

Webinar Takeaway: Procuring a training provider for the level 4 Revenues and Benefits Practitioner Apprenticeship

INTRODUCTION

In our webinar, *Procuring an Apprenticeship Provider: Avoiding the Pitfalls*, our expert panel discussed the main factors to consider when procuring a training provider. These are summarised below.

APPRENTICESHIP OVERVIEW

The level 4 Revenues and Benefits apprenticeship standard is a robust qualification – designed to challenge learners and equip them with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to excel in demanding Revenues and Benefits environments.

OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The expert panel recommended that employers pay close attention to a training providers' Ofsted report (found here: reports.ofsted.gov.uk).

As well as a providers' overall grade, employers should read through the report and check when the inspection took place. A recent report holds more value.

escalla was inspected last year and received an Ofsted grade 2 'Good' rating with 'Outstanding' for personal development, behaviour and welfare. Our report is available at:

<https://files.api.beta.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2693171>

KEY APPRENTICESHIP METRICS

It is important to check each training providers' learner and employer satisfaction rates, and how these compare to their competitors and the national average.

A key measure is the providers' national achievement rate, i.e. how many apprentices who start a programme go on to complete it.

escalla has a national achievement rate of 87.6%, a learner satisfaction rate of 89%, and an employer satisfaction rate of 91%.

EXPERIENCE IS ESSENTIAL

There has been a recent explosion in the number of new training providers in the market. But Ofsted has recently announced that a fifth of all new training providers are inadequate.

To account for this, it is essential that you check the training providers' experience. Have they delivered apprenticeships before and for how long? Do they have apprentices themselves and what experience do they have of providing Revenues and Benefits training?

escalla has delivered a range of apprenticeship training for over 7 years. We have also delivered training and resources to Revenues and Benefits services nationally for over 25 years. All trainer CVs are available on request.

CULTURAL FIT

This apprenticeship programme can span up to 18 months. So working with an apprenticeship provider is a long-term partnership you want to get right.

Employers need to go beyond the sterile procurement process and get to know potential providers. Invite them in, speak to them and, if practical, visit them to see their apprenticeship programme in action.

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VALUE FOR MONEY

'Our concern is that value for money is becoming a synonym for cheaper. High quality provision can be expensive, but it is worth it.' (Select Committee Report on apprenticeship quality.)

To ensure you get value for money you need to examine the training programme and learner journey in detail:

- How does the training provider support apprentices? And how does that vary for learners who are struggling?
- How often do they carry out progress reviews with learners?
- What materials and resources will the learner have access to?
- How do they expect you as an employer to support the apprentice with their learning?
- How many days face-to-face classroom (not online) training is included?
- How much will staff benefit from the training offered? Does it include personal development?
- Are there any hidden costs? Is the End Point Assessment included etc.?

With escalla's apprenticeship programme, learners receive a minimum of 10 days face-to-face classroom training, 21 hours individual support, and face-to-face reviews every 10 weeks. The programme includes significant personal development, as well as the costs of the End Point Assessment.

OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Is the training providers' programme viable and sustainable?

For example, have you scrutinised the training providers' trading accounts? And have you evaluated how sustainable the training providers' programme is, based on the price and quality of delivery? If something seems too good to be true it usually us!

With escalla you can rest assured that we have been delivering high-quality apprenticeships for over 7 years. Our experience of delivering successful apprenticeships is what sets us apart.

Have you checked the notices of concern register?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-current-notices-of-concern>

Does the provider have any other quality marks that show their commitment to delivering quality?

For example, the Matrix quality standard.

And is the provider ready to deliver the training programme?

If the provider is already delivering the programme, find out where and ask for testimony.