

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

Higher and degree apprenticeships are a real alternative to higher education and major companies such as Rolls Royce, BT and PWC are running programmes at these levels. For many, this is an ideal way to avoid student debt, as the education costs will be taken care of. Higher apprenticeships equate to Foundation degree-level and above, up to the equivalent of a degree or master's level. Degree level apprenticeships are also available, where your young person will be studying an actual degree or master's.

The apprenticeship route, although a valid and successful pathway in years gone by, has taken a while to become established as an alternative to becoming a full-time student. It is now gaining in popularity as people realise how it can boost career chances, as well as being a cost-effective way of obtaining degree-level qualifications.

What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are work-based learning programmes offering skills and qualifications whilst in employment. They are available in a wide range of careers such as health and social care, business administration, ICT, customer service, engineering, hospitality, law, travel and construction, as well as in many other sectors. Apprenticeships are placed in full-time employment with an appropriate wage, e.g. engineering degree apprenticeships can start on £19,000 pa. Many apprentices progress to take higher or professional qualifications and if they wish, go on to degree-level study.

What qualifications do you need to take a degree or higher apprenticeship?

A degree or a level 4, 5, 6 or 7 higher apprenticeship requires A-levels or equivalent and is one obvious route after sixth form. (N.B. There are apprenticeships available from levels 1-3, demanding lower-level qualifications.)

What form does the study take?

Degree and higher apprenticeships involve a combination of learning on the job, alongside experienced colleagues, with off-the-job training at a college or university, or perhaps a company training centre.

What qualifications could be available?

If your young person is offered a higher apprenticeship they would be working towards a nationally recognised qualification, such as a knowledge-based qualification which could be a foundation degree, level 4 HNC (Higher National Certificate), level 5 HND (Higher National Diploma), a level 6 Diploma (which is equivalent to a degree).

In the case of a degree apprenticeship, this will directly lead to your young person working towards gaining a degree or master's. Apprentices might also be able to work towards professional qualifications specific to an industry, for example, engineers can take the first steps towards gaining chartered status.

Examples of higher and degree apprenticeships

Here are some links to organisations who offer higher and degree apprenticeships.

Accountancy:

<https://www.cipfa.org/qualifications/apprenticeships>

<https://www.bdoearlyincareer.co.uk/apprenticeship/>

Engineering and Business

<https://careers.rolls-royce.com/united-kingdom/students-and-graduates/apprenticeships-and-school-leavers/>

NHS: Health Services and admin

<https://www.stepintothenhs.nhs.uk/apprenticeships>

IT:

<https://www.capgemini.com/gb-en/careers/your-career-path/apprenticeships/>

Legal services:

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/en/career-advice/becoming-a-solicitor/qualifying-without-a-degree/apprenticeships>

You can search for higher and degree apprenticeships and apply online on the National Apprenticeship Service website:

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

For the up-to-date listings for which companies are offering higher and degree apprenticeships, you can look here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships>

Note, the information above is for England. If you want to look into apprenticeships in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships>

<https://www.apprenticeships.scot>

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/apprenticeships>

© Lisa Stone, August 2021