



Skills Funding  
Agency

# Joining the register of apprenticeship training providers – application instructions

October 2016

Of interest to organisations that want to deliver apprenticeship training in England from May 2017.

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# 1. Register of apprenticeship training providers (RoATP)

The register of apprenticeship training providers (RoATP) is a list of organisations that have demonstrated the capability to deliver apprenticeship training through an online application. Organisations that successfully enter the RoATP will be eligible to deliver apprenticeship training from May 2017.

The application process helps provide assurance to government and employers, though employers may want to assure themselves that a provider is suitable to deliver their apprenticeship programme before entering into a contract.

## 2. What to consider before applying

If you are interested in applying to the RoATP, you must consider the following first:

### **Will you be delivering apprenticeship training?**

If you will not be delivering apprenticeship training, you are not eligible to apply to RoATP.

### **Do you have a UK provider reference number (UKPRN)?**

All organisations that want to deliver apprenticeship training must have a UKPRN. You will be required to include this on your application to RoATP. If you do not have a UKPRN, you can register for one with the [UK Register of Learning Providers](#).

### **If Ofsted has inspected you, has your 'effectiveness of apprenticeship provision' been judged as grade 4 (inadequate) within the last three years?**

You are ineligible to apply to RoATP.

### **If Ofsted has inspected you, has your 'overall effectiveness' been judged as grade 4 (inadequate) within the last three years?**

You are ineligible to apply to RoATP if you hold a grade 4 for overall effectiveness unless you have an Ofsted grade 3 or above on the effectiveness of your apprenticeship provision.

**Are you registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office for the processing of personal data for education and training?**

It is a legal requirement to have this registration. If you do not have it, please register [here](#) or you will fail the RoATP application process.

**Are you thinking about how your organisation will safeguard apprentices and give consideration to the prevent duty?**

We will want to know if you have policies and/or strategies in place.

**Do you have equality and diversity policies and are you able to tackle bullying and discrimination?**

As an organisation intending to deliver apprenticeship training, we expect you to have these in place or be developing them before any training starts.

**Are you able to explain the expertise or experience of your organisation, or staff, to deliver effective apprenticeship training that meets the needs of learners? Do you know what a successful apprenticeship looks like?**

We want apprentices to receive high quality training. These are some of the questions we believe you should be asking yourself and be able to answer.

**Are you financially sound?**

Most organisations must go through our financial health assessment. If you are subject to the assessment, you must be at least ‘satisfactory’. If you are a new business, you must have been trading for at least three months.

If you are confident you can deliver on all of the above, you should consider our different application routes.

### **3. Application routes**

There are three application routes to the RoATP. If you are interested in applying, you must apply through one of these routes.

The routes are associated with three separate pre-qualification questionnaires (PQQs) on our e-tendering portal. These are different, depending on how you wish to operate as a provider of apprenticeship training and who you wish to deliver to.

1. Main route
2. Employer provider route
3. Supporting route

You are only able to apply through **one** application route. Organisations cannot enter RoATP through more than one route, so it is important you select the route that is most appropriate for your organisation. The grid below will help you pick the right application route to meet your training or commercial needs.

### Application route grid:

Scenario		Apply to one route that meets your requirements		
		Main route	Employer provider route	Supporting route
Main provider scenarios	I want to deliver apprenticeship training, as a main provider, to employers that <b>will use</b> a digital account to pay for apprenticeship training	This route will enable you to do this	Not able to do this	
	I want to deliver apprenticeship training, as a main provider, to employers that <b>will not use</b> a digital account to pay for apprenticeship training	In addition to applying to the main route, you must also compete in a procurement exercise. The procurement is open for applications until 5pm on 25 November 2016.		
Employer scenarios	I will use a digital account to pay for apprenticeship training, and want to deliver apprenticeship training as a main provider or subcontractor	<p>This route enables you to deliver training to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Your own staff</li> <li>* Your '<a href="#">connected companies</a>' defined by HMRC</li> <li>* Other organisations that will use a digital account to pay for apprenticeship training, including your supply chain</li> </ul>	This route enables you to deliver training to:	Not able to do this

<b>Subcontracting Scenarios</b>	I want to deliver apprenticeship training as a subcontractor and the total value of these arrangements will be £100,000 or more per year	This route will enable you to do this, including above £500,000 per year	See employer scenarios above	This route will enable you to do this, only up to a value of £500,000 per year across all organisations you work with
	I want to deliver apprenticeship training as a subcontractor and the total value of these arrangements will be less than £100,000 per year	You are not required to apply to the RoATP		

## 4. How to apply

You must apply to the RoATP through our online Bravo e-tendering portal. If you don't have an account you will need to set one up. This will enable you to access the questions in the pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ). [Further guidance](#) is also available.

You must select the appropriate PQQ for the application route you have selected. You should only complete one PQQ for your application.

PQQ 28910: Main route - register of apprenticeship training providers

PQQ 28911: Employer provider route - register of apprenticeship training providers

PQQ 28912: Supporting route - register of apprenticeship training providers

## 5. Completing an application to RoATP

The application process forms part of a formal procurement process.

### The SFA's responsibilities:

- we must demonstrate that transparency, honesty and integrity is maintained throughout and that the application process is handled in a consistent and fair manner
- in order to treat all applicants fairly, we will not accept any additional information or changes to your application after the closing date
- we will fully verify all your answers

### **Your responsibilities:**

- to ensure your answers are fully complete and correct
- to complete the application as early as possible to ensure that you meet the closing date deadline
- to monitor the online message board and your registered e-mail address for the e-tendering portal throughout the application process

### **We reserve the right to modify, amend or provide further clarification at any time before we close for applications.**

- We will notify you about any changes through the e-tendering portal. Where such modifications constitute a significant change we may, at our discretion, extend the deadline for completion for all applicants.
- Should we make any changes to any of the questions while open for applications, we will terminate your application, and we will let you know by email. You must then review the details of the change(s) and if necessary amend your submission. Whether the change(s) affect your submission or not, you must still resubmit your response in order for us to evaluate your application.

If you provide information that misleads us intentionally, we will remove you from the RoATP. The SFA may also share your answers with other government departments/agencies to safeguard public funds and assist with fraud prevention and detection.

The e-tendering portal restricts us from reviewing your application until after the deadline has passed. We will download applications at the same time to ensure applicants are treated fairly. If you submit your application early, you can amend your submission up to the deadline.

### **Responding to questions**

- Questions prefixed with a red asterisk (\*) are mandatory. If you do not answer all mandatory questions, the e-tendering portal will not allow you to submit your application and we will not be able to evaluate it.
- Where we ask a closed question and ask you to provide supplementary information in the next question, you must provide all the information requested in the follow-up

question. If you do not provide this information, the SFA is unable to assess the level of associated risk and you will fail the process.

- When responding to a question, your answer must be within the relevant textbox or attachment. If you include information in your answers to other questions, we will not consider this information when evaluating your application.
- For questions that require you to upload an attachment, you must return it in the format that we specify. Where we do not specify the format you must use widely recognised formats such as PDF, Excel, Word documents and image files. We cannot open Mac or equivalent files or extensions.
- Please do not 'password protect' your information as we will be unable to evaluate it.
- If you would like to upload more than one file as an attachment, you may do this by submitting a zip file.
- To help ensure that we can access your attachments, please keep the length of your filename as short as possible and only use letters and numbers in your filename.

## 6. Sections of the RoATP application

### Organisation details

The information that you provide in this section will form part of our due diligence checks to help safeguard public funding.

Your name on the Bravo e-tendering portal must match your legal name. Do not abbreviate it.

Your name on the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) website must also match your legal name.

- If you are a company, this is your name on [Companies House](#)
- If you are a charity, this is your name registered with the [Charities Commission](#)

- If you are a sole trader or partnership you must enter your own name followed by trading name (for example, 'John Smith T/A Smith Training')

If we cannot verify your legal information, you will fail the application process.

## **Grounds for mandatory exclusion and discretionary exclusion**

Your application may fail if there is evidence of convictions relating to specific criminal offences including, but not limited to, bribery, corruption, conspiracy, terrorism, fraud and money laundering.

We may also exclude you if you have been the subject of a binding legal decision which found a breach of legal obligations to pay tax or social security obligations (except where this is disproportionate, for example, only minor amounts involved).

An organisation that provides evidence that remedial action has taken place and 'self-cleans' by paying necessary compensation, collaborating with investigations, and taking concrete technical, organisational and personnel steps to prevent recurrence of the offence or misdeeds, may be able to proceed in the application process providing they are able to demonstrate satisfactory remedial action.

## **Financial health**

Refer to [section 7](#) for further information.

## **Compliance**

In this section you will be asked to provide information on:

- whether your organisation is in a state of insolvency, voluntary administration, company voluntary arrangement, compulsory winding up, receivership, composition with creditors or subject to equivalent proceedings
- if you have any outstanding debts and how you manage this
- if any senior manager, director or trustee of your organisation has been investigated or removed by the Charities Commission or appear on the register of removed trustees
- if you have any legal disputes that could prevent you from delivering apprenticeship training
- criteria linked to the SFA's higher risk providers and subcontractors policy

If we identify that your answer presents a risk, you can clarify or give mitigating factors in follow-up questions. If we establish your organisation is high risk when reviewing your answer, you will fail this section of the application process.

Organisations applying to the 'main route' or 'supporting route' will be asked to confirm they hold employer's (compulsory) liability insurance of at least £5 million. This is not applicable to sole traders.

## **Capability**

In this section, you will need to provide information on the following areas. The specific requirements will be dependent on the application route you are following.

Applicants to all routes:

- your safeguarding policy to ensure the welfare of apprentices that you are training - applicants to the main route will be asked for further information to describe how they put this into practice
- any issues that have ever prevented the award of a qualification, or apprenticeship, to your learners
- your organisation's Information Commissioner's Office registration number

Applicants to the 'main route' and 'supporting route':

- your understanding of your organisation's responsibilities to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism as specified under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Applicants to the 'main route' and 'employer provider route':

- health and safety policies and procedures for apprentices when they are in an environment outside the organisation's direct control
- equal opportunities policy in relation to training apprentices
- promotion of diversity, anti-bullying and anti-discrimination strategies
- how you will submit data to the Skills Funding Agency

Applicants to the 'main route' only:

- your business continuity plans to ensure minimum disruption to apprentice training

Organisations applying through the main and employer provider routes must have a management information system in place at the point they begin delivery. This must be able to produce an ILR XML file that meets the requirements of the ILR specification and schema. You may access further information on these requirements by reading the SFA's guidance.

An ILR learner entry tool is available for download and supports returns for up to 500 learners. This software is free to organisations that submit data to the SFA and do not have access to a data management system. You can download the tool from the useful links area on the front page of the Hub. A user guide is available on the ILR page on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). You can only use this software with Windows operating systems.

## Quality

We ask if you have been subject to Ofsted inspection or QAA review. For Ofsted inspections, we only need to know about inspections of your organisation as an FE and skills provider.

We also test the quality of apprenticeship training you are able to deliver. This is broken down into three questions that all applicants must pass, ensuring they address all bullet points within each question. The questions cover:

- how you communicate your plans and expectations in order to attain high standards of training, the expertise of your staff in relation to apprenticeship training and how it is kept up-to-date
- the apprentice learner journey from start to end, considering how the needs of learners and employers are met, and that it is relevant to a standard or framework, and what impact delivery has on the apprentice
- quality assurance within your organisation, staff performance mechanisms and how the success of apprenticeship delivery is measured, and what is done with this information

For each of the quality questions you should produce a statement which provides evidence on how you provide high quality apprenticeship training against each of the criteria. Your answer may include evidence from Ofsted (overall effectiveness) or QAA review (overall). If you are not yet delivering apprenticeship training, your answer must clearly state how you intend to meet the criteria.

You should ensure your answers address all the points in each question individually. We will not take into account information supplied against other questions in our evaluation.

Questions QA-09, QA-10 and QA-11 are broadly similar across the 'main', 'employer provider' and 'supporting' application routes, although we expect the evidence provided by applications to vary across the three application routes.

For the 'supporting' route, we understand that you may be new to the apprenticeship training, are building capacity, or do not offer full standards or frameworks. We consider this when evaluating your application.

## **Digital apprenticeship service**

Only organisations that apply through the 'main' application route will be required to complete the digital apprenticeship service section. If you have applied to the 'employer provider' or 'supporting' routes, you can move on to the declaration section.

Organisations that apply through the main application route will appear on the digital apprenticeship service for selection by employers.

In order to appear on the digital apprenticeship service, you are also required to complete your apprenticeship training offer on the 'course directory provider portal'. You must do this after the RoATP has closed for applications.

If you have not already completed your apprenticeship offer on the 'course directory provider portal', you will be invited to enter your information on the portal using the email address you have provided in response to question DAS-01.

You can complete your offer from 5 December 2016, ready for validation by 13 January 2017. Validation of the information submitted is due by the end of January. If we require any amendments to the information you have submitted, we will let you know by email, and you will have four weeks to address any shortfalls identified.

If you have already completed your apprenticeship offer in the course directory, you will not need to resubmit it, but we will ask you to review and refresh your information to reflect your offer from May 2017.

You can find further information about the course directory on our website [Find apprenticeship training: how to submit data](#).

## Declarations

You must agree to the terms and conditions, which include validating that all the information in your application is accurate.

## 7. Financial health

Financial health is a measure of an organisation's financial status, in terms of financial performance and ability to meet ongoing financial commitments. Organisations that are in scope for a financial health assessment must be able to demonstrate they are financially robust and present a low risk.

Organisations are graded as one of the following: inadequate; exempt; satisfactory; good; and outstanding. Any organisation identified as inadequate will fail on financial health.

All organisations that apply to RoATP must upload a [financial health self-assessment toolkit](#) to question FH-01 as part of their application. Applicants must also upload their latest full financial statements so the SFA can reconcile information provided in the self-assessment toolkit.

## 7.1 Exemptions

The following organisations are exempt from the financial health assessment, and do not need to submit financial statements to the SFA (if you are one of these organisations ensure you complete the self-assessment toolkit up to question 9b):

- further education colleges receiving funding from the SFA or EFA
- central government departments, including executive agencies or non-departmental public bodies
- local authorities, including local education authority (LEA) schools
- academy schools, free schools or sixth-form colleges
- NHS trusts or fire authorities
- universities monitored and supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) The SFA will contact HEFCE to identify if there are any financial concerns with your organisation

## 7.2 Organisations with an annual turnover of more than £75m

If you are an organisation with an annual turnover of more than £75m, and apprenticeship funding will be less than 5% of your annual turnover, you will not be subject to a full financial health assessment.

You are required to complete the self-assessment toolkit up to question 10. If you have never submitted financial statements to the SFA before, you must also upload your latest full financial statements to question FH-03. We will use this to confirm status and financial stability and apply an 'out of scope' status in relation to financial health.

If you have a parent company, you will also need to complete questions 15 to 19 of the toolkit and upload their accounts to questions FH-05c.

### **7.3 Organisations unable to supply statutory financial statements**

If you are a sole trader or partnership, you must submit your full accounts. You must also complete the self-assessment toolkit (up to question 33).

If you are unable to provide full statutory accounts because you have not traded for a sufficient period, you must upload your management accounts to date showing actual activity, along with financial forecasts to question FH-04. This information combined must cover a minimum of 12 months from start of trading. You must also complete the self-assessment toolkit (up to question 33).

When we review the information you submit, the grade awarded will be no better than satisfactory. When it comes to refreshing the RoATP, the SFA will identify if you produced a full set of accounts.

Please note that if you are an organisation that has not been actively trading for at least three months, you are ineligible to apply for RoATP.

### **7.4 Other organisations**

Organisations not identified in 7.1, 7.2 or 7.3 must submit their latest full financial statements and complete the self-assessment toolkit up to question 33.

Financial statements submitted must be full accounts (not abbreviated), signed and audited, if appropriate. We will also consider the information you submit to Companies House and/or the Charities Commission when undertaking a financial health assessment of your organisation.

If you are only required to submit abbreviated accounts to Companies House you must still submit your full accounts to us, not just an extract or selected pages. If an organisation, due to its legal form, is not required to produce statutory financial statements, it must submit accounts in the format used for producing annual accounts.

## **7.5 Financial health self-assessment toolkit**

You must submit your organisation's completed financial health self-assessment toolkit in Excel format. If you experience any technical difficulties when opening the toolkit, please send a message through the message board on the e-tendering portal.

You must use the following naming convention when uploading your completed toolkit:

*'Your organisation name toolkit'*. For example, *'Joe Bloggs Ltd toolkit'*.

You must ensure that you submit the correct toolkit with your application. , If you submit a toolkit from an application to a register other than RoATP, we will not assess your financial statements and you will fail.

The financial health self-assessment toolkit is designed to help applicants to the RoATP determine the right information to upload for assessment.

Based on the information entered, it also indicates your predicted financial health grade. We will verify this information for accuracy.

## **7.6 Parent company guarantees**

Organisations may submit a parental guarantee to support their application. Further information is available in the self-assessment toolkit. Note that the use of parent company guarantees is a transitional arrangement until the first refresh of the RoATP.

## **7.7 Rules for completing the financial health section**

Your financial health assessment will fail if you do not:

- complete all the required information on the self-assessment toolkit
- upload the completed self-assessment toolkit in Excel format
- upload complete financial statements – full accounts, not abbreviated accounts, not an extract and not selected pages
- ensure the information you submit is current
- submit your latest available financial statements

- ensure the figures provided in the self-assessment toolkit are a true reflection of your organisation

Your assessment will also fail if there are significant irregularities with the figures you submit. Do not submit any further financial information than requested as we will not review or assess it.

## **8. Communications**

We are happy to answer any questions on the process.

When the register is open for applications, we only communicate about the application through the online message board on the e-tendering portal.

If you contact us about the process using any other method, we will direct you to the online message board or our email address. We do not provide telephone support, as we must ensure consistency in the information that applicants receive, which includes the way we communicate with them.

We aim to respond to queries within three working days of receipt on the online message board. During busy periods, there may be a delay in our response. We may not respond to queries three working days before the closing date for applications.

If you are unable to direct your communication through the e-tendering portal then please use the email address [RoATP@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:RoATP@sfa.bis.gov.uk).

## **9. What will happen when you have submitted your application?**

If we require clarification on information provided on your application, we will contact you through the e-tendering portal.

We will provide written feedback to all organisations in March 2017. We will give this feedback through the Bravo e-tendering portal message board. You will receive an email

notification to the email addresses registered against your Bravo account. This will advise you to log in to review your message on the e-tendering portal.

### **If you fail**

If you fail any part of the process, we will not accept any additional information to change our decision. We will not enter into a dialogue about your application and we will not provide feedback outside of the process.

We also advise you to review your application and consider your commercial and financial status and capability to deliver apprenticeship training before reapplying in the future.

### **If you pass**

If you pass the application process, you will be eligible to appear on the RoATP. We will also publish a list of organisations that have been successful.

Organisations that apply to the main application route, and are successful, will also be searchable to employers on the digital apprenticeship service.

You will not receive a registration number and you are not entitled to use our logo. Appearing on the RoATP does not mean that we endorse you as an organisation and it is not a 'kite mark' or an 'award'.

You must inform us immediately if your organisation changes its legal structure while it is listed on the RoATP. You must also inform us if there are changes to the employers you are working with. You may need to reapply at the next application opening, in line with your new legal structure or status.

## **10. Timetable**

The timetable for this RoATP opening is set out in the table below.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Open for applications</b>	<b>Monday 24 October 2016</b>
<b>Applications close</b>	<b>5pm on Friday 25 November 2016</b>

<b>SFA evaluates applications</b>	<b>November 2016 to February 2017</b>
<b>Feedback to applicants</b>	<b>Early March 2017*</b>
<b>Publication of RoATP</b>	<b>Early March 2017*</b>

\* Please note that we use the dates for feedback and publication as a guide only. The exact dates will depend on the volume of applications that we receive.

## 11. Refreshing the RoATP

It is a requirement that organisations listed on the RoATP refresh their information when required to do so. We will notify organisations of the requirement to refresh.

## 12. Removal from the RoATP

We reserve the right to remove any organisation from the RoATP. The grounds for removal of organisations reflect the circumstances described in our [‘Funding higher-risk providers and subcontractors policy’](#).

If we find you have provided false information on your application, we will remove you from the RoATP.

## 13. Company name and name changes

Your name on the Bravo e-tendering portal must be your full legal name with no abbreviations. If there is a change to your organisation name, with no other legal or organisational change, you must amend your details on the portal.

To do this you must take the following actions.

- a) Ensure your legal name has been updated on the Companies House website if you are a limited company or Charities Commission website if you are a charity.
- b) Ensure your legal name has been updated on the [UK Register of Learning Providers](#) website. If your name has not been updated, contact the UKRLP helpdesk on 0345 202 1600.

c) When your organisation name has been updated on the UKRLP website you will need to email our team at [RoATP@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:RoATP@sfa.bis.gov.uk) and confirm the following information.

**Your name as it stands on the bravo e-tendering portal**

**Full legal name** (your new name)

**UKPRN**

**Companies House number** (if applicable)

**Charity number** (if applicable)

**Sole trader / partnership** (Yes/No)

When we have received and validated the evidence, we will authorise Bravo Solutions to change the name.

If you are in the process of completing an application, please prioritise the completion of your application. You can request that your name is updated on the e-tendering portal after you have submitted your application.

## 14. Freedom of information

We are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If you consider the information you provide as part of your application as 'commercial in confidence' you must indicate this in a message sent through the online message board on the e-tendering portal.

We will then check this and, if appropriate according to Freedom of Information legislation, we will seek an exemption not to publish that particular information, if requested.

## 15. Complaints

Use our [complaints procedure](#) on GOV.UK if you want to make a complaint.

## 16. Useful links

The following links may be useful for completing your application:

[Bravo e-tendering portal](#)

[Department for education](#)

[Funding higher-risk organisations and sub-contractors](#)

[Skills Funding Agency funding rules](#)

[Ofsted](#)

[Ofqual](#)

[QAA](#)

[Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers webpage](#)

[UK Register of Learning Providers](#)

## 17. Definitions

**Academy** – a school directly funded by central government (specifically the Department for Education) and independent of direct control by local government.

**Business continuity** – an organisation’s response plan that sets out how the business will operate following an incident. It includes how it expects to return to ‘business as usual’ in the quickest possible time afterwards.

**General Further Education College** – an institution conducted by a corporation established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

**Organisation** - we use the term ‘organisation’ to include companies, charities, bodies, colleges, universities, sole traders and other types of legal entity, including those who are in the same group as, or are associated with, the main provider. The term ‘organisation’ excludes individuals who are self-employed or supplied by an employment agency and who are working under the main provider’s or employer-provider’s direction and control, in the same way as an employee.

**Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME)** – please refer to the [EU definition](#).

**Statutory financial statements** – those prepared using generally accepted accounting principles in accordance with the legislative requirements of the organisation type. For example, a limited company's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts. A registered charity's accounts are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission.

**Subcontractors** - We use the term ‘delivery subcontractor’ to include any organisation

contracted through a main provider or employer-provider to deliver apprenticeship training and/or on-programme assessment. The term excludes subcontractors you may use for other purposes, such as to help with your marketing or data management. The term also excludes subcontractors who are delivering training to an apprentice that is incidental to the overall achievement of the apprenticeship.

**Third sector** – defined by HM Treasury as organisations that:

- are non-governmental
- are 'value driven' in that they are primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental and cultural objectives rather than make a profit
- reinvest surpluses, principally to further their social, environmental or cultural objectives

**UKRLP** – the UK Register of Learning Providers is a database that registers the legal entity details of learning providers in the United Kingdom. It links together existing data sources on training organisations and gives access to the information to learners, employers, training organisations and government agencies.

**UKPRN** – the UK Provider Reference Number is a unique eight-digit number assigned to all training organisations on verification. The number does not provide endorsement by UKRLP.



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