

3.2 Partners for apprenticeship formation

As stated earlier, there are four primary partner roles involved in any apprenticeship programme, all of which are likely to be represented in any consortium established to propose and develop an apprenticeship. These are:

- Employers of apprentices
- The Coordinating Provider
- Collaborating providers who may or may not be relevant providers, including off-the-job education and training providers and other providers
- Apprentices

To avoid doubt and assist those most directly involved in programme development and provision, it is useful to explain some of the terms used in these guidelines to ensure that all stakeholders interpret them in the same way.

- **An Employer of Apprentices** should be taken to mean any contractual employer of apprentices that has been approved by the statutory regulator for apprenticeship. Where the term “employer” or “enterprise” is used, it should be taken (where the context requires) to have the same meaning for the purpose of the guidelines.
- **The Statutory Regulator** is responsible for fulfilling those functions assigned to it under the 1967 Industrial Training Act or its successors. This role is statutorily assigned to SOLAS. This role is distinct from SOLAS’s role as a provider of apprenticeships or as funder of apprenticeships. The statutory regulator appoints authorised officers who carry out activities on its behalf.
- **A Consortium** is a group, normally led by employers and including providers, involved in the development and provision of an apprenticeship programme.
- **A Provider** is a person (an entity with legal personality) who provides, organises or procures a programme of education and training.
- **A Coordinating Provider** is a relevant or linked provider who is ultimately responsible for providing (as defined by the 2012 Act) an apprenticeship programme. Among its responsibilities are the development and maintenance of the curriculum and assessment procedures for the programme and leading the collaborating providers involved. To act as a Coordinating Provider for an

apprenticeship programme, the entity must be a **relevant or linked provider** under the 2012 Act. This means, among other things, that it must be a legal entity and the provision of education and training must be one of its principal functions. If an entity is not already a relevant provider, it may become one through a QQI process.

- **A collaborating provider** is a provider who is formally involved in the provision of an apprenticeship programme and accountable in this respect to the Coordinating Provider.
- **An “off-the-job-provider”** is a collaborating provider involved in an apprenticeship programme with a responsibility for off-the-job education or training. It may be the Coordinating Provider, but if it is not, it is expected to be accountable to the Coordinating Provider for delivery of those elements of the programme within its control.
- **A Relevant Provider** is as defined in section 2(1) of the 2012 Act.
- **A Linked Provider** is as defined in section 2(3) of the 2012 Act.
- **A Programme Board** is as defined in section 3.7.6 (during development) and in section 4 (following development).
- **An Initial Consortium Steering Group** is as defined in section 3.7.
- **A Consortium Steering Group** is a governing entity that might be usefully constructed and established (as envisaged in Appendix 2) and whose role would be to ensure that the apprenticeship programme conforms to, and evolves with, the requirements of the occupation. Its purpose would be to ensure that the apprenticeship programme is enterprise-led and meets labour market needs.
- **Funding Bodies** for apprenticeship are SOLAS and the Higher Education Authority (HEA). One or both of these bodies will fund each apprenticeship programme in accordance with terms and conditions that they determine.