UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIP: EMPLOYER TOOLKIT
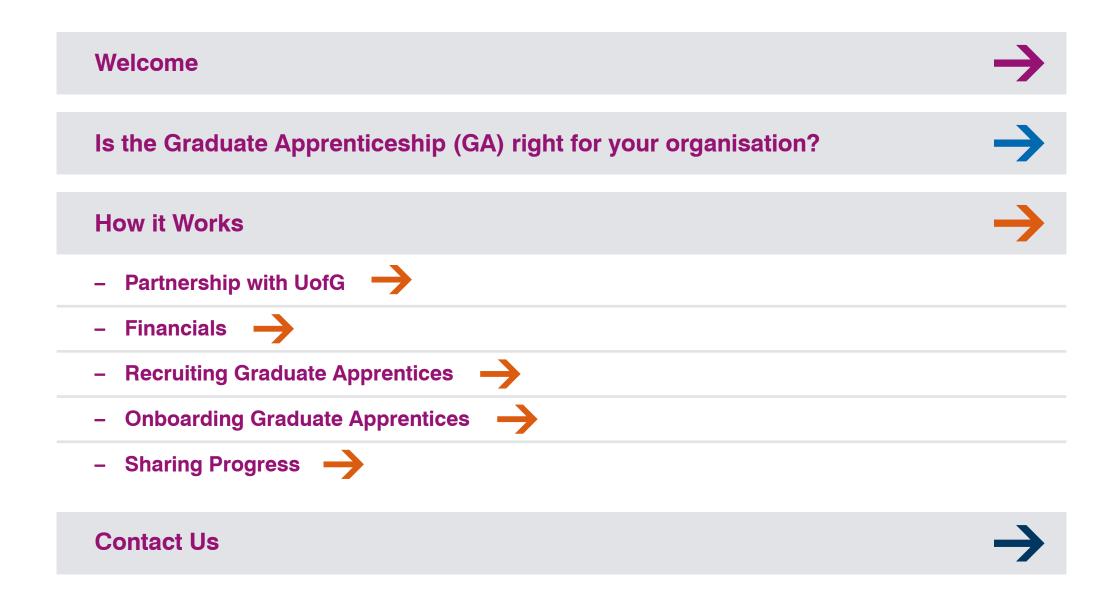
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WELCOME

UofG is the only Russell Group University in Scotland to offer a Graduate Apprenticeship

"THE GOAL OF A DEGREE IS TO GET A JOB AT THE END OF THE COURSE, BUT WITH A GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIP YOU GET A JOB AT THE START…"

Welcome to the University of Glasgow's Software Engineering Graduate Apprenticeship Programme!

Our BSc (Hons) degree programme develops skilled Software Engineers through a combination of work-based learning and intensive university-based study.

Designed and delivered in partnership with some of Scotland's most ambitious employers, our innovative programme creates work-ready apprentices from an early stage and provides apprentices with access to specialist courses taught by experts in their fields.

This Toolkit provides detailed information on partnering with us, but we offer bespoke support to ensure we meet the needs of all our partners – from start-ups to multinationals – so please also reach out to our friendly and experienced employer-facing team.

Matt (Programme Director), **Anna and Claire** (Programme Managers)

Meet your GA team →

E: compsci-ga-team@glasgow.ac.uk →

IS THE GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIP (GA) RIGHT FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

Do you have a challenge recruiting tech talent?
Graduate apprenticeships (known as Degree Apprenticeships in England) are designed to address skill-shortages by creating new recruitment and learning pathways in competitive labour markets. Our GA has become a popular route into the software engineering profession, and our team work closely with applicants, schools, colleges, and partner organisations to ensure employers have a high-quality pool of applicants who address your recruitment needs.

Can you offer apprentices the learning environment they need to grow?
Apprentices offer a great return on investment when they are in a supported learning environment. Specifically this involves providing apprentices with a mentor who is separate to their line manager, access to enough relevant work (especially coding) to apply their knowledge and a supportive team environment for them to flourish.

Do apprentices offer the skillset your organisation needs?
Our apprentices become skilled software engineers quickly. As a guide we anticipate productivity from apprentices from 6 months into the course, dependent on their skillset and the support available in the workplace. Apprentices gain specialist knowledge and access our research resources for work-based projects in their final years. The outputs of these projects have often had lasting impact and been highly valued by employers.

Can you commit to employing a Graduate Apprentice for 4 years?
Employers must be able to commit to employing their apprentice fulltime for the 4-year duration of the degree course. As with any employee the apprentice must meet contractual obligations and exit points are available, but our course does boast very high completion rates. Employers typically offer GAs permanent roles on graduation from the course.

Does our blended on-campus and work-based learning course structure work for your organisation?
For the first two years of the GA course, apprentices are taught in 4 x 8-week "teaching blocks" on campus. This enables us to front load teaching and reduces context switching so apprentices learn quickly, and employers tell us they see return on investment faster than in a traditional day release model.

In the final two years apprentices are taught term time only (c.1.5 days a week) and work with you to select their courses from our full honours catalogue. Apprentices are taught by experts in their field with the option specialise in Data Science, Cyber Security or Systems Engineering.

Does our programme content work for your organisation?
Our programme goes well beyond the IT Software Development framework to ensure the GA degree course gives the same level of education as our standard route degrees.

YEAR 1: Apprentices will learn the fundamental knowledge and skills needed to work professionally in software engineering, including:
– how to navigate and modify large codebases in unfamiliar programming languages (quickly picking up the languages used most prominently in their workplace)
– software development and practical improvement techniques
– testing fundamentals
– web applications systems
– low-level architecture
– report writing.

YEAR 2: Apprentices will cover a broad spectrum of Computing Science topics, including:
– data storage and retrieval
– human-computer interaction (HCI)
– algorithmics
– systems programming
– user interaction
– data science fundamentals
– advanced professional software engineering.

YEARS 3 AND 4: Apprentices have an opportunity to specialise in years 3 and 4 if they wish and can choose subjects from our full honours catalogue of electives, taught by leading experts in the relevant fields.

> "Graduate Apprenticeships can be a great way to remove barriers experienced by some people applying for university degrees, helping to enhance social mobility"
>
> Stephen McLafferty, Morgan Stanley

Are you looking to increase diversity in your workforce?
Apprentices bring socio-economic, gender and age diversity to technology teams. The GA course has access pathways, a generous academic entry tariff, free online summer schools in programming and maths, a free CV checking service for applicants and excellent links to schools, colleges, and partner organisations to encourage applications from target groups and support them through the application process.

Are you worried about the resource involved in recruiting an apprentice?
Our dedicated team can support your recruitment and shortlisting processes. The level of support is tailored to your needs and ranges from promoting opportunities to supporting interviews or connecting you with "pre-screened" candidates who have already met our academic requirements and received support with their CVs.

Do you know about the benefits of partnering with the University of Glasgow?
Strong communication between our small employer-facing GA Team and partners ensures our Programme works well for everyone involved. We'll support you to resolve challenges, celebrate successes – and have fun as we do it! Partnering on the GA can lead to closer collaboration with the University in other areas of early careers talent development or even research.

Do you want to join a community committed to developing the next generation of tech talent?
Our Employer Partners are diverse in size and sector but share a commitment to developing the next generation of tech talent through degree-level apprenticeships. Through our Community of Practice you can connect with peers, understand how others have overcome challenges and share insights.

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HOW IT WORKS

PARTNERING WITH UOFG

This is the only GA course currently offered by UofG so our course design, delivery structure and team are dedicated to ensuring this course delivers for our employers and apprentices. Annually, we accommodate approximately 40 apprentices and work with around 10 employer partners.

Please speak to the team as early as possible to "hold" places on the course.

Meet your GA team →

FINANCIALS

The degree programme is fully funded and open to all companies with a software development operation in Scotland.

Apprentice tuition fees are funded by the Scottish Funding Council via the Students Award Agency for Scotland (SAAS).

Employers pay their apprentices a fulltime salary commensurate with their role (typically living wage or above) and provide apprentices with a *"reasonable amount of time to complete study and assessment related to their GA within their working hours" (SFC Guidance, 2023).* You should plan for study time to be approximately 20% of an apprentice's time across the degree course.

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RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

It is a competitive market for Software Engineering GAs, but we have a strong track record of helping Partner Employers secure apprentices well suited to their organisational needs.

Our agile team adapts the support offered to fit the hiring process which works best for your organisation.

– **Creating the Job Description (JD):** GAs can take on a variety of technology-based roles provided they have access to code and coding. UofG can provide example JDs and help draft academic and financial eligibility requirements.

– **"Pre-Screened" Candidates:** Drawn from our applicant pool, we can provide you with applications from candidates who meet our entry tariff and have had their CVs reviewed by our team. This reduces your workload and is a popular option for smaller organisations.

– **Internal Candidates:** GAs can be existing employees rather than new recruits and some employers have run GAs with a mixture of both.

– **Supporting Recruitment:** Our team ensures roles reach high quality candidates through:
  • UofG social media and websites
  • targeted mailings to GA followers and standard degree course applicants
  • supporting applicants to develop their CVs and check their eligibility.
  • working closely with schools, colleges and partner organisations
  • attending and hosting applicant events.

– **Shortlisting, Assessment & Interviews:** Employers anticipate receiving 20-75 applications for each GA role and have unique shortlisting and assessment processes, which can include psychometric testing, assessment centres and interviews. Support can include ensuring candidates meet eligibility requirements, providing sample interview questions or joining final stage interview panels.

– **Making An Offer:** Candidates often apply to multiple apprenticeships simultaneously so moving quickly can ensure securing your top candidates. Offers of employment should be contingent on their acceptance onto the course at UofG and eligibility for SAAS funding. Acceptance to the University will be automatic for candidates who have already achieved our minimum academic tariff and conditional for those awaiting exam results.

ONBOARDING YOUR GRADUATE APPRENTICE

GAs are primarily employees and the majority of their onboarding process will mirror standard employment practices. The areas you may wish to give special consideration for apprentices are:

– **Employment contract** – GAs should be offered a standard fulltime employee contract with terms commensurate with any other employee on a continuing basis. This could be the first time your GA has seen an employment contract so make sure they understand it and draw attention to any confidentiality clauses.

– **Start date** – GAs can start work at any time before the course begins at the end of Oct annually and we recommend they start at least a few weeks before the course so they can get to know their team, start to appreciate your organisational culture and complete outstanding admin.

- **At the beginning –** if your GA is new to the workplace, they will need guidance to settle in. The classroom may have been their previous "place of work" so having the autonomy to grab a cuppa or pop to the bathroom may be new to them. Conversely, they may need instruction on what is acceptable such as dress code, communication, when to take breaks, use of personal mobile phone, how to engage with team members, etc. Please also do not assume they are familiar with standard office packages.

- **Employer Handbook –** You will receive our Employer Handbook to provide greater detail on what expect across the four-year programme from academic content to apprentice progression, how best to support them through the process, and how we can best support you.

- **Agreements with UofG & SFC Requirements –** There is inevitably paperwork to complete as required by the GA funders, the Scottish Funding Council. This includes an Agreement between the learning provider and the employer, a Tripartite Agreement between the employer, GA and learning provider, and a standard registration form for the SFC. The good news is the GA Team is on hand to walk you and your GA through every step and wherever possible take the burden away from you. Please note the GA Team can provide sample documents for you to review at any time.

SHARING PROGRESS

Our shared aim throughout the apprenticeship is supporting your GAs to achieve their potential in the workplace and at university.

- **Catch Ups:** Scheduled twice a year, our Programme Director and Manager meet with your team to share academic progress, discuss well-being and further support we can offer. In addition to these meetings the GA Team are available on a totally flexible basis to provide interim progress reports or address any concerns you may have regarding your GA.

  When your GAs progress into years 3 and 4 we have an additional meeting with each GA and their Line Manager to explore and agree their subject choices for that academic year.

- **Community of Practice:** Our programme is relatively small which allows our employer partners to work collaboratively sharing experiences and best practice through informal events, newsletters and focused breakfasts.

CONTACT ADVISOR OF STUDIES/ MEET YOUR GA TEAM

Our Employer facing team comprises:

Dr Matthew Barr, Programme Director and Advisor of Studies for all GAs and Anna Doyle & Claire Johnston, Programme Managers (job share).

The team are a friendly, experienced bunch who encourage employers to reach out at any time for support, information – or just a chat!

In addition to our Employer facing team, we have a dedicated GA teaching team for Years 1 & 2 and in Years 3 & 4 the apprentices will specialise and be taught by experts in these respective fields.

Matthew Barr, Programme Director
matthew.barr@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Matthew Barr is Programme Director for the Graduate Apprenticeship in Software Engineering at the University of Glasgow, and Chair of the Ada Scotland Festival (ada.scot). He is also Director of Education at SICSA, co-Director of the University's Games & Gaming Lab, and BAFTA Scotland Games Jury Chair. He has published on various aspects of higher education, including graduate skills, game-based learning, and work-based learning. His book, Graduate Skills and Game-Based Learning, was published by Palgrave in 2019.

In 2021, Matt won the University of Glasgow Student Teaching Award for Best Advisor of Studies in recognition of the exceptional level of support he provides Graduate Apprentices.

Anna Doyle, Programme Manager (Job Share)

anna.doyle@glasgow.ac.uk

Anna is passionate about identifying young talent with the aim of creating career opportunities and ensuring a strong pipeline of skills for the Scottish economy.

She was previously Director of UK Operations for BIMA (The British Interactive Media Association) and Scottish Digital Community Lead. Prior to that Anna spent four years in the BBC Arabic Service newsroom and heading up a pan-BBC World Service change management programme. She has worked in a diverse range of industries from financial derivatives trading, petroleum engineering and spring manufacturing, spanning Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Anna has a BA(Hons) from the University of Hull. She sits on the ScotlandIS Diversity Council, is an ada.scot board member, and volunteers for Code Your Future, a not-for-profit organisation training refugees in coding.

Claire Johnston, Programme Manager (Job Share)

claire.johnston@glasgow.ac.uk

Claire is passionate about connecting talent with opportunity to realise potential and accelerate innovation in Scotland's economy.

Educated at the University of St Andrews (MA Hons) and the University of Edinburgh (MSc & LLM), Claire worked in recruitment, admissions and widening participation at both institutions. She became a founding team member of the Saltire Foundation and developed and managed their flagship international internship programme for 5 years, working closely with host organisations and all of Scotland's universities to implement a sustainable financial model and double the number of internship placements. As Project Manager for the Entrepreneurial Scotland Network, she went on to develop commercial mentoring and talent matching initiatives.

Claire is a native of the Isle of Arran and serves on several charitable boards connected to the island, focused on young people and education.