

# What is Off The Job training and what does it really mean?

These questions are what every manager asks when thinking of apprenticeships in their department and, concerns most managers in following through with valuable training and development that will help improve the skills of their department and their team's performance.

This guide to 'Off the job Training' hopefully will dismiss those fears, give real life examples of how you, as the manager, can help and support your team member achieve their potential and add to the effectiveness and delivery of your team and department goals.

**Use Off the Job Training To Benefit, the Line Manager, the Apprentice and the Team.**

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## 'Off-the-Job' or 'On-the-Job'

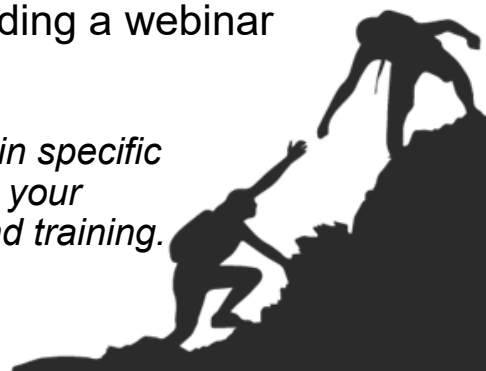
It could be argued that the term 'off the job' is a little unhelpful as it suggests Apprentices physically need to be away from their work premises for it to apply.

**This is not true**, and training can absolutely happen in the workplace.

To count it just needs to be that Apprentices are not undertaking normal day-to-day duties and that their time is being spent in some form of training or development relevant to the apprenticeship standard they are completing.

For example – is the Apprentice shadowing another colleague to use a new system? Are they having a new process or procedure explained or demonstrated to them? Are they attending a webinar or CPD session relevant to their apprenticeship?

*If you are unsure what would constitute off the job training in specific relation to the apprenticeship, ensure you discuss this with your training provider and receive appropriate understanding and training.*



## Off the Job (OTJ) doesn't mean one day per week....

Many managers assume that OTJ means one day per week needs to be spent training. However, OTJ is flexible and should be achieved throughout the programme. The Apprentice and Line Manager can plan in ahead the training and development opportunities in the workplace so OTJ can take place whenever and wherever you want.

For example, an Apprentice who works for 37 hours per week, for a 48 week year (permanent role minus holidays), who is undertaking an apprenticeship that lasts 12 months, they would need 355 hours 'off the job' training; for a 18 month apprenticeship that would be 532 hours; for a 2 year apprenticeship that equates to 710 hours.

It is important to remember that these hours are over the whole duration of the apprenticeship, it is NOT stated that it must be x hours EVERY week.

## Make Inductions Count!

Depending if the Apprentice is new to the role / department, their induction, into the department, into such areas as systems, procedures, practices, documentation to use, can be included.

If the Apprentice has been working in the department already then, the induction on to the apprenticeship programme can be included, as long as this includes some activity that relates to skills development of the apprenticeship programme being studied.

Apprenticeship Training Providers should always aim to achieve this as part of the onboarding session.

## Embrace flexibility of delivery methods

It is the case that the OTJ **has** to be achieved in worktime so if you only allow your Apprentice to study in the evening and weekend and don't give any time off in lieu, **then this won't count and breaches the funding rules.**

At Shropshire Council we opt for a day release model, ensuring maximum flexibility in delivery. However some courses may require a block release model (up to 1 week in training) but this doesn't change the OTJ rule.

If you have a busy period coming up (i.e. end of year) and you need your member of staff for a specific job, this can be negotiated with the Apprentice and the Training Provider in advance and adjustments can be made—communication is key!

Ideally Apprentices will be released to attend delivery sessions (frequency every 4-8 weeks dependent on the course), which last for a day. If there are extenuating circumstances arrangements can be made. We all need to be flexible to enable the apprentice to succeed.

## Consider when your apprentices are 'in training'

As part of your Apprentice's programme, will they be taught new skills and knowledge whilst technically 'on the job'? This may be the hardest part to quantify and remember!

This is where an electronic learner platform will support the Apprentice to keep a journal online, where they can log hours which they have had some new skills or development, what it was, and how it benefits them in their role. This will be reviewed at the regular progress reviews that will be held with the Apprenticeship Training Provider, the Manager supporting the Apprentice and the Apprentice themselves.

It is important that your apprentice collects evidence to back up their OTJ hours throughout their apprenticeship journey—line managers must support apprentices to do this.

## Upskill Shropshire's Top Tips for Achieving Success with Off the Job Learning



Upskill Shropshire's Team members have over 5 years experience of working with apprenticeships, with team members undertaking apprenticeship training apprentices themselves. Having gone through the process and needing to undertake Off the Job Training as part of a busy role and undertaking the apprenticeship, this is the Upskill Team's Top Tips for Achieving Success with Off the Job Learning.

- 1. Plan your Off the Job Training in advance and log in your diary.** This will encourage you to ensure you're planning OTJ into your working week and makes it clear to your manager and colleagues when you may be focusing on your apprenticeship or participating in a webinar, or other CPD activity. It'll also help you monitor what OTJ you're undertaking and be easier to log in your E-Portfolio.
- 2. Spread out your Off The Job.** Taking a whole day of OTJ can be unachievable. It's likely you'll be easily distracted by work or lose focus if you're completing assignments. Plan out your OTJ in manageable small chunks across the week, planning your activity in advance and ensure you set yourself reasonable time to complete activities or assignments in.
- 3. Log your Off The Job Hours weekly where possible.** Don't wait to log your OTJ hours. If you leave it till last minute or at the end of your apprenticeship, you'll need to spend A LOT of time logging this. You cannot complete your End Point Assessment until you have achieve your OTJ hours.
- 4. Collect evidence as you go.** Documents, screenshots, emails, feedback etc. All of this can back up and evidence your Off The Job Training. Set yourself up a folder to collate all of this evidence and ask your Training Provider the best way to capture this as OTJ hours.
- 5. Ensure you review your apprenticeship with your line manager during monthly supervision.** The Apprentice and Line Manager should be reviewing progress on the apprenticeship at every supervision. The reason why this is important is because the line manager might identify something to the apprentice which they might not have considered to be "new learning" in line with the apprenticeship and count as OTJ.

**Create yourself an OTJ Log so you can keep a track of all of your activity and plan out your apprenticeship. This is also a great record of Continued Professional Development that would be great for performance development reviews. Please see example below.**

Start Time	End Time	Activity/ Task	Planned Activity	Time Taken	Comments
09:00 01/01/000 0	09:45 01/01/00 00	Webinar	Being a successful apprentice	45 mins	Really useful webinar. Screen-shotted attendance and took notes. Uploaded to E-Portfolio
11:00 02/01/000 0	12:00 02/01/00 00	Reflective Review	Wrote a review following webinar to demonstrate how I would apply to workplace.	1 hour	Uploaded and submitted reflective review in E-Portfolio
13:00 02/01/000 0	14:00 02/01/00 00	Assignment	Start and complete assignment on Safeguarding	1 hour	Did not finish assignment in set time, needed to undertake research. Will complete later in the week.

**Hopefully this guide has helped solve any of those questions you may have had regarding Off the Job Learning and has given you the confidence to support your development or the development of your apprentice throughout the lifetime of the programme. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at Upskill Shropshire.**