

# Level 4 School Business Professional Apprenticeship

## Overview for Applicants

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The SBM Partnership (Serco, Adfecto and ISBL) deliver the **Level 4 School Business Professional Apprenticeship**, an apprenticeship developed by a group of employers which included the SBM Partnership and based on standards and an assessment plan by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IFA) and the Department for Education. As well as the IFA apprenticeship, an optional qualification is also available within the apprenticeship, the Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers, which is accredited by the Institute for Leadership & Management (ILM).

The Level 4 School Business Professional (SBP) Apprenticeship is a 21-month learning programme (longer for those on term-time only contracts) suitable for school business managers, or those in similar business or support roles (Finance Manager, Office Manager, School Administrator, Business Support Officer, Bursar, HR Manager, etc.) in a school or academy based in England. An end-point assessment takes place within a 3-month window after the learning programme.

For part-time employees or those working term time only (TTO), the apprenticeship will be extended pro rata, although the majority of the learning still takes place as a group within the 21-month period. There is no age limit and the vast majority of school business managers (SBMs) will already have experience of the role, or could be relatively new to role. The Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship will support participants in developing their operational and management capabilities as an SBM.

### Benefits to the school will include:

- Professional staff member who will enhance the management of your school
- A school business professional who understands the importance of their role and its scope
- Allows headteachers to focus on teaching, learning and student attainment
- Helps to develop the school business team and gain specialist expertise in areas including leading support services, finance, marketing, procurement, HR and infrastructure management.

### Successful apprentices will achieve:

- On-the-job experience
- A professional pathway for future development
- IFA apprentice certificate (plus optional ILM Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers if selected)
- Level 2 in maths and English (if you do not already have these qualifications)

### Programme Overview

Applicants wishing to join the Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship are committing themselves to a 21-month programme of study. If you work term-time only (or other part-time pattern) then your study period will be extended pro rata. The final, end-point assessment, occurs within a 3-month window after the study period. You are supported by a coach, a facilitator, your line manager/mentor and also through peer support via online group forum areas and networking opportunities at face-to-face workshops. Apprenticeships also require employers to agree to **20% off-the-job training** for the apprentice (which can include attendance at workshops, coaching and review sessions).

As part of the application process you will need to complete a **self-assessment** with your line manager. There are a number of **additional forms** we will require you to complete as part of the onboarding process for the apprenticeship. You will also agree an **individual learning plan** (ILP) with your line manager or mentor. You then

begin your academic studies, developing a portfolio of evidence of the skills and knowledge of a SBP, as well as producing a separate portfolio of learning.

Most units will begin with face-to-face workshops (5 x one-day workshops in total, held at regional centres) but the remainder of your studies will be online, maximising the flexibility of learning.

In addition, you, the apprentice, will receive visits and support from your coach (5 x workplace visits plus 2 x touch-point phone support calls) who will ensure, with your line manager's support, that the learning is put into practice and also helps you develop a portfolio of evidence.

In order to successfully complete the Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship, you will also need to attend a one-day assessment centre (**end-point assessment** or EPA) with an external assessor once you have completed all activities. This end-point assessment (EPA) should take place within a 3-month window after your practical learning period (on successful completion of your apprenticeship studies).

## Structure

The apprenticeship will typically take 21 months to complete (but longer for term-time only or part-time employees) and must include 20% off-the-job training (which includes attendance at workshops and coaching sessions, etc.).

The programme includes units on:

- Leading Support Services
- Finance
- Procurement
- Human Resources
- Marketing
- Infrastructure

The programme will develop and examine the knowledge, skills and behaviours of these activities associated with the role of school business professionals. Further information on these units can be found in the FAQ (frequently asked questions) document available on the Level 4 SBP web page via [www.sbmpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sbmpartnership.org.uk)

In addition to the above, it is a requirement that you are able to evidence that you are working at Level 2 maths and English. You will be required to take a short online initial assessment after you have accepted your place. Should you not have these GCSE Level 2 qualifications (or their equivalent) or be unable to find their original certificates, then we will provide additional support to help you gain these qualifications (at no extra cost). Note that these eligibility conditions are applied rigorously to comply with ESFA (Education & Skills Funding Agency) requirements.

## What is the role of my line manager?

We will only accept applications from individuals who have the support of their line manager. They will be asked to provide a written statement in support of your application (part of the 'personal statement and line manager support' document) so that we are satisfied that each party understands the commitment being made. Your line manager will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read the guidance document, and will also be involved with your review process during the apprenticeship.

Your line manager may wish to identify a mentor to support you throughout your programme of study rather than undertake this themselves. Regardless of whether you are supported by a mentor, we do require a signed, written statement from the line manager.

## Funding and Costs

The DfE funding band for the SBPA is capped at £6,000, however the cost of the programme may be reduced slightly depending upon previous experience and qualifications (plus separate £171 + VAT for ILM accreditation; if selected this must be paid separately by the school).

If you are employed by a **levy-paying school** (or organisation such as a trust or a local authority) then the cost of the Level 4 SBP should be covered by the apprenticeship levy. Your employer (usually the organisation shown on your payslip) should have a digital apprentice account or be able to provide us with the contact details for the parent organisation holding the account; this may be the local authority or academy trust for example.

As long as your school/ organisation have sufficient funds in their digital apprenticeship account (DAS) then there is no additional cost for the programme delivery. You, or your line manager, will be required to provide your employer's levy account details.

If you are from a **non-levy paying** school then you will be invoiced for 5% of the total cost of the programme (please contact us for further details), i.e. normally £300 + VAT.

Please be aware that you will be required to attend 5 x one-day regional face-to-face workshops, each at the beginning of most units and although workshops are situated in the closest location for the majority of participants within the cohort, you may have to travel. You will need to agree with your line manager/ employer whether your school will cover the cost of travel. It is unlikely that you will require overnight accommodation but we recommend that you confirm what your school will cover prior to the programme commencing.

### **Time Commitment (line manager)**

The line manager, or mentor identified by the line manager, will be required to:

- join the first meeting between you, the apprentice, and coach for approx. half an hour to ensure that all key parties are aware of the requirements of the individual learning plan.
- actively contribute to the regular coaching/assessment sessions held with yourself (they will not be required to attend the full session). Some of these sessions will be observations by the coach of you, the apprentice, undertaking certain activities.
- observe you undertake certain activities such as giving a presentation, for example. Your line manager/mentor will be required to complete a proforma confirming that they observed certain skills and behaviours and you will include this proforma in your portfolio of evidence.
- attend an annual review of progress between the coach, apprentice and the line manager/mentor.
- support you, the apprentice, by providing a room within your normal place of work for the above meetings to take place in confidence
- ensure that you are given time to attend the above meetings and the face-to-face workshops. This must not be deducted from their annual leave allowance. Please note that the workshops, web conferences and coaching/assessment sessions are mandatory elements of the apprenticeship. You cannot successfully complete the programme without full attendance.
- support you in your studies, identifying opportunities for you to develop your skills alongside your learning

### **Study time**

In addition to the above-mentioned workshops etc, apprentices must be given time to study. Study time should be flexible to minimise the impact in the workplace. This should be agreed between you and your line manager prior to the start of the programme. As an apprenticeship, you must be allowed **20% of your work time to study**; this includes workshops and meetings with your coach, but it also includes any learning or development activities that your role requires, for example meetings to discuss your work, work based dialogue between colleagues, attendance at SBM meetings etc. The 20% off-the-job training must be logged to meet ESFA compliance.

Study time will need to be flexible, so, for example, it could be 1 hour at the beginning or end of each day or a morning/afternoon twice a week etc.

## Next Steps – two-stage application process

If the Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship seems the right way forward for you and you have the commitment to study the 21-month programme (or longer if working term-time only, etc.) ,plus end-point assessment, with support from your line manager/ employer, then you will need to:

1. Complete an application form which can be accessed via [www.sbmpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sbmpartnership.org.uk) – navigate to the Level 4 School Business Professional web page. You will need to read and download, or print, all of the important supporting documents found in the **Key Documents** area (on right-side of the web page).
2. Once your application form is submitted you will have 5 working days to complete a **personal statement** which we also require your line manager to sign. Their signature is required to confirm that they have read the line manager’s guidance document and fully support your application. We will not consider applications unless we receive a personal statement which is also signed by the line manager (signatures must be handwritten, and completed signed documents should then be scanned and emailed to us).
3. We will then send you a Skills Scan to complete so that we may assess your eligibility to join the programme and develop your individual learning plan (ILP). You will have 5 working days to complete the self-assessment Skills Scan.

We may invite applicants to participate in a phone-based interview as part of the selection process later on (after the application deadline).

Applicants will receive confirmation of their place on the Level 4 SBP Apprenticeship approximately 3-4 weeks after the application deadline. Should an applicant be unsuccessful in their application they will be offered feedback and recommendations to help prepare them to study the programme at a later date.

Once a successful applicant has formally accepted their place, they will then be sent an **Apprenticeship Agreement**, by email, together with other official documents, to be completed and returned. These formal documents will need to be signed by you and your line manager and returned to Serco Education.

## Start dates

Termly intakes (with regional locations for the 5 x face-to-face workshops) will be offered termly. See [www.sbmpartnership.co.uk](http://www.sbmpartnership.co.uk) for latest start dates.

## Key documents to read

Please read this document in conjunction with the following documents available on the Level 4 SBP web page:

- **SBP FAQs (frequently asked questions)**
- **SBP Terms & Conditions**
- **Personal Statement & Line Manager Support**
- **Line Manager’s Guidance**

## Further information:

[www.sbmpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sbmpartnership.org.uk)

## Enquiries:

[sbmpartnership@serco.com](mailto:sbmpartnership@serco.com)

01452 930300 (office hours)

Produced by Serco Education (SBM team), Gloucester GL1 3AJ, (on behalf of the SBM Partnership)

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