

INFLUENCERS

APPRENTICES

A GUIDE TO APPRENTICESHIPS

An introduction to apprenticeships, what they are, the benefits, how to find the right opportunity, and more.



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An introduction to apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a paid job where the employee learns and gains valuable experiences. Alongside their on-the-job training, they will spend at least 20% of their working hours completing classroom-based learning with a training provider (such as a college or university) which will lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

An apprenticeship includes:

- paid employment with holiday leave
- hands-on-experience in a sector/role of interest
- at least 20% off-the-job training
- formal assessment which leads to a nationally recognised qualification

Who can apply?

An apprenticeship is a great paid work opportunity for people over the age of 16 in England who are:

- early in their career
- looking to upskill in their current job
- looking for a career-change
- not in full-time education

All apprenticeship vacancies on find an apprenticeship will state the entry requirement which may differ depending on industry, job role and apprenticeship level; <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

Individuals with learning difficulties or a disability can access a level 2 intermediate apprenticeship as long as they can achieve an entry level 3 qualification during their apprenticeship.

A disability confident employer will generally offer an interview to any applicant that declares they have a disability and meets the minimum criteria as defined by the employer.

Levels of apprenticeship

Different levels of apprenticeships equal a different level of qualification.

An apprenticeship can start at any level, but some may require:

- previous qualifications such as english or a maths GCSEs
- additional training in english or maths to ensure the apprentice is at the right level

Traineeships are a great way to gain the relevant skills and experience to take on an apprenticeship and prepare for work.

One of the following qualification levels will be achieved depending on the apprenticeship level:

| Apprenticeship type | Level | Equivalent education level |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Intermediate | 2 | GCSE |
| Advanced | 3 | A level |
| Higher | 4,5,6 and 7 | Foundation degree or above |
| Degree | 6 and 7 | Bachelor's or master's degree |

Off-the-job training

In England, it is a statutory requirement for an apprentice to spend 20% of their paid time off-the-job. This involves essential training to help the apprentice gain the skills needed to complete their apprenticeship.

Off-the-job training is delivered by subject experts and can include:

- teaching theory (e.g. classroom lessons, lectures and online learning)
- practical training (e.g. shadowing, mentoring, industry visits)
- learning support and time to write assignments

The training can take place in or out of the work environment and some training providers will offer in-house training, whereas others work with colleges, universities and training providers to deliver the training for them.

The training must equate to 20% of the overall contracted hours for the duration of the apprenticeship. It can be delivered flexibly, for example, as part of each day, once a week, or as a block release. The employer and the training provider decide on the most appropriate model.

Working hours

The minimum duration of each apprenticeship is based on the apprentice working 20 hours a week or more, including any off-the-job training they undertake.

Individuals with caring responsibilities or a disability may work reduced weekly hours and the duration of the apprenticeship will extend to account for this.

Training providers

Training providers play a key role in providing off-the-job training. They assess the apprentice's progress towards achieving their qualification and support them during their apprenticeship.

Training providers work closely with employers to ensure the apprentice receives:

- an induction programme
- a detailed training plan (including off-the-job training)
- regular progress reviews
- opportunities to put learning into practice to achieve their apprenticeship qualification/requirements
- mentoring and general support

A commitment statement which outlines an individualised learning plan will be signed by the employer, training provider and apprentice.

Further information can be found out about learner satisfaction at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-choices>

Apprenticeship benefits

Apprenticeships are an exciting paid option for anyone wanting to gain experience, upskill or looking for a career change because they offer the chance to earn a wage whilst they work and study.

There are many benefits to completing an apprenticeship, which include:

- experience and skills development
- a nationally recognised qualification
- employee benefits and a wage
- exposure to industry professionals

Apprenticeship wage

What the apprentice earns will depend on the industry, location and the level of the apprenticeship they choose.

If aged between 16 and 18 or in the first year of the apprenticeship, the apprentice is entitled to the apprentice rate;

<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

If the apprentice is 19 or over and has completed the first year of the apprenticeship, they are entitled to the National Minimum Wage;

<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

i This is the minimum an apprentice can earn, many employers offer their apprentices a competitive salary.

There are no student loan or tuition fees for an apprenticeship because it is funded by the government and the employer. The apprentice will need to cover the cost of their day-to-day expenses, such as lunch and travel, however many employers offer a competitive salary to support this.

If the apprentice is 16 to 24 and a care leaver, they will receive a £1,000 bursary payment to support them in their first year of the apprenticeship.

Additional financial support for apprentices

Although apprentices are paid a wage, there are also additional ways to benefit from money-saving schemes.

These might include:

- NUS apprentice extra card; <https://www.apprenticeextra.co.uk/>
- railcard for 16-25 year olds; <https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>
- £1,000 bursary for care leavers which is accessed through the training provider
- support with interview clothing through companies like 'Smart Works', 'Dress for Success' and 'Suited and Booted'

Finding the right apprenticeship

Thousands of employers offer apprenticeships, from large corporations to small businesses, and it is important to consider all career options to ensure the apprentice's decision is an informed one.

Choosing the right career path

Career options that combine work and studies include:

- apprenticeships
- traineeships
- t levels

For more information about post-16 career options, visit the National Careers Service website or speak to a careers adviser by calling 0800 100 900; <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/career-choices-at-16>

Choosing between full-time education or combining work and study

A lot of individuals can struggle to decide whether an apprenticeship or full-time education, like university, is the right option for them. It's worth taking some time to consider the differences and benefits of each option.

This could include questions like:

- are you required to study?
- do you need to move/travel?
- will you have to pay for your training/tuition?
- will you earn a salary?
- what qualification level can you achieve?
- what is the application process like?
- will you get work experience whilst you study?
- will you need to balance working and study at the same time

For more information about post-16 career options, visit the National Careers Service website or speak to a career adviser using the webchat or call 0800 100 900.

Choosing the right employer

All apprenticeships offer bespoke training and study programmes, making the apprenticeship a highly personal experience, regardless of whether the apprentice is the only one in the business or one of many.

Benefits of an apprenticeship with a small employer include:

- a personalised experience
- a smaller team which can create stronger working relationships with colleagues, line managers and mentors
- hands on experience across different roles
- the opportunity to stand out and progress quickly

Benefits of an apprenticeship with a large employer include:

- opportunities to relocate
- advanced recruitment processes
- the opportunity to work closely with other apprentices
- a range of career progression opportunities
- a recognised employer on a CV
- rotation programmes to gain experience in different roles

Things to consider when researching apprenticeship vacancies include:

- reading the job description and job advert to see what experience the apprenticeship will offer
- researching the training provider that will be offering the classroom based learning, such as reviewing their Ofsted rating
- researching the employee benefits
- speaking to the employer and/or the training provider about how 20% off-the-job training will be delivered because employers take different approaches

Finding apprenticeship opportunities

There are hundreds of apprenticeships to choose from and find an apprenticeship is a great resource to view current vacancies; <http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

The service can also be used to save and apply for vacancies and also create alerts for new vacancies in specific sectors and locations.

Applying for more than one apprenticeship

Submitting applications to more than one employer increases the chance of securing an apprenticeship.

Employers often advertise at different times of the year, so it's important to understand that finding an apprenticeship can sometimes be more complicated than applying for full-time education (e.g. university).

Supporting someone who changes their mind

If a person applies for full-time education and changes their mind, they are still able to apply for an apprenticeship.

If a person applies for an apprenticeship and changes their mind, they will need to hand in their notice and their training provider will often help support them in finding employment or further study.

Employee benefits

As well as paid work experience and a recognised qualification, an apprenticeship offers a range of other benefits.

These can include:

- networking opportunities
- ongoing and personalised support from the employer and training provider

- peer-to-peer support
- social benefits
- student benefits, such as discounts
- paid annual leave
- employee perks
- no tuition fees or learning costs

Employability skills that apprenticeships offer

An apprenticeship will expose individuals to a range of experiences and support which will develop a variety of highly sought after skills.

Skills might include:

- professional skills; such as the basics of writing emails and understanding business etiquette
- industry skills; such as understanding sector priorities and experience of working with the latest technology
- confidence building; in areas like project management, contributing to meetings and speaking to customers
- resilience; to cope with challenges and find solutions
- time management skills; to help cope with the pressures of dealing with competitive deadlines and large workloads

- interpersonal skills; such as learning to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, listen and manage relationships with people from different backgrounds
- public speaking; such as presenting ideas to colleagues, speaking in meetings and delivering presentations

The social life of an apprentice

Individuals can sometimes be concerned that they will miss out on the social aspects of full-time education like university.

Each apprentice has a different experience depending on their training provider or employer, however they are often employed alongside other apprentices who provide invaluable support.

“There is no shortage of opportunity to have a fun and active social life. Who needs a ‘uni lifestyle’? I’d say apprentices don’t miss a thing!”

- Previous apprentice ambassador

Many apprentices also feel that having a wage provides more freedom to do things that you wouldn't get from full-time education.

**"For me, my wages
simply gave me the
freedom to go out and
enjoy myself. "**

- Previous apprentice ambassador

Applying for an apprenticeship

Once an apprenticeship opportunity has been found, there will be an application process to follow.

The process can differ for each employer, so it's important to visit their website and read the job advert carefully.

Applications and CVs

More than one application can be made using 'find an apprenticeship' and it can improve chances of success;

<http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

For individuals who are still considering their options, applications can be still be made for university and an apprenticeship at the same - allowing extra time to reach a decision.

A CV and a cover letter will often need to be created during the application process. There is lots of support on how to write a CV and cover letter on the National Careers Service ;

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cv-sections>

Interviews

If the application is successful, the candidate is invited to interview with the employer.

Interviews for apprenticeships are often similar to interviews for any other job. They can differ between employers, for example, a small employer may only conduct one interview whereas a large employer could request up to three.

Interviews could be:

- face to face
- with a panel
- over the phone
- online - for example, Skype or Zoom

To make sure candidates are prepared, they should:

- research the apprenticeship and the organisation
- practice by doing a mock interview
- check where and when the interview is
- get to the interview early
- dress appropriately and stay focussed
- ask questions if they don't understand

For more interview advice visit the National Careers Service website;
<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice>

Additional support

For more information about apprenticeships visit: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk or speak to a National Career Service adviser by calling 0800 100 900.

More information on apprenticeships:

Visit: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

Call: 0800 150 400

