

Apprentice Support Guide

A guide for Apprenticeship applicants

A large graphic featuring the words "FLYING START" in a bold, white, outlined, italicized font. The text is set against a black background with a perspective effect, as if on a runway. Three dotted lines converge from the top towards the text. Below the text are two thick, white, parallel horizontal bars that also taper towards the center.

FLYING START

Brought to you by
National
Apprenticeship
Service

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"I think Apprenticeships are brilliant. They're a chance to take a leap into the real world. I'm dealing with real-life customers and situations all the time, answering calls and emails, checking deliveries, advising customers and interacting with them. It's all about learning and moving forward, and I'm getting everything I need to move onto the next step."

**Kerri, Customer Services Administrator,
facemediagroup**

This publication was produced by KEITS Training Services Ltd in partnership with The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Provider Network, Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO) and Nottingham Apprenticeship Hub's partner providers.



What is an Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships give you the opportunity to work for a real employer, earn a real salary and gain a real qualification whilst gaining valuable workplace skills and experience.

What are Apprenticeships?

An Apprenticeship is a real job with training so you can earn while you learn and pick up some nationally recognised qualifications as you go. They take between one and four years to complete and cover over 1,500 job roles in a wide range of industries, from things like engineering to financial advice, veterinary nursing to accountancy.

What types of Apprenticeship are there?

There are three types of Apprenticeship you can apply for depending on your current skills and qualifications:

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeship (level 2)
- Advanced Level Apprenticeship (level 3)
- Higher Apprenticeship (level 4 or above)

How old do you have to be?

Anyone living in England, over 16 years old and not in full-time education can apply to be an apprentice.

How much do you get paid?

The minimum wage for apprentices is £2.68 per hour, but many employers pay more than this. The average gross weekly wage for an apprentice is £200*. This is dependent on the sector, region and Apprenticeship level.

What hours will I work?

Your employment will normally be a minimum of 30 hours per week but may be more. In a small number of circumstances you may complete an Apprenticeship in less hours but there must be a valid reason and in these cases employment will be for a minimum of 16 hours per week.

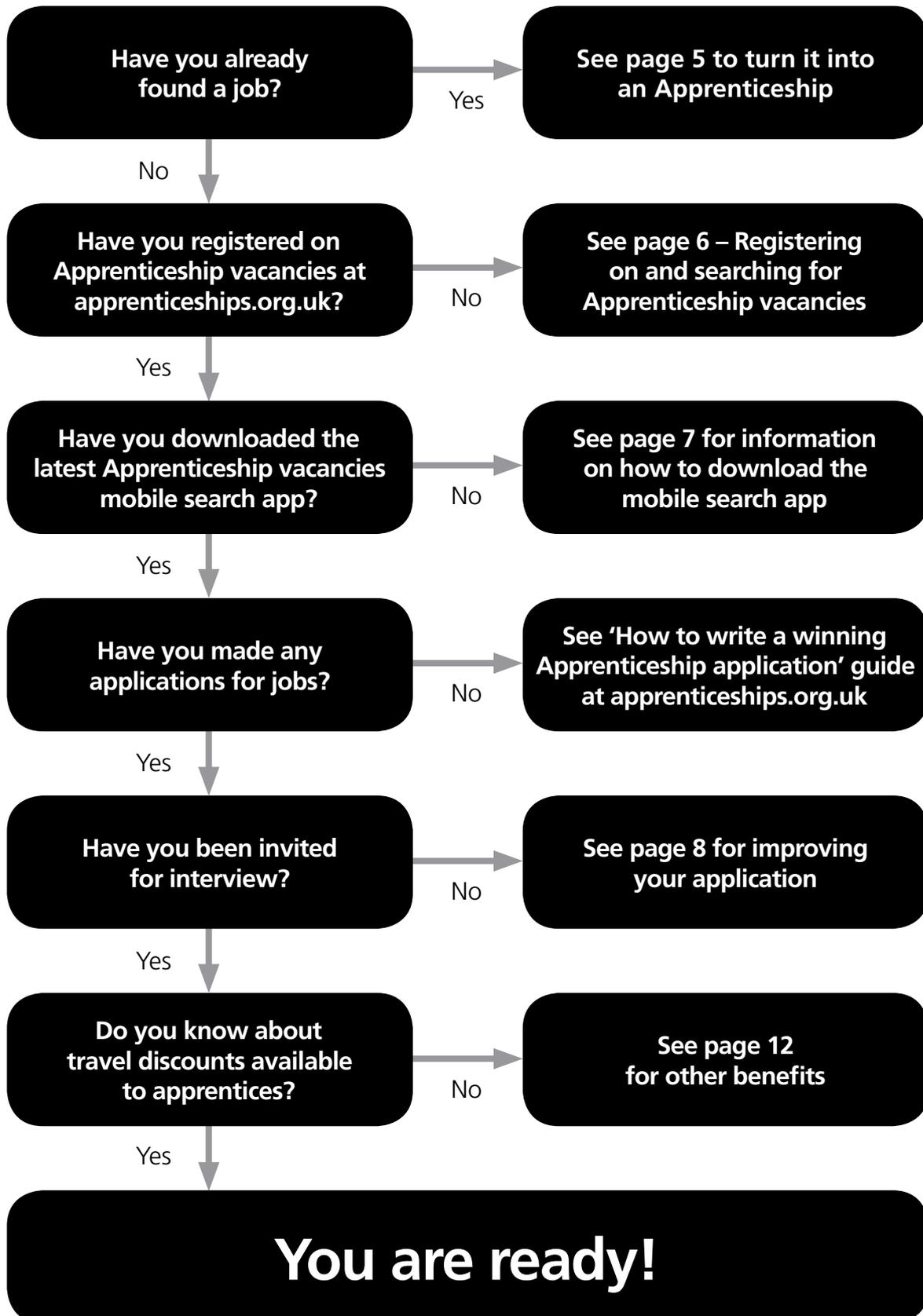
Training

Apprenticeships are designed with the help of employers, so they offer a structured programme that takes you through the skills you need to do a job well. There are targets and checks to make sure that your employer is supporting you and you are making progress. As an employee you will be in the workplace for most of your time, as most training takes place on-the-job. The rest usually takes place at a training organisation (sometimes referred to as a training provider). Increasingly you will find that your training organisation will be utilising e-learning, e-portfolios and a variety of new technologies to help you to learn in the most fun and efficient way.

Raising the participating age (RPA)

The Government is increasing the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training. It means them continuing until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until their 18th birthday from 2015. You can take up an Apprenticeship as one of your options under RPA.

Are you ready to become an apprentice?



Already found a job?

Congratulations! If you have already found a job you may be able to convert it into an Apprenticeship, follow these simple steps to find out how.

Turning your job into an Apprenticeship



You will need to speak to your employer and check that they are happy to discuss the idea of you becoming an apprentice. There is plenty of help and support available for them and they may be eligible for a grant, providing they have not started an apprentice in the last 12 months, see below.



The Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds (AGE 16 to 24) is a £1,500 grant to help businesses to grow by employing young people through the Apprenticeship programme. Your employer may be eligible for the grant if they are willing to transfer you to a new full time Apprenticeship job role (minimum 30 hours per week). Ask your employer to visit the web page below for full details of the grant and eligibility criteria.



Finding an Apprenticeship Training Organisation is really quick and easy. There is a new search tool on the Apprenticeships website or you can call 08000 150 600. Simply type in a keyword linked to your job title and your postcode and a list of Apprenticeship training organisations will be displayed. You can then select which organisations to contact and find out other useful information, such as success rates and their website.

A screenshot of a search tool titled "Find an Apprenticeship Training Organisation". The tool includes a text input field for "Keyword: eg. job title*", a dropdown menu for "Level" set to "All", and another dropdown menu for "Distance*" set to "5 Miles". Below these is a text input field for "Your full postcode*" and a "Search" button. A red asterisk indicates that the postcode field is a required field. On the left side of the form, there is a phone number "08000 150 600" and a note: "to talk to an Apprenticeship advisor. Find out more about the role of a training organisation and the search tool." The entire form is set against a dark background with white and red text.

Further information
apprenticeships.org.uk
apprentice.tv

Registering on and searching for Apprenticeship vacancies

1 Register your details

To search for Apprenticeship vacancies go to apprenticeships.org.uk and click 'Search for vacancies' then register your details under 'New user?'

It's free to register and once you have set up your account you can receive alerts to tell you about new vacancies that may interest you.

Top tip:

Make sure your email address is a professional one as it will be seen by potential employers.

2 Log in reminder

Username: Password:

Your password must be between 8 and 20 characters long and include a combination of letters, numbers and special characters such as % or {.

Top tip:

Make sure your username is relevant and that your password is something that you can remember.

3 Account Activation

Before you can get started using Apprenticeship vacancies, you must activate your account.

When you register for the first time, you'll receive a confirmation email through your registered email address. You must activate your account by clicking on the link in the confirmation email.

Log in to your account by using the username and password you used to set up your account.

Top tip:

The activation email will usually appear in your inbox but it may be diverted to your spam folder – so you should check this too.

4 Search for vacancies

You can search for your ideal job in a number of different ways including using keywords, occupation type, job role or postcode to suit your criteria.

Your search can also be refined by selecting the date the vacancy was posted, indicating the weekly wage or the level of Apprenticeship you are looking for – such as a Higher Apprenticeship.

Top tip:

Make sure your email address and mobile number are correct and up to date in 'My Profile.'

5 Found a vacancy?

Once you've found the job you want, applying is easy. The application form is simple, secure and reusable, so you can respond to vacancies and save your application forms. You can view the status of your applications and manage them online.

You can apply for up to ten live vacancies at any one time.

Top tip:

First impressions count – use the spell checker and get someone to check your application.

Apprenticeship vacancies mobile search app

A new mobile application (app) has been launched to make it possible for you to search for Apprenticeship vacancies in England, whilst on the move.



Download it now from the iPhone and Android stores.



Improving your application

There are a variety of ways you can describe yourself and your strengths. Try using the following:

'I am...'

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skilled at... | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent at... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A skilful... | <input type="checkbox"/> Able to... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competent in... | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good at... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely good at... | <input type="checkbox"/> Talented at... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar with... | <input type="checkbox"/> Qualified to... |

Employers are looking for various qualities and characteristics in a potential employee. Use the following list of words to help you when describing yourself, whether in an application or at interview:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Able | <input type="checkbox"/> Diverse | <input type="checkbox"/> Keen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accurate | <input type="checkbox"/> Drive | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledgeable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable | <input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alert | <input type="checkbox"/> Educated | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious | <input type="checkbox"/> Effective | <input type="checkbox"/> Mature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical | <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient | <input type="checkbox"/> Methodical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Articulate | <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Objective |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy a challenge | <input type="checkbox"/> Organised |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astute | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bright | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast learner | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capable | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Polite |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident | <input type="checkbox"/> Focussed | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Committed | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Proactive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common sense | <input type="checkbox"/> Gifted | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good communicator | <input type="checkbox"/> Rational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer literate | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardworking | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> Highly motivated | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cope under pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Imaginative | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decisive | <input type="checkbox"/> Impressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Team player |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenacious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> Thorough |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire to succeed | <input type="checkbox"/> Innovative | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Determined | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative | <input type="checkbox"/> Versatile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligent | <input type="checkbox"/> Willing |

Responses to Apprenticeship application questions

The table below shows examples of good and not so good responses. Use these examples to help you when filling out the application form.

Question	Good	Poor
What are your strengths? (e.g. team working, organising etc)	'I feel that I have very good communication skills. As a keen team member of a local football team, it is crucial that we communicate constantly when on the pitch to ensure that everyone can work together to win the game. I have been praised by the team captain for the way that I communicate effectively on the pitch, saying that I am calm, motivational and fair.'	'I am currently studying at college. Punctual organised professional appearance and problem solving' What is wrong with this response? <input type="checkbox"/> Misuse of capital letters <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation
What personal skills would you like to improve? (e.g. time managing, questioning skills)	'I would like to improve my knowledge of the latest cutting and colouring techniques being used within the fashion industry and how these could be adapted to suit high street fashion trends.'	'I would like to improve my time management' What would an employer think of this response? <input type="checkbox"/> Poor attention to detail <input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely to turn up on time
Is there anything we can do to support your interview?	'No thank you.'	'Nope' What do you think? <input type="checkbox"/> Rude/unprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> Not how you would talk to an employer

Hobbies and interests

If you are struggling to think of hobbies or interests to include in your Apprenticeship application, use this list for inspiration.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animals, farms, zoos | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse-riding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archery | <input type="checkbox"/> Jogging / Track |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art / Painting / Drawing | <input type="checkbox"/> Models |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astrology | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Music / concerts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird watching | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing a musical instrument |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board Games / Card games | <input type="checkbox"/> Pool / Pinball / Video games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating / Water-skiing | <input type="checkbox"/> Puzzles / Sudoku |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bowling | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping / Hiking / Picnics | <input type="checkbox"/> Rugby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cars / Mechanics or racing | <input type="checkbox"/> Running |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chess | <input type="checkbox"/> Roller-blading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climbing / walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Science / Electronics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing / Needlework |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking / Baking | <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboarding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> Space / Aviation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cricket | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming / Diving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dancing / Gymnastics | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis / Ping-pong |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Theatre / musicals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duke of Edinburgh Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Films / cinema | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Website design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrestling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf / regular or miniature | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gym / keep fit | |

Interview checklist

Prior to submitting an application:

- Ensure your voicemail message on your mobile phone is appropriate
- Make sure your email address is sensible and not embarrassing
- Spell and grammar check your CV, ensure it is up to date

Prior to interview:

- Research the organisation and job you're applying for
- Prepare at least 2 or 3 questions that show an interest in the job and organisation
- Work out how to get to the interview and how long the journey will take
- Prepare answers to some typical interview questions e.g. 'why do you want this job?'
- Prepare examples of when you have used skills relevant to the job

Appearance:

- Take a bath or shower prior to interview
- Wear clean and ironed clothing
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear – formal shoes, not trainers
- Wear matching socks
- Polish/clean your shoes
- Make sure your hands and fingernails are clean
- Wear conservative makeup, accessories and jewellery (including nail varnish)
- Brush your teeth
- Wear subtle perfume/aftershave
- Cover tattoos with long sleeves
- Remove facial piercings (one set of small earrings is fine)
- Remove chewing gum prior to interview

Body Language:

- Shake hands firmly
- Smile
- Sit when you are offered a seat
- Use good posture

- Be attentive, nod or take notes
- Make eye contact but avoid staring
- Avoid negative behaviour (yawning, crossing your arms, checking your watch, looking at your feet etc.)
- Be composed (no fidgeting, playing with hair, tapping your feet)

Responsiveness:

- Take a copy of your CV and a pad and pen to take notes if necessary
- Switch off your phone or set to silent (turn off vibrate as this can still be heard)
- Be on time
- Shake hands with the interviewer
- Use interviewer's title and surname
- Refer to the job advert/job description when answering questions
- Show enthusiasm
- Speak clearly, using proper grammar
- Avoid slang, swear words and suggestive language
- Answer questions clearly and concisely
- Focus on your strengths
- Avoid interrupting the interviewer

Attitude:

- Be respectful
- Be positive and enthusiastic
- Be attentive
- Be knowledgeable about the company
- Use the interviewer's name
- Be professional

Closing the interview:

- Ask any questions about the organisation/job that you prepared prior to the interview
- Stand and shake hands
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time
- Emphasise your interest in the job
- Ask when a decision will be made

Other benefits

There are a number of different schemes available to support you both whilst you are looking for an Apprenticeship and when you successfully secure employment. Two national schemes are detailed below. You can also check with your training organisation or local authority for details of what is available in your area.

Train Travel Discount Scheme

Jobcentre Plus has announced a new Travel Discount Card that provides a 50% discount on most National Rail journeys for eligible individuals in the first three months of their Apprenticeship and the unemployed. In England and Wales, claimants become eligible for the discount card once they have been registered unemployed for 13 weeks, up to, and including the point when they enter the Work Programme.

The card can be used to help with the travel costs for attending interviews with employers, travelling to recruitment open days and job fairs, as well as providing discounted travel for the first three months of employment, including an Apprenticeship.

Claimants can apply for the Discount Card at their local Jobcentre. You will need to bring in two passport sized photographs.

Further information

Travel Discount Card:

transportforall.org.uk

16-25 Railcard Apprentice Discount:

apprenticeextra.co.uk

NUS apprentice Extra Card

The deals don't stop once you find employment as an apprentice. Did you know that apprentices are entitled to an NUS Card through the National Union of Students?

For just £11 you could have access to discounts from more than 120 high street and online retail partners meaning you could save around £525 per year. Discounts are available on travel, sport, books and DVD, technology, mobile and broadband, fashion and beauty and going out. You can even save 11% on your 16-25 Railcard, saving you a third on train fares.

Further information

Apprentice Extra:

apprenticeextra.co.uk

KERCHING!

Traineeships

If you're not ready for an Apprenticeship, there are other pre-employment options available to you including Traineeships.

A Traineeship is an education and training programme with a work placement that is focused on giving young people the skills and experience that employers are looking for. At its core are work preparation training, English and maths for those who need it, and a high quality work experience placement.

Traineeships last anything from six weeks to a maximum of six months with the content tailored to your individual needs, including:

- Work preparation training which ensures you are ready and have the confidence to take the first step in your career, such as an Apprenticeship.
- English and maths* support to help give you the literacy and numeracy skills needed for the workplace.
- A meaningful work experience placement which provides insight and experience of the world of work.

Read the Factsheet on the website for information on eligibility and find out how Traineeships can help you get ready for work.

Further information

Traineeships:

apprenticeships.org.uk
or call 08000 150 600

Traineeships

A focussed period
of work preparation
training

+

English
and Maths

+

A high quality
work experience
placement

=

Apprenticeship
or other job

All young people undertaking a Traineeship will be required to study English and maths, unless they have achieved a GCSE A - C in those subjects or, for those aged 19 -23, a GCSE A* - C in those subjects or a functional skills qualification at Level 2.

Other useful information

Work Experience through Jobcentre Plus (16 – 24)

Jobcentre Plus work with employers to offer 16 – 24 year old jobseekers the opportunity to gain experience of the world of work through offering a Work Experience placement lasting 2 – 8 weeks.

Young people undertaking a Work Experience placement will continue to receive their benefit and continue to look for permanent work. Jobcentre Plus will cover the costs of travel and childcare if required and there is also an opportunity for some participants to have their placement extended by up to 4 weeks where an employer makes an offer to take them onto an Apprenticeship. 16 – 17 year olds generally do not have access to Job Seekers Allowance, if you are not sure about which benefit you are entitled to please contact your local Jobcentre Plus office.

Further information
JCP Work Experience:
dwp.gov.uk

National Careers Service

The National Careers Service makes it easy for everyone over the age of 13 in England, to find accurate information about learning and work, with a helpline giving professional advice on making the right choices. The Service can be accessed online at nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk, including through webchat, or by phoning 0800 100 900 (free from a landline).

Improving your qualifications or going for that better job can be easier than you think if you have the right tools. Every step of the way the National Careers Service offers free, impartial and professional advice on careers, skills and the job market.

From creating a simple action plan through to writing your first CV, they can help. You can get in contact with one of the highly trained advisers who will be more than happy to help you.

Further information
nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk
or call a professional careers adviser on 0800 100 900 (8am – 10pm daily).

For technical support using Apprenticeship vacancies:

Telephone
0800 015 0400 (landline)
02476 826 482 (mobile)

Email
nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk



"I've always been interested in motorsport, and I've been part of some great projects here. I've been at URT for five years now, and this is where I want to stay. The support I've had, the jobs I've worked on and the responsibilities I've taken on – they're all helping me towards a supervisory role in the company and, hopefully, a long, promising future here."

**Josh, Composite Laminator,
Universal Race Technology**



National Apprenticeship Service



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Watch our Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/ApprenticeshipsNAS



Download our free Av mobile search app to access live job vacancies in your area

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Find jobs on the move with the 'AV Search' app



apprenticeships.org.uk