

Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme



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Introduction

The Network Rail Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme is a key cornerstone of the future development of Network Rail. The Apprentices who join the business will have benefited from a development programme which will equip them to become the technicians, team leaders, supervisors, managers and engineers of the future. There is no doubt that as the use of technology increases, and we introduce new and innovative methods of work, we will need a workforce with a strong underpinning knowledge of engineering principles, who are highly motivated, flexible and who by instinct personify the Network Rail behaviours of customer-driven, accountable, challenging and collaborative.

We must do all we can to equip our apprentices with the skills, knowledge and ability to achieve their full potential.



Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme

Overview of Year 1 Development

Year 1 of the Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme focuses on the following key parts:

- Health and safety
- Personal development
- Life skills development
- Underpinning academic development
- Skill of hand and basic engineering practical development
- Preparing for the depot learning experience

The first year **does not** concentrate on railway technology, but on developing the individual, inculcating the Network Rail values and giving the Apprentices the skills and understanding of first principles in engineering, which they can apply in Years 2 and 3, en route to achieving competence in their chosen discipline.

As part of the Maintenance Engagement programme, Year 1 Apprentices are programmed to visit their depots for a two-day depot and workplace familiarisation. These visits are programmed to take place mid February. The Network Rail team at HMS Sultan will co-ordinate these visits, however individual Apprentices are expected to contact their future line managers to confirm exact details.

Rail specific competencies achieved during Year 1

In order to help the Apprentices assimilate into their depots and selected disciplines, they will undertake Personal Track Safety [PTS] training on the first Monday and Tuesday after their Year 1 Graduation in June of each year. Additionally, Apprentices will also complete a one or two week induction course delivered by the Network Rail team at HMS Sultan, which shall include as part of it an introduction to rail equipment, besides manual handling, fire awareness and emergency first aid training.

The track apprentices who require Track Induction certification will have this issued to them upon successful completion of their PTS.

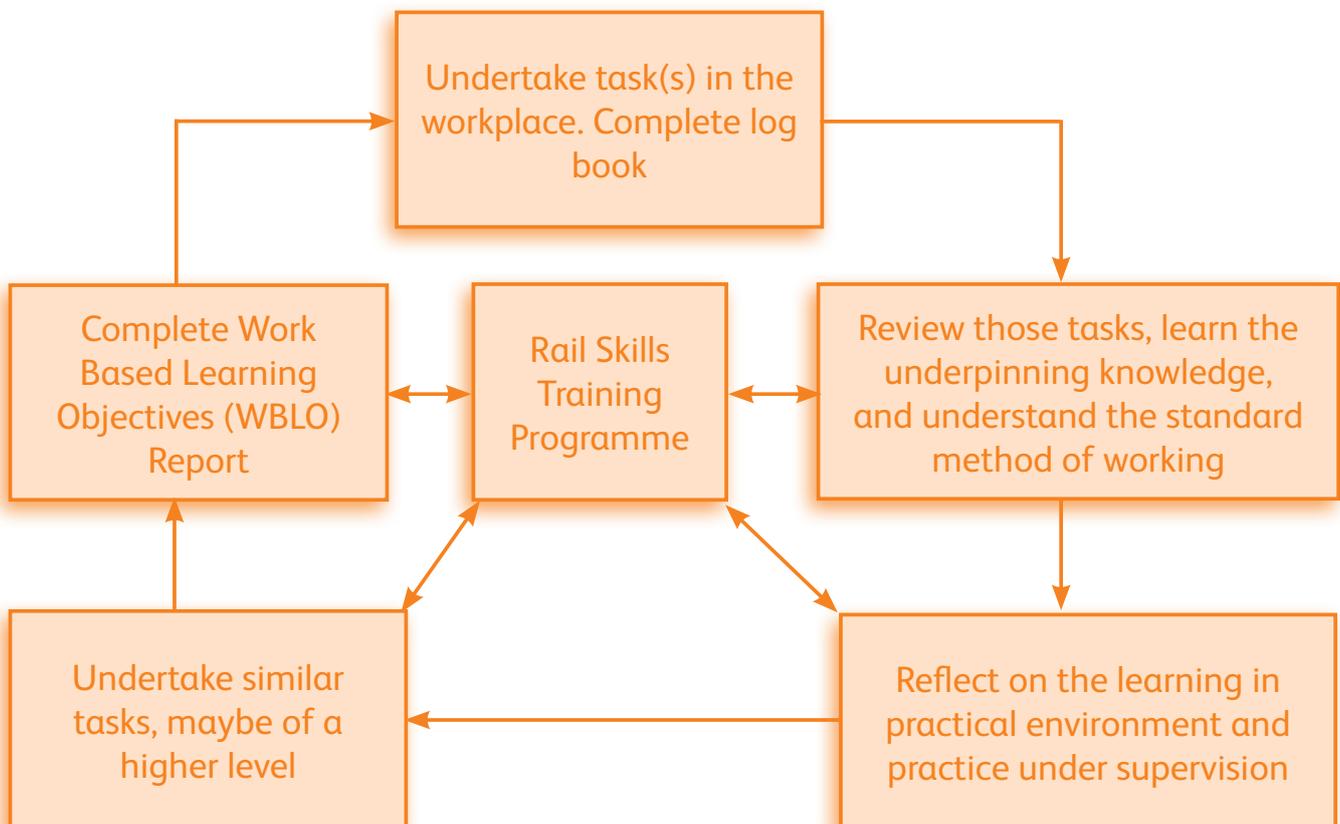
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Overview of Years 2 and 3 Development

Years 2 and 3 of the Network Rail Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme are where the Apprentices apply their underpinning knowledge and skills gained during Year 1 into the rail environment. It is essential that each Apprentice gets suitable and sufficient practical experience against the range of tasks and activities laid out in the scheme documentation.

Line managers are required to manage the Apprentices to ensure that their performance meets the required outcomes.

Apprentice Learning Cycle



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Overview of Years 2 and 3 Development

Each Apprentice will undergo a two year structured learning programme in the depot. The structure of the work placement is designed to dovetail with the Rail Technology Training programme.

Completion of the National Vocational Qualification in [NVQ] Rail Engineering [level 3] City & Guilds 7558

The final part of the Apprenticeship is satisfactory completion of the above qualification. For this qualification to be awarded the Apprentice must produce a portfolio of evidence which shall consist of the following:

- 9 Maintenance activity tasks
- 2 or 3 Direct observations

Rail technology training courses – competences Years 2 and 3

The majority of training courses undertaken on the rail technology training programme are Network Rail standard courses, some of which lead to the award of specified competencies in line with the competence management system. Where these competencies are awarded they will be managed in accordance with the Apprentice Competence standard NR/L3/CTM/307 section 4:1.4.4.1 – 4:1.4.4.4

The standard covers the process and the roles and responsibilities for 2nd and 3rd year Apprentices for Skills Assessment Scheme on completion of their technical competencies at Sultan, and the issue of Statements of achievement to the Skills Assessment Scheme co-ordinators for extension to the mentoring process.

Apprentices should not be put on any Look out course at anytime whilst still an apprentice, similarly they should not be put on a COSS course until nearing the end of their 3rd year of the apprenticeship and this should only then be done at the line managers discretion.

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Overview of Years 2 and 3 Development

Apprentices must have 12 weekly reviews during the 2nd and 3rd years of their Apprenticeship, undertaken by their line manager. The central theme is to maximise performance in their current placement, and to address issues of their personal development. Where there are performance issues these should be dealt with under the performance improvement process.

It is a requirement of the SFA (Skills Funding Agency) that the 12 weekly reviews are carried out, and that auditable records are maintained. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to funding being withdrawn. NB: current funding is to the value of c. £2m per annum.

The team at Sultan will record the completed 12 weekly reviews and an email will be sent periodically to HR showing any missing reviews which need to be chased.

Apprentices are subject to the Network Rail performance improvement process which is intended to help employees achieve and maintain the performance standards expected of them. It is important to identify any causes of under-performance and put timely and appropriate support measures in place which are then monitored and reviewed.

Whilst in their 1st year at HMS Sultan it is the responsibility of the Sultan team to manage the performance of the apprentice, reporting on actions to the prospective line manager.

For apprentices in years 2 and 3 of the Scheme their performance management is the responsibility of their line manager.

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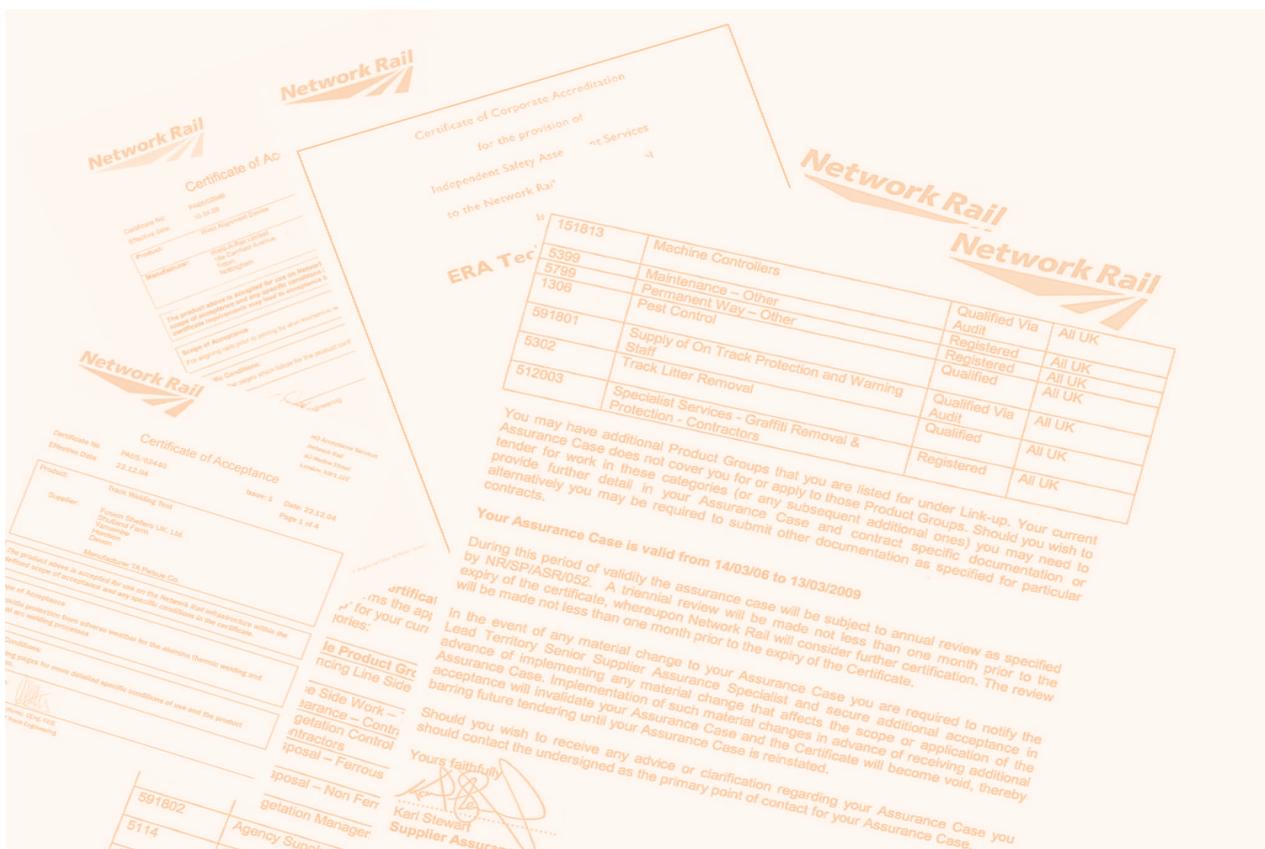
Completion of the Apprenticeship

Timely Completion

Timely completion is a requirement of the Skills Funding Agency; this requires Network Rail to submit claims by 1st October each year for all completed apprentices who have received a release date from the Scheme. Failure to achieve timely completion will incur financial penalties to Network Rail. The timescales for Work Based Learning Objectives and for NVQ evidence submissions must be strictly adhered to so as to enable the claim to be made.

Award of Apprenticeship Certification

During the scheme, each individual award will be externally certificated, i.e. BTEC Award in Engineering, Key Skills level 2 etc. The final award which encompasses all the individual awards is the Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme in Rail Engineering.



Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme

How we manage talent

Management of Apprentices as talent

As a business we are strongly committed to the growth and development of all employees and see the Apprentices as a source of leaders of the future. The Advanced Apprentice Scheme gives the Apprentices a solid foundation from which to build their careers in the business and it is expected that some will indeed develop as leaders. The Apprentices like all employees will need to take charge of their own career development though they will be supported with this.

On completion of their third year all Apprentices should sit down with their manager to agree a development plan that can be the focus of the next 2 years of their development.

Development tools to consider:

- Individual learning: the PD&T toolkit has a wealth of information that individuals can use to direct their own learning.
<http://leadershiptoolkit/index-2.html>
- Formal training: a range of formal training programmes are available for recent Apprentices. The practical leadership programme should be considered. See the Management and Leadership section for details.
- Coaching: a coach can enable the Apprentice to learn from their own experience and the resources around them. See Coaching pages in the Management and Leadership section.
- Mentoring: a mentor passes on their experience: what works/doesn't work
- Formal Assessments: People can discover more about themselves through various assessments.
- Job related development challenges: stretching the Apprentice to broaden their experience or adding a new element to their existing job to develop a particular skill.

Please see the **Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme Handbook** for more in-depth information on the scheme.