Microsoft UK Partner Apprenticeship FACT Sheet

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	
Microsoft	**Microsoft Partner Apprenticeship**	
- *Corporation* - *Founded in Albuquerque, New Mexico, US* - *Headquarters in Redmond, WA, US*	*Microsoft devised its Partner Apprenticeship program in 2008 to support young professionals in building the skills and experience to meet the needs of UK business and its network of supply-chain partners delivering ICT services. To this, Microsoft facilitates the placement and delivery of c3,500 apprentices aged 16 to x24 annually by working through a select group of training partners, and communicating the opportunity to young people, employers and Government.* *Our goal is for the program to become the established, alternative route to university for young people entering a career in IT working with Microsoft technologies*	
Vision: *The Microsoft Partner Apprenticeship sits under Microsoft's global YouthSpark initiative the goal of which is to empower 300 million young people with opportunities for education, employment, and entrepreneurship.*	**Type of Program:** *Vocational Training program aimed at young people* **Partners:** *The program is delivered in England by six 'Learning Partner' training providers (QA, Remit, Baltic, Firebrand, IT Skillsman & PDS) and Scotland by two (QA & YouTrain); employers are mainly Microsoft Partners but increasingly Microsoft customers; other partners include City & Guilds (UK Vocational Education Organization), e-Skills (UK IT Sector Skills Council – a state-sponsored, employer-led organization to address skills issues in its respective sector)), Skills Funding Agency (a division of the UK Government's Department of Business Innovation & Skills (BIS))* **Funders:** *Although Microsoft does not receive any funding directly, the providers are funded to deliver the program by UK Government, specifically BIS*	**Duration:** *Apprenticeships last a minimum of one year but can progress up to the equivalent of degree level.*
Mission: *To grow a workforce of young people to work in specialized IT roles, provide opportunity to individuals who would otherwise not have the opportunity for an IT career path, and align partner channels with skilled talent.*	**Target Group**: *Target beneficiaries are aged between 16-24 and will not hold a degree level qualification* **Target Skills:** *Beneficiaries will receive either a Level 3 or Level 4 IT Apprenticeship (awarded by the Sector Skills Council); a City & Guilds Diploma and/or Certificate in IT; and two levels of Microsoft Certification: Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) and Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP). It is these Microsoft Certifications that are most attractive to employers and young people as they are the industry benchmarks that demonstrate competence in specific technologies. The Certifications range from IT user to IT professional and developer depending on the 'flavor' of the program. There are currently six flavors: Desktop Support, Server Support, Database Support, developer, Technical Sales, IT Applications Specialist/ Business Admin*	**Operating in:** *The Partner Apprenticeship currently operates only in the UK*

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Target Industries: *The program prepares young people to work primarily in IT roles and/or within the IT industry. However, the companies in which they work operate across many sectors (Finance, Manufacturing, Logistics, etc.) and we are seeing more 'end-user' customers directly employing IT apprentices.*	**Since:** *Microsoft devised its Partner Apprenticeship program in 2008*
PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	**RESULTS**
In a typical one year apprenticeship: • *Microsoft supports the training providers through supporting program design and delivery* • *This includes access to certifications, e-learning, lesson plans and other key learning benefits* • *Microsoft communicates the opportunity through its UK Partner Network interested in taking on an apprentice* • *Microsoft also supports the providers in communicating to young people why the apprenticeship program is an attractive proposition and actively increase rates of female participation.* • *Part of this is through an Ambassador Network of ex-Microsoft Apprentices who attend careers fairs, parliamentary receptions, schools visits and arrange technical demo sessions.* • *Apprentices are recruited into a Microsoft Partner or Customer prior to program start* • *Recruitment criteria is based on some school-level qualifications but more so on potential* • *The program is split between training with a training provider and applying the knowledge gained in the workplace* • *Training consists of either week-blocks or day release* • *Delivery methods include traditional face-to-face classroom, residential 'boot camps' but also fully remote using Microsoft Technology (Lync) as a virtual classroom and assessment tool* • *Learning is front-loaded to build the apprentices usable skillset as quickly as possible whilst maintaining time in the workplace* • *The program aims for apprentices to be given billed activity by 3 months* • *By 6 months, the apprentice should be performing 90-100% of*	*Over 7,500 apprentices started their career through this route in over 5,000 employers since the program was rolled out nationally in 2010.* *We are currently hitting 3,500 apprentice starts per year* *92% of apprentices stay with the company with which they started their apprenticeship*

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	the full role • *Then final 6 months involve completing the learning (including the MCP certifications) and building further knowledge and experience* • *Once qualified, apprentices are then regarded as IT professionals with an opportunity to progress to other vendor certification, higher apprenticeships or degree level qualifications.* • *Microsoft maintains an ongoing dialogue with Government, NGOs and other relevant bodies to ensure the Apprenticeship program is prioritized and recognized*	
Values*: To be a part of reversing some of the economic damage brought on by youth unemployment, and educational debt.*	**FUTURE GOALS/SCALING STRATEGY**	
	The goal is for the program to become the established, alternative route to university for young people entering a career in IT working with Microsoft technologies *We will continue to support the training providers in scaling their activity as well as ensuring the program are recognized and reflected in changes to government apprenticeship policy. We will also continue to grow new methods of delivery using technology such as remote and MOOC to ensure employers or young people in any location can participate*	
Theory of Change: *Support an industry relevant, up to date Microsoft Channel Partner Apprentice program to deliver the required applied skills and experience to businesses – all through the Apprenticeship "earn while you learn" model.*	**LESSONS LEARNED & SUCCESS FACTORS**	
	Delivering real jobs with industry- recognized qualifications that is supported by one of the world's leading software company in partnership with UK government has all contributed to making this a hugely successful program. More so than any of these points however is the ability of the program to address skill shortages in the IT sector by opening up a career route to many young people who would have otherwise not considered a career in the sector. *By constantly consulting with employers to ensure the continued relevance of both content and delivery, we have ensured the program's continued success. We have also ensured the program is recognized by government and other groups for is relevance and success and have built on this recognition to give our SME Partners a voice in shaping of the future of apprenticeships in the UK.*	

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MARKET ALLIGNMENT:

From consultation and feedback from members of the Microsoft Partner Network (MPN), of which there are 24,000 in the UK, and input from Microsoft Learning & Certification, the Microsoft Partner Apprenticeship produces optimum certification combinations for apprenticeship programmes specific to entry level roles within Partners and other businesses. MPN includes companies that support, develop and resell Microsoft technologies. They are all independent of Microsoft and range in size from micro to global. By tracking these businesses' changing requirements, and taking advantage of its successful Learning and Certification programs, Microsoft has supported an industry relevant, up to date Microsoft Partner Apprentice program to deliver the required applied skills and experience to businesses.

TECHNOLOGY USED IN PROGRAMS:

All flavors and providers use eLearning and MOOCs (through portals such as Microsoft Virtual Academy) to augment and support face-to-face delivery. However, in October 2013, Microsoft launched a 'remote' version of the program through IT Skillsman using Skype for Business as a virtual classroom and assessment tool to replicate the face-to-face experience of the physical classroom. This innovation was introduced to ensure employers and young people could participate in the program, even if they were not near a physical classroom.

Links: *For more information about the program in England, please go to: https://mspartner.microsoft.com/en/uk/Pages/Training/apprenticeships.aspx; or in Scotland: https://mspartner.microsoft.com/en/uk/Pages/Training/apprenticeships-scotland.aspx. To find out more information about each course or to apply, please go to: QA - http://apprenticeships.qa.com/; Remit IT Academy - http://www.remit.co.uk/it_academy; Firebrand - http://www.firebrandtraining.co.uk/apprenticeships/programmes; IT Skillsman - http://www.itskillsman.co.uk; Baltic Training Services - http://www.baltictraining.com/; YouTrain – http://www.youtrain.com; PDS - http://www.pds-group.co.uk/apprenticeships/it-apprenticeships/microsoft-apprenticeships/*