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**Future Skills Including Service Level Agreements**

**GP.HR4014**

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**1.0 Introduction**

Buckingham Group has a dedicated Future Skills Team to aid the business in recruiting fee-free employees, advising and supporting apprentices, trainees, graduates and long-term industry placements.

**1.1 Scope**

This Group Procedure sets out expectations between Future Skills, Recruitment Managers, Line Managers and Employees on the programme.

**1.3 Responsibility**

The Group HR Director is ultimately responsible for the Future Skills programme and any Service Level Agreements in place. They may choose to delegate the day-to-day operational management to the Future Skills Team as prescribed in this procedure.

**2.0 Recruitment**

**2.1 Future Skills Supported Recruitment**

Seasonal Recruitment Dates	Adhoc Recruitment Requests
<b>Apprentices:</b> Advertise May/ June for September start <b>Graduates &amp; Placements:</b> Advertise October/ November for next year Summer start	<b>Minimum 8 weeks to recruit dependant on number of applications</b>

The Future Skills Team require written pre-approval to recruit from the relevant Director/ Head of Department and Group Managing Director or Deputy Group Managing Director before advertising and interviewing potential candidates. Final package approval will be sought from the relevant Director before offer letter forms are sent to HR.

In order to progress recruitment of a potential future skills employee it will be necessary to confirm proposed site location (including area/ establishment to recruit from if applicable), together with confirmation of expected Line Manager and anticipated start date using form GP.HR4014.F01 Future Skills Recruitment Request. Once completed, GP.HR4014.F01 must be forwarded to the [Future Skills Team](#) for processing.

All potential new apprentices must attend an assessment day run by the Future Skills Team before appointments can be made. Recruitment and Line Managers, or any other nominated employees are welcome to attend on the day.

Trainees will have an initial screening interview with the Future Skills Team, with successful candidates then being handed over to Recruitment and Line Managers to arrange and conduct second interviews.



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Following second interviews for apprentices and trainees, and subject to appropriate feedback, the Future Skills Team will advise candidates accordingly on the outcome. The Future Skills Team will then seek final package approval from the relevant Director, complete the necessary forms and send all information to HR to draft and send an offer letter. Assuming all information is provided, the offer letter will be sent out within 3 working days.

Graduate and industry placement fairs will be arranged at universities generally around October/ November each year. Pre-approval, location and proposed Line Manager for intended recruits should be sent to the Future Skills Team prior to October for recruitment into roles to start following conclusion of studies the following year. Generally, the Future Skills Team will invite applications for Engineering, Quantity Surveying and Construction Management disciplines (unless other roles are specifically requested prior to October each year).

The Future Skills Team will assess applications to shortlist candidates and will subsequently arrange first interviews to be conducted prior to the end of the year. Following a successful interview candidates will be handed over to the Recruitment and Line Managers for second interview and Confirmation of Offer letter where appropriate.

To secure the best Graduate and Placement candidates, we should aim to have second interviews conducted and offer letters sent no later than February for a summer start.

Package approval and offer process as above, supported by the Future Skills Team.

For short-term, unpaid work experience placements please refer to the [People Hub Line Managers](#) page for supporting documents. These placements should be arranged at site/ department level however the Future Skills Team can be requested to attend for a one-hour slot during the placement to discuss careers in construction. A placement case study must be completed and sent to the Group Social Value Manager for reporting purposes.

### **2.2 Recruitment Not Initiated with Future Skills**

Occasionally candidates are referred directly to sites or departments via current employees or agencies that require the support of the Future Skills Programme. If any educational support is to be transferred over to Buckingham Group, advice must be sought from the Future Skills Team before committing to a potential candidate at interview. Failure to do so may result in the business not being able to follow through with the commitment(s) made to the candidate around education and/or fees required for them to continue on their current educational pathway.

Although it is not paramount for Future Skills to meet all candidates before joining the business, all future skills commitments must, once checked with the team, be included in the offer letter request form to HR. This ensures that future skills are aware of the new employees start date and educational commitments made so that we can adequately onboard/ transfer studies and provide support to the new employee.

### **3.0 On-Programme Support**

#### **3.1 Apprentices & Trainees**



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Upon joining the business, the Future Skills Team will book an introduction with new starters, usually during the first week, either face to face or via Microsoft Teams. The basis of the introduction is to meet the team and be advised of the support the team provides while on-programme. New starters will also be provided with details of their assigned mentor to contact and arrange how they would like the mentor-mentee relationship to work (Future Skills Team can be involved in this meeting if requested to offer advice).

### 3.2 Development Matrices

All site-based employees will be provided with a development matrix. Central Services roles will work from job descriptions provided upon joining and can be developed further with the Future Skills Team as required. Matrices should be reviewed regularly with Line Managers as part of the PPR process. Matrices include a comprehensive overview of the role apprentices and trainees are undertaking, as well as support with gaining Chartership with the relevant Professional Body. The Future Skills Team will request copies of matrices quarterly for recording and reporting purposes.

### 3.3 Training Provider Onboarding & Support

The Future Skills Team will coordinate onboarding with the relevant training provider as detailed in the offer letter. Some support from Line Managers will be necessary to complete required documentation, however the Future Skills Team must review all paperwork and sign on Buckingham's behalf before returning to the training provider. The Future Skills Team will ensure all apprentices are set up for payment on the DAS Account. Sponsorship letters for trainees are available upon request to provide details of where training providers are to send invoices to; the Future Skills Team will then raise a purchase order and send the payment approval to accounts to pay the training provider. Feedback of any kind is always gratefully received and appreciated when considering continuous use of any training provider. The Future Skills Team should especially be made aware of any issues relating to the training provider to enable escalation with the provider if necessary.

### 3.4 Quarterly Reviews

All Future Skills employees are required to engage in the quarterly review process. This is to ensure adequate support in both the workplace and educational setting whilst on the programme. January and July reviews are conducted via Microsoft Forms, which are sent out at the beginning of the month with a completion date usually around the end of the same month. April and October reviews are conducted face-to-face, either on site or via Microsoft Teams with Line Managers also in attendance. An email is sent out the month before the review requesting information on meeting preference and any dates to avoid; the Future Skills Team will then work with employees to get the review meetings booked in. A report is sent to Sector Directors/ Heads of Departments at the end of each review month, highlighting any non-attendance/ engagement with the quarterly review process.

Upon completion of the programme, apprentices and trainees are invited to a six-month review meeting to assess transitional support into their full-time role. These meetings are also reported to Sector Directors/ Head of Departments however it is not a mandatory requirement to complete this review.



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**3.5 Study Progression**

Towards the end of the apprentice or trainees' current level of studies (to a minimum L4 for site-based roles) the Future Skills Team will arrange to meet the employee to discuss available options relating to continuation on the programme or going full-time within the business. For those who wish to conclude their current studies and commence their role full-time, the Future Skills Team will pass those details on the HR Team so that they and the relevant business sector or department can arrange the necessary contract changes.

For those who wish to continue on the programme, the Future Skills Team will invite them to undertake a ten-minute presentation on what they would like to do next and why. The presentation, along with matrix, quarterly review engagement and training provider reports will then be reviewed, and employees will be informed on the decision made on whether to support the preferred pathway or a return proposal made, with clear reasoning on an alternative pathway to be supported. Onboarding and support then repeat as stated above.

**3.6 Study & Membership Discretionary Bonus Payment**

Upon completion of studies and/ or professional membership (including if this is part of the apprenticeship end point assessment), a bonus payment review will take place for both elements upon receipt of official certificates. Employees must also be performing satisfactorily in the workplace to be eligible for the bonus payment.

For those invited to attend a graduation ceremony, they will be entitled to an additional half day of annual leave to attend the occasion. Line Manager approval is still required as per annual leave policy.

**3.7 Graduates**

Upon joining the business, the future skills team will book an introduction with new starters, usually during the first week, either face to face or via Microsoft Teams. The basis of the introduction is to meet the team and be advised of the support the team provides while on-programme.

**3.8 Development Matrices**

As per Section 3.2.

**3.9 Quarterly Reviews**

As per Section 3.4.

**3.10 Chartership Support**

After six months, graduates are encouraged to liaise with their Line Manager and the Future Skills Team to discuss and confirm if they wish to be put forward for Chartership. If all agree, the Future



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Skills Team will put the graduate in touch with the relevant Buckingham employee heading up the training programme with the relevant professional body. Mentor support and any other requirements of the professional body (e.g. access to online systems) will be provided. Working on chartership takes place in graduates own time unless pre-approved by Line Management during working hours.

### **3.11 Promotion from Graduate Title**

Subject to satisfactory performance, as determined by Line Management, and feedback on engagement with the Future Skills processes, generally promotion from Graduate title is after one year in the business. All promotion and package details are dealt with between the sector/ department and HR. Future Skills are not privy to this information, however they will be informed of the promotion to complete the graduates time on-programme.

### **3.12 Industry Placements**

Industry placements are weekly paid employees on a fixed term contract lasting between twelve (summer) and fifty-two weeks (year out).

### **3.13 Onboarding**

HR will include placements on the starters & leavers schedule which informs IT to configure laptops for them. Sites/ departments will be contacted two weeks before the placement is due to start to remind them to arrange for an employee to pick up laptop(s) from Head Office or submit a new starter request via the Aspire portal requesting the laptop to be shipped to a site/ office.

During the placements first week, the Future Skills Team will arrange to visit to complete the required weekly paid onboarding paperwork and send over to the accounts payable team. A development matrix will also be provided to site-based placements giving them and their Line Manager a training plan to work on for the duration of the placement.

### **3.14 Placement Reviews**

Summer placements will be invited to book a review and feedback meeting towards the end of their placement. Year out placements will be invited to book two review and feedback meetings, the first after six months and a final review towards the end of their placement.

### **3.15 Transfer to Salaried Position**

Subject to satisfactory feedback from Line Managers, it is possible for placements to transfer onto a permanent contract of employment at the end of their placement and complete their degree studies part-time. Our preference would be to transfer onto an apprenticeship to conclude the degree and complete an end point assessment as part of the apprenticeship process. However, if this isn't possible, the business will fund up to £4,500 per academic year towards the part-time studies. The Future Skills Team will liaise with the placement and Universities to determine the best pathway.



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A permanent position would be subject to the standard recruitment and offer letter sign-off process, supported by the Future Skills Team. The placement would come under either the apprentice or trainee discipline, following the processes prescribed in Sections 2.1 - 2.6.