



HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL
An Academy Trust



Apprenticeships

Information for students and parents

January 2021

What are apprenticeships?

An apprenticeship is a real job with training, which allows trainees to earn while they learn, as well as gaining a nationally recognised qualification. An apprenticeship is a work-based placement that combines practical, on-the-job training with continued study towards a recognised qualification.

Apprenticeships are funded by the government and the relevant employer, follow frameworks that document statutory requirements, and are supported by certified training providers to ensure they comply with national standards.

They represent an alternative to academic-based study, opening up career opportunities for those who prefer a hands-on learning experience. Apprenticeships take between one and five years to complete and cover 1,500 job roles in a wide range of industries, from engineering to accountancy, public relations to veterinary nursing.

There are four levels of Apprenticeship available, which depend on the applicants' skills and qualifications:

- Intermediate Apprenticeship (level 2: equivalent to 5 good GCSE passes).
- Advanced Apprenticeship (level 3: equivalent to 2 A level passes).
- Higher Apprenticeship (level 4 or 5: a higher education qualification usually started at the age of 18+).
- Degree Apprenticeship (level 6 or 7: offer the chance to achieve a full bachelor's degree – level 6 – or masters' degree – level 7; aged 18+).

Apprenticeships are available to anyone who has reached the legal school leaving age (16 in England). As all students at Hitchin Boys' School will have taken GCSEs, boys would be looking at an Advanced apprenticeship at the end of Year 11, or a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship at the end of Year 13. There are different entry requirements depending on the sector and job.

How apprenticeships work

On an apprenticeship, you are employed to do a real job while studying for a formal qualification, usually for one day a week at either a college or training centre. By the end of your apprenticeship, you will hopefully have gained the skills and knowledge needed to either succeed in your chosen career or progress onto the next apprenticeship level.

What you will learn depends on the role for which you are training. However, apprentices in every role follow an approved study programme, which means you will gain a nationally recognised qualification at the end of your apprenticeship.

These qualifications can include:

Functional skills - GCSE level qualifications in English, maths and IT.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) - from Level 2 (comparable to five GCSEs) up to Level 5 (similar to a postgraduate degree).

Technical certificates/awards such as BTEC.

Academic qualifications - including a Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND), foundation degree or the equivalent of a full Bachelor's degree.

You will also be constantly developing your transferable skills, otherwise known as soft skills, which are highly valued by employers. These include communication, teamwork and problem solving, as well as knowledge of IT and the application of numbers.

Different levels of apprenticeship

Advanced Apprenticeships

Advanced Apprenticeships offer students a Level 3 qualification – equivalent to having two A-level passes. As a guide, Advanced Apprenticeships last around 24 months, although they can be longer or shorter.

The core components for Advanced Apprenticeships are: a nationally recognised vocational qualification, functional skills (e.g. literacy, numeracy and ICT), a technical certificate such as a BTEC or City & Guilds (relevant to the specific Apprenticeship), and other professional qualifications or requirements as specified by the particular job.

Apprentices spend most of their time working for an employer and learning on-the-job, but they will also spend some time at a training institution or local college gaining qualifications at Level 3. These will include a Level 3 competence qualification, a Functional Skills qualification and a relevant knowledge-based qualification. In practice, this might mean apprentices spend two days a week at college and three days in the office or workplace.

Higher Apprenticeships

Higher Apprenticeships are suitable for students who have A levels or who have already completed an Advanced Apprenticeship. The core components for Higher Apprenticeships are the same as for Advanced Apprenticeships but exclude the functional skills element. They offer students a Level 4 or above qualification, which is the equivalent of a higher education qualification. The programmes function pretty much like a normal apprenticeship in the sense that it provides a mix of on and off-the-job training.

Degree Apprenticeships

Degree Apprenticeships offer the chance to achieve a full bachelor's or master's degree – at Levels 6 and 7 – as a core component of the programmes. While Degree Apprenticeships must last a minimum of one year, the programmes generally last longer than this, typically up to four years. Students choosing a Degree Apprenticeship are not eligible for student loans, but tuition fees are often paid in full by the employer, and students are paid a salary as full-time employees, like all other apprentices.

Degree Apprentices split their time between university study and the workplace and will be employed throughout – gaining a degree while earning a wage and getting real on-the-job experience in their chosen profession. In practice, this might mean spending two days a week at college or university and three days in the office or workplace. Alternatively, they might go to college or university once a fortnight (or maybe even less). Some employers use a ‘block training’ approach, concentrating the required off-the-job training into weekly or fortnightly slots across the year.

Degree Apprenticeships also offer the rare opportunity to gain experience and form working relationships with high profile, well-respected companies – potentially even more advantageous than the academic qualifications on offer

What will I earn?

There are quite strict guidelines around the minimum employers should pay their apprentices. The minimum that apprentices are entitled to depends on their age and length of time on a programme. Starting at £4.15 (as of April 2020) per hour – if an apprentice is under 19 or in their first year – this rises to £6.45 in the second year for those aged 18 to 20, then to £8.20 for 21-24-year-olds, and then up to £8.72 (National Living Wage) if they are over 25. Employers are free to pay above the new wage and many do so, but employers must ensure that they are paying their apprentices at least the minimum wage.

The average weekly wage for an apprentice is actually around £200, dependant on the sector, region and apprenticeship level. For example, some Higher Apprenticeships can pay as much as £300-£500 per week.

Higher Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships often pay higher than the National Minimum Wage and National Apprenticeship Minimum Wage; a £16,000 starting salary, for example, with regular pay reviews just like a standard employee would receive. Some Higher Apprenticeship employers pay as high as £23,000 per year.

When to apply for apprenticeships

Deadlines for applying for apprenticeships are set by individual companies and can vary – there is not a single deadline date as there would be when applying to university. Start your search early so that you have the best chance of finding something that you want to do.

More information on apprenticeships

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/apprenticeships/>

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/apprenticeships/finding-an-apprenticeship>

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/apprenticeships/should-i-go-to-university-or-do-an-apprenticeship>

<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/why-choose-an-apprenticeship/>

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/apprenticeships-for-young-people>

Finding an apprenticeship

The following websites have lists of available apprenticeships at different levels:

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/#>

<https://www.unifrog.org/student/apprenticeships/start> (log in first)

<https://careerfinder.ucas.com/jobs/apprenticeship/>

<https://www.hartld.co.uk/individuals-hub/apprenticeships/opportunities/>

<https://www.indeed.co.uk/jobs?q=Apprenticeships&l=England>

<https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk/Choices/Apprenticeships.aspx>

<https://www.totaljobs.com/jobs/apprenticeship>

<https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/search?show=jobs>

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/courses/apprenticeships>