



Queen Mary's Grammar School  
Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

## Apprenticeships

### Aims

**The Aim of this document is to provide one guide for 6<sup>th</sup> form students and parents/guardians supporting advice on Apprenticeships.**

1. What's an Apprenticeship?
2. History of Apprenticeships and Why the government favour them?
3. What are the entry requirements?
4. Apprenticeships v University?
5. Why I chose an apprenticeship?
6. Where to look for an apprenticeship?
7. Calendar of KEY Apprenticeship events
8. Further Resources

### 1. What's an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship, which must last for a minimum of 12 months, **combine practical training in a job with studying to obtain qualifications**. 20% of your time is set aside for learning, usually at a college, university or training provider. It's a paid position, so you earn while you learn.

### 2. History of Apprenticeships and Why the government favour them?

The **National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)**, part of the Skills Funding Agency, is a government agency that coordinates apprenticeships in England, enabling young people to enter the skilled trades.

At the beginning of February 2008 the Labour Government published a document called *Strategy for the Future of Apprenticeships in England*. It commenced the National Apprenticeship Service. At the time of its formation, the Labour Government up to that point had been heavily focused on persuading 50% of under-18s to attend university. In other European



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countries, much more focus is placed on apprenticeships; only 6% of English companies offer apprenticeships compared to 30% in Germany.

In England, those who by age of 25 had been on an apprenticeship are **likely to earn much more** than those who do not, for similar qualifications (£100,000 over a career). A university degree is often quoted as improving earning potential, but is highly dependent on choice of degree, and **apprenticeships have a much higher success rate on earning potential.**

**Source: NAS**

“...tens of thousands of university graduates are earning less than school leavers taking apprenticeships”

**Source: ONS**



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### 3. What are the entry requirements?

Apprenticeships are available at four levels. Each level has different entry requirements, which may depend on the skills and qualifications you hold.

Level	Entry requirements
<b>Intermediate (Level 2)</b> – generally considered to be equivalent to five GCSE passes.	You need to be over 16 years old, and show you have the ability to complete the programme.
<b>Advanced (Level 3)</b> – generally considered to be equivalent to two A level passes.	Some industries want apprentices who have three or more GCSEs, but other employers don't specify any formal qualifications. Some may ask for previous experience in the industry. Check apprenticeship vacancies to see if there are any specific subjects and/or grades you need to have.
<b>Higher (Level 4 and above)</b> <b>Level 4</b> – equivalent level to an HNC, a foundation degree, or the first year of an undergraduate degree. <b>Level 5 and above</b> – equivalent to a full degree.	Entry can include at least five GCSEs grades A – C, and Level 3 qualifications, including A levels, NVQ/SVQ Level 3, or a BTEC National. Some will expect or require applicants to have subjects related to the particular apprenticeship. Check apprenticeship vacancies to see if there are any specific subjects and/or grades you need to have.
<b>Degree (Level 5 to Level 7)</b> – these are new and enable apprentices to achieve a full bachelor's or master's degree as part of their apprenticeship. <b>Levels 5 and 6</b> – equivalent to a full degree. <b>Level 7</b> – equivalent to a master's degree.	Entry can include at least five GCSEs grades A – C, and Level 3 qualifications, including A levels, NVQ/SVQ Level 3, or a BTEC National. Some employers have specific entry requirements. For example, recent IT degree apprenticeship adverts have required an A level (or equivalent) grade range of ABB to CCC. Many employers will expect or require you to have qualifications in subjects related to the particular apprenticeship. Check apprenticeship vacancies to see if there are any specific subjects and/or grades you need to have.

Source: UCAS



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### 4. Apprenticeships v University?

Both University students and apprentices can gain a full degree qualification, but there are some key differences:

- Apprentices split their time between university study and the workplace, and are employed throughout the course.
- Traditional degrees offer a much broader choice of courses, subjects, subject combinations, and the range of modules you can cover. However, degree apprenticeships are limited to the universities working with the employer and the employer's location, and the course content is industry-specific.
- **Degree apprenticeships are focused on developing the skills and knowledge for specific jobs and careers.** Traditional degree courses, on the other hand, offer a wide range of career prospects, but some are focused on particular professions, and there are still many careers that require traditional qualifications which cannot be attained with a degree apprenticeship.
- The experience of student life will be different for apprentices. Traditional on-campus learning, with the social life it offers, can be particularly important to some students. While degree apprentices do experience some elements of campus life, it will be different and combined with additional work-based experience.
- Degree apprenticeship fees are funded by the government and the employer, and apprentices are paid a wage throughout the apprenticeship, meaning **degree apprentices can be debt-free**. Studying a traditional degree will cost students their tuition fees (around £9,000 per year) plus living expenses. There are student loans, bursaries, and scholarships available

**Source: UCAS**



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A simple table comparing University v Apprenticeships is shown below:

University	College of Further Education, Higher Education or Foundation Degree	Apprenticeship
<b>PRO'S</b>	<b>PRO'S</b>	<b>PRO'S</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in your future, 1/3 of jobs now require a degree</li> <li>You can earn more in the future</li> <li>Time to develop a deeper subject knowledge</li> <li>Work and live amongst new people who love your subject too</li> <li>Gain life skills along with higher level thinking skills</li> <li>Lots of experiences: work experience, gap year in a foreign country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller working environment than a large university</li> <li>Smaller step between Level 3 and a full degree</li> <li>Lower grades to get onto a Foundation degree</li> <li>2 years for a foundation degree (usually 3-4 years for a degree)</li> <li>Good basis for a step up to a degree afterwards</li> <li>Further and higher study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work and get an education</li> <li>Get paid for doing the job from day one</li> <li>Earn a qualification you do not have to pay for too</li> <li>Gain employability skills as well as an education</li> <li>Learn from people in the profession</li> <li>Can earn a degree whilst doing an apprenticeship and some companies pay for this too – no student debt</li> <li>Practical and vocational learning</li> </ul>
<b>CON'S</b>	<b>CON'S</b>	<b>CON'S</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Money – Tuition fees and loans</li> <li>Might mean you need to move away</li> <li>3 more years of education not earning a real wage</li> <li>No guaranteed job at the end</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not a full degree</li> <li>If you choose Level 3 qualifications not moving up an academic level</li> <li>Money – Need to pay Post-19</li> <li>More time studying</li> <li>No guaranteed job at the end</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time management in balancing full time work and study</li> <li>Can pigeon hole you</li> <li>More restrictions and not as much flexibility</li> <li>Still no guaranteed job (Risk that some companies will only take you on for the time of the apprenticeship and then let you go)</li> </ul>



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### 5. Why I chose an apprenticeship?

"I feel I need real-world experience to further my career and skills"

<https://www.unifrog.org/blog/interview-with-eugene-why-i-chose-an-apprenticeship>

"We know apprenticeships work – 90% of apprentices go on to secure a job and nobody understands the skills employers need better than employers themselves." Apprenticeships and skills minister Robert Halfon

"...students on school visits are shocked to hear he is taking a degree at no cost to himself: They don't know anything about apprenticeships and they want to know more!" Adam Sharp, an apprentice engineer at Sellafield

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/mar/07/why-apprenticeships-are-working>

"That's when I found degree apprenticeships. My apprenticeship has allowed me to be so much more independent in comparison to my peers at university. I have no student debt and I have managed to buy a car and become a home owner, both of which are only possible because of my apprenticeship." Amy Grange, Oracle Applications Consultant at Capgemini

<https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/worklife/campus/a22543244/why-should-you-do-an-apprenticeship/>



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### 6. Where to look for an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship vacancies appear throughout the year and can be found through a variety of sources.

The Governments apprenticeship database enables a search via location, apprenticeship level or industry type. Once registered on Find an apprenticeship, email and text alerts can be set up about new apprenticeship vacancies which may be of interest.

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

UCAS have an apprenticeship finder.

<https://careerfinder.ucas.com/jobs/apprenticeship/>

Many National and International companies will offer Apprenticeships through their own media sources.

<https://www.jaguarlandroverretailerapprenticeships.co.uk/apply-now>

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

<https://careemap.co.uk/ict-apprenticeships/>





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## **7. Calendar of KEY Apprenticeship Events**

### **February**

#### **What career Live? What University Live?**

28–29<sup>th</sup> February 2020, NEC, Birmingham

Visitors can compare over 100 of the UK's top apprenticeships and universities side-by-side.

<https://www.whatcareerlive.co.uk/birmingham>

### **March**

#### **National Apprenticeship event and conference**

27<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, ICC, Birmingham

The National Apprenticeship Event & Conference is designed to inspire future apprentices and is aimed at candidates aged 14 and older.

<https://nationalapprenticeshipevents.co.uk/>

### **May**

#### **Birmingham Jobs Fair**

17<sup>th</sup> May 2019, Council House, Birmingham

The Birmingham Jobs Fair sees an exhibitor turnout of 25 – 35 companies and occur every 2–3 months.

<https://www.thejobfairs.co.uk/network/birmingham/>

### **June**

#### **Birmingham Higher Education Exhibition in conjunction with UCAS**

4 – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019, NEC, Birmingham

UCAS experts and hundreds of university representatives, employers, and gap year specialists at one of our largest events.

<https://www.ucas.com/events/birmingham-higher-education-exhibition-339421>





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### November

#### World Skills Live

21-23 November 2019, NEC, Birmingham

The UK's largest interactive apprenticeships, skills and careers event. Over 130 employers from across the UK

<https://www.worldskillsuk.org/directions/our-events/worldskills-uk-live>

### 8. Further Resources

#### National Apprenticeship Service

A government agency that coordinates apprenticeships in England, enabling young people to enter the skilled trades.

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

#### A guide to Apprenticeships - National Apprenticeship Service

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/787717/Guide-to-Apprenticeships-260219-LR.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/787717/Guide-to-Apprenticeships-260219-LR.pdf)

#### UCAS Guide to Apprenticeships

<https://www.ucas.com/file/120301/download?token=DPdwJ0EV>

#### Unifrog

A one stop destination platform, all QM students have access to this and can compare every UK degree apprenticeship.

<https://www.unifrog.org/>

#### Amazing Apprenticeships

The approved communication channel, commissioned by the National Apprenticeship Service, to support the Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge for Schools project. It displays a range of employers fact files outlining the types of apprenticeship vacancies available at these companies across the year.

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/>



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### NGTU

Notgoingtouni was founded in 2008 by Tom Mursell a student who couldn't find a website that showed him his options outside of going to university. notgoingtouni.co.uk is now the UK's leading website dedicated to helping school & college leavers make informed decisions about their future by showing the opportunities that exist outside of traditional university such as apprenticeships, sponsored degrees, diplomas, gap years, distance learning and jobs.

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

### A parents' guide to Apprenticeships

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/711088/Parent-Guide-Apprenticeships.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/711088/Parent-Guide-Apprenticeships.pdf)

### Calendar of Apprenticeship Events

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/employment-help-young-people/list-of-uk-careers-fairs-in-2019/>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/796345/Calendar\\_of\\_event\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/796345/Calendar_of_event_2019.pdf)