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*Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim*  
Education and Training Board

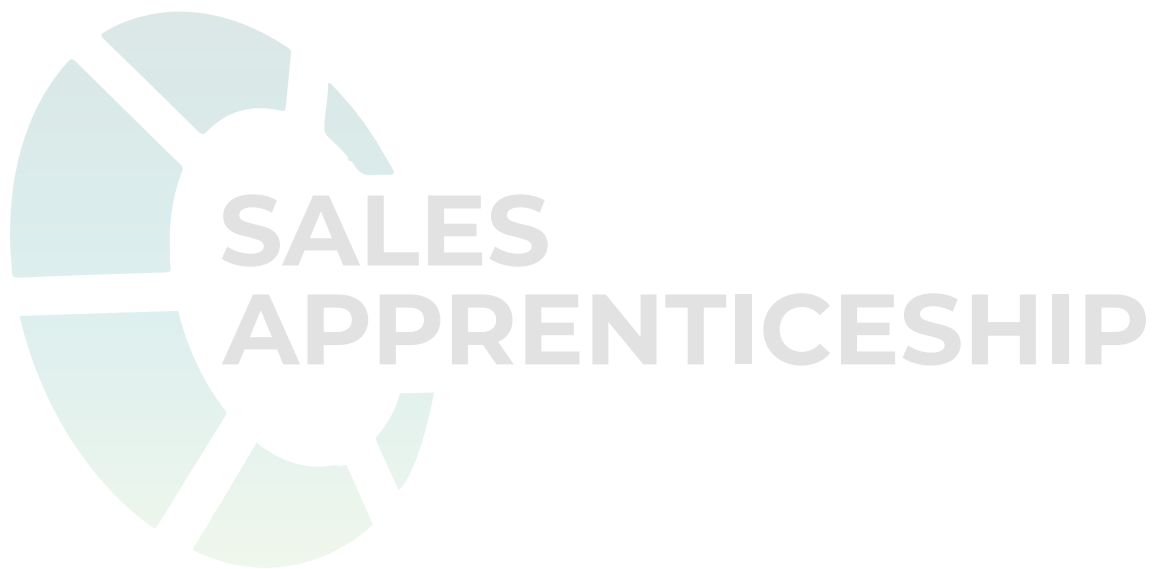


# BOOST YOUR BUSINESS

*Employ A Sales Apprentice*



| An Employers Guide





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# CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>PROGRAMME OVERVIEW</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>BUSINESS BENEFITS OF HIRING A SALES APPRENTICE</b>                | <b>5</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>YEAR 1 MODULES</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>YEAR 2 MODULES</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>ANATOMY OF A SALES APPRENTICESHIP GRADUATE</b>                    | <b>6</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE EMPLOYING A SALES APPRENTICE</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>ROLE OF THE WORKPLACE MENTOR</b>                                  | <b>8</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>STEPS INVOLVED IN EMPLOYING &amp; REGISTERING AN APPRENTICE</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>TO BECOME AN APPROVED EMPLOYER</b>                                | <b>8</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>REGISTER AN APPRENTICE</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>APPRENTICE PROFILE &amp; ENTRY REQUIREMENTS</b>                   | <b>9</b>  |
| .....  |           |
| <b>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</b>                                    | <b>10</b> |
| .....  |           |

\* Recommended for Validation



# SALES APPRENTICESHIP

## Programme Overview

This new apprenticeship programme was designed by a consortia of sales industry partners and Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB). It was developed to ensure a consistent number of apprentices are hired, developed and retained for sales organisations. It ensures that approved industry partners hiring apprentices are seen as employers of choice with regard to outstanding training, development and progression opportunities within their organisation. The goal is to deliver committed, adaptable and ambitious individuals into the sales sector year on year. This programme will become a key contributor to the strategic succession planning process for the extensive sales industry in Ireland over the coming years.

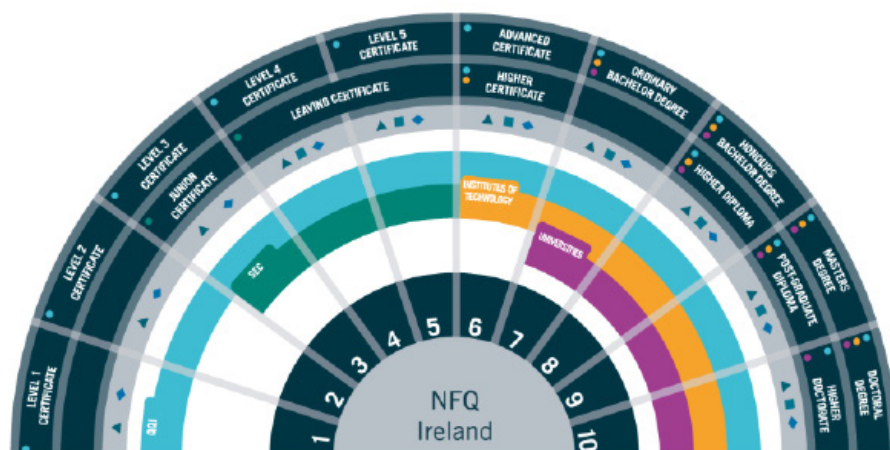
This programme is an “earn and learn” model, designed to empower the sales apprentice with underpinning knowledge, skills and competencies required to become an effective employee in a dynamic sector. It is open to a wide range of employers, across all industry sectors, both large and small firms, on a national basis. It specifically targets demographics who wish to commence, develop and/or upskill their career in sales; it offers a unique opportunity to learn in a practical, supportive environment while simultaneously working towards a recognised Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Major Level 6 Award. Successful graduates can further their careers within the sales sector and/or progress to further studies in higher education.

QQI is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills with responsibilities for quality assurance of education and training and qualifications in Ireland. All QQI validated programmes are quality assured, are nationally and internationally recognised, offer access to further and higher education and training opportunities and are recognised by employers.

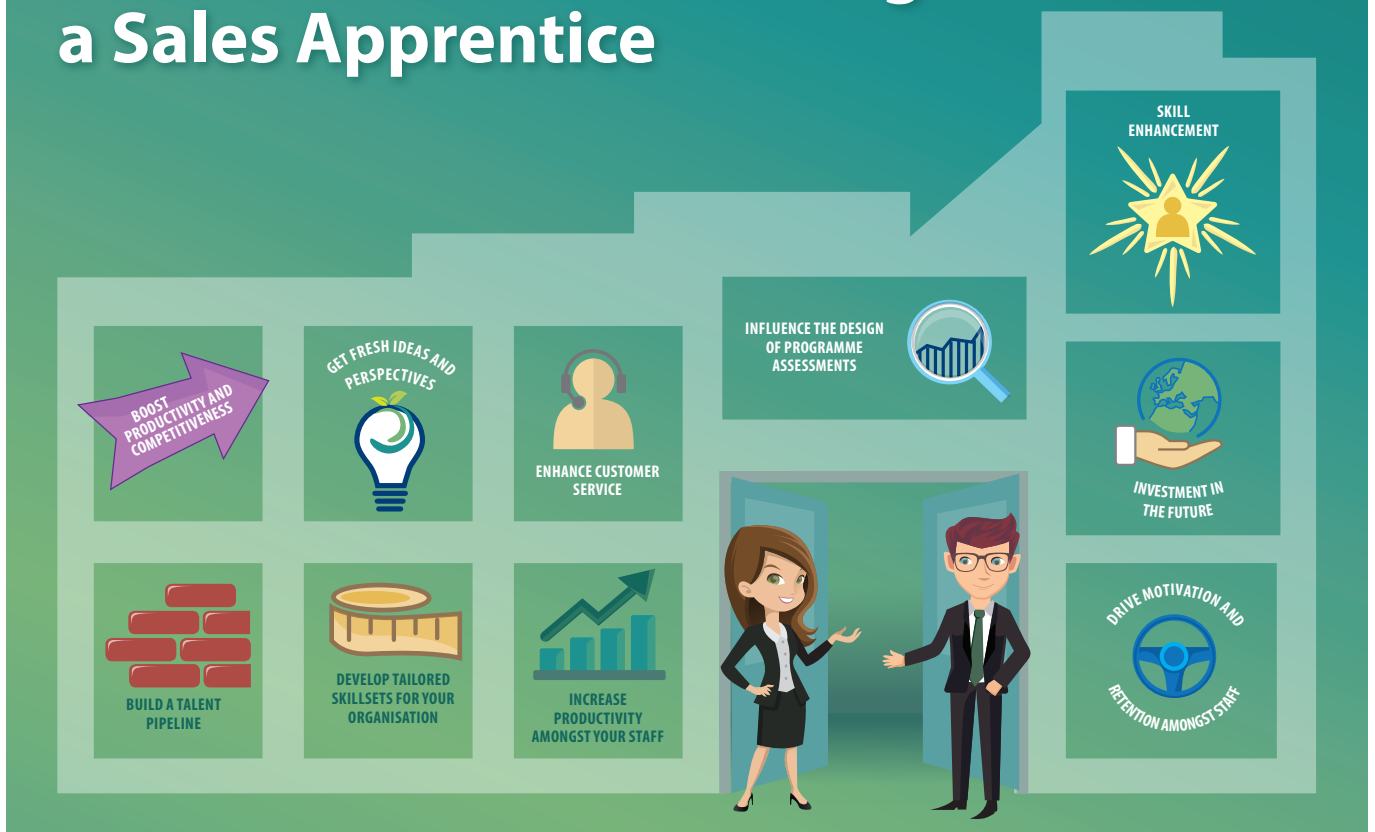
National qualifications frameworks describe what learners should know, understand and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification. These frameworks also show how learners can move from one qualification, or qualification level, to another within a system. Over 150 countries are now developing, or have developed, a national qualifications framework.

The Irish NFQ, is a framework through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill and competence. Because all NFQ qualifications are quality assured, learners can be confident that they will be recognised at home and abroad.

Upon completion of this apprenticeship the graduate will achieve a Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Sales.



# Business Benefits of Hiring a Sales Apprentice



## Year 1: Modules Are Delivered Consecutively

| Module                                     | Online Learning* | Off the Job Release (Face to Face Workshops) |
|--|------------------|--|
| Induction                                  | x                | 7 days                                       |
| Sales Fundamentals                         | 2 hours per week | 3 days                                       |
| The Psychology of Sales                    | 2 hours per week | 5 days                                       |
| Customer Service in the Experience Economy | 2 hours per week | 5 days                                       |
| Sales Forecasting and Budgeting            | 2 hours per week | 5 days                                       |
| Legal and Ethical Considerations for Sales | 2 hours per week | 3 days                                       |
| Marketing in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century  | 2 hours per week | 3 days                                       |
| Digital Skills for Sales                   | 2 hours per week | 5 days                                       |

\*Apprentices need to be released from work 2 hours per week over 5 - 10 weeks (module dependent) on a consecutive basis

## Year 2: Modules Are Delivered Consecutively

| Module   | Online Learning* | Off the Job Release (Face to Face Workshops) |
|--|------------------|--|
| Induction to Year 2  | 2 hours          | 1 Day  |
| Introduction to Capstone Module                                | x                | 2 days                                       |
| Sales Coaching   | 2 hours per week | 3 days                                       |
| Consultative Selling, Negotiation and Decision Making in Sales | 2 hours per week | 5 days                                       |
| Developing Leadership Skills                                   | 2 hours per week | 5 days                                       |
| International Selling for the Sales Practitioner               | 2 hours per week | 3 days                                       |
| Action Entrepreneurship  | 2 hours per week | 3 days                                       |
| Capstone Module  | 2 hours per week | 4 days                                       |

\*Apprentices need to be released from work 2 hours per week over 5 – 10 weeks (module dependent) on a consecutive basis



# Questions to Ask Yourself Before Employing a Sales Apprentice

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## 1. Can you provide the apprentice with continuity of employment (both On-the-Job and Off-the-Job over a 2 year period)?

The position is a 2 year fixed full time permanent contract (including the Off-the-Job release commitments). Your normal contract of employment for the job role together with a Code of Practice for Apprentices and Employers outlining your obligations will form the basis of the employment. This Code of Practice is intended to assist both employers and apprentices to understand their duties and responsibilities relating to the apprenticeship programme. As part of the employer approval and apprentice registration processes, employers and apprentices agree to comply with this Code of Practice.

A copy of the code of practice can be found at:

[www.apprenticeship.ie/Documents/ApprenticeshipCodeOfPractice.pdf](http://www.apprenticeship.ie/Documents/ApprenticeshipCodeOfPractice.pdf)

## 2. Can you provide access for the apprentices to the type of work that allows them gain the necessary experience and develop their skills across the full range of competencies included in the programme?

You are required to facilitate the rotation of tasks to ensure the apprentice is afforded the opportunity to gain experience of the different types of work related to the apprenticeship programme within the organisation. MSLETB will offer full support to the organisation to ensure this can be achieved.

## 3. Can you provide adequate resources such as the time, facilities and equipment necessary to support the apprentice in respect of both on and off-the-job learning in your organisation?

On-the-job learning resources include a desk, PC or portable device within a team environment

On-the-job learning resources include releasing the apprentice for 2 hours per week at a scheduled time, in a quiet area with a skype capable device which has a webcam, microphone and headphones to participate in online lectures.

In addition your apprentice is required to attend face to face workshops at a venue arranged by MSLETB to enhance professional and technical knowledge.

## 4. Can you provide a qualified or experienced staff member who will act as the apprentice's Workplace Mentor and whose key role is to supervise their training and assess their competencies in the workplace?

Each apprentice is allocated a Work Place mentor (a maximum of 4 apprentices to 1 mentor) whose key role is to manage the training needs of the apprentice. The Workplace Mentor will be an experienced member of the employer's management or senior supervisory team who has achieved a Major Level 6 Award in a cognate area and a minimum of 2 years' industry experience in the sector or has a minimum of 5 years' experience working within in the sales sector.

A bespoke Workplace Mentor Handbook and customised training for the mentor will be provided by MSLETB prior to the commencement of the programme. Continuous support throughout the duration of the programme is also provided.

## *Role of the Workplace Mentor*

- Familiarise themselves with the sales apprenticeship programme.
  - Assist the apprentice in understanding and become conversant with work practices and sales terminology.
  - Facilitate the apprentice's learning in the workplace by shadowing, coaching, observing and guiding.
  - Promote independence and autonomy in learning and in the completion of workplace tasks.
  - Promote a culture of ongoing development with a focus on developing knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes to positively influence performance.
  - Foster a supportive environment to complete workplace tasks.
  - Facilitate peer learning with other experienced members of staff.
  - Provide pastoral care to the apprentice in the workplace.
  - Develop a sense of professionalism in the apprentice including attributes such as dependability, maturity, politeness, respect, loyalty and the ability to communicate effectively.
  - Attend a mandatory briefing day workshop prior to the apprentice commencing.
  - Participate in and/or contribute to the National Programme Board.
  - Liaises with the academic supervisor.
- 

## *Steps involved in Employing and Registering an Apprentice*

For an employer to get approved to train apprentices in a particular occupation, s/he must demonstrate that they have the capacity and the ability to provide quality, relevant on-the-job training to apprentices as per the requirements of the national apprenticeship programme and the statutory apprenticeship system overall.

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## *To become an Approved Employer*

The employer must be approved by SOLAS in order to register an apprentice on this programme.

- 1) The employer must contact their local Education and Training Board (ETB) to engage with their SOLAS Authorised Officer. An assessment meeting will be scheduled to ascertain if they meet the specified qualifying criteria to become an approved employer to train apprentices on the Sales Apprenticeship.
  - 2) The employer must be able to provide a suitable qualified person in this occupation to act as a Workplace Mentor for the apprentice for the On-the-Job elements of this apprenticeship programme. MSLETB will screen all applications to confirm that the mentor minimum entry requirements are met.
  - 3) If the employer is deemed suitable, the SOLAS Authorised Officer recommends the employer to SOLAS for approval.
  - 4) If the employer is deemed unsuitable, the SOLAS Authorised Officer will identify what requirements remain to be met and subsequently, a re-visit can be scheduled to re-assess.
- 

## *To Register an Apprentice*

- 1) The employer must be an approved employer to register and train apprentices on the Sales Apprenticeship.
  - 2) Once approved, the employer can then apply via the SOLAS Authorised Officer in their local Education and Training Board (ETB) to register an apprentice. This apprentice can be a new or existing member of staff who must meet the minimum entry requirements for this programme.
  - 3) MSLETB will screen all applications to confirm that the apprentice meets minimum entry requirements.
-





## *The programme is suitable for*

- School leavers.
  - Existing employees seeking to progress within their organisation and develop skills relevant to the workplace.
  - Career changers.
  - Mature applicants aged 21 or over with relevant work experience without formal qualifications will also be considered via Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures.
- 

## *Apprentice Entry Requirements*

- Must be employed by a SOLAS 'Approved Employer' and registered as an apprentice.
  - Aged 18 or over.
  - Must have Grade O6/H7 or above in 5 Leaving Certificate subjects (including Maths F2/O6/H7 along with English or Irish O6/H7) or a full QQI Level 5 or higher qualification.
  - International applicants must present the equivalent of a full Level 5 qualification or higher.
  - English is the language of tuition and assessment. Apprentices for whom English is not a first language must demonstrate proficiency in English and hold a minimum of a B1 CEFR or recognised equivalent.
  - Non-EU applicants are subject to work permit regulations.
  - Mature applicants aged 21 years and over without a Level 5 qualification will also be considered following an interview and submission of supporting documentation.
  - Certified and non certified Recognition of Prior Learning will also be considered.
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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## 1. *Is there a cost associated with taking on a sales apprentice?*

There are no costs involved for either the apprentice or the organisation. All training is government funded. However, the apprentice needs to be a full time employee of the organisation.

## 2. *Does the apprentice have to leave work for long periods to attend college?*

This work based learning programme has been designed to be flexible in terms of time, location, and mode of learning.

It will be delivered by using a blend of

- 84% learning whilst on the job in the workplace
- 12% Face to Face workshops (2 - 5 days offsite every 10 - 12 weeks)
- 4% online learning which equates to 2 hours per week in the workplace

Employers will be required to release the apprentice for 2 hours per week for the mandatory online classes and also 2 - 5 days every 10 - 12 weeks for the duration of the programme for the face to face workshops. However 84% of the programme will be completed in a workplace environment where a Workplace Mentor will be assigned by the organisation to mentor and guide the apprentice. Training will be provided free of charge to the Workplace Mentor and there will be continuous extensive support offered by MSLETB throughout the programme.

## 3. *Do apprentices have to study in Mayo, Sligo or Leitrim?*

No – the sales apprenticeship is a national apprenticeship programme so employers and apprentices can be based in any part of the Republic of Ireland.

## 4. *What qualification does the apprentice get?*

Upon successful completion of the programme, the apprentice graduate will get a Major QQI Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Sales. Progression opportunities are available for those who wish to continue their studies into higher education. Indeed apprenticeships are acknowledged as vital elements in the economic regeneration of countries across the globe. The continued expansion of apprenticeships into new occupational areas will enhance their image and profile and are a real option to academic-only learning pathways.

## 5. What type of companies is this sales apprenticeship open to?

This programme has been developed to meet current and future industry demand for sales personnel employed across all industry sectors. Today the sales industry does not have a recognised apprenticeship programme and employers have identified that the lack of a talent pipeline has resulted in an increasingly difficult employee recruitment and retention environment for the sector. This apprenticeship will be an industry game changer; empowering sales apprentices with the essential blend of knowledge, skills and competencies they need to become an effective employee.

The programme is ideal for industries who employ sales people in various sectors including:

- Pharmaceutical
- Agriculture
- Contact Centres
- Communications
- Entertainment
- Financial Services
- Technology
- Property Services
- Hospitality & Food
- ICT
- Electrical
- Construction
- Logistics
- Media
- Healthcare
- Insurance
- Motor
- Manufacturer
- Retail
- Travel & Tourism



For further details contact:  
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Education and Training Board



**SOLAS**  
learning works



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills