OTMA

AI AND AUTOMATION PRACTITIONER, LEVEL 4

The facts, for anyone considering joining the programme or putting a member of staff forward.

UK GOVERNMENT APPROVED APPRENTICESHIP STANDARD

QUALIFICATION	**Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation practitioner**
STANDARD REFERENCE	**ST1512, version 2.1 / LARS code 828**
LEVEL	**Level 4 (equivalent to the first year of a degree)**
APPROVED BY	**Skills England. Quality assured by Ofqual**
STATUS	**Approved for delivery, available for starts**
TOTAL DURATION	**18 months typical: 15 months on programme, then end point assessment**
TIME COMMITMENT	**Around 7 hours a week, within paid working hours**
DELIVERY	**Live online. One four hour group session a month. No in person days**
FUNDING BAND	**Up to £18,000 per apprentice**

01 WHO IT IS FOR

This is an apprenticeship, so the apprentice must be **employed**. It is not a course an individual can enrol on privately. It suits someone already working in or alongside operations, service delivery, customer support, finance or a change function, who has real processes around them that could be improved.

- They must be in a role with **genuine automation or process work to do**, not a hypothetical project
- They need **access to the systems** they will be working with, and permission to build
- The employer names a **workplace mentor** and agrees to release around 7 hours a week
- Existing experience counts: significant prior AI or automation experience is assessed at onboarding and the programme and funding adjusted accordingly

Typical job titles on this standard include process automation analyst, digital operations technician, business process support executive, digital productivity consultant and workflow solutions assistant.

02 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- **Employment and eligibility checks** at onboarding: residency, employment status, contracted hours and prior qualifications
- **English and maths** must be completed in line with apprenticeship funding rules. Most Level 4 apprentices already hold GCSEs. Anyone without them is enrolled onto Functional Skills alongside the programme, and those hours are additional to the 420
- **Initial and diagnostic assessment** for everyone, plus a digital and accessibility needs assessment so reasonable adjustments are in place before the first session

There is no formal academic entry requirement beyond the funding rules. The workplace suitability check matters more than prior qualifications.

03 THE TIME COMMITMENT, IN DETAIL

- **4 hours a month** live online, as one group session with the tutor
- **Around 5 hours a week** of the apprentice's own working time, applying it to a real process in their business
- **420 hours minimum** of off the job training across the programme, which is the compliance minimum for this standard
- All of it sits **inside paid working hours**. Not evenings, not weekends

Off the job training does not mean away from the desk. It means learning something new that relates to the standard, during working hours. Recording those hours is part of the apprentice's responsibility and is checked at every review.

04 WHAT HAPPENS, MONTH BY MONTH

Thirteen taught sessions across fifteen months. Each one is applied to the apprentice's own workplace process that month, so the learning lands on a real problem rather than a case study.

PHASE 01 ORIENTATION — MONTHS 1 TO 2

01 The Practitioner Role, and How AI and Automation Actually Work

The occupation and their own role mapped to the 15 duties. Off-the-job training explained properly, so the log starts in week one.

02 Responsible AI: Law, Ethics and Governance

UK GDPR in automated processes. Automated decision-making rights, and where the law says a human must stay involved.

PHASE 02 DISCOVERY — MONTHS 3 TO 5

03 Process Discovery, Mapping and Opportunity Analysis CHECKPOINT BUILD 1

As-is before to-be. Interviewing the people who do the work and cannot describe how they do it.

04 Data Foundations: Quality, Bias and Error

Profiling a real dataset live. Preparation, conversion, and spotting the errors that break an automation later.

05 Designing for People: Requirements and Human-Centred Design CHECKPOINT BUILD 2

Gathering requirements from people who do not know what they want. Writing user stories that survive contact with reality.

PHASE 03 BUILD — MONTHS 6 TO 9

06 Working with AI Tools: Prompting and Evaluation

Specifying output precisely. Grounding answers in real documents, and scoring quality rather than judging by impression.

07 Building with Low-Code and No-Code Automation CHECKPOINT BUILD 3

Choosing a platform for the organisational context. Building live, including letting things fail on purpose.

08 Connecting Systems: APIs, Integrations and AI Services

Event-driven patterns. Choosing an AI service, and connecting systems that were never designed to talk.

09 Testing, Assurance and Documentation

Designing test cases that find real defects. Assessing viability, and making an honest go-live recommendation.

PHASE 04 **EMBED**		MONTHS 10 TO 11
10	**Adoption, Enablement and Change** Resistance treated as information rather than obstruction. Engagement planning, and training your real users.	
11	**Governance, Security and Life After Go-Live** Governance and accountability. Identifying vulnerabilities, and monitoring what happens once you stop watching.	
PHASE 05 **VALUE**		MONTHS 12 TO 13
12	**Proving the Value: Productivity and Cost-Benefit** Baseline, measure, attribute. Counting time properly and honestly, including what did not work.	
13	**Fairness at Scale and Portfolio Consolidation** Algorithmic impact assessment end to end. Workforce equality monitoring, and consolidating the evidence.	
PHASE 06 **COMPLETION**		MONTHS 14 TO 15
14	**Consolidation and EPA practice** No new teaching. A group consolidation session, portfolio finalised, and practice for the end-point assessment.	
15	**Gateway** The formal gate into end-point assessment, which is then carried out separately by the assessment organisation.	

Checkpoint builds at months 3, 5 and 7 mean something working exists early. A monthly assignment is submitted through Aptem throughout, building into the portfolio.

05 WHAT THE APPRENTICE ENDS UP WITH

- The **Level 4 qualification**, a nationally recognised standard rather than a private certificate
- **A working automation live in the business**, documented and handed over
- **A costed report** setting out what it actually saved, measured against a baseline taken at the start
- **A portfolio** of workplace evidence covering all 64 knowledge, skills and behaviours in the standard

06 HOW IT IS ASSESSED

Assessment happens **after gateway** and is carried out by an independent end point assessment organisation, not by the training provider or the tutor. It is expected to take the form of two assessment events:

- A **project report**, with a 30 minute questioning session
- A **portfolio of workplace evidence**, with a 60 minute professional discussion

The assessment organisation for this standard is being appointed. The two event model above is the expected format and the programme is built around it, but the final detail is confirmed at enrolment.

07 WHAT IT COSTS THE EMPLOYER

APPRENTICE UNDER 25

£0

Fully funded by the government, whatever the size of the business. Nothing for the employer to pay.

APPRENTICE 25 OR OVER, NO LEVY

5%

The government funds 95%. The employer contributes the remaining 5%.

LEVY PAYER (WAGE BILL OVER £3 MILLION)

Levy

Drawn from the levy pot the employer already pays into each month.

The funding band for this standard is up to £18,000. Unspent levy funds expire after 12 months. If a levy payer's pot for the year is already exhausted, co-investment for an apprentice aged 25 or over is 25% rather than 5%. There is no cost to the apprentice in any case.

08 WHERE IT LEADS

Progression routes recognised on the standard include **data engineer**, **data scientist** (integrated degree) and **AI data specialist**.

Check any of this yourself. The official government record for this standard is published by Skills England:

skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeship-standards/st1512