

NEW 2018/19



The Complete Guide to Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

Which?
University

 Apprenticeships

Higher and degree apprenticeships: the basics

If you thought apprenticeships were just for 16 year-olds leaving school, it's time to take another look

Apprenticeships offer a valid alternative to university, with the qualifications to match. If you choose a degree apprenticeship, you still get to graduate with your cap and gown, along with several years of work experience under your belt.

First and foremost, though, an apprenticeship is a job with substantial training and the development of transferable skills. It's a way to earn and learn, gaining a real qualification, long-term career path and the possibility for higher earnings.

And, best of all, no university debts: you'll have been earning for the length of your apprenticeship and there are no tuition fees.

What is an apprenticeship, exactly?

An apprenticeship is a combined package of work and study. As an apprentice, you'll be employed by a company and paid a wage for the work that you do. Apprentices are entitled to the same rights as other employees: a contract of employment and at least 20 days paid holiday per year, plus bank holidays. Apprenticeships are available across the UK, but this guide focuses on England.

How does it work?

You'll spend most of the week at work (usually a minimum of 30 hours) watching, learning and getting stuck in. You will be learning from colleagues across all levels of the business, typically working closely with someone more senior who will review your progress and coach you.

You'll also spend time attending college, a university or training provider, training at work or online. Some apprenticeships use a combination

of options; your employer will decide which method works best.

The Institute for Apprenticeships is an independent public body which works to ensure apprenticeships are the best they can be. It develops apprenticeship standards with employers that meet the needs of the companies and learners alike.

What grades do I need?

Entry requirements vary from programme to programme, and depend on the sector and prior skills. If you have achieved A-levels you may still be expected to start at intermediate or advanced level as some sectors, such as engineering, require you to build up your occupational skills. See examples of entry requirements:

- Unilever requires five GCSEs including English and maths and two A-levels
- Deloitte requires five GCSEs including maths and English Language, grade 4 or above (previously grade C or higher) as well as 104 Ucas points (previously 260 pre 2017 Ucas system).

What could I earn?

If you're aged 16–18, or aged 19 or over and in the first year of your apprenticeship, you'll earn at least the minimum wage for apprentices (£3.50 per hour, rising to £3.70 per hour from April 2018).

Many companies pay more than this, particularly for higher level apprenticeships:

- An aerospace engineering apprentice at BAE Systems UK can earn £22,975 per year.
- A higher accountancy apprentice can earn over £13,000 per year.
- A software engineer apprentice can earn £14,500 per year.

In fact, you could potentially earn upwards of £300 per week plus your employer and the government pay your tuition fees, meaning no university loans for you!

In contrast, English students taking a full-time university degree pay a maximum of £9,250 per year in tuition fees.

Many employers advertise roles with a 'competitive salary'. This could mean the salary and benefits will be in line with similar roles for other organisations, or that it depends on your current skills and experience.

Benefits could include a pension, access to a car, leisure facilities or a relocation allowance if you have to move.

Apprenticeship discounts

You'll be classed as an employee, rather than a student, so you won't be entitled to student discounts, but the National Union of Students (NUS) has an Apprentice Extra Card. For £11 per year you can get discounts on lots of brands. See more at apprenticeextra.co.uk. You may also be eligible for discounts on public transport. Many local schemes are available, like the Apprentice Oyster photo card in London, which gives apprentices 30% off certain journeys.

87 per cent of higher (Level 4 plus) apprentices were satisfied with their apprenticeship.*



Got what it takes to be the next apprentice?

You've heard what an apprenticeship is, but how do you know if it's right for you?



Across all types of apprenticeship, there were 1,656,680 online applications made in 2015 to 2016.*

An apprenticeship is not the easy option. You'll be starting a challenging job and trying to prove yourself in the workplace, while getting to grips with studying for a degree. You will be expected to achieve academically and at work, managing your time and adjusting to longer hours with fewer holidays than at school or university. You might have to travel or relocate to find the right opportunity for you.

What are employers looking for?

An apprenticeship is actually designed by employers, meaning you'll be developing the right skills and knowledge to be a success in your chosen industry. They're looking for personal aptitude and enthusiasm rather than just your academic ability; in fact, some employers don't ask for specific grades at all. It helps if you have a particular interest in the area you want to work in

and can demonstrate this from previous experience.

Anything that can demonstrate your interest and your readiness for work could help you stand out from the crowd.

Which level is the right level?

There are various levels of apprenticeship you could apply for (see table, right). Some courses could be up to four, five or six years long.

Which higher level apprenticeships are available?

There are more than 100 apprenticeship types available. From accounting to aerospace engineering, new apprenticeships are being developed all the time with more highly skilled apprenticeships popping up each year.

Big companies like Rolls Royce, GlaxoSmithKline, Goldman Sachs and BAE Systems offer degree apprenticeships, but you'll also find smaller companies offering them, too.


As well as being flexible and adaptable to suit changing business needs at work, you'll also need to be self-motivated during independent study, and be prepared to put what you learn into practice.

Sought-after skills and qualities

- Teamwork
- Collaboration
- Interpersonal skills
- Enthusiasm
- Motivation
- Communication
- Analysis
- Creative solutions
- Attention to detail
- Logical thinking
- Initiative

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes (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

* Statistics from GOV.UK



“University had always been the expected route for me and something which my school had pushed. When I just missed my university offers with AABB grades I was devastated and considered entirely rethinking pursuing the technology route. Since joining Capgemini as an apprentice, I’ve gained so much. I’ve achieved a university degree but also worked on my professional skills, been able to travel, and really developed in confidence.”

James Gee, Higher Apprentice, Software Engineering, Capgemini



“When I first started my apprenticeship I knew I wanted to work in engineering, and I thought I would likely go down the manufacturing/theory route but my apprenticeship enabled me to maximise my experience by rotating around different parts of the business including finance and marketing. This granted me a good insight into how the company is run and ultimately allowed me to realise the area that best suited my skills.”

Holly Broadhurst, Higher Design Engineering Apprentice, JC Bamford Excavators

“I chose an apprenticeship because university is an expensive route to take. I am also aware many employers value relevant work experience when hiring new staff, particularly in the scientific field. The apprenticeship scheme has allowed me to earn while I learn and gain industry experience far beyond what I would’ve gained at university.”

Charlotte Hughes, GlaxoSmithKline, Higher and Degree Apprentice of the Year 2017

“Apprenticeships allow us to attract the very best of talent and to keep it, through a focus on upskilling the entire workforce regardless of age or role. We’ll continue to promote apprenticeships as the right thing for our employees and our company.”

Barry Norris, Training and Development Director, Mitie

“We took on apprentices because it was the right thing to do; for social mobility, improved staff retention and for the future of our business. But what’s amazed us most is how well the apprentices have performed. They still surprise us every day.”

Sam Lee, Head of Recruitment, Bond Dickinson LLP

What's on offer: subjects

At a glance: higher and degree apprenticeship sectors

Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
Arts, Media and Publishing	Health, Public Services and Care
Business, Administration and Law	Information and Communication Technology
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	Retail and Commercial Enterprise
Education and Training	Science and Mathematics

In detail: subjects and professions

Accounting	Facilities Management
Actuarial Technician	Financial Adviser
Advanced Dairy Technologist	Financial Services Professional
Aerospace Engineer	Food Industry Technical Professional
Aerospace Software Development Engineer	Healthcare Assistant Practitioner
Agriculture	Healthcare Science Associate
Aircraft Maintenance Certifying Engineer	Healthcare Science Practitioner
Assistant Technical Director (Visual Effects)	High Speed Rail & Infrastructure Technician
Associate Ambulance Practitioner	Hospitality Manager
Associate Project Manager	HR Consultant / Partner
Aviation Operations Manager	Human Resource Management
Bespoke Tailor And Cutter	Insurance Professional
Broadcasting Technology	Intelligence Operations
Building Services Design Engineer	Investment Operations Specialist
Business And Professional Administration	IS Business Analyst
Care Leadership And Management	IT, Software, Web & Telecoms Professionals
Chartered Legal Executive	Junior 2D Artist (Visual Effects)
Chartered Manager	Junior Management Consultant
Chartered Surveyor	Laboratory Scientist
Civil Engineer	Laboratory Scientist
Commercial Procurement And Supply	Legal Services
Construction Management	Licensed Conveyancer
Control / Technical Support Engineer	Life Sciences And Chemical Science Professionals
Conveyancing Technician	Management
Creative And Digital Media	Manufacturing Engineer
Cyber Intrusion Analyst	Manufacturing Engineering
Cyber Security Technologist	Mineral Products Technology
Data Analyst	Network Engineer
Dental Practice Manager	Non-Destructive Testing Engineer
Dental Technician	Nuclear Scientist And Nuclear Engineer
Digital And Technology Solutions Professional	Nuclear Technician
Digital Learning Design	Nuclear Welding Inspection Technician
Electrical / Electronic Technical Support Engineer	Nursing Associate
Electrical Power Networks Engineer	Operations / Departmental Manager
Electrical Power Protection And Plant Commissioning Engineer	Outside Broadcasting Engineer
Embedded Electronic Systems Design And Development Engineer	Paraplanner

100+
subjects in
development

Passenger Transport Operations Manager	Retail Manager
Policy Officer	Road Transport Engineering Manager
Postgraduate Engineer	School Business Professional
Power Engineer	Senior Compliance / Risk Specialist
Probate Technician	Senior Housing / Property Management
Process Automation Engineer	Senior Insurance Professional
Product Design And Development Engineer	Social Media And Digital Marketing
Professional Accounting Taxation Technician	Software Developer
Professional Services	Software Tester
Project Management	Solicitor
Public Relations	Supply Chain Management
Public Sector Commercial Professional	Sustainable Resource Operations And Management
Rail Engineering Advanced Technician	Systems Engineering Masters Level
Recruitment	Teacher
Registered Nurse	The Water Industry
Relationship Manager (Banking)	Unified Communications Trouble Shooter

Please note that this information is correct as of publication. For an up-to-date list please visit gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship



What's on offer: unis and employers

Universities

Ada, the National College for Digital Skills	University of Bedfordshire
Anglia Ruskin University	University of Bradford
Aston University	University of Cambridge
Bath Spa University	University of Central Lancashire
Birkbeck College	University of Chester
Birmingham City University	University of Chichester
Bournemouth University	University College Birmingham
BPP University	University of Cumbria
Brunel University London	University of Derby
Buckinghamshire New University	University of Durham
Canterbury Christ Church University	University of East Anglia
City, University Of London	University of East London
Coventry University	University of Essex
Cranfield University	University of Exeter
De Montfort University	University of Gloucestershire
Edge Hill University	University of Greenwich
Harper Adams University	University of Hertfordshire
Imperial College Of Science, Technology And Medicine	University of Huddersfield
Kingston University	University of Hull
Leeds Beckett University	University of Keele
Leeds Trinity University	University of Kent
Liverpool John Moores University	University of Lancaster
London Business School	University of Leeds
London Metropolitan University	University of Lincoln
London South Bank University	University of Newcastle Upon Tyne
Loughborough University	University of Northampton
Manchester Metropolitan University	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Middlesex University	University of Nottingham
Nottingham Trent University	University of Plymouth
The Open University	University of Portsmouth
Oxford Brookes University	University of Reading
Plymouth College Of Art	University of Salford
Queen Mary University Of London	University of Sheffield
Ravensbourne Limited	University of Southampton
Sheffield Hallam University	University of Suffolk
Southampton Solent University	University of Sunderland
Staffordshire University	University of Warwick
Teesside University	University of West London
The Royal Agricultural University	University of the West Of England, Bristol
University of Bath	University of Wolverhampton
University of Bedfordshire	University of Winchester
University of Birmingham	University of Worcester
University of Bolton	Writtle College
	York St John University

Examples of employers offering apprenticeships

Accenture	Fujitsu	Royal Air Force
AECOM	GCHQ	Royal Navy
Airbus	GE	Sainsbury's
Arcadis	Grant Thornton	Santander
Army	GSK	Sellafield
Atkins	IBM	Severn Trent
Babcock International Marine & Technology	J.P. Morgan	Siemens
BAE Systems	Jaguar Land Rover	Skanska UK Plc
Balfour Beatty	JCB	Sky
Barclays	KPMG LLP	Staffordshire University
BBC	Laing O'Rourke	Tesco
BDO	Lloyds Banking Group	Thales
Boots	Mace	Transport for London
BT	Marks & Spencer	Troup Bywaters + Anders
Cappgemini	McCann Worldgroup	TUI
CGI	National College for High Speed Railway	Unilever
Cisco	Nestlé	Virgin Media
Civil Service Fast Track	Network Rail	Vodafone
Deloitte	OMG	Wates
Dentsu Aegis	PwC	Wessex Water
Dyson	QA	Willis Towers Watson
EDF Energy	Renishaw	WSP
EY	Rolls-Royce	

Please note that this information is correct as of publication. For an up-to-date list please visit gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship



Over the past three years, 56,200 people have started a higher or degree apprenticeship. The government has pledged to create 3 million apprenticeships across all levels by 2020.*

A week in the life

There's no such thing as a typical week, or even day, in the life of an apprentice

From travelling to an office in another city, meeting with clients to visiting a construction site: who knows what you might be doing next. Employers expect a lot, but no-one expects you to know how to do the job already. That's what the apprenticeship is for, after all. The organisation you work for should help you to adjust to your new working life with induction programmes or personal development activities to help you get started. Later on, you'll meet buddies or mentors who you can turn to for support.

"A typical day could see me sketching up ideas on paper or Computer Aided Design (CAD) software, transferring them to engineer drawings, completing stress analysis calculations, writing user instructions or conducting a risk assessment on the design - essentially, anything that goes into the design of that machine."

Adam Sharp, Advanced Level Mechanical Design Apprentice and National Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2017, Sellafield

"My role as an apprentice is highly varied. I work across commercial and private banking on large change projects and for the past 18 months, I've been leading part of a large project on improving customer information security across the bank. I've been able to work with some of the most senior managers in the bank and it's been a great learning curve for me."

Ross Aynsley, Degree Apprentice Graduate, Banking and Finance, Royal Bank of Scotland

"We're getting a high level of academic performance from apprentices on our programme as the relevance of the material is immediate."

Ian Nabney, Deputy Dean, School of Engineering and Applied Science, Aston University

"Jaguar Landrover apprentices spend most of their first year at college, learning the fundamentals of engineering. Practical experience of the workplace takes place in a manufacturing plant or vehicle workshop outside term-time. Attendance at college drops down to two days per week in the second year, while attendance at work increases. This is later followed by block-release study towards BEng Applied Engineering at University of Warwick."

Engineering Degree Apprenticeship, Jaguar Landrover

"The CapGemini programme starts with a seven-week block of residential practical training attended by apprentices working for various different employers. Apprentices get to network, make friends and learn from each other. For those based in the same towns or cities, some even move into shared accommodation afterwards. After this, the programme is delivered online by Aston University through recorded lectures, online tutorials and case studies. Online seminars and tutorials might take place in the evening. Each week, apprentices are expected to do at least five hours learning and an additional five hours self-study, on top of their full-time job."

Digital and Technology Solutions Degree Apprenticeship, CapGemini

Your long-term career prospects

What kind of difference could an apprenticeship make to your life in the long-run?

Although no-one knows exactly what the future holds, the prospects for higher and degree apprentices look bright. One of the reasons businesses take on apprentices at this level is that they need a highly-skilled workforce. This is a good thing for the company but also for you. Exactly what happens after an apprenticeship will depend on your employer and your contract. Many higher and degree apprenticeship programmes are designed to develop the leaders and managers of the future. The experiences you gain as an apprentice can provide a springboard towards promotions and higher level opportunities.

After several years working with managers and peers, experiencing various aspects of the business and developing the essential skills and knowledge, you should have

* Statistics from AAT and CEBR - Is a university degree the best route into employment?

** Compared to those with Level 3 vocations. Statistics from Adult further education: outcome-based success measures.

become a very valuable employee. It's not unusual for an ex-apprentice to work their way up to the boardroom. Former apprentices are particularly well represented in senior management teams in construction, engineering and energy; 30% of the senior UK managers at Rolls Royce started out at the company as apprentices. Remember to make sure you keep track of the key skills and experience you've gained for your growing CV.

"My apprenticeship has, quite frankly, changed my life. My confidence has grown from being a very shy person to being able to present in front of both client directors and in local schools to help promote apprenticeships. Family and friends have noticed that I have grown as a person. I can honestly say that without this apprenticeship I would not be the person I am today."

Joshua White, Business Analyst, IBM

"My apprenticeship has offered endless development opportunities. I would never have thought that by the age of 21 I would be given the chance to manage a team, travel to BT offices abroad and contribute to the business economy".

Memona Mohammad, Higher Apprentice, Technology, Service and Operations, BT

"I'm very ambitious about my future. I started at university in September, studying a BEng in Computer Aided Engineering. Without my apprenticeship, I wouldn't be the confident, mature, challenge-driven individual I am today: greatest decision of my life."

Jade Aspinall, Manufacturing Engineer, MBDA UK

"The degree apprenticeship has been designed by employers to teach students the cutting-edge technical skills that they need to stay ahead in an ever-changing market. This means that the sky really is the limit for those who graduate from a degree apprenticeship and businesses are benefiting from the skills that they bring from day one."

Sasha Morgan Manley, Managing Director, Morgan Manley Ltd

Higher apprentices could earn £150,000 more on average over their lifetime.*

Over 90% of apprentices go into work or further training."

How to apply and next steps

Raring to go? Here's how to make an application - and be successful



'Find an Apprenticeship' has between 12,000 and 20,000 vacancies listed at any one time.'

If you have a specific query you can also contact the National Apprenticeship Helpdesk on 0800 015 0400 or email nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk.

With so many opportunities on offer there are several ways you can find the apprenticeship that's right for you.

Where to apply

For apprenticeship opportunities local to you and further afield go to 'Find an Apprenticeship' on GOV.UK. Once you register you can set up email and text alerts to inform you about new apprenticeship roles.

You can also find a range of vacancies at ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk, as well as over 12,000 reviews. It's worth checking directly on employer recruitment sites too.

Head over to amazingapprenticeships.com to use 'Vacancy snapshot' which provides useful

information on well-known employers which may help you with your application.

When to apply

Unlike university applications, there is no fixed deadline when it comes to applying for apprenticeships. Vacancies appear throughout the year.

Don't wait until the deadline to apply, some companies close their recruitment as soon as they have sufficient candidates.

As a general rule, vacancies with larger companies start appearing in the autumn, but the majority pop up from January or February onwards. Smaller businesses might start recruiting a month or two before the job starts, so if you

hope to start work in August or September, you might start looking from Easter onwards.

Do check start dates closely, to make sure you'll have finished school or college. Start your research early – the sooner the better, so you have time to fill any gaps in your CV with the things employers are typically looking for (see page four), including getting some relevant work experience.

Stay focused

It's really quite normal to have some doubts and nerves about the process, especially around spring-time, when your friends have their university offers and you might still be waiting to find the right vacancy to apply to.

Don't panic! Keep calm and focus on making a great application when the right opportunity arises. Remember this is a competitive process: you're applying for a job, so make sure you sell yourself as best you can.

The recruitment process

There can be a number of hurdles to leap before you even get to a face-to-face interview: an application form, online tests, perhaps a phone or online interview, before heading to an assessment day.

You might find that smaller organisations have a slightly more informal or personal process, perhaps involving an initial written application, followed by face-to-face interview stages if you're shortlisted. Good luck!

APPLICATION TIPS

- Clearly read the job description, making note of key points such as entry requirements and 'essential' qualities
- Research the company beforehand, so you understand its key areas and priorities
- Include relevant experiences and skills
- Be specific and give examples to demonstrate what you have to offer
- Back up your statements with evidence
- Use an appropriate email address and voicemail message on your phone
- Regularly log on to your account to track your applications
- Don't let emails end up in your junk folder
- Don't undersell yourself. Be confident (but honest!) about your abilities.

* Statistics from GOV.UK



Which? University

university.which.co.uk/

 [@WhichUniUK](https://twitter.com/WhichUniUK)

 [WhichUniversity](https://www.facebook.com/WhichUniversity)

 [WhichUniversity](https://www.linkedin.com/company/WhichUniversity)

**Supported by
National
Apprenticeship
Service**

National Apprenticeship Service

0800 015 0400

Search apprenticeships on GOV.UK

 [@Apprenticeships](https://twitter.com/Apprenticeships)

 [National Apprenticeship Service](https://www.facebook.com/NationalApprenticeshipService)

Which?
University

 **Apprenticeships**