Academic Professional Apprenticeship

Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education

Departmental Course Handbook

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WELCOME TO THE ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL APPRENTICESHIP COURSE

Welcome,

We are delighted to share with you the information about the Academic Professional Apprenticeship. This is a newly launched route designed to allow demonstration of learning and teaching expertise via a range of recognised pathways: a Postgraduate Certificate, evidence of completion of an apprenticeship course and Fellowship with the Higher Education Academy.

The course provides a framework for the development of the academic knowledge, skills, values and behaviours, required to deliver contemporary pedagogic practice in Higher Education. Throughout the delivery course members will be given opportunities for reflection, enquiry and evaluation of pedagogy which will enrich their understanding, perception and ways of dealing with issues that surround learning and teaching, within their chosen discipline area.

The Academic Professional Apprenticeship has a strong commitment to working collaboratively, balanced by flexible and personally tailored programme of learning, of which work-based learning forms an integral part.

Your departmental contribution, of a commitment to ethically placed professional practice and development, will enable staff to effectively contribute to the organisational success of the university, alongside supporting individual academic citizenship.

The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of the course, including information regarding the departmental commitment and support mechanisms that are required, in order to ensure positive outcomes for staff members enrolling on the course.

The valuable investment you are making by allowing staff to join the course will help to perpetuate your continued commitment to the quality of teaching that is delivered within your department.

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. If, after reading the contents, you have any questions or queries I would be very happy to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Joanne

Dr Joanne Brindley
Course Lead
What is the Academic Professional Apprenticeship?

This is a Higher Apprenticeship, at Level 7, and is specifically designed for academic professionals engaged in teaching, and supporting learning, in organisations involved in the delivery of higher education. The standard is referenced to the long established professional standards frameworks for academic professionals in the UK: the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

The apprenticeship standard sets out the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours expected of professionals working within Higher Education. Apprentices are expected to take a leading role in the development of current learning and teaching practice, pedagogical and assessment methodologies. Including the advancement of skills which support learning for diverse groups of learners, such as those with learning disabilities. In addition to this, apprentices require a high level of information literacy in order to effectively apply the use of technology, in the support of learning. Apprentices contribute to changes of practice by developing innovative forms of teaching, for use with students who are working towards higher-level learning at levels 4 to 8.

An apprenticeship is defined as a genuine job with an accompanying skills development programme. Throughout their apprenticeship, course members will gain the technical knowledge, practical experience and skills they need for their immediate job alongside the development of broader academic citizenship skills, required for their future career. These skills are developed via 80% on the job training and 20% off the job training.

Advance HE (Formally the Higher Education Academy)

In 2018 a new agency was created by the merger of the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) called Advance HE.

Advance HE supports institutions to improve learning and teaching, equality and diversity and leadership and governance in higher education. By gaining Fellowship (FHEA) your staff are demonstrating their commitment to teaching, learning and the student experience, through engagement in a practical process which encourages research, reflection and development.

Fellowship is increasingly sought by employers across the higher education sector as a condition of appointment and promotion and as such is recognised and valued by a growing number of international institutions.

Despite the change in name to Advance HE, Fellows at all categories will still use the Fellowship post-nominal’s: AFHEA, FHEA, SFHEA & PFHEA to demonstrate their Fellowship status.
Strategic alignment

The Academic Professional Apprenticeship (APA) is aligned, in accordance, with the following university strategies:

The APA contributes to the **People Strategy** by:

‘exploring and delivering new models of staff development, such as apprenticeships’ (p.7) and ‘supporting our academic community to build capability to deliver targets for teaching and learning, and for research and innovation activities’(p.7), alongside ‘investing in learning and development to support and enhance transformative change management and team development by creating an institution-wide coaching and mentoring culture’ (p.7).

The APA contributes to the **Education Strategy** (2016-20, P. 9):

As a mechanism for ensuring that ‘Staff who teach or support student learning will be expected to achieve formal recognition for their teaching skills, notably through meeting the descriptors in the UK Professional Standards Framework and other qualifications underpinning high quality teaching, scholarship and research’ (p.9).

The APA contributes to the **UoP Strategy** (2015-20):

As a means of ‘promot[ing] lifelong learning and develop[ing] new flexible progression routes into HE, including vocational routes through apprenticeships, CPD and corporate degrees in partnership with employers’. (p.11).

As a means of ‘increas[ing] our attractiveness as an employer of choice, to attract, develop and retain outstanding staff who share our values’ (p. 13).

Course aims

The educational aims of the course are:

- To provide a framework for the professional development of academic knowledge, skills, values and behaviours required to deliver contemporary teaching and support effective learning, in Higher Education.
- Offer a flexible, accessible and personally tailored programme of learning of which work-based learning forms an integral part.
- To provide course members with the skills and knowledge to undertake a research informed curriculum enhancement, within their own area of professional practice
- Offer an opportunity for reflection, enquiry and evaluation of pedagogy so that individual understanding, perception and ways of dealing with issues about learning and teaching in the relevant educational strand are developed and changed constructively.
- To equip course members with the skills and behaviours required to evidence their commitment to lifelong learning, in order to support academic citizenship.
Postgraduate Certificates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the course member:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
  - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

Course structure
The Academic Professional Apprenticeship (APA) is a non-integrated apprenticeship programme that will encompass a Postgraduate Certificate (two core units) within its delivery. The apprenticeship aspect will span across a maximum of 24 months, with the initial apprenticeship phase commencing in October each year.

New to teaching staff would join the course in October, with an option for existing staff who wish to undertake a formal teaching qualification joining in January each year, as demonstrated in Figure 1.
The initial phase of the apprenticeship is the academic toolkit. The academic toolkit delivery will introduce new to teaching staff with an opportunity for familiarisation with university and departmental processes (including personal tutoring and the Portsmouth Hallmarks), prior to commencing the core Postgraduate Certificate units of study. This initial toolkit phase will encourage formation of learning sets, orientation with online learning resources and eportfolio, wellbeing and time-management activities. The toolkit is a core element for new to teaching staff at the university, and an optional element for existing university staff.

Condensed induction period
Prior to the commencement of the core unit of study, there will be shorter condensed induction programme, providing an entry point for new staff who have joined the university after the start of the academic year. This point will also be the orientation phase for existing university staff who are joining the programme.

Academic and Professional Development (Core unit)
This unit aims to facilitate acquisition of the core knowledge, values and behaviours required of Professional Academics working in higher education. The theoretical delivery is designed to stimulate collaborative and inter-disciplinary discussion and debate with course members peers. Class based and online activities will inform the development of individual teaching practices, within the course members sphere of activity, which is evidenced via an electronic portfolio.
The non-standard delivery approach, which extends into the summer block, will allow course members to experience completion of an academic year, prior to developing a small-scale, evidence based, curriculum enhancement project based within their subject discipline. The flexibility of the summer block allows time for individual and group support to occur on an ‘as and when required’ basis. The submission date for the first core unit assessment is September. This allows course members to manage their individual workloads and work-life balance over the summer period. This flexibility is also mirrored during the final End Point Assessment.

**Research Ethics**
Ethical approval will be required over the summer period, in line with the UofP Ethics Policy. Course members are responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient ethical approval in place prior to commencing their educational research project.

**Research Informed Teaching (Core unit)**
This unit focuses on the application and dissemination of a small scale, independently led, research project. Culminating in the preparation of an article suitable for publication, in line with a chosen journals author guidance, decided by the individual course member. Alongside this, the course member will be expected to participate in a dissemination activity, which will include analysis and identification of the potential impact of their curriculum enhancement activity, within their disciplinary context. The benefit of the journal article is twofold; it allows the course member to expand their portfolio of academic citizenship, alongside, dissemination of the contribution to innovation in learning and teaching that is being made to Higher Education by your department.

**End Point Assessment**
This is a Higher Apprenticeship (at Level 7) and in line with all other apprenticeships, the course must include an End Point Assessment (EPA). The EPA is the culmination of an apprenticeship. It measures the skills, knowledge and behaviours that have been acquired throughout the duration of the course. The EPA is designed to grade individual performance against the apprenticeship standard. Course members are provided with grades that reflect their skill acquisition in three distinct areas: academic practice, professional conversation and a written submission. Grades are awarded accordingly: fail, pass and distinction.

Taking the EPA is designed to be flexible and can occur at any point during May-October, following completion of the two 30 credit units of study. The flexibility of the EPA approach enables the EPA to be taken at a time that best suits the course member in addition to minimising impact on departmental activities.

**Retaking the End Point Assessment**
Apprentices who do not successfully complete the EPA at the first assessment will be provided with a supportive action plan to enable them to retake the assessment element they have been unsuccessful in. Grades are not capped should a re-take be required.
Apprenticeship standard eligibility requirements
Course members will require evidence of a level 2 English and level 2 mathematics qualification, or enrolment on a programme that will enable achievement of these two qualifications in order to complete the apprenticeship. If course members do not have the required evidence they can take a short Functional Skills Assessment in these aspects, which will enable them to demonstrate that these skills thresholds are met. If additional support is required this is available via a bespoke package. Further information can be sought regarding this from the Apprenticeship Office.

Staff eligibility
All staff members who wish to join the course should have the following arrangements in place, prior to application:

1. Discussion with their Line Manager regarding commitment to the course, which includes:
   • potential suitability for the course
   • entry point onto the programme (October or January)
   • individual workload time commitment and allocation
   • monthly mentorship support, from a named departmental mentor
   • agreement to participate in bi-annual progress reviews with the course member, a course team representative and a departmental representative
   • commitment to support the course member in the Peers Enhancing Practice cycle

Early career teaching staff
It is a normal expectation that early career teachers who are in their first two years of teaching gain Higher Education Academy Fellowship (Descriptor 2). Staff who have not yet commenced their application for Fellowship status with the Higher Education Academy, should enrol on this course, following discussion and agreement with their Line Manager, as stated in 1 (above). This taught pathway replaces the APEX CPD route to Higher Education Academy Fellowship (D2).

Existing staff requiring formal teaching qualification & recognition
Staff who have been involved in teaching, but have not yet achieved Fellowship Status with the Higher Education Academy, would benefit from the opportunity to further expand their knowledge and expertise by undertaking the apprenticeship, following discussion and agreement with their Line Manager, as stated in 1 (above).

Existing staff who have substantial teaching experience
Staff who have been employed in an academic role within the university who do not have HEA Fellowship, and consider themselves to have substantial teaching experience, may like to consider the APEX written application route. Further information regarding this can be obtained by contacting apex@port.ac.uk
Departmental support and relationships

In order to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standard a course members working hours must be split into two distinct categories: On The Job Training and Off The Job Training.

On The Job Training

Work-based practice forms a mandatory component of this programme and as such, 80% of a course members’ time should be devoted to departmental activities (On The Job Training). Course members are expected to evidence and demonstrate continued engagement with learning and teaching activities consistently throughout the course delivery. It is anticipated that course members would usually be involved in delivering a minimum of 100 hours teaching (or module co-ordination), throughout the entire duration of their course.

Off The Job Training activities

The remaining 20% of a course members’ time should be allocated for Off The Job Training. Whilst the composition of activities for this 20% can be negotiated the time allocation is a requirement of the apprenticeship programme and activities will be tracked to ensure there is full compliance with this requirement. As a department, you are able to tailor your course members Off The Job Training hours, depending on your requirements. For example, you may need to cluster some training as part of a course members’ departmental induction. This approach would be especially useful if the course member is working within a setting where detailed simulation equipment is required. Allowing the department to plan a bespoke programme which reflects the time spent training the new staff member(s) shadowing these activities. As long as the course member has 20% of their time allocated to Off The Job Training over the duration of the year, how and when the training is planned occurs should be agreed locally. The departmental activities, which course members is expected to undertake can include any of the following:

- Practical training (related to the department)
- Shadowing
- Mentorship activities (including preparation prior to and reflection on)
- Attendance at departmental training events and activities
- Group activities e.g. Team Development
- Attendance at conferences, workshops or seminars
- Peers Enhancing Practice activities
- Mandatory CPD

Encompassed within the 20% Off The Job Training, there will be formal taught sessions, which will run predominately on Wednesday afternoons. Course members should attend a minimum of 9 of these sessions during the 12 week teaching blocks, which together with attendance at DCQE sessions will account towards 50% of their Off The Job Training. Within this course members will also need to identify and attend a series of DCQE sessions, which can be planned via the DCQE Events.
Calendar, tailored to their own individual learning requirements. For a full time member of staff 158 hours (pro rata) should be allocated, per annum, for these activities:

- Formal taught sessions
- Undertaking online activities
- Writing and preparing work (including PG Cert assignments, portfolio tasks/reflections)
- Learning support & tutorials
- Personal development activities
- Research and preparing documents for ethical approval

To summarise: for full time staff beginning their course in October an allowance of 158 hours should be dedicated to the departmental activities, with a further 158 hours allocated for formal taught activities, each year.

**Peers Enhancing Practice**
During their training course members are expected to engage with the Peers Enhancing Practice (PEP) cycle. This is an important aspect of academic citizenship, which should occur during their course and beyond. As such, it is important that support is provided to ensure that this activity is undertaken at the planned points during the programme. PEP can include a range of learning and teaching activities (including online review) and we would encourage you to be creative in exposing course members to a broad range of delivery styles, in line with your departmental vision.

**Departmental mentor**
The departmental mentor is a key person in supporting course members during their pedagogical learning journey. All departmental mentors will be invited to a training workshop during September each year. Alongside this, additional support is offered via a Mentors Handbook and a Moodle site which contains online resources.

Mentorship is an important element to engage with for those staff considering applying for Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. It is also recommended for existing Senior Fellows to ensure that they remain in good standing.

The frequency of meetings should be approximately 6 times per year: October, November, January, February, March and once over the summer period. One hour should be provided for the mentor and course member (mentee) to meet on each occasion and this should be reflected in individual workload plans.
Monitoring of individual course member progress

Study support
Throughout their course an academic supervisor will monitor and support course member’s engagement. Formal review meetings with the course member, academic supervisor and departmental representative, should occur. These are key in establishing the expectations of the course, identifying what is expected from the learning experience, alongside providing development support and feedback in order to optimise course member achievement.

Individual monitoring
Course members will be expected to complete regular online documentation, which allows the course team to identify their progress and time spent on Off The Job Training activities.

Formal review meeting
During their programme the course member will have a formal review meeting, at which point the course lead will visit them, by prior appointment, in their departmental setting. The departmental mentor will be invited to this meeting and it is also an opportunity for you to meet with the Course Lead, should you have any questions, queries or comments about the course member’s progress or the course experience.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of the course, at any point, please feel free to contact the Course Lead: Joanne Brindley or telephone 023 9284 5336

Suspension of studies
On occasions, there may be a need for a course member to suspend or withdraw for their studies. If this is the case it is vitally important that the Course Lead is contacted as swiftly as possible as apprenticeships are closely monitored (often up to a two day timeframe) and penalties are in place if course member data is inaccurate. Your support with this is much appreciated.

Further information
We look forward to embarking on our common objective of developing the Academic Professionals, by investing in our staff we are safeguarding the continued quality of learning and teaching that we have to offer here at Portsmouth. We would be very happy to meet with you at any point before, during and after the course delivery and welcome regular communication from you.

We sincerely hope that the apprenticeship experience is enhancing not only for the course member but also for you as a department. If you have any further suggestions that could improve your experience of this higher-level apprenticeship, please do not hesitate to contact the course team at apa@port.ac.uk.