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# University Graduate Apprenticeship places for AY 2022-23



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REFERENCE:	SFC/GD/06/2023	
SUMMARY:	Guidance for universities on the delivery of Graduate Apprenticeships in Academic Year 2022-23	
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# University Graduate Apprenticeship places: AY 2022-23

### Introduction

- 1. I am writing to provide guidance on Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) places for universities in Academic Year (AY) 2022-23, including funding allocations, eligibility criteria and reporting requirements.
- 2. As announced in March 2021, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is responsible for the funding of Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs) delivered directly through Scotland's universities.
- 3. The <u>University Final Funding Allocations for AY 2022-23</u> confirmed the allocation and distribution of 2,756 (1,378 starts) for GAs in AY 2022-23. The distribution of funded places was primarily based on universities' past provision of GAs, with adjustments made based on their capacity to deliver this activity.

# Background

- 4. GAs were first introduced in 2017, created in partnership with industry and the further and higher education sector.
- 5. The apprenticeships combine academic knowledge with skills development to enable participants to become more effective and productive in the workplace.
- 6. GAs enable access to university learning for individuals previously unable to study and work through financial constraints.
- GAs support the Scottish Government's Future Skills Action Plan by offering upskilling and reskilling work-based learning opportunities, contribute to the achievement of the Scottish Government's Apprenticeship targets and supports the objectives of the Young Persons Guarantee.

# GA frameworks

- 8. The curriculum and the methods of delivery and assessment for each GA sectoral framework are based on employer identified current and near-future needs. This provides a benchmark against which the delivery of the programme is developed and can be quality assured as a GA.
- 9. GAs are work-based learning programmes at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 9, 10 or 11.
- 10. They are nationally recognised, accredited, and certificated by university. GAs at SCQF level 9, 10 or 11, lead to an undergraduate degree or postgraduate award.

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- Frameworks **SCQF** levels Accounting with Professional Accreditation (5-year programme) 10 Business Management (which incorporates the former Business 10 Management: Financial Services pathway) **Civil Engineering** 10 Construction and the Built Environment 10 10 & 11 Cyber Security Data Science 10 Early Learning and Childcare (pilot) 9 10 **Engineering: Design and Manufacture** Engineering: Instrumentation, Measurement and Control 10 **IT: Management for Business** 10
- 11. This guidance is for GAs in Scotland in the following subject areas:

### National Outcomes and Outcome Agreements

**IT: Software Development** 

- 12. GAs are led by employer demand, aligned to industry need and are designed to meet the requirements of the future workforce.
- 13. GAs support the delivery of SFC's strategic objective to invest in education that is accessible to learners from all backgrounds, gives them a high-quality learning experience, supports them to succeed in their studies, and equips them to flourish in employment, further study and fulfilling lives.
- 14. GAs also support the Scottish Government's strategic priority of high-quality learning in a system which is seamlessly connected for the learner. This includes learning which prepares people well for the world of work and successful long-term careers, prioritising provision that meets known skills gaps in the economy.

### Eligibility criteria

#### **Recipient eligibility**

15. To be eligible to participate in an approved GA framework, a student must satisfy the criteria set out below. The university shall use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the student meets the eligibility criteria as set out below.

#### Course eligibility

- 16. To be eligible to participate in an approved GA framework, a student must be studying for a GA in Scotland and be starting the course in AY 2022-23. For this cohort the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) will provide tuition fees.
- 17. Students who started a GA before AY 2022-23 should not apply to SAAS for funding. More information is available from SAAS at <u>https://www.saas.gov.uk/full-time/graduate-apprenticeships</u>.

#### **Previous study**

- 18. If a student has had UK or other EU public funds for a higher education course before they may still get funding to study a GA. Students will still be eligible to participate in a GA when:
  - The individual holds an existing lower-level qualification in the same subject area as the GA.
  - The individual holds an existing same level qualification in a different subject area as the GA.

#### Residence

- 19. To residence conditions, GAs must have settled status and been living in:
  - The United Kingdom (UK).
  - The Channel Islands
  - The Isle of Man.

for the three years immediately before the start of your course.

20. Students must also be living (ordinarily resident) in Scotland on the day their course starts. Where 'ordinarily resident' means to have 'habitual and normal residence in one place'. The Scottish Government expects someone who is ordinarily resident in Scotland to have made their home in Scotland with the intention of staying and living here, and not just to undertake a course of study. More information is available from SAAS: <a href="https://www.saas.gov.uk/full-time/graduate-apprenticeships">https://www.saas.gov.uk/full-time/graduate-apprenticeships</a>.

#### Age

21. Students must be aged 16 or above at the commencement of their GA.

#### Employment

- 22. The work-based learning component of a GA is a significant and central part of the award. Each GA student must be employed with a Scottish-based employer under a contract of employment relevant to the GA for a minimum of 21 hours per week. The student must spend the majority of their time working, including on the job learning, in Scotland.
- 23. Universities must ensure that a collaborative tripartite agreement between the institution, the student and the employer is in place and states that the student's academic learning hours are incorporated into their normal working hours.
- 24. SFC may, in exceptional circumstances at their discretion, authorise continuation of any part of a student's GA, in the event that the student's employment status changes. Further advice and support can be received through your SFC Outcome Agreement Manager.
- 25. Students following a GA framework must be subject to the same policies and procedures as other employees of the organisation with which they are employed, and the university must use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that each student is informed of this by their employer.
- 26. Students must be provided with a job description which clearly defines their role and study arrangements. The job description must align to the GA framework. Universities must ensure that students have a reasonable amount of time to complete study and assessment related to their GA within their working hours. Universities should ensure that students are sufficiently remunerated, and the employers pay a salary commensurate with the job role and in adherence to National Minimum Wage legislation. This is applicable for the duration of the GA programme.
- 27. Students must be assigned a workplace mentor to offer support throughout the GA.
- 28. Students who are self-employed and wish to participate in the programme will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the university.

#### Exclusions

29. If an individual is subject to an employment restriction and/or to a time limit on his/her stay in UK, they shall not be eligible to commence or continue (as applicable) the GA.

#### Change in employer

30. The student must inform the university if they are considering changing employer whilst continuing their GA. Any new job role and employer would need to be assessed by the university to ensure alignment with the GA that the student is currently studying. This

would include ensuring that any new employer is adequately supported and aware of their role in delivery and assessment. Any change to employer must be recorded in the FIPS system.

31. To allow the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) team to provide support to the GA learner following redundancy, universities should notify at the earliest opportunity if a student is made redundant through the FIPS system.

# Timeframe for funded activity

32. Universities will be funded as they would for core provision and should comply with SFC's <u>Early Statistics guidance</u> on eligibility for funding.

#### **Programme entry**

#### **Entry requirements**

- 33. The university will decide the formal entry requirements when developing the course. However, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and/or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) processes must be used to offer flexibility to under-represented entrants with experience and/or other industry and professional body qualifications.
- 34. The achievement of SDS Foundation Apprenticeship programmes should be considered as part of formal entry requirements. In addition, universities should consider the achievement of Modern Apprenticeships and other vocational programmes, as RPL, where practicable.
- 35. In determining eligible persons for recruitment to the GA Programme, the university can apply additional and/or alternative eligibility criteria.

#### Entry and exit points

- 36. GAs have flexible entry and exit points in the programme so that students can begin and end their study at the right point. The university should apply their RPL Policy to identify which year of entry to the GA is suitable for the individual. This may shorten the amount of time the GA learner is required to do to complete the course.
- 37. Universities must be able to evidence their process for agreeing the GA entry requirements, course content and assessment methods with the employer.

# Accessibility and additional support

38. Universities must ensure that all GA programmes are designed to ensure equality of opportunity for all, with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. <u>Annex A</u> sets out considerations for programme design, development and delivery.

39. Should a student require additional specialist equipment or support to undertake their GA, then the university shall advise and support the proposed student to apply to the Access for Work funds (or equivalent). The level of funding/support will depend on the size of the employer. The university can advise whether there are any other grant/bursaries available to the student. Students will not be entitled to any SAAS funding for additional support needs. If the student is not able or entitled to any funding from other sources, the university shall meet the costs of additional specialist equipment or support to enable the student to undertake their GA.

#### Programme entry

- 40. The university must ensure that each proposed student completes a GA registration form and provides appropriate evidence prior to starting the GA. Universities must use the GA registration form made available by SDS. The university will use the information in the registration form to add the learner information to the Funding Information and Processing System (FIPS).
- 41. When an individual agrees to join a GA Programme, they will be required to sign the Registration form which will include:
  - A declaration consenting to the sharing of relevant information.
  - An undertaking to co-operate with SDS and/or SDS' agents following any request for information from SDS and/or its agents concerning the individual's training, (all as specified in the Information Exchange and Co-operation Statement section of the Registration form).
- 42. The university must ensure that the proposed student declares all existing qualifications in the GA registration form.

### GA delivery outcomes

#### Programme performance

43. In performing its obligation to deliver GAs, universities are expected to deliver the programme in such a manner as to ensure that the achieved performance levels meet the expected Key Performance Indicators within the programme outcome timescales.

#### **Reporting periods**

- 44. Reporting and performance management are split into two areas: Progress Reporting and Quality Reporting; as detailed in <u>Annex C</u>, with associated timelines.
- 45. Monitoring visits will form part of the work with universities to monitor the GA experience. For these activities SFC and SDS will request access to the apprentices as

well as to the lecturers or module leaders that are leading (parts of) the GA programme. SDS will provide information on these visits as part of its engagement with universities.

#### Allocation and reallocation of funding

- 46. SFC will allocate funds and the associated number of GA funded places to be delivered in our annual indicative and final funding announcements. This will be informed by past performance and capacity of universities to deliver GA activity and underpinned by the annual demand statement process.
- 47. Universities are able to vire funding and GA activity between frameworks within the overall budget allocation. However, in doing so, they should be mindful of the overall target. Universities should notify SFC of any changes to frameworks.
- 48. Universities that do not have sufficient demand to fill the GA places allocated should relinquish the funding and associated GA places. Where there is a university with unmet demand we will seek to reallocate unfulfilled places to that university in the first instance.
- 49. If demand is greater than places available through funded opportunities in AY 2022-23 universities have the ability to utilise core places to support the delivery of additional GA places. Any university wishing to do so should discuss this with their Outcome Agreement Manager in the first instance.
- 50. The indicative timeline for allocation and reallocation is set out below:
  - Indicative allocation target number of GAs and associated funding for each university March 2022.
  - Engagement with universities regarding capacity to deliver target March-April 2022.
  - Final funding allocation and target number of GAs confirmed May 2022.
  - Start of the Academic Year (AY) further engagement on GA target August 2022.
  - Formal process of reallocation of funded GA places and funding September/October 2022.
- 51. Universities will receive funding for GA activity in line with the standard profile of monthly payments for main grants for AY 2022-23.

### Monitoring and reporting

52. In developing a joint delivery model for AY 2022-23, the ambition of both SFC and SDS was to streamline, simplify and reduce the administrative burden for universities in the delivery and reporting of GAs.

- 53. Whilst it has not been possible to move to a one system reporting method for AY 2022-23, we have reduced the volume of evidence and reporting required throughout the year (<u>Annex B</u>). It remains our ambition to further simplify the system reporting process. We will work with the sector in the next AY to review, refine and co-create the future reporting methodology. For AY 2022-23 universities will be required to report both through FIPS and HESA as in previous years.
- 54. SFC will monitor the uptake of activity through university reporting and HESA returns. The requirements for reporting through HESA can be found in the <u>HESA Guidance for AY</u> <u>2022-23</u>.
- 55. SDS will require student data to monitor and manage GA learning provider performance across all learning providers.
- 56. Programme performance will continue to be monitored through the joint arrangements between SFC and SDS (<u>Annex C</u>).
- 57. The university shall ensure that it meets the minimum Performance Levels set out in <u>Annex D</u>. Where the university fails to meet any performance levels, this will be raised by SDS and SFC key contacts and may result in an escalation resulting in SFC withholding or withdrawing funding.
- 58. In partnership with SFC, SDS will, from time to time during the period of the GA allocations, evaluate the achievements of each university by assessing the Achieved Performance Levels that the university has delivered against those delivered by other GA learning providers.
- 59. We require that you make outcome evidence available to us and to SDS for performance management purposes. The purpose of the evidence is to provide the necessary assurance that you have delivered the GA Programme in accordance with the terms of this guidance.
- 60. In performing its obligation to deliver GAs, the university is expected to perform the services in a way that meets the delivery of the programme outcomes within the required timescales.
- 61. SDS and SFC will work with universities to support delivery of programme outcomes.
- 62. The Key Performance Levels (KPLs) that are applicable are set out in <u>Annex D</u>.

#### Monitoring the use of funds

63. SFC will use the same arrangements for monitoring and reporting for GAs as we do for monitoring core funding. This will mean that we will collect information on student numbers through our Early Statistics and Final Statistics returns.

64. We also expect the university to provide a full student record return for GAs through HESA returns.

# SAAS funding – tuition fees only

- 65. Eligibility for a place on a GA remains at the advice and discretion of the university. The university will advise employers if their employee/candidate meets their entry criteria, is eligible to participate and what they need to do next to apply for tuition fees from SAAS.
- 66. GAs starting their course in AY 2022-23 need to apply for SAAS funding. SAAS will check that the preferred candidate meets the residency requirements by being domiciled in Scotland for the duration of their GA programme. Once eligibility is confirmed, SAAS will pay the tuition fee directly to the university.

### **Quality management**

- 67. The Quality Standards that apply to GA Providers can be accessed in the SDS Learning Provider area of <u>www.apprenticeships.scot</u>.
- 68. The Quality Standards assess the extent to which each provider maintains capacity and capability to successfully deliver quality provider services throughout the period of delivery.
- 69. SFC expects institutions to utilise these Quality Standards, combined with existing quality assurance and enhancement arrangements, to ensure a high-quality experience for GA students.

# Marketing and communications requirements

70. In promoting GAs, the university should take appropriate positive action in marketing with a view to improving representation where there is clear imbalance in provision, targeting gender, disability, ethnicity and people who have been in care. There is a marketing toolkit available in the provider area of <u>apprenticeships.scot/resources</u>

# Conditions of funding

- 71. The following conditions apply:
  - Funds must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated, as set out in this guidance; that is, for the provision of GAs. SFC retains the right to audit relevant institutional documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case (and the university undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires).

- Use of funding must meet the eligibility criteria set out in this guidance.
- Any under-delivery or shortfall in activity may result in the recovery of funding.
- Universities must provide data returns requested by SFC to the deadlines and standards specified.
- Universities must provide updates on the funded activity as requested by SFC.
- In acknowledgement of SFC's funding contribution, our logo must be displayed on any publicity material relating to GAs (signage, posters, website, etc.). You will also be required to display other logos in recognition of GA delivery – full details are contained within the marketing toolkit on <u>www.apprenticeships.scot/resources</u>.
- 72. SFC is committed to processing any personal data fairly, transparently and in accordance with the law. SFC's privacy notice is available on our website. SFC will use the information submitted by colleges to provide regular updates to the Scottish Government on the current uptake and use of funding. (The Scottish Government's privacy notice is available on their website.)

#### **Further information**

- 73. To complement the above guidance, a link to 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQs) is included in <u>Annex E</u>.
- 74. Any queries/requests for further information should be directed to Sharon Drysdale, Deputy Director, Work Based Learning and Skills, email: <u>sdrysdale@sfc.ac.uk</u>.

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James Dunphy Director, Access, Learning and Outcomes

# Annex A

### Programme design, development and delivery

- Universities must ensure that SFC and SDS are involved in the approval process of all new GA programmes. The formal outcome of any approval process should be reported by SFC through your Outcome Agreement Manager (OAM).
- Universities must consult employers in the design and development of all GA programmes.
- Universities should seek to ensure that GA programmes are based on industry needs and have been co-designed with employers to deliver business requirements.
- Universities should seek to gain professional body accreditation of all GA programmes prior to programme start date (where a relevant body exists).
- Universities must ensure that students and employers know what is expected of them in the delivery of the GA programme. Universities must provide the student and employer with a learning and assessment timetable before the course start date, covering on-campus and work-based learning.
- Universities must ensure that both the student and employer are offered an induction process to the GA programme.

# Approval of GA programmes

- For new GA programmes, each university will undertake a programme validation, whereby all new programmes are subject to formal consideration and approval prior to implementation.
- The format of any validation event will depend on a university's own internal processes. However, as a minimum, a panel should be convened that includes SDS representation to examine the quality and standards of the proposed programme and ensure they align to the published GA Framework requirements.
- Universities should provide documentation to SDS at least 10 days in advance of a validation event. This documentation should, as a minimum, include a programme specification document (that includes the rationale for the development of the GA programme, evidence of employer demand and how the programme fits with your institutions strategic planning for work based learning); a programme mapping exercise that clearly demonstrates that the learning outcomes meet the requirements of the associated GA Framework; and detailed module descriptors that include how each module will be taught and assessed.

• The purpose of a validation event is to take a decision on the approval (or validation) of the GA programme subject to your university's regular quality review processes.

### Review and re-approval of GA programmes

- Subject to the university's own Institution-Led Subject Review (ILSR) processes, each GA programme will be required to undergo a formal review process. This is normally every 6 years (including the course re-approval element of it). When the university prepares for their ILSR a year in advance, this will involve engagement with relevant stakeholders, including SDS, learners and employers.
- If there are significant changes being proposed as part of the ILSR, this will require a re-validation event with a validation Panel and should follow the validation process as above (Approval of GA Programmes).
- Where there are no significant changes required to a programme, or a programme has recently been validated ahead of the ILSR, these should be re-approved internally. However, course teams will still be required to liaise with SDS to obtain written confirmation that any changes, particularly relating to learning outcomes or assessment, remain aligned to the requirements set out within the published GA Framework.

# Annex B

# SCQF level framework expected outcomes

Outcome	Evidence Required	Timeline
Start of Year 1	Registration Form Equality Monitoring Form Proof of Qualification	As soon as the student has been formally accepted on the GA course by the university. The university must confirm that the student starts at course start date.
Start of Year 2	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress Reports are submitted 12 months after GA course start date.
Start of Year 3	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress Reports are submitted 24 months after GA course start date.
End of Year 3	GA Destination Report Proof of Completion	University must ensure that all GA Progress Reports are submitted 36 months after GA course start date.

SCQF Level 9 framework expected outcomes will be as follows:

SCQF Level 10 framework expected outcomes will be as follows:

Outcome	Evidence Required	Timeline	
Start of Year 1	Registration Form Equality Monitoring Form Proof of Qualification	As soon as the student has been formally accepted on the GA course by the university. The university must confirm that the student starts a course start date.	
Start of Year 2	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress Reports are submitted 12 months after GA course start date.	
Start of Year 3	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress Reports are submitted 24 months after GA course start date.	
Start of Year 4	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress Reports are submitted 36 months after GA course start date.	
End of Year 4	GA Destination Report Proof of Completion	University must ensure that all GA Destination Report are submitted 48 months after GA course start date.	

Outcome	Evidence Required	Timeline
Start of Year 1	Registration Form Equality Monitoring Form Proof of Qualification	As soon as the student has been formally accepted on the GA course by the university. The university must confirm that the student starts at course start date.
Start of Year 2	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress Reports are submitted 12 months after GA course start date.
End of Year 2	GA Destination Report Proof of Completion	University must ensure that all GA Progress Reports are submitted 24 months after GA course start date.

SCQF Level 11 framework expected outcomes will be as follows:

Accounting with Professional Accreditation framework expected outcomes will be as follows:

Outcome	Evidence Required	Timeline
Start of	Registration Form	As soon as the student has been formally
Year 1	Equality Monitoring Form	accepted on the GA course by the university.
	Proof of Qualification	The university must confirm that individual
		starts at course start date.
Start of	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress
Year 2		Reports are submitted 12 months after GA
		course start date.
Start of	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress
Year 3		Reports are submitted 24 months after GA
		course start date.
Start of	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress
Year 4		Reports are submitted 36 months after GA
		course start date.
End of	GA Progress Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress
Year 4		Report are submitted 48 months after GA
		course start date.
End of	GA Destination Report	University must ensure that all GA Progress
Year 5	Proof of Completion	Report are submitted 60 months after GA
		course start date.

# Annex C

# Reporting schedule

#	Туре	Schedule	Description of report		
Progress reporting					
1	Mid-Year 3	January 2025	Mid-year retention check		
2	Year End 3	September 2025	End of year retention check		
3	Mid-Year 4	January 2026	Mid-year retention check		
4	Year End 4	September 2026	End of year retention check		
5	Mid-Year 5	January 2027	Mid-year retention check		
6	Year End 5	September 2027	End of year retention check		

# Annex D

# Key performance levels

#	KPL	Measure	Period Measured	Level of performance	Underperformance
1	Fulfilment of allocated	Measure as a percentage, the number of new Starts properly entered in the system	September 2022	University shall ensure that the number of new	If the University fails to meet this Performance Level in any period
	volumes & retention levels	against allocations.	September 2022	Starts and those retaining are up to date	and fails to provide a rationale which is acceptable to SFC (at SFC's
		Measure as a percentage of the number of starts retained in year and expected returners in subsequent years.	September 2023 September 2024 September 2025	and properly entered on system timeously	entire discretion), SFC shall be entitled to reduce the funding awarded.
2	Continuous Improvement Action Plan alternative reporting documentation (for Learning providers for 2022-23 GA delivery)	<ul> <li>Measure in relation to the Learning</li> <li>Provider Continuous Improvement Action</li> <li>Plan or alternative reporting</li> <li>documentation 2021-23, whether Provider</li> <li>has:-</li> <li>Completed the plan as at 1 year</li> <li>anniversary date and updated the plan at</li> <li>each of the required intervals.</li> <li>Provided immediately on request, all</li> <li>appropriate evidence of the actions stated</li> <li>within the plan.</li> </ul>	Start date of 2021 Continuous Improvement Plan – 1 year anniversary	Provider shall ensure that it has fully complied with the requirements.	If the Provider fails to meet this Performance Level in the Period, and fails to provide a rationale which is acceptable to SFC (at SFC's entire discretion), SFC shall be entitled to suspend and/or terminate funding.

# Annex E

# Frequently Asked Questions

75. Please refer to <u>GA FAQs</u> which are updated as required.