

Apprenticeships Frequently asked questions

The National Apprenticeship Service – what we do

The National Apprenticeship Service is responsible for Apprenticeships in England. We provide a dedicated service to employers, offering free, impartial advice and support to those looking to recruit apprentices for the first time or expand their Apprenticeship programme.

Why Apprenticeships?

Hiring apprentices helps businesses grow their own talent by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. Designed by employers for employers, Apprenticeships are a cost effective way to deliver skills designed around business needs. Apprentices have made an active choice to learn on the job and to make a commitment to a specific career. As a result apprentices tend to be eager, motivated, flexible and loyal to the company that invested in them.

Apprenticeships cover more than 170 industries and 1500 job roles, from advertising to youth work via environmental engineering and nuclear decommissioning.

What is an Apprenticeship?

An Apprenticeship is not a qualification in itself, but a number of separately certified qualifications and courses known as a Framework. Apprenticeships combine practical and theoretical skills, and they are designed to help employees reach a high level of competency and performance. A framework would generally consist of:

- **Competence Qualification** - a work related competence based qualification assessed in the workplace by a college or training provider;
- **Knowledge Qualification** - a knowledge-based qualification such as a BTEC or City & Guilds, relevant to the specific Apprenticeship and usually delivered by a college or training provider;
- **Functional Skills** - transferable skills that support an employee in their job (e.g. literacy and numeracy, working in teams, problem-solving and using new technology);
- **Employment Rights and Responsibilities** - to develop knowledge and understanding about the world of employment;
- **Personal Learning and Thinking Skills** – covers six areas to help the apprentice to become: independent enquirers, creative thinkers, reflective learners, team workers, self-mangers.

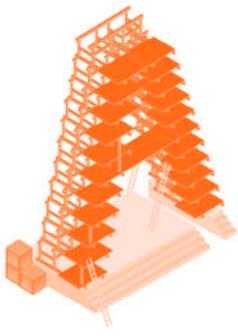
Frameworks are available as Intermediate Level Apprenticeships (Level 2, broadly equivalent to five good GCSE passes), Advanced Level Apprenticeships (Level 3, broadly equivalent to two A Levels) and Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4-7, equivalent to a foundation degree, a bachelor's degree and even a master's degree in some sectors).

Employment is a fundamental part of an Apprenticeship. An apprentice must be employed in a job role with a productive purpose.

How is the training delivered?

An Apprenticeship is a partnership between the employer, training organisation and apprentice. The employer will normally work with a training organisation who will support the delivery of the training programme, carry out the assessments and deliver the additional skills and knowledge training required to complete the framework.

Most of the training is 'on-the-job' – working with a mentor to learn the job-specific skills in the workplace. Off-the-job training may be delivered in the workplace or through 'day-release' – the arrangements for this depend on the occupational area, the training organisation and the requirements and wishes of the employer.



How long does it take?

The duration of an Apprenticeship depends on the framework being followed and the ability of the individual apprentice. An Apprenticeship can take between one and four years depending on the level and type. As a guide an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship usually takes around 12 months and an Advanced Level Apprenticeship around 24 months.

Who can be an apprentice?

Apprenticeships can be offered to both new and existing staff. Different Apprenticeships have different entry requirements which should be discussed with the training organisation. Apprenticeships are open to all ages, although Government funding is prioritised for certain groups.

Individuals with a Level 4 or above qualification including graduates are not eligible to receive Government funding towards their Apprenticeship however, they can still do an Apprenticeship but the training will need to be funded by either the employer or the individual.

Who pays for the training?

Apprenticeship funding is available from the Government through the Skills Funding Agency and is paid directly to the training organisation. The Government funds Apprenticeship training in full for 16-18 year olds. Training for Apprenticeships for those over 19 is part funded, with employers expected to make a contribution. The employer contribution may vary between training organisations and according to the age group of the apprentice - it may be possible to make some or all of this 'in kind'.

Where Government funding is not available an Apprenticeship can be funded entirely by the employer or employee.

What about wages?

All apprentices must be employed, have a contract of employment just like other employees. Ideally, a salary should be offered which reflects the job role and the skills and experience of the candidate, whilst recognising the training opportunity being offered. It can also be helpful to consider how the apprentice's pay will increase over time. The average Apprenticeship wage is £200* per week.

A minimum wage of £2.68 per hour (including off the job training time) must be paid to all apprentices who are under 19 or in the first year of their Apprenticeship. Individuals not falling into these categories should be paid the National Minimum Wage rate for their age band. Employment must be for at least 30 hours per week, except in the minority of circumstances where the learner cannot complete the full 30 hours.

How can an employer recruit an apprentice?

Employers may already have an existing member of staff or another individual in mind to fill an Apprenticeship vacancy. Where they need to recruit, a training organisation will be able to support them in recruiting an apprentice using Apprenticeship vacancies, the jobsite for Apprenticeships. This website allows employers to advertise their Apprenticeship vacancies free of charge and can be supported by your normal recruitment advertising methods.

Up to 20,000 quality Apprenticeship vacancies are available online at any one time at apprenticeships.org.uk and over 1.6 million applications were made online in 2013.

How can potential apprentices apply?

Potential apprentices can register with Apprenticeship vacancies. They can search for local and national vacancies in their required job role and level at apprenticeships.org.uk. The new Apprenticeship vacancies mobile search application also makes it possible for candidates to search for Apprenticeship vacancies on the move.

*Apprenticeship Pay Survey 2011