

Apprenticeship Strategy

This apprenticeship strategy sets out the approach the HIAL Group intends take in relation to the use of apprenticeships – both in recruitment and for existing staff. It will support the delivery of the People Plan and help to ensure that the HIAL Group has the people with the necessary skills to deliver on its strategic aims.

The Business Case for Apprenticeships

The business case for apprenticeships is three-fold. First, it will support three of the building blocks outlined in our People Plan. The People Plan sets out our commitment to build and maintain a workforce ready to face the challenges and seize the opportunities both immediately and in the years to come. It is our commitment to build the capability of our workforce and ensure our people flourish in their careers.

Our Apprenticeship Programme will respond to this by maximising workforce capability, through building our own and bringing in a diverse pipeline of talent to meet existing and future skills gaps. This means building skills that are transferable and that support the development of modern careers which include short and long term movement within and out of the HIAL Group.

We will develop a breadth of experience and depth of expertise through a variety of apprenticeships, from entry-level skills to higher and degree level apprenticeships, open to both new recruits and existing staff as an opportunity to retrain or learn new skills.

Growth in apprenticeships will further support our ability to improve the regional spread of opportunities, with the development of apprenticeship partnerships across all of our geographic locations.

Secondly, Apprenticeships present an opportunity to improve the diversity and inclusivity of workforces, by providing people from all backgrounds the possibility to take a step on professional career ladders.

Our values are about giving every talented individual the opportunity to progress. By supporting staff to learn within the workplace environment and harnessing partnerships and funding opportunities with education providers, we can remove some of the barriers in place, both for potential new employees and for our existing workforce.

Thirdly, apprenticeships make business sense. Using apprenticeships to support the development of skills in-house reduces recruitment costs, reduces the time taken to fill business-critical posts and also reduces the time to competency when staff move into posts.

In the apprenticeship evaluation survey, last completed in 2014 employers were asked about the impact of apprenticeships on their business; 70% believed that apprenticeships had positively impacted on the service they delivered, 65% believed they had improved productivity, and 55% believed that they had improved their ability to attract good staff.

Types of Apprenticeship in Scotland

Apprenticeship has been the focus of Government policy for a number of years. This included the introduction of an apprenticeship levy in the UK with the purpose of funding new apprenticeships. The levy is charged at 0.5% of the annual pay bill for employers whose annual pay bill exceeds £3m.

In Scotland, the funds raised through the levy have been used to further develop three types of apprenticeship, and also to introduce the Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

In 2020 the Government introduced the Kickstart scheme, designed to offer opportunities to young people in danger of long-term unemployment. More information on the different apprenticeship types can be found at **Appendix 1**.

Methods

This section sets out the approach that HIAL will take to creating apprenticeship opportunities.

We have three main routes through which we will create apprenticeships:

- **Converting planned external recruitment.** This means assessing whether roles and vacancies which are to be advertised externally could be offered as apprenticeships.
- **Offering our current workforce increased opportunities to retrain and upskill.** We will target apprenticeships at key capability gaps within the existing workforce, ensuring that we utilise the opportunities offered by the apprenticeship approach to support our employees to develop transferable and nationally recognised skills and knowledge.
- **Developing and enhancing our current apprenticeship schemes.** As part of our talent pipeline approach we will develop and build on our current corporate schemes, such as our leadership development approach, increasing involvement from learning providers, and strategically aligning this to career paths. In addition we will consider developing new corporate apprenticeship schemes in core areas of our business; air traffic services, airport fire services and airport security.

In order for these routes to be successful, HIAL will need to rethink some of its existing recruitment practices. We will need to identify roles which are suitable for offering through an apprenticeship, and we will need the right recruitment and selection processes, which allow us to attract and identify talent based on potential rather than the finished product.

We will also need to strengthen our existing partnerships with learning providers, particularly the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), and to that end we are currently exploring opportunities with the UHI including a memorandum of understanding. We will also need to build new partnerships both with other higher education providers. This has already commenced with Robert Gordon's University and the Open University, and with training providers in the private sector with experience in modern apprenticeships.

Finally, we will need to further develop our approach to talent management and workforce development. We will need to map career paths which can operate not just within functions as they currently do, but also allow individuals to develop between functions, improving our resilience and creating a wider talent pool. Our Airport Managers of the future and our future senior managers will be with us already, we need to be able to identify them and provide them with the development they need. This apprenticeship strategy is co-dependent with these processes.

The Five Pillars of our Strategy



Developing Skills

We will work with apprenticeships to build strong professional capabilities, and with apprentices to ensure they are part of a highly capable, skilled and engaged workforce with effective leaders.

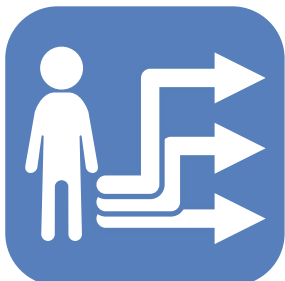
This includes developing profession-orientated apprenticeships at a variety of levels (including degree and masters levels) and in areas where we have identified skills gaps.



Enhancing Diversity and Social Mobility

We will ensure that apprenticeships are a key component of an inclusive organisation that reflects the communities it serves.

This includes promoting apprenticeships to under-represented groups. Enhancing our recruitment practices to focus on potential and developing apprenticeships across the area we cover.



Embedding Apprenticeships

We will create apprenticeships that provide a modern employment offer and viable route into and up through the HIAL structure.

This includes considering apprenticeships as part of strategic workforce planning, location strategies, talent management, people strategies and career pathways.



Ensuring Quality Experiences

We will make sure apprentices receive high quality training and feel engaged with HIAL and the work it does.

This includes working with reputable training providers, complying with apprenticeship standards and securing senior and line management engagement to ensure accountability for the quality of the apprenticeship schemes.



Delivering Return on Investment

We will build apprenticeship schemes that achieve the best mix of quality and economic efficiency.

This includes working collaboratively across the HIAL airports, departments and functions to ensure apprenticeships fit efficiently within workforce planning and maximise strategic outcomes of delivering apprenticeships within the resources available.

Appendix One – Apprenticeships in Scotland

(current at 31st January 2021)

Foundation Apprenticeships	<p>Foundation Apprenticeships give young people the opportunity to benefit from work-based learning while still at school. They typically take two years to complete and normally learners will begin in S5. Young people get a head start in their career, gain a vocational qualification and work experience alongside their other school subjects. They are equivalent to one or two highers and are recognised by all universities. Foundation apprentices spend one day per week either at college or with an employer. Foundation apprenticeships are delivered by learning providers, most commonly further education colleges.</p>
Modern Apprenticeships	<p>Modern Apprenticeships are the most well-established of the three types in Scotland. There are over 80 Modern Apprenticeship subjects or frameworks. With a Modern Apprenticeship the individual learns 'on the job'. They are fully employed, and alongside their employment, they undertake a nationally recognised qualification. This may be specific to their role or it may be more generic. Modern Apprenticeships are managed and administered through Skills Development Scotland and delivered by approved Learning Providers. There is no age limit, but funding varies and is usually highest for those aged 24 and under.</p>
Graduate Apprenticeships	<p>These are the most recent addition to the apprenticeship suite. With a Graduate Apprenticeship the individual is fully employed whilst also studying for an employment related degree. The costs of the degree are fully met through Government funding administered through Skills Development Scotland. There are no age limits. There are currently 12 Graduate Apprenticeship types in Scotland, three are engineering based and the others range from Early Learning and Childcare to Business Management.</p>

Kickstart Scheme

In addition to the above, in 2020 the Government introduced the Kickstart scheme. This is aimed at providing 6 month work placements for those aged under 24 who are in receipt of Universal Credit and at risk of long term unemployment. Vacancies created under the Kickstart scheme must be new vacancies, must pay at least the minimum wage and last for a minimum of six months. For vacancies which qualify the Kickstart scheme covers the cost for 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, and all the associated employer National Insurance contributions and employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions. There is also £1,500 per job placement available for setup costs, support and training.

