

IRO Apprenticeship Overview for Applicants

Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager

v1.8 Feb 2020

The **Level 5 Operations/ Departmental Manager** apprenticeship standard has been developed by a group of leading employers to equip managers with the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the role. The apprenticeship standard has been approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and the Department for Education.

The Institution of Railway Operators (IRO) is an approved main provider for the apprenticeship standard and has used its unique understanding and position to add a rail context to the workshops and assessments. In addition to the taught modules and workshops for the apprenticeship standard content, apprentices will be offered nine rail context workshops to attend in our area hubs. These will be led by rail industry experts and offer apprentices an opportunity to broaden their understanding across the rail industry and extend their networks.

Additionally, the learning will be accredited by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) and apprentices will be given access to their high quality learning materials including their online management resource portal Management Direct. On successful completion, apprentices will achieve a Level 5 Award in Management and Leadership from the CMI.

The **Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager Apprenticeship** is a two-and-a-half-year programme suitable both for individuals who are at the start of their career in rail and want to take the first steps into professional management, as well as those who may already have developed some practical experience and now wish to develop their theoretical understanding of management and leadership.

An operations/departmental manager is someone who manages teams and/or projects, and achieving operational or departmental goals and objectives, as part of the delivery of the organisations strategy. They are accountable to a more senior manager or business owner. Key responsibilities may include creating and delivering operational plans, managing projects, leading and managing teams, managing change, financial and resource management, talent management, coaching and mentoring.

Roles may include: Operations Manager, Regional Manager, Divisional Manager, Department Manager and specialist managers.

There is no age limit and managers may already have experience of the role, or they could be relatively new to management. Regardless, the apprenticeship will support you in developing your operational and management capabilities in rail.

Benefits to the employer include:

- The development of a professional staff member who will enhance the leadership and management of the organisation
- A manager who understands the importance of their role and its scope
- An individual with a broad understanding of the rail industry
- Development of the employer's business team and specialist expertise gained in areas including Operational Management, Project Management, Finance, Interpersonal Excellence, Leading People, Managing People, Building Relationships and Communication.

Successful apprentices will achieve:

- A **Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager** apprenticeship certificate from the Institute for Apprentices (IfA)
- Enhanced membership of the IRO (level tbc)
- CMI Level 5 Award in Management and Leadership
- Full membership of the CMI, and those with three years of management experience can apply for Chartered Manager status through the CMI
- On-the-job experience
- A professional pathway for future development
- Level 2 in maths and English (if qualifications not already achieved)

Programme Overview

Should you wish to join the Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager apprenticeship you will commit to a 27 month programme of study. You are supported by a tutor, a coach and your line manager and have networking opportunities at face-to-face workshops. Apprenticeships require employers to agree to 20% off-the-job training for the apprentice (which can include attendance at workshops, scheduled learning exercises and coaching sessions).

Once accepted onto the programme, you will agree an individual learning plan with a tutor and your line manager. You then begin your studies, completing the knowledge elements relevant to your apprenticeship Standard, and developing a portfolio of evidence of the skills and behaviours listed in the Standard. Most units will begin with a face-to-face workshop and the remainder of your studies will be online, maximising the flexibility of learning. In addition, you will have a conference call with your IRO coach and your Line Manager every 12 weeks plus supporting phone calls about every six weeks. This will ensure, with your line manager's support, that learning is put into practice and help you develop your portfolio of evidence.

In order to successfully complete the apprenticeship, you will need to attend a one-day assessment centre (end-point assessment or EPA) with an external assessor once you have completed all activities. This end-point assessment (EPA) should take place within 8-12 weeks of the successful completion of your apprenticeship studies.

Structure

Level 5 Operations/ Departmental Manager

The apprenticeship includes 20% of time spent off-the-job training (which includes attendance at workshops etc.) The programme includes units on:

L5 Apprenticeship Standard units	IRO rail contextual modules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading People • Managing People • Building Relationships • Communication • Operational Management • Project Management • Finance • Awareness of Self • Management of Self • Decision Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail business • Delivering customer services • Delivering passenger and freight services • Emergency and incident management • Managing Safety • Operational planning and timetabling • Rail people and change • Performance management • Rail engineering

The programme will develop and examine the knowledge, skills and behaviours of these activities associated with the role of the Operations/Departmental Manager in rail.

The apprenticeship standard teaching includes 10 units which each have a one day workshop, plus there is a one day induction at the start and a one day preparation for EPA (end point assessment) at the end. They are spaced at about one every 10 weeks, with content-heavy units getting a bit more time. All the dates are agreed up front and attendance at these workshops is as far as possible compulsory.

In addition, you will be invited to attend 9 one day rail context workshops which offer the wider rail learning and the context for the management learning. These will be put on about every 12 weeks and apprentices will be invited to book on to these at a date and location that is convenient.

Maths and English

It is a requirement that you are able to evidence that you are working at Level 2 in Maths and English. Should you not have these GCSE qualifications (or their equivalent) or be unable to find your original certificates, then you will need extra time in addition to the 20% off-the-job training time to gain these qualifications. Functional skills learning takes place online via our subcontractor Total People Limited.

Cost

The apprenticeship costs £7000. If you are employed by a levy-paying organisation, then the cost is covered by the Apprenticeship Levy. As long as your organisation has sufficient funds in their digital apprenticeship account (DAS) then there is no additional cost for the programme delivery. If you work for a non-levy paying organisation, then please contact us for further details.

You will need to agree with your line manager/employer whether your organisation will cover the cost of travel. It is unlikely that you will require overnight accommodation, but it is

recommended that you confirm what your organisation will cover prior to the programme commencing.

The role of your line manager

Applications will only be accepted from individuals who have the support of their line manager. The IRO as Main Provider have to be satisfied that each party understands the commitment being made. Your line manager will be asked to confirm and sign that they have read guidance documents and agree to their own and your participation.

The role of the Line Manager

Applications will only be accepted from individuals who have the support of their line manager. The IRO as Main Provider must be satisfied that each party understands the commitment being made. Your line manager will be asked to confirm and sign that they have read guidance documents and agree to their own and your participation.

The line manager will be required to:

- Ensure that the apprentice is given time to attend workshops, meetings and off-the-job learning activities
- Support the apprentice identifying opportunities for them to develop their skills and behaviours alongside their learning
- Observe their apprentice undertaking certain activities e.g. giving a presentation
- Attend a progress review between the IRO reviewer, the apprentice and line manager, every 12 weeks
- Attend induction with the apprentice to ensure that all key parties are aware of the requirements of the apprenticeship. This will give them a better understanding of the journey you will be undertaking as an apprentice, and how they can help and support you along the way and ensure you are given the best possible chance of completing your apprenticeship to the maximum of your ability.

Your line manager (and mentor if you have one) will also be invited to attend induction.

Off-the-job (OTJ) time commitment

In addition to the above-mentioned workshops etc., apprentices must be given time to learn and develop their skills and behaviours. OTJ time should be flexible to minimise the impact in the workplace and should be agreed between you and your line manager prior to you starting the programme. For an apprenticeship, your organisation is required to allow you 20% of your work time to study; this includes workshops and meetings with your coach, but it also includes any learning or development activities that your role requires, for example meetings with your line manager to discuss your work, work-based dialogue between colleagues etc.

If some of the apprenticeship activities occur at weekends and these are not working days in your employment contract, it is important the IRO is shown an agreement between you and your employer that TOIL (Time Off In Lieu) is available to cover any such time they spend.

Next Steps

If the IRO apprenticeship seems the right way forward for you and you are confident that your line manager is committed to you studying the whole programme (plus end-point assessment), and will support you in this, then please get in touch with the learning and development team in your organisation.

Cohorts of 12-14 apprentices are negotiated with employers and workshops set up at suitable locations for the group. New cohorts can be made up of mixed employers.

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