

information for **employers**



Aim higher...
next steps to success for apprentices



Aim higher...
www.learnandwork.org

What is an Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are nationally recognised training programmes for 16-24 year olds. They are not just jobs with learning, but are real career opportunities that ensure training and progression continues after leaving school or college. Apprenticeships offer young people the opportunity to learn on-the-job, whilst building up skills and knowledge and gaining qualifications at the same time.

There are two levels: Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship. The Apprenticeship programme takes at least 15 months and leads to qualifications at a minimum of Level 2, equivalent to 5 GCSE grades A*-C. The Advanced Apprenticeship will take a minimum of two years and leads to qualifications at a minimum of Level 3, equivalent to 2 'A' Levels.

For more information about Apprenticeships visit:
www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/



What is studied on an Apprenticeship?

All Apprenticeships are made up of a framework of qualifications. All parts of the framework must be obtained to successfully complete the Apprenticeship programme. A framework is a standard format comprising of 3 components:

NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) – this is a competency based qualification, which is assessed using work based evidence; Level 2 for Apprenticeship and Level 3 for Advanced Apprenticeship.

Key Skills – these are transferable skills, such as Communication and Application of Number. Key Skills qualifications consist of an external assessment and portfolio. These skills will be relevant throughout working life.

Technical Certificate – these qualifications provide the knowledge required for the job role. Technical Certificates are nationally recognised, stand-alone qualifications, which are assessed by examination, for example, a City & Guilds Diploma or a BTEC National Certificate.

Each Apprenticeship framework is developed by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), who represent employers' needs, therefore, ensuring that employers are involved in deciding the content of the Apprenticeship framework. SSCs also set the content of the Technical Certificate.

Apprentices learn through a combination of on and off the job education and training. On the job they work and learn the practical skills needed for their job alongside your staff and off the job they learn the underpinning knowledge from a local Training Provider (usually on day release). The Training Provider will help you and your apprentice decide which Apprenticeship is best for your business.

It is sometimes possible to negotiate 'add ons' to the apprentice framework with a Training Provider.

For a list of contacts for Training Providers offering Apprenticeships in your business sector visit:
www.lsc.gov.uk/Regions/SouthWest/egtp
www.learnandwork.org
www.trainingprovider.com





What entry qualifications are expected of Apprentices?

If a young person wants to become an Apprentice, they will need to show that they have the ability to complete the Apprenticeship. The usual entry requirement for an Advanced Apprenticeship is 5 GCSEs with grades A*-C or equivalents, English and Maths being two of those subjects, or progression from an Apprenticeship. Entry to an Apprenticeship can be gained with lower grades. The Training Provider will carry out an assessment of general suitability for either programme, in the chosen area of study.

What will it cost?

The Learning Skills Council provides the funding for training Apprentices off-the-job. This money is paid directly to the Training Provider. You will not be able to claim any cost related to on-the-job training.

Apprentices have employed status (just like any other employee) from the start of their training. Therefore, you will need to pay them a wage, which depends very much on the 'going rate' for the trade, although this should be no less than the lower earnings threshold for National Insurance contributions. Your Training Provider will be able to give you more details.

If you decide to support your Apprentice to gain higher-level qualifications, you will not normally be able to recover the cost of this training. However, students who study on a part time basis may be eligible for a grant, if they earn less than £15,345 a year. This grant is to cover the cost of fees and materials. For more information go to:
www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport/students/par_part_time_stude.shtml



What advantages are there to employing an Apprentice?

- ▶ Apprentices will be trained to do a job to agreed standards, which have been set by the representative trade body (SSC). They will gain qualifications that show they have the necessary skills to do the job, unlike those who follow a formal academic route.
- ▶ Many young people prefer the concept of 'learning by doing', rather than remembering facts and are more likely to succeed in achieving their qualifications.
- ▶ Apprentices are usually more motivated and loyal employees, because they can see that their employer is investing in their training and playing an active role in their development.
- ▶ Because Apprentices learn while they work, their knowledge is up-to-date. The practical skills they gain are the ones that are right for your business.
- ▶ They can progress onto higher-level qualifications, such as NVQ Level 4, HNC/D, Foundation Degree, full Degree or specialist Professional Qualifications, by studying part time while still being employed with your company. By supporting this development, you will improve the productivity of your business. This increased investment will benefit not just your business, but will lead to greater motivation and company loyalty from the Apprentice.

How can Apprentices progress?

Once they have completed their Apprenticeship, you may consider supporting them to gain higher-level qualifications. Here are some of the options you can consider:

- ▶ Vocational study leading to NVQ Level 4. These are common progression routes in the Accountancy and Insurance sectors. These higher-level NVQs enable progression onto Professional Qualifications, such as CIMA or ACCA for Accountancy, leading to membership of the relevant Association or Institute.
- ▶ Higher National Certificate (HNC). This is the typical route for the Engineering and Construction sectors. The HNC has a natural progression to HND or Foundation Degree.
- ▶ Higher National Diploma (HND) is a common route in a number of sectors, including Information Technology and Business Studies. The HND enables students to progress onto a full Degree with one or two years' study, depending on the subject.
- ▶ Foundation Degrees are a relatively new class of degree, developed for students following a work based learning route. They can be studied on a day release basis and can be topped up to an Honours Degree with further study.

What are the advantages to your company?

- ▶ Employers believe in the worth of people with higher level skills in their company, which is why they are paid more and are more likely to be sought out for promotion.
- ▶ Employees with higher level skills can bring an added dimension to a company. They bring up-to-date knowledge, experience gained through mixing with people from differing backgrounds and a maturity gained through self-guided and independent study.
- ▶ By investing in employees they will become highly motivated and committed stakeholders in your business.
- ▶ There are other less tangible benefits to supporting employees through higher-level qualifications. These include innovation, productivity, flexibility and long-term business success.
- ▶ Higher Education benefits the national, regional and local economies by developing a more competitive and inclusive society.

Where can you find out more?

Employers guide to Training Providers
www.lsc.gov.uk/Regions/SouthWest/egtp

The Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network
www.trainingprovider.com

Devon and Cornwall Learning Skills Council
www.lsc.gov.uk/Regions/SouthWest

Employers Guide to Apprenticeships
www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/

Sector Skills Councils
www.ssda.org.uk/ssda/default.aspx?page=16

Employers Guide to Foundation Degrees
www.fdf.ac.uk/uploads/dfesemployer.pdf

Vocational and Work Based Opportunities in Devon and Cornwall
www.connexions-cd.org.uk/careers_workandtraining.asp
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Best Practice for Businesses
www.dti.gov.uk/bestpractice

Support for Businesses in Devon and Cornwall
www.southwestrda.org.uk/links/business-growth.shtml
www.blinkdandc.com
www.cornwallenterprise.co.uk
www.dcbc.co.uk

Support for Part-time Students
www.dfes.gov.uk/studentsupport/students/par_part_time_stude.shtml



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