



Insights

Apprenticeship Units: Unlocking the hidden benefits



A large, stylized green quotation mark icon consisting of two thick, rounded brackets facing each other.

“Modular learning allows individuals to build skills progressively in ways that suit their careers and employers’ needs.”

Organisation for
Economic Co-operation & Development

“Employers value training that reflects real workplace competencies and can be delivered in manageable blocks.”

UK Department for Education

“Unlocking potential with relevant training”

The introduction of apprenticeship units in April marked an important shift in how skills are developed, recognised, and applied in the UK workforce.

From our perspective, this change reflects something we've long believed: the traditional approach to learning, focused too heavily on rigid structures and what looks good on paper, no longer works for people or businesses.

The world of work is competitive. **But it's also changing, fast.**

Employers need practical and work-ready skills now, not years down the line.

And individuals need flexible routes that fit around real lives and evolving ambitions.

Apprenticeship units are a response to that reality, breaking learning into more accessible, targeted segments that **build real capability, step by step.**

This shift aligns closely with our belief that finding your competitive edge is what unlocks growth.

By moving towards a more modular system, this should help create opportunities for learners to develop skills in a way that's more flexible, more focused, and more relevant to the roles they want to progress into.

At the same time, **employers can invest in the specific skills their teams actually need**, removing unnecessary complexity and accelerating impact.

Importantly, this is about more than structure. It's about unlocking potential.



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AI Leadership: Developing AI Strategy

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Solar PV: Installation & Maintenance

This is the second unit we're delivering from the initial rollout of apprenticeship units and believe it's one that will provide real change for electricians and their employers.

What are Apprenticeship Units?

Apprenticeship units are short, modular training programmes derived from existing apprenticeship standards.

Rather than completing a full apprenticeship (which can take 1–4 years), your employees can complete specific segments of training focused on targeted skills.

Key characteristics

- **Modular structure** – each unit focuses on a discrete skill set
- **Short duration** – typically from one week to a few months
- **Accredited learning** – aligned with national occupational standards
- **Flexible delivery** – can be taken independently of a full apprenticeship

This marks a shift from a “one-size-fits-all” model to a flexible, skills-based approach.

Who are they for?

Employers are arguably the main target of the policy.

Why they benefit you:

- Provide ability to train staff quickly in specific skills
- Better alignment with your business needs and emerging technologies
- More efficient use of levy funding

For example, your company can train employees in a specific AI tool or data skill, without committing to a full apprenticeship.

What are the first Units available?

The government launched an initial “first wave” of units focused on critical skills shortages, mainly in AI, engineering, construction, and green energy in April.

At Leep, we’re able to provide the two apprenticeship units below, with other units announced by the Government also included below for reference.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Leadership

This apprenticeship unit is for those who are in (or aspiring to) leadership roles responsible for setting direction, governance and oversight for AI use who need upskilling in AI leadership literacy, organisational AI priorities and leading organisational change.

Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Installation & Maintenance

This apprenticeship unit is for existing, employed electricians who, with the support of their employer, need to upskill in solar PV installation and maintenance fundamentals. Learners must be employed, 19 years of age or older and a fully qualified electrician.

Other units announced include:

Battery Manufacturing

EV Charging Point Installation

Electrical Fitting & Assembly

Mechanical Fitting & Assembly

Permanent Modular Building Assembly

Mechanised Welding

Quickfire FAQs: Apprenticeship Units

How quickly can I train my staff using Apprenticeship Units?

The short answer is weeks, not years. Apprenticeship units can be completed in as little as 1–12 weeks, letting you respond quickly to skills gaps instead of committing to long programmes.

Can I target a specific skill for my employee to focus on?

Yes. Rather than enrolling staff on full apprenticeships, units let you train for specific capabilities, like EV installation, Solar PV, or AI leadership, without unnecessary content.

Can I use existing funds I've paid into the Levy?

Yes. The new Growth and Skills Levy allows you to fund short, focused training, helping you spend levy funds more efficiently and reduce unused balances.

How much disruption can I expect? Is there a lengthy assessment period?

The shorter duration of apprenticeship units means less disruption to operations. Your employees gain skills while staying productive in their daily work. Units are also assessed through focused skills tests, so employees can demonstrate competence and return to work faster.

So, what are the hidden benefits?

The headline benefits are obvious. Faster career progression for your staff, that's funded via the Growth & Skills Levy.

But what are some of the "hidden" benefits for your business? We breakdown just a few to provide an insight of how you and your organisation could take advantage.

#1 Stackable career pathways

At first glance, units look like standalone training, but their deeper value is that they can be combined over time.

You can gradually build highly specialised employees without committing to long programmes upfront.

- Workers can "stack" units (e.g. electrical → EV → solar)
- Leads to multi-skilled staff

Units aren't just "one-off" fixes and can help form part of your long-term workforce development strategy.

#2 Reduced investment risk

Traditional apprenticeships involve:

- Long commitments
- Higher cost risk if employees leave your business

However, apprenticeship units allow for low-risk experimentation with your training and upskilling.

e.g. Try a skill → assess the impact → scale up if useful

This avoids wasting levy funds on unsuitable full apprenticeships.

#3 Faster internal innovation

Because units are short and targeted, they can accelerate innovation inside your organisation.

- Employees quickly gain cutting-edge skills (e.g. AI, green tech)
- Skills can be applied almost immediately

Example:

A manager completes an the AI Leadership Apprenticeship Unit and starts automating processes within weeks.

Apprenticeship Units shouldn't be viewed as a simple compliance box ticking exercise, but as a genuine driver of innovation.

#4 Improved retention

Some employers worry: "If I train staff, they'll leave."

But evidence often shows the opposite.

Apprenticeship Units can increase retention because:

- Your employees feel invested in
- Training is relevant and immediate
- Career development feels continuous

Because units are short, you may underestimate their psychological impact on staff loyalty.



Unit: AU0002

AI leadership: Developing AI strategy



Who's it for?

This apprenticeship unit is for employees who are in (or aspiring to) leadership roles responsible for setting direction, governance and oversight for AI use, who need upskilling in AI leadership literacy, defining organisational AI priorities and leading organisational change.

Key criteria

- Individuals must be **currently employed** and **over the age of 19**
- Learners should also be working in (or aspiring to) a leadership position within an organisation with autonomy to deliver technological change and inform investment decisions.

What's taught?

- AI strategy and organisational direction
- AI procurement, investment and adoption
- Governance, ethics and responsible AI
- Enterprise risk, audit and incident readiness
- Leadership, delivery and organisational change
- Communication, trust and external engagement
- Workforce transformation and capability building



“Artificial intelligence and generative AI may be the most important technology of any lifetime.”

Marc Benioff
CEO
Salesforce

“The playing field is a lot more competitive and businesses that don’t deploy AI and data to help them innovate in everything they do will be at a disadvantage.”

Paul Daugherty
Chief Technology & Innovation Officer
Accenture

Unit: AU0007

Solar PV: Installation & Maintenance

Who's it for?

This apprenticeship unit is for existing employed electricians who, with the support of their employer, need to upskill in solar photovoltaic (PV) installation and maintenance fundamentals.

Key criteria

- Individuals must be **currently employed** and **over the age of 19**
- Learners should also be a fully qualified electrician.

Delivered by



What's taught?

- Understanding of health and safety, legislation, and safe working practices relevant to solar PV work.
- Mathematical, electrical, and scientific principles to support installation, testing, fault finding, and maintenance.
- Understand equipment types, features, and requirements across commercial and residential environments
- High-level design, planning, installation and commissioning processes in line with industry expectations.
- Fault-finding, inspection, testing, and maintenance activities using appropriate tools and techniques.
- Maintain essential records and communicate professionally using digital platforms.



“Solar PV is no longer niche, it’s becoming a foundational part of modern energy systems.”

National Renewable Energy Laboratory

“The workforce is central to achieving net zero, and skills development must accelerate alongside deployment.”

**UK Government Department for
Energy Security & Net Zero**

“An opportunity to think differently”

We believe the introduction of apprenticeship units marks a clear step toward widening access, supporting reskilling, and enabling more people to move forward with confidence.

For businesses, this is an opportunity to think differently about workforce development.

Instead of relying solely on long-term programmes, you can now take a more agile approach, building capability in the moments that matter, aligned to real business needs.

We see our role as an opportunity amplifier within this evolving landscape.

Our focus remains the same: helping ambitious individuals and forward-thinking businesses find their edge and grow further.

Apprenticeship units strengthen that mission by making skills development more accessible, more relevant, and more closely connected to employment outcomes.

That said, success will depend on how this reform is delivered.

Maintaining quality, ensuring clear progression pathways, and keeping employer needs at the centre will be critical.

Done well, apprenticeship units won't fragment the system, they'll make it more responsive, more inclusive, and ultimately more effective.

This isn't just a policy update. It's a step towards a more realistic, more human approach to skills, one that recognises potential goes beyond qualifications alone.

And that's where real progress begins.



Ready to **think**
differently about
your workforce
development?

Find out
more here:



Potential powered up



Potential. Powered up.

