

# Understanding apprenticeships

Apprenticeships were developed to help address the skills shortage in UK businesses. They provide a way of combining learning with on the job training, which helps build solid, professional skills transferable from one organisation to another.

Apprenticeships can last from one to five years – and may be longer if undertaken part-time. They result in a professional qualification. Employers pay a salary and tuition fees are covered by the employer and the government.

## Who can become an apprentice?

Apprenticeships are aimed at candidates between 16 and 25 years old. However, they are now open to anyone age 16 or over looking to improve their expertise. This means there's plenty of competition from more experienced applicants, but organisations are often keen to take on school-leavers in order to train them both in the job and the organisation's values. Very often the relationship between employer and apprentice continues long after the apprenticeship is over, creating long-term work opportunities.

## Apprenticeship levels

Apprenticeships range between Level 2 and Level 7. There is no "Level 1" because enrolling in an apprenticeship requires demonstrating a certain aptitude, which may be gained through trainee courses if examination result don't meet minimum requirements. Apprenticeship levels 2-3 are aimed at younger applicants, 4-6 are aimed at sixth form leavers with levels 6-7 offering degree or equivalent level qualifications.

A full list of the levels and what they mean can be found on pages 14 and 15 of this guide

- [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- [UCAS](https://www.ucas.ac.uk)
- [Interested in other options?](#)

## Flexibility

Apprenticeships are designed to be flexible. An employer may offer a level 6 or 7 apprenticeship without it resulting in a degree – although the qualification earned would be considered equivalent to a degree. It's important your child checks the qualifications on offer before applying for an apprenticeship.

## Study at university

There is usually an element of academic learning during an apprenticeship, but degree apprenticeships are a specific type of apprenticeship (Level 6 and above) that include study at university resulting in a degree level qualification (BA or BSc). Be warned! Not all apprenticeships that include study at university result in obtaining a degree.

Apprenticeships range between Level 2 and Level 7 and are designed to be flexible







### Typical length

12-18 months

### Entry requirements:

None or few

### Qualifications obtained:

GCSE, BTEC or equivalent

### Who's it for?

Mostly for 16-year-olds with limited or no academic qualifications.



### Typical length

3-5 years

### Entry requirements:

A levels or equivalent

### Qualifications obtained:

Higher national diploma / foundation degree

### Who's it for?

Mostly for those who want to qualify for professional career paths without attending university or college.



### Typical length

12-24 months

### Entry requirements:

Usually 5 GCSEs

### Qualifications obtained:

A levels or equivalent

### Who's it for?

Mostly for 16-year-olds with reasonable academic achievements but who don't want to study in sixth form.



### Typical length

3-7 years

### Entry requirements:

At least 2 A levels or equivalent

### Qualifications obtained:

A BA or BSc degree or higher

### Who's it for?

Mostly for those with excellent sixth form results that want to study for a degree or similar whilst working.