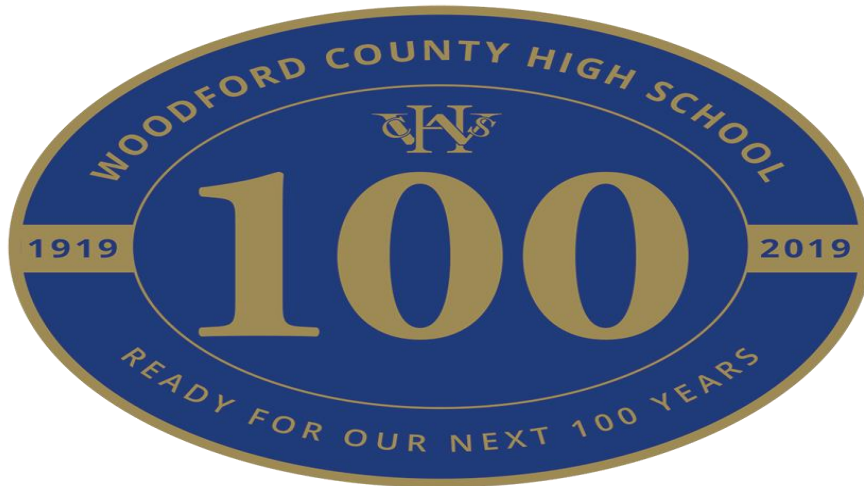


**Apprenticeship Guide**  
**Woodford County High School**



**This guide is prepared from UCAS advice on apprenticeship and from The Apprenticeship Guide. Following links may be used to explore apprenticeships in UK.**

<http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/>

<https://www.ucas.com/file/120301/download?token=DPdwJOEV>

## **Introduction:**

**Apprenticeships are a great option for getting on the job ladder and earning a wage while you train, writes Keith Smith, director of apprenticeships at the Education and Skills Funding Agency**

Over recent years, apprenticeships have changed to better meet the needs of apprentices and employers alike. Apprenticeships work for employers. They were involved in the design of new high-quality apprenticeships and the changes to how apprenticeships are funded—resulting in the system providing long term, sustainable opportunities for all. For apprentices, apprenticeships now last longer, are of higher quality and mean more off-the-job training than ever before.

An apprenticeship is a real job, with hands-on experience, a salary and the chance to train while in work and earning. Becoming an apprentice is an opportunity to fulfil career ambitions in a real work environment, developing competence in a specific occupation and enabling everyone in that role to work at a consistent high standard. Apprentices are treated just like all the other employees they work alongside, with a contract of employment and paid holiday leave.

An apprenticeship can take between one and six years to complete, depending on the apprenticeship of choice, the level of apprenticeship and any previous experience an apprentice brings. There are many, many different apprenticeships available all over England, at companies large and small, in a wide range of industries, from local organisations to large national brands.

## **Who are apprenticeship for in England?**

Apprenticeships are ideal if you have a clear idea of the career you'd like to pursue, and you're willing to commit to work and study. Unlike in school, at college or on a traditional degree course, the majority of your learning will be through on-the-job training in your place of work.

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

- aged 16 or over
- living in England
- not in full-time education

**Apprenticeships would suit someone who:**

- has a clear idea of the type of career they wish to pursue,
- is willing to commit to work and study, but would prefer a more practical and work-related approach to learning,
- is ready to start work with an employer, and be based in the workplace most of the time.
- is well organised and able to cope with the competing demands of work and academic study at the same time
- is ready to be assessed through a mix of assignments and written work, including essays, reports, practical exercises, end tests, and exams

No matter what kind of career you want to follow, you need to do your research and find out if you can reach your career goals through an apprenticeship, or if you need/would prefer to study full-time at university or college.

**Apprenticeships aren't the 'easy' option.** Holding down a full-time job and studying takes commitment and hard work, and it won't be right for everyone. You'll need to prove yourself in the workplace, while getting to grips with studying for a higher level qualification. You'll be expected to achieve academically and at work, managing your time and adjusting to longer hours, with fewer holidays than at school, college, or university. You might have to travel or relocate to find the right opportunity for you.

## **Which apprenticeship level is right for you?**

**Whether you're about to finish secondary school and in need of an entry-level position, or you're in search of an alternative to university, there is an apprenticeship out there for you**

### **Intermediate (level 2)**

Intermediate (or level 2) apprenticeships are designed to cover entry-level roles and provide the basic skills and knowledge required to begin a career. If you're aged 16, they represent the ideal opportunity for you to embark on further training outside of the classroom. Typically over a 12-month period, you'll work toward obtaining qualifications equivalent to GCSEs, usually in the form of a diploma relevant to the area you're working in.

Entry requirements will vary from one or more GCSEs to no formal qualifications or experience, and employers are encouraged to make their apprenticeships as accessible as possible, so relevant experience and skills will be considered. On completion of an intermediate apprenticeship, you'll be able to seek

advancement at your current employer, undertake an advanced qualification at your current employer or elsewhere, or move into further education at a higher level than when you left school.

Some of the intermediate apprenticeships on offer, across sectors such as agriculture, environmental, animal care, construction, business, administration, vehicles, transport, engineering, manufacturing, healthcare, science and hospitality.

### **Advanced (level 3)**

Advanced (or level 3) apprenticeships are the next step on the apprenticeship ladder, offering an alternative to A-levels, with which they're considered equivalent, and are suitable if you have skills, experience or qualifications in a sector already and are looking to progress. Typically over an 18-month to 24-month period, you'll delve into technical detail and gain expertise in your chosen sector.

Entry requirements are stricter for advanced apprenticeships, with many often requiring up to five GCSEs, including maths and English. At this level and depending on the apprenticeship, you may achieve professional recognition upon completion by the relevant professional organisation or institute.

### **Higher (level 4, 5, 6 or 7)**

Higher or (level 4, 5, 6 or 7) apprenticeships are designed to offer degree-equivalent qualifications and experience while doing the job. They typically take between 12 and 60 months to complete, with a significant proportion of that time spent with a training provider, college or university, to develop knowledge and skills.

Employers offering higher apprenticeships will usually expect some form of previous experience or subject knowledge.

The entry requirements are tough, with five GCSEs and level 3 qualifications such as A-levels tending to be prerequisites to entry. As ever, equivalent experience is acceptable, and higher apprenticeships tend to be the level at which those already in work or leaving higher education such as university will apply, so expect competition to be that much more intense.

### **Degree apprenticeships**

A degree apprenticeship is similar to a higher apprenticeship, but apprentices will also work toward a bachelor's degree at level 6 or a master's degree at level 7.

Degree apprenticeships are a popular alternative to the traditional route of obtaining a degree directly from a university, because the employer will cover the cost. Going to university to study a three-year bachelor's degree as an individual student, for example, will set you back thousands of pounds. Degree apprenticeships are entirely funded by the employer. As an apprentice, you'll also be paid a salary while you study, and be entitled to holiday.

Where degree apprenticeships and traditional degrees differ is the method of learning. Work placements will often come in the final year of a degree, with studying on campus taking up the majority of your time.

On a degree apprenticeship, you'll mix learning with working, so you'll split your time between a training provider, increasingly one of England's many universities, and an employer, meaning you'll be able to put

your knowledge and skills into immediate practice, and take away those burning questions that you want to pose to your teachers.

Degree apprenticeships are still relatively new, but employers, higher education providers such as universities, and professional bodies are waking up to their potential, with dozens now available in England. They range from digital and technology solutions professional, which will prepare you to work in software, business and systems analysis, cyber security, data analysis, or network infrastructure; to senior leader, an apprenticeship that will arm you with the skills and knowledge necessary to take up a C-suite executive position at a top company.

## **How do you decide which apprenticeship is right for you?**

There are more than 500 apprenticeships available in England. But how do you identify an apprenticeship that may interest you and warrant further research? How do you match who you are now with what you want to do with the rest of your life? These are important and complicated questions, but they needn't be difficult to answer, if you follow this simple three-step plan.

### **Step 1: What do you enjoy doing?**

Your interests and hobbies are the things you enjoy doing most, so they're a good basis for choosing a career. You'll spend a good proportion of your adult life in various roles, so they should be doing something that you're committed to and wish to develop in. Above all, you need to bear in mind that you'll be spending eight hours per day in an office, giving your weekends because you're on rota, or spending extended periods of time away from home because your career demands it. Your ideal apprenticeship needs to be something you have a passion for.

### **Step 2: What were/are your strongest subjects at school?**

Your school subjects are important to which apprenticeship you choose, because the former represent the most significant proportion of your life so far, and the latter the most significant yet to come. The subjects you studied at school, particularly those you excelled in, offered you the opportunity to put your interests and hobbies into practice, particularly the skills you gained during the course of your past-time pursuits. Under the tutelage of your teachers, you would've been given an academic grounding, allowing you to develop and flourish. Where you ceased to be interested, you can accept that those particular skills in that area weren't a passion after all, and so wouldn't be appropriate to pursue as a career.

Of course, not everyone has a clear pathway they can follow. You may have interests that aren't easily recognisable in your school subjects, or you may not be academically inclined and so didn't excel in them in the way described above. That's not a problem. Apprenticeships offer vocational training that can overcome these obstacles, focusing your education on directly applicable subjects, such as specific theory relating to a particular trade or profession. It's worth bearing in mind that most school subjects and interests teach widely applicable skills. Take English literature: during the course of your education, you'll learn to interpret texts and understand context, which are two essential skills for almost every job in the world. Be broad-minded during this step, because you'll be pleasantly surprised by just how much you can do when you think about it.

### **Step 3: What is the apprenticeship like?**

When all is said and done, you need to learn what the apprenticeship you take a fancy to is really like. What does the role actually entail? What are the advantages and disadvantages (because every job comes with both)? Is it something you can develop a passion for? If you're going to find and keep a career, you need to know what's in store and whether it's something you want to do.

## **What goes into an apprenticeship application?**

**The keys to a successful application for an apprenticeship are a good CV and cover letter. This is how you create them**

A CV and cover letter tell potential employers important facts about you. They're your opportunity to show them that you have the skills and experience that make you suitable for the apprenticeship you're applying for.

Here are a few pointers on how to create them.

### **How to produce a good CV for your apprenticeship application**

**Presentation:** Type up your CV using a clear, uncomplicated font (Times New Roman or Arial tend to work best). Make sure to keep the same size font throughout (12 is standard) and avoid trying to do clever visual things. Clean and tidy are far more important to the prospective employer.

**One page:** Keep your CV to one page. Managers and other professionals focused on hiring will be busy and have many applications to consider. Plus, keeping to a single page will force you to be concise and stick to the important points.

**Organise:** Categorise your skills, experience and achievements under the following headings: work experience, education and extracurricular activities. Part-time jobs go under work, secondary school under education and anything you've done in your own time should go under extracurricular activities. List them in chronological order, with the most recent first. Restrict the information you include to dates, locations and, most importantly, achievements. Employers want to see what you've accomplished.

**Customise:** Tailor your CV to the job you're applying for. Use the job description to match the skills you include with the ones the employer is looking for.

**Check it:** Make sure your CV is free of mistakes, including spelling and grammar. Read it over several times and then ask someone else to check it. Show it to a careers advisor who is trained to help you do this kind of thing. Then check it again.

### **How to produce a good cover letter for your apprenticeship application**

**Why you want the job:** Lead with what attracted you to the job in the first place, keeping it to two or three sentences. You might be attracted to the company, the position may offer certain benefits, or the career area is something for which you have a passion. Let them know why you're interested.

**Key person specifications:** Almost every job advert will list the key qualities that a person must have in order to get the job. These will range from previous experience in the particular field, to demonstrable skills such as teamwork and organisation. Depending on the job you're after, they may include more specialist requirements, such as experience in certain software packages, or familiarity with certain methodologies and regulations. Match your own experiences and achievements with as many as you can in your cover letter, outlining what you meet and how you've met it, as succinctly as possible.

**Anything else you bring to the table:** An avid reader? Keen on sports? Add some personal details to close, to give the employer an insight into you as a person.

### **Other points to remember**

**References:** You'll need at least two references when applying for a job. These are usually sought once you've been offered the position. They'll be former employers, teachers, or anyone who knows you well, although relatives and friends are out of bounds.

**Format:** Every employer will accept CVs and cover letters in different formats, but as a rule, expect to submit both as Word documents or PDFs, via email. There may be application forms to fill out instead of submitting a CV and cover letter, or even application systems to navigate online. Rest assured, these almost always follow the path of a CV, so you'll be able to transfer the information from one to the other with relative ease.

**Accompanying evidence or information:** Certain jobs, such as graphic design or journalism, will require a portfolio of work, to demonstrate previous experience. This requirement will be made explicit, but it's worth remembering that it may come up, so you can take the time to build one.

## How do you prepare for an interview?

**You only get one opportunity to make a good first impression, so be prepared for the apprenticeship interview**

There are fewer things more stressful than an interview (driving test and moving house probably trump it), but there's no need to worry about it, if you follow these simple steps and prepare, prepare, prepare.

### Research

**The employer:** Spend some time finding out about the employer. What do they do? How do they do it? Perhaps they're well-known, or maybe they're new to the scene. Put in the time to find out about them. Visit their website, or speak to someone you know who already works for them.

**The location:** Where are you going for the interview? The employer's headquarters? Figure out how you will get there on the day, so that you don't have to worry about getting lost. It might even be a good idea to visit the location ahead of your interview, to time how long it'll take you to get there.

**You:** Why do you want the job? That is the question you should begin with in your preparation for the interview itself. You can't predict what questions you'll be asked, but you can guess and plan general answers that can be narrowed down on the day. The less you have to improvise, the better, so practise potential questions and likely answers on your own or with a parent or teacher. You should also prepare questions that you want to ask about the role, the company, benefits and future progression. An employer will want to hear these, to show just how keen you are on getting the job.

**The interview:** Interviews can be more complicated than they first appear, depending on the employer. Some still do them one on one, on a single day, and then make their decision. Others prefer two interviews; the first to whittle down applicants from a long list, the second to make their final decision. Some employers even meet their applicants all at once, to see how you would react in a group setting. Find out what the format of the interview will be when the employer first gets in touch. Knowing ahead of time will make it easier for you to prepare.

### The day before

**Dress code:** It's always best to wear something smart, even if the employer is a trendy technology start-up or a car mechanic. 'Smart' is open to interpretation, and you should always wear what makes you most comfortable. It's best to consider what you'd wear for a formal event like a wedding, and then dial it down from top hats and ball gowns, to something a little less complicated. What do your parents wear to work? Don't be afraid to seek a second opinion.

**Things to bring with you:** You may need to bring a portfolio of work, a passport to prove you have the right to work in this country, or your CV. Check and make sure it's out and to-hand the day before, so you won't forget it.

### **The interview**

**Be punctual:** Don't be late. This should be obvious, but it's easy to be delayed or get lost. Make sure you give yourself enough time to get to the interview, both to be punctual and to avoid having to rush. Arriving frazzled after a mad rush from the train station is not the best way to arrive at an interview. Get there early if you can, but find somewhere to go before heading to the interview, as arriving too early is also a thing. Employers need to know that you can keep to schedule, so go and get a coffee if you're too early.

**Body language and eye contact:** You're going to be nervous. Accept this and move on. Shake the hands of everyone present when you arrive, and keep it natural. No-one maintains eye contact all of the time, so just meet their gaze when they're speaking, and when you are. Try not to fidget but keep your hands clear of your pockets. Again, be natural and yourself. If it helps, ask for a glass of water.

**Questions:** Don't forget to ask your questions. There will be things you absolutely need to know, such as what the salary is, as well as particulars of your own that you're curious about. Does the employer offer a pension? Do they do socials? These are all good questions and the interview is your opportunity to ask them.

### **Find out more ----**

- [www.getingofar.gov.uk](http://www.getingofar.gov.uk)
- [www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk](http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk)
- [www.successatschool.org](http://www.successatschool.org)
- [www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk](http://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk)