

# Protected Learning Time

## Level 2 Dental Reception Excellence Apprenticeship

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?

#### Level 2 Dental Reception Excellence Apprenticeship – Protected Learning Time Requirements

The new minimum requirement for Protected Learning Time is **278 hours** across the full duration of the Level 2 Dental Reception Excellence Apprenticeship.

For ease of planning, this equates to approximately **6 hours per week**.

If an apprentice completes more than **6 hours per week**, they could reach the 278-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 6 hours per week for the full 12 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 **278 hours** is met by the end of the programme, the distribution of hours is entirely within your control.

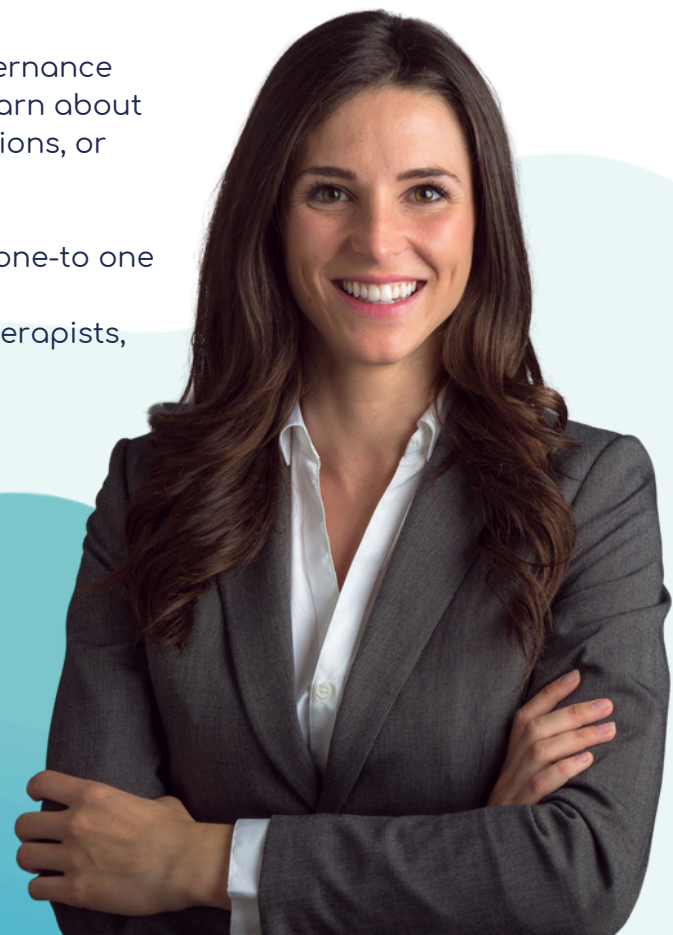
Please note, protected learning time can be completed outside of working hours if it is agreed, documented and confirmed that the learner was paid for these hours, or time given back in lieu. Completing these hours outside of working hours should be an exception, not the norm, for example, when there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

### What this means for you

- More flexibility for your practice and team scheduling
- 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 Basic Life Support (BLS), medical emergencies, or fire safety training.
- **E-learning modules or webinars:** Completing online courses about communication skills, patient management software, and compliance topics.
- **Independent research:** Looking up dental treatments, oral hygiene products, scope of practice for the dental team, researching the General Dental Council (GDC) standards or CQC regulations.
- **Shadowing or coaching:** Observing and learning from experienced colleagues - e.g., shadowing a Head Receptionist or a Mentor completing complex treatment bookings, patient finance approvals or learning how to utilise patient management functionality options.
- **Cross-department learning:** Spending time with the dental team to understand treatment options and how each role contributes to overall patient care.
- **Role-specific development:** Learning to use electronic patient record systems, payment systems, or platforms to order supplies.
- **Company information:** Reading through updates, new practice policies, or procedures - like safeguarding, health & safety and data protection changes, or updated reporting requirements.
- **Meetings attended:** Practice meetings, clinical governance meetings, or patient care discussions where you learn about new approaches, updates to dental procedure options, or service improvements.
- **Support or guidance received:** Learning through one-to one conversations with your Practice Manager, Head Receptionist, Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Therapists, or Laboratory Technicians.



## Application and reflection

- **Your own supervision:** Reflecting on feedback and goals discussed with your Practice Manager or Mentor, including actions to improve your performance.
- **Workplace projects:** Contributing to improving patient flow, updating stock management systems, or implementing new digital dentistry workflows.
- **Mentoring others:** Showing a new staff member how to carry out a reception task (e.g., booking a patient's appointment, processing payments) and reflecting on how teaching helped you improve.
- **Action planning:** Setting goals in your development plan based on your recent learning or feedback from your skills coach.

## 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 **bud**

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.

Have any questions? Contact your Skills Coach directly or email [customersuccess@babington.co.uk](mailto:customersuccess@babington.co.uk) and the team will be able to answer any questions you may have. Alternatively, call **0333 323 4050**