Apprenticeships at the University of Cambridge

A guide to off-the-job learning





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# What is off-the-job learning

Apprenticeships must last a minimum of 12 months and involve at least 20% off-the-job learning. This 20% off-the-job learning is measured over the course of the apprenticeship and is an essential part of the apprenticeship and therefore must take place during employed time.

If learning activities must, by exception, take place outside of contractual hours we would expect this to be recognised (for example, through time off in lieu). We recognise that some apprentices may wish to undertake learning activities outside of their working hours, however learning undertaken outside paid employment (and therefore outside the apprenticeship) cannot be counted towards meeting the 20% requirement.

The off-the-job learning must be directly relevant to the apprenticeship framework or standard and must teach new knowledge, skills and behaviours that will contribute to the successful achievement of the apprenticeship.

It could include the following:

* The teaching of theory e.g. lectures, workshops, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning.
* Practical training e.g. work shadowing, mentoring, industry visits, attendance at competitions.
* Learning support and time spent writing assessments/assignments.

Off-the-job learning does not include:

* English and maths (up to level 2).
* Progress reviews or on-programme assessment needed for an apprenticeship framework or standard.
* Learning activities which take place outside the apprentice’s paid working hours.

To decide whether a learning activity constitutes off-the-job learning, it may be helpful to consider it in comparison to activities undertaken by other staff that are fully occupationally competent.

The apprentices’ commitment statement should, amongst other information, outline the programme of learning that the apprentice should receive and set out how the training provider intends to fulfil the 20% off-the-job learning requirement.

Off-the-job learning should be seen as an opportunity to upskill your apprentice that will bring real long-term benefits.

# Where off-the-job learning should take place

Off-the job learning activities can take place at the apprentices workplace or off-site e.g. in a classroom or from home via distance learning, as part of a blended approach.

It is the activity, rather than the location that determines whether the learning meets the criteria. It is possible for an apprentice to be undergoing learning activities outside of their normal working duties while physically at their normal workstation. For example, being taught how to operate new machinery or use a new IT package.

# Evidencing the off-the-job learning

All 20% off-the-job learning is recorded and monitored throughout the duration of the apprenticeship to ensure the apprentice is meeting their requirements. Depending on the training provider used, this may be recorded manually or through an online portal. The training provider will support the apprentice to evidence their 20% off-the-learning activities.

# Off-the-job learning methods

The 20% off-the-job learning can be achieved in a variety of ways, from formal classroom based lectures and workshops through to informal work based coaching and mentoring.

Further examples of delivery methods can be found overleaf and it is important to remember that any activity related to the job and the apprenticeship that develops new skills, knowledge or behaviours can count towards the 20% off-the-job learning.

# Examples of off-the-job learning activities

| Activity | Examples of valid off-the-job training |
| --- | --- |
| Classroom sessions/Lectures | Block or day release |
| Workshops and coaching | Interactive learning. Face-to-face tutor led delivery/coaching sessions. |
| Simulation exercises | Business modules and gaming |
| Online learning | Online training modules. Participating in relevant online forums. Attending webinars |
| Shadowing | In work or new department locations. Reflect on lessons learnt. |
| Mentoring | Support from the line manager/colleagues. Delivering a mentoring session. |
| Industry visits/Attendance at industry shows | Within sector or outside of work roles |
| Writing assessments/assignments/workbooks | Short exercises or longer projects. Individual study time. Preparation for assessments. |
| Practical training, direct training in the workplace relevant to the programme, (e.g. IT training, soft skills training) | Any training support delivered in the workplace  or with other external providers |
| Numeracy and or literacy training required to perform the job | English and maths related to the job |
| Preparation for a professional discussion | In support of portfolio or job related |
| Gathering portfolio evidence | Recording learning and training |
| Reflective log/journal | Recording all learning that has taken place on a  monthly/quarterly basis, and reflecting up on it |
| Conferences | Job sector or related |
| Special projects/work projects | Projects relating to the job role or to the testing of the programme |
| Continuous professional development/PDP | Any activity related to the job that develops new skills/knowledge/impacts on behaviours |
| Peer to peer support | Discussions/joint working with colleagues |
| Research | Background working to improve knowledge. Research tasks to gain new knowledge. |
| Revision for exams and End Point Assessment | Preparation for ongoing end point assessment |
| Workplace 1-2-1 performance reviews | Staff Review and Development Meetings. Development meetings with line manager. |