

Apprenticeships – a guide for teachers and support staff

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Why do I need to know about Apprenticeships?

Work-based routes to careers have many advantages, and should be presented in a way that gives them parity with purely academic routes. Apprenticeships can allow people to combine work-based learning with academic achievement, to have a paid job, practical training and experience, and to gain qualifications at an appropriate level.

Teachers and support staff can:

- encourage young people to explore the range of Apprenticeships available
- help young people with active research to find out more, and to apply
- make links between the curriculum and career choices
- invite employers, unions, and ambassadors for apprenticeships to speak to students

- show video case studies and real life stories
- refer young people to the National Careers Service or other careers advisers to discuss options
- check that information about Apprenticeships is included in tutorials and one-to-one guidance sessions, PHSE lessons, careers support programmes and appropriate areas of the curriculum.

There is lots of help available. Read this leaflet to find out more.

Legally schools have to secure access to independent information, advice and guidance, and young people will find it useful if teachers and support staff help them to access information about the full range of progression, job and career opportunities available to them. Young people will then all have an equal chance of a satisfying working life, based on informed choices.



What is good about Apprenticeships?

- It's a real job with a real employer for at least a year, taking between one and four years to complete depending on the level of Apprenticeship, the apprentice's ability and the industry sector.
- Start a career with the prospect of promotion, not just gaining a qualification.
- Earn and learn in a paid job with a minimum wage, employment rights and employee benefits.
- Work alongside experienced staff, gaining workplace and business experience.
- Be paid to develop skills, experience and qualifications at any level.
- Gain access to progression routes to higher education.
- Build up a practical CV and current references.
- Choose from 1,400 job roles in a range of sectors.
- It's open to all age groups of 16 and above – school leavers, job and career changers living in England and not taking part in full-time education.



What makes a great Apprenticeship?

› Learning at college and at work



"Our employer does appreciate you've got college work to get on with and they give you time to continue your studies as well as

expecting us to have responsibilities in work."

Jenny Tata Steel

› Enjoying responsibility



"Some people think you're not given anything important to do when you're an apprentice. But our company gave a couple

of us a project to manage which involved implementation of an entire new system over two sites. They trusted us to go through a major external audit which we passed and they keep trusting us with even harder projects now."

Paul Alcoa Fastening Systems

› Earning while you learn



"The biggest thing I would put across to anyone about Apprenticeships is that you're earning while you're learning, and

having the opportunity to move on to degree level standard without going down the route of staying on in education and getting into debt."

Jack Babcock Marine

› Getting on in a career



"There is not enough awareness of Apprenticeships. Parents who want their kids to do well in a future career need to support the vocational training option."

Charlotte Community

› Acquiring a wide range of skills



"One of the best things about doing an Apprenticeship is you get to see so many different areas and learn different skills. So you

don't have to go into a job and sit there for five years: you can find out what you like and what you don't like and adjust your skills accordingly."

Ashok Rolls-Royce

› Support from the employer



"I got a lot of help from my employer, which made me feel good. They put me forward as BSI BTEC Apprentice of the Year at West Suffolk College and when I won

that it gave me a bigger incentive to knuckle down."

Ben St Edmundsbury Borough Council

› Support from the union



"My union give me complete support – anything I need, anything I want, they're always there for me."

Jayne Tesco



How do the levels of Apprenticeships work?

There are currently three different levels of Apprenticeship:

- Intermediate Apprenticeships (Level 2)
- Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3)

→ Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4 and above)

The diagram below shows you which qualifications may be included at each level.

What do Apprenticeships include?

Apprenticeships are made up of four compulsory elements:

- a qualification which proves that an apprentice can demonstrate competence in the relevant skill, trade or occupation – this must be achieved in order to qualify for an Apprenticeship certificate
- a technical certificate, to show understanding of the relevant underpinning theory or knowledge – sometimes an Apprenticeship framework may have an integrated qualification that combines competence and technical knowledge elements
- either functional skills (maths and English) qualifications or GCSEs in maths and English, and a module on personal learning and thinking skills
- a module in Employment Rights and Responsibilities (ERR) in the workplace – every apprentice is required to demonstrate that they know and understand areas such as the range of employer and employee statutory rights and responsibilities under employment law, health and safety and equality and diversity procedures and documentation for their organisation.

Routes into Higher Education

Level	Qualification	Other Qualifications	Other Qualifications	Other Qualifications	Other Qualifications	Other Qualifications
8	Doctorate e.g. PhD	Professional Qualifications at Level 8				
7	Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)	Postgraduate Diploma (PG Diploma)	Masters Degree (MSc/MA)	Professional Qualifications at Level 7		
6	Year 3 Honours Degree (BA/BSc)	Professional Qualifications at Level 6				
5	Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND)	Year 2 Foundation Degree (FdA, FdSc)	Year 2 Honours Degree (BA/BSc)	Higher Apprenticeship	QCF NVQ/ other level 5 quals e.g. City and Guilds
4	Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)	BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC)	Year 1 Foundation Degree (FdA, FdSc)	Year 1 Honours Degree (BA/BSc)	Higher Apprenticeship	QCF NVQ/ other level 4 quals e.g. City and Guilds
3	AS/A2 Level or International Baccalaureate	BTEC Nationals Extended Diploma, Diploma, Subsidiary Diploma, Certificate	QCF NVQ/ other Level 3 quals e.g. City and Guilds	Access to HE Diploma	Advanced Apprenticeship	Relevant experience
2	BTEC FIRSTS Diploma, Extended Certificate, Certificate	GCSE grades A* - C	Pre-Access to HE Diploma	Intermediate Apprenticeship	QCF NVQ/ GCSE/ other level 2 quals e.g. City and Guilds	Professional Qualifications at Level 2
1	Foundation Learning: a range of entry Level and Level 1 qualifications from Awarding Bodies. e.g. NVQ Level 1, City and Guilds, Pre-Apprenticeship (Level 1), BTEC Vocational Qualifications (Entry Level 1)					

Entry

What are apprentices entitled to?

- a written contract of employment, covering working time, pay, health and safety, holidays, protection from discrimination and the right to join a trade union
- a full induction in the workplace
- a negotiated training plan or contract between the apprentice, the employer and the training provider
- a fair wage, and the same benefits as other employees
- a safe working environment and protection from discrimination or bullying
- release from work to attend formal training
- provision of an appropriate range of work experiences to enable the apprentice to complete their qualifications
- access to support, guidance and mentoring
- practical training on the job
- regular assessments and review of progress
- sufficient time away from work station or desk to study in work time.



How much do apprentices get paid?

The amount paid to employed apprentices, as for all employees, is negotiated with the employer. Pay rates vary between sectors, regions and between different employers. A union can help in negotiating pay rates. There is an apprenticeship national minimum wage (NMW) in Britain, which applies to all 16- to 18-year-olds and to those aged 19 and over in the first year of their Apprenticeship. The

current rate is £2.65 per hour in 2013. This is subject to an annual review. However, unions generally negotiate pay rates well above that. According to the National Apprenticeship Service, the average pay rate for apprentices is around £170 per week. As their skills develop, pay increases. Apprentices may get extra money for essential books, clothing or equipment, or to help them with a disability.

What support can trade unions give?

Unions negotiate fair pay and equal treatment in the workplace. Unions also tackle discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexuality and disability.

Unions will help ensure that an Apprenticeship is high quality and that the apprentice is properly supported. Unions will negotiate with employers, making sure that time off is allowed to study or train, and that apprentices receive impartial information, advice

and guidance, and are supported by a mentor. The employer must give an apprentice the chance to join an appropriate union*. To find out more about which union to join go to www.worksmart.org.uk

Some unions now have rates specifically for apprentice members – many also have structures within the union to support apprentices within their workplace.

*unless you are working for the Ministry of Defence.

How can schools and colleges help young people to find an Apprenticeship?

Teachers and support staff can help young people to find an Apprenticeship by supporting them to do active research into:

- sectors, job roles and progression opportunities
- types and levels of Apprenticeships and how they link to curriculum areas
- the local and national job market
- how to find a placement, and how to apply
- how to tell if specific opportunities are legitimate and good quality
- what support is available in the workplace, and how to join a union
- how to match and present themselves to the employer.

“ The thing I like about my Apprenticeship is that what I learn at college I take to work the next day and I apply it and it just clicks. ”

IT apprentice

The resources section at the back of this leaflet will help you to find all the information you need.

Apprenticeships are very popular and there is a lot of competition. Applicants need to be able to demonstrate good communication skills, drive and commitment, motivation, reliability, trustworthiness and eagerness to learn new things. Teachers can help young people to develop these skills and qualities and to present themselves effectively.



How the NUT can help you

It is the firm view of the NUT that all young people should have the right to the most appropriate pathway to fit their interests and passions. Information in this booklet explores the reasons why the Apprenticeship route should be considered alongside other career options as part of the Information Advice and Guidance offered to young people in schools. Vocational education must be recognised and offered as a valuable pathway for young people.

Many schools and colleges already successfully offer a balance of academic and vocational studies to students aged 14 and over. Apprenticeships can offer young people a great way into work-based learning alongside academic learning. This guide is designed to help teachers find out more about Apprenticeships from Level 2 (GCSE level). The raising of the participation age is designed to allow young people to follow routes other than full-time schooling.

The more information young people are given about work-based routes, the better informed they will be about their future options. Vocational routes are one relevant and important alternative to university. This guide offers practical support for schools to assist young people to make informed choices.

For more information go to the NUT website

www.teachers.org.uk/schoolsector/secondary

www.teachers.org.uk/6fcs/post-16

or email apprenticeships@nut.org.uk

Resources for teachers

For more information about unionlearn's "Apprentices are Union Business" project go to:
www.unionlearn.org.uk/apprenticeships
or email apprentices@tuc.org.uk

For more information about rights at work, or about joining a union go to:
www.workSMART.org.uk

For resources for teachers, including checklists, presentations, lesson plans, quizzes and videos go to the National Apprenticeship Service at:
www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Partners/IAG.aspx

The National Apprenticeships Service website also has full details of how to apply and a placement service:
www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Be-An-Apprentice/Applying.aspx

For the National Careers Service telephone 0800 100 900 (free from a landline) or go to:
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/courses/typesoflearning/Pages/apprenticeships.aspx>

Not Going to Uni has a guide, case studies, videos and a placement service:
www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

The Gov.UK website has a factual guide, and links to other sites:
www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide

The Sector Skills Councils' websites have details of apprenticeship frameworks and career pathways:
www.afo.sscalliance.org/frameworkslibrary

The unionlearn Higher Learning at Work website has information, resources and case studies about progression to higher education via work-based learning:
www.higherlearningatwork.org

Find case studies and real life stories by searching for apprentices on:
www.careersbox.co.uk,
<http://icould.com>, and
www.youtube.com and advise learners about how to use Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to make contact with employers.

For more information about unionlearn's Apprentices are Union Business project go to:
www.unionlearn.org.uk/apprenticeships or email:
apprenticeships@tuc.org.uk

For more information about Apprenticeships go to the National Apprenticeship Service at:
www.apprenticeships.org.uk

