



**GO HIGHER**  
West Yorkshire

# Go Higher in Apprenticeships

**Getting into Higher Education through  
higher level and degree apprenticeships.**

# THE FACTS

## What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a real job which combines work with studying for a qualification. You're employed, paid, and most of your time is spent on the job. At the same time, you're studying for a formal qualification.

## What is a higher level or degree apprenticeship?

Higher level and degree apprenticeships provide a higher level of qualification than other apprenticeships: that is qualifications at Level 4 or above, or in other words above A levels, BTECs or their equivalents.

## APPRENTICESHIP LEVELS

| Name         | Level         | Equivalent   |
|--------------|---------------|--|
| Intermediate | 2             | 5 GCSE passes (grade A*- C or 9 - 4)                           |
| Advanced     | 3             | 2 A-level passes/ Level 3 Diploma/ International Baccalaureate |
| Higher       | 4, 5, 6 and 7 | Higher National Certificate (HNC) and above                    |
| Degree       | 6 and 7       | Bachelor's or master's degree                                  |

## What grades do I need?

The entry requirements for apprenticeships vary from programme to programme, depending on the requirements of both the employer and the training provider. Entry requirements for higher level apprenticeships usually include at least five GCSEs grades 9 – 4 (A\* – C on the old grading system), including English and Maths. For degree apprenticeships typically you will need Level 3 qualifications, including A levels, NVQs, or a BTEC.

Some employers will expect or require you to have studied subjects relevant to the apprenticeship you are applying for. Higher level and degree apprenticeships can also be accessed by firstly having completed a Level 2 or 3 apprenticeship, usually from within in the same industry, and often through the same employer.

## What qualifications will I get?

A higher level apprenticeship is an opportunity to gain a Level 4 qualification or above, with most apprentices gaining an NVQ (Level 4), HND or foundation degree (Level 5).

A degree apprenticeship is an opportunity to gain a full bachelor's degree (Level 6) or even a master's degree (Level 7). Degrees earned via this route are awarded by a recognised body which is able to award degrees, typically a university, and are of an equivalent standard to degrees taken via the full-time undergraduate route.

**You're getting that real experience,  
whilst gaining a qualification  
at the same time.**



# THE FACTS

## How does it work?

Up to 80% of your hours will be spent at work, for example, 4 out of 5 working days. Indeed, many employers structure apprenticeships like this. However, other apprenticeships will see you working full-time for a number of weeks or even months and then studying full-time for a number of weeks on placement blocks.

With at least 20% of your paid time dedicated to your studies, you may be required to attend college, university, or an alternative training provider. However, you may have the option to study at your place of work, online, or use a combination of options; your employer will decide which method works best.

## How long do they take?

A higher level apprenticeship can typically take from two to five years to complete.

A degree apprenticeship can typically take between three to six years to complete.

## How much do they cost?

There are no fees for individuals doing a higher level or degree apprenticeship. The costs of the training are shared by your employer and the government.

*Personally I think the benefits are that you come out with a great degree in a field of study that interests you and importantly you also gain vital, on-the-job experience.*

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## What industries could I work in?

There are hundreds of different types of apprenticeships, from accounting to social work, and there are new apprenticeships being developed all the time.

Large, well-known companies offer degree apprenticeships, but you'll also find smaller, lesser-known companies offering them too.

## What could I earn?

For apprentices of any age, and in the first year of an apprenticeship only, the minimum wage is £6.40 per hour. After successful completion of the first year, the national minimum wage for your age will apply. However, for higher level and degree apprenticeships the vast majority of businesses offer considerably more than this.

In fact, you could potentially earn upwards of £300 per week, plus your employer and the government pay your tuition fees.

Other benefits could include access to a car, leisure facilities or a relocation allowance if you have to move.



# TOP TIPS

## EMPLOYABILITY

Apprenticeships are all about helping you become employable, qualified and trained in a particular industry and role — giving you a headstart in your chosen career.

## RELEVANT SKILLS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Through an apprenticeship you will develop the real-world skills and experience you need for your chosen career.

## EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

You are employed and paid a wage throughout your apprenticeship.

## NO STUDENT LOAN

As an apprentice you will gain a formal qualification — in some cases bachelor's or master's degrees — without needing to pay student fees.

*The challenge I have is trying to balance working, studying and also just trying to have a normal social life. It can get a bit difficult at times.*





# THINGS TO CONSIDER

## **COMPETITIVE**

Competition for higher level and degree apprenticeships can be tough — partly because there are only a limited number of vacancies at present, but also because school/college leavers and adults already in employment can apply for them. Employers may also be considering applications from existing employees so you must be committed to the opportunity and demonstrate that in your application and interview.

## **BIG COMMITMENT**

Studying for a higher level or degree apprenticeship whilst working lots of hours can be a challenge, so you must be disciplined and driven.

## **NO FIXED ENTRY ROUTE**

There is no fixed entry route into higher level and degree apprenticeships, as there is with full-time undergraduate study, so you need to find your own way. For example, although start dates are typically in line with the academic year, there is no fixed time of the year to apply so it's up to you to research opportunities using relevant websites and resources. You have to research your chosen career and company, prepare as best you can for the application and interview process, and be ready to enter the world of work.

# NEXT STEPS



## WHERE TO APPLY



- For apprenticeship opportunities go to 'Find an Apprenticeship' on **GOV.UK** – once you register you can set up email and text alerts to inform you about new apprenticeship roles.
- **UCAS** – Find out everything you need to know about apprenticeships, and search for vacancies, at **ucas.com/apprenticeships**
- You can also find a range of vacancies at **ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk**
- Head over to **amazingapprenticeships.com** to use 'Vacancy snapshot' which provides useful information on well-known employers. This information may help you with your application.
- It's worth checking directly on employer recruitment sites too.

### When to apply

Unlike university applications, there is no fixed deadline when it comes to applying for apprenticeships. Vacancies appear throughout the year.

Don't wait until the deadline to apply, some companies close their recruitment as soon as they have sufficient candidates.

As a general rule, vacancies with larger companies start appearing in the autumn, but the majority pop up from January or February onwards.

Smaller businesses might start recruiting a month or two before the job starts, so if you hope to start work in August or September, you might start looking from March onwards. Do check start dates closely, to make sure you'll have finished school or college.

Start your research early – the sooner the better, so you have time to fill any gaps in your CV with the things employers are typically looking for, including getting some relevant work experience.



# EXAMPLE APPLICATION TIMELINE

- RESEARCH

- WORK EXPERIENCE

- PREPARE CV

- CONTACT COMPANIES

  - APPLY ONLINE

  - INTERVIEW PREPARATION

  - TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

  - ASSESSMENT DAY

  - FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW

- REQUEST FEEDBACK

- REFLECT ON OUTCOME



# TOP TIPS

## **START EARLY AND STAY ORGANIZED**

- Research in advance, track deadlines and don't rush your application.

## **MAKE SURE YOU TAILOR YOUR APPLICATION**

- Customise your application to highlight your most relevant skills, experiences and qualities for the role/company – show enthusiasm!

## **GAIN RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:**

- Part-time work, internships, volunteering, shadowing, extracurricular and super-curricular activities.

## **PREPARE PROPERLY**

- Research the employer, industry and sector thoroughly, and practice your interview skills.

## **SEEK SUPPORT AND FEEDBACK:**

- Talk to your careers team and ask for help and feedback! Ask employers for feedback after interviews too!





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Find out more at  
**[www.ghwyheadstart.co.uk](http://www.ghwyheadstart.co.uk)**

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