WELCOME

FOR MANAGERS OF APPRENTICES

get ahead guide

PART OF OUR

GETAHEAD

SERIES

Association of Apprentices

WELCOME

So you're an apprentice's manager...

WELCOME TO THE GET AHEAD GUIDE FOR APPRENTICES' MANAGERS! AS A MANAGER, YOU PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN SHAPING THE SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR APPRENTICES. YOUR GUIDANCE, SUPPORT, AND MENTORSHIP CAN HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH, SKILLS ACQUISITION, AND OVERALL CAREER TRAJECTORY. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO EQUIP YOU WITH THE NECESSARY TOOLS, HINTS, AND TIPS TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE AND MENTOR YOUR APPRENTICES.

Whether you are new to managing apprentices or have years of experience, this comprehensive guide will provide valuable insights and practical strategies to help you navigate the unique challenges and opportunities that come with this role.

We understand that managing apprentices requires a different approach compared to managing other team members. Apprentices are eager to learn, passionate about their chosen career paths, and possess a wealth of untapped potential. They bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a hunger for growth to your team. It is your responsibility as their manager to foster an environment that nurtures their development and helps them flourish.

Remember, your role as a manager of apprentices extends beyond simply overseeing their day-to-day tasks. You have the opportunity to shape the future workforce, contribute to the growth of your organisation, and leave a lasting impact on the lives and careers of your apprentices.

With the practical insights and tips found in this handbook, you will be equipped to navigate the complexities of managing apprentices and unleash their full potential. Your investment in their development will not only benefit them but also contribute to the success of your team and organisation as a whole.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION TO USE THIS GUIDE
But why should your organisation miss out?

CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE

Get Ahead Guide

CONTENTS

1 getting started

HOW TO SUPPORT APPRENTICES
CREATING A STRONG FOUNDATION - INDUCTIONS
MANAGERS' CHECKLIST

2 maximising the potential of apprentices

- UNDERSTANDING APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS
- TOP TIPS FOR REVIEWS
- MANAGER ADVICE FOR SUCCESFUL APPRENTICESHIPS FROM AN AWARD WINNING APPRENTICE LINE MANAGER

3 understanding the needs of apprentices

- OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING
- RESOURCES FOR LINE MANAGERS
- WORD IN THE COMMUNITY - APPRENTICE INSIGHTS
- JOIN THE COMMUNITY

getting STARTED

How to support apprentices

Supporting apprentices is a crucial responsibility for managers. Apprenticeships are valuable opportunities for individuals to gain practical skills and contribute to the organisation's success. Here are some top tips for supporting apprentices:

1. Clarify Expectations:
   - Set clear expectations for the apprentice's role, responsibilities, and goals.
   - Discuss the apprentice's learning objectives and career aspirations.

2. Provide a Structured Onboarding:
   - Ensure the apprentice receives a comprehensive orientation to the workplace, including safety protocols.
   - Introduce them to team members and key colleagues.

3. Assign a Mentor or Buddy:
   - Appoint an experienced employee to serve as a mentor or buddy to guide the apprentice.
   - Encourage regular meetings for guidance and feedback.

4. Offer Training and Development:
   - Provide access to relevant training programmes, workshops, or courses to support the apprentice's learning journey.
   - Encourage attendance at industry events and conferences, if applicable.

"My manager has supported me through my apprenticeship by allowing me to experience new opportunities and lead on some HR projects." - Association of Apprentices, Apprentice Council Member

5. Provide Regular Feedback:
   - Offer constructive feedback on the apprentice's performance, emphasising both strengths and areas for improvement.
   - Conduct regular check-ins to discuss progress and adjust goals as needed.
   - Regularly evaluate the apprentice's overall performance and development.
   - Use this information to adjust the learning plan and provide additional support as necessary.

getting STARTED - Continued.

6. Set Realistic Goals:
   - Establish achievable milestones and goals to track the apprentice's progress.
   - Ensure goals are challenging but not overwhelming.

7. Monitor Work-Life Balance:
   - Be mindful of the apprentice's workload and work-life balance.
   - Promote a healthy work environment to prevent burnout.

8. Support Skill Development:
   - Offer opportunities for hands-on learning and skill development.
   - Provide access to tools, resources, and technologies required for their role.

9. Prepare for Transition:
   - Plan for the apprentice's transition to a full-time role or the next phase of their career.
   - Offer guidance on job searches and professional growth.

By following this list, you as a manager can help apprentices to thrive in their roles, develop valuable skills, and make meaningful contributions to the organisation while also building a strong talent pipeline for the future.

SIGNPOST THIS: APPRENTICE EVENTS

Any UK apprentice can join AoA events for free. These can be virtual or in-person and are a mix of development and networking which can count towards off-the-job training - Check out AoA's Latest Events Here

creating a strong FOUNDATION

Inducting a new cohort of apprentices is an exciting time for both the apprentices and the managers responsible for their development. As a manager, your role is crucial in creating a positive and supportive environment that sets the foundation for their success. By following a few key tips, you can ensure a smooth and effective induction process, helping your apprentices integrate into the team seamlessly and empowering them to thrive in their new roles. By implementing these strategies, you can lay the groundwork for a successful apprenticeship programme and foster a culture of growth and development within your organisation.

- Involve the Team

Create a welcoming and motivated team environment.

- Provide Inductions

Offer inductions on health & safety, data protection, company values, and more.

- Set Clear Expectations

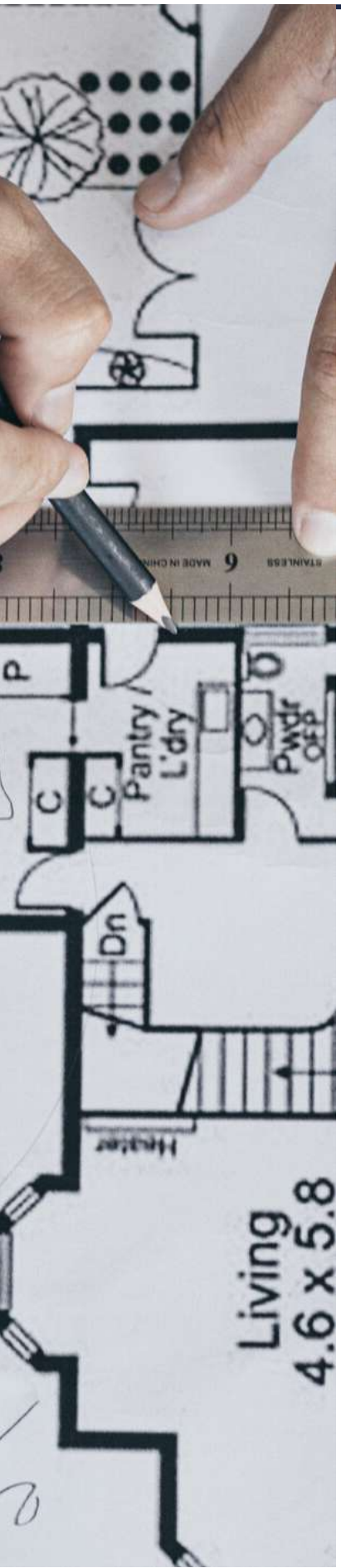
Don't make assumptions about their capabilities. Encourage responsibility.

- Assign a Mentor

Consider assigning a trusted staff member as their work-place Mentor or Buddy for support, especially during the induction stage.

tick these off as you go

MANAGERS' CHECKLIST



☐ Preparation:

- Set up a workspace for the apprentice.
- Gather necessary equipment and tools (computer, software, safety gear, etc.).
- Prepare an email or communication introducing the apprentice to the team.

☐ Induction:

- Organise a formal induction programme.
- Introduce the apprentice to their team and other relevant departments.
- Provide a tour of the workplace, highlighting key areas and facilities.
- Discuss company culture, values, and expectations.

☐ Training & Development:

- Familiarise yourself with the training provider's curriculum (how could you match the apprentices' work to their training?).
- Block out the apprentice's off-the-job training day in the calendar as a meeting-free day.
- Attend meetings with the trainer every 12 weeks.
- Ensure the apprentice understands their role and responsibilities.

☐ Communication:

- Set up regular check-in meetings to discuss progress and address concerns.
- Ensure open lines of communication between the apprentice, HR, and the training provider.
- Encourage the apprentice to ask questions and seek clarification when needed.

☐ Resources & Support:

- Provide access to online resources or training materials.
- Ensure the apprentice knows where to find company policies and procedures.
- Offer resources for mental and emotional well-being.

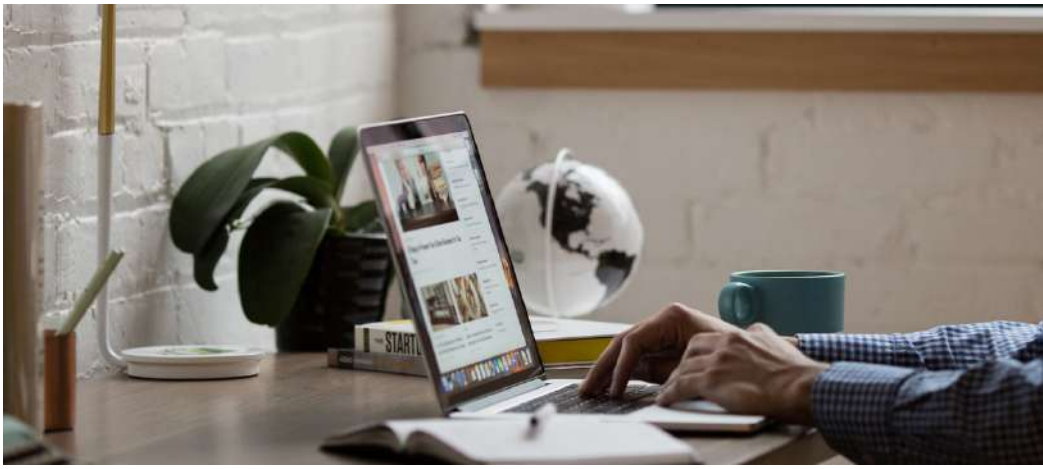
☐ Feedback & Reviews:

- Schedule the first performance review.
- Provide constructive feedback regularly.
- Celebrate small achievements and milestones.

☐ Integration:

- Encourage team-building activities.
- Involve the apprentice in team meetings and brainstorming sessions.
- Promote a culture of inclusivity and respect.

maximising the potential of APPRENTICES



Understanding Apprenticeship Standards

Apprenticeship standards are industry-specific frameworks that outline the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required for a particular job role. These standards serve as a guide for apprentices and their managers, providing a clear roadmap for their development and progression. It is essential for managers to thoroughly understand the apprenticeship standards relevant to their apprentices to effectively support their learning and growth.

Tip 1: Familiarise Yourself with the Apprenticeship Standard
Take the time to read and familiarise yourself with the specific apprenticeship standard that your apprentice is enrolled in. This will give you a comprehensive understanding of the skills and knowledge they are expected to acquire throughout their apprenticeship. By doing so, you can align their learning and development activities with the requirements outlined in the standard.

Tip 2: Identify Opportunities for Skill Development
Within the apprenticeship standard, there will be specific skills and behaviours that apprentices need to develop. As a manager, it is important to identify opportunities for your apprentices to enhance these skills within their day-to-day work. This could involve assigning them tasks or projects that allow them to practise and apply the skills outlined in the standard.

Tip 3: Encourage Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing
Encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst your team members, including your apprentices. Provide opportunities for them to work together on projects or participate in team activities that promote learning and sharing of ideas. This collaborative environment can foster creativity and innovation, benefitting both the apprentices and the team as a whole.

Tip 4: Support Off-the-Job Learning
Off-the-job learning is a crucial component of apprenticeships, allowing apprentices to gain broader knowledge and experience beyond their day-to-day tasks. Support your apprentices in accessing the necessary resources and learning opportunities required for off-the-job learning. This could include providing access to relevant training programmes, workshops, or online courses.

As a manager of apprentices, you have a significant role to play in supporting the growth and development of your apprentices. By understanding apprenticeship standards, creating a supportive learning environment, and building strong relationships, you can maximise the potential of your apprentices and contribute to their long-term success. Remember, the Association of Apprentices is here to support you and your apprentices throughout their journey. Together, we can create a bright future for the next generation of skilled professionals.

See Apprenticeship Standards on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's website

top tips for

REVIEWS

Reviews play a critical role in the development and success of apprentices. As a manager, your active participation in reviews with their training provider can greatly enhance the learning experience for your apprentices.

STAY ENGAGED

Attending apprentice reviews demonstrates your commitment to their growth and development. By participating in these meetings, you can gain insights into their progress, challenges, and areas for improvement. Ideally, aim to join your apprentice's reviews every 12 weeks to maintain regular communication and monitor their progress. This involvement shows your investment in their success and creates a supportive environment.

PROVIDE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

One of the most valuable contributions you can make during reviews is offering constructive feedback. Share your observations and insights on the apprentice's performance, skills, and attitude. Highlight their achievements and acknowledge their efforts while also providing guidance on areas where they can improve. Remember to focus on specific examples and actionable suggestions to facilitate their growth. Constructive feedback helps apprentices understand expectations, develop self-awareness, and strive for continuous improvement.

CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Taking an active interest in your apprentice's long-term development is crucial. Celebrating their achievements not only boosts their morale but also reinforces their commitment to their apprenticeship.

case study

RICH BROOKS, SENIOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT IMDB, AN AMAZON SUBSIDIARY

MANAGER ADVICE FOR SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIPS

I work as a Software Development Manager at IMDb/Amazon. In 2019 we launched our first degree-level Software Development apprenticeship. I managed 2 Software Development Engineer Apprentices through their 4-year degree apprenticeship. They successfully completed their apprenticeships in August 2023 and are now working full time as Software Development Engineers.

Here are 6 guiding rules which I think helped their success.

Rule 1: No Tea Making

In 2019 one of our apprentices thought that they'd be doing the less skilled jobs in the team such as making cups of tea but they quickly found out that an apprenticeship is a real role, it's not about making tea for the team. Apprentice software engineers are real software engineers. The essence of an apprenticeship is on-the-job training, working alongside experienced engineers, learning ways of working and best practices. We enabled our apprentices to do the job for real, got them solving real problems, and kept them away from "practice" projects. There were no tea rounds.

Rule 2: Deliver Customer Value

Delivering for the customer is the most important thing we do as software engineers, the quicker your apprentice is able to deliver customer value the sooner you start your apprentices' Deliver Results / Customer Obsession flywheel. We got our apprentices delivering code to solve real problems as quickly as possible. We started them off fixing bugs, working on our paper-cut ticket queue and solving on-call issues alongside our on-call engineers. We identified real projects where they worked alongside other engineers to deliver value, these project tasks were initially non-critical-path items on our core projects but they delivered real customer value. We got them reviewing code alongside the rest of our team as soon as possible so that they became part of the code-quality conversation. We had them working on-call within their first 9 months so that they started to understand our team systems and wider business context. We had them solving problems alongside our Product Manager and Customers to increase their customer awareness. As their skills increased and opportunities came up, we identified design tasks and stand-alone projects where they could take the lead.

Rule 3: Structure knowledge growth

In the early stages of the apprenticeship our apprentices needed support gaining basic skills such as how to navigate file directories or how to use source control. We asked our tenured engineers to suggest an agenda of key skills to learn and had our apprentices augment this list with things they want to learn about. Having regular (weekly) sessions where our tenured engineers taught apprentices and the apprentices demonstrated knowledge they'd researched created a healthy conversation forum to bootstrap technical relationships. We set up mentors to work alongside our apprentices, these mentors were motivated by sharing knowledge and growing people. We connected our apprentices with experts in our organisation to further enhance their knowledge network and idea exposure.

Rule 4: Degree Work Beats Project Work

As a manager I ensured our apprentices were always able to prioritise degree (apprenticeship) work over team work, I built capacity in our team schedule to allow this. I worked with our apprentices to spot opportunities to align degree course requirements and real work projects and timings. e.g. security reviews at a similar time to course security modules. I encouraged and supported autonomy with time management for our apprentices to own how they delivered against their academic and job demands.

Rule 5: Team

Our apprentices were part of all team-centred activities and had a voice in the team, they contributed to all stand-ups, team meetings, retros, design sessions and review sessions. They were encouraged to ask any questions they had, it's a great forcing function in the team to reduce ambiguity in communication. We celebrated apprentice success, had them demoing work, shouting out their project and academic achievements, acknowledging their contribution to team success. We aimed to identify all opportunities to give our apprentices a public voice and recognition.

Rule 6: At the end there can be tea

We did break the no tea-making rule; on the final day of their apprenticeship one of our apprentices did decide to make the team cups of tea as a thank you for the support they'd had during the apprenticeship. We then went out for a celebratory team meal.

Rich Brooks won Apprentice Line Manager of the Year at Amazon's internal awards.
Hear what one of his apprentice reports had to say about working with Rich:

"Rich was a key player in setting up the Software Apprenticeship Scheme, he has a profound impact on the apprenticeship programme and is one of the reasons we have so many Software Apprentices. Rich has been my manager for 3 years of the scheme and has paved the way in which managers should manage and support apprentices. He is the reason I and other apprentices have become competent engineers. Rich provides an outstanding level of support while letting you be a leader of your own time and work. He helps you help yourself and is the most understanding manager I've ever had. From the start of the apprenticeship Rich has been devoted to making us competent engineers instead of being concerned with our work output. He has supported us to work as part of the team and treats us like engineers on the team. He spreads his culture and ethos across the team and the organisation which is why peers and leaders of the organisation trust and respect our opinion. Rich is amazing and every manager could (and should) learn something from Rich. "

off-the-job TRAINING

Off-the-job training is a highly important aspect in an apprenticeship. It is defined as an activity that is not part of an apprentice's day-to-day role which supports their apprenticeship training.

The minimum volume of hours no longer links to working hours (previously there was a 20% off-the-job training rule). Off-the-job training now consists of a minimum of six hours per week – a consistent figure, irrespective of the hours worked by the apprentice.

All off the job training must be recorded and evidence retained. Training providers will support their learners to do this, but you can help too.

Examples of off-the-job training

The training can consist of a range of activities, which will help develop an apprentice's skills.

Here are a few examples:

- Shadowing other members of the team to learn new skills.
- In-house training programmes relevant to the apprenticeship.
- Writing reflective journals.
- Attendance at workshops, training days and webinars relevant to the apprenticeship.
- Completion of online learning modules on AoA Learn, the Association of Apprentices' online learning platform.
- AoA Masterclasses (live or on-demand)
- Self-study that includes reading or watching videos.
- Training in new working practices or on new equipment.
- Role-playing or simulation exercises.
- Industry visits/conferences relevant to apprenticeships such as online and in-person events
- Writing assessments, assignments and completing projects or activities.
- Practical training or training in the workplace relevant to the apprenticeship.

Benefits of off-the-job training

- Provides a better understanding of the overall knowledge, skills and behaviours required in the wider industry.
- Promotes a flexible, practical and creative approach to learning – and an opportunity to gain new, transferable skills.
- Provides an environment where learning can be explored in various ways through real-life learning.
- Promotes networking with other apprentices.

No record of off-the-job training? Use this handy template from gov.uk:
Off-the-job-training evidence collection template

resources for

LINE MANAGERS

LINE MANAGERS' GUIDE FROM GOV.UK

From gov.uk, this page will provide you with useful information that you will need to know in order to give your apprentice the support they need to reach their potential.

MANAGING AN APPRENTICE

From Government Communication Service (GCS). Adapt this handy guide to suit your needs.

OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING FROM GOV.UK

To find out more about 'off the job training' and how to record it, access further information here. A guide to off-the-job training. PDF 55 pages.

TIPS FROM A TRAINING PROVIDER

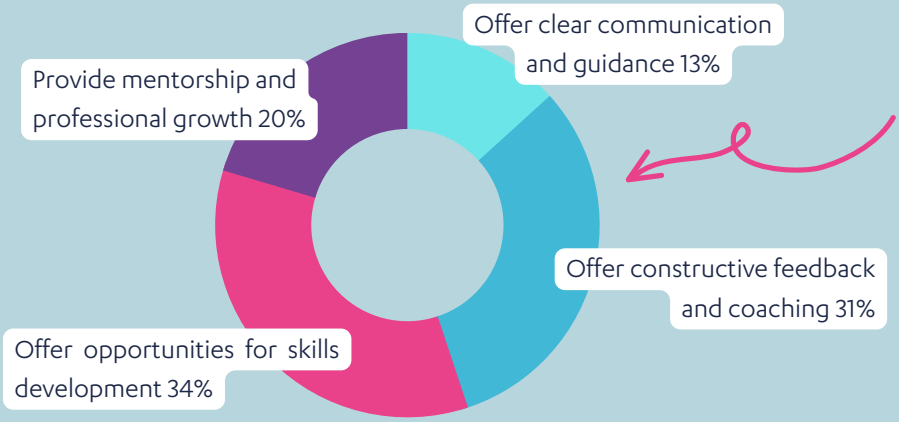
Lifetime provides inside information here.

AOA INSIGHTS

Read AoA's latest insights report to find out more about the apprentice community

word in the COMMUNITY

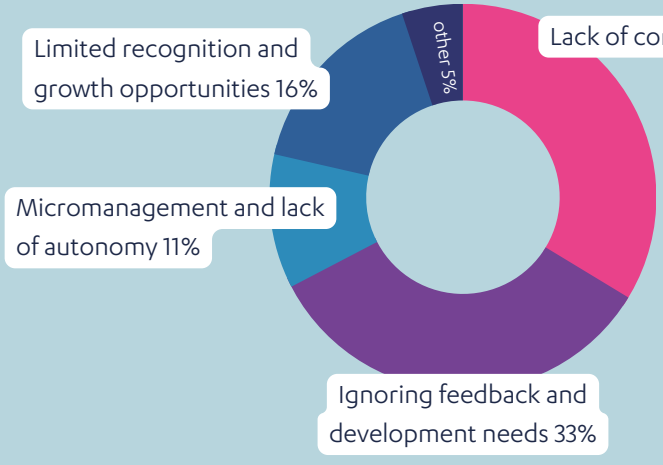
AoA Connect is a networking platform by the Association of Apprentices (AoA) to connect apprentices with various opportunities and support networks. It serves as a hub for apprentices to access resources, share experiences, and engage with fellow apprentices across different industries. Offering a range of features, including webinars, networking events, and access to exclusive apprenticeship opportunities, we also check in with the community to understand apprentices' wants and needs. Here are a few relevant findings:



WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE ACTION YOUR LINE MANAGER CAN TAKE TO SUPPORT YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU BELIEVE CAREER CONVERSATIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE?

- Monthly 34%
- Quarterly 34%
- Annually 3%
- Bi-annually 3%
- As needed 24%



WHAT IS THE MOST DETRIMENTAL WAY THAT A LINE MANAGER CAN IMPEDE YOUR PROGRESS ON YOUR APPRENTICESHIP PATH?

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

As soon as an apprentice has accepted their place on their apprenticeship, it is time to join their community.

The Association of Apprentices is an exclusive community. Events, off-the job training, a bespoke professional networking platform, and peer-to-peer support means apprentices will have all the tools to make the most of their apprenticeship.

If your organisation is already an AoA partner, get your unique link from a member of our team.

If you are interested in becoming a partner, contact us on hello@associationofapprenticeships.org.uk

Individual membership for apprentices is available here: **Unlock your apprentice membership here**

WITH THANKS TO

All of AoA's Founding Partners, Advisory Partners and Corporate Partners
Amazon
AoA's Apprentice Council
The Apprentice Voice (TAV)
AoA Members

Apprentices gain access to:

1. AoA Connect – A vast online community connecting apprentices, nationwide. With social and professional networking, industry news and topical discussions, access to peer-support is available through a compact app or through a browser.

2. AoA Learn – An online learning platform full of innovative training resources. Designed to help apprentices enhance skills, this app is crucial for career success. From Communicating Under Pressure to the Resilience EDGE Model, there is a wealth of knowledge to learn from experts in their fields. Apprentices can also complete the 10-step Career Development Programme for certification.

3. AoA Events – We run both virtual and physical events, including bespoke Masterclasses for apprentices. These events are a fantastic way to learn interactively whilst networking and building professional relationships. All our past online events are available to stream on AoA On Demand so you can catch up anytime, anywhere.