

Successful Apprenticeships

The Apprenticeship framework

An Apprenticeship can be a route into higher education. Apprenticeships generally fall into one of three categories, each resulting in a package of nationally-recognised qualifications:

- **Apprenticeships** - when completed the qualifications are considered to be equivalent to 5 good GCSE level passes and are typically composed of a competence based element from assessment of performance and knowledge on the job (NVQ level 2), a knowledge based element (for example a BTEC First Diploma or City & Guilds Progression Award at level 2) and Key Skills / Functional Skills at Level 1 or 2 which includes communication, information technology, problem solving, application of numbers and personal skills.
- **Advanced Apprenticeships** - when completed these are considered to be equivalent to 2 A level passes and could include NVQ level 3, BTEC National or a City & Guild level 3 and Key Skills / Functional Skills at level 2 or 3. Once you have obtained these Level 3 qualifications you can go on to a Higher Apprenticeship or explore other routes to gain higher education (university level) qualifications.
- **Higher Apprenticeships** – when completed these will give you level 4 or 5 qualifications equivalent to an HNC or HND or a foundation degree plus key skills at level 3 or above.

The intention is to include the apprenticeship framework in the UCAS points system by 2012. In other words, the knowledge and skills acquired by an apprentice would be accredited in the same way as A level grades.

Who are Apprenticeships for?

To qualify for an Apprenticeship you need to be living in England and not in full-time education.

Because Apprenticeships are directly related to the workplace and involve vocational study you will first need to decide which career area suits you best. You will then have to judge whether you can commit to the demands of an Apprenticeship, juggling work and study. How long an Apprenticeship takes will depend on the profession you choose, your level of ability and your employer's needs, the usual time is one to three years (but it could be as long as up to five years in some cases).

There are no fixed entry requirements for most Apprenticeships. However, for some more technical Apprenticeships you may need GCSE grades A* - C in English, maths and science. If your application is successful, you'll be offered either an Apprenticeship or an Advanced Apprenticeship depending on the skills, experience and qualifications you already have.

If you want to do an Apprenticeship but are unable to find an employer to take you on you should consider beginning your studies at college and getting some work experience to increase your likelihood of getting accepted for an Apprenticeship with an employer.

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

The NAS was officially launched in April 2009 and has overall responsibility for the delivery of Apprenticeships in all sectors and industries throughout England. The NAS web site has information about all aspects of Apprenticeships for applicants, apprentices, parents, employers and training providers. There are details of over 200 frameworks for Apprenticeships from engineering to boat building, veterinary nursing to accountancy ranging over 80 different industry sectors. The web links below will take you straight to the appropriate area of the NAS website:

- [Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care](#)
- [Arts, Media and Publishing](#)
- [Business, Administration and Law](#)
- [Construction, Planning and the Built Environment](#)
- [Education and Training](#)
- [Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies](#)
- [Health, Public Services and Care](#)
- [Information and Communication Technology](#)
- [Leisure, Travel and Tourism](#)
- [Retail and Commercial Enterprise](#)

As part of their website the NAS maintains an online system enables individuals to search and apply for live apprenticeship vacancies and allows employers, and their training providers to advertise their vacancies to a wide range of interested applicants. www.apprenticeships.org.uk

How are Apprenticeships Funded

While you are on an Apprenticeship, your employer pays you a minimum salary of £95 a week. However, as skills develop, many employers tend to increase wages and recent research has found that apprentices earn an average of £170 net pay per week.

Most of the training is 'on the job' within the workplace, however the knowledge based element can be provided by a local college or by a specialist learning provider. If you are aged 16 - 18 the NAS will pay 100% of your training costs, and if you are aged 19 – 24 the NAS will pay 50% of the costs. If you are aged 25+ the NAS may still make a contribution to the cost for some courses.

If you're aged between 16 and 18 and decide to study at a college while looking for an Apprenticeship, you may qualify for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of up to £30 a week:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/MoneyToLearn/EMA/index.htm

Other sources of help and information

If you have read this information leaflet and you want to know more about becoming an apprentice we suggest you start by looking at the FAQs, the case studies, the different job roles and the videos on the NAS website:

www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Be-An-Apprentice/Next-Steps.aspx

There is also useful information about apprenticeships on the direct.gov website:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/OptionsAt16/DG_4001327

If you are aged 13 -19 visit **Connexions Direct** for information and advice to help you make the decision about whether an Apprenticeship is right for you:

www.connexions-direct.com or call 080 800 13219.

If you are aged 20+ (or 18–19 if you've been referred by Jobcentre Plus) visit **nextstep South East** and use the map or the links to get information about your nearest nextstep office:

www.nextstepsoutheast.org.uk or call freephone 0800 1954 700

or visit **The Careers Advice Service** at:

www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk or call freephone 0800 100 900