

**NORTHERN  
SKILLS**



# PARENT'S GUIDE TO APPRENTICESHIPS

EXPERTS IN  
APPRENTICESHIPS & TRAINING

# INTRODUCTION

For parents of students exploring potential apprenticeships, it's common to be more acquainted with the traditional university path to careers rather than the apprenticeship route. You may lack first-hand experience with apprenticeships or know anyone who has pursued this option, possibly leading you to perceive apprenticeships as a secondary choice rather than a primary career plan. However, it's crucial not to overlook the possibility that an apprenticeship might be the ideal fit for your child.

Apprenticeships present a unique opportunity for your child to seamlessly integrate study with paid employment, ultimately resulting in a professional qualification. Noteworthy benefits include the absence of tuition fees, covered by both the employer and the government, and a salary that can cover living expenses.

While apprenticeships were historically linked with trade industries like electricians, mechanics, or plumbers, the landscape has evolved. Nowadays, apprenticeships span a diverse array of industry sectors, providing entry points to careers in accounting, banking, IT, law, management, and television. A relatively recent addition to the apprenticeship landscape is the advent of "degree apprenticeships," offering an "earn while you learn" path to achieving BSc or BA status.

While embarking on an apprenticeship is not without its challenges, with fierce competition being one, it demands organisation and dedication to balance work expectations with academic commitments. However, if your child thrives through practical application, the work-based nature of apprenticeships will align well with their learning style. This hands-on experience will not only serve them during the apprenticeship but also enhance their prospects of securing fulfilling work once it concludes.

# CONTENTS

- 4 **Understanding apprenticeships**
- 8 **Apprenticeships we offer**
- 19 **Researching apprenticeships**
- 20 **Where to find the right apprenticeship**
- 23 **Apprenticeships and disability**
- 25 **Support from Northern Skills**
- 26 **Applying for apprenticeships**
- 28 **Writing a CV**
- 30 **Covering letter**
- 32 **Interviewing for apprenticeships**
- 37 **Dealing with rejection**
- 38 **Supporting your child**
- 40 **Apprenticeships with Northern Skills**
- 44 **Myths about apprenticeships**
- 46 **Apprenticeship glossary**

# UNDERSTANDING APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships were established as a strategic response to the skills shortage in UK businesses. They offer a unique blend of learning and on-the-job training, fostering the development of robust, professional skills that can seamlessly transfer from one organization to another.

The duration of apprenticeships can range from one to five years, with the option of longer durations if undertaken part-time, ultimately leading to the attainment of a professional qualification. Employers provide a salary, and the coverage of tuition fees is a joint responsibility of both the employer and the government.





## Who can become an apprentice?

They are open to anyone over the age of 16 who is not in full-time education, and they can suit different learning styles and career goals.

An apprenticeship can be a rewarding and fulfilling option for your child if they:

- › Enjoy learning by doing and applying their knowledge to practical situations
- › Want to start their career as soon as possible and gain relevant work experience
- › Are motivated to balance work and study commitments and manage their time effectively
- › Are keen to be assessed through a variety of methods, such as assignments, written work, and practical exercises

To be considered for an apprenticeship programme, you need to be:

- › aged 16 or over
- › living in the UK
- › not in full-time education

## Apprenticeship Levels & Types

There are hundreds of apprenticeships available across a wide range of sectors and occupations, from engineering and construction to health and social care. They are designed to meet the needs of employers and the labour market, and they are constantly updated to reflect the latest developments and innovations.

Apprenticeships are divided into four levels, depending on the level of qualification and the duration of the programme:

**Degree apprenticeships (Levels 6 and 7)** last 3 to 6 years, equivalent to a bachelor's or master's degree. They involve a Level 6 or 7 competency-based qualification (e.g., NVQ) and a Level 6 or 7 knowledge-based qualification (e.g. bachelor's or master's degree).

**Higher apprenticeships (Levels 4 and 5)** last 2 to 4 years, equivalent to a foundation degree or HND. They include a Level 4 or 5 competency-based qualification (e.g., NVQ) and a Level 4 or 5 knowledge-based qualification (e.g. diploma or foundation degree).

**Advanced apprenticeships (Level 3)** last 18 to 24 months, equivalent to 2 A Level passes. They focus on a Level 3 competency-based qualification (e.g., NVQ) and a Level 3 knowledge-based qualification (e.g. BTEC or diploma).

**Intermediate apprenticeships (Level 2)** last 12 to 18 months, equivalent to 5 GCSE passes. They involve pursuing a Level 2 competency-based qualification (e.g., NVQ) and a Level 2 knowledge-based qualification (e.g. BTEC).

UNIVERSITY	8	Doctorate PhD				
	7	Master's Degree MA, MSc, MPhil			Higher Apprenticeships	Degree Apprenticeships
	6	Undergraduate degree BA, BSc				
	5		Foundation degree FdA, FdSc	Higher National Diploma HND		
	4			Higher National Certificate HNC		
COLLEGE	3	AS / A2 / A Level T Level	BTEC Nationals		Advanced Apprenticeships	
SCHOOL	2	GCSE Grades 9-4	BTEC Firsts		Intermediate Apprenticeships	
	1	GCSE Grades 3-1				

# APPRENTICESHIPS WE OFFER

All our apprenticeships are new qualifications developed in consultation with employers by the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education.

## Beauty

- › Level 2 Beauty Therapist
- › Level 3 Advanced Beauty Therapist

## Business

- › Level 3 Team Leader/ Supervisor (ILM3)
- › Level 3 Business Administrator
- › Level 2 Customer Service Practitioner
- › Level 2 Accounts/ Finance Assistant (AAT2)
- › Level 3 Accounts Assistant (AAT3)
- › Level 4 Professional Accounting (AAT4)
- › Level 5 Operations/ Departmental Manager (ILM5)

## Catering & Hospitality

- › Level 2 Commis Chef
- › Level 2 Production Chef
- › Level 2 Hospitality Team Member
- › Level 3 Hospitality Supervisor

## Childcare, Healthcare and Education

- › Level 3 Dental Nursing
- › Level 3 Teaching Assistant
- › Level 4 Children, Young People and Families Practitioner

## Construction

- › Level 2 Bricklayer
- › Level 2 Wood Manufacturing Operative
- › Level 2 Carpentry and Joinery (Architectural, Site)
- › Level 3 Advanced Carpentry and Joinery (Architectural, Site)
- › Level 2 Property Maintenance Operative
- › Level 3 Civil Engineering Technician
- › Level 4 Civil Engineering Senior Technician
- › Level 4 Construction Quantity Surveying Technician
- › Level 4 Construction Site Supervisor

## Engineering & Manufacturing

- › Level 2 Lean Manufacturing Operative
- › Level 2 Engineering Operative
- › Level 2 General Welder
- › Level 2 Science Manufacturing Process Operative
- › Level 3 Science Manufacturing Technician
- › Level 3 Science Industry Maintenance Technician
- › Level 3 Laboratory Technician
- › Level 3 Maintenance & Operations Engineering Technician
- › Level 3 Engineering Design & Draught (Electrical, Mechanical, Instrumentation and Structural)
- › Level 3 Engineering Technician
- › Level 3 Machining Technician
- › Level 3 Engineering Fitter
- › Level 3 Metal Fabricator
- › Level 3 Pipe Welder
- › Level 3 Plate Welder



## IT, Computing & Digital Technologies

- › Level 3 Digital Marketer
- › Level 3 Information Communications Technician
- › Level 3 Marketing Assistant
- › Level 3 Cyber Security Technician
- › Level 3 Network Cable Installer (Newcastle only)
- › Level 3 Software Development Technician
- › Level 3 Content Creator
- › Level 4 Digital Industries – Marketing Executive
- › Level 4 Digital Industries – Software Developer
- › Level 4 Digital Industries – Network Engineer
- › Level 5 Audio Visual Technician

## Motor Vehicle (Automotive Technology)

- › Level 2 Autocare Technician
- › Level 3 Light Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician





## How do they work?

There are hundreds of apprenticeships available across a wide range of sectors and occupations, from engineering and construction to health and social care. They are designed to meet the needs of employers and the labour market, and they are constantly updated to reflect the latest developments and innovations.

During an apprenticeship, your child will dedicate 80% of their work week to gaining hands-on experience at their place of employment. They will be actively accruing work hours and enjoying the benefits of accumulating holiday pay, much like any other employee.

The remaining time will be devoted to studying the theoretical aspects of their work, which can be pursued either through a university or college, or by engaging in on-the-job learning, usually one day a week.

Throughout the apprenticeship, your child will receive a salary, and their course fees will be covered by the employer and the government. The key is a willingness to put in the effort and effectively manage the balance between work and study. Success will be demonstrated by applying the theoretical knowledge acquired to their practical responsibilities on the job.

Apprenticeships are a significant investment for companies, in staff time, finance and other resources. Companies are keen to nurture talent because it demonstrates that they offer:

- › Investment in people (not just products or services);
- › Long and successful career opportunities;
- › Personal and professional growth. It's worth remembering that this investment provides benefits for the company too:
- › A workforce trained to their unique professional needs;
- › Chance to reinforce their values with new employees;
- › Long-term commitment of staff, avoiding recruitment and re-training costs;
- › Flexible, mobile workforce to help fill any unexpected gaps.

One of the great advantages about an apprenticeship is that it works well for both employer and apprentice. As a result, it can often be the start of a long and rewarding professional relationship.





## Degree apprenticeships

Degree apprenticeships (Level 6 and 7), developed by universities, professional bodies and employers, offer the chance to qualify with a bachelor's or master's degree whilst working. Time is split between work and study. This can be an attractive alternative to attending university. Fees There are no tuition fees to pay (these are covered by the employer and the government) and the apprentice will receive a salary to cover living expenses, paid holiday and sick leave. Salaries usually range between £7k-18k p/a, although some employers offer more. Applications for degree apprenticeships are via the company offering the apprenticeships, not via UCAS.

## How much will my child get paid?

Apprentices are entitled to a special minimum wage, which rises in accordance with the age and experience of the apprentice. Some companies will pay this wage initially and raise it. Employers set their own wages.



**Scan the QR code for more information on up-to-date minimum wages for apprentices**



# Apprenticeships: The Pros and Cons

## Pros

- 1. Earn and Learn:** Apprenticeships allow you to earn a salary while gaining practical experience and knowledge simultaneously.
- 2. No Tuition Fees:** There are no tuition fees associated with apprenticeships, making it a cost-effective way to obtain qualifications.
- 3. Real-world Skills:** Apprenticeships provide focused and applied training, offering real knowledge, skills, and experience tailored for success in the workforce.
- 4. Practical Approach:** Suited for those not inclined towards academic learning, apprenticeships offer a hands-on, practical method of attaining qualifications.
- 5. Paid Employment:** Apprenticeships come with paid employment, combining structured learning with on-the-job experience.
- 6. Key Transferable Skills:** These programs develop essential transferable skills, addressing gaps identified in the labour market.
- 7. Future Employment Opportunities:** Apprenticeships may lead to future employment within the company, revealing previously unknown job roles.
- 8. Competitive Advantage:** Gaining work experience and on-the-job training through apprenticeships can provide a competitive advantage when applying for full-time employment.
- 9. Degree Apprenticeships:** This option offers the opportunity to attain a BA or BSc without incurring the debts associated with traditional university studies.

## Cons

- 1. Balancing Study and Work:** Achieving a balance between academic study and work commitments can be challenging, requiring strong organisational skills.
- 2. Different Student Experience:** The experience of student life in apprenticeships differs from that of full-time university or college courses. Your child might feel they're missing out on the traditional 'student life' if they opt for a degree apprenticeship, although some universities offer a robust student experience for their apprentices.
- 3. Initial Wage Challenges:** The starting wage for apprentices may be lower than in other jobs, necessitating careful budgeting for daily living costs such as travel and living expenses, especially if not living at home.
- 4. Career Direction:** Apprenticeships may limit options early on, requiring your child to have a clear idea of the career they wish to pursue.
- 5. Study-Work Dilemma:** Combining studying with working can pose challenges for your child.
- 6. Graduate Schemes:** Many companies offer graduate schemes for university leavers upon completing their degrees.
- 7. Competition:** Apprenticeships can be competitive and some industries and levels have a limited number of vacancies.

## Questions to ask

- › Does your child have a clear idea of the type of career or job they want to pursue?
- › Is your child more suited to an applied and hands-on working environment?
- › Is your child organised and able to balance work with academic study?
- › Will your child perform better under the guidance of a supervisor in a work environment?
- › Will your child enjoy the combination of different learning environments?
- › Does your child enjoy practical / active homework assignments?
- › Has your child undertaken any paid or voluntary work and did they enjoy it?



# RESEARCHING APPRENTICESHIPS

Determining the appropriate industry and level of apprenticeship available is the initial step. Your child must decide on the level based on two factors: possessing the required qualifications for acceptance and specifying the duration of their commitment to the apprenticeship. Remember that apprenticeships are progression opportunities and starting at a Level 2 or 3 does not mean your child won't eventually end up gaining a higher level apprenticeship.

Degree apprenticeships emerge as an appealing alternative to full-time university study, offering the prospect of obtaining a BA or BSc while committing to three or four years of study, coupled with real-world job experience, however these are far more competitive so don't close the door on searching for Level 3 or higher level apprenticeships.

Determining their areas of interest follows, wherein they should explore available apprenticeships within their chosen sector. Conducting research and seeking guidance from careers advisers or online sources can aid in identifying areas of interest. If a particular sector fails to captivate their interest during research, it may indicate that it is not a suitable fit. Engaging in work experience serves as an excellent means of evaluating whether the practical experience aligns with the theoretical allure of a dream job.

Finally, the apprenticeship's alignment with their desired career is crucial. While they need not be overly specific about their ultimate job or role, establishing a correlation between the apprenticeship, areas of study, acquired experience, and their envisioned future (say, five years ahead) is paramount.

# WHERE TO FIND THE RIGHT APPRENTICESHIP

Exploring apprenticeships can be approached through various channels, and we suggest utilizing a combination of options for a comprehensive search.

The first step to finding an apprenticeship is to research the different options and opportunities available in your child's area of interest and location.

You can use the following websites and tools to help you with your search:

## **Government Website**

Find an apprenticeship: This is the official government website where you can search and apply for apprenticeships in England. You can filter your search by keyword, location, level, and sector, and you can also sign up for email alerts to get notified of new vacancies.

## **Industry Sector**

Directly checking company, university, or college websites within the chosen industry sector is a wise approach. If your child is unsure which sites to explore, researching the industry of interest first can guide them to relevant companies.

## **Job Boards**

National job agencies advertise apprenticeships, allowing your child to narrow down options based on local proximity or specific job types. This method can be particularly effective for seeking apprenticeships in the Level 3-5 range.

## Companies Direct

Identifying specific companies of interest and checking their websites for apprenticeship opportunities is another option. While applications to well-known international companies may be highly competitive, it can serve as a starting point to understand apprenticeship components and discover similar opportunities with other companies.

## Other Websites

**Amazing Apprenticeships:** This is a website that provides information and resources for students, parents, and teachers about apprenticeships. You can find guides, videos, webinars, case studies, and events to help you learn more about apprenticeships and the application process.

**RateMyApprenticeship:** This is a website that features reviews and ratings from current and former apprentices, as well as advice and tips on how to apply for apprenticeships. You can also browse and apply for apprenticeships from top employers across various sectors and regions.

Encourage your child to explore these avenues to enhance their chances of finding the right apprenticeship opportunity.



## Apprenticeship checklist

- How long does your child want to commit to studying?
- Is there a valuable role at the workplace?
- What skills and subjects will be learned?
- What types of career will be available afterwards?
- Does the provider have a quality statement?
- Is the provider's reputation solid? (i.e. knowledge/skills/ behaviours)
- Degree level apprenticeship or other apprenticeship?
- With or without a university component?
- What do current apprentices think of the training?



# APPRENTICESHIPS AND DISABILITY

In order to expand their pool of top available talent and benefit from a workforce that reflects the diverse range of customers they serve, many UK employers offer support and equipment to help apprentices with special educational needs and disability (“SEND”) to do their jobs.

This includes making reasonable adjustments during the application and interview process.

Look out for companies displaying the “disability confident” logo on job / apprenticeship adverts. These companies have signed up to the Government led scheme designed to recruit and retain disabled people and people with long term health conditions for their skills and talent.

There are three levels of accreditation aligned with bronze, silver and gold standards: committed, employer and leader.

## **What financial support is available?**

Access to Work (“AtW”) funding is available to support apprentices in the workplace providing money towards extra costs, such as travel, specially adapted equipment or support workers. The money does not have to be paid back and is only available for additional costs, not expenses that any apprentice incurs.

To enable employers and trainers to make reasonable adjustments to provide a suitable training and work environment, there is extra funding via the Government and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (“ESFA”) for those employing young people that previously were in care, had an education and healthcare plan (“EHCP”), or require adjustments under the Equality Act.

## **Making reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act (2010)**

All UK employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for their disabled employees. Whilst it may be unreasonable to expect an employer to install a lift for a wheelchair user, it is reasonable to expect the employer to provide a ground floor office or work space.

Other reasonable adjustments may include providing additional time during tests for employees with learning needs or by providing appropriate resources, such as voice-activated software, a laptop or a dictaphone.

## **Meeting minimum standards in English and maths**

If SEND prevents meeting the minimum standard in English and Maths needed to obtain the appropriate apprenticeship qualification or entry requirements, there may be some flexibility.

Any concerns should be discussed with the training provider who, if appropriate, can arrange an approved assessment.

## **Finding local opportunities**

Local authority websites, in “The Local Offer” section, include details about supporting young people with SEND to get into work, including apprenticeships.

# SUPPORT FROM NORTHERN SKILLS

Once registered with Northern Skills, our experienced recruitment team will be on hand to support your child through the full recruitment process.

## How we will support applications

- › **Initial interview:** Our team will conduct mock interviews to help your child gain a better understanding of the interview process, as well as finding out about their future prospects and eligibility for particular roles.
- › **CV and further interview support:** We will also work with your child to ensure their CV is the best professional representation of themselves. Should they need to, we will also support with additional mock interviews to ensure students feel fully prepared for the next step.
- › **Job matching:** Our recruitment team will continue to send your child new job opportunities as they become available, ensuring they are given the best chance at finding their dream apprenticeship!



# APPLYING FOR APPRENTICESHIPS



## Writing the application

There are likely to be several elements to an apprenticeship application and each serves a slightly different purpose. Understanding what the application form, CV and cover letter are meant to achieve will help your child include the right information.

### The application form

It's always best to look through the application online, and then write answers in Word (or elsewhere), prepare and spell check them thoroughly, before copying and pasting into the online form.

This avoids risking a computer crash and losing the work, gives thinking time and allows comparisons between different questions so that answers are not repeated. Answers will be different depending on the apprenticeship.

Preparation for one apprenticeship will not be sufficient for application to another (although it may form a good basis).

Applications should be tailored according to the specification outlined in the advert and your child must check the company website for any specific advice and tips offered.

Check your child has made their application as relevant as possible to the job in question. Giving examples is a key differentiator in applications. Make sure your child always gives examples to support their statements and does not make unsubstantiated assertions such as "I am a great team leader" and "I am a good communicator" without showing why they hold this opinion.

# WRITING A CV

A CV is a brief synopsis of experience and qualifications. Whilst it should reflect the personal style of the person it describes, all CVs should include:

- › Personal information, including address and contact details
- › Education and Qualifications
- › Professional and voluntary experience with the most recent job first, whether voluntary, paid, temporary or work placements
- › Skills, strengths and achievements – including a full clean driving licence if they have one
- › CVs should not exceed two sides of A4
- › Check for spelling mistakes!
- › Use a professional font which is easy to read



# How your CV should look

Your 'Personal Profile' should summarise the skills you have gained from both academic and work experience and be related to the apprenticeship you are applying for.

Name  
Full Address including Postcode  
Home Telephone and Mobile Number  
Email (Ensure this is appropriate for work use)

## Personal Profile

I am a hard-working, honest and reliable individual who would like to have a career in accountancy. I have excellent IT skills being adept with Microsoft Office and I pick up systems quickly. I am able to work effectively in a team as I do playing Rugby with my local team, and I am equally competent and relied upon working on an individual basis as I am trusted to babysit. I am keen to learn and acquire new skills to enhance my overall career prospects of studying AAT to help train in accounts.

## Education and Qualifications

### School

GCSE'S  
English Language 6  
English Literature 6  
Religious Studies 5  
French 5  
Additional Science 6

### Date

Mathematics 6  
Science 7  
Art & Design 7  
I.C.T 6

The 'Education and Qualifications' section must include the name of the school or college that you attend/have attended, with the dates you studied there. Your most recent education needs to be first.

### College

### Date

#### AS Level

Mathematics D

#### BTEC

Business Studies Merit

## Career Summary

In the 'Career Summary' section, please include any work experience or jobs you have/have had, including the dates and the duties you completed.

## Voluntary / Work Experiences

Date: September 2018

Position Held: Sales Assistant Company Name: Buttercup Hospice

- Working in a team of 5 for a local charity shop
- Serving customers
- Answering the telephone
- Organising fundraising events

## Key Skills

- Team work
- Good communication skills
- Excellent time keeping

The 'Key Skills' section could include a list of your skills.

## References

Available on request

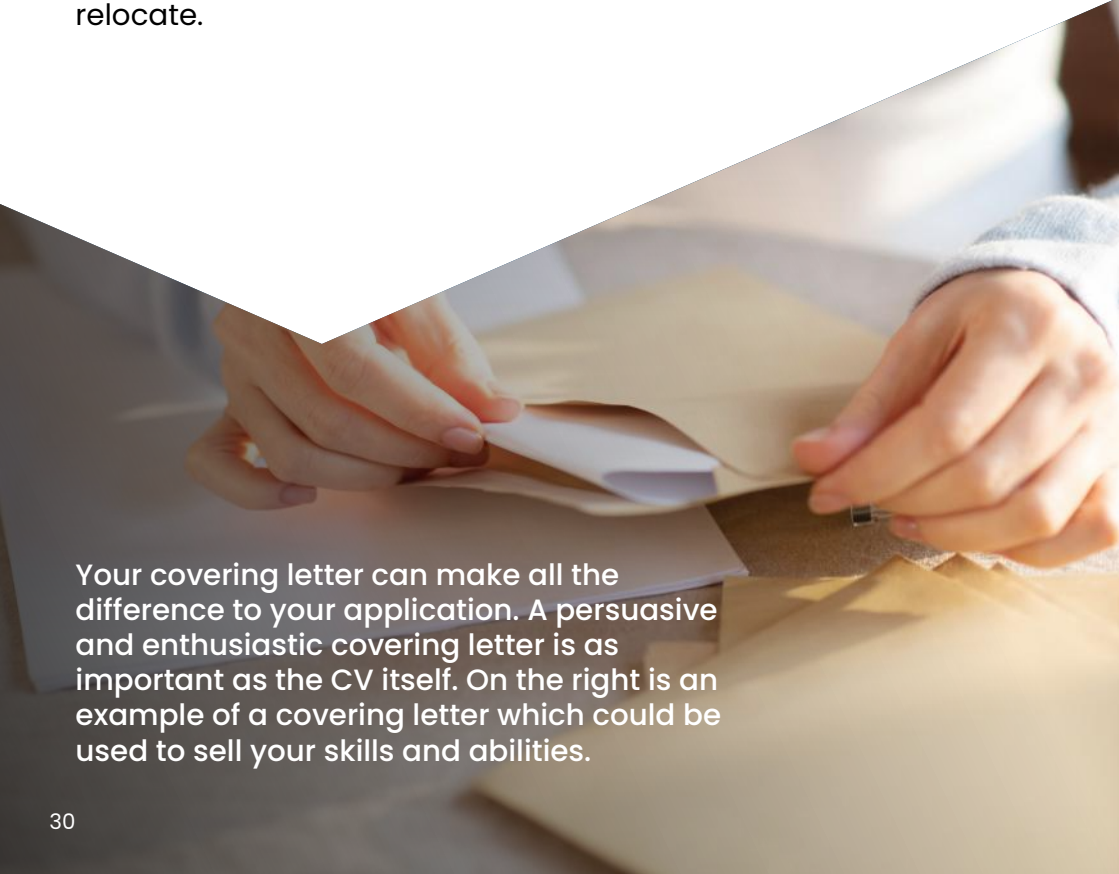
# COVERING LETTER

Where possible, your child should include a cover letter along with their CV.

CVs are generic whereas a cover letter gives them an opportunity to specify why this particular apprenticeship appeals to them and what qualities they have that make them a good match.

Make sure they read the job description carefully and use the letter to illustrate how their skills match up to what has been requested. It is important to be specific and use examples of what they have already done not to theorise about what they'd like to do in the future.

If necessary, they should explain why they would be happy to relocate.



Your covering letter can make all the difference to your application. A persuasive and enthusiastic covering letter is as important as the CV itself. On the right is an example of a covering letter which could be used to sell your skills and abilities.

# How your covering letter should look

Address and contact details are important for the employer to be able to contact you!

Applicant Address  
Town  
Postcode  
Telephone Number  
Email Address  
Date

Hiring Manager  
Employer Address  
Town  
Postcode

If you don't know the employer's name, use "Dear Sir / Madam" Include company contact details and job reference (if applicable).

Dear [title and surname of hiring manager],

Ref: [job title with reference number]

I have recently registered with the Northern Skills to work towards a **(put the type of apprenticeship in)** apprenticeship. To enable me to start my apprenticeship and fulfil the course criteria it is essential for me to secure employment working within the **(put the type of apprenticeship in)** environment. I am therefore enquiring whether **(put the name of the company)** has or anticipates having any placements in the near future.

Put in a few sentences why you would like to work for that company (having researched them) and why the job interests you. If you have any work experience or transferable skills explain how these relate to the role you are applying for.

**Example:** I am an interested retail assistant looking to discuss with you the current requirements your company has, and how my skills may fulfil those. Having achieved many successes throughout my career, including assisting with training new members of staff and taking a lead role with window displays, I feel I am in a unique position to help your company grow and I would relish the opportunity to bring my skills to your business.

Having already researched your company's values and products, I was especially interested when I noticed you had recently received an award through the local newspaper for your standard of customer service. This is something that particularly interests me as I too pride myself on delivering a quality service to customers, both new and existing. I feel it would be the ideal company to develop my career and I believe I can be an excellent addition to the team.

Please find attached a copy of my CV, which outlines all of my experience and skills to date. Please don't hesitate to contact me, should you wish to discuss my application further.

Yours sincerely

Your Name

Use "Yours faithfully" if you don't know the name of the manager

# INTERVIEWING FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

## Interview tips

An interview is a discussion between your child and an employer to find out if they would be suited to the job role.

Here is a handy checklist of the dos and don'ts for you to pass on to your child.

### What to do

- › Dress smartly, look bright and attentive, speak clearly and confidently
- › Find out where the venue is beforehand, your NS contact will give you the employer address details to ensure you can get there
- › Get your outfit ready the night before
- › Do some research on the company via the internet
- › Make sure you read the job description thoroughly
- › Prepare answers for the main questions you might be asked – see examples overleaf
- › Quote real examples of when you've used certain skills – just saying you've got a skill isn't enough, quote school experiences or hobbies and interests
- › Give a good firm handshake
- › Take your time when answering the questions – make sure you understand the question and take a short pause if you need to think
- › Sell yourself as no-one else is going to! Be positive about yourself and your experiences
- › Prepare some questions to ask at the end of the interview – use it as an opportunity to find out more about the role and the employer, don't ask about money or perks just yet!
- › Keep your answers focused and think about what skills you may have to offer the employer
- › Turn off your mobile phone! Treat the interviewers with respect and give them your undivided attention

## What not to do

- › Don't be late!
- › Don't swear or use slang words
- › Don't slouch in your seat or do anything else that makes you look disinterested
- › Don't smoke or have a cigarette just before the interview
- › Don't lie! An employer can dismiss you if they find out you have
- › Don't have earphones visible
- › Try not to get too nervous. A few nerves are normal but extreme nerves will affect your performance - remember that it's not a life and death situation
- › Don't be arrogant and assume you've got the job. Nothing turns off employers more than someone who is disrespectful and overconfident
- › Don't discuss controversial topics such as religion, politics and gender relations
- › Don't read from notes or your CV - you should be familiar enough with your own history to be able to talk about it unprompted
- › Don't criticise former employers or colleagues - it is not professional
- › Don't argue with the interviewer, no matter what. Remember to keep things positive!
- › Don't take friends or relatives to interviews, if you need help in getting there, ask them to wait outside whilst you have your interview



# Pre-interview checklist

## Has your child...

- Worked out how to get there and how long their journey will take?** Suggest a trial run to the venue a day or two before, this will help your child feel prepared and at ease on the day
- Prepared answers to some of the typical interview questions?** Get the inside track on the next page!
- Researched the organisation?** A simple scan of the website can help your child impress the interviewer with your knowledge of their organisation
- Printed out their CV?** Ensure your child has a printed copy of their CV so they have it to hand should they be asked any specific questions around their work history
- Prepared examples of when they've used skills relevant to the job?** You can identify the kinds of skills they will need by reading through the person specification and/or by checking out job profiles on [www.northernskills.co.uk](http://www.northernskills.co.uk)
- Prepared two or three questions for the end of the interview?** Discuss potential questions with your child that might be asked at the interview, this is their chance to impress and show they understand the organisation!
- Decided what they're going to wear?** It is always best to look smart for your interview, even if the dress code at the organisation is informal
- Remembered their certificates?** Most interviewers will want to see evidence of any qualifications your child has

# Typical interview questions

## Questions about the company

- › Why do you want to apply for this apprenticeship?
- › Why do you want to work for this company?
- › What do you know about this company?
- › What qualities do you think are important to this role?
- › Which part of the job role do you think will be the most challenging?
- › What do you think are the most challenging issues facing the company at the moment?

## Questions about the applicant

- › Tell me about yourself. What skills can you bring to the role?
- › What do you think makes you stand out from other applicants?
- › What are your three key strengths? Do you have any weaknesses? (The answer is always yes!)
- › What are they and how are you addressing them?
- › Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- › What do you think you would like least about this role?
- › Give an example of why you feel you are a good communicator / team member?
- › How have you influenced team decisions? How do you respond to stressful situations / under pressure / difficult customers?
- › What are your hobbies and interests?

## Questions your child might ask

- › Where do you think this company is going to be in the next five years?
- › What do apprentices usually go on to do?
- › Will there be the option to continue my training after the apprenticeship finishes?
- › How regularly will my work performance be reviewed?

**TIP:** Get your child to find a recent news article on the company / industry they are applying in. Based on what they have read, help them think of a question they might like to ask at the interview.



# DEALING WITH REJECTION

Experiencing rejection for the first time can be tough. As adults, we have had many years to develop the coping mechanisms to deal with such occasions. However, this may be your child's first experience of rejection so it is important to know what to do if this situation arises.

As apprenticeships continue to grow in popularity, so too have the number of student applications. For some of the larger company names, places can be highly competitive. Bear in mind that letters of decline are likely to happen in the lead up to examinations.

Try your best to prevent this from having a negative impact on your child's study or revision efforts by following some of these strategies.

- 1.** Try to encourage your child to research and apply for more than one apprenticeship scheme. Aim for at least five apprenticeships – just like university applications – choosing five apprenticeships helps your child to avoid placing all their eggs in one basket.
- 2.** Encourage your child to request feedback from the company. Whilst not all companies offer this, many do. Feedback will help your child understand the reasons for not being successful and will help them improve for future interviews. Companies have a lot of experience in providing feedback of this kind and it is likely to be sensitive and constructive.
- 3.** Be there. Listen carefully to their feelings and reassure them that in the long-run, things will work out.
- 4.** Apprenticeships are available all year round. If they have not been successful yet and have already finished school, encourage them to take on an internship or some additional work experience to help strengthen future applications

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

## How can I support my child during their apprenticeship journey?

As a parent, you play an important role in supporting your child during their apprenticeship journey, from helping them with their research and application, to encouraging them throughout their training and work. Here are some ways that you can support your child:

- › Be positive and open-minded about apprenticeships, and recognise the benefits and opportunities that they can offer your child. Avoid comparing apprenticeships to other routes, such as university, and respect your child's choice and preferences.
- › Help your child with their research and application, by providing them with access to the internet, helping them with their CV and cover letter, and practising some interview questions with them. You can also accompany them to any events or open days that they may attend to learn more about apprenticeships.



- › Encourage your child to be proactive and organised, by setting goals and deadlines, keeping track of their progress, and following up with employers and training providers. You can also help them with their time management and budgeting skills, as they will need to balance their work and study commitments and their income and expenses.
- › Support your child's learning and development, by showing interest in their work and training, asking them about their achievements and challenges, and celebrating their successes. You can also help them with their coursework and assignments, and encourage them to seek feedback and guidance from their employer and trainer.
- › Be there for your child emotionally, by listening to their concerns and worries, offering them advice and reassurance, and helping them cope with any stress or difficulties. You can also help them maintain a healthy lifestyle, by ensuring they get enough sleep, exercise, and nutrition.



# APPRENTICESHIPS WITH NORTHERN SKILLS

## Expectations during the recruitment process

### What you can expect from Northern Skills

- › We will treat all candidates fairly and consistently during the selection process
- › All candidate details will be treated with confidentiality and held securely and in line with the Data Protection Act and relevant legislation
- › We will provide information, advice and guidance relevant to the candidates needs
- › We will send your child's details out to suitable employers with apprenticeship vacancies
- › We will provide feedback and support following interviews with employers

### What we expect from your child

- › They will be active with their job search for a suitable job to undertake your apprenticeship
- › They will keep us informed of any developments or changes to their circumstance such as:
  - › Contact information – address and telephone numbers
  - › Exam results
  - › Driving license / access to a motor vehicle
  - › Job situation

- › They will respond to any calls or e-mails sent to them in a timely manner
- › They will attend any interviews that have been arranged for them
- › Prior to their interview, they will research the role and plan their travel to avoid turning up late for interview
- › They will attend their interviews in formal, smart attire

## **Employer expectations during the interview**

### **Some top tips to pass onto your child!**

- › Not to be late. Always try to arrive 10 minutes before the interview time
- › Make sure to announce that you are there for an interview; don't expect reception to know who you are. Let them know your name, why you are there and who you are there to see
- › Make sure you take your coat off - let the employer see that you have dressed appropriately and are taking the interview seriously
- › Don't take any drinks and don't chew gum
- › Refrain from smoking - you are entering a non-smoking environment therefore any odours will be easily picked up by the employer... first impressions count
- › Be polite and smile throughout - a good manner is just as important as the answers you provide
- › Make sure you have some questions to ask at the end of the interview. This shows your interest in the company and the job
- › Once the interview has come to an end, make sure to thank the employer for their time and the opportunity to interview

# Expectations once your child has been employed

## What you can expect from Northern Skills

- › A Training Advisor will be assigned to your child in order to support and help them to progress through your apprenticeship programme
- › The Training Advisor will support your child with information, advice and guidance about progression routes that might be available to them
- › The Training Advisor will continually assess your child's performance through site visits / classes / training sessions and employer feedback

## What we expect from your child

- › They will be in attendance at pre-arranged site visits / classes / training sessions
- › All work set by the Training Advisor prior to visits / classes will be completed on time
- › They will attend any off site exams - as required
- › Their progression throughout their qualification will be discussed with your employer. If you fail to comply with any of the above the points then this may affect your employment as an apprentice

## What the employer expects of your child

- › To always be punctual and reliable in the workplace
- › Dress appropriately for their working environment
- › Show enthusiasm and willingness to learn
- › Keep an open mind, it takes time to adjust to a new environment
- › Adherence to the employment contract and policies and procedures listed therein – don't use social networking sites (Facebook etc.) in the workplace if this does not form part of your job and don't use your mobile phone whilst at work



# MYTHS ABOUT APPRENTICESHIPS

## **Myth 1: Apprenticeships are not considered as favourable as degrees.**

Undergraduate degrees are not the sole option; various paths, including apprenticeships, lead to desired careers. Apprenticeships hold equal value to undergraduate degrees and are already widely embraced. Additionally, completing a degree apprenticeship allows you to attain the same degree while working as an apprentice, gaining industry experience, and receiving a salary.

## **Myth 2: Apprenticeships are for those who perform poorly in school.**

Apprenticeships are inclusive, catering to individuals with diverse academic backgrounds. Different entry requirements exist, akin to traditional jobs or degrees, requiring you to meet the employer's criteria. Apprenticeships accommodate various learning styles, appealing to practical learners or those seeking industry experience. Combining a degree with an apprenticeship is also an option.

## **Myth 3: Apprenticeships are limited to vocational industries.**

Apprenticeships span a broad spectrum of industries, including unexpected ones like business, marketing, chemistry, sports, and journalism. Whether in construction, hair and beauty, or engineering, apprenticeships offer a suitable pathway to your desired career, emphasizing finding the right fit for your interests and learning style.

## **Myth 4: Apprenticeships don't involve 'real' jobs.**

As an apprentice, you engage in real projects from day one, functioning as an employee rather than a volunteer or intern. Whether working with clients, treating patients, or contributing to design projects, apprenticeships provide hands-on experience. Guidance from employers, mentors, or supervisors ensures a supportive learning environment, with objectives set and measured regularly.

## **Myth 6: Apprenticeships are exclusively for school leavers.**

While there's no upper age limit for apprenticeships, they generally suit individuals over 16. Some apprenticeships may have an age requirement of 18 or older due to safety concerns, so check job descriptions for criteria. Apprenticeships are suitable for career changes later in life, offering an opportunity to earn and learn simultaneously.

## **Myth 7: An apprenticeship won't lead to a career.**

An apprenticeship is a practical path to your chosen career, making you an invaluable asset to a company with acquired industry experience and skills upon qualification. Degree apprentices are particularly sought after, possessing both a university degree and years of work experience.



# APPRENTICESHIP GLOSSARY

If you've been researching apprenticeships, you might have seen some technical jargon that you're just not sure about. Here, we break down what each term means so you can confidently navigate the world of apprenticeships.

- › **Apprenticeship standard:** An apprenticeship needs to have an approved 'standard' in England that defines what you do and learn while you're there. It's how an apprenticeship is structured and makes sure you get the most out of the experience.
- › **Apprenticeship frameworks:** In England, frameworks are the old version of 'standards' and aren't used anymore. In Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, frameworks mean the way the apprenticeship is structured, similar to a 'standard' in England.
- › **End-point assessment:** An assessment you take at the end of your apprenticeship, carried out by an independent body. You'll have to demonstrate you can carry out your job responsibilities and that you have the knowledge and skills for the role. This is usually the last step before you get your qualification.
- › **Knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs):** Things you need to learn and demonstrate throughout your apprenticeship and during your final assessment to be awarded your qualification. These will be set out at the start of the apprenticeship.
- › **Degree apprenticeship:** An apprenticeship where you gain either an undergraduate or master's degree while working. Degree apprenticeships are available in England and Wales.
- › **Graduate apprenticeship:** In Scotland, degree apprenticeships are known as graduate apprenticeships. This is an apprenticeship where you can gain an undergraduate or master's degree at the same time.

- › **Apprenticeship levels:** Apprenticeship levels tell you how advanced the apprenticeship is. They start from Level 2 and go all the way up to Level 7, and the level you start on depends on your previous qualifications and experience. The qualification you get at each level is different. For example, a Level 2 apprenticeship is equivalent to GCSEs, and a Level 7 is equivalent to a master's degree. In Scotland, apprenticeship levels work slightly differently and include foundation, modern and graduate apprenticeships.
- › **Training provider:** The organisation that delivers the study part of your apprenticeship. For example, a university or college that is partnered with your employer to provide the apprenticeship.
- › **Commitment statement:** At the start of an apprenticeship, you, your employer and training provider all sign a statement, like a contract, that includes the details of the apprenticeship. This includes how the training will work and what's expected of you. It's designed to make sure you and your employer benefit from your apprenticeship.
- › **Apprenticeship starts:** Someone starting an apprenticeship. You might see this in reports, e.g. 'There were 1 million apprenticeship starts in 2021'. This means that 1 million people started apprenticeships in that year.
- › **Learner:** Sometimes apprentices are referred to as learners.



## Northern Skills

Tel. 03453 40 40 40

Email: [info@northernskills.co.uk](mailto:info@northernskills.co.uk)

[northernskills.co.uk](http://northernskills.co.uk)

Northern Skills (Middlesbrough)  
Middlesbrough College Campus  
Dock Street  
Middlesbrough TS2 1AD

Northern Skills (Sunderland)  
The Software Centre  
Tavistock Place  
Sunderland SR1 1PB

Northern Skills (Newcastle)  
The Stamp Exchange  
Westgate Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SA

TTE  
Edison House, Middlesbrough  
Road East, South Bank,  
Middlesbrough TS6 6TZ



20.03.24

**NORTHERN  
SKILLS**

  
Middlesbrough  
College Group

**TTE**