Foundation Apprenticeships
Frequently Asked Questions

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Introduction to Foundation Apprenticeships

What is a Foundation Apprenticeship?

Foundation Apprenticeships are a Skills Development Scotland (SDS) initiative, providing new, work-based learning opportunities for learners in their senior phase of secondary education. It enables them to complete elements of a Modern Apprenticeship while still at school.

Learners work towards a Foundation Apprenticeship alongside their other subjects — their National 5 and Highers. They'll also spend part of the school week with a learning provider and with a local employer. They will work towards industry-recognised qualifications while developing skills and experience in the workplace.

What Foundation Apprenticeships are available?

There are Foundation Apprenticeships available in the following subjects:

- Accountancy
- Business Skills
- Civil Engineering
- Creative and Digital Media
- Engineering
- Financial Services
- Food and Drink Technologies
- Information Technology: Hardware/System Support
- Information Technology: Software Development
- Scientific Technologies
- Social Services and Healthcare
- Social Services: Children and Young People

What is included in a Foundation Apprenticeship?

Each Foundation Apprenticeship framework contains the following components:

- A National Certificate (NC) or National Progression Award (NPA) — an industry-recognised qualification which is taught within a classroom environment
- Selected Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) units — developed through National Occupational Standards, the units are completed within a workplace environment
- Professional qualifications are also contained within the Accountancy and Food and Drink Technologies frameworks, which enable learners to gain industry-specific skills within their apprenticeship.

My organisation is interested in delivering Foundation Apprenticeships. Where can I find information about this?

Organisations looking to deliver Foundation Apprenticeships should approach SDS for information and guidance in the first instance. SDS can be contacted directly at newapprenticeships@sds.co.uk.
Delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships

What are the SQA requirements to deliver a Foundation Apprenticeship?

Each component of a Foundation Apprenticeship must be delivered by a provider which:

- has the appropriate resources, facilities, and trained and qualified staff; and

- is approved by the appropriate awarding body (SQA in the case of NC/NPA, and SVQ units)

Organisations interested in delivering a Foundation Apprenticeship as a sole provider will have to ensure they have approval for the full Foundation Apprenticeship framework — the Foundation Apprenticeship group award code, the NC/NPA components, the SVQ units and any professional qualification approvals through other awarding bodies.

Centres delivering the Foundation Apprenticeship in Accountancy or Food and Drink Technologies should also ensure that approvals are in place through the relevant awarding body. Please refer to the SDS Foundation Apprenticeship Framework publications for more information.

Partnerships delivering a Foundation Apprenticeship

Where an organisation is interested in delivering a Foundation Apprenticeship within a partnership arrangement, the ‘lead partner’ will be responsible for the overall delivery of the Foundation Apprenticeship, including compliance with SQA processes such as verification and record keeping. The lead partner will be approved for the overall Foundation Apprenticeship group award code, and each partner will be approved for the component(s) it delivers.

Shared arrangements between delivering centres should be detailed in a partnership agreement. This ensures that all partners are aware of their role and responsibilities and those of others involved with SQA provision. This includes anyone sub-contracted or working in partnership with the centre. Please refer to SQA’s Systems and Qualification Approval Guide for details on partnership agreements.

We have provided examples of possible delivery models at the end of this document, showing how a Foundation Apprenticeship can be delivered by a single organisation, or a partnership of providers.

SDS requirements

Centres delivering a Foundation Apprenticeship must also comply with SDS contract arrangements for delivery, including providing the learner with access to a work placement in order to meet the SVQ workplace requirements.

How do I become an SQA approved centre to deliver a Foundation Apprenticeship?

The first step is to enter into a contract with SDS to be able to offer a Foundation Apprenticeship. SDS sends a list of contracted learning providers to SQA, so when your centre applies to SQA for approval, we will check this list before you can start SQA’s normal approval process, ie centre approval, qualification approval or devolved approval route.
**Centre approval:** if your centre is not an SQA approved centre but wishes to be approved by SQA to deliver a Foundation Apprenticeship, you must get in touch with SQA’s Business Development Team, who will support you through the centre approval process. Please call 0303 333 0330 or e-mail mycentre@sqa.org.uk.

**Qualification approval:** SQA approved centres can submit a qualification approval application form or recognition application form.

**Devolved approval:** where the Foundation Apprenticeship is a devolvable qualification, SQA approved centres with devolved authority can submit a devolved approval form (DAQAAF) for the Foundation Apprenticeship. Foundation Apprenticeships are listed under ‘vocational qualifications’ on SQA systems.

Approved centres should (where applicable) use the devolved approval processes available to them. If a delivering centre is not one of Scotland’s colleges, it must submit an application for centre approval, qualification approval and/or unit approval for the components of the Foundation Apprenticeship it is delivering.

**Where can centres find details of the component qualifications and units in a Foundation Apprenticeship?**

SQA approved centres can view the latest Foundation Apprenticeship framework on the SQA system. SDS has also published framework documents for Foundation Apprenticeships on its website.

**How can centres recognise prior learning?**

Candidates may be able to use recognition of prior learning (RPL) to achieve their Foundation Apprenticeship. RPL is not an exemption from a unit in a group award, and centres should follow SQA’s usual processes, including entering and resulting the equivalent SQA unit and retaining evidence of achievement for verification. Standard unit and group award entry fees also apply (SVQ units are currently £7.50).

If your centre is offering another awarding body’s SVQ unit and is using achievement of that unit to contribute towards the Foundation Apprenticeship, you must ensure that you follow SQA’s Recognition of Prior Learning policy. SQA’s usual quality assurance requirements, processes and charges, including entering and resulting for the equivalent SQA SVQ unit, still apply in this circumstance.

**Will a group award specification or arrangements document be produced by SQA or SDS for Foundation Apprenticeships?**

The Foundation Apprenticeship is an SDS product (though it has an SQA Group Award (4+2) code for identification and operational purposes). SQA provides group award and unit specifications for the SQA group awards and units in the Foundation Apprenticeship framework. SDS has Foundation Apprenticeship product specifications and Foundation Apprenticeship framework publications on its website.
Verification of Foundation Apprenticeships

SDS has its own quality assurance arrangements for its contract delivery — these do not duplicate or replicate the quality assurance that SQA conducts on the qualification delivery.

What verification group do Foundation Apprenticeships belong to?

Foundation Apprenticeships can belong to a number of verification groups. You can find the verification groups on SQA’s Connect system.

The NC or NPA component of a Foundation Apprenticeship may belong to a different verification group from other component units (eg SVQ units). Where the components of a Foundation Apprenticeship are divided between more than one verification group, more than one external verifier may be involved in verification.

Have external verifiers been advised about the delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships?

External verifiers were briefed at standardisation events, and this information is available on the SQA QA Appointee website. All senior external verifiers have this information to disseminate to their teams.

How is verification triggered for component SVQ units?

Verification for the component qualifications and units is triggered when a centre enters a candidate on SQA’s system using the Foundation Apprenticeship group award code. The verification activity will vary depending on which verification group the Foundation Apprenticeship group award and component SVQ units belong to. Verification activity does not apply to the mandatory Foundation Apprenticeship Certification unit HE6E 04.

If I use recognition of prior learning, what is the verification process?

External verifiers will contact each centre during the planning process to organise the details of the verification visit. Where the centre has advised that recognition of prior learning is being used, the external verifier will discuss the most appropriate verification method, eg checking candidate achievement. Where there are shared delivery arrangements, the centre entering and resulting candidates for recognition of prior learning is responsible for providing the evidence of candidate achievement.
Certification of the Foundation Apprenticeship

What are the charges for qualifications and units in Foundation Apprenticeships?

When entering candidates for the Foundation Apprenticeship on SQA systems, you must also enter candidates for the following components:

♦ NC or NPA component — standard NC or NPA pricing
♦ SVQ units — £7.50 per unit
♦ Professional qualification shadow units — £7.50 per unit (Food and Drink Technologies and Accountancy only)
♦ *Foundation Apprenticeship Certification* unit — £25 certification fee

What certificates will candidates receive?

Candidates will receive the following certificates when they complete a Foundation Apprenticeship:

**SQA commemorative certificate for the component group award (NC or NPA):**
♦ This commemorative certificate will detail achievement of the group award.
♦ These certificates are automatically generated and sent to candidates during the first available certification run.
♦ If a candidate is entered and resulted for the NPA or NC component in year one, the certificate will be issued then.

**SQA, SDS and SSC commemorative certificate for the Foundation Apprenticeship:**
♦ This will detail achievement of the Foundation Apprenticeship, and will include the logo and a signature from SDS, SQA and the relevant SSC for the industry sector.

**Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC):**
♦ The candidate's SQC will list the Foundation Apprenticeship, and the component group award and all its components. The SQC is a cumulative record of a candidate's achievement as recorded on SQA's system.
♦ If candidates have achieved and been certificated for the Foundation Apprenticeship and are completing any National Qualifications (eg National 5, Higher), their SQC will be issued on results day in August as normal, and will list their Foundation Apprenticeship and component group award achievements.

**SQA component unit certificate:**
♦ Candidates will receive a certificate for a completed component unit only if there are no other outstanding units or qualifications on their record.
When will candidates receive their certificate?

Once a centre submits all the contributing results onto SQA’s systems, the next certification run will produce the candidate’s certificate. For most of the year, certification runs take place three times per week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday).

From mid-July to results day in August processing is restricted — no updates (results submission, certification etc) are accepted for any candidates involved in National Qualifications certification.

Processing will still take place for candidates who are not taking National Qualifications, but certification will be less frequent during this period.

Some Foundation Apprenticeships contain other awarding body provision. How do I ensure successful candidates receive the Foundation Apprenticeship certificate issued by SQA?

Some centres may deliver SVQ units through another awarding body. In addition, centres offering the Accountancy or Food and Drink Technologies Foundation Apprenticeships will also deliver professional qualifications through bodies such as REHIS, AAT or ACCA as part of the Foundation Apprenticeship framework. Where units are provided by other awarding bodies, there is a corresponding 4+2 unit code on SQA systems to include in the Foundation Apprenticeship framework.

In both scenarios, centres will enter and result the unit on SQA systems to ensure a Foundation Apprenticeship certificate can be produced. Each unit is charged at £7.50 which covers the cost of administration. Verification will check evidence of candidate achievement to ensure candidates have achieved each component of a Foundation Apprenticeship before a commemorative Foundation Apprenticeship certificate can be issued by SQA.

How do centre staff ensure that candidates receive their Foundation Apprenticeship certificates?

Centre staff must use their normal submission method to enter candidates for each unit (including the mandatory Foundation Apprenticeship Certification unit HE6E 04) and each group award (NPA, NC) in the Foundation Apprenticeship framework.

Once all unit and group award results have been submitted to SQA, and assuming the candidate has successfully achieved all component parts, the candidate will receive a commemorative certificate for each group award along with their SQC.

For enquiries about SQA’s certification process, please e-mail mycentre@sqa.org.uk or call 0303 333 0330.
Pathways for progression

Are there any articulation arrangements for the Foundation Apprenticeships with higher education institutions?

To find out more about progression pathways for Foundation Apprenticeships, please visit:

♦ SDS Apprenticeships website
♦ SDS website

For information on UCAS or Insight Tariff points, please contact SDS directly at newapprenticeships@sds.co.uk.

Further information

Where can I find out more about Foundation Apprenticeships?

For information about the Foundation Apprenticeship framework, or to provide feedback:

♦ contact SDS directly at newapprenticeships@sds.co.uk
♦ visit the SDS Apprenticeships website
♦ visit the SDS website

For more information on SQA’s processes, qualifications and units, or to provide feedback:

♦ Centres should call 0303 333 0330 or e-mail mycentre@sqa.org.uk.
♦ Candidates should call 0345 279 1000 or e-mail customer@sqa.org.uk.

For more information on SQA’s processes, please visit the frequently asked questions section of our website, or contact our Business Development and Customer Support Team at mycentre@sqa.org.uk.
Examples of delivery models

The table below outlines a variety of models which may be used to deliver a Foundation Apprenticeship in different scenarios. A fuller explanation of each scenario follows:

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<th>Scenario</th>
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<th>Delivery Partner</th>
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<th>Facilities, resources and staff to deliver NPA / NC qualification</th>
<th>Approved for SVQ units</th>
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**Scenario A**

College A contracts with SDS to deliver the Foundation Apprenticeship in Engineering. College A is already an SQA approved centre and has the resources, facilities, and trained and qualified staff to deliver the engineering components (both NPA/NC and SVQ units), therefore they can be approved to deliver the apprenticeship framework.

College A will be responsible for the Foundation Apprenticeship delivery, including SQA processes.

**Scenario B**

A local authority contracts with SDS to deliver the Foundation Apprenticeship in Financial Services. The local authority is not an SQA approved centre, nor do they have the resources, facilities, or trained and qualified staff to deliver the Financial Services components. The local authority therefore partners with College B, which is an SQA approved centre, and can deliver these components, and can thus be approved to deliver the apprenticeship framework.

College B will be responsible for the Foundation Apprenticeship delivery, including SQA processes.

**Scenario C**

A local authority contracts with SDS to deliver the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills. The local authority is already an SQA approved centre for delivery of SVQ units, and has the resources and facilities required to deliver the vocational (work-based) components. The local authority does not itself have the resources, facilities, or the trained and qualified staff to deliver the classroom-based NPA components. The local authority partners with Organisation X, which is an SQA approved centre with the resources, facilities, and trained and qualified staff to deliver the NPA components, and is approved to deliver the NPA component.

The local authority will be responsible for the Foundation Apprenticeship delivery, including SQA processes.

**Scenario D**

An independent training provider contracts with SDS to deliver the Foundation Apprenticeship in Accountancy. The independent training provider is already an SQA approved centre for delivery of SVQ units, and has the resources, facilities, and trained and qualified staff required to deliver the vocational (work-based) components. The independent training provider also has the resources, facilities, and trained and qualified staff to deliver the classroom-based NPA component — however, it is not approved by SQA to deliver this.

The independent training provider, if it wished to be sole provider of the Foundation Apprenticeship, would therefore have to apply for qualification approval for the NPA, and would be responsible for the Foundation Apprenticeship delivery, including SQA processes.

(Please note, the examples above are not prescriptive, and a variety of other delivery models may be possible. Please contact your SQA Business Development Manager to discuss possible delivery models.)