Digital Apprenticeships at Gloucestershire College

General Handbook

Contents

Introduction

This handbook contains general information about all the digital apprenticeships offered.

See specific handbooks for detailed information about the apprenticeships.

Digital Apprenticeships

Employers from over 200 organisations have worked together to develop a suite of new digital apprenticeship standards, under the Trailblazer initiative, to cover all the major entry level roles into technical and digital careers. These new standards, approved by the Department for Education (DfE), give employers confidence that their apprentices will develop the skills they need to make a real contribution to their company.

Choosing the right apprenticeship

Currently, there are four apprenticeships available:

- Infrastructure Technician – level 3
- Software Developer – level 4
- Network Engineer – level 4
- Software Tester – Level 4

Level 3 vocational apprenticeships are the equivalent of academic A levels

Level 4 vocational apprenticeships are the equivalent of first year university courses

The tables below should help you choose the most suitable one:

Job role	Infrastructure technician (L3)	Software Developer (L4)	Network Engineer (L4)	Software Tester (L4)
Help desk	☐			
1st or 2nd line support	☐			
IT technician	☐			
Network support	☐		☐	
Network design			☐	
Network installation			☐	
Network maintenance			☐	
Web development		☐		
Application development		☐		
Mobile application development		☐		
Games development		☐		
Software development		☐		
Software tester				☐
Software test analyst				☐

Competencies	Infrastructure technician (L3)	Software Developer (L4)	Network Engineer (L4)	Software Tester (L4)
Networking and architecture	☐			
Mobile and operating systems	☐			
Cloud services	☐			
Coding and logic	☐			
Business process	☐			
Network principles			☐	
Network systems and architecture			☐	
Network security			☐	
Software life cycles		☐		
Software design methodologies		☐		
Software team roles and responsibilities		☐		
Software design		☐		
Computational theory and mathematics		☐		
Software Test plans				☐
Software testing				☐
Test tools				☐

Structure

There are two major components to the apprenticeship:

- The work-based component is completed in conjunction with the assessing college and the employer. This consists of setting relevant work based projects and building a portfolio of evidence
- The college based component consists of specific lessons, practical work and assessment covering the requirements of the BCS knowledge modules or industry certifications.

Acceptance on programme

A college training coordinator and an assessor will review the chosen apprenticeship with the employer and ensure that the requirements of the programme are fully understood.

- The employer's responsibilities for mentoring and training throughout the programme

- The employer's and assessor's responsibilities for setting and agreeing projects

- How progress will be monitored and the employer's involvement in readiness reviews

- Releasing the apprentice for college training and partner training

- The synoptic project and end point assessment (EPA) process

Duration

This apprenticeship will last from 12 to 24 months in total and will be concluded by an end point assessment (EPA). See the individual handbooks for details.

It consists of 80% on the job training and 20% of off the job training.

On the job training and projects

- The assessor and employer set projects of increasing complexity throughout the apprenticeship

- The assessor maps criteria to projects and the apprentice builds a portfolio of evidence which is validated by the assessor

- Selected evidence from the portfolio is assembled for the summative portfolio

- Progress is regularly monitored and reported by the training coordinator

Off the job training

- Lessons, practical tasks and assessments cover the curriculum for the BCS knowledge modules and the industry certifications

- The assessor sets tests to assess progress and readiness for taking the qualification

- The assessor and employer agree readiness and the training coordinator books certification training.

Assignments/Portfolio

In the weeks when the apprentice is at work and not at college, then 5 hours per week should be allocated away from normal duties. The time should be spent on completing any assignments set by the assessor and generating the evidence to build the portfolio. The employer is required to record and certify this time.

On Programme Assessment

Technical knowledge and understanding is assessed on programme through a combination of Ofqual-regulated BCS Knowledge Modules and specified vendor and professional qualifications. These must be passed before the end point assessment can take place. Practice tests will be set at regular intervals to assess progression to the next phase of the programme.

Threshold assessment

In order to ensure that the end point assessment is successful, a threshold assessment will:

- Have the summative portfolio checked by the assessor

- Check that all the required knowledge module or vendor certificates are available

- Have the employer and assessor rehearse the interview with the apprentice

- Have the employer prepare the reference

- Have the employer and assessor agree a date and book the synoptic project (at the college)

- Have the employer, assessor and training co-ordinator determine readiness and book the EPA

End Point Assessment

This diagram shows how certification is achieved
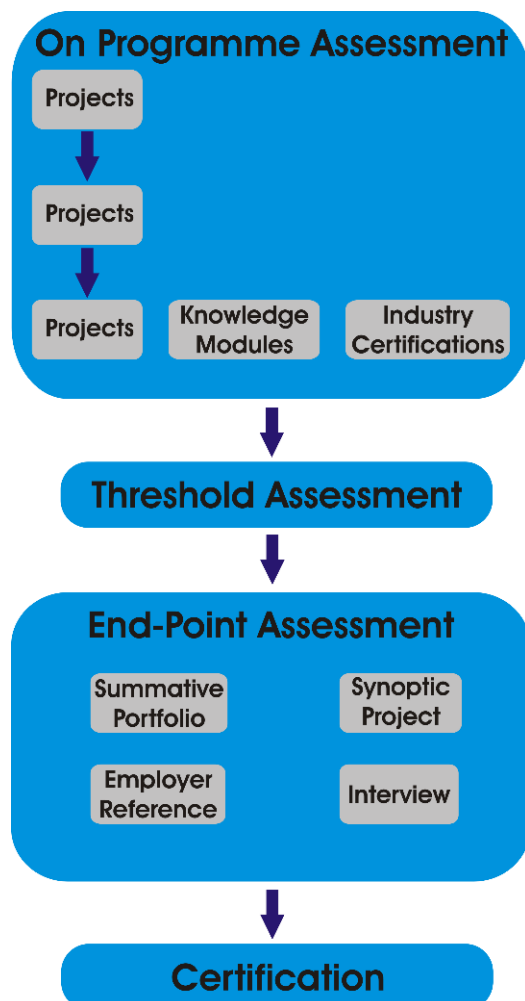
The final, end point assessment is completed in the last few months of the apprenticeship. It is based on:

- a portfolio – produced towards the end of the apprenticeship, containing evidence from real work projects which have been completed during the apprenticeship, usually towards the end, and which, taken together, cover the totality of the standard, and which is assessed as part of the end point assessment
- a project - giving the apprentice the opportunity to undertake a business-related project over a one-week period away from the day to day workplace
- an employer reference
- a structured interview with an assessor - exploring what has been produced in the portfolio and the project as well as looking at how it has been produced

An independent assessor (from the BCS) will assess each element of the end point assessment and will then decide whether to award successful apprentices with a pass, a merit or a distinction.

Certification

The final certificate showing that all elements of the apprenticeship have been completed will be issued by the BCS (the official awarding body).

Contacts

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