



CRGS
Sixth Form

Apprenticeships

A Guide to Applying
2026/27

What are Apprenticeships?

There are over 600 different apprenticeships. From Aerospace Software Development Engineer and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Specialist to Paramedic and Professional Economist - no matter what career you're interested in, there's likely to be an apprenticeship for you.

Apprenticeships offer a valid alternative to university, with the qualifications to match. An apprenticeship is a job with substantial training and the development of transferable skills. It's a way to earn and learn, gaining a real qualification and future career. An apprenticeship is a combined package of work and study. You will spend most of the week at work watching and learning but mainly having a go yourself. You'll also spend time attending a college or training provider, this is usually one day per week.

If you're looking for an apprenticeship after A Levels, a higher or degree apprenticeship is worth considering. Degree apprenticeships enable you to study for a BSc or BA degree whilst working. They provide you with the opportunity to not only gain valuable real-life work experience, but you will not incur any student debt whilst gaining your degree. Places on such programmes are highly competitive as they are a very attractive option for lots of school leavers.

The combination of work and study means that apprenticeships aren't an easy option; you will need to be focussed and committed to succeed. It can be tough to get in, too. Employers are looking for highly capable and committed individuals, so do your research.

The 4 different apprenticeship levels are:

Name	Level	Typical Duration	Equivalent Educational Level
Intermediate	2	12-18 months	5 GCSEs at grades - 9-4
Advanced	3	12-24 months	2 A Levels
Higher	4, 5, 6 and 7	3-5 years	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	3-7 years	Bachelor's or master's degree

Entry requirements vary from programme to programme and depend on the sector and prior skills. If you have achieved A Levels you may still be expected to start at intermediate or advanced level as some sectors, such as engineering, require you to build up your skills.

- Unilever require five GCSEs including English and Maths and two A Levels
- Deloitte require five GCSE's including Maths and English Language, grade 4 or above as well as 104-120 UCAS points (depending on the scheme).

Typical entry requirements for apprenticeships (both degree and non-degree) are that you have a grade 4 GCSE in English and Maths and if you are applying for a Higher or Degree apprenticeship that you have a Level 3 qualification (usually a minimum of 2 A Level passes or equivalent). Regardless of the level of apprenticeship offered, the employer will expect you to commit to the full term of the apprenticeship on offer.

Is an apprenticeship the right choice for you?

If you have a strong interest or focus on a particular industry, then an apprenticeship can be a great choice. You will be provided with paid employment alongside a structured programme of learning that is funded by the employer; this often results in future employment with the company. However, if you are not too sure on your future career field or if you feel that you might be missing out on the whole 'university experience' then an apprenticeship might not be the right choice for you at this time. That's the most important thing – that you are making the right choice for you and your future career aspirations.

How to find an apprenticeship

Applying for an apprenticeship is like applying for a job, so some might be more competitive than others. This is something to think about when starting your search. It might be worth spreading your application efforts across a good mix of well-established, competitive schemes and lesser-known apprenticeships that also offer good prospects.

There are a lot of apprenticeships out there – and this means that the process of finding them can be quite a long and complicated one. Sadly, there is no centralised place to help you find and apply for apprenticeships, so be prepared to do lots of research.

Many national and multinational organisations launch their apprenticeship programmes at various times throughout the year – **CHECK COMPANY WEBSITES REGULARLY.**

Set up alerts to receive the latest, live streams of new apprenticeship vacancies from:

- <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
- www.ucas.com/degree-apprenticeships
- <https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/>
- www.amazingapprenticeships.com
- <https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/apprenticeships> (Degree Apprenticeships)
- www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk
- <https://www.uclan.ac.uk/degree-apprenticeships>

Unifrog have an apprenticeship section on their website where you can search for opportunities and create shortlists of apprenticeships that you are interested in:

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

When the Careers Office receives Degree Apprenticeships, we advertise these in the Careers Bulletin and also the student bulletin.

There is no fixed date for applying for apprenticeships, vacancies appear throughout the year.

What does it cost?

Apprenticeships are funded from contributions made by the government and your employer. This means you will not have any student loans or tuition fees.

You'll just need to cover the cost of your day-to-day expenses, such as lunch and travel and living expenses if you are going to be based in another area of the country.

What are employers looking for?

Although many employers look for similar traits in an apprentice, it's important to research the company and gain a better understanding of what they are looking for because each employer can differ. Airbus, for example, looks for potential apprentices who can demonstrate a love of collaboration, teamwork and a passion for wanting to 'learn, grow and share their achievements with others'.

Be prepared, be proactive and do your homework. Research the industry *AND* the organisation. Be clear on the company vision.

What should you include in your application?

Ensure your CV is up to date and make sure you include key skills, languages, work experience, hobbies and interests. Your hobbies and extracurricular activities are a great way to showcase these skills and experiences. During the application process you will be asked to demonstrate essential skills.

Did you know your hobbies can demonstrate these valuable skills?

- **Art/Photography** - creativity, eye for detail, passion, patience, idea development.
- **Music** - dedication, creativity, teamwork, perseverance, memory, listening, collaboration, confidence.
- **Puzzles** - strategy, logic, determination, analytical skills, problem solving, perseverance.
- **Reading** - imagination, empathy, creativity, attentiveness.
- **Scouts/Guides** - initiative, teambuilding, confidence, leadership, communication, problem solving.
- **Social media** - presentation skills, audience awareness, self-awareness, interpersonal skills.
- **Sports/fitness** - motivation, communication, passion, dedication, teamwork, leadership, time management, competitiveness.
- **Volunteering** - motivation, passion, dedication, communication, interpersonal skills, networking, sense of community, empathy.

Useful Tips

- Set up alerts on the above websites to receive emails or text messages when new apprenticeship vacancies are added.
- Engage with social media and connect with potential employers on platforms like LinkedIn and X.

- Attend Apprenticeship and Career Fairs/Events. Ask the companies if they offer Higher and/or Degree Apprenticeships. Find out when their apprenticeship applications open, and when they start.
- Look out for National Apprenticeship week – for all things dedicated to apprenticeships.
- Broaden your awareness of different roles within organisations. Large organisations will have different functions like Logistics, Business Administration, Management, Software/IT, Finance and Engineering.
- Apprenticeship vacancies don't fit with the University application cycle. Organisations will launch their programmes throughout the year – check company websites often. Degree Apprenticeship applications tend to open between October and March. And closing dates typically fall between late December and early March, so be on the lookout from the start of Year 13.
- Don't wait for a job advert! Sending a speculative application to potential employers is an option you shouldn't rule out. Make a list of the companies you're interested in, then visit their websites to either (a) search for apprenticeship vacancies or (b) find contact details to send a speculative application.
- Write a Personal Statement - you will need to demonstrate why YOU are the best apprentice they should recruit. This will help you focus your mind and prepare you for completing the application and for interview.

A list of the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers (2024) can be found [here](#):

These are just some of the companies that offer apprenticeship schemes and that our students have gone on to:

