

Protected Learning Time

Level 4 Dental Practice Management

Protected learning time, also commonly known as 'off-the-job training', or 'OTJ', is a statutory requirement for an apprenticeship.

It's learning that the apprentice completes during their normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

- Apprentices must use this time to complete activities that are outside of their usual working role.
- The activities must focus on teaching new skills and knowledge, not assessing existing skills.

How much protected learning time is needed?



The minimum off-the-job hours have been reduced

Level 4 Dental Practice Management Apprenticeship – Protected Learning Time Requirements

The new minimum requirement for Protected Learning Time is **418 hours** across the full duration of the Level 4 Dental Practice Management apprenticeship.

For apprentices completing the programme over **17 months** (approximately 74 weeks), this averages out to 5.7 hours of Protected Learning Time per week.

If an apprentice completes **7 hours per week**, they could reach the 418-hour requirement sooner, potentially enabling them to complete earlier than planned. This approach also provides flexibility for learners who may need additional support, allowing them to continue with 7 hours per week for the full 18 months to meet their learning and development needs.

Importantly, Protected Learning Time hours are flexible and do not need to be completed evenly each week. For example, an apprentice might do 2 hours one week and 7 hours the next. As long as the total minimum of **418 hours** is met by the end of the programme, the distribution of hours is entirely within your control.

Please note, protected learning time can be completed outside of working hours if it is agreed, documented and confirmed that the learner was paid for these hours, or time given back in lieu. Completing these hours outside of working hours should be an exception, not the norm, for example, when there is a staff shortage.

What this means for you

- More flexibility for your practice and team scheduling
- Highest achievement rates in the UK – 30% above the national average.
- Choose your preferred study day
- We're proud to support practices with a training model that truly works for them.

Learning and development activities

- **Formal training completed:** Any mandatory or optional training sessions, such as CPD covering compliance softwares, mentor training, finance and internal recruitment.
- **E-learning modules or webinars:** Completing online courses or attending industry webinars about communication skills, patient management software, or specific dental management specialities.
- **Independent research:** Conducting market and competitor analysis to inform and strengthen marketing activity. Undertaking research into equality, diversity and inclusive recruitment practices. Proactively staying up to date with current guidelines, regulations and industry news from the British Dental Association (BDA), General Dental Council (GDC) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- **Professional reading:** Reading articles or newsletters from dental journals (e.g., Association of Dental Administrators and Managers (ADAM), Dental Nursing, British Dental Journal) about best practice in dentistry and practice management.
- **Mock presentations or discussions:** Preparing for your End-Point Assessment by practicing your presentation skills and holding mock professional discussions to prepare for your assessment.
- **Role-specific development:** Learning and putting into practice key skills such as team rota management and health and safety procedures.
- **Company information:** Reading through updates, new practice policies, or procedures - like safeguarding changes, legislation compliance, new cross-infection protocols, or updated reporting requirements.
- **Patient updates:** Understanding changes in patient medical histories, new treatment plans, GDPR requirements, and patient confidentiality considerations, as well as health and wellbeing updates. Adapting communication styles appropriately to ensure clarity, sensitivity and compliance.



Application and reflection

- **Your own supervision:** Reflecting on feedback and goals discussed with your Tempdent Tutor Assessor or Workplace Mentor, including actions to improve your management techniques.
- **Workplace projects:** Contributing to improving patient flow and overall experience, or introducing new marketing campaigns to grow your practice.
- **Mentoring others:** Showing a new staff member how to conduct themselves within the practice, and the patient experience you strive to uphold, and reflecting on how teaching helped you improve.
- **Action planning:** Setting goals in your development plan based on your recent learning and feedback.

What makes Protected Learning Time evidence valid?

To meet government requirements, all Protected Learning Time training should be:

Planned

It should be part of your apprenticeship journey.

Relevant

Clearly linked to your apprenticeship standards and development.

Don't forget when logging hours in 

Always include a summary of what you learned. This reflection helps turn your experiences into valuable learning evidence.

Where possible, also link your activity to specific **Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs)** in your apprenticeship standard.