

Sixth Form Apprenticeship Support Booklet



St Joseph's College

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Introduction to Apprenticeships

Understanding apprenticeships

Apprenticeships were developed to help address the skills shortage in UK businesses. They provide a way of combining learning with on the job training, which helps build solid, professional skills transferable from one organisation to another.

Apprenticeships can last from one to five years – and may be longer if undertaken part-time. They result in a professional qualification. Employers pay a salary and tuition fees are covered by the employer and the government.

Who can become an apprentice?

Apprenticeships are aimed at candidates between 16 and 25 years old. However, they are now open to anyone age 16 or over looking to improve their expertise. This means there's plenty of competition from more experienced applicants, but organisations are often keen to take on school-leavers in order to train them both in the job and the organisation's values. Very often the relationship continues long after the apprenticeship is over.

Apprenticeship levels

Apprenticeships range between Level 2 and Level 7. There is no "Level 1" – that's because enrolling on an apprenticeship requires demonstrating a certain aptitude.

Apprenticeship levels 4-6 are aimed at sixth form leavers with levels 6-7 offering degree or equivalent level qualifications. A full list of the levels and what they mean can be found on page 4 of this guide.

Flexibility

Apprenticeships are designed to be flexible. An employer may offer a level 6 or 7 apprenticeship without it resulting in a degree – although the qualification earned would be considered equivalent to a degree. It's important your child checks the qualifications on offer before applying for the apprenticeship.

Study at university

There is usually an element of academic learning during an apprenticeship, but degree apprenticeships are a specific type of apprenticeship (Level 6 and above) that include study at university resulting in a degree level qualification (BA or BSc). Not all apprenticeships that include study at university result in obtaining a degree.

Types of Apprenticeship:

LEVEL 2 Intermediate apprenticeships

Typical length 12-18 months

Entry requirements: None or few

Qualifications obtained: GCSE, BTEC or equivalent

Who's it for? Mostly for 16-year-olds with limited or no academic qualifications.

LEVEL 3 Advanced apprenticeships

Typical length 12-24 months

Entry requirements: Usually 5 GCSEs

Qualifications obtained: A Levels or equivalent

Who's it for? Mostly for 16-year-olds with reasonable academic achievements but who don't want to study in sixth form.

LEVEL 4/5 Higher apprenticeships

Typical length 3-5 years

Entry requirements: A Levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained: Higher national diploma / foundation degree

Who's it for? Mostly for those who want to qualify for professional career paths without attending university or college. Sometimes referred to as 'school leaver' or 'non-graduate' programmes.

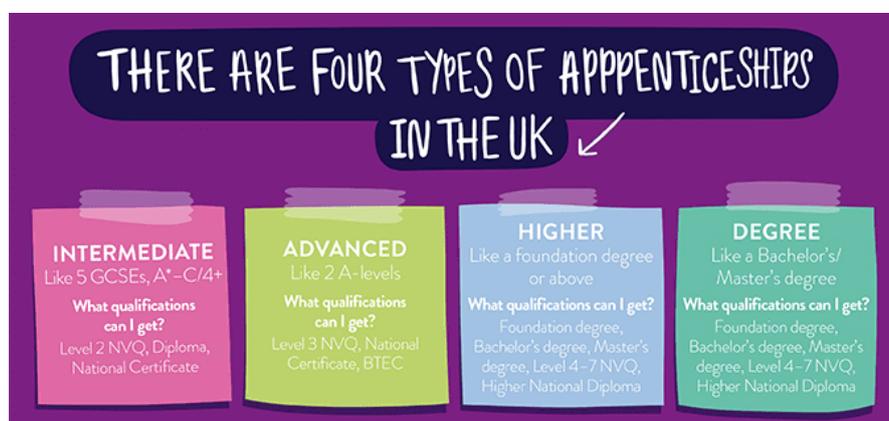
LEVEL 6/7 Degree apprenticeships

Typical length 3-7 years

Entry requirements: At least 2 A Levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained: A BA or BSc degree or higher

Who's it for? Mostly for those with excellent sixth form results that want to study for a degree or similar whilst working. Aimed at attracting talented, high-calibre candidates to bridge professional skills gaps.



A guide for students, parents and guardians

Recent Developments

Apprenticeships may have been around for centuries, but there have been significant changes in recent years. Historically, apprenticeships supported trade careers such as carpentry, building and needlework, without offering a route into professional careers such as law, accountancy and management. In addition, earlier apprenticeships didn't provide the opportunity of obtaining higher qualifications such as degrees or masters.

This has now changed, especially with the introduction of degree apprenticeships in 2015. However, despite such significant changes, there are still some misconceptions and preconceived ideas. Keep in mind that apprenticeships are available across a wide range of industries, can provide a route into professional occupations and, with the introduction of degree apprenticeships, offer a credible alternative to university. Degree apprenticeships have also created routes into jobs which previously could only be entered by obtaining a degree through university, such as nursing.



Non-degree apprenticeships

If your child wants to continue their education after sixth form but doesn't want to undertake three or four years' study, apprenticeships offer the opportunity to commit to just one or two years and obtain a recognised higher qualification

Typical entry requirements for non-degree apprenticeships

- Must live in the region where they are applying for the apprenticeship (i.e. England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) except for degree apprenticeships (level 6);
- Must work at least 30 hours per week – which includes teaching time (though additional study time will be needed);
- Must have a Grade C / 4 GCSE (or equivalent) in English and Maths or be studying towards it;
- Should commit to the full term of their apprenticeship;
- Additional apprenticeships (i.e. higher levels) can be added on at a later date if desired (i.e. one year initial commitment, followed by another year).



Qualifications

CHECK CAREFULLY THE TYPE AND LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION OFFERED Most apprenticeships work towards one or more qualifications. These qualifications correspond to the level of apprenticeship.

Intermediate apprenticeships (level 2) – this is equivalent to gaining five GCSEs at grade C / 4 and above. Most apprenticeships at this level will cover basic numeracy and literacy skills as well as providing level 2 qualifications, such as awards, certificates, diplomas or NVQs depending on the length and difficulty of the work and training provided.

Advanced apprenticeships (level 3) provide qualifications equivalent to 2 A levels. Level 3 qualifications may include National Certificates, National Diplomas or NVQs, suitable as a post 16 or post 18 option.

Higher apprenticeships (level 4 / 5) provide a higher education qualification equivalent to the first or second year of university. Level 4 and 5 qualifications include Higher National Certificates (equivalent to first year of university), Higher National Diplomas (equivalent to second year of university) or foundation degrees.

Flexibility

Apprenticeships are often flexible in that it may be possible to extend the apprenticeship period and obtain a higher qualification. For example, some apprenticeships will allow you to continue on to a higher apprenticeship (level 4 / 5) once the advanced apprenticeship is complete. Always check with your employer whether such progression is possible.

Traineeships and Internships are not types of apprenticeships:

Traineeships

Traineeships are short-term work placements, almost always unpaid, lasting up to a maximum of six months to help young people become “job ready”. The work experience element includes at least 100 hours on the job training to help provide the necessary experience to undertake apprenticeships or other employment.

Internships

Whilst internships can be useful, they should not be confused with apprenticeships. Internships are informal arrangements with an employer: there is rarely a signed contract, they are usually short-term (less than one year) and they do not result in a formal qualification. They do offer an insight into business, networking opportunities, the possibility of job offers afterwards and the ability to learn practical, transferable skills. They are often unpaid, so you’ll need to be aware of how you’re going to support yourself if you accept an internship.



What's on offer?

Non-degree apprenticeships offer a practical, staged approach to learning through experiencing the job first-hand. There may be some separate study at a training centre or college, but most of the coaching will be provided by the employer as work experience. This is a significant investment for companies, in staff time, finance and other resources. They are keen to nurture talent because it demonstrates that they offer:

- Investment in people (not just products or services);
- Professional development and career progression;
- Long and successful career opportunities;
- Personal and professional growth.

It's worth remembering that this investment provides benefits for the company too:

- A workforce trained to their unique professional needs;
- Chance to reinforce their values with new employees;
- Long-term commitment of staff, avoiding recruitment and re-training costs;
- Flexible, mobile workforce to help fill any unexpected gaps.

One of the great advantages about an apprenticeship is that it works well for both employer and apprentice. As a result, it can often be the start of a long and rewarding professional relationship.



Examples of companies offering apprenticeships:

<https://www.pizzaexpress.com/careers/apprenticeships>

https://www.ibm.com/uk-en/employment/school_leaver.html

<https://careers.vodafone.co.uk/apprentices>

<https://careers.sky.com/earlycareers/apprenticeships/>

<https://www.nestleacademy.co.uk/apprentices/>

<https://apply.army.mod.uk/what-we-offer/regular-soldier/skills>

<https://toniandguy.com/careers/apprenticeships>

<https://www.hondaapprenticeships.co.uk/>

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/careers/apprenticeships/>

<https://www.kmf.co.uk/more/young-apprenticeships.html>

<https://www.ibstockplc.co.uk/careers/engineering-apprenticeship-scheme>

<https://careers.bentleymotors.com/go/Apprenticeships/4803301/>



Degree apprenticeships

Degree apprenticeships (levels 6 and 7), developed by universities, professional bodies and employers, offer the chance to qualify with a bachelors or master's degree whilst working. Time is split between work and study. This can be an attractive alternative to attending university. At the moment, degree apprenticeships are only available in England or Wales but applications can be made from anywhere in the UK.

Fees

There are no tuition fees to pay (these are covered by the employer and the government) and the apprentice will receive a salary to cover living expenses, paid holiday and sick leave. Salaries usually range between £7k-18k p/a, although some employers offer more. This should significantly contribute, if not totally cover, living expenses (such as accommodation, food, travel and entertainment) way beyond what their university peers can achieve through part-time work.

Links to universities

Degree apprenticeships were launched in September 2015. As they are still relatively new, places are limited, but due to their popularity and success, new apprenticeships are being created regularly. Most organisations partner with a small number of universities so the choice of apprenticeship should be driven by the apprenticeship type (and reputation of the company offering it) and not location or university. Applications for degree apprenticeships are via the company offering the apprenticeships, not via UCAS.



Typical entry requirements for degree apprenticeships

- Unlike other apprenticeships, applicants for degree apprenticeships can live anywhere in the UK, but the apprenticeships are only available in England and Wales;
- Must work at least 30 hours per week – which includes teaching time (though additional study time will be needed);
- Must have a Grade C/4 GCSE (or equivalent) in English and Maths or be studying towards it;
- Must have Level 3 qualifications (minimum two A level passes or equivalent). Sometimes more is required;
- Some employers have specific entry requests;
- Should commit to the full term of their apprenticeship (which may be three to four years, or longer if part time).

What's on offer?

Degree apprenticeships are a very significant investment for companies, in staff time, finance and other resources. Employers promise to fund (or part-fund) three or four years' tuition costs, salary (and all the related additional costs, such as holiday / sick leave), a job opportunity for three or four years, mentoring and on the job training. Such a commitment is not undertaken lightly and, in the most part, companies do this because they aim to develop talented individuals, skilled to fulfil the companies' unique needs, who will continue working for them long into the future.

There's no guarantee that a job offer will follow an apprenticeship, but a company's objective in investing in the apprenticeship is to create a top-pool of talent from which they can select the very best employees. Because apprenticeships include the development of many transferable skills (emailing, meetings, problem-solving, strategy, implementation, project management and team building to name but a few) as well as company specific skills training, it's not problematic to obtain a degree from an apprenticeship with one company but subsequently move to another. However, quite often an apprenticeship is the start of a long and rewarding professional relationship.

Important information to remember

The larger companies tend to recruit as early as **October** onwards. Once they get enough applications they can close the scheme – it's important for students to be aware that even if the closing date is February the employer can still close it early. Many students do get caught out by this! It is vital that you do not consider degree apprenticeships as a last minute option. Degree schemes tend to require high grades and the larger employers run assessment centres which are tough so you need to invest time in preparing for the application process.

Some Examples of Degree Apprenticeships:

<https://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/apprentice/>

<https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/careers/local/apprenticeships>

<https://www.airbus.com/careers/apprentices-and-pupils.html>

<https://www.cgi.com/uk/en-gb/careers/school-and-college-leavers/apprentices>

<https://www.nestleacademy.co.uk/apprentices/higher-apprenticeships-l4-6/>

<https://joinus.barclays/eme/apprenticeships/>

<https://careers.bentleymotors.com/go/Apprenticeships/4803301/>

Getting a Degree - university or apprenticeship?

With the introduction of degree apprenticeships in 2015, apprenticeships now provide a viable alternative to university in gaining a full degree qualification. It's important to understand the pros and cons of opting for one route over another: there are benefits and drawbacks.

Choice

With over 1,500 different degree titles, traditional degrees offer far greater variety in the choice of courses, subjects and modules available. Traditional degrees enable students to study subject areas that interest them and to tailor their degree during their study by opting for certain modules as their interests evolve. In contrast, degree apprenticeships are far more focused and industry-specific and the university and location of study is limited to the universities working with the employer.

The student experience

Whilst degree apprentices will experience some aspects of university life, it will be different to full-time students. Most university degrees offer plenty of flexibility with how students manage their study time, but an apprentice's times for study will be limited. Holiday periods are a significant differentiator. University students will have around 14 weeks' holiday per year, but apprentices will have only four or five. Some university apprenticeships offer the opportunity of full-time academic study during university term time, and full time work during the holiday periods.

Direction

Degree apprenticeships are an excellent choice for school-leavers who have a clear idea of the type of career they would like to do. In contrast, university degree courses remain relatively open and provide a springboard to a range of career prospects after graduation.

Employability

One of the biggest advantages apprentices achieve over their peers who have similar level qualifications obtained through university is that they will have developed many commercially desirable soft skills. First-hand experience of meeting work deadlines, forming professional relationships with colleagues at many different levels, building rapport and trust with external stakeholders, and corresponding (whether by email, phone call or in meetings) in a work environment is highly valuable for future employers.

Style of learning

Although largely dependent on the type of university and the chosen course, full time students are likely to be better suited to classroom and teacher-led learning.

Degree apprenticeships offer a more vocational and applied learning environment where much of the learning and training is done on the job.

Finances

Degree apprenticeships are fully funded by the government and the employer and apprentices are paid a wage for their time. Apprentices usually complete their apprenticeship debt free. A traditional degree will cost students around £9,250 a year excluding their living (“maintenance”) expenses. Low interest loans, scholarships and bursaries are available, but it is likely that a full time student will graduate with a sizeable debt.

Summary

Apprenticeships have changed considerably over the last few decades and higher and degree apprenticeships are now an attractive alternative to full-time university courses. Degree apprenticeships have also opened up routes into jobs which previously, could only be entered by obtaining a degree through university.



Is an apprenticeship the right choice?

Advantages	Considerations
<p>Apprenticeships provide focused and applied training for those who already have a strong interest in a job or industry.</p>	<p>Apprenticeships may narrow options early on.</p>
<p>Not everyone is suited to university style learning and apprenticeships provide a practical approach to obtaining qualifications.</p>	<p>Your child will need to have a fairly clear idea of the type of career they wish to pursue.</p>
<p>Apprenticeships provide paid employment. In addition, your child will leave debt free.</p>	<p>It may be difficult for your child to combine studying with working.</p>
<p>Apprenticeships develop key transferable skills which are considered lacking in the labour market.</p>	<p>The salary of an apprentice can be quite low and your child will also need to consider financing their travel and living expenses if they are not living at home. Furthermore, your child may need to pay back their course fees if they choose to leave their apprenticeship early.</p>
<p>Apprenticeships may provide future employment within the company and working within an organisation may reveal job roles they did not know existed.</p>	<p>Your child may feel that they are missing out on the 'student life' offered at universities. However, some universities and colleges still offer their degree apprentices a strong student experience.</p>
<p>Gaining work experience and on the job training may provide your child with a competitive advantage when applying for full time employment.</p>	<p>Student fairs and networking events at university enable students to explore different career routes that they were not aware of when leaving school.</p>
<p>Some students flourish with the responsibility and structure of an apprenticeship.</p>	<p>Many companies provide graduate schemes for university leavers on completion of their degree.</p>
<p>Degree apprenticeships offer the chance to gain a BA or BSc without incurring the debts associated with studying at university.</p>	<p>Entering the work place at an early age may lead to fatigue.</p>
	<p>Degree apprenticeships are still quite new, so there is only a limited number of vacancies available at the moment.</p>

Questions to ask:

Does your child have a clear idea of the type of career or job they want to pursue?

Is your child more suited to an applied and hands-on working environment?

Is your child organised and able to balance work with academic study?

Will your child perform better under the guidance of a supervisor in a work environment?

Will your child enjoy the combination of different learning environments?

Does your child enjoy practical / active homework assignments?

Has your child undertaken any paid or voluntary work and did they enjoy this?

Don't worry if your child is still unsure which option is right for them. Students can apply for degree and higher apprenticeships at the same time as applying to university through UCAS. Details on how to apply for apprenticeships are covered in this booklet.



Summary

1. Apprenticeships range from level 2 to level 7, typically last 1-5 years and offer different qualification types upon successful completion;
2. Apprenticeships include paid work with an element of study;
3. Degree apprenticeships result in a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science;
4. Apprenticeships are very demanding with few holidays, a challenging job role and the need to study outside of working hours; however, they can be immensely rewarding and offer a very good chance of post apprenticeship employment.



Finding the Right Apprenticeship

Researching Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships vary in the qualifications that can be achieved, length of commitment and balance between work and study. They may involve moving away from home. With so many options, it may be helpful to consider the various elements independently.

What level of apprenticeship is appropriate?

First, your child needs to decide which level of apprenticeship they wish to take. This will be determined by two things:

- Having the required level of qualifications to move on to the next level;
- How long they intend to commit to their apprenticeship.

After sixth form, degree apprenticeships offer an attractive alternative to studying full time at university, whilst still obtaining a BA or BSc. Like university, this will mean committing to three or four years study and – unlike university – it will mean working in a real job too!

Alternatively, they may opt to take a different type of apprenticeship (i.e. higher at Level 4 or 5). They will still obtain a recognised professional qualification (but not the equivalent of a degree) and their commitment to the apprenticeship will be shorter (between one and two years usually). Later they could choose to build on their apprenticeship to gain further qualifications up to master's level.

In order to apply for a post-sixth form apprenticeship, they will have to have achieved Level 3 status (two A levels or equivalent) and in some cases (even for lower level apprenticeships), they may need to have exceeded this.

What sectors are they interested in?

Next, they should decide on their area of interest and see what apprenticeships are available within that sector. If they don't know where their areas of interest lie, it's time to do some research! Of course, careers advisers can help at school, but they might want to jump online themselves. If they get bored reading about a certain sector, chances are that's an indication the sector isn't for them. Getting some work experience is also a good way of deciding whether reality matches up to the theory of a dream job.

Will the apprenticeship help them get the career they want?

There's no need to be too specific about the job or role they ultimately want, but it's important that they can see a correlation between their apprenticeship, the areas of

study, the experience it will give them, and where they want to be in the future (say five years' time)

Useful links:

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/>

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

RESEARCH!



How to find the right apprenticeship

There's a wide range of ways to seek out apprenticeships and we recommend using a selection of options rather than relying on one.

Government website

Most apprenticeships are posted on the Government's website. By creating an account, your child can set up alerts and filters to see opportunities that are of most interest to them and to be emailed when new opportunities arise. However, not all apprenticeships will appear

Industry sector

It's smart to check apprenticeships directly on company, university or college websites. If your child doesn't know which of these sites to select, then they should first do some research on which industry sector may be of interest, and then find companies within this sector.

Companies direct

Another alternative is for them to identify companies that are of interest and check their websites for apprenticeships. Be warned! Applications to well-known international companies (such as Amazon, Coca-Cola, Facebook, Google, Virgin) will be highly competitive; however, it might be a good starting point for identifying what's included in the apprenticeship and seeking out other companies that provide similar content. The descriptor names can then be used in search functions on the government website or job boards. Not all companies offer apprenticeships.

Job boards

National job agencies will also advertise apprenticeships and options can be narrowed to review within local ranges or job types, this might be a particularly good way to seek out apprenticeships in level 3-5 range.

Reviews

To find out what other students have thought about an apprenticeship and how they rate them, there are reviews on <https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/>

Apprenticeship checklist

- With or without a university component?
- How long does your child want to commit to studying?
- Degree level apprenticeship or other apprenticeship?
- Is there a valuable role at workplace?
- What skills and subjects will be learned? What types of career will be available afterwards?
- Is the provider's reputation solid? (i.e.knowledge/skills/behaviours)

Useful links:

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

<http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/vacancies/>

<https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/apprenticeships/apprenticeships-england/how-find-apprenticeships-england>

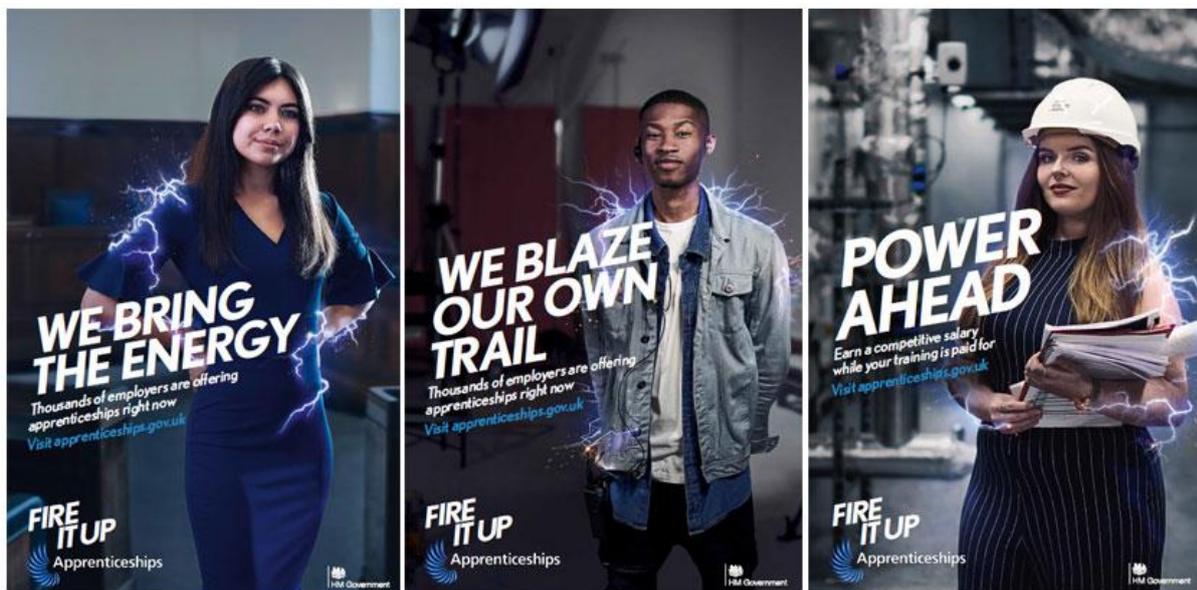
<https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/apprenticeships-223>



SUMMARY

Choosing the right apprenticeship takes research.

1. Decide which level of apprenticeship – this may be based on your child’s existing qualifications and / or how long they will commit to study;
2. Find out what interests them – is it a specific industry, company or job type;
3. Read the apprenticeship offering in detail – what qualification will be obtained, terms of study leave and job role;
4. Check the apprenticeship is approved and accredited by the Government to ensure quality.



The Application Process

Applying for an apprenticeship

The application process is very similar to applying for a conventional job and, with the exception of degree apprenticeships, opportunities can arise at any time of the year. Your child will need a CV, to be able to complete an application form, be interview ready and may need to complete aptitude tests. Plenty of practice is a good way to prepare.

Timelines

Unlike university application where there is a fixed process that takes place at the same time each year, applications for apprenticeships come up throughout the year. This might feel disconcerting if your child's peers have all made their university applications and even received offers, whereas your child has yet to secure an apprenticeship, but the system is different because apprenticeships are tied to genuine jobs. Don't worry that your child might miss out; they can set up alerts so they know when new opportunities in their areas of interest emerge.

For degree apprenticeships, some companies may have set applications windows i.e. January application for September intake (Unilever), others offer the opportunity to pre-register (BAE). **APPLY EARLY - DON'T WAIT FOR THE DEADLINE**



Final dates

Apprenticeships will advertise a deadline or final date for applications, but your child should try to apply as early as possible. Unlike UCAS, where the time of submission has no bearing on whether or not a place at university may be obtained, with apprenticeships, some companies will close opportunities ahead of the advertised deadlines if they have enough appropriate candidates.

Application process

The application process is much more closely aligned to job applications than university applications. The longer the apprenticeship, the more rigorous the application process is likely to be. It differs between organisations and may include:

- Online application form – may also require a Curriculum Vitae (“CV”);
- Online competency tests (these can be in any or all of English, Maths, logic, personality assessments, verbal reasoning);
- Video response (usually this takes the format of your child answering questions that appear on screen, rather than a two-way video interview);
- An assessment day, which may include group activity as well as individual interviews.

Employers are trying to ascertain whether you child can:

- Present their ideas and thoughts clearly so they are easily understood;
- Obtain core competency in English and Maths;
- Assimilate, digest and learn the information provided during the apprenticeship, both in theory and in practise;
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in the subject matter/industry area;
- Reveal what kind of thinker are they:- imaginative, creative, logical, rational;
- Apply themselves to different situations;
- Work and integrate well with others;
- Identify values and ambitions;
- Show they be a good fit within their organisation

Key tip: If your child’s contact details change, it’s important they update their applications, registration websites, CV etc as soon as possible. If they don’t, they could miss out on an offer.



Writing the application

There are likely to be several elements to an apprenticeship application and each serves a slightly different purpose. Understanding what the application form, CV and cover letter are meant to achieve will help them include the right information.

The application form

It's always best to look through the application online, and then write answers in Word (or elsewhere), prepare and spell check them thoroughly, before copying and pasting into the online form. This avoids risking a computer crash and losing the work, gives thinking time and allows comparisons between different questions so that answers are not repeated.

Answers will be different depending on the apprenticeship. Preparation for one apprenticeship will not be sufficient for application to another (although it may form a good basis). Applications should be tailored according to the specification outlined in the advert and they should check the company website for any specific advice and tips offered. Check your child has made their application as relevant as possible to the job in question.

Giving examples is a key differentiator in applications. Make sure your child always gives examples to support their statements and does not make unsubstantiated assertions such as "I am a great team leader" and "I am a good communicator" without showing why they hold this opinion.

Writing a CV

A CV is a brief synopsis of experience and qualifications. Whilst it should reflect the personal style of the person it describes, all CVs should include:

- Personal information, including address and contact details;
- Education and Qualifications;
- Professional and voluntary experience with the most recent job first, whether voluntary, paid, temporary or work placements;
- Skills, strengths and achievements – including a full clean driving licence if they have one;
- CVs should not exceed two sides of A4;
- Check for spelling mistakes!
- Use a professional font which is easy to read (e.g. Calibri, Arial).

Covering letter

Where possible, your child should include a covering letter along with their CV. CVs are generic whereas a covering letter gives them an opportunity to specify why this particular apprenticeship appeals to them and what qualities they have that make them a good match. Make sure they read the job description carefully and use the letter to illustrate how their skills match up to what has been requested. It is important to be specific and use examples of what they have already done rather than to theorise about what they'd like to do in the future. If necessary, they should explain why they would be happy to relocate.

CV TEMPLATE

You can use the CV Template on the next pages to create your own.



CV Template

Name

Address

01234 900621 • 0113 000 0000 • name@mail.com

Driving Licence • Own Car

Personal statement

A highly motivated and hardworking individual, studying for their A-Levels, predicted to receive excellent grades in both Maths and Science. Seeking an apprenticeship in the engineering industry to build upon a keen scientific interest and start a career as a maintenance engineer.

Mechanically minded, with a methodical approach to working and an eagerness to learn and develop personal skills in a practical setting. Eventual career goal is to become a fully-qualified and experienced maintenance or electrical engineer, with the longer-term aspiration of moving into project management.

Key Skills

Advanced problem solving and numeracy skills

Accomplished communication skills, both written and verbal, developed through numerous essays and presentations given during my time at college

Ability to take the initiative and work well under pressure, ensuring strict deadlines are met, as successfully demonstrated during work experience placement project

Flexibility, whilst maintaining enthusiasm and commitment to each project

Proficiency in all areas of Microsoft Office, including Access, Excel, Word and PowerPoint

Education

College/School Name

(2020 – 2022)

A-levels:

Physics – A

Maths – B

Business Studies – B

School Name

(2015 - 2020)

10 GCSEs, grade 9-4, including Maths (8) and Double Science (88)

Work Experience

Part-time Sales Assistant, Shop Name, Location

(April 2021 – Present)

Key results:

- Achieved four out of five revenue targets

- Personally billed over £10,000 since starting position.

- Demonstrated resilience and ability to upsell products, consistently meeting KPIs set for adding more value to sales.

- Significantly improved negotiation skills, regularly converting customers from point of enquiry to sale.

Pharmaceutical Company (*unpaid work experience*)

(Summer 2019)

Duties included:

- Shadowed a key member of laboratory staff, observing their day-to-day work

- Spent a morning working within customer service centre, listening to client complaints and understanding company best practice when responding

- Assisted in project on risk management and contingency planning in case of failure at distribution centre

- Learned about company project management lifecycle methodology

- Gained knowledge of key health and safety standards used within the industry

Hobbies & Interests

Over the last two summers I have helped a family friend restore a classic sports car. This has triggered a passionate interest in mechanics and automotive restoration and, now that the project is finished, I have continued to build my knowledge by attending various classic car events.

During this time, I also decided to set up a blog around the project. Initially starting as a way to ask other collectors for advice whilst tracking progress, I began to enjoy writing about the subject and have now started writing occasional freelance articles for an online automotive magazine.

References

References are available on request.

Interviews

Interviewing can be nerve-racking, so it's worth reassuring your child that interviewers are not looking to catch them out and pick fault with them, quite the contrary, they are just as keen to find the right person to take up their apprenticeships as students are to find the right opportunity!

That said, employers like to be taken seriously as there's a lot of time and money invested into the interview process. There are some fundamental must-dos before moving on to some of the tips that could make your child stand out from others. Fundamental things they should do for interview:

- Dress smartly, irrespective of whether the interview is face-to-face or online. Be fresh, clean and alert (make sure they have not been out partying the night before!). Wear smart, suitable shoes (no trainers, slip-ons or open toes). No brightly coloured nail varnish and minimal cosmetics. If the interview is online, make sure the background is appropriate and uncluttered;
- Find out about the organisation. Your child must be able to supply a heartfelt, credible reason why they want to work for whomever is offering the apprenticeship – if they've already had work experience with them, so much the better;
- Be on time! It reflects very poorly to arrive late for an interview – even if it is just a few minutes. In most cases, interviews will run to a tight schedule; aside from making a poor initial impression by being late, they will have less time than others to make themselves stand out – the interview is unlikely to be extended;
- Allow some contingency. Make sure your child plans their journey so they can arrive with time to spare. If there are problems with public transport or traffic en route, they will have factored in a buffer. If they need to visit the toilet, they will have time. If it's hot outside, they will have chance to cool down in air-conditioning. If they are suffering with nerves, they can get a glass of water;
- Check whether they will be expected to give a presentation – and prepare for it if so;
- Be able to talk fluently on what they have mentioned in their CV and application. It can be a long time between making the application and getting the interview. Also, brush up on anything relevant that has happened in between.

INTERVIEWS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE PROCESS - PRACTISE IN ADVANCE

Preparing for an interview

To help your child prepare for their interview, a list of commonly asked interview questions have been included in this guide. The aim of this is not to encourage your child to learn answers off by heart, but to help build their confidence in speaking around these topics.

Research the company and job role

Questions on the company itself are likely to be asked - so make sure your child has researched carefully the values and aims of the business. Direct them to the required skills / competencies found in the job description to gain a better understanding of what the employer is looking for and how they can demonstrate these in their responses.

Prepare responses

Get your child to write down some shorthand answers to each of the questions that appear later in this section. Preparing thoroughly prior to the interview gives your child thinking time and will help them to provide considered responses to difficult questions.

Reflect on past experiences

Make sure your child can support their answers with specific examples of when they have previously demonstrated the skill or character trait they are talking about.

Practise:

One of the key things employers will be looking for is good communication skills. Encourage your child to practise their responses out loud to improve their interview skills. You may wish to role-play interviews with your child using the list of questions in this section to guide you. Pay particular attention to what your child says, how they speak and their body language.

Prepare your own questions

It is very common for interviewers to ask their applicants if they have any questions at the end of the interview. This is a great opportunity for your child to demonstrate their interest in the apprenticeship. Help your child to prepare some questions in advance - some ideas are shared below

Useful links:

http://www.apprenticeshiprecruitment.co.uk/go_files/files/552759-WEB%20-%20Sample%20Apprenticeship%20Interview%20Questions.pdf

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-interviews/46-apprenticeship-interview-questions-and-tips>



Typical interview questions

Questions about the company

Why do you want to apply for this apprenticeship?

Why do you want to work for this company?

What do you know about this company?

What qualities do you think are important to this role?

Which part of the job role do you think will be the most challenging? What do you think are the most challenging issues facing the company at the moment?

Questions about the applicant

Tell me about yourself.

What skills can you bring to the role?

What makes you stand out from the other applicants?

What are your three key strengths?

Do you have any weaknesses? (the answer is always yes!).

What are they and how are you addressing them?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

What do you think you would like least about this role?

Give an example of why you feel you are a good communicator / team member?

How have you influenced team decisions?

How do you respond to stressful situations / under pressure / difficult customers?

What are your hobbies and interests?



Questions your child might ask

- Where do you think this company is going to be in the next five years?
- What do apprentices usually go on to do?
- Will there be the option to continue my training after the apprenticeship finishes?
- How regularly will my work performance be reviewed?

TIP: Get your child to find a recent news article on the company / industry they are applying in. Based on what they have read, help them think of a question they might like to ask at the interview.



Dealing with rejection

Experiencing rejection for the first time can be tough. As adults, we have had many years to develop the coping mechanisms to deal with such occasions. However, this may be your child's first experience of rejection so it is important to know what to do if this situation arises.

As apprenticeships continue to grow in popularity, so too have the number of applications. For some of the larger company names, places can be highly competitive with reports of more than 2000 applications for just 52 posts.

Bear in mind that letters of decline are likely to happen in the lead up to examinations. Try your best to prevent this from having a negative impact on your child's study or revision efforts by following some of these strategies.

1. Try to encourage your child to research and apply for more than one apprenticeship scheme. Aim for at least five apprenticeships - just like university applications - choosing five apprenticeships helps your child to avoid placing all their eggs in one basket.
2. Encourage your child to request feedback from the company. Whilst not all companies offer this, many do. Feedback will help your child understand the reasons for not being successful and will help them improve for future interviews. Companies have a lot of experience in providing feedback of this kind and it is likely to be sensitive and constructive.
3. Be there. Listen carefully to their feelings and reassure them that in the long-run, things will work out.
4. Apprenticeships are available all year round. If they have not been successful yet and have already finished school, encourage them to take on an internship or some additional work experience to help strengthen future applications.

Finalising the process

Just as you would expect a contract outlining terms and benefits when starting a job, similar rules apply with new apprenticeships. Check carefully that terms have been clearly set out, so that expectations on both sides are understood.

As well as checking the paperwork ahead of the apprenticeship, there should be regular review meetings with both employer and training provider to make sure the apprentice is staying on track and that the employer is providing appropriate support. This should be referenced in the agreement.

Apprenticeship agreement

This is signed by the employer and apprentice, it is equivalent to a contract of employment, giving details of what the employer and apprentice agree, including:

- How long they'll be employed;
- The training offered;
- Their working conditions (such as pay, working hours, holidays, and any support or benefits provided);
- The professional qualification they're working toward;
- The apprenticeship framework or standard they will be working to;
- The skill, trade or occupation for which they are being trained;
- Study time allowed (often one day per week);
- Mentor provision.



Rights and entitlements

Minimum wage

Apprentices who are under 19, or who are 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship, will be paid a minimum of £4.30 per hour (April 2021). This increases after their first year when they are paid at least the national minimum wage for their age. Apprentices are paid not only for their working hours but also for any training that is part of their apprenticeship. Apprentices may be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly depending on the company policy.

Holiday pay

All apprentices are entitled to the statutory minimum of 20 days paid holiday per a year, plus bank holidays.

Fair working hours

The limit for an average working week is 48 hours and no apprentice should be expected to work more than this including any training or study time. Your child will also be entitled to at least a 20 minute break for every 6 hours of work. On average, apprentices are likely to be working 30 hours a week, excluding study time.

Fair treatment in the work place

As an apprentice, your child should not face any unfair or discriminatory treatment based on their religion, race, age or gender.

Note that the following list demonstrates the minimum requirements set out by UK law. It is not uncommon for some companies to pay above the minimum wage in order to attract the best applicants.

Summary

1. Check the deadline for applications and, if possible, submit early;
2. Create a strong CV demonstrating key qualities such as team player, communicator, leader, problem solver;
3. Draft answers to the application form elsewhere so they can be reviewed and spell checked before submission;
4. Read the requirements thoroughly and go online to check whether the company has any specific guidance and tips before tailoring a cover letter;
5. Practise interview questions to help with confidence on the day.

