

## Apprenticeships in England

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) are actively supporting the development of a speech and language therapy degree apprenticeship that is being led by employers and by universities. We are delighted that the degree apprenticeship standard and the end point assessment have now been approved as ready to be delivered by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

The RCSLT Board of Trustees has agreed apprenticeships could offer important new opportunities for career progression to those already working in healthcare settings and to the existing SLT assistant workforce. In addition, apprenticeship routes may appeal to a new cohort of students who had not previously considered speech and language therapy as a career.

### Expectations of any pre-registration apprenticeship standard

The RCSLT has an important role to play in the accreditation of all speech and language therapy pre-registration courses. The RCSLT requirements for the accreditation of any pre-registration speech and language therapy apprenticeship course will not be any different to those of existing pre-registration courses. This is likely to have implications for the design of an apprenticeship standard, as it will need to ensure that it does not preclude the possibility of future accreditation by RCSLT; in particular any apprenticeship programme:

- will need to provide at least a degree-level qualification that will capture graduate-level learning outcomes to achieve RCSLT accreditation;
- will need to adhere to curriculum guidance published by the RCSLT, which includes international mobility under the Mutual Recognition Agreement;
- will need to reflect the breadth of UK speech and language therapy practice, that is to say, with clients of all ages and in all settings, and be explicit about the range of learning that needs to be demonstrated and assessed, including relating to practice-based learning;
- will be of sufficient length to cover the expected learning outcomes;
- will define a high-quality learning experience and support for apprentices;
- will align with HCPC requirements for eligibility to register to practise as an SLT in the UK and to use the protected title.

### Progress so far and next steps

Employers and universities have played a crucial role in the development of the apprenticeship standard and the end point assessment. The trailblazer group developed a rigorous apprenticeship standard that will enable apprenticeship courses to be developed that meet RCSLT accreditation requirements and HCPC requirements for registration. The Group took as a basis the RCSLT curriculum guidance. That has been translated into the very different format required of an apprenticeship standard.

We were pleased to see the positive response from members to the consultation on the standard in autumn 2018. We have also been contacted by many assistants keen to study via an apprenticeship who have not previously been able to consider the traditional routes.

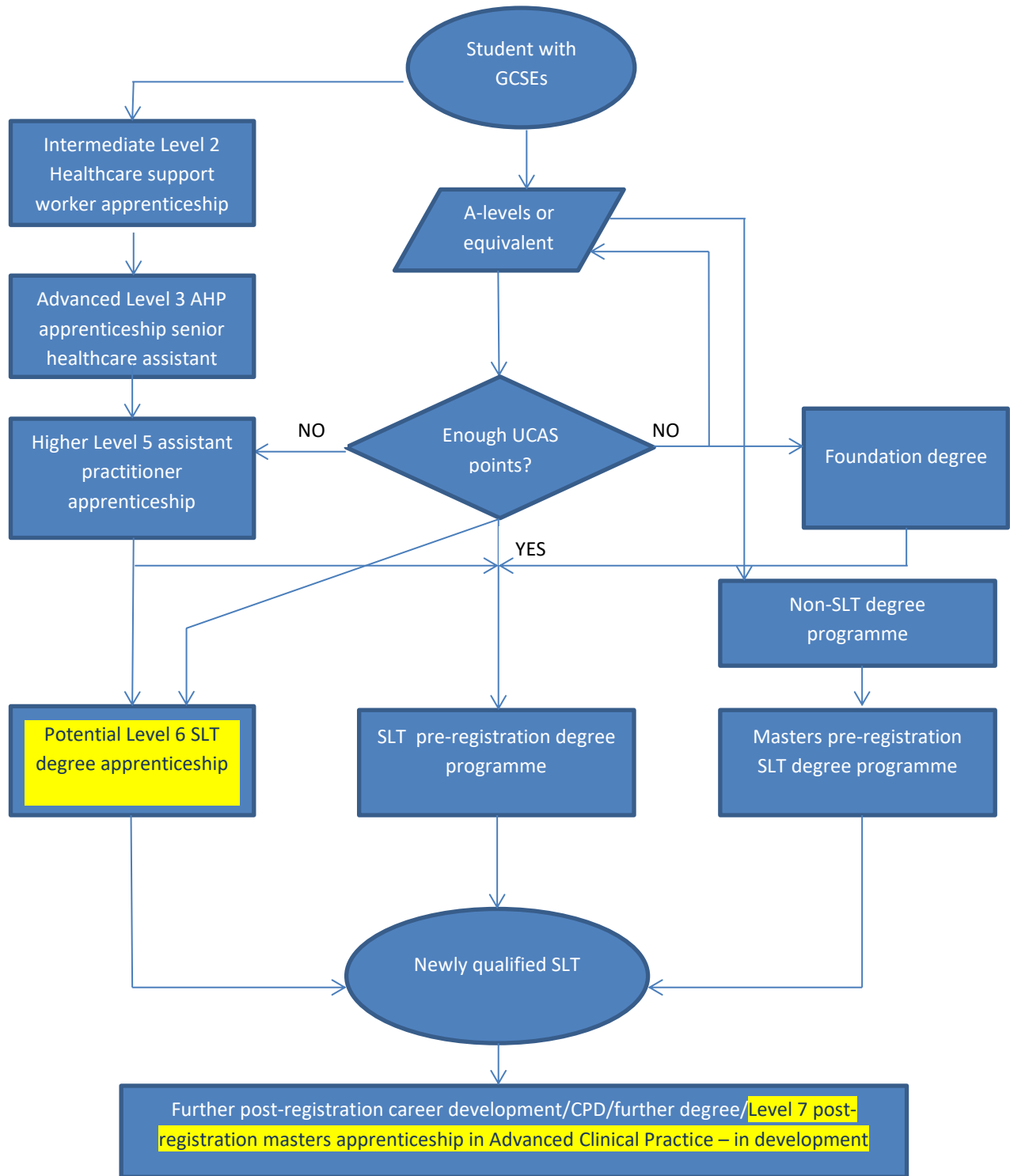
Now that the apprenticeship standard and the end point assessment have been approved, the focus of work will turn to implementation and delivery. The RCSLT will be developing guidance for employers, universities and apprentices about our expectations of what a quality apprenticeship will look like. We are also ready to help support employers and universities as they develop the new relationships that will be required to deliver apprenticeships.

The profession and potential new students have much to gain from a potential additional route to qualification, especially in the light of the removal of the NHS Bursary in England, and we are committed to supporting it.

This document will continue to evolve as policy develops on apprenticeships. Please check back for updates.

RCSLT  
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**Flowchart 1: Routes to SLT qualification in England (including potential future routes)**



**The NHS is promoting four levels of apprenticeship:**

**Intermediate-level apprenticeships**

Intermediate-level apprentices follow work-based learning towards Level 2 - equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grade A\*-C. These apprenticeships may be of interest to those interested in a career as a generic assistant working in general activities to support the Allied Health Professions or nursing.

**Advanced-level apprenticeships**

Advanced-level apprentices follow work-based learning towards Level 3 - equivalent to 2 A-levels. This level of apprenticeship usually requires five GCSEs (grade C or above) or to have completed an intermediate-level apprenticeship, and may be of interest to those in a career as an assistant working in a specific area.

**Higher-level apprenticeships**

Higher-level apprentices follow work-based learning towards Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 - equivalent to a foundation degree and above. To enter this level of apprenticeship, the candidate should ideally have 2 A-levels or have completed an advanced-level apprenticeship. This would be of interest to an individual working towards entering one of the healthcare professions.

**Degree-level apprenticeships**

Degree-level apprentices follow work-based learning towards Levels 6 and 7 - equivalent to a full bachelors or masters degree – this may be pre- or post-registration.

**FLOWCHART 2: Practical steps to developing a pre-registration degree apprenticeship in speech and language therapy**

