

## Apprenticeships Q&A

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## What is an apprenticeship?

In simple terms, an apprenticeship is a job with training. Being an apprentice involves gaining a recognised qualification, and essential skills, all while getting paid. Apprentices are employed on a fixed term basis, for the duration of the apprenticeship.

## Who can be an apprentice?

Apprenticeships are available to anyone aged 16 or over who is not in full time education, and is eligible to work in the UK. There are no set minimum hours in Scotland, but in order to meet the training requirements, most apprenticeships specify a minimum of 20hrs per week.

## What makes a good apprenticeship?

A good apprenticeship needs to provide a well-rounded experience of the workplace, with mentoring and training support. There should be a good balance of on and off the job training, but this will depend on the specific occupation.

## How long does an apprenticeship take to complete?

As a minimum, an apprenticeship should last for 12 months. Modern Apprenticeships normally take one to two years to complete, whereas Craft and Graduate Level Apprenticeships can take up to four years.

## How much does an apprenticeship cost?

As an apprentice is also an employee, salary costs are met by the employing service. If the apprenticeship is provided through an approved framework, such as Skills Development Scotland or Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), some or all of the training cost will usually be met by the funding agency. Training for young people (aged 16-24) is at least partly if not fully funded by the Scottish Government.

## What are the benefits of taking on an apprentice?

### Addressing Skills Gaps

Apprenticeships are a great way to address skills shortages and grow your own workforce. Apprenticeships can be used to fill existing skills gaps and to date, we have successfully implemented apprenticeship schemes in a wide variety of services including ICT, Community Care and Support and HR&OD.

### Employee engagement and retention

Investing in skills and training helps with employee engagement. 83% of our apprentices stay with us once they have completed their training.

### Cost effectiveness

As apprentices learn while on the job, they pick up key skills and experience as they develop. In many cases the government fully funds the training costs through Skills Development Scotland, meaning that your training budget can be utilised for other key training activities.

There is no employer's national insurance contributions costs for Modern Apprentices aged 16-24. This works out at a saving of approximately £1000.00 per year, based on a full time non-apprentice equivalent post.

### Wider employee development

Taking on an apprentice can create opportunities for existing employees to develop their assessment, management, mentoring and people skills, which brings extra benefits to the wider workforce and can help prepare staff for leadership positions.

We are an approved SQA training centre. This means that we are able to assess certain types of apprenticeship opportunities. If you are interested in becoming an internal assessor for a modern apprenticeship framework, please contact [AskHR](#) to see how you can take this forward.

## What types of apprenticeships are there?

### Modern Apprenticeships

Modern Apprenticeships cover a huge variety of job roles, from admin, catering and sport, right through to social care, legal and customer services. Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks are listed on the [Skills Development Scotland Website](#) and cover over 80 frameworks. Each framework covers the training and outcomes required for the apprenticeship. Modern apprenticeships are usually set at SCQF level 5 or 6.

### Construction Apprenticeships

There are other regulated bodies that approve training frameworks, including the CITB. Construction apprenticeships are usually set at SCQF Level 5 or 6.

### Graduate Level Apprenticeships

Graduate Level Apprenticeships (GLA's) provide training from HNC and Degree, up to Master's level. GLA's are a relatively new type of apprenticeship and the number of frameworks are growing. Please visit [Skills Development Scotland Website](#) for more information on available frameworks at this level

## What is the role of the training provider?

The role of the training provider is to:

- Work in partnership with you to you to deliver an apprenticeship training programme.
- Manage the training.
- Assess the apprentices throughout the process.
- Administer the funding.

## When should I advertise for an apprenticeship post?

School leavers tend to start thinking about options for employment/further study from September to December in their final academic year. On this basis, you may wish to engage directly with schools to promote your apprenticeships (and wider careers in your service) around this time.

It is recommended to advertise your apprenticeship vacancies during the following months:

- November/December
- April/May
- July/August

This will help attract the widest pool of candidates and school leavers. You are also more likely to attract school leavers, who will be looking at their options at this point (employment/further study etc.).

It is appreciated that you may have a need to advertise and recruit out-with these times, and we will fully support you with this as required.

## How should I advertise an apprenticeship post?

All apprenticeship vacancies should be advertised externally, to ensure that you are targeting the widest pool of candidates. Many (but not all) applicants will fall into the 16-24 year old age category, so it is important that vacancies are accessible to school leavers.

You may also wish to consider advertise opportunities through social media or external apprenticeship websites. Please contact [AskHR](#) for further details.

## What should I consider when recruiting and selecting an apprentice?

It is important to understand that school leavers and young people will likely have limited job application and interview experience, so you should factor this in to any apprenticeship recruitment and selection process.

### Helpful Tips – Apprentice Recruitment and Selection

- Keep the interview panel small.
- Involve interviewers who have previously been apprentices or mentors.
- Keep the interview questions simple.
- Keep the interview short (20-30 minutes max).
- Ask scenario based questions (how would you...?)
- Use exercises and practical tests to enable candidates to demonstrate their strengths.
- Encourage the candidate to ask questions.
- After the interview, tell the person what will happen next.
- Ensure you give interview feedback to the unsuccessful candidates.

## What qualifications are needed to start an apprenticeship?

Exact qualifications will depend on the post. It is vital that the preferred candidate has achieved the required qualifications prior to starting their apprenticeship.

## What if a preferred candidate has not received their exam results?

School leavers can apply for any apprenticeships prior to sitting their final exams. In such instances, shortlisting and job offer decisions should be based on predicted grades. However, you will need to ensure that candidates have attained the required exam grades prior to starting their apprenticeship.

## What is the minimum age for an apprentice?

The majority of apprenticeship opportunities have a minimum age requirement of 16. Applicants can apply for apprenticeship posts if they are aged 15, but won't be able to start in post until they reach 16 years of age.