

Head of Apprenticeships & Graduates

Full Time (London/Flexible) - Permanent Contract

Who We Are:

Go-Ahead is one of the UK's leading providers of passenger transport providing operating bus and train services to over a billion customers every year (pre-pandemic). Through our two rail and 10 bus companies, we provide efficient, integrated and sustainable local public transport systems, employing 25,000 people across the UK, Ireland, Norway, Germany and Singapore. Go-Ahead believes that a strong and growing public transport network is key to the sustainable future with buses and trains playing a vital role in meeting environmental challenges such as reducing traffic congestion and carbon emissions, and through our Climate Change Strategy we have pledged to become a net zero business by 2045. Transport is also fundamental to the economy as a means of connecting people, communities and moving goods. In addition, we recognise the business benefits of comprehensive social and environmental management.

Go-Ahead believes that a devolved organisation is the most effective way to service local communities. Our structure and values enable us to closely monitor the performance of each operating company while giving managers the autonomy they need. In addition to the travelling public, Go-Ahead's customers include the Department for Transport (DfT), Transport for London (TfL) and local authorities.

Go-Ahead prides itself on its values: Agile, Open Minded, Collaborative, Accountable and Transparent. Through our strategy, The Next Billion Journeys, we are moving you and the next generation towards smarter and healthier planet.

Overall Job Purpose:

Reporting to the Group HR Director, this role will be responsible for managing the strategy for apprenticeship and graduate provision for the Group in close collaboration with the Group's HR community, MDs and named accountable individuals in each operating company.

Key to the success of this role is alignment across all operating companies within the Go-Ahead Group to execute and deliver high quality apprenticeship and graduate programmes which link directly to customer experience, support growth, progression and retention of talent.

The post holder will take a lead role in ensuring high quality apprenticeship and graduate programmes are being delivered across the Group, as well as the evaluation of provisions to ensure that value to the business can be shown and demonstrated.

Principal Accountabilities:

Apprenticeships:

- Accountability for all apprenticeship levy funding across the Go-Ahead Group ensuring transparency and accuracy in allocation, spend and review of all funding;
- Responsible for the development of, and review of, monthly reporting and statistics relating to apprenticeship levy funding;
- Responsible for the creation of process and plan for all data returns to the ESFA ensuring all ESFA audits are planned, achieved and passed with zero errors;
- To lead quality improvement plans and self-assessment reports for the Group.
- Lead on engaging senior leaders / managers across the Group in the apprenticeship strategy, defining its direction and committing their energies and expertise to achieving results;
- Report to the Group HR Director on all aspects of the apprenticeship delivery strategy - including, financial and non-financial and legislative changes;
- Provide guidance for operating companies across the group to ensure consistently high standards of delivery are applied.

- Manage relationships with key apprenticeship bodies, including (but not limited to), ESFA, awarding organisations, assessment organisations and OFSTED;
- Interpret and implement ESFA contractual changes and requirements and provide updates and communicate changes of internal policies as necessary to ensure Go-Ahead Group compliance;
- Ensure that internal processes meet external quality and delivery standards;
- Anticipate future apprenticeship development and policy changes and respond as appropriate.
- Benchmark performance against the industry to identify and develop initiatives for continuous improvement and which reflect the changing market place;
- Manage and maintain the Quality Improvement Strategy (OFSTED) across the organisation, including an annual quality improvement cycle and all processes that underpin it. Work with apprenticeship managers across the Group to embed quality improvement processes.
- Provide guidance and support to all training data administrators;
- Develop processes that will improve efficiency and provide greater transparency of roles and interdependencies across operating companies.
- Fully implement the Apprenticeship Strategy across participating operating companies;
- Formation of a stakeholder working group responsible for continually improving and raising the quality of apprenticeship provision across Go-Ahead;
- Established and tested quality monitoring plans in line with EFSA, OFSTED and company requirements;
- Accurate and timely management of apprenticeship levy funding;
- Accurate and transparent financial management of Go-Ahead Group levy funding streams and account;
- Quality, effective training providers and end-point assessment organisations in place;
- Measurement against ROI metrics for all apprenticeship programmes;
- Effective leadership and management of entire apprenticeship provision.

Graduates:

- Deliver and support the graduate programmes across bus and rail including the recruitment and selection of graduates through to the support of arranging placements as and when required.
- Manage relationships with the graduate recruitment company, ensuring appropriate contracts are in place and that suppliers adhere to service level agreements, conduct quarterly progress reviews and provide feedback.
- Manage stakeholder relationships and steering groups to ensure programmes are high quality, graduates are well managed and graduate retention rates are maintained.
- Collect and provide workforce data for graduates.

Knowledge & Experience:

Qualification:

- Degree, equivalent qualification (degree desired not essential) or evidence of equivalent experience.

Desirable Experience:

- Minimum 2 years working in the field of apprenticeships and managing graduate attraction/programmes end to end employee experiences.
- Demonstrate an in depth understanding of, and working within, funding rules for apprenticeships.
- Practical experience of learning, employment and funding policy, in relation to apprenticeships.
- Knowledge, and experience of, internal and external assessment, standardisation and verification processes;
- Worked with and in an employer funded provision;
- Experience of working with quality systems.

Skills:

- Excellent communication skills;
- Engaging presentation style;
- Strong influencing skills;
- Ability to manage stakeholder relationships with external and internal suppliers.
- Excellent planning and organisational skills.
- Knowledge of systems in the learning and development arena;
- Proven ability to work to deadlines across multiple projects simultaneously;
- Able to inspire and motivate to achieve business excellence.
- Ability to work along and effectively as part of a team.
- IT literate and competent in Office 365 including Outlook, Word, Excel and Powerpoint.

Attributes:

- The ability to travel and work away from home in the UK when necessary to meet Group requirements;
- Can-do attitude, customer focused, commercially astute.

Please submit your application with a covering letter and up to date CV. Applications should be submitted to Vicky Cobb at vicky.cobb@go-ahead.com. The closing date for this role is 9 September 2022.