



Apprenticeships: A sector approach from the HCA

One of the many important focus areas for the HCA, identified during the recent members' roundtables, was Apprenticeships. How the healthcare communications sector embraces this opportunity, and how we ensure we have apprenticeship standards appropriate for our profession, certainly needs cross-sector cooperation which the HCA can lead and facilitate.

The HCA has subsequently undertaken meetings and discussions to better understand the environment and identify the most appropriate way forward. In consultation with organisations such as the *Institute for Apprenticeships* we have identified a strategy which we believe is most appropriate for members and allows us to quickly open up the prospect of healthcare communications 'tailored' apprenticeships being available. We outline the background and proposed strategy here, and invite members interested in taking on apprentices in the next 12 months to engage with the HCA in working with the key stakeholders in the process.

Executive summary

- Apprenticeships offer HCA members a cost-effective way to bring new talent into the section and support their training
- As a sector, under the leadership of the HCA and in partnership with an identified main provider and training organisation, we can ensure the study undertaken by apprentices in our sector is tailored to their healthcare communications role

Call to action: If your organisation is interested in taking on apprentices within the next 12 months, please contact mikedixon@hca-uk.org and join an HCA members' group 'tailoring' apprenticeships specifically for healthcare communications.

Apprenticeships: Background

- [Apprentices](#) are aged 16 or over and combine working with studying to gain skills and knowledge in a specific job
- Apprentices can be new or current employees
- You can [get government funding](#) to cover some of the cost of training and assessing an apprentice if you're in England
- You must pay the apprentice at least [the minimum wage](#)
- Your apprentice must:
 - work with experienced staff
 - learn job-specific skills
 - study during their working week (for example, at a college or training organisation)



Getting funding

- You can get help from the government to pay for apprenticeship training
- The amount you get depends on whether you pay the apprenticeship levy or not. You pay the levy if you're an employer with a [pay bill over £3 million each year](#)
- **If you don't need to pay the levy**, you pay 10% towards the cost of training and assessing your apprentice
- **If you pay the levy**, you'll receive funds to spend on training and assessing your apprentices. The government will add 10%

Apprenticeship standards

Apprentices need to be employed and trained based on approved standards. One option, if a standard does not already exist, is to bring together a group of employers to 'trailblaze' a new standard. This is both resource and time intensive, typically taking significantly more than 12 months to fully establish before any apprenticeships can begin.

What have the HCA been investigating?

We have worked closely with the *Institute for Apprenticeships*, and other key stakeholder organisations with whom we will ultimately partner, to identify appropriate standards for our sector and how to tailor the training for these specifically for healthcare communications. This will allow the creation of tailored apprenticeships within our sector early next year, or even sooner.

Note: The Institute for Apprenticeships is the crown, non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Education to ensure the development of high quality apprenticeships so they are viewed and respected as highly as other education routes and to ensure that apprentices have the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to make a significant contribution to their job role, sector and employer.

The most appropriate standards available for healthcare communications

Apprenticeship in Marketing Communications

Having consulted with the Chartered Institute of Marketing, we propose that the Marketing Executive Standard (Level 4 - attached), which they helped establish, has also been developed with communicators in mind and is therefore highly relevant for those in our sector delivering brand related healthcare communications. By using this, about to be launched, standard, we will be able to then tailor the training and study for healthcare communications. More details on how this would be coordinated are outlined below.



Note: Level 4 is an equivalent educational level to a foundation degree and above

Apprenticeships in PR

Should there be enough interest in taking apprentices into Healthcare PR specific roles, we can deliver a similar scenario as marketing communications, this time using the Public Relations Assistant Standard (Level 4 - attached).

Identified training and main provider partner

The HCA has identified a main provider and associated training partner with whom we can work to ensure apprenticeships for our sector are tailored for healthcare communications. For any specific standard we need to identify between 10 and 15 apprenticeships that will be initiated over 12 months for it to be economically viable to tailor the study process. Under the leadership of the HCA, those organisations who agree to take on apprentices will, as a group, then be able to collaborate in guiding our partner organisations to ensure the study tailoring is relevant to the healthcare communicator's role.

Timings

The Public Relations Assistant Standard is approved for delivery and has full funding secured.

The Marketing Executive Standard is in development with the standard and assessment approved, but the funding still being negotiated. It is estimated this process will be completed by the start of 2019. However, with the standard approved, we can start the discussions for the tailoring in the meantime, so we are ready for delivery.

Helping members find apprentices

As part of a separate initiative which will support bringing new talent into our sector, the HCA will also be initiating activity to help identify potential apprentices for our members.

Networking

The HCA will organise networking events during the year specifically for apprentices joining our sector through this initiative.

If your organisation is interested in taking on apprentices within the next 12 months, please contact mikedixon@hca-uk.org and join an HCA members' group 'tailoring' apprenticeships specifically for healthcare communications.



MARKETING EXECUTIVE

Reference Number: ST0596

Details of standard

This apprenticeship standard is currently in development and its contents are subject to change

Occupational Profile

Marketing is vitally important to all businesses providing the insight to develop and deliver new products and services to meet ever-changing customer needs. It is the process of researching, developing, promoting and distributing, products or services through effective channels to engage with a range of target audiences. Occupations in marketing span most industries and sectors and the roles can sit within a specific company/agency that provides marketing deliverables and advice to external clients, or within an internal marketing team, delivering marketing activities to drive that business. Marketing teams generally work with external agencies to deliver specialist elements of their marketing campaigns.

A **Marketing Executive** will help shape, support and deliver marketing plans, working in conjunction with the Marketing Manager who will define the overall marketing strategy. A highly audience focused role which requires creativity, communication and project management skills - these individuals are responsible for planning and executing tactical and targeted marketing activity. Typical responsibilities include:

- Managing and maintaining key marketing channels, including digital, offline and social media
- Planning and delivering tactical integrated marketing campaigns
- Managing the production and distribution of marketing materials
- Liaising and networking with a range of stakeholders including customers, colleagues, suppliers (incl. agencies) and partner organisations
- Collecting and analysing research information to understand target audience behaviour and views across the market in general and the marketing mix
- Assisting in the achievement of brand positioning to agreed guidelines
- Organising and attending events such as conferences, seminars, receptions and exhibitions.

The Marketing Executive typically reports to a Marketing Manager.

Typical job titles include: Marketing Executive, Marketing Officer, Marketing and Communications Officer, Marketing Specialist, Communications Executive, Communications Specialist

Requirements: Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

Knowledge

The Marketing Executive requires an understanding of:

Marketing Concepts & Theories

- The fundamentals of marketing theory that support the marketing process e.g. the extended marketing mix (7P'S: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Physical environment, Process, People), product development, and segmentation

- The concepts of brand positioning and management and implementing process to support corporate reputation
- The principles of stakeholder management and customer relationship management (CRM), both internal and external, to facilitate effective cross-functional relationships internally, and channel and customer relationships externally.

Business understanding and Commercial Awareness

- The characteristics and plans of the business and sector they work within, including their vision and values
- How marketing contributes to achieving wider business objectives
- The target audience's decision making process and how that can influence marketing activities
- The sector specific legal, regulatory and compliance frameworks within which they must work, including current Data Protection regulations.

Market Research

- The principles of effective market research and how this can influence marketing activity e.g. valid data collection sources and methodologies and usage, including digital sources, and when to use quantitative and qualitative methods.

Products and Channels

- Basic principles of product development and product/service portfolios
- The marketing landscape and how routes to market interplay most efficiently, e.g. franchise model, distribution
- The features and benefits of different marketing communications channels and media, both digital and offline, and when and how to apply these.

Skills

The Marketing Executive is able to:

Marketing Campaigns

- Coordinate and maintain key marketing channels (both digital and offline)
- Plan and deliver tactical campaigns against SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) objectives
- Manage the production and distribution of marketing materials, e.g. digital, print and video content as appropriate.

Interpersonal and Communications Skills

- Produce a wide range of creative and effective communications, including ability to write and proofread clear and innovative copy, project briefs, and give confident presentations
- Able to engage and collaborate with a wide range of clients/stakeholders, across departments internally and with clients/suppliers externally to support marketing outcomes as required.

Service Delivery

- Use good project and time management to deliver projects/tasks/events as appropriate, effectively. Including the ability to divide time effectively between reporting, planning and delivery
- Coordinate several marketing campaigns/projects/events to agreed deadlines
- Effectively liaise with, and manage, internal and external stakeholders including suppliers to deliver required outcomes.

Budget Management

- Monitor project budgets within their scope of work using appropriate systems

and controls.

Evaluation and Analysis

- Evaluate the effectiveness of marketing campaigns by choosing the appropriate digital and offline data sources.
- Assimilate and analyse data and information from a range of sources to support marketing activities
- Evaluate data and research findings to derive insights to support improvements to future campaigns.

Systems and Processes

- Effectively use appropriate business systems and software to deliver marketing outcomes efficiently, for example to analyse data, produce reports and deliver copy
- Use appropriate technologies to deliver marketing outcomes e.g. digital/web analytics, social media, CRM.

Behaviours

The Marketing Executive is able to demonstrate:

Agile and flexible

- A tenacious and driven approach to see projects through to completion
- Being a proven 'self-starter' and have an adaptable approach to meet changing work priorities.

Creative Thinker

- A creative and analytical mind, with a willingness to think of new ways of doing things
- They come up with ideas and solutions to support the delivery of their work.

Resilience and continuous improvement

- A willingness to learn from mistakes, as not all activities go to plan, and improve their own performance as a result.

Professionalism and Emotional Intelligence

- A high level of professionalism, reliability and dependability with a passion for the customer
- A collaborative approach is central to how they work, showing empathy and being mindful to the needs/views of others
- Ethical behaviour in the way they approach marketing activities and their work, valuing equality & diversity.

Duration:

The typical duration of this apprenticeship is 15-21 months

Entry Requirements:

Entry requirements will be determined by individual employers

Qualifications:

Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the end-point assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement the apprenticeships English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3, and British Sign Language qualifications are an alternative to English qualifications for those whom this is their primary language.

Link to professional registration and progression:

This apprenticeship is designed to meet the requirements for registration as an Affiliate Member with the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM).

Level:

This is a Level 4 apprenticeship.

Review date:

After 3 years.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSISTANT

Reference Number: ST0311

Details of standard

Typical duration:

12-18 months

Typical job titles include:

Junior Account Executive, Junior Consultant, Junior Press Officer, Junior Publicist, Public Affairs Assistant, Campaign Assistant, PR Assistant & Communications Assistant.

Occupational Profile:

Public Relations (PR) and Communications concerns the building, protecting and maintaining of positive reputation for brands, organisations and individuals. It also concerns the way those brands, organisations and individuals communicate about themselves, their products or their services with the public, via different methods. The industry employs over 63,000 individuals in the UK and organisations and employers come from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Typically, PR & Communications Assistants either work in agencies or in-house for employers. They communicate with different people: the media, the public, internal colleagues or any number of different audiences to get their client's or organisation's message across and influence opinions and behaviour in the most effective way.

They are responsible for researching and understanding their clients' / organisation's goals, and then using their digital and communication expertise to support the day to day delivery of effective campaigns in order to deliver specific or organisational objectives. This could take various forms including supporting social media activity, blogs, press releases or planning events. The occupation requires using one's own initiative while supporting those leading on campaigns and so involves working closely with colleagues in a team environment.

Knowledge

A PR & Communications Assistant has a keen interest in, and demonstrable

knowledge and understanding of:

- ***Current affairs, the PR industry, the media and marketing*** – including sector specific insight, news, politics, contemporary culture, new consumer media technology, behavioural change theory and public relations best practice.
- ***Finance processes related to PR campaigns*** – managing timesheets and basic suppliers, including (but not limited to) office supplies, print production, social media advertising and event venue costs.
- ***The principles of operational management*** - effective planning, organising and prioritising of workloads and suppliers to meet deadlines and objectives, and key processes (e.g. status reports, databases, reporting).
- ***IT-*** how and when to use Word, Excel, PowerPoint, WordPress, EventBrite, Survey Monkey, Mailchimp, etc for maximum effectiveness in the delivery of campaigns.
- ***Planning and production processes involved in building campaigns*** – the basics of creating a communications strategy, developing communications tactics and implementing a crisis plan. Digital build and content creation timeframes, print deadlines, production lead-times and media deadlines.
- ***Public Relations & Communications objectives*** – how tactical targets can be set for activity, based on insight and strategy, to help meet overall individual or organisation requirements.

Skills

A PR & Communications Assistant has the skills to:

- ***Use IT effectively to support campaigns*** - can use bespoke social media / PR software, such as media databases and media monitoring tools to deliver activity.
- ***Build effective relationships & interpersonal communications*** – including developing contacts within the media and presenting ideas to stakeholders, colleagues and other interested parties in formal and informal settings.
- ***Assist campaigns by carrying out many support tasks*** - including desk research, event co-ordination, database management and reporting in compliance with agreed service / performance levels.
- ***Produce content (including but not limited to press releases, policy statements social media posts, leaflets, op-eds, feature pitches, live events)*** by using an accurate and effective written communication style tailored to different audiences and media.
- ***Support production of non-written content***, e.g. film production management, producing short user generated style content, live video streaming, social image creation, infographic production.
- ***Distribute content produced to maximise positive communications opportunities by:***
 - Using media relations process, pitching in stories as directed.
 - Creating media / influencer lists for use by colleagues when required.

- Using all key digital / social channels, networks and platforms.
- Using search marketing techniques, email marketing and paid media. Including the use of Google, Facebook and Twitter Business Manager tools.
- *Evaluate results by:*
 - Using appropriate systems and software to accurately log and archive content outputs and results (e.g. coverage, social media reach, event attendance).
 - Reporting back on findings and activity in a meaningful way to your manager.
 - Analysing the impact of communications activity, using quantitative data and updating analytical dashboards.

Behaviours

A PR & Communications Assistant demonstrates these behaviours at all times:

- Proactively updating colleagues on progress and flagging time slippages well in advance and managing your line manager's expectations.
- An awareness of pressures other members of the team may be facing and the need to offer support where necessary.
- An enthusiastic and can-do attitude, participating in all required training – and then sharing knowledge with other team members.
- Commitment to getting the job done wherever it is and however long it takes.
- Punctuality, reliability and personal responsibility.
- Creativity in the development of new ideas and in overcoming challenges which may be faced in delivery of the communications programme.

English & Maths

Apprentices must achieve level 2 English and Maths prior to taking their end-point assessment.

Professional Registration

Anyone successfully completing the apprenticeship will be eligible to apply for membership of the Public Relations & Communications Association (PRCA).

Review

After 3 years

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