

Apprenticeships - benefiting businesses and individuals

Apprenticeships offer a range of benefits to businesses such as a committed and competent workforce, helping to increase productivity and competitiveness, whilst offering the apprentice the opportunity to develop their skills and career in the sector.

What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a package of learning and qualifications combined with practical work experience gained through employment in a chosen industry. Apprenticeships can receive public funding and are available to learners of all ages.

Apprenticeships involve a partnership approach between the apprentice, employer and training provider. They are designed by industry, working together with Sector Skills Councils in collaboration with employers and training providers, and are therefore tailored to meet the needs of each specific industry.

The essential elements of the apprenticeship are set out in an apprenticeship framework. They contain the following separate components:

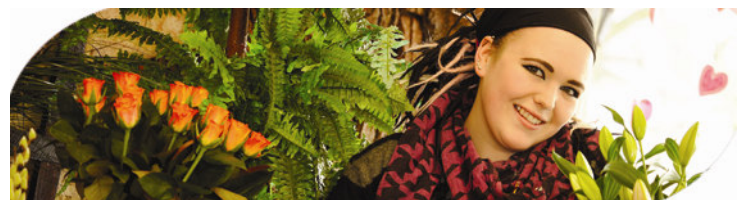
- A competence and knowledge based element
- Functional/key skills - these are transferable skills such as Maths, English and ICT
- Additional qualifications that are appropriate to the occupation and business



These component qualifications are achieved through:

- On-the-job experience - an apprentice will work alongside other employees and learn the skills of the job working towards a work-based qualification
- Off-the-job learning - apprentices may spend time with a learning provider such as a college gaining further skills and knowledge. This can be on a day or block release basis

The work-based qualifications are usually at Level 2 or 3 and the amount of time spent studying varies; it can be anything from 100 to 1,000 hours over the course of an Apprenticeship, depending on the industry.



How does an apprenticeship work?

Funding

Training providers and colleges are approved to deliver apprenticeships. They receive funding towards the cost of training and assessment from government, which does vary depending on the age of the apprentice and the particular industry. Employers are required to employ the apprentice, pay their wages and in some cases contribute towards the training costs.

Recruiting an apprentice

Employers may be approached by a training provider, college or even a potential apprentice, or employers can also advertise for an apprentice themselves. Some of the employer's responsibilities when taking on an apprentice include:

- Meeting with the training provider/assessor to review the apprentice's progress
- Outlining the apprentice's role and responsibilities
- Releasing the apprentice for off-the-job training
- Providing suitable training opportunities for the apprentice to meet their training plan
- Taking responsibility for the health and safety of the apprentice, supporting and rewarding the apprentice

The apprentice has the same responsibility to their employer as any other employee in the business. They should also be committed to their training plan.



How will an apprenticeship benefit employers?

Apprenticeships can help businesses by offering a route to harness new talent. Businesses consider skills shortages and recruitment difficulties a bigger threat to performance than soaring oil prices and declining consumer spending, and more than a quarter of these rate this form of vocational training higher than any other qualification.

Apprenticeships can provide the workforce with the practical skills and experience organisations need now and in the future. The mixture of on- and off-the-job learning ensures apprentices develop the skills that are required by industry.

Improve business productivity - because apprentices receive relevant training, they can have an immediate effect and make a real and more meaningful contribution to business. Their training is 'on-the-job', so they can directly gain from the skills and experience of those around them.

Motivate the workforce - apprenticeships are available to both new and current employees. As a result of their training, apprentices are highly motivated and eager to know more. The extra responsibility also makes them feel more valued and they are easier to retain in the long term.

Give them relevant training - apprenticeships provide business with expertise that is not only specific to an industry, but also directly relevant to a particular business. They are designed around business needs by industry specialists who genuinely understand what industry does.

Avoid skills shortages - change and innovation are always with us. By taking on apprentices, a workforce develops the specialist skills needed to keep pace with the latest technology and working practices in industry.

Find out more about Apprenticeships from:

www.lantra.co.uk/apprenticeships

www.apprenticeships.org.uk