

COVID-19

APPRENTICE EMPLOYER GUIDE - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



With the introduction of urgent government measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and a rapidly developing situation, Fareham College has implemented changes to Apprenticeship training, ensuring employers are supported and Apprenticeship training continues during this time.

As an employer you will be able access support from government to support the costs of your apprentice salary through schemes such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. We are supporting employers across our provision to ensure the continued employment of their workforce. Please contact us if you need support.

Full government guidance on support available to you as an employer is available at [this website](#), including details about the government funded Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

To support training requirements of our employers, all Fareham College Apprenticeship training is now delivered remotely. Our team of Professional Coaches and Tutors are trained e-learning practitioners. During this time our team have been engaging your Apprentice through a wide range of digital training, e-learning platforms and online resources to ensure training can continue. Your Professional Coach or Tutor will support all Apprentice line-managers individually to understand these learning opportunities.

Below you will find frequently asked questions to support you to understand how best to support your Apprentice as an employer. If you have further queries or concerns, please get in touch.

Contact Business Plus:

Phone: 01329 815 153 Email: business@fareham.ac.uk

What do I do if I think an apprentice is not well enough to work (especially in a health setting)?

Employers should follow the government's guidance for employers and businesses on Coronavirus ([click here for more information](#)).

What happens to the apprentice during a period of unpaid leave in terms of pay? Do they have access to Universal Credit?

Universal Credit may be available for both workers and the unemployed alike, as long as they meet the other conditions of entitlement (including that the applicant and their partner have savings of under £16,000 between them).

Apprentices may be entitled to access Universal Credit during a period of unpaid leave. They may also have access to Universal Credit even if they were working and being paid. Being laid off or on a lesser number of hours could increase the rate of Universal Credit entitlement.

Apprentices on unpaid leave may also be eligible for other benefits ([click here for more information](#)).

Through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, all UK employers will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis. HMRC will reimburse 80% of furloughed workers wage costs, up to a cap of £2,500 per month.

My staff are required to work different hours and aren't able to attend training at their usual place of work. How can my apprentices continue their learning?

If your apprentices are unable to attend their scheduled learning, Fareham College is offering a comprehensive range of digital and distance learning options that are delivered flexibly around agreed working hours. This service ensures your apprentice can still progress on their Apprenticeship.

We recommend offering additional mentoring and support for your apprentice to support their health and well-being at this time. Our Student Support team is on hand to support all apprentices with any concerns.

I am having to move staff into different and/or business critical roles that aren't related to their Apprenticeship. What happens to their Apprenticeship?

We are working to ensure that all apprentices can continue their Apprenticeship and work towards successful completion of end-point assessment. Funding rules currently state that any pause on an Apprenticeship must be initiated by the apprentice. These rules have been changed in response to the current situation. Both employers and Fareham College can now temporarily report and initiate a break in learning. Speak to us for further information.

If the apprentice's job change becomes permanent, we will ensure you are supported to transfer your apprentice to an alternative Apprenticeship programme that is mapped to their new role.

I am a non-levy paying employer recruiting for/having apprentices due to start. Can I still go ahead and reserve funds on the system?

Employers who do not pay the Apprenticeship levy are able to reserve Apprenticeship funding through the Apprenticeship service. Business Plus is supporting a wide range of employers to ensure they can still operate and recruit apprentices during this time.

What happens to my funding reservation as a non-levy employer, if my apprentice can't start?

Reservations will expire if they are not turned into a commitment within 3 months of the Apprenticeship start date. Where a previous reservation has expired, a new reservation must first be made.

Should employers use the 'Stop' or 'Pause' apprentice facility in the Apprenticeship service?

Before considering any actions ensure you speak to your Fareham College contact. We are leading the way in delivery of remote online learning. Where you feel an apprentice is unable to complete training, in circumstances related to COVID-19, employers should use the 'Pause' function in the service. Employers must only use the 'Stop' function when they are certain that training will not resume at any point. Using 'Pause' will stop payments temporarily and allow the apprentice to resume the Apprenticeship at a later date.

If this affects you, contact the Business Plus team for support.