

Foundation Apprenticeship Handbook

A guide for young people
in Fife, and their parents,
guardians, carers and teachers.

**Set yourself
up for a big
future**

All your questions
on Foundation
Apprenticeships
(SCQF Levels 4 – 6)
answered in one
place!

1 What is a Foundation Apprenticeship?

A Foundation Apprenticeship (or FA as it is often referred to) is a vocational qualification that provides young people with the opportunity to develop new knowledge and skills in the classroom whilst also experiencing work-based learning in a local business or organisation. The SCQF Level 4 and 5 programmes are carried out over one academic year and include introductory work-based skills units and engagement with an employer while you are still at school and as part of your school timetable.

There are currently three Foundation Apprenticeships at these levels:

- Automotive Level 4
- Construction Level 4
- Hospitality Level 4 and 5

An FA at SCQF Level 6 includes some elements of a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) and also includes work-based learning whilst still being at school and as part of your school timetable.

There are currently up to 10 SCQF Level 6 Foundation Apprenticeships on offer in Fife:

- Accountancy
- Business Skills
- Civil Engineering
- Creative and Digital Media
- Engineering
- Food and Drink Technologies
- Information Technology: Software Development
- Scientific Technologies (Lab Skills)
- Social Services and Healthcare
- Social Services: Children and Young People

An FA contains several Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) subjects that you will study throughout your time in the classroom, and you will carry out a project as part of the work-based challenge in our industry-standard practical work areas or your FA may take the form of a weekly work placement. The mix of subjects and approaches taken will ensure the skills, techniques and knowledge you learn as you complete your FA are confirmed by actually doing, showing and recording your competence – that is your ability to do the things you have been shown and apply the knowledge you have learned.

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2 Does an FA differ from other school/college subjects?

The Level 4 and 5 FAs are studied over one year and differ from your other national qualifications, with part of your time spent on work-based challenge projects, visits from local business or organisations, learning and doing real work.

Level 6 FAs are studied over one or two years, with a large part of the course spent on a work placement with a local business or organisation.

The other main difference is that the FA has no big exams in May/June each year like National 5s and Highers. For some young people this may be a preferred option. FAs consists of several SQA units/topics and once you complete them these will all appear on your SQA certificate along with your FA certificate. (Please note this may follow later than exam results.)

An apprenticeship helps you build the experience and skills that employers want to see.

3 Why should I study for an FA?

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There are many reasons why you may choose to study towards an FA:

- While still at secondary school, FAs provide you with a work-based vocational qualification which includes a work placement, and the skills and knowledge today's employers are looking for
- The FA aims to give you the skills and knowledge you need to develop a career in your chosen industry
- The FA includes industry recognised qualifications
- The FA frameworks have been designed in subjects to meet specific skills gaps identified in Scotland
- The FA will give you essential employability skills including problem solving, communication, team working, time management and IT skills
- Some of Scotland's biggest employers have been involved in the creation, design and implementation of the FAs, including Scottish Water, the NHS and local authorities
- An FA provides an accelerated route for young people who can then progress onto a Modern Apprenticeship, as some of the topics have been designed to be in both apprenticeships
- With the unemployment rate for people aged 16-24 higher than any other age group, an FA provides important skills and a work placement to put on your CV to help you gain a job
- It is a great way for you to try out a career to see if it is right for you!

4 What level of study is an FA?

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There are currently three different levels of Foundation Apprenticeships in Scotland. Each apprenticeship is at a different level of study which is confirmed on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The three types of Foundation Apprenticeships are:

- Foundation Apprenticeship at SCQF Level 4 offers a blend of practical and theoretical units to allow you to understand and experience working within three practical areas of industry that have been forecast as growth sectors for the future
- The Foundation Apprenticeship at SCQF Level 5 allows you to progress your studies within the hospitality sector
- A Foundation Apprenticeship at SCQF Level 6 combines learning and training with your school subjects (the same level of learning as a Scottish Higher)

5 Where can I progress after my FA?

As an FA is a recognised qualification on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), many doors open for further progression in the world of work and study. Fife College will accept successful completion of the Foundation Apprenticeship to progress on to higher level qualifications (although please note that additional qualifications may be required).

Let's look at what else is possible:

- One option may be to progress from your Level 4 on to the Level 5 and 6 and then on to a Modern Apprentice qualification
- You could progress from your FA to a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) and, as the FA Level 6 contains some units/topics from the MA qualification, your length of time as a Modern Apprentice may be shorter
- You could progress to college or university to study on a full or part-time course. Both colleges and universities will recognise your FA qualification and using this along with your National 5 or Higher certificates you could meet entry requirements into a higher level course. If your FA is at SCQF Level 6 and, depending on the college or university you chose to study at, the FA should be recognised as equivalent to one or two SQA Highers
- You could use your FA qualification with the work placement on your CV to enter straight into employment. Remember, gaining an FA in a specific subject does not mean it is only useful in that one employment area. You will gain many transferable skills, and having the work placement is of great value for any job or career path you choose to follow. So think wider and pursue an area you enjoy and are good at!
- A Modern Apprenticeship (MA) combines training with paid employment at SCQF Levels 5, 6 and 7 (up to the same level of learning as a Scottish Advanced Higher)
- A Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) combines paid employment with learning up to degree level at SCQF Levels 8, 9, 10 and 11 (up to the same level of learning as a Masters Degree)

6 How long is my FA?

FAs at level 4 and 5 are planned to be delivered over one year. It normally takes one or two years to complete a Level 6 FA, so it will be part of your study timetable in years S4 or senior phase. Your school timetable will include two half days per week for your FA. At SCQF Level 6, on some of the frameworks detailed, you may also be expected to undertake part or all of your work placement during school holidays (e.g. October, Easter or Summer).

During your FA you will spend time doing various activities which may include:

- Attending classes at your school, another school in Fife, or at a Fife College campus
- Attending practical workshops, computer labs, or science labs
- Visiting local businesses or organisations for a morning or afternoon
- Attending talks or presentations from local employers
- Work placement of several days and weeks, particularly in the Level 6 FAs. Some FAs include weekly placements
- Having fun whilst learning new and exciting skills and meeting new friends

There is a lot of time committed towards your FA but do remember it will be worth it and the qualification is at the same learning level as a Scottish Higher. It's also recognised by colleges and universities as equivalent to one or two Scottish Highers.

Some of the FA frameworks may be delivered as a one-year course e.g. Business Skills, Construction, Hospitality, Scientific Technologies, Children and Young People, Health and Social Care.

Contact your school or Fife College for more information.

SCQF TABLE

SCQF Level	SQA Qualification			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Apprenticeships/ SVQs
12				Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship SVQ
10				Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship
9				Professional Development Award	Graduate Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
8		Higher National Diploma		Diploma of Higher Education	Higher Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
7	Advanced Higher Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate		Certificate of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
6	Higher	National Certificate Advanced Certificate			Foundation Apprenticeship Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
5	National 5 Intermediate 2	National Certificate Intermediate Certificate			Foundation Apprenticeship Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
4	National 4 Intermediate 1	National Certificate Certificate	National Progression Award		Foundation Apprenticeship SVQ
3	National 3 Access 3				
2	National 2 Access 2				
1	National 1 Access 1				

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Where will I study?

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Depending on your chosen FA subject and which school you attend, this will vary as the FA is a vocational qualification and is designed to enhance and develop your skills and knowledge.

You may study at your own high school, another high school in Fife, or at a Fife College campus. It could even be a combination of these three options. We can also guarantee Level 6 FAs will have a work placement which will add to the variety, value and excitement of your learning experience!

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How will I be assessed?

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The FA has no big exam in May/June each year like National 5s or Highers. Instead, you will be assessed on an ongoing basis which means you could get two assessments in one week or even an assessment within the first eight weeks of your FA. Your teacher/assessor will advise you of planned assessments by providing you with a schedule of work, what format the assessment will take, what timescale you have, what you will be expected to do, and the format of your submission.

The frequency, size and type of assessment will vary for each FA. There are many different ways for your teacher or assessor to confirm what you know (to test your knowledge and understanding) and what you can do (to test your understanding and skills).

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When will I meet and work with employers?

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Each framework follows a different pattern for work placement. Some are in the form of a project, meeting with and following the employer specifications. Some are weekly, monthly or quarterly and this can vary over the duration of the course for year one or year two placements.

You will meet and work with employers throughout your entire FA at different stages. During this time, engagement with employers may include one or more of the following formats:

- Visit or tour of the premises of a local business to see inside the organisation and find out more about the processes and systems they use to ensure they meet customer needs
- Attend a local event hosted by a local employer
- A local employer visiting your FA group to present, talk or host a workshop related to your chosen FA
- For the level 6 FAs - Meet and greet sessions to get to know more about the local organisations that will be hosting work placements for your year 1 or year 2 placement
- A weekly work placement

During your Level 6 FA, you will be allocated a local employer who will host your work placement and provide you with an appropriate safe environment to learn and demonstrate new skills related to your FA. Some of your assessments used towards your gaining qualification will be completed in and during your work placement.

10 Do I get paid when on my work placement?

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The FA has been designed to combine learning and training with your school subjects. You will not receive any pay or salary whilst studying your FA, however you will continue to receive any Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) you have been receiving whilst studying all your subjects and classes in school.

11 Do I get paid travel expenses?

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Travel costs and arrangements are supported whilst you are participating in a Foundation Apprenticeship. You should also be aware that you can apply for free nationwide bus travel at freebus.scot. Your Learning Provider can provide any support or advice you may need on travel arrangements.

12 Are any checks done with work placement providers?

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Yes, all work placement providers and the site where you would be placed are checked against a list of Health and Safety requirements including confirming appropriate insurance. The work placement is also checked to ensure it has the appropriate staff and resources to support you correctly during your time there. All of these checks are completed prior to you attending your work placement.

13 Am I assessed in my work placement?

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Yes, as a Foundation Apprentice the workplace will also be your classroom and a location where assessment will take place as part of your FA. Your work placement is also a location that forms a key part of your learning, as in learning new skills and also applying the learning from your school or college classes into the workplace.

What you will find in the workplace is that assessment is often fun and very practical – just like when faced with challenges and problems to solve in the real world of work, as your work placement is the real world you are working in with a real employer!

14 When will I receive my certificate?

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FA certificates are issued by the SQA and the certificate will be issued in the summer after you complete your full FA qualification. The certificate will not normally be issued as part of your SQA National 5 and Higher results, in fact you may receive it before or just after this date.

15 Do I have to buy a uniform or safety equipment or clothing?

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No, any uniform, special clothing, or safety equipment needed will be provided free of charge to you.

Foundation Apprenticeship course information:

Fife College (information and applications)

www.fife.ac.uk/foundation

Opportunities Fife:

www.opportunitiesfife.org

SDS:

www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

Apprenticeships.Scot:

www.apprenticeships.scot

National Parent Forum:

www.npfs.org.uk

The information published in this guide was correct at the time of print.
For the most up-to-date information, you should always check our website.
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