



The
Development
Manager Ltd.

Employer Engagement (for Apprenticeships) Policy and Process

Policy Statement

The Development Manager Ltd (TDM) believe in the value of apprenticeships as a real opportunity to upskill , reskill and gain career and social mobility. An apprenticeship is a job with an educational programme providing the skills and knowledge required to meet the national occupational standard.

TDM understand that any apprenticeship programme can only be successful if there is absolute commitment from the employers to support the apprenticeship. Therefore, TDM understand that the employer commitment must be genuine and that is a key contributory towards the success of the apprentice in meeting the national occupational standard.

TDM will explicitly align our choice of which standards to deliver according to regional economic drivers and emergent skills gaps, where we operate. These are reviewed every year.

TDM operate mainly in the West Midlands Region for Levy and Non-Levy employers.

Employer Engagement (for Apprenticeships) Principles

TDM have a set of principles that drive our approach to engage with employers:

The Development Manager (TDM) will only work with employers who are:

1. Fully committed to mentoring and supporting Work-Based Learning.
2. Willing to commit to an Apprenticeship Agreement and employer statement in addition to a contract of employment.
3. Supportive of delivering, in partnerships with TDM, both 80% of On-the-Job Learning and 20%+ of Off-the-Job Learning.
4. Supportive of the wider skills and knowledge brief which is required by:
 - o The apprenticeship standard as per national economic drivers
 - o The region's economic growth priorities as per the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) skills development plan (or similar e.g. WMCA (West Midlands Combined Authority)

Employer Engagement (for Apprenticeships) Process

Our process for engagement with employers runs across different teams. From the very first step of promoting the apprenticeship programme to employers, to then helping employers decide which standard may be suitable for their business needs, to the formation and shaping of the individual learning plan right across to the continuous evaluation of the programme. The TDM teams (Business Development, Marketing, Coaching/Training (Academic), Support, Compliance) work together following the process to provide the best possible apprenticeship service, which in return will provide the apprentice with the possibility of a national occupational

standard and career and social mobility.

Step 1: Identification of employers

- TDM Marketing and Business Development Executives (BDE) teams generate leads via opportunity awareness, promotional events with employers that operate in the sectors we deliver apprenticeship standards for. For example, employers that do software development, employers that have Tech infrastructure or employers that have a digital marketing department.
- The BDE team have two main functions, they operate as:
 - Employer Representatives, qualifying in and out employers who agree with our employer engagement principles, as stated above in the “Employer Engagement (for Apprenticeships) Principles”.
 - Applicant Engagers, qualifying potential apprentices in and out and supporting apprenticeship applicants (either job-seekers or already employed applicants) according to: ability, capacity and eligibility to achieve the apprenticeship standard, employer needs and requirements.
- Operating outside the West Midlands can be considered only if there is a big enough cohort of apprentices that would justify delivery outside the reach of our regional training centres: Worcester and Birmingham. These types of opportunities must be discussed with the directors to check for suitability and viability.

Step 2: Training Needs Analysis

- The Employer Representative conducts a training needs analysis with each interested employer for each apprenticeship vacancy they wish to engage.
- TDM’s Training Needs analysis is designed to identify employer company background, vision and goals; company markets, products and services; company operations: how they measure costs and what IT infrastructure they have; company business marketing and customer satisfaction services; business structure and people and training needs analysis (training already taking place, training actively looking for, training they could do with).
- The TDM TNA then is evaluated to identify if there is a match between the apprenticeship programmes TDM can offer and the employer company training needs.
- This process includes a skillscan of the specific standard they are considering apprenticing someone towards (The Competency Checklist).
- The employer must confirm that the job role of the apprentice will provide the opportunity for coverage of the standard with the depth and breadth of tasks in the job role to be sufficient to meet the standard.
- Once the employer is clear of the expected outcomes they sign “The initial terms of business” and “request for services” for TDM (This includes a commitment to the 20% Off the job training as per funding rules).
- This would then enable TDM to publish the apprenticeship vacancy via the “Find an apprenticeship” website: <https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/> (if employer is looking to recruit apprentices).
- After application to apprenticeship vacancy the potential apprentice/candidate undergoes an initial assessment process to be able to enrol into a TDM apprenticeship programme (See initial assessment policy and process). This also applies for candidates that are already employed.
- An initial training plan is drawn up before start date and approved by TDM’s Compliance Team. This is to confirm commitment to the apprenticeship deliverables and the training programme. Once the

apprenticeship programme commences, this is passed on to the TDM coaching team for review and further development during onboarding.

Step 3: Promotion of employers' apprenticeship vacancies (For new apprenticeship vacancies)

- Promotion of employers' apprenticeship vacancies via the "Find Apprenticeship Training"/ "Find an Apprenticeship" service can be done only after step 1 and 2 have been completed.
- TDM BDE will liaise with employer to finalise the job vacancy description and specification, which will be then be input to the "Find Apprenticeship Training" service.
- TDM BDE and Marketing Team will also advertise the vacancy via other routes such as trusted jobs boards, use of the network we operate in that may have candidates seeking for a position that closely matches the vacancy being advertised, use of social media in the regions employers operate.
- TDM BDE will look for suitability of any of the candidates that have been shortlisted by TDM in any given month and that are actively looking (The candidate pool) to see if there is a close match between candidate and the requirements of the employer vacancy.
- Where needed, TDM BDE and Marketing Team will also support employers through the requirements of creating a Digital Account. This may be done for Levy employers, employers who would like to access the levy transfer or non-levy employers from 2020.
- TDM Marketing Team will actively communicate with employers via email campaigns and webinar tutorials on how to create their digital account and the steps to do this.
- Where candidates have applied to an employer vacancy using the "Find Apprenticeship Training" service and have been shortlisted to TDM interview and employer interview, but then have been unsuccessful, TDM BDEs will refer the candidate to other suitable apprenticeship vacancies available or refer them to other educational opportunities within the training provider network and other organisations that support people into jobs.
- BDE applicant engagement team collaborate with Training Provider Networks on a Regional Basis in order to serve as an impartial referral source towards alternative educational provision wherever that best serves a applicant (or an employer's) learning interests. This is in accordance with the Matrix Standard guidance.

Step 4 : Collaboration with employers to create and update the apprentice's individual learning plan

- There are two routes for candidates to become apprentices at TDM: The already employed route and the applicant route. Both routes require the applicant to undergo an initial assessment to test suitability to the job role/apprenticeship standard requirements.
- Once a match has been made between the apprenticeship programme requirements, the candidate and the employer the apprenticeship programme can commence.
- An apprenticeship start date will be agreed with the employer.
- On start Date (The sign up date) the TDM BDE will visit the employer premises to do a "first day in learning" session with the employer and the apprentice. At this meeting the following will be covered:
 - Review of the initial training plan originally drawn up during step 2, this is done so that both the employer and the apprentice can together look at the deliverables required to meet the standard.
 - On this day TDM representative, The employer and the Apprentice will discuss:
 - The apprenticeship standard key deliverables:

- Technical knowledge and understanding
- Competencies in the workplace
- Professional attitudes and behaviours
- Onboarding quarter: Coaching programme, orientation, focus day
- First day in learning VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) course
- National educational priorities introduction: Health and safety, equality and diversity, British Values, Safeguarding including the Prevent agenda.
- Complaints policy and procedure and key communication channels via the TDM coaches and the BDE-Account Manager.
- The Individual Learning Plan in the VLE.
- Next steps to be followed by The TDM Skills and Knowledge and Professional Development Coaching team.
- Soon after the start date: The apprentice will attend the orientation course and the Focus day of their apprenticeship standard at TDM premises and
- The TDM coach will visit the employer premises to have an Onboarding workplace coaching visit. At this meeting:
 - The individual learning plan is finalised with the mentor, the apprentice and the TDM coach.
 - Workplace projects and tasks are agreed with the employer so that the apprentice can cover the depth and breadth required by the national occupational standard.
 - Where the employer job role does not offer coverage of the standard the TDM coach will provide ideas of projects or tasks that are a typical match with the national occupational standard and will advise on ways to apply these into workplace context to achieve maximum impact not only for the apprentice benefit but also for company benefit.
 - The coach will remind the mentor and the apprentice of the learner journey and key deliverables
 - The coach will also remind the mentor and apprentice of the TDM systems, such as the VLE: Learning Management System (LMS) and e-portfolio) and communications channels (workplace coaching visits, distance coaching sessions, e-portfolio workshops, face to face training programmes).

The Coaching/Training Programme (Continued evaluation of the progress of the individual learning plan to ensure timely completion and successful progress)

- A team of two coaches: the skills and knowledge coach (SKC) and the professional development coach (PDC) are deployed to help each apprentice and employer to successfully complete the apprenticeship programme and achieve the standard.
- The coaches will visit the workplace and review the learning plan every 8-12 weeks, at this review meetings the coaches will check with the mentor and the apprentice on the progress of the individual learning plan:
 - **Impact:** Have the objectives set up last quarter been met?. Is the apprenticeship programme having the desired impact into the place of work? How has the apprentice grown as a result of the programme? What Distance has been travelled within the apprenticeship programme?
 - **Intent:** What will be the new (carry forward) objectives for the upcoming quarter?

What will the key milestones be?. Are the key apprenticeships deliverables being met? (20% off the job training, Knowledge Module Test Pass, etc). What projects and tasks are needed in the workplace that the apprentice can work on aided by TDM's coaches?. Are there any deliverables (tasks and projects) the mentor would like the TDM coaches to help the apprentice with, provided they are within the remit of the coaching programme? Does the apprentice need extra support or stretch and challenging activities?

- **Implementation:** How will the objectives be implemented?. How will the Individual Learning Plan be shaped to record the new requirements?. What will the new milestones be? How will these objectives and milestones be achieved on time every time?
- The coaches will then do Distance Coaching session in between their workplace coaching visits to check on the progress of the objectives set.
- Coaching records forms are completed at every intervention with the apprentice and the employer and these are stored in the CMS and shared with all parties.

Employer and TDM engagement expectations

- Continuous engagement with employer is paramount to the success of the apprenticeship. Therefore, coaches must insist on the mentor being present at the workplace coaching sessions.
- If a mentor cannot be present on the day of the workplace coaching visits the TDM coach must fill in the workplace coaching visit record and then communicate with the mentor remotely to complete the relevant mentor sections in the form and agree on deliverables.
- Where a mentor has failed to attend two or more coaching sessions and is showing disengagement this must be highlighted as an issue to the academic manager and the TDM leadership management team. This usually can be highlighted during the regular "school meetings" where coaches discuss progress per apprentice.
- The skills and knowledge coach and the professional development coach must draw up a plan of remedy and communicate this to the mentor/employer. They then need to carefully monitor the plan is delivered.
- If necessary the coaching team will liaise with the BDE employer representative to contact HR managers or directors at the Employer Company, who were first involved in original training plan set up.
- If after the plan is delivered there are still issues with mentors, the issue must be escalated to the academic delivery manager, who will discuss with directors to seek alternative solutions.
- Where the mentor/employer/apprentice have an issue either in the workplace or with TDM's programme, the TDM professional development coach will intervene to facilitate communication and propose issue resolution. If needed the professional development coach will point out to the complaints policy and procedure.
- Where relevant the professional development coach will highlight the learner as a

Communication Channels

- The professional development coach is the main point of contact for any questions related to the programme deliverables, including issue resolution and advice and guidance.
- The professional development coach works alongside the skills and knowledge coach and checks on the progress made by the apprentice on a quarterly basis.
- The professional development coach will complete a distance travelled matrix by checking on all documentation and systems updated and completed by the apprentice, the coaches and the mentor during

the quarter coaching sessions and checking also on the training programme attendance.

- Every time the SKC or PDC contact the apprentice for a coaching session a record is produced: The Workplace Coaching Record, The Distance Coaching Record, the Training Activity record . These are filled in by coaches for compliance purposes and in conjunction with the learning management system individual learning plan section, where objectives are set.
- Once these documents are completed these are to always be shared with the apprentice and their mentor/employer. This is to maintain a record of the progress being made and to aid transparency if the process.
- If there are any safeguarding
- Communication with mentor and apprentice is via the use of the learning management system, the e-portfolio and the use of emails, online platforms such as GotoMeeting or Google meet to have the interaction with apprentices and employers on what they need to do.

Step 5 : Continuous employer feedback for quality improvement

- TDM will perform regular checks on the quality of our delivery to inform our quality improvement plan. This will be done following these methods:
- Via the Coaching programme: As described above the regular coaching visits will seek feedback on the individual learning plan: Impact-Intent and Implementation steps.
- Via Account Management: TDM BDE Employer Representatives will:
 - Maintain a long-term working relationship with every employer they hold the account for, they will contact their accounts on a regular basis to ask for feedback on the coaching and training programme.
 - Aid issue resolution where required by the professional development coach or the management team.
- Via Employer and Apprentice Feedback:
 - TDM support team run different feedback surveys online or via telephone to establish:
 - Effectiveness of the training programme that delivers the Technical knowledge and understanding
 - Effectiveness of the curriculum in terms of training.
 - Effectiveness of the coaching programme (face to face workplace visits and distance coaching)
- Via Exit and Progression Review
 - On completion of the apprenticeship programme the employer and the learner will be visited by the professional development coach in the workplace to do an exit/progression review meeting.
 - At this meeting the employer and apprentice will give their feedback on the programme and progression opportunities will be discussed with them to either a TDM higher level programme , such as the degree apprenticeship or to other continuous professional routes.
 - In the case that an apprentice withdraws from the programme before completion the professional development coach must complete the exit/progression review detailing reasons why the apprentice did not complete and seek feedback from employer on lesson learned.
 - Records are then uploaded to the TDM CMS (Content Management System)

- The results of this feedback will be evaluated on a quarterly basis (TDM's quarters) and be communicated to the leadership and management team to be discussed at the Company quarterly management review meetings and to be presented at the TDM board of governors meeting (which happen every quarter too).
- If ad-hoc unsolicited feedback is received either positive or negative this will be added to our complaints and/or compliments log and if it is a complaint the apprentice/employer will be guided towards the complaints policy and procedure, which can be also found in the learning management system.
- This cyclical review of feedback and recording it into the logs allows us to check for trends and add key improvement tasks where needed. These are also communicated to the coaching team and at team meetings.

Issue Date	Revision Number*	Revision Date*	Revision Changes*	Initials
25/06/2019	001	-	Issued	DK
01/11/2019	002	-	Changes to explain the process engagement with employer through the programme	EH
01/11/2019	003	31/01/21	Checked for currency	EH