



## APPRENTICESHIP FAQs



Barking & Dagenham College



## Apprenticeship levels explained

There are various levels of apprenticeships available. Please note not all apprenticeships are linked to an NVQ or have a qualification attached, ie: bricklaying, plastering, painting and decorating and carpentry are some examples.

Name	Level	Equivalent Educational Level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at grades A* to C (level 9-4)
Advanced	3	2 A Level passes
Higher	4, 5, 6 & 7	Foundation Degree and Above

## What are transferable skills?

Many different industry sectors share the same skill sets. These core skills are transferable across sectors and are built into the apprenticeship to maximise flexibility and choice for employers and apprentices. They include:

- **Communication (mandatory)**
- **Application of numbers (mandatory)**
- **ICT**
- **Working with others**
- **Improving own learning and performance**
- **Problem solving**

## My business is struggling to make ends meet. How is taking on an apprentice going to help?

Even in difficult times like these, apprenticeships are a vital way of improving the skills of staff and generating a committed and valuable workforce. When times are tough, competition for contracts is even tougher. That's when a well-trained, extra pair of hands could make a real difference to your chances of success.

Apprentices can also help you prepare your businesses for when the economy comes out of recession. By offering a flexible resource that can help your business grow, apprentices can also give you a competitive advantage to exploit new business growth opportunities.







## Do candidates need any qualifications before they can become an apprentice?

Apprentice candidates must not have restrictions on their right to work in the UK in order to receive ESFA apprenticeship funding. Further guidance on this can be provided on request.

There are no formal academic requirements in order to be accepted on to an apprenticeship. However, if an apprentice does not have a C or higher in GCSE Maths and English (or an equivalent such as Functional Skills Level 2) they will be required to complete Functional Skills qualifications alongside their apprenticeship, which we provide.

Part of our pre-screening involves testing candidates' Maths and English abilities in order to ensure they are at a level of ability that will not prevent them from completing the apprenticeship. If a candidate falls significantly short in Maths and English screening, this may prevent us from being able to train them.

## Do employers get a choice in who they take on as an apprentice?

Yes – just as with any employee you take on, you are able to follow your usual selection procedures. If an employer has a candidate in mind, we usually ask to arrange a screening process to ensure the candidate meets the requirements for the apprenticeship training.

Barking & Dagenham College also provides a recruitment service at no extra cost – through this, we advertise roles, select and pre-screen candidates, and provide a shortlist to employers. From the list, employers can select candidates for interviews or trial days, allowing you to find the best fit.

## I have an employee keen to do an apprenticeship. Can I still take them on as an apprentice?

Yes. If you have an employee who is keen to do an apprenticeship then you can still take them on as an apprentice.



## How much do employers need to pay apprentices?

Apprentice minimum wage is £4.81 per hour (April 2022). Over the course of the apprenticeship, apprentices must work (on average) 30 paid hours per week, for 52 weeks of the year, pro-rata.

[www.gov.uk/nationalminimum-wage-rates](https://www.gov.uk/nationalminimum-wage-rates)

Like most other employees, Apprentices must be given at least 20 days paid holiday per year as well as Bank Holidays.



For apprentices in schools, if working term time only, minimum hours must still be met as noted above.

For example, a term time only apprentice would need to work 40 hours per week over 39 weeks to meet the 1,560 hours per year minimum, if the apprenticeship is to be completed within the minimum timeframe.

If 1560 hours over 12 months (pro rata) cannot be provided, it may be necessary to extend the apprenticeship; we are happy to discuss this on a case-by-case basis. In the London area, we would advise employers to offer National Minimum Wage (or higher); this is a common trend among employers, and is more likely to attract applicants.

**On completion of their first year the apprentice wage goes up in accordance with their age.**



## What do employers need to have in place for apprentices?

Employers must ensure that they provide a suitable level of induction, training, support and mentorship to apprentices. Typically, this means assigning a current employee as a mentor who would be responsible for training the apprentice in the workplace, setting tasks and providing general supervision.

Mentors do not need to be at the apprentice's side throughout the day, but should be able to provide a reasonable level of consistent support and guidance throughout their employment. A more detailed pack on mentor responsibilities can be provided on request.

They will need an employment contract. An apprentice has the same rights as any other employee including sickness, holidays and bank holidays.



## How long do apprenticeships last?

Apprenticeships vary in length depending on the programme. The minimum length is 12 months but can last for 48 months depending on the course and level.

## What is the procedure for onboarding an apprentice?

When an apprentice starts with an employer, a typical employer-employee relationship is initiated. This means that the employer must issue an employment contract and follow their own HR policies regarding induction, probation, training etc. Any pre-employment checks such as references and DBS checks must be carried out by the employer.

As the apprentice starts their position, they will also be required to complete an enrolment process, often referred to as a 'sign-up'.





## How is training delivered through an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are designed to develop skills through on and off-the-job learning. During their time as an employee, apprentices should have the opportunity to develop skills relevant to the position they hold, under the guidance and supervision of a mentor within the company. As a training provider, BDC assigns a tutor to each apprentice. Tutors assign coursework to be completed as part of an apprentice's 'off-the-job' learning.

Approximately once every 6/12 weeks, tutors arrange meetings (usually on site at the place of employment) to complete reviews, assessments and generally check on how the apprentice is getting on.

Apprentices are required to spend 20% of their time completing off-the-job learning. For more information about 20% off-the-job learning time, please read the [guidelines provided by the Department for Education](#).

## What happens when an apprenticeship ends?

Achievement of an apprenticeship will be determined by an Independent End Point Assessment. The format of this varies by programme. This could involve an on demand test, a practical observation, a professional discussion, or an assessment of a portfolio of evidence. On completion of the apprenticeship the apprentice must perform tasks confidently and completely to the standard set by the industry.

When an apprentice finishes, employers may choose to progress the apprentice on to a higher level (if available), or take on the apprentice as a regular employee. If the employer does not choose to keep the apprentice, they are expected to provide some support in finding future employment. This could be in the form of career advice, an exit interview, or support in searching for further employment or education.

No recruitment fees are payable for employers who decide to keep on apprentice as a regular employee.

## Is there an upper age limit for apprenticeships?

No, there is no upper age limit for apprenticeships. The only age limit is that the apprentice must be over 16 years of age.

## Do apprentices take exams?

Most assessments are carried out in the workplace but there may be a requirement to take some tests.





## Why would I want to take on an apprentice?

Because it is good for business. Skills shortages are still one of the biggest threats to UK business. Apprenticeships can help businesses across all industries by offering a route to harness fresh talent. If you have trained staff with the right skills for the job they can do a wider range of tasks and take on new responsibilities - this can help to reduce skill shortages, minimise staff turnover and workplace accidents, and increase productivity.

Taking on an apprentice is cost-effective because your people can learn while they're on the job and the Government contributes to the costs of learning.

## Is there a limit to the number of apprentices that an employer can take on?

No, an employer they can take on as many as they like. The employer will be responsible for giving the apprentice an induction into their role as they provide on-the-job training.



## Can my apprentice start work straight away?

Yes; as long as they're aged over 16 and not in any other work or formal education.

## Are apprenticeships just for people who can't go into higher education?

No. Apprenticeships are for anyone who wants to earn and learn at the same time. Higher apprenticeships can include degrees.

## Government funding and financial incentives for employers

### Levy Employers:

The Apprenticeship Levy applies to employers with an annual pay bill of over £3million and is charged at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's annual pay bill. Employers who pay the levy can use these funds to pay for the apprenticeship training and assessment costs.

### Non-Levy Employers:

If your organisation does not pay the levy, you can still take on apprentices by accessing co-investment funding. The government will fund 95% of the apprenticeship training costs. Non-Levy employers will be required to make a 5% contribution of the cost, directly to the college.

The government is offering additional support to organisations by paying 100% of training and assessment costs for their apprentices aged 16-18 and for those aged 19-24 formerly in care or with a local authority education, health and care plan.

If you have any comments, queries or questions please contact your business development manager or email [employer.services@bdc.ac.uk](mailto:employer.services@bdc.ac.uk)





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