

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

GUIDE TO  
OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

A GUIDE FOR APPRENTICES, EMPLOYERS AND UEL STAFF



2024-25

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# What types of training do apprentices receive?

All apprenticeships at the University of East London have been designed with a combination of the following teaching and learning methods:

## OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

Only the following two means of training count towards off-the-job training and are a legal entitlement of the apprentice:

* **Direct training by UEL relating to KSBs**  
  For example: lectures, seminars, workshops, webinars. This could be on campus, online or on excursions.
* **Self-led training by the apprentice in the workplace**  
  For example: shadowing colleagues, applying new skills, critical reflections. For this, employers have a responsibility to allocate time for the apprentice to undertake this.

## ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

* **Direct training by the employer in the workplace not relating to KSBs**  
  On-the-job training will vary from employer to employer in quantity and content. This includes any training necessary for apprentices to complete their role (such as workplace induction) but not relating to the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship.

## OTHER TRAINING

* **Self-led training by the apprentice outside the workplace**For example: at-home revision, reading, etc.
* **Direct training by UEL not relating to KSBs**For example: university induction, academic skills sessions, functional skills sessions.
* **Summative assessments**For example: presentations, examinations. However, work apprentices put towards summative assessments such as essays, portfolios, projects, etc. can count towards off-the-job training.

# What is off-the-job training?

The following information is taken from act 3 (Off-the-job training) of [The Apprenticeships (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1310) (2017):

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| --- |
| 1. It is a condition of an approved English apprenticeship […] that the apprentice is to receive off-the-job training. 2. Each approved English apprenticeship agreement must specify the amount of time the apprentice is to receive off-the-job training during the period of the agreement. 3. For the purposes of paragraphs (1) and (2):    1. “off-the-job training” means training which is not on-the-job training and is received by the apprentice, during the apprentice's normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving the approved apprenticeship standard to which the agreement or arrangement relates;    2. “on-the-job training” means training which is received by the apprentice during the apprentice's normal working hours for the sole purpose of enabling the apprentice to perform the work to which the agreement or arrangement relates. 4. For the purposes of paragraph (3), “normal working hours” means the period when the apprentice is required or, as the case may be, expected, under the agreement or arrangement, to work or to receive training. |

The easiest way to understand this is that off-the-job training is any type of training that directly relates to the development of the knowledge, skills and behaviours listed in the applicable apprenticeship standard.

# What can count towards off-the-job training?

To determine whether an activity can count towards your off-the-job training hours, it must pass the following four tests:

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| **TEST 1** |  | Did the training occur once the apprenticeship had started? |
|  | | |
| **TEST 2** |  | Is the learning directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard? |
|  | | |
| **TEST 3** |  | Is the apprentice learning new knowledge, skills and behaviours? |
|  | | |
| **TEST 4** |  | Is the learning taking place during paid working hours? |
|  | | |
| If the answer to all four tests is **YES**, this training can be classified as off-the-job training! | | |

# Example off-the-job training activities

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| Attending  UEL training sessions | Watching educational videos | Shadowing your colleagues | Completing quizzes |
| Giving professional presentations | Going on educational trips and visits | Attending virtual lectures | Listening to academic audiobooks |
| Completing online modules | Participating in group discussions | Applying new skills in the workplace | Participating in sector-wide competitions |
| Attending work-based workshops | Reading academic literature | Preparing  For events | Evaluating professional conduct |
| Mentoring others at work | Receiving coaching from senior staff | Role-playing workplace scenarios | Completing workbook activities |
| Creating portfolios of evidence | Proposing ideas to improve processes | Watching recorded webinars | Simulating a professional setting |
| Writing reflective journals | Receiving academic support | Giving professional guidance to peers | Revision for end point assessment (EPA) |

**Note:** This is not an exhaustive list. You can consult with your Module/Course Leader or Apprenticeship Coach if you are ever not sure whether an activity can count towards off-the-job training hours or not.

# Where can off-the-job training take place?

Off-the-job training can take place **anywhere**! As long as it passes the four tests, it can count towards off-the-job training. This includes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | At the University of East London… |
|  | …in the workplace… |
|  | …on a placement… |
|  | …on an educational visit or trip… |
|  | …or even at home! |



# Can supernumerary hours count towards off-the-job training?

The following information is only applicable to apprentices working within NHS organisations and is taken from paragraph 17 of ESFA [off-the-job training: guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training) (2022):

|  |
| --- |
| Off-the-job training is different from terms such as ‘protected learning time’ or ‘supernumerary’. Protected learning time is a term often used within the NHS to mean the time apprentices are given to practise and develop their skills safely at work. This time often exceeds the minimum off-the-job training requirement and this should be considered when planning the apprenticeship. Supernumerary means the apprentice is not counted as part of the normal staffing ratios/headcount. |

Therefore, supernumerary hours can count towards off-the-job hours, however, only for the development of new knowledge, skills and behaviours; not for the practising of existing knowledge, skills and behaviours.

# What cannot count towards off-the-job training?

The following are examples of commonly misunderstood components of an apprenticeship which cannot be counted towards off-the-job training. However, they are all extremely important to ensure the successful completion of the apprenticeship!

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|  | Studies from before the apprenticeship start date |  | English and maths training |
|  | UEL induction and initial assessment |  | Tripartite progress reviews |
|  | Workplace induction |  | Study outside of paid working hours |
|  | Library/academic skills training |  | Study during annual/sick leave |
|  | Training not applicable to the apprenticeship |  | Knowledge, skills and behaviours you are already professionally competent in |
|  | Formative and summative assessments (e.g. exams) |  | Studies after Gateway |

If you are ever unsure about whether an activity can count towards your off-the-job training or not, you can consult with UEL course/module leaders or apprenticeship coaches.

# What is my responsibility as an employer to support apprenticeship off-the-job training?

The following information is taken from the ESFA [Off-the-job training: guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training) (October 2023):

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| --- |
| Off-the-job training must be away from the productive job role, but this doesn’t mean it must also be away from the workplace; training can take place at the employer’s premises and even at the apprentice’s normal workstation. Training can also take place off-site (e.g. in a provider’s classroom) or from home (via distance learning). It is the activity, rather than the location, which determines whether it meets the off-the-job training definition set out in the apprenticeship funding rules. |

As an apprentice employer, your responsibilities to support off-the-job training are as follows:

1. **Allocate protected off-the-job training time:**

Allow your apprentice protected time in their contracted working hours to attend UEL sessions. This could be one full day per week (known as ‘day release’) or for an intensive block of weeks for the entire week (known as ‘block release’). Whether an apprenticeship is structured via day release or block release will be communicated to employers and incoming apprentices at sign-up.

1. **Integrate off-the-job training with apprentice workplace duties:**

Allow your apprentice to apply their learning from UEL sessions in the workplace. Time protected for apprentices to apply their newly learned knowledge, skills and behaviours under your supervision will count towards their off-the-job training and the development of their professional competencies.

1. **Support off-the-job training monitoring activities:**

Allow your apprentice protected time in their working hours to undertake activities which support the monitoring of their off-the-job training. This could be, for example, reflective logs, workbook activities, online modules, and so on. These tasks will be communicated with you by UEL staff as the course progresses. Encourage apprentices to regularly log into Aptem to upload their off-the-job training evidence. When you monitor their Aptem Dashboard, check whether the evidence uploaded is indicative of the protected learning time you have allocated them. Check you are satisfied your apprentice is adequately logging the learning they are undertaking during their paid working hours.

# off-the-job training log writing style

Here are some examples of common mistakes made when logging off-the-job training and how they can be avoided to ensure not only compliance, but also a better quality of reflection to demonstrate to both UEL staff and your employer the progress you are making on your apprenticeship:

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| --- | --- |
| **Non-compliant examples** | **Best Practice!** |
| “Attended lectures.”  [Uploading lecturer’s slideshows]  [Uploading a photo of a lecture room] | “I attended a two-hour lecture at UEL on the topic of XXXX.” |
| “Shadowed my supervisor.”  [Uploading a timesheet] | “I shadowed my supervisor all day (seven hours) to learn how to XXXX by myself in future.” |
| [Uploading a certificate] | “I spent an hour completing an online course on the topic of XXXX.” |
| [Uploading a worksheet] | “I spent two hours completing a worksheet on the topic of XXXX.” |
| [Uploading employer policies or handbooks] | “I spent an hour studying about my employer’s policy on XXXX.” |
| “Revision for exam.”  [Uploading journal articles] | “I spent three hours in the library reading books and articles on XXXX.” |
| “Went to a conference.” | “I attended a conference all day (seven hours) where I learned about XXXX.” |
| [Uploading snapshot of Turnitin submission] | “I spent ten hours during paid working hours completing my summative assessment.” |
| “Mentored colleagues at work.” | “I spent four hours at work mentoring my colleagues on XXXX to reaffirm my own learning.” |

To support high quality off-the-job training evidence, the UEL Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) team has introduced Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) activities; sampling of apprentice off-the-job training to support academic teams in identifying common mistakes their apprentices are making and examples of best practice. For more information on IQA, contact [QAE@uel.ac.uk](mailto:QAE@uel.ac.uk).

# How often should apprentices record off-the-job training?

The following information is derived from Version 1 of the 2024/25 ESFA [Apprenticeship Funding Rules](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules):

## DAY RELEASE APPRENTICESHIPS

A ‘day release’ is a delivery model characterised by undertaking protected off-the-job training one day a week.

For apprentices on day release, off-the-job training must place at least **every calendar month** of the practical period (from the learning start date to the learning actual end date).

For example, if off-the-job training is recorded on 1 August 2024, off-the-job training must be recorded on or before 30 September 2024.

If apprentices do not engage with off-the-job training as scheduled in any calendar month, the ESFA will mandate that all missed activity is caught up on in the following month. If apprentices do not engage with off-the-job training as scheduled in any two-calendar month period, the ESFA will mandate a retrospective break in learning to be applied.

The only exception to this is for level 6 Teacher apprentices with a term-time-only contract, where the ESFA does not require a break in learning for the month of August (i.e. the summer holiday period).

**Therefore, apprentices on day release should record off-the-job training at least monthly.**

## BLOCK RELEASE APPRENTICESHIPS

The following guidance applies to apprentices on the level 6 Midwife (NMC 2019) apprenticeship only.

A ‘block release’ is a delivery model characterised by undertaking intensive off-the-job training for a full week (30 hours) or more at a time.

For apprentices on block release, off-the-job training must place at least **every three calendar months** of the practical period (from the learning start date to the learning actual end date).

For example, if off-the-job training is recorded on 1 August 2024, off-the-job training must be recorded on or before 30 November 2024.

If apprentices do not engage with off-the-job training as scheduled in any three-calendar month period, the ESFA will mandate a retrospective break in learning to be applied.

**Therefore, apprentices on day release should record off-the-job training at least every three months.**

# The Aptem off-the-job hours interface

On the Dashboard page of every apprentice’s profile, apprentices, employers and UEL staff will be able to view the graph below which displays off-the-job training evidence for the past four calendar months:



**Minimum Required** = Based on the apprenticeship duration, this is the absolute minimum number of off-the-job hours an apprentice should complete by the **end** of their apprenticeship.

**Planned (ILR)** = This is the number of hours UEL has agreed with employers to deliver by the end of the apprenticeship. Due to how Aptem rounds numbers up/down, there may be a slight difference of one hour. However, if this number is significantly different to the Minimum Required, apprentices and employers should raise a query with their Apprenticeship Coach.

**Submitted** = This is the number of hours an apprentice has uploaded to Aptem which have not yet been marked by a member of UEL staff. This appears as **pale blue** on the graph.

**Completed** = This is the number of hours an apprentice has uploaded to Aptem which have been marked and accepted by a member of UEL staff. This appears as **bright blue** on the graph.

**Forecast** = This is number of hours an apprentice has uploaded to Aptem (i.e. Submitted + Completed).

# off-the-job training log best practices

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| --- | --- |
| **Duplicating hours for one piece of learning** | If apprentices are uploading multiple pieces of evidence for the same task (e.g., a PowerPoint of lecture slides and a Word document of notes), they should only record hours against **one** of the pieces of evidence.  If apprentices upload each file with off-the-job training hours against it, they will duplicate the hours recorded for one session of learning. |
| **Recording evidence for one week across multiple weeks** | There is no limit to the amount of evidence apprentices can upload into a weekly off-the-job training log.  However, some apprentices have misunderstood that for each week, there can only be one piece of off-the-job training evidence. As a result, they record their first piece of evidence against week one, their second piece of evidence against week two, their third piece of evidence against week three, and so on.  All off-the-job training evidence that represents training from the same week should be uploaded together. |
| **Recording evidence in the wrong week** | On the system, all weekly off-the-job training logs feature a date. While this date is not a hard deadline (as you can retrospectively complete any off-the-job training log), apprentices should not record any off-the-job training beyond the date specified in the specified log.  For example, in off-the-job training log dated 29 January, all evidence should feature off-the-job training that occurred on 29 January or earlier.  Off-the-job training that occurred on 30 January or later would be recorded in the following week’s log. |
| **Recording off-the-job ‘minutes’ incorrectly** | When recording off-the-job training logs, the system measures off-the-job training like a digital clock.  Therefore, if an apprentice undertakes 0.5 hours of training (i.e., 30 minutes), they should record off-the-job training hours as “00:30”, not “00:50”.  In this example, the system will register off-the-job training as 50 minutes, not 30 minutes. Therefore, 2½ hours of off-the-job training should be recorded as “02:30”, not “02:50”, and so on. |
| **Recording off-the-job training during annual leave** | Apprentices are not allowed to record off-the-job training outside of their paid employment hours, which includes during annual leave and workplace closures (e.g., around Christmas and New Year).  Apprentices should simply make a note in their off-the-job training logs for any weeks that they did not go to work that zero off-the-job training hours took place, and why.  These off-the-job training logs **must** have zero hours recorded against them. |
| **Over-simplifying off-the-job training logs** | While the level of detail does not need to be complex when recording off-the-job training, on occasion, apprentices have over-simplified off-the-job training logs (e.g., by simply writing “lecture” or “studying in the library”).  Apprentices need to state what they have learned to evidence to the government, their employer and UEL staff what learning is taking place. |
| **Selecting the wrong option for ‘type of training’** | When recording off-the-job training, the system allows apprentices to select one of three options:   * Learning took place during paid working hours; * Learning took place in my own time and I received paid overtime; * Learning took place in my own time and I received time-off-in-lieu (TOIL).   For almost all (if not, every) off-the-job training log, off-the-job training will take place during paid working hours.  However, occasionally apprentices have accidentally selected the wrong option, indicating that they are regularly undertaking off-the-job training during paid overtime.  Apprentices should be mindful to ensure they are selecting the correct option from this drop-down list; where apprentices are registering the latter two options regularly, this will initiate a cause for concern from UEL staff. |
| **Not marking off-the-job training logs as ‘complete’** | Once apprentices upload any evidence to an off-the-job training log, our system cannot tell whether or not they will upload any additional evidence for that week until they click ‘Complete’.  Once apprentices have finished uploading all the evidence they want to for one week, they should be sure to click the dark blue ‘Complete’ button to ensure that Apprenticeship Coaches know evidence is ready for marking/review. |
| **Pre-populating off-the-job training logs for future weeks** | Off-the-job training logs are supposed to be an accurate log of training that has taken place during paid employment hours.  For that reason, they need to be an accurate reflection of what has actually occurred (i.e., in the past).  Therefore, apprentices should not complete off-the-job training logs for dates in the future, even if they are aware of what their upcoming schedule of training will be.  Many factors could affect future planning, such as staff absence, apprentice sickness, sudden university closure, and so on. |
| **Recording all paid employment hours as off-the-job training hours** | Some apprentices have misunderstood that the off-the-job hours log is a timesheet of hours they have worked that week, even where no ‘training’ is occurring.  While all off-the-job hours must take place during paid working hours, paid working hours are not automatically off-the-job training hours.  It is important for apprentices to be diligent about this to allow UEL to identify whether apprentices are receiving protected off-the-job training hours or not. |
| **Recording pre-apprenticeship training as off-the-job training** | Any training that takes place before the official apprenticeship start date can never count towards off-the-job training.  If apprentices want to upload any training evidence from before this date for their own records (e.g., certificates), they should use the ‘Documents’ section of the system. |
| **Misunderstanding ‘weekly’ as ‘one day a week’** | Weekly off-the-job training logs do not mean for one day each week, apprentices must record off-the-job training.  These logs are for apprentices to reflect upon all off-the-job training that took place across a full week and record all of it on the system. |

# Worked example of a completed off-the-job training log

Here is a completed example of an off-the-job training log. On the following page, a blank template has been provided.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Name of Apprentice** | | John Smith | | | | **Apprenticeship Standard** | | Chartered Manager | | | | **Off-the-Job Training Log for the week commencing:** | | 4 September 2024 | | | | **Day** | **Description of activity** | | **Hours spent** | **Occurred during paid working hours?** | | Monday | Attendance at UEL:   * Two-hour lecture on [Topic 1] * One-hour seminar discussion on [Topic 1] * Lunch * Two-hour lecture on [Topic 2] * Two hours self-study in the library on [Topics 1 & 2] | | 7 | Yes | | Tuesday | - | | - | - | | Wednesday | Two hours shadowing line manager on how to [Topic 2] | | 2 | Yes | | Thursday | - | | - | - | | Friday | One hour writing a reflective journal on [Topics 1 & 2] | | 1 | Yes | | Saturday | - | | - | - | | Sunday | - | | - | - | | Total | | | **10** |  | |