

Employer Newsletter

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AAT Special Recognition Award

We are thrilled to announce that we are the winners of the 2024 AAT Special Recognition Award for the whole of FI!



We were honored to receive the award as this recognition highlights our commitment to providing an exceptional learning experience for our students, our significant contributions to the industry, and our partnership with the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT).

You can see the reasons for receiving this award [here](#) in our blog.

Apprenticeship funding update

Small employer co-invest and levy transfer changes

From April 2024 the government scrapped the small and medium-sized employer (SME) co-investment payments for apprentices under the age of 22. This means any non-levy employer who employs an apprentice will get the relevant training fully-funded, saving the usual 5% co-invest contribution. This will save up to £1,050 (5% x £21,000) for a level 7 apprentice and 5% of £12,000 or £8,000 for a level 3 or 4 apprentice respectively. This change came into force for all apprenticeship starts from 1st April 2024.

The government has also increased the amount of funding that can be transferred from apprenticeship levy-payers to other businesses from 25% to 50%.

Please do get in touch if you require any further information about these changes in funding policy.

Feedback from our client survey



Thank you to all our employers who took the time to complete our employer survey. Your feedback is invaluable in helping us continue to support your learners through their programmes whilst ensuring we meet your business needs.

It was great to see how many of you feel well informed of your learner's progress and use the monthly reports to prompt necessary action. The survey did identify that reports are not always finding their way to the correct people, so we have been in touch to ensure that we have up to date contact information for those that need access to the monthly reports.

The survey also highlighted that line managers are not always receiving the skills day briefing documents that we send ahead of each skills module. These briefing

documents are designed to help line managers understand what specific skills their learners are currently developing in class and to discuss opportunities to embed this learning into the workplace. We will be reviewing this process, which is currently automatic, to ensure that these documents reach line managers accordingly.

AAT mock exams

New mock process designed to prepare students for final exam.

As you are hopefully aware, we require all AAT learners to pass a mock exam under exam conditions before allowing them to sit the real exam. We are increasingly aware of students trying to book their real exam several months after completing a mock, when they have done little revision since. Having then subsequently forgotten a lot of the knowledge and exam techniques this has led to a fail in the real exam.

We have therefore now implemented an additional requirement to our mock exam policy, whereby learners that have sat a mock exam more than two months prior to the real exam will be required to sit and pass **another** mock before sitting the real exam. We hope this will encourage them to take the exam on a timely basis as well as to maintain momentum with their revision.

Apprentice feedback

Understanding our new BRAG rating

We have recently implemented a new BRAG rating system with our apprentices. The purpose of this rating is to identify the student's progress in their studies and ensure they have the right support to help them achieve their apprenticeship in the required timeframes. Please see the guidance below. Your apprentices' BRAG rating is shared at each progress review directly with the apprentice and the line manager. If you notice anyone rated either Amber or Red, this indicates that they would benefit from additional support to remain on track. We encourage you to get in touch if you require any more information about the reasons behind any ratings and what you can do to support your apprentice. If you have any questions regarding this, please do get in touch.

	Reasons	Examples
Blue	Exceptional PQ performance	Above 15% pass mark in exam Distinction in exam
	On track for distinction	High workplace feedback Strong EPA feedback
	Exceptional FI learn work	Minimal feedback on development tasks
Green	On track to complete ontime/early	Timesheets submitted on time Exams passed as per plan Submissions submitted on time Workplace performance is satisfactory
	On track to complete with their revised end date	Learner failed one exam and has pushed their end date by one sitting
Amber	PQ performance	Apprentice has failed exam and a new plan has not yet been agreed Apprentice is awaiting the results of a resit Apprentice has fallen behind with their planned exams and has not been replanned
	Programme challenges	Learning plan is not suited to apprentices' current progress
	Personal circumstances	Difficult home circumstances
	Lack of engagement	Not submitting learning logs (overdue on 1 objective) Not submitting submissions (overdue on 1 objective) Not submitting mock exams Not booking exams by deadline Regularly not replying to emails
Red	Seeking other employment	Apprentice has been made redundant
	PQ performance	The learner has already had three attempts at an ICAEW exam Employer has an exam fail policy that might mean they get taken off their apprenticeship Consistently failing their exams
	Lack of engagement	Routinely not submitting learning logs/submissions Workplace feedback (e.g. skills scans) highlights concerns Routinely not booking exams by deadlines Overdue on multiple objectives
	Personal circumstances	Extreme home life circumstances Active safeguarding concern

Line managers update

Signing progress reviews and skills scans

A key element of our regulatory compliance is to ensure we have evidence of engagement and participation from line managers. As such, line managers attending apprentice progress reviews receive a link to sign the formal write-up of the meeting. This is an important requirement that **must** be completed by both apprentices and line managers in accordance with the **current** ESFA funding rules. Please ensure that you, as a line manager, are promptly signing the progress review using the link below, as well as the apprentice. This will help us continue to ensure we are supporting your learners effectively.

In addition, an important part of the progress review is the Skills Scan. This is when line managers, apprentices and the apprentices' skills coach review how the student is progressing through the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard. We complete this at each progress review to ensure that your apprentices are actively developing their apprenticeship skills, to help prepare them for their End Point Assessment and to ensure they can add value to your business. As part of this skills scan process, we ask for line manager feedback and agreement about the current skills level. It is important that line managers are engaging in this process, whether that's providing feedback before the meeting, conducting an initial review with their apprentice or providing information directly on the review. This is important as line managers are required to sign off that they are satisfied that an apprentice has the desired knowledge, skills and behaviours before the end of their apprenticeship.

Functional Skills

Having the English and maths capabilities to succeed

As part of an apprenticeship sign-up process students must complete an initial maths and English assessment to help us verify that they are currently performing at the required level and that they have not atrophied since acquiring their GCSE certifications. This is done via a platform called BKSb (Basic Key Skills Builder). A score of 2 on this platform demonstrates a current A-C / 4-9 GCSE grade.

On the majority of occasions, a student will score 2 and above. Where this happens, no further action is taken.

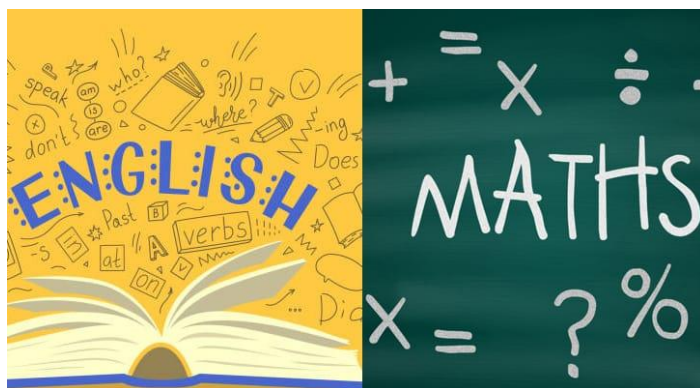
If the student scores less than 2 on their BKSb assessment, then we have evidence that some learning/teaching is required, and Functional Skills funding is available. We will incorporate this into the apprenticeship to ensure they gain the required level.

If a learner scores marginally below a score of 2, we will incorporate functional skills into the apprenticeship and support them to achieve the required level.

If a learner scores significantly below a score of 2 we may need to advise more specialist support is required from a 3rd party, and delay the apprenticeship until this has been gained.

If a learner is employed without the A-C / 4-9 grade in GCSE maths and English it is mandatory that they complete functional skills. We can use the BKSb system to ascertain the level of support required as above.

We will work closely with you and the apprentice to ensure you fully understand what will be the best level of support if it is required. Should you have any queries during your recruitment process please do contact your Client Partner for advice and support.



Earn £300 Amazon Voucher by introducing new apprentices to First Intuition Reading and Southampton

We're introducing a special referral program that rewards you for spreading the word about First Intuition!

Do you know another company who could benefit from our Finance Apprenticeships? If you introduce us to them and they sign-up an apprentice with us, you will receive a £300 Amazon voucher as our way of saying thank you (or a £300 donation to a charity of your choice).

Here's how it works:

1. Refer a **new** client to our Commercial Director (ryanhill@fi.co.uk)
2. Once they become a client and onboard an apprentice who stays on programme for 3 months, you'll receive a £300 Amazon voucher as our way of saying thank you (or a £300 donation to a charity of your choice).

There's no limit to the number of referrals you can make.

Any questions, don't hesitate to drop Ryan an email (ryanhill@fi.co.uk).

Recruitment

How to target Gen Z in recruitment process using social media

Last month First Intuition hosted another First Intuition Think Tank (FITT) with a panel of experts on how to target Gen Z in the recruitment process using social media. In today's digital age, a deeper understanding of Gen Z candidate's preferences and behaviours on social media platforms can help employers when recruiting.

You can read the outcomes of this session and watch the recording [here](#)

Recruiting an apprentice

We often receive queries about recruitment, including the best way to find and recruit a new apprentice. One tried and tested approach is the Find an Apprenticeship site <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>. Many schools, colleges and universities direct their learners to this site to help them identify apprenticeship opportunities with local employers.

If this is a service you would like help with, we can set this up for you, free of charge, please do get in touch.

We also regularly attend recruitment fairs and schools to promote apprenticeships. If you are recruiting, please feel free to share with us your adverts and job descriptions and we can promote them at these events while we talk about apprenticeships. Please contact your client partner if this is something you would like to pursue.

Past newsletters

If you want to read some of the historical newsletters they can be found [here](#).