

# SKILLS

## A quick guide to apprenticeships for business

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## What is an Apprenticeship?

- A genuine job with an integral skills development programme with independent competency assessment
- There are apprenticeships for accountancy through to zoo keeping
- A mix of learning in the workplace developing new skills in a real work environment and formal training (minimum 20%) by a training provider, further education college or university, either on site or away from the working environment, during normal working hours
- Can be used for new recruits and up-skilling or re-skilling people in the workforce
- You need to pay the apprentice a salary that does not go below the [minimum wage](#)
- There are a range of levels for apprenticeships:

Level	Type	Equivalent to
2	<b>Intermediate</b>	5 GCSE passes
3	<b>Advanced</b>	2 A-level passes
4, 5, 6 & 7	<b>Higher</b>	Foundation degree and above
6 & 7	<b>Degree</b>	Bachelor's or master's degree

Have a look at what is available by sector [here](#).

## Benefits to business

- 86% of employers said apprenticeships developed skills relevant to their organisation
- 78% reported improved productivity
- 74% said apprenticeships helped them improve the quality of their product or service
- Other benefits [here](#)

## Hiring an apprentice

The road to a quality apprenticeship is mapped out [here](#).

There are several steps to taking on an apprentice:

1. Choose an apprenticeship standard at a suitable level  
[www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employer/find-apprenticeship-training](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employer/find-apprenticeship-training)
2. Check what funding is available [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employer/funding-an-apprenticeship](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employer/funding-an-apprenticeship)
3. Create an apprenticeship service account  
<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/create-apprenticeship-service-account>
4. Find an organisation that offers training for the apprenticeship standard you've chosen  
[www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employer/choose-training-provider](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employer/choose-training-provider)
5. Select an end-point assessment organisation <https://find-epao.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk>
6. Advertise your apprenticeship – Create an advert at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/creating-an-apprenticeship-advert> and/or work with your training organisation
7. Select your apprentice and make an apprenticeship agreement and commitment statement with them.

Free advice and support [here](#).

## Support for non-levy-paying employers (pay bill less than £3m a year)

You will get funding from the government to pay towards training and assessing apprentices. The amount of funding you get depends on the number of employees you have and the apprentice you're hiring. More information is [here](#).

- **If you are an employer with fewer than 50 employees**, the government will fund 100% of apprenticeship training costs up to the funding band maximum if, on the first day of the apprenticeship, the apprentice is:
  - between 16 and 18 years old
  - between 19 and 24 years old and has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or has been in the care of their local authority
- **If you have at least 50 employees or your apprentice does not meet the criteria above**, you'll share apprenticeship costs with the government. This means:
  - you will pay 5% towards the cost of training and assessing your apprentice
  - the government will pay the remaining 95%, up to the funding band maximum

If your apprentice's training and assessment costs more than the funding band maximum, you will have to pay the difference.

You will need to reserve funds to support the costs of training and assessing the apprentice(s). To do this you must create an [apprenticeship account](#).

## Support for levy-paying employers (pay bill over £3m a year)

If a business/organisation has a pay bill over £3m a year (includes wages, bonuses, commissions and pension contributions), they must pay the [apprenticeship levy](#) @0.5% of pay bill with a £15,000 allowance and use the [apprenticeship service](#). More information is [here](#).

You will receive funds through the apprenticeship service to spend on apprenticeship training and assessing your apprentices. The government will apply a 10% top up to the funds you have in your account.

If you don't have enough funds, you just pay 5% of the outstanding balance and the government will pay the rest. This is up to the funding band maximum allocated to each specific apprenticeship. Guidance on how to pay and report the apprenticeship levy to HMRC through the PAYE process can be found [here](#).

When you're ready to get started, you'll need to sign in or [create an account](#) on the apprenticeship service.

Employers who pay the apprenticeship levy are able to fund apprenticeships in another organisation through a [transfer](#) of up to 25% of their annual funds. Guidance can be found [here](#).

Surplus funds will expire 24 months after they appear in the apprenticeship service account.

## Incentive payments for hiring a new apprentice

Employers can also receive an additional payment of £1,000 if the apprentice starts the apprenticeship aged 16 to 18 or 19 to 24 years old and has an education, health and care plan provided by their local authority or has been in the care of their local authority.

More information at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/incentive-payments-for-hiring-a-new-apprentice>.

## Hire an apprentice who has been made redundant

You can also use a government service to [help you hire apprentices who have been made redundant](#).

Many of these apprentices may already have the skills and knowledge you need. Hiring a new apprentice in this way could mean you have a work-ready apprentice who can quickly add value to your business, shortening the time you'll see a return on your investment.

## Other support and information

The apprenticeship service is made up of the following:

- Main HM Government site - [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk)
- Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education - [www.instituteforapprenticeships.org](http://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org)
- Office for Students, Degree apprenticeships guide for employers - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/skills-and-employment/degree-apprenticeships/recruiting-and-employing-a-degree-apprentice/>

You can register your interest in apprenticeships [here](#)

## Further and Higher Education apprenticeship support

### South East Midlands Further Education Colleges

- Barnfield College - <https://www.barnfield.ac.uk/employers/>
- Bedford College - <https://bedfordcollegigroup.ac.uk/study/employers/>
- Central Bedfordshire College - <https://www.centralbeds.ac.uk/about-you/employers.html>
- Milton Keynes College - <https://mkcollege.ac.uk/employers/hire-an-apprentice/>
- Moulton College - <https://www.moulton.ac.uk/employers>
- Northampton College - <https://www.northamptoncollege.ac.uk/employers>
- Tresham College - <https://bedfordcollegigroup.ac.uk/study/employers/>

### South East Midlands Universities

- Cranfield University - <https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/about/masterships/employers-introduction>
- MK:U - <https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/mku/mku-apprenticeships>
- The Open University - <https://www.open.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/employers>
- University of Bedfordshire - <https://www.beds.ac.uk/apprenticeships/>
- University of Northampton - <https://apprenticeships.northampton.ac.uk/>

## SEMLEP Contact

[SEMLEP's Growth Hub business support](#)

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