UK employers can now get five AI qualifications for their staff through a single apprenticeship at no cost

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A growing number of UK employers are discovering they can upskill their entire workforce in AI and automation without spending a penny, thanks to a Level 4 apprenticeship that bundles up to five industry qualifications into a single programme, all fully funded through the Apprenticeship Levy.

TESS Group, an Ofsted Good training provider working with employers including the Financial Times, EDF Energy, Transport for London, DPD, and NHS England, has built its AI & Automation Practitioner programme around a simple idea: AI skills shouldn't be limited to IT departments, and employers shouldn't have to pay extra for professional certifications.

The 15 to 18 month programme is designed for employees at every level, from front-line staff to senior leaders. There's no coding required. Learners work with tools like Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, and Power Automate to build practical AI and automation skills they can apply to their day job from month one. It's equally suited to a team leader looking to make better use of AI across their department as it is to someone in an operational or support role. For organisations that run on Google Workspace rather than Microsoft, the programme can be tailored to Google's AI tools instead.

What makes it unusual is what's included. Where most training providers deliver only the apprenticeship standard, TESS Group embeds up to five additional qualifications at no extra cost: Microsoft AI Business Professional (AB-730), NCFE Level 3 certificates in Cyber Security and Data, NCFE AI Prompt Engineering, and BCS certification. Employers don't pay for any of it. The full programme is funded at £18,000 through the Apprenticeship Levy for levy-paying employers, with 95% government funding available for smaller businesses.

"Most employers have no idea they can get this many qualifications wrapped into one apprenticeship," said Rod Doyle, Director and Founder of TESS Group. "They're already paying the levy. This is money they've already spent sitting in a pot that expires after 24 months if they don't use it. We're helping them turn that into real capability across their teams, not just in IT, but in HR, finance, operations, marketing, every department. And it works just as well for leaders as it does for the people they manage."

The business case is straightforward. Learners typically reclaim over 10 hours a week by automating repetitive workflows, and because they're applying what they learn directly to their role throughout the programme, the return on investment starts immediately rather than after graduation.

All sessions are delivered live online via Zoom or Microsoft Teams, with new cohorts starting every month. Employers can enrol a single learner or run a private cohort tailored to their sector and challenges. For organisations wanting dedicated AI leadership development, TESS Group also offers specialist pathways for people leaders, operations managers, and coaching professionals, each with CMI management qualifications built in.

TESS Group currently delivers to over 100 employers across England and has trained more than 10,000 learners, with a 59% distinction rate against a national average of around 20%. The provider holds a 97% employer satisfaction rate and a 4.9 out of 5 rating from over 680 verified reviews on Google and Trustpilot.

Employers interested in using their Apprenticeship Levy for AI training can book a free 15-minute discovery call at www.thetessgroup.com or contact info@thetessgroup.com.

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Notes to Editors

About TESS Group
TESS Group is an independent, Ofsted Good training provider delivering 27+ apprenticeship programmes from Level 3 to Level 7 across England. The AI & Automation Practitioner is one of five AI programmes offered by TESS Group, spanning Levels 3 to 6, including specialist pathways for people leaders, operations managers, coaching professionals, and machine learning engineers. TESS Group is an accredited centre for CMI, ILM, and BCS, and an aligned provider for CIPD. All programmes are delivered nationwide via live online sessions with monthly rolling starts.

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Key Facts
Ofsted Good provider | 10,000+ learners trained across 100+ employers | 59% distinction rate (national avg ~20%) | 97% employer satisfaction | 4.9/5 from 680+ verified reviews | 5 AI programmes across Levels 3-6 | Up to 5 qualifications per programme | 100% Levy funded (95% for SMEs) | Monthly starts | Delivered nationwide online

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