



Level 4

**Artificial Intelligence
& Automation
Apprenticeship**

Important Information



**University of
Sunderland**

Introducing the new Artificial Intelligence & Automation Apprenticeship

The North East has been designated as an AI Growth Zone, with public statements pointing to potential investment of up to £30 billion and more than 5,000 high-skilled jobs being brought to the region. Our new AI & Automation apprenticeship programme helps businesses start their AI journey to improve efficiency, reduce manual workload and safely introduce AI into day-to-day operations.

The apprenticeship focuses on practical application, enabling learners to identify inefficiencies, develop solutions and implement automation within their role including:

- Automating repetitive admin and manual tasks
- Streamlining processes to save time and reduce errors
- Using AI to generate insights and support decisions.

Learners develop real, transferable skills that directly impact business performance while building confidence in modern AI tools and helping to optimise the processes in the business.

About the Programme

The **Level 4** apprenticeship runs over **18 months** and is delivered through a mix of classroom & remote sessions, regular 1-2-1 reviews and workplace-based learning. Learners build skills in automation, data, AI tools and process improvement, applying these directly to real business tasks. Structured training is combined with practical projects to ensure consistent progress and clear impact.

All work completed will be related to the learners role within the business and we do not get them to complete extra assignments or exams but rather develop their occupational competence through practical application.

For this apprenticeship, the End-Point Assessment (EPA) comprises of three elements:

- Work-Based Project: Demonstrating the ability to identify inefficiencies and implement AI or automation solutions within the workplace.
- Professional Discussion: Based on a portfolio of evidence produced during the apprenticeship.
- Presentation with Questions: Showcasing the outcomes and impact of the learner's project work.

This programme has been developed alongside local businesses to tackle everyday challenges such as time-consuming admin, inefficient processes and inconsistent use of digital tools.

It focuses on **practical, work-related activity** rather than theory, meaning learners apply what they learn straight away to improve how the business operates. This leads to real outcomes such as reduced manual work, improved accuracy and better use of data. In plain English, it trains someone to spot friction, waste, duplication and avoidable admin, then improve those processes safely and sensibly.

By the end of the programme, the apprentice is not just trained, but actively contributing to making processes faster, simpler and more efficient across the organisation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some frequently asked questions regarding the new apprenticeship programme.

If you require any further information, please get in touch - our dedicated team is here to help.

Who is this apprenticeship suitable for?

It is suitable for both new and existing employees working in roles such as administration, finance, operations, marketing, or any area involving repetitive processes or data.

Do learners need prior experience in AI or coding?

No. This programme focuses on practical application using low-code/no-code tools and does not require a technical background for either the learner or their workplace mentor. The better entry qualities are curiosity, attention to detail, process thinking and the ability to explain ideas clearly to non-technical colleagues.

How is the apprenticeship funded?

Funding is provided through the apprenticeship levy or co-investment, depending on the size of the organisation. Speak to our business development team to find out the exact funding route for your business.

How is the apprenticeship delivered?

The apprenticeship has a typical duration of **18 months** during which the learner will be required to attend two days a month for Off the Job Training. Delivery is a mix of remote sessions, practical face to face workshops, and workplace-based learning, designed to apply skills directly to the learner's role.

How do we know if our business is ready?

A business is ready if it has clear processes to improve, a supportive manager, and a willingness to adopt new ways of working. Many employers do not think they need an AI apprentice. They do think they need someone to fix admin bottlenecks, reporting pain, customer-service backlogs and disconnected systems while building in-house digital capability rather than relying on external consultants.

Frequently Asked Questions (continued...)

Is AI safe to use in a business environment?

Yes, when used correctly. The apprenticeship includes training on data protection, GDPR, and safe implementation of AI tools. We also operate on a governance first approach to ensure cybersecurity.

What kind of projects will the learner complete?

Learners will work on real business projects such as automating workflows, improving reporting processes, or implementing AI tools within their organisation. Good projects are boring in the best possible way. They fix repetitive, messy, manual or error-prone processes that waste time and frustrate staff such as:

- Automating invoice or purchase-order processing
- Using AI to summarise and categorise customer enquiries
- Creating internal knowledge assistants for policies and procedures
- Automating routine reporting, dashboard updates or file handling
- Improving recruitment screening or interview scheduling workflows
- Building approval flows for forms, absence, expenses or onboarding
- Using AI safely to support drafting, note-making or quality checks.

The projects the learner completes will be decided through analysis and discussion of the business needs with the learner, employer and trainer.

What is required from the employer?

Employers must provide a suitable job role, a workplace mentor, and opportunities for the learner to apply their learning in real tasks alongside attending regular progress reviews. There is no requirement of existing AI expertise or coding knowledge for the business.

How quickly will we see results?

Most businesses begin to see value within the first **3–6 months** through small automation improvements and process efficiencies and apprentices should finish with the practical, transferable capability to analyse a workflow, select an appropriate AI or automation approach, test it responsibly, support users, and measure whether it actually improved anything.