

# A guide to apprenticeships



## What's an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a genuine job and under all circumstances an apprentice will be an employee from day one. Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study.

An apprentice will:

- work alongside experienced staff
- gain job-specific skills
- earn a wage and get holiday pay
- be given time for study related to their role (the equivalent of one day a week)

## What levels are there?

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

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at grade A*– C or 9 – 4
Advanced	3	2 A level passes/Level 3 Diploma/ International Baccalaureate
Higher	4, 5, 6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

## What can an apprentice earn?

There are different rates of minimum pay for apprentices depending on the age and year of the apprenticeship being followed.

You can find out more information about the apprentice national minimum wage here: [gov.uk/become-apprentice/pay-and-conditions](https://www.gov.uk/become-apprentice/pay-and-conditions)

More details on salaries and entry criteria in specific apprenticeship occupations can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and search 'apprenticeships'

## Where to look for an apprenticeship

With many opportunities on offer, there are several ways to find an apprenticeship.

More information, including videos of current apprentices, is available at [apprenticeships.gov.uk](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk). You can search and apply for vacancies on Find an apprenticeship on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). Once registered on Find an apprenticeship, email and text alerts can be set up about new apprenticeship vacancies which may be of interest.

You could also meet employers and apprentices through our films and case studies. The interviews take a look behind the scenes at a range of different employers and meet some of their apprentices: [apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers/resource-hub](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers/resource-hub). If you have a specific interest in a certain employer, it is also worth going direct to their recruitment site.

Our YouTube channel has useful hints and tips on applying plus other videos on apprenticeships, visit [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) and search apprenticeships/NAS.

## Why apply?

- Earn a real wage
- Be trained in the skills employers want
- Set yourself up for the future – apprentices enjoy marked salary increases when they complete their training, and those completing a higher apprenticeship could see increased earnings of an estimated £150,000 over their lifetime.\*

## Entry requirements

Apprenticeships are available to anyone over the age of 16, living in England and have no upper age limit. The Department for Education is committed to ensuring that high quality apprenticeships are a prestigious option, accessible to all people from all backgrounds. All vacancies on [Find an apprenticeship](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk) will clearly state what the entry requirements are for the job role being advertised. There will be different entry requirements depending on the industry, job role and apprenticeship level.

Changes to the minimum English and maths requirements mean that:

- if an individual hasn't gained GCSE maths or English at level 4 or above, they will be required to complete a maths and English initial assessment and will now be able to be supported through level 1 maths and English functional skills as part of the apprenticeship programme.
- individuals with a learning difficulty or disability can now 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. For more details, search Disability Confident on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

\*University education – Is this the best route into employment?  
AAT and CEBR Feb 2013

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## How to apply?

You can find and apply for apprenticeship vacancies across England in a variety of careers and industries online at Find an apprenticeship, available at [gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship). You can search by keyword (job role, occupation type or apprenticeship level) and by location. In addition, some employers advertise vacancies on their website.

Once the right job comes up, simply register on the website and follow the step by step instructions to apply for the role.

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## What is the role of the training provider?

The training provider has a key role to play in providing off-the-job training, assessing the apprentices' progress towards achieving their qualifications and supporting the apprentice generally during their apprenticeship. They work very closely with the employer to ensure that the apprentice receives:

- an induction programme on starting
- a detailed training plan (including on-the-job training)
- regular progress reviews
- opportunities to put into practice off-the-job learning so that they can achieve their qualifications/requirements of the apprenticeship
- mentoring and general support throughout the apprenticeship

This will all be documented in a commitment statement that is part of the Apprenticeship Agreement. This is an individual learning plan that the provider, the employer and apprentice will all sign up to.

You can find out more about learner satisfaction with training organisations and colleges by accessing the learner satisfaction survey results on the FE Choices pages of [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

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## How many hours per week will an apprentice be working?

The minimum duration of each apprenticeship is based on the apprentice working 30 hours a week or more, including any off-the-job training you undertake.

However, this does not apply in every circumstance. For example, people with caring responsibilities or people with a disability may work reduced weekly hours. Where this is the case, the duration of the apprenticeship will be extended to take account of this.

As part of the apprenticeship programme, all apprentices are entitled to paid off-the-job training. This allows them to receive training and gain the relevant skills needed to complete their apprenticeship and will be the equivalent of 6 hours per week.

The employer must allow time to complete the apprenticeship within their normal working hours, in addition to any English and maths.