

WHAT IS...

AN APPRENTICESHIP

An Apprenticeship is a system of training people who are learning how to do a job which needs a special skill. Someone who is learning in this way is called an “apprentice”. An apprentice will learn by working with someone who is already skilled at a job. They are like a teacher and pupil.

An apprenticeship is a type of job you can get from the age of 16 where you work full-time for a company but are also trained at the same time. You earn a salary and are treated like an employee, giving you all the independence and responsibility that you’d get if you went straight into a job, but at least 20% of your time will be spent in training, learning the hands-on skills you’ll need to progress in your chosen career. Usually for one day a week you will be at a college or training centre. However, sometimes, somebody will come to your workplace to train you.

You will also be developing what are known as soft skills – these are the skills that employers are looking for and are often called employability skills. These skills include team work, communication, initiative, creativity, integrity, problem solving and ability with IT and numbers.

You can choose to do an apprenticeship anytime from the age of 16 – there’s no upper age limit so it doesn’t have to be straight after your GCSEs. They can take anything from one to five years to complete, but at the end you’ll be fully trained and qualified in your chosen role. Apprentices in every role follow an approved study programme, which means you’ll gain a nationally-recognised qualification at the end of your apprenticeship.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Entry requirements will differ depending on the industry, job role and level you’re interested in. If you’ve just finished your GCSEs you will probably want to look at Intermediate or Advanced Apprenticeships.

Most job sectors offer apprenticeship opportunities in the UK, with a wide range of specific roles on offer within each. These include accountancy, business administration, construction, IT, law, media and retail to name a few.

These qualifications can include:

- > **Functional skills** - GCSE-level qualifications in English, Maths and IT.
- > **National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)** - from Level 2 (comparable to five GCSEs) up to Level 5 (similar to a postgraduate degree).
- > **Technical certificates** - such as BTEC, City and Guild Progression Award etc.
- > **Academic qualifications** - including a Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND), foundation degree or the equivalent of a full Bachelors degree.

WHAT LEVELS ARE THERE?

There are various levels of apprenticeship to apply for depending on current skills and qualifications. Apprenticeships have equivalent educational levels:

NAME	LEVEL	EQUIVALENT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at Grades A*- C or 9 - 4
Advanced	3	2 A level passes
Higher	4, 5, 6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

All apprenticeships include elements of on the job and off the job training leading to industry recognised standards or qualifications. Some apprenticeships will require an assessment at the end of the programme to assess the apprentices ability and competence in their job role.

WHAT'S NEXT?

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER MY APPRENTICESHIP?

- > Go on to the next level apprenticeship.
- > Turn your apprenticeship into a permanent position. Many apprentices are taken on as full-time, permanent members of staff after they have completed their apprenticeship.
- > Find another job. If your current employer is unable to take you on with a permanent position, ask them if they know anywhere with similar roles available.
- > Go to a College of Further Education. Many people opt for further education after they have completed an apprenticeship. Having already obtained an NVQ, there are a lot of further choices.