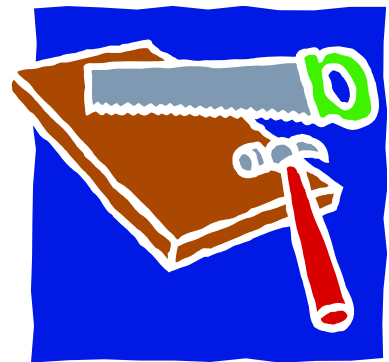


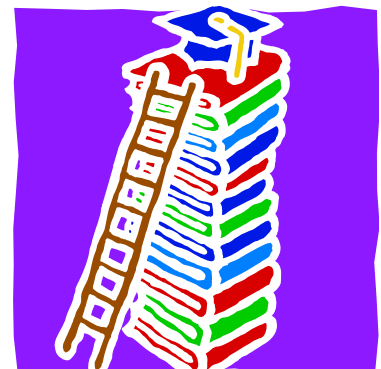


SHREWSBURY
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Unlocking potential...Shaping futures



Apprenticeships



Apprenticeships

What is an apprenticeship?

If you are keen to enter the world of work, but do not want to stop studying, then an apprenticeship could be the answer. Apprenticeships offer a practical balance between learning skills and earning a living. There are now over 180 apprenticeships available across 80 different sectors.

All apprenticeships lead to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Key Skills qualifications. Some apprenticeships also offer BTEC or City & Guilds certificates. Each apprenticeship involves a structured programme of training and they cover a wide range of occupations from football to accountancy.

As an employee you will be in employment for most of your time as training takes place on the job. The rest usually takes place at a local college or a specialist training organisation. You can complete this off-the-job training on day release or over a number of days in a block. The amount of time you spend varies according to your apprenticeship. It could be anything from one day every other fortnight to two days every week.

Key benefits

- Earn a salary
- Get paid holidays
- Receive training
- Learn job-specific skills

How long does an apprenticeship take?

There is no set time for completing an apprenticeship, but they typically take between one and four years to complete, depending on the level of apprenticeship, the apprentice's ability and the industry sector. The pace of progress will depend on you.

How much will you earn?

As an apprentice you will be exempt from the National Minimum Wage for at least the first year of your apprenticeship. However, all employed apprentices must receive a wage of no less than £95 per week. Many apprentices earn significantly more. After the first year the National Minimum Wage regulations apply.

As your skills develop, your pay will increase accordingly. You may also get additional money for essential books, clothing or equipment or to help you with a disability. As an apprentice you will receive the same benefits as other employees, such as pension contributions, subsidised canteen and leisure facilities.

Levels of apprenticeships

There are three levels of apprenticeship available:

Apprenticeships

(equivalent to five good GCSE passes)

- Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications, such as a NVQ Level 2, Key Skills and, in some cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification such as BTEC.
- These provide the skills you need for your chosen career and allow entry to an Advanced Apprenticeship.

Advanced Apprenticeships

(equivalent to two A level passes)

- Advanced apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications, such as NVQ Level 3, Key Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification such as a BTEC.
- To start this programme, you should ideally have five GCSEs (grade C or above) or have completed an apprenticeship.

Higher Apprenticeships

- Higher apprentices work towards work-based qualifications such as NVQ Level 4 and, in some cases, a knowledge-based qualification such as Foundation degree.

NVQ	Equivalent qualification
Level 1	5 GCSEs at grades D-G
Level 2	5 GCSEs at grades A-C
Level 3	2 A levels/1 vocational A level
Level 4	HNC, HND and Degree level

Entry requirements

There may be different entry requirements for apprenticeships depending on the occupational sector. They are open to anyone currently not in full-time education or holding a university degree. Competition for places with employers can be fierce, so you will need to show that you are committed and aware of your responsibilities to both yourself and the company who will employ you.

In order to apply, you should be:

- Committed
- Responsible
- Prepared for further study
- Able to use your own initiative
- Able to show you have researched the area of work you want to do and that you are the right person for the job.
- Able to work as part of a team and individually.

Types of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships have been developed by a wide range of industry sectors and are available with different types of employers from large national companies, such as British Gas, BMW and British Telecom, to smaller local companies.

There are over 190 types of apprenticeships across the following sectors. The right one for you will depend on your interests, your experience and the opportunities in the area.

- 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

How to apply

There are several ways to get an apprenticeship:

NAS website

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) look after apprenticeships in England. You can search for apprenticeship vacancies by postcode, keyword, job role or learning provider. Visit their website at www.apprenticeships.org.uk and click on the link for 'apprenticeship vacancies' to see what is available.

The NAS also have a helpline you can call for support. An adviser will be able to give you general advice on applications and on how to put yourself forward in the best light. You can call for free on 08000 150 600.

After you have found the apprenticeship you want, apply as soon as you can. Places may not be available for long as there is a high demand for many of the apprenticeships on offer. Remember that you are not automatically guaranteed a place. The selection process is like any other job application and you will have to convince the employer that you are the right person for the job. Depending on the type of apprenticeship you choose, you may have to go through one or more interviews, fill in forms, and maybe even take some tests. This whole process can be carried out by both the employer and learning provider that you are hoping to train with.

Reed.co.uk website

Reed.co.uk is the one of the UK's biggest job sites, featuring over 95,000 jobs from leading employers, recruitment agencies, charities and public sector organisations. You can search for apprenticeships on their website at www.reed.co.uk/apprenticeships.

Employer contact

If you have found an apprenticeship with a company that particularly interests you, then you can approach the employer directly. Before you contact them, it is a good idea to check the company's website as answers to the most common questions might be there. Remember that you will be contacting the company as a potential employee so act professional – first impressions are important.

To find companies offering apprenticeships, check your local job listings and Jobcentre plus. Local recruitment agencies might also be a good source of advice.

Funding

While you are on an apprenticeship, your employer pays your salary and supports you in your training – most of your learning will happen at work, but some might take place with a training provider. Financial help is available and you won't have to pay any fees. If you are between 16 and 18, the NAS will pay the full cost of your training (if you are over 19, your employer may be expected to contribute to your training costs). The funding you are eligible to receive depends entirely on your circumstances, your employer and the type of apprenticeship.

Recommended websites

- www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- www.shropshireyouth.com
- www.connexions-direct.com
- www.shrewsbury.ac.uk
- www.notgoingtouni.co.uk