



From mountain to sea

Apprenticeships

What you need to know about undertaking an apprenticeship with Aberdeenshire Council



Introduction

Hello and welcome to Aberdeenshire Council's apprenticeship guide. In this guide we hope to answer some of the main questions you may have regarding an apprenticeship. You may find your first week or so overwhelming, with a lot of information to take in, however we hope to remove any worries by answering the following questions:

- What is an apprenticeship?
- What does an apprenticeship involve?
- How long is an apprenticeship?
- What are core skills?
- What contact will I have with my assessors?
- Is there an exam?
- When should I work on my qualification?
- What do I need to complete to be awarded my qualification?
- Will I be guaranteed a job at the end of my apprenticeship?
- Who should I speak to if I have any issues/problems during my apprenticeship?



What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are designed to help you learn whilst working. You'll gain hands on experience with your employer, all while getting paid. During your apprenticeship, you will receive full training to develop new skills. You may spend some time at college or with a training provider, and in some cases, you may also be allocated a buddy to assist with your development.

You then put these new skills into practice within the workplace, while working towards a qualification.

During your apprenticeship, you will also need to meet certain requirements. This ranges from completing 'enhancements', to making sure you have the right level of 'core skills'.

Enhancements, may or may not be mandatory, and provide extra training and knowledge. For example the enhancement for the Business and Admin Modern Apprenticeship is the 'European Computer Driving Licence' (ECDL) which is a well-known computer course.

Enhancements and core skills are nothing to worry about. You will be provided with all the support you need, plus you will have plenty of time to complete them!

What does an apprenticeship involve?

A key part of your apprenticeship is the qualification, which includes modules that relate to the work you are undertaking in your job. The qualification has a number of modules that must be completed before you can complete your apprenticeship. Some of the modules will be mandatory, but there are usually a choice of optional modules that you can select as well, based on your job role.

Here is an example of how a qualification is designed:

- Business and Admin – SCQF Level 5
- 3 Mandatory
- 5 Optional
- ECDL Essentials

Throughout your apprenticeship, you will be required to build a portfolio to demonstrate your knowledge of the units you have chosen. You will build your portfolio along with your assessor, and this may be by answering questions, or completing an observation. You may also collect witness statements from members of your team which will provide supporting evidence that you are progressing. This will be explained to you by your assessor at the start of your apprenticeship.

How long is an apprenticeship?

The length of time an apprenticeship takes to complete varies depending on the type. Here are some examples below.

Business and Admin - SCQF Level 5	1 Year to complete
Care - SCQF Level 5	1 Year to complete
Joinery - SCQF Level 6	4 Years to complete

IMPORTANT INFORMATION You must complete your qualification within the given time period or you will not pass your apprenticeship.

What are core skills?

When you start your apprenticeship, you will be asked by your assessor to show a copy of your qualifications. This will help your assessor determine if your core skills are/are not up to the level required for the qualification you are completing.

If your core skills are not at the required level, additional training and/or support sessions will be provided to help get you there. Support is usually delivered by a tutor, who will provide you with all the support and knowledge you will need to meet the required level. As an example this could be extra support with maths or ICT.

Ensuring your core skills are at the right level is a mandatory part of completing your apprenticeship. Completing core skills gives you the chance to develop your skills and to better yourself, giving you a greater chance at successfully

finding a job when your apprenticeship ends. Developing your core skills is nothing to worry about, you will be given all the help and support that you need.

If your core skills are up to the required level then there is nothing to worry about, no further work will need to be completed.

Please see table below for an example of core skills required for Business and Admin SCQF Level 5.

Core skills	Business
Communication*	3
Working with others*	4
Numeracy	3
ICT	3
Problem solving*	4

**Are all obtained within the qualification, others require additional tutors.*

What contact will I have with my assessor?

Your assessor is the person who will help you to complete your apprenticeship, providing all the support you need. Contact with your assessor varies depending on your apprenticeship/ assessor. The number of meetings will be determined by your training provider, and at the meetings you may discuss plans for your qualification, set deadlines and go over anything that you may be unsure of.

Your assessor makes sure you are meeting the required standards for your apprenticeship. They can do this in a number of different ways, such as completing an 'observation'. This is where the assessor watches you carry out a task which is highlighted in your modules, for example using a scanner. You may also need to answer knowledge questions, which allow you to demonstrate your understanding of tasks.

A short report will be written up on what your assessor has seen/heard. This creates the 'evidence' of your understanding and awareness of the various parts of your apprenticeship. The evidence builds over time, and you create a portfolio. This is what makes up your final qualification, which is then sent off to be verified.

If you ever have any problems with your apprenticeship, you can speak with your workplace buddy (if you have one), your line manager, or even your assessor.



Is there an exam?

Within the qualification there is no final exam, but there will be continual assessment throughout. You may have to take an exam depending on which enhancements are required to complete your apprenticeship. For example the ECDL Essentials (mandatory for Business and Admin).

However, exams are not something to worry about, and you have the whole duration of your apprenticeship to pass them. You will take them when you are ready and will be given all the support you need.

When should I work on my qualification?

You should be given time in work to complete your qualification, however you are free to complete some of the work at home.

What must I complete to be awarded my qualification?

To be awarded your apprenticeship qualification, you must complete your qualification, carry out any mandatory training, and make sure your core skills are up to the required standard. If one part is left unfinished, you will not achieve your apprenticeship!

Will I be guaranteed a job at the end of my apprenticeship?

While you are not guaranteed a job at the end of your apprenticeship with the Council, most apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeship end up finding a job with us. Our Human Resources department (HR&OD) can help you with interview training and applying for jobs should you require this. Please contact askHR for more information. You can also speak to your line manager, workplace buddy or assessor for more information.

Who should I speak to if I have any issues/problems during my apprenticeship?

Hopefully throughout your apprenticeship there will be no difficulties. However, if you encounter any problems, there are plenty of people that you can talk to. Depending on your problem, you may not feel confident speaking about your issue to certain people. Any of the following should be willing to help you resolve the issue:

- Line Manager
- Assessor
- Mentor
- Buddy
- Trade Union Rep

