University of
CUMBRIA

SHAPE YOUR
FUTURE

A USEFUL GUIDE TO
ONBOARDING, PROGRAMME
EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT
LIFE AS AN APPRENTICE

WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

We are pleased you are embarking on your apprenticeship journey with us. As one of the leading universities offering degree apprenticeships, we work hard to offer excellent higher level and degree apprenticeships, with brilliant learner support.

We attract apprentices from a range of backgrounds having followed many different pathways. Some of you will be early career professionals recently leaving school or college and enter our programme at the beginning of your career. Others will be upskilling, have some experience and possibly enter their apprenticeship part-way through a programme, having achieved prior qualifications and/or experience.

Whether you are young or more mature, or perhaps you may have followed a traditional academic route or a more applied approach; stepping onto a higher level or degree apprenticeship is a challenging but rewarding experience. We provide you with the tools, support and help so that you can adapt and settle into your learning.

The following guide outlines our approach to joining the programme, what to expect and a brief insight into some of the technical aspects that make sponsored learning through an apprenticeship unique.

Each programme has an induction session(s) aimed at getting you started, whether you learn online or on campus. It's important that you attend your induction so that you have a smooth start to your programme and begin this new exciting chapter in your career.

Welcome and I hope you enjoy learning with us.

Paul Armstrong
Head of Apprenticeships and Employer Skills

JOINING AN APPRENTICESHIP

What is Onboarding?

Onboarding is the process of applying for and being accepted onto a programme as an apprentice with the University of Cumbria.

You will kick-start your application once the university receives your details from your employer. This then allows us to set you up with an APTEM account and enable you to complete the 'Onboarding Wizard' to apply directly to us.

The Onboarding Wizard allows you to complete all aspects of the onboarding process and upload the necessary evidence required for your chosen apprenticeship. This will allow us to assess your eligibility and create a Training Plan that will formalise your apprenticeship. Our Onboarding Wizard platform has all the instructions built in.

Please make time to read these and complete your application carefully. It will reduce any delay in obtaining outstanding evidence or seeking clarification where information is not clear.

What is APTEM?

APTEM is our apprenticeship system which ensures you are correctly onboarded onto the apprenticeship programme and funded through the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). APTEM is also used to show you are actively involved in your learning and allow the university to draw down the funding for your apprenticeship.

APTEM will be used throughout your apprenticeship to evidence your progress such as the recording of your off-the-job hours (OTJH), Tripartite Reviews (TPRs) and other key milestones for you to progress to your End Point Assessment (EPA) and successfully pass your apprenticeship. APTEM is configured in different ways for different people and so often varies by apprentice to reflect their personal learning requirements.

What is the Skills Radar?

Before an apprenticeship begins, we need to assess your prior learning to establish the 'starting point', or baseline of your apprenticeship. The Skills Radar covers all the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) associated with your apprenticeship standard. We ask you to honestly assess yourself against four judgements of competence for each KSB at the application stage.

Whilst this is subjective, it is important you make time to do this realistically as it informs how much of the apprenticeship training content you require and checks that the apprenticeship is an appropriate training programme for you. If we don't feel this self-assessment via the Skills Radar is an accurate reflection of your starting point, having considered your prior learning, employer statement and wider factors, it may delay approving your application and we may, under some circumstances ask you to redo the Skills Radar.

What is the Basic and Key Skills Building Assessment (BKSB)?

All apprentices are required to complete as part of the onboarding process an initial assessment of your English and Maths ability.

The results of this assessment are used to identify your initial level of skills in these areas as stipulated by OFSTED. You must complete the assessments for your application to proceed. It's also important to show your current working standard for English and Maths, not just your qualification, as some applicants may be many years on from gaining their GCSEs or equivalent qualification.

Those who score below Level 2 in either Maths or English will be advised to access the university support via the Skills@Cumbria team. The university programme team will assess and support you to enhance your English and Maths on programme, but you can also access free resources such as **bbc.co.uk/skillswise** where you will be able to refresh any areas you feel may need some practice.

JOINING AN APPRENTICESHIP

What is a Training Plan?

When you enrol on one of our apprenticeships, a bespoke Training Plan will be generated setting out the elements of your apprenticeship. This is best described as a contract, which you will sign along with the university and your employer. It outlines the planned content and schedule for training, expectations of the apprenticeship, and how to resolve queries or complaints. It is a requirement of the funding for the apprenticeship that your Training Plan is signed.

What is the Apprenticeship Agreement?

The apprenticeship agreement is a statutory requirement for an apprenticeship in connection with an approved apprenticeship standard. It forms part of the individual employment arrangements between the apprentice and the employer. It is a contract of service (i.e. a contract of employment) and not a contract of apprenticeship. The purpose of the apprenticeship agreement is to identify: the apprenticeship standard connected to the apprenticeship, the dates, and duration of the apprenticeship that is expected to take place, along with the amount of off-the-job training that you are to receive.

What is the time frame to hear back from the University of Cumbria after I have submitted my application?

If your application is successful, you will be notified by email. This email will be sent to the email address you registered with when creating your APTEM account.

Should there be any issues with your application a member of the team will be in touch with the details/evidence we require to proceed with your application. It is important to respond and act on any requests as soon as possible to avoid delaying your application and prevent you from joining your apprenticeship. We may also include your employer in these requests.

ENROLMENT

When do I register and when will I receive my registration link to register as a student at the University of Cumbria?

Once you have completed your APTEM application and have been accepted on the programme, you need to fully register with the University of Cumbria. Registration is the final part of the onboarding process and enables you to access our University of Cumbria systems, online learning platforms and will confirm your status as a student with us.

Registration links are usually sent out approximately two weeks (10 working days) before the start of your programme and will be sent from **data.management@cumbria.ac.uk**

Occasionally links go into spam/junk folders so please check these folders if you think you have not received it. If you haven't received the email, please contact our administration team at **pal@cumbria.ac.uk** who will be able to advise further.

There are occasions when applicants try to open their registration link and they receive a message stating that the 'security key' is not recognised. This security key error is usually caused by your employer's firewall and is a known issue but is beyond the control of the university. Where this happens, please contact **data.management@cumbria.ac.uk** to provide a personal email address for them to re-send the registration link to. You can also forward the email to your personal email account and complete registration off-site instead. Further information on how to Activate your IT Account can be found here: **cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/New-Students/Activate-Your-IT-Account**

When do I get a Student Email?

All University of Cumbria students on activation of their IT account will be provided with a student email address. This will be the main method of communication between you and the university and will be used to communicate key programme details during your apprenticeship, and keep you updated and informed of what is also happening more widely at the University of Cumbria.

You also get access to lots of information, advice and guidance at your fingertips to help you during your studies - **hub.cumbria.ac.uk/dashboard/student**

When should I complete HeadStart or HeadStart Plus to Apprenticeships?

This is a suite of online self- study courses designed to give you a head start on your learning journey, and it is particularly useful for those new to studying at university. These digital learning assets will be included in your APTEM Learner Plan and be available to you once you start on the programme. If you are joining an undergraduate level apprenticeship programme you will be invited to complete HeadStart. If you are signed-up for a postgraduate level apprenticeship, you will be allocated to HeadStart Plus.

Other useful pages

Central access to all university systems and services **hub.cumbria.ac.uk/dashboard/student**

Library Information, locations and opening times **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/Libraries**

IT Services, Facilities and Support **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/it-media**

Academic Skills **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/Skills-Cumbria**

LinkedIn Learning **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/LinkedIn-Learning**

Support as a Distant Learner **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/Resources/Subjects/Using-the-Library-as-a-Distance-Learner**

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Health-and-Wellbeing**

ON PROGRAMME EXPERIENCE

Am I required to re-register with the university at the start of each academic year?

Annually, the university must re-register all students, including apprentices, to ensure we meet our statutory requirements and maintain accurate data. All students who are still on the programme on the 1st August will receive a registration email and link asking that they register for their course.

This is a mandatory requirement that all students **must** complete to ensure that access to the university IT is not interrupted, and the release of module/degree transcripts are not withheld from students.

How long is my apprenticeship and how will I attend sessions?

Apprenticeships range between 1 and 5 years to complete, depending on the course you take. For details on how long your apprenticeship is please consult your programme handbook/lead. Apprenticeship durations vary from programme to programme.

You'll typically attend university by day-release or block-release. Taught provision varies depending on the course, but attendance for the equivalent of 30 weeks every year is a simple way to illustrate our approach. On the weeks you don't go to university, you'll still spend 20% of your time learning and developing on the job.

I have received an email from the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS), and it states my programme is 36 months and not 24. What do I do?

When you confirm your apprenticeship details on the apprenticeship service, the course duration is taken from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education website. This is the standard duration of the apprenticeship and does not consider any prior learning, which has reduced the duration of your programme.

Currently, this field is not editable and so may show an incorrect duration for your apprenticeship. In the interim, please refer to your apprenticeship agreement which will outline your correct course duration.

ON PROGRAMME SYSTEMS

Whilst you study for your apprenticeship you will use a variety of systems which are designed to support you throughout your studies. Your programme lead will introduce you to the systems used on your programme during your induction. However, the main systems that may be used are:

Blackboard

Blackboard is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) used at the University of Cumbria. This is where you will find all your taught modules, teaching materials, presentations, module guides, assignment descriptions and assignments submission areas (Turnitin). The programme team will also use this to communicate any announcements regarding your module site's updates such as submission reminders, room changes (where applicable) and job opportunities.

Blackboard also hosts the Blackboard Collaborate webinar software and the discussion forums used in some courses. Getting familiar with Blackboard at the start of your course will help you feel in control of your learning.

Blackboard is available via the Student Hub, or you can login directly at: **mylearning.cumbria.ac.uk** and an overview of Blackboard is available on our Blackboard page - **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/ Learning/Skills-Cumbria/Digital-Skills/Blackboard**

You can find out about alternative formats and accessibility options within Blackboard by accessing our Blackboard Ally page - **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/ Learning/Skills-Cumbria/Digital-Skills/Blackboard-Ally**

PebblePad

PebblePad is an e-portfolio system and is used by some courses. PebblePad is much more than an e-portfolio, it is a Personal Learning Space being used for Personal Development Planning, Continuing Professional Development, and Learning, Teaching & Assessment.

PebblePad has been designed with the learner at the centre of the system. It helps users create records of learning, achievement, and aspiration and has a reflective structure underpinning all its core elements.

More information about PebblePad, along with support can be found here: **my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/ Learning/Skills-Cumbria/Digital-Skills/Pebble-Pad**

The Online Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE)

The online Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) is used for Registered Nursing, Nurse Associate and Midwifery apprentices and is the online tool for practice hour monitoring. All learners will have an account created if your course uses online PARE and further guidance will be provided by your programme team on commencing studies.

APPRENTICESHIP AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Does my apprenticeship require a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) and Occupational Health (OH) check? How do I provide this?

Certain courses require apprentices to be both DBS and OH cleared. In certain instances, the university will receive this directly from your employer. When the university requires you to complete an in-house DBS check this will be communicated via the Admissions and DBS team.

I have been asked to complete a Declaration of Good Health and Good Character. What is this?

All apprentices on health-related degrees are required to sign a Declaration of Good Health and Good Character at the start of each academic year. These are mandatory requirements that ensure we meet the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requirement. We ask that all apprentices complete this as soon as they can and discuss any issues/ concerns they may have with their Personal Tutor prior to signing.

Off-The-Job Learning

Over the duration of your apprenticeship, you need to keep a log of your 'Off-The-Job Hours' (OTJH). These hours comprise active learning related to the role you are training for such as:

- Participation in university taught sessions - lectures, simulated sessions, seminars, workshops, tutorials (these can be face to face, virtual, live or pre-recorded).

- Study time during your working day in which you complete research, gather knowledge and write assignments.

- Work-based development - formal or informal placements in different settings, work shadowing, completing tasks in work (this might feel like the day job, but if you are completing work that is directly related to your apprenticeship without full professional autonomy, then it is assumed there is some degree of new learning). You will see some people refer to this as 'clinical hours' (see below).

What is not classed as OTJHs?

Apprentices are **not** eligible to claim if any of the above is done outside of your contracted working hours (in your own time) nor can you include the time committed to completing regular Tripartite Reviews (TPRs).

You also **cannot** include the first day(s) of induction as this is not classed as 'off the job learning'.

How do I log OTJHs?

OTJH forms are available on APTEM to complete and should be submitted to your learning plan for the corresponding month to be approved by the academic team.

Please give as much detail as you can about work outside the university. It must be made clear in your logs how the work outside the university relates to your apprenticeship. For logging university time, simply pop the module code in. For anything else make sure you are clear that it is time at work during normal working hours and not a day off or your own time.

Tripartite Reviews (TPRs)

All apprentices are required to attend regular TPRs throughout their apprenticeship. These are a three-way discussion between yourself (the apprentice), your employer and the university and are a way to discuss progress, set targets and review how the training you are undertaking is developing you against the knowledge, skills and behaviours of your apprenticeship. It is your responsibility to book your TPR within your TPR window and you are expected to fully participate in the discussion.

Failure to attend may result in a progress review taking place in your absence or withdrawal from the programme. Attendance may be via virtual/video conferencing where an in-person meeting is not possible. All TPRs **must** be signed by the apprentice and the university lead conducting the review. Where TPRs remain unsigned these will be followed up by our administration team and will be reported back to the relevant academic and quality assurance team.

Education and Skills Agency (EFSA) Apprentice Learner Satisfaction Survey

The ESFA will email all live learners 3 months after your start date to provide feedback. The feedback is published, anonymously, on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education website, so others can view information from apprentices with first-hand experience with us. It also allows us as a training provider to better understand what we are doing well and where we may need to improve.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Am I eligible for financial assistance?

As degree apprentices' fees are covered by their employer, apprentices cannot take out a student loan. Therefore you will need to cover your own living costs, including housing, travel, and any course related materials from your salary (some employers may provide limited support for travel).

Disability Students Allowance (DSA)

Apprentices are not eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), but you may be eligible for funding through Access to Work. If you need adjustments for the study aspect of your apprenticeship, our Disability Team can provide further advice. More information is available here: **cumbria.ac.uk/student-life/student-support/disabilityand-spld/disability-support-and-advice**

Can I apply for Council Tax exemption?

Due to their employed status, apprentices are not eligible for council tax exemption under Regulation 5 of the Council Tax (Discount Disregards) Order 1992.

TOTEM Card

A TOTUM Apprentice membership gives you access to over 600 discounts, deals and offers on big-name brands both online and in store, giving you big savings on eating out, tech, fashion, travel and more. You can apply at: **app.totum.com/register/join/apprentice**

SUPPORT SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

I have a disability or learning support need. How do I go about requesting additional support?

The university Disability Team can provide support and guidance to all students who have, or believe they have a disability. Further details on can be obtained via: **cumbria.ac.uk/student-life/student-support/disability-and-spld/disability-support-and-advice**

What support services are available to me as an apprentice at the University of Cumbria?

Apprentice students have access to a wide range of university services, covering Digital Skills, Safeguarding, Counselling and Wellbeing and so much more. More information can be obtained via: **cumbria.ac.uk/about/organisation/professional-services/student-services**

Students can also self-refer themselves via the universities STEP System **uoc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid042276** for key university services such as:

• Digital Skills

• Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)

• Skills@Cumbria

• Money Matters

• Counselling and Wellbeing

YOUR UNIVERSITY LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Our learning is designed to shape apprentices to be critical thinkers. We will impart knowledge and shape skills through teaching that you apply to your development in the workplace. The way you develop professionally will shape your behaviours as you prepare for your End Point Assessment (EPA).

As well as training you to be critical thinkers informed by academic knowledge, we encourage you to be reflective practitioners, considering the impact of your learning to shape professional portfolios and evidence for the EPA.

All our apprenticeship programmes are delivered through a university academic programme, which is structured around learning modules that are assessed for credit (typically 20 credit modules). This credit builds up to the final award, and the percentage grade will inform your overall degree award e.g. 2:2, 2:1 or 1st.

To be successful you will need to read and research academic and professional thinking, considering opinions and form views to write assignments. This requires you to plan, organise your time to complete assignments and submit them on time.

Over the duration of your programme, you may find some aspects of learning more challenging than others, and you may find some assessments more difficult.

We encourage you to reach out and seek assistance if this happens. There are options for additional time to be allocated if there are personal or professional challenges.

We use regular reviews (TPRs) to monitor your progress, personal and professional confidence and check that in-work support is appropriate and helping you shape your learning.

How do assessments work?

There are different ways we will assess you over the course of the programme including formative and summative assessments, some of which are practical, and some are written. Please consult your programme handbook for further details on how assessment will work on your apprenticeship programme.

Over the duration of the programme, academic modules will seek to set assessments to test your academic knowledge, written, verbal and listening skills, and some might include group work and presentations. Health programmes may have clinical skills assessments as well.

Gateway Reviews

All learners are required to sign a Gateway review at the end of the taught programme which confirms that you've met the on-programme requirements, and you are ready to progress to the End Point Assessment (EPA). You will only start the EPA once all parties agree that you're ready to proceed. This is a mandatory requirement, and all parties must sign to say they agree.

END POINT ASSESSMENT

End-Point Assessment (EPA) is the final stage of your apprenticeship and is an impartial assessment of whether you have developed the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) outlined in your apprenticeship standard.

The EPA may fall into two categories: integrated and non-integrated depending on your apprenticeship, and may include an industry project, portfolio and/or interview.

What is an Integrated Apprenticeship?

An integrated apprenticeship will typically be assessed as part of a degree course. You will still have an EPA, but it will be integrated into your course and may be part of the final University Progression and Award Board (UPAB), or be independently assessed via a presentation, and interview based on final assessment and a portfolio of evidence.

What is a Non-Integrated Apprenticeship?

A non-integrated degree apprenticeship is where you will need to combine the degree and EPA conducted by an independent body, typically in the form of presenting your industry project and being interviewed on your portfolio of applied work.

Any additional requirements for your programme will be listed in the relevant apprenticeship standard.

For those that require a portfolio of evidence you will be guided and coached on how to gather and record this evidence. For some health programmes, a portfolio takes the form of in-work competencies being checked and signed off by clinical experts and aligned to progression on the degree apprenticeship.
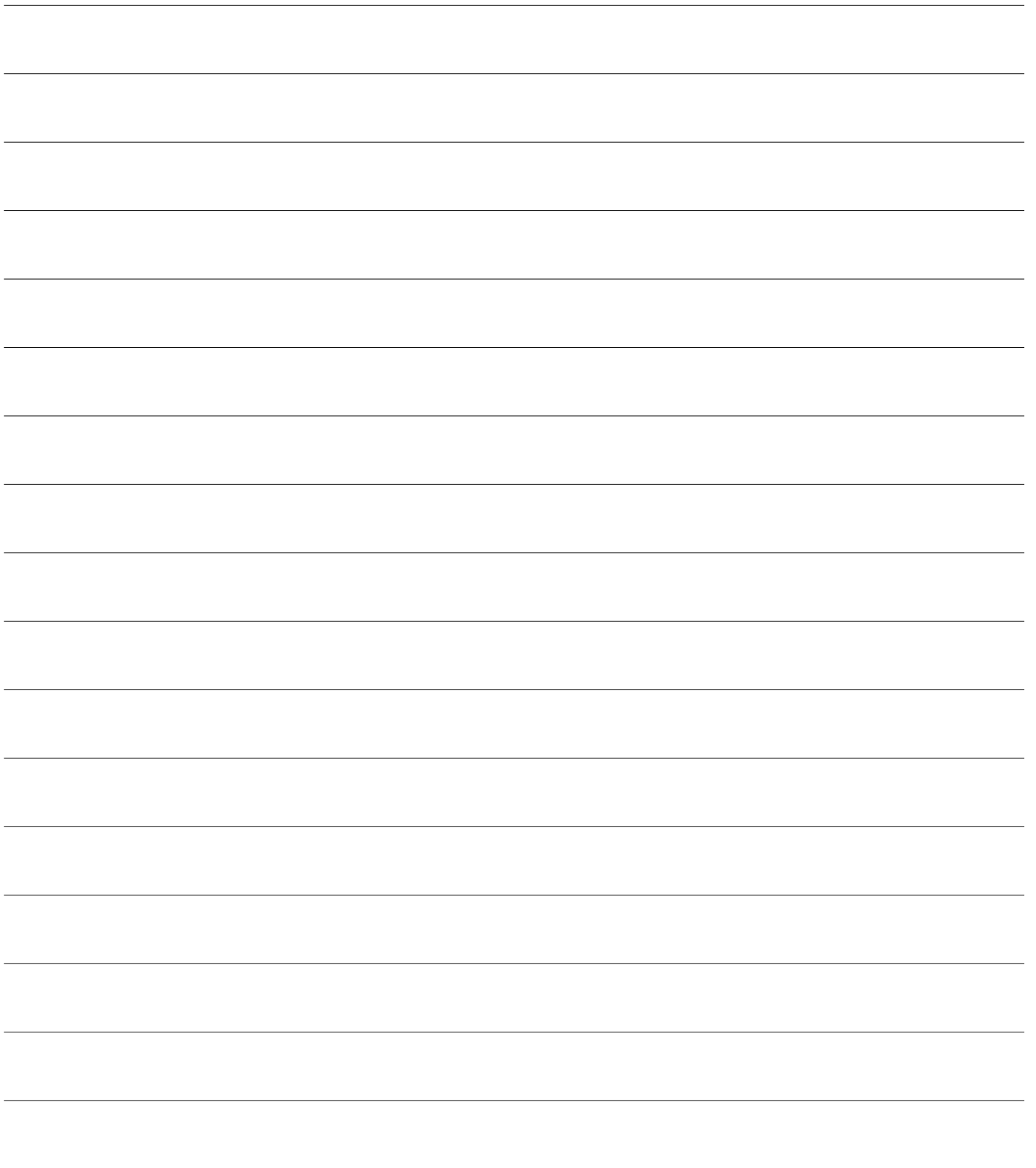
NOTES/
QUESTIONS TO ASK

FUNDED BY

Office for
Students OfS

University of
CUMBRIA