

A parent guide to...Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a good way to gain the skills, qualifications, and experience needed to get into many careers. They combine work, training, and study without the fees, letting apprentices 'earn while they learn'.

If your son or daughter is undecided whether to apply for an apprenticeship or university, they can apply for both at the same time. However, it's important to keep in mind that the deadlines for applying will be different for each option.

What do apprenticeships involve?

Apprentices spend most of the week at work (a minimum of 30 hours), where they focus on learning to do a job.

They learn from colleagues across all levels of the business, typically working closely with someone more senior, who will monitor and review their progress. They will also spend time attending college, university, or a training provider, or training at work.

Apprentices complete assessments during and at the end of the programme, which test both academic learning and occupational competence.

Who are apprenticeships for?

Higher and degree apprenticeships will suit someone who:

- has a clear idea of the type of career they wish to pursue and is willing to commit to a vocational pathway
- wishes to continue with higher education level study, but would prefer a more practical and work-related approach to study
- is ready to start work with an employer and be based in the workplace the majority of the time
- is well organised and able to cope with the competing demands of work and academic study at the same time
- is ready to be assessed through a mix of assignments and written work, including essays, reports, practical exercises, end tests, and exams

What are the benefits?

- Apprentices are employed and paid a wage throughout the course
- Apprentices can gain a full degree – bachelor's or master's – without needing to pay student fees
- Employers contribute and the remaining funding comes from the government. This means degree apprentices can graduate debt-free, earning a wage at the same time
- Apprentices will gain a head start in their chosen profession
- Professional accreditation and membership

An apprenticeship is not an easy option. Apprentices will be starting a challenging job and trying to prove themselves in the workplace, while getting to grips with studying for a higher or degree level qualification. They'll be expected to achieve academically and at work, managing their time and adjusting to longer hours, with fewer holidays than at school, college, or university. They might have to travel or relocate to find the right opportunity.

To find out more about apprenticeships, check out:

- apprenticeship information at www.ucas.com/apprenticeships
- the Which? higher and degree apprenticeships guide at www.which.co.uk/apprenticeship