months after the final milestone date you provide in your bid.

9.5 **Is it possible to start two groups at different dates within the same cohort?**

Yes, this is possible, to have staggered cohorts, provided that a) you do not exceed the total awarded starts and b) no further intake takes place after 30 September 2020 as part of this award. Future intakes should be planned for the next round of procurement.

9.6 **How will milestone payments be managed for a staggered cohort?**

It will need to follow the individual resulting potentially in multiple payments for registration

10. Quality assurance

10.1 **Does SDS have any further quality assurance requirements beyond the University validation procedure?**

Yes, SDS are working in partnership with the QAA and SQA to develop robust quality procedures for Graduate Apprenticeships. We expect these arrangements and supporting guidance to be available during the summer 2020.

11. FIPS

11.1 What is FIPS?

The Funding Information Processing System (FIPS) is SDS's new software system to provide supporting information and evidence.

11.2 What information is required to be maintained on the system?

Delivery partners will enter and maintain all their GA participant records in FIPS.

11.3 How often does the information have to be submitted?

GA participants will need to be entered into FIPS by each delivery partner when the system goes live for GA. Delivery partners will be required to update the record at mid-year point to evidence retention, when a GA exits the programme, and at end of each year of delivery to confirm retention for the following year.

11.4 Will the software be accessed remotely online or will it require to be installed on our network

The software will be accessed remotely online.

11.5 What else is involved?

SDS will offer webinars to train the users of FIPs for each delivery partner. There will also be an annual delegated authority check to make sure that the right admins are in place.

What are the costs?

The current costs for the CRM dynamics basic licence to SDS is £23.21 (inc. VAT) per month per person, however, the costs may be subject to change for next financial year. For this purpose SDS recommends a maximum of two GA programme users per delivery partner.

12. Employer relationships

12.1 What support does SDS offer with regard to Employer Engagement?

Each delivery partner will be responsible for their own employer engagement as outlined in their bids. SDS will provide a marketing toolkit, key messages and FAQs to support this engagement along with dedicated web pages on the Skills Development Scotland websites. Additional support needs should be discussed with SDS.

12.2 How much flexibility does a delivery partner have when developing a GA with an employer, based on a framework?

A GA framework document outlines a broad set of high and low level employer defined learning and skills outcomes. Learning providers should tailor their intended provision to meet the high-level learning outcomes of the framework and address the needs of their intended employer audience.

Each learning provider will have its own approach to delivering the degree and progression between stages. The low level skills and derived learning outcomes that are detailed in the document are intended to provide a checklist to ensure that each degree covers each of the learning outcomes appropriately. It is not intended that the list is used as a pro-forma curriculum.

13. Communications and marketing

13.1 What do I need to do before releasing an official statement or press release regarding GAs?

A marketing toolkit is provided to our delivery partners along with our marketing guidelines. We also provide the contact details of our SDS Marketing and Communications team, for advice and support.

14. Further information

14.1 Where can employers and individuals find more information?

For up-to-date information on GA courses, funding, learning providers, and vacancy advertisement, please visit www.apprenticeships.scot.

If you have further questions, there is also an option to contact the GA team direct via the website.

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This framework is also available on the Skills Development Scotland corporate website:
www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk