

Employer Handbook



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Welcome

Apprenticeships at Ixion Holdings

Welcome to Ixion Holdings and thank you for choosing us, we value our strategic partnerships with Employers and hope to have a long and beneficial partnership with you. Ixion Holdings acts as a strategic partner to design and deliver bespoke apprenticeship programmes that align to business goals, while maximising use of the levy and other funding streams.

Our programmes are helping employers to attract and retain talent, professionalise the workforce, and migrate existing learning and development activity to apprenticeship programmes. We offer tailored solutions and ongoing support to employers looking to recruit for the first time or upskill their existing workforce through bespoke apprenticeship, early careers and career transition programmes that align to organisation goals and needs.

The apprenticeship landscape is currently going through a period of rapid change, below are some key facts -

- The government has committed to achieving three million apprenticeship starts by summer 2020
- To help achieve this, the apprenticeship levy was introduced from April 2017
- The levy payments are ring-fenced in a 'digital account' and can only be used to purchase apprenticeship training from approved providers
- Levy payments are made on a monthly basis, and organisations have 24 months to use or lose the funds
- The scheme puts the control of Apprenticeship funding in the hands of employers and enables them to decide where, and how, the Apprenticeship money is spent

With all the new updates available you may still have some unanswered questions around the structure and support available to you. The purpose of this guide is to provide an outline of an apprenticeship programme and the roles and responsibilities of the key people involved. This handbook will also be a useful resource for you to refer to for information and guidance when required.

About Us:

Ixion remains an independent not-for-profit group of companies with its own main board, Chairman and Non-Executive directors and is now part of the Shaw Trust Group.

Ixion operates to strong commercial principles but we are guided by a strong moral compass and drive to achieve our vision to "transform people lives through Skills, Employment, Enterprise and Innovation, for growth".

We help individuals transform their lives and we also assist economic growth... using workforce skills development, helping the unemployed, employed, offenders, veterans and all types of individuals acquire new skills, get jobs, gain confidence and we give business start-ups the know-how to get going, sustain and grow.

We work with the government and private sector to deliver contracts and partner with organisations in health, education, private sector, central and local government.

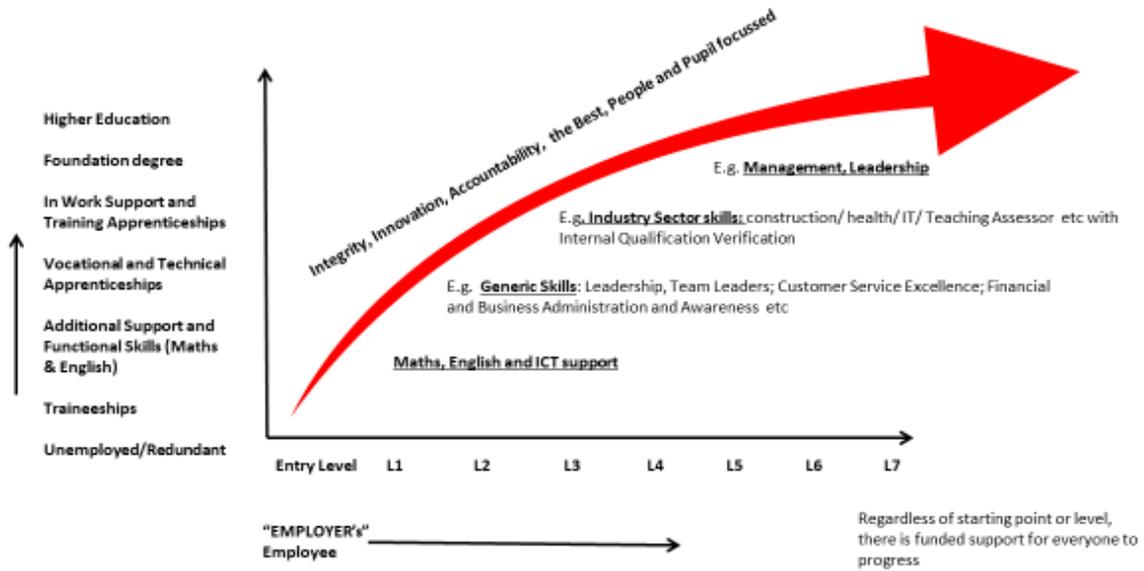
We offer a number of different services set under a number of different divisions these include:

- Skills & Apprenticeships
- Enterprise & Start-up
- Employment & Justice
- Innovation & Consultancy

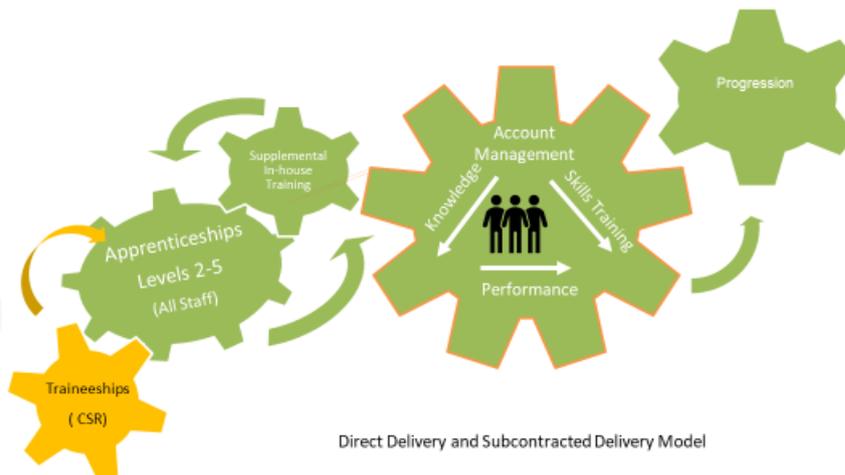
What can you expect from Ixion?

- An innovative, open and honest strategic partner with extensive knowledge and experience of navigating the apprenticeship levy
- Tailored training programme to fit your exact business needs.
- Access to other government funded streams or signposting to other streams
- We conduct a Company-wide Organisational Needs Assessment to drive business impact and outcomes and develop a full cost analysis
- Support with succession planning
- Support with CSR for local community benefit
- Access to a VLE through OneFile for bespoke business training courses
- Additional Maths and English support for staff as part of the government offer,
- Access to business breakfast and development events
- Curriculum development for additional skills and Input and contribution to learner's curriculum for their course
- Dedicated staff and account management
- Develop current staff and look to recruit the next generation of staff in key places
- Our time, support and dedication
- Cost effective recruitment via 16-18 apprenticeship and bursary's

Improving and Sustaining Skills



Our Promise: Learning and Skills - collaborative Staff Training Pathway developed with "Employer" for "Employers" staff



What is the Levy?

In the 2015 summer budget, the government announced plans to introduce an apprenticeship levy for large employers from April 2017. The levy will require employers to contribute to a training fund which can only be spent on apprenticeships.

Key Facts – Levy Payer:

- You will need to pay the apprenticeship levy if you are an employer, in any sector, with a pay bill of more than £3 million each year
- Funding – £3bn + 10% so £3.3billion UK wide – England retains £2.5 billion
- The levy rate has been set at 0.5% of an employer's UK payroll total and will be collected through the Pay as You Earn (PAYE) system from April 2017
- Levy payments will be ring fenced and held in a 'digital account' for organisations to reclaim and used to purchase apprenticeship training from approved providers
- Levy funds can only be used to pay for apprenticeship training of an English qualification (it may be that these can be delivered across the UK)
- Once the funds enter the digital account, employers have a set period of 24 months to reclaim the funds after which any unused money will be made available to other employers
- The Government has confirmed organisations will be able to 'get out more than they put in' via a top up system, providing they deliver sufficient apprenticeships to meet their levy amount
- Levy will be a cap rather than a rate – employers will be able to negotiate rates and a payment price with Independent Training Providers
- The services and agreement between employers and Training Providers is outlined in a SLA
- The government will apply a 10% top-up to the funds you have for spending on apprenticeship training in England. Extra support is also given for apprentices aged 16-18 years of age, 19-24 year old care leavers and those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan: The government will make an additional payment of £1,000 to employers to help with these extra costs and ensure all individuals have the opportunity to benefit from an apprenticeship

Example of a Levy payer

Based on an employer with an annual pay bill of £10,000,000:

- Levy sum: $0.5\% \times £10,000,000 = £50,000$
- Subtracting levy allowance: $£50,000 - £15,000 = £35,000$ annual levy payment

Key Facts: Non Levy Payer:

- As a non Levy payer you would have an annual pay bill of under £3 million.
- Although you won't be paying into the new apprenticeship levy or using the new digital apprenticeship service to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment until at least 2018, the way apprenticeships are funded will still change for you.



- Funding bands and co-investment Every individual apprenticeship framework and standard will be allocated to a funding band. The upper limit of the funding band will cap the maximum price that government will 'co-invest' towards.
- The government will fund 90% of the agreed price for training and assessment, and you as the employer will pay 10%. You will be able to agree a payment schedule with us and spread your payments over the life time of the apprenticeship

Example of how this might work

Based on an employer choosing an apprenticeship maximum price of £12,000

- Government co-invests 90% = £10,800
- Employer co-invests remaining 10%= £1,200
- Employer and provider agree to spread this over 10 instalments of 120

Additional payments and funding which may be available

- Employers are not required to pay National Insurance Contributions for apprentices under the age of 25 on earnings below the higher tax rate of £827 a week (£43,000 a year).
- £1,000 payment to both the employer and provider when they train a 16- to 18-year-old.
- £1,000 payment to both the employer and provider when they train a 19- to 24-year-old who has previously been in care or who has a local authority education, health and care plan.

The Employer and Apprenticeships

An Apprenticeship is a programme of learning partly funded by the Government that can be used to upskill existing employees or to bring fresh talent into an organisation. It is designed to enhance the employee's level of competency and confidence within their current role by developing their practical skills and knowledge.

As a result, the employee will gain nationally recognised qualifications in the form of a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Certificate or Diploma, Functional Skills (English, Maths & ICT) as well as knowledge of their statutory rights in employment. In return the employer is able to benefit from improved overall efficiency, productivity and competitiveness within their market.

Return on Investment Calculator

The Return on Investment (ROI) calculator has been designed to help you understand the returns you can possibly gain on investing in Apprenticeships.

Drawing on research from the Warwick Institute for Employment Research ('The Net Benefits to Employer Investment in Apprenticeship Training' – November 2008) into the costs and benefits of Apprenticeships, the ROI calculator has been made available to help employers make the right decisions.

The ROI calculator estimates the average costs of employing and training an apprentice against the gains that come when their 'additional productivity' impacts on the business.

Follow the link below to access the Return on Investment Calculator -
<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/ROI-Tool.aspx>

The Apprenticeship Framework Structure

2.1 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) – These are qualifications which recognise ability in the work place, this is covered by on the job training and assessment. Anyone can take an apprenticeship at any age or stage of career and no previous qualifications are necessary.

Certification is based on evidence of the skills required, there are many different levels of apprenticeship. The NVQ has several separate units which we tailor together to reflect the job role that is being carried out and the skills needed. Each unit contains learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

2.2 Technical Certificates – Technical Certificates are a requirement in some apprenticeships and check the knowledge and understanding which underpins the NVQ requirements.

These are delivered through self-study and support from the teaching assessor, learners will need to complete a workbook and may be required to undertake some external tests.

2.3 Functional Skills – Functional Skills are relevant to all job in all sectors and industries. The run alongside the specific skills of the job and support in the development as well as supporting your business in becoming more efficient and competitive.

One of the main reasons that functional skills are important in the workplace because they are applied skills, these skills help to develop the skills required to solve real life problems as well as supporting you with enhanced communication and mathematical skills.

Learners who already have GCSE Grade A* to E may not have to work toward functional skills, this will dependent on a short assessment you complete at induction.

The learning teaching and assessment can be in a variety of formats including face to face, Virtual Learning Environment, skype, webinars, over the telephone, use of iPad and android as applicable.

2.4 Personal Learning and Thinking Skills – These skills are essential to life, learning and work, they have a significant impact on a person's ability to make a confident contribution both in work and externally in social and personal situations, Personal Learning and Thinking Skills capture the essential skills of managing relationships with others; managing yourself; managing performance and work. The knowledge, skills and understanding regarding these skills will be assessed as part of the qualification.

2.5 Employment Rights and Responsibilities – Every apprentice will be supported via training, development and assessment to demonstrate that they know and understand areas such as the range of employer and employee statutory rights and responsibilities under employment law, health and safety, equality and diversity laws, procedures, processes and documentation for your organisation.

2.6 **Off the Job Training** - As part of the apprenticeship programme the apprentice will be required to attend planned off-the-job training sessions away from their day to day tasks. The requirement to attend will depend on the programme they undertake and whether they need support to achieve their functional skills.

Key Facts:

- Apprentices hold real jobs in your business, and spend the vast majority of their time carrying out their mainstream duties
- Apprenticeship standards may include a qualification, but this is not a mandatory requirement unless specifically written into the criteria
- An apprenticeship takes a minimum of 12 months to complete based on individual needs and depending on the subject and attainment level
- Apprentices build their skills and competence through a combination of learning activities, on and off the job

Delivering Learning Programmes

Having planned your employee's learning programme we will work together to deliver the training that is required to develop the skills and help achieve their qualification. Much of the training will take place within the workplace itself. This will typically involve staff developing their skills through observing others perform activities, practising themselves and learning from their supervisor.

Flexible Training Solutions

In terms of who provides the off-the-job training, this is a matter of personal choice. You may wish to carry out some or all of the training within the company. We also provide off-the-job training sessions to support what the apprentice is learning in the workplace. We will agree when and where this will take place when developing the learning programme. In this way we can also ensure that the off-the-job training which is being provided is appropriate to what the apprentice is doing in the workplace and vice versa.

Apprenticeship Reforms:

Apprenticeships in England are changing. The government is introducing a new style and a new method for funding apprenticeships, aimed at meeting the changing needs of employers and learners. These new apprenticeships are known as 'Trailblazer Apprenticeships', which aim to:

- Give employers control in designing apprenticeships
- Increase the flexibility of delivery
- Simplify the funding system
- Increase the effectiveness of training

What's Changed?

New Trailblazer Apprenticeships put employers 'in the driving seat' in terms of designing apprenticeships and deciding how funding is spent.

1. New Apprenticeship Standards will replace the old SASE Frameworks. The Standards will:
 - Define an apprenticeship that lasts a minimum of 12 months
 - Be linked to a specific occupational level
 - Respond to employers' needs, ensuring that apprenticeships are high quality and rigorous and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviour required for a specific job role
 - Be designed to prepare the apprentice for the end-point assessment Towards the end of the apprenticeship, employers and providers will 'sign-off' the apprentice as being ready for end-point assessment.
2. Introduction of End Point Assessment

End-point assessment is being introduced as the main assessment method for all Trailblazer Apprenticeships. This new model separates training delivery and assessment and it allows employers and providers to focus on ensuring high quality of training and learning is provided and ensures the apprentice gains the maximum possible support and training before they are assessed.

What do the changes mean for existing Apprenticeship frameworks?

Existing frameworks continue to be valid and can be used by new apprentices until new replacement standards have been signed off and approved for delivery. However, all new apprenticeship standards need to be developed through the employer-led Trailblazer model. By 2017–18 this model will be standard across all sectors and will progressively replace the existing frameworks

Employer's role in the Learner Journey

Based on our Learners passport to learning, employers should expect involvement in the following aspects of the learner's journey:

Induction

Each learner will be asked to undertake a structured induction with their Assessor. Employers are asked to ensure learners are made available for their induction and initial assessments. Employers will need to sign the learner's enrolment form as confirmation of the learner's planned training programme; Individual Learning Plan.

Initial Assessments

Learners will be asked to undertake an initial assessment to ensure that the most appropriate Functional Skills (maths/English/ICT) programme is selected if applicable.

Individual Learning Plans

Each learner will have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which will include identifying any existing qualifications and experience the learner has gained and will document their learning journey. The

Employer will be asked to contribute information towards this document throughout the programme.

Apprenticeship Agreement

This mandatory document forms part of the learner's apprenticeship enrolment form and must be signed by both the employer and learner.

Contract of Employment

You employer may be asked to confirm the how long the learner has been employed and whether the learner has a contract of employment.

Employer Health & Safety Form

The employer will be given a Health & Safety checklist to complete at the time of learner induction.

Employer Liability Insurance

The employer will be asked for a copy of their Liability Insurance documentation at the time of learner induction.

Visit Reports and Learner Reviews - Learner Progress

We will ask for your involvement in the visit and review process conducted by Teaching and Learning Mentor (assessor)s with learners. We aim to keep learners progressing well against their individual learning plan however if a learner is falling behind on their targets the employer may be asked to support them to get back on target.

Supervision of Learners

Please ensure arrangements are in place for a competent member of staff to supervise the learners at all times. Learners must be advised by their supervisor of any dangerous equipment / machinery they are not allowed to use, or areas they are not allowed to enter. Learners must be given a health and safety induction.

Additional Learning Support

Pastoral support given to learners should be recorded / discussed with Ixion's staff during reviews. Additional support identified for learners and provided by the employer should be evidenced.

Employer Feedback

We will ask you to give feedback on the programmes your organisation have been involved in. Your feedback is extremely important to us in our aim to continually improve our training programmes and delivery.

Information, Advice & Guidance

Throughout the apprenticeship programme your staff and yourself will receive ongoing information, advice and guidance from Ixion staff. This may involve:

- Giving you further advice about your apprentice's current learning.
- Giving them personal support and guidance e.g. with money and health problems.
- Help them find out about other training and employment opportunities

Post Apprenticeship

As all good employers know, having qualified and motivated staff is a key driver to ensure a competitive edge in today's industry. On completion of an apprenticeship the apprentice will take part in an exit interview. The exit interview allows us, as part of our continuous improvement process, to check the apprentice programme met the expectations of the learner and you the employer, this provides us with an opportunity to discuss possible improvements for future learner

What are the main responsibilities of the employer?

Pay the right rates

Apprentices must be paid at least the national minimum wage during their placement. Apprentices who are under 19, or who are over 19 and in the first year of their apprenticeship must be paid at least the national minimum wage for apprentices. For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/nationalminimum-wage-rates>

30 hours per week

To employ apprentices for a minimum of 30 hours a week or extend the length of time the learner remains on programme in line with the hours worked

Same benefits as other employees

Generally apprentices should get the same benefits as other employees unless employers can otherwise justify not providing such benefits, failure to do so can lead to discrimination claims

Contract of employment

Employers should provide a contract of employment which sets out the employment rights, responsibilities and duties

Equal Opportunities / Equality & Diversity

Employers must have an Equal Opportunities policy that is issued to all employees. The policy should state that as employers they will:

- Treat all employees/learners fairly within the organization.
- Ensure learners undertaking training programmes are identified only by virtue of their ability and experience.
- Make sure that employees/learners are not bullied and that they know who they can approach if they have a problem.
- Make employees/learners aware of the company's complaint procedure.
- Any complaint raised must be thoroughly investigated by the employer and Ixion staff.

Training Providers role

- Promote equal opportunities throughout the work-based training process
- Have a written equal opportunities policy which staff, learners and employers understand and are committed to



- Advise you on equal opportunities issues and legislation
- Explain to learners how they should treat other people
- Make sure that learners know what to do if they feel they are being unfairly treated in the workplace
- Act on any complaints received from learners

Employers role

- Comply with equal opportunities legislation
- Demonstrate your commitment to equality of opportunity in the workplace through a clearly publicised statement
- Ensure equality of opportunity in selection and recruitment and training activities
- Make sure that learners are not bullied, harassed or made to feel unwelcome in the workplace
- Explain to learners what to do if they have a complaint about the way they are treated

Safeguarding

Employers must have a Safeguarding Policy that is issued to all employees. The policy should state that as employers they will:

- Commit to safeguarding the welfare of employees and learners.
- Ensure employees and learners know who to contact if they are suffering harm and feel empowered to do so.
- Have effective safeguarding procedures in place following national and local guidance.
- Review their safeguarding policy and procedures at least every year to make sure they are relevant and effective.

Health and Safety

Employers must have a health & safety policy that is issued to and discussed with all new employees. Employers should:

- Comply with current legislation
- Ensure learners are issued with and informed about your health and safety policy including the name of your H&S nominated person
- Risk assess areas where the learner will be working and issue protective clothing
- Give learners adequate training on any equipment they will operate
- Have up to date insurance which covers the learners
- Report any accident which happens to the learner to Ixion

Accident Reporting

Where a learner is absent due to personal injury or illness caused whilst attending training/work placement, the employer must immediately notify Ixion (and SFA). An approved accident book must be maintained by the employer and the appropriate authorities notified if the injury / disease are of a reportable nature (see RIDDOR reporting information for guidance).

Key Contact Details

Here are some key contact details should you wish to contact Ixion

Assistant Director of Skills – Sales – Lauren Webb

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Assistant Director of Apprenticeships & ESF – Ray Gray

Ray.Gray@ixionholdings.com

Tel Number: 07712 862404

Head of Service - Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Alison Whatsize

Alison.Whatsize@ixionholdings.com

Tel Number: 07850 775033

Contact Centre Manager – Roberta Hall-Smith

Roberta.Hall-Smith@ixionholdings.com

Tel Number: 07717 275986

Designated Safeguarding Officer – Jo Sears

Jo.Sears@ixionholdings.com

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