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# What is an apprenticeship?

APPRENTICESHIPS ALLOWS YOU TO COMBINE WORKING IN A REAL JOB GAINING HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE, WITH LEARNING UP TO DEGREE LEVEL. THEY ARE A POPULAR ROUTE INTO THE WORLD OF WORK FOR SCHOOL- AND COLLEGE-LEAVERS. APPRENTICESHIPS AREN'T JUST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. THERE'S NO UPPER AGE LIMIT - AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION AND ARE AGED 16 OR OVER, YOU CAN APPLY.

# What types of apprenticeships are there?

- ▶ You may be surprised at how many people undertake Apprenticeships. In the first two quarters of the 2020/21 academic year (August 2020 to January 2021), there were 161,900 apprenticeship starts. They are available in most industries and cover hundreds of job roles; it's possible to take an Apprenticeship in anything from accounting to youth support work!
- ▶ There are 600 different apprenticeships on the national apprenticeship website alone!

# The Structure of an apprenticeship

- ▶ Apprenticeships offer structured training in the workplace together with off-the-job training (for around 20% of the time). The off-the-job element may be undertaken at a training centre, college or university - perhaps one day a week or through block release.
- ▶ Apprenticeships are designed to develop your competence to undertake a particular job, and will lead to relevant qualifications or industry-recognised standards.

# Do I have the qualifications/skills for an apprenticeship?


- ▶ There are no nationally set entry requirements for Apprenticeships, but to be sure entrants are capable of completing their programme successfully, you may be asked for certain qualifications. In some cases, having the right personal qualities, enthusiasm and commitment may be as important as any qualifications required. Some learning providers/employers are prepared to consider you no matter how you have done at school, although good numeracy and literacy skills are always going to be an advantage. You may have to take an entrance test, particularly if you don't have GCSEs in maths and English or if you are interested in the practical trades.

# How and when do I apply?

- ▶ Young people often apply for training during their final year at school, with a view to starting in the summer, especially if it is linked to a college course that begins on a particular date. However, you can start many programmes at any time. Some Apprenticeships have closing dates, so check carefully to avoid missing out.
- ▶ Just like applying for a job, you can expect to be interviewed (face-to-face, on the phone, by online chat or video call) and, in some cases, you will also be given assessment tests.
- ▶ Competition - particularly for certain Apprenticeship opportunities - can be intense, so make sure you are well prepared.

# Pay and conditions?

- ▶ When you start your programme, you should be given an agreement/contract that includes details of your training, pay, hours of work, the length of your Apprenticeship etc. Apprentices are entitled to the same amount of holiday and other working conditions as any employee in a similar grade/role.
- ▶ Once on an Apprenticeship, you will be employed and receive a wage. From April 2021, the National Minimum Wage rate for apprentices aged 16-18, or 19 or over and in the first year of their Apprenticeship, is £4.30 per hour. Other apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum/Living Wage rate for their age.

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- ▶ In reality, many employers pay more than the National Minimum/Living Wage. In fact, according to the Apprenticeship Pay Survey 2018/19 (published 2020), the mean hourly rate for level 2 and 3 apprentices in England was £7.64 an hour. Of course, pay rates for Apprenticeships, as with all jobs, vary widely depending on the occupational sector, employer etc.



# What Happens if I don't get an apprenticeship?

- ▶ There are lots of apprenticeships out there! Like applying to jobs, consider applying to more than one apprenticeship.
- ▶ Consider alternatives back ups such as applying to college, looking for voluntary work, traineeships or seeking supported employment.
- ▶ Look out for employment support courses, i.e. interview skills, CV and job searching support.

# Further information

- ▶ the National Careers Service in England - tel: 0800 100 900 - [www.direct.gov.uk/nationalcareersservice](http://www.direct.gov.uk/nationalcareersservice) or
- ▶ National Apprenticeship Service - to find out about Apprenticeships in England, phone the Apprenticeship helpline: 08000 150 600 or you can search for vacancies and apply online at:
- ▶ [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk)
- ▶ Amazing Apprenticeships - there's information and resources for potential apprentices in England at:
- ▶ [www.amazingapprenticeships.com](http://www.amazingapprenticeships.com)

# Useful websites

There are a number of sites that promote alternatives to full-time education post-16, and carry vacancies for Apprenticeships and other work-based training programmes:

- ▶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-confident-employers-that-have-signed-up>
- ▶ Dynamic Training specialise in working with individuals aged 16 - 24 with an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan).
- ▶ Webpage referring to supported apprenticeships:  
<https://www.dynamictraining.org.uk/apprenticeships/employers/supported-apprenticeships/>
- ▶ Current apprenticeship roles:  
<https://www.dynamictraining.org.uk/apprenticeships/employers/apprenticeship-roles-we-support/#content>

# More useful websites

- ▶ [www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk](http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk)
- ▶ <https://careerfinder.ucas.com/jobs/apprenticeship>
- ▶ [www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk](http://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk)
- ▶ [www.milkround.com/school-leavers](http://www.milkround.com/school-leavers)
- ▶ [www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)
- ▶ [www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk](http://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk)
- ▶ [www.allaboutschoollleavers.co.uk](http://www.allaboutschoollleavers.co.uk)