

Apprenticeships: Guidance

Contents

Introduction
Apprenticeships in England
Bursaries for Apprenticeships in England
Foundation Apprenticeships (England only)
Apprenticeships in Wales
Apprenticeships in Scotland
DWP Social Mobility Apprenticeships

Introduction

Apprenticeships are real jobs with real employers that allow claimants to work, earn a salary and gain valuable qualifications and experience. Apprenticeships combine on-the-job training with academic study.

As of 11 February 2025, apprenticeships for people aged 19 and over in England do not require participants to achieve an English or Maths qualification to complete their course. This is now an optional requirement if agreed with their employer.

It is still mandatory for people aged 16-18 to complete their English and Maths qualifications.

Apprenticeships for people aged 19 and over in England who have already started their English and Maths training must continue to do so until agreed otherwise with their employer.

Employers and apprentices have until 1 April 2025 to decide if the apprentice will continue or discontinue towards their English and Maths qualification.

Apprentices will still be assessed on the job-specific English and Maths skills they need.

These changes apply to apprenticeships in England only.

Information about further changes to apprenticeships from August 2025 can be found at National Apprenticeships Week

Apprenticeships in England

For information about what an apprenticeship is and what claimants can gain by participating in them, see the Introduction

Eligibility

Claimants must be:

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

Apprentices will:

- be an employee earning a wage and entitled to holiday pay (see [Become an Apprentice: pay and conditions on GOV.UK](#))
- work alongside experienced staff
- gain job specific skills
- get time for training and study related to the role (at least 6 hours per week, 20% of a 30 hour week).

Apprentices are entitled to the apprentice minimum wage if aged under 19 or aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship. In all other cases, claimants are entitled to the minimum rate for their age.

The National Minimum Wage for apprentices is reviewed each April.

An apprenticeship is a job and earnings for Universal Credit claimants are treated in the same way as any other job.

Levels of apprenticeship

The levels of apprenticeship range from level 2 (equivalent to GCSE) to level 7 (equivalent to a degree).

Some apprenticeships may also give an additional qualification, such as a diploma. There are thousands of apprenticeships in more than 170 industries. New apprenticeships are advertised each week covering a wide range of job roles and suitable claimants should be signposted to [Find an Apprenticeship](#)

Bursaries for Apprenticeships in England

There is a bursary payable to eligible care leavers who participate in an apprenticeship in England.

For an overview, payment and eligibility criteria, see [Apprenticeships care leavers' bursary guidance on GOV.UK](#)

Claimants receiving the bursary must report this on their Universal Credit claim and it will be treated as capital. See Treatment of capital and Care Leavers guidance.

Foundation Apprenticeships (England only)

Foundation apprenticeships are entry-level paid jobs with structured training designed for young people aged 16-21. However, there is extended eligibility for 22-24 year olds who:

- have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- are a care leaver
- are a prisoner or a prison leaver

They are Level 2 apprenticeships that combine on-the-job experience with off-the-job learning, focusing on a broad occupational sector (for example, as a construction worker) rather than as a single, narrow job role.

They are ideal for those who are new to the workforce and provide a stepping stone into employment and further training. This includes technical skills and employability training which helps young people to build confidence, resilience and workplace readiness.

Foundation Apprenticeships are also designed to help young people explore different career paths within a particular sector before committing to a more specialised or higher-level apprenticeship.

There are no prior qualification requirements to participate in a Foundation Apprenticeship and the duration can be as little as 8 months.

Adverts for Foundation Apprenticeships in England have been available from 1 August 2025 on Find an apprenticeship in the following sectors:

- construction
- engineering & manufacturing
- health and social care
- digital

Other Level 2 apprenticeships may be more appropriate for learners who have already expressed interest in a particular specialist occupation.

Apprenticeships in Wales

For information about what an apprenticeship is and what claimants can gain by participating in them, see the Introduction

Eligibility

Claimants must be:

- aged 16 or over
- living in Wales
- have the right to live in the UK
- not in full-time education

Apprentices will:

- be an employee earning a wage and entitled to holiday pay (see [Become an Apprentice: pay and conditions on GOV.UK](#))
- work alongside experienced staff
- gain job-specific skills
- get time for training and study related to the role

Apprentices are entitled to the apprentice minimum wage if aged under 19 or aged 19 or over, and in the first year of the apprenticeship. In all other cases, claimants are entitled to the minimum rate for their age.

An apprenticeship is a job and earnings for Universal Credit claimants are treated in the same way as any other job.

Levels of apprenticeship

The levels of apprenticeship range from level 2 (equivalent to GCSE) to level 7 (equivalent to a degree).

For information on the different levels available, see [What is an Apprenticeship?](#) on the Careers Wales site.

Suitable candidates should be signposted to [Apprenticeship search](#) on the Careers Wales site.

For further information, see also [Apprenticeships](#) on the Careers Wales site.

Apprenticeships in Scotland

For information about what an apprenticeship is and what claimants can gain by participating in them, see the Introduction

Eligibility

Claimants must be:

- aged 16 or over
- living in Scotland
- have the right to live in the UK
- not in full-time education

Apprentices will:

- be an employee earning a wage and entitled to holiday pay (see [Become an Apprentice: pay and conditions on GOV.UK](#))
- work alongside experienced staff
- gain job-specific skills
- get time for training and study related to the role

Apprentices are entitled to the apprentice minimum wage if aged under 19 or aged 19 or over and in the first year of the apprenticeship. In all other cases, claimants are entitled to the minimum rate for their age.

An apprenticeship is a job and earnings for Universal Credit claimants are treated in the same way as any other job.

Levels of apprenticeship

Modern apprenticeships

Modern apprentices learn on the job gaining skills, experience and qualifications to kick-start their career.

Participants learn real-life industry skills while working towards an industry recognised qualification.

Suitable candidates should be signposted to [Find and apply for a vacancy](#) on Apprenticeships Scotland.

For further information, see [Apprenticeships in Scotland](#).

Graduate Apprenticeships

Participants gain full-time industry experience and a wage while working towards a degree. Time is split between studying at university while working.

Most Graduate Apprenticeships have entry requirements that are similar to an undergraduate degree but will also take into consideration alternative paths of learning. Previous completion of a Foundation Apprenticeship is desirable.

All graduate apprentices must apply directly to Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) for funding. For more information about how to apply, see the [SAAS website](#).

Graduate Apprenticeships have flexible entry and exit points in the programme so participants can begin and leave the course at the right point, ensuring any previous learning will not be repeated.

Suitable candidates should be signposted to [Find and apply for a vacancy](#) on Apprenticeships Scotland.

For further information, see [Become an apprentice on Apprenticeships in Scotland](#)

DWP Social Mobility Apprenticeships

Social Mobility apprenticeships are offered to claimants aged 16 years or over, who are in receipt of benefits and have significant barriers to work and/or complex needs such as:

- long term unemployment
- little work experience
- unlikely to get through a standard recruitment process
- low or limited qualifications,
- those who are care leavers, carers, prison leavers, veterans or veteran spouses.

Claimants are referred to a DWP Social Mobility Apprenticeship by a Work Coach and participants are offered an 18 month contract with DWP at AO or EO grade.

They will receive the same salary and terms and conditions as anyone else of that grade.

When Social Mobility Apprenticeships are available in your District, information will be available on the local District Provision Tool (DPT) or Manage Jobs and Opportunities.