

**University of
Northampton**

UoN



**Higher & Degree
Apprenticeships**

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

WELCOME TO YOUR GUIDE TO HIGHER & DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Welcome to the University of Northampton where we are dedicated to supporting aspiration, creating opportunities and delivering impact.

The University of Northampton apprenticeships embrace the growing development for vocational higher education in England by offering higher and degree apprenticeships specifically designed by industry to respond to high level skills gaps.

Inside you will find guidance on career options, application advice, employers we work with and more.

Read *honest* reviews from past apprentices

Compare apprenticeships and university education

Understand apprenticeship levels

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A NOTE TO PARENTS AND CARERS

Apprenticeships are gaining popularity, offering a diverse array of courses. From health to engineering, the range of available programmes has grown significantly in recent years.

This guide should answer most of your questions, but here are some other key points you may want to know...

Benefits of an Apprenticeship:

- **Earn While You Learn:**

Apprentices receive a salary and are entitled to paid annual leave

- **No Student Debt:**

Training costs are covered by the employer and the government, so apprentices can gain qualifications without incurring student debt

- **Career Progression:**

Apprenticeships provide a solid foundation for career advancement, with opportunities for further studies and promotions

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a paid job that includes formal training. Apprentices work for an employer while also studying to gain industry-recognised qualifications.

How can you help?

You can help by researching apprenticeship options, understanding the application process, and discussing career goals.

Is an apprenticeship a real job?

Apprentices have the same employment rights as other employees, including a minimum wage, holiday allowance, and sick pay. They also have protected time for studying, known as "off-the-job training".

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

We are one of the youngest universities in the UK but we are already leading the way in adding value to society, which we call social impact. We have won multiple awards for our work in this area, among others, but what matters the most to us is ensuring that our students and graduates have the opportunity to make their mark on the world too.

We want to break the mould of what Higher Education can be. This has led us to build a whole new University from the ground up that is designed to reflect the way that you actually learn rather than the way you are expected to learn.

We want to ensure that your experience studying with us enables you to transform your life and those of others too, no matter how great or small this may be.



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At the University of Northampton, we are dedicated to fostering a vibrant, ethical, and sustainable environment for work, study, and living, where equality, diversity, and inclusion are deeply valued.

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team, part of the Equality and Access Team within the Vice Chancellor's Office, drives our commitment to these principles.

We go beyond meeting statutory requirements, aiming to bring about meaningful cultural change. The EDI team ensures that fairness is at the core of everything we do, encompassing the protected characteristics:

Age

Gender
Reassignment

Ethnicity

Disability

Pregnancy
and Maternity

Sex
(Gender)

Religion
and Belief

Sexual
Orientation

Marriage

If you would like to know more how the University of Northampton is prioritising equality, diversity and inclusion, scan the QR code:



A SPOTLIGHT ON DISABILITY

At the University of Northampton, we work with our students and apprentices with disabilities to help achieve their full potential and to promote equal opportunities.

As an apprentice, even though you will not be on campus five days a week, you are still our responsibility. We aim to provide a safe and happy workplace where you can thrive and not be overlooked because of your differences.

Having a disability should never stop you from pursuing your dream career.

Our **Additional Student Support and Inclusion Services Team (ASSIST)** is here for you. ASSIST aims to enable students to access all aspects of university life and take control of their learning. This is underpinned by a commitment to accessibility and respect for confidentiality.

ASSIST provides support for apprentices, examples include:

- physical impairments
- sensory impairments
- mental health difficulties
- medical conditions, for example epilepsy
- Autistic spectrum disorders
- specific learning difficulties, for example dyslexia



BUSTING APPRENTICESHIP MYTHS

There are many misconceptions about apprenticeships, so let's set the record straight.

Apprenticeships are only for new employees

Apprenticeships can be for new employees, but they are also a fantastic way for existing employees to upskill, gain new qualifications, and advance their careers within their current workplace.

Apprenticeships are for only trade industries


Apprenticeships are not limited to trade industries. They are available in diverse fields such as technology, healthcare, digital marketing, finance, and even creative arts. This variety allows individuals to gain practical experience and qualifications in a wide range of professions.

Apprentices are poorly paid

While the national minimum wage for apprentices is £7.55 per hour (as of April 2025), apprentices in the East Midlands region typically earn more competitive salaries. Our current higher and degree apprentices at the University of Northampton earn average starting salaries between £18,000 and £26,000, varying by sector and employer.

Apprentices gain hands-on experience, learn practical skills, and contribute to real projects under the guidance of experienced professionals. This valuable training prepares them for successful careers in their chosen fields.

Apprentices just make the tea and coffee



**Apprenticeships
are for people
who aren't
'academically
inclined'**

Apprenticeships are for everyone. They offer a practical, hands-on approach to learning that complements academic skills and can lead to advanced qualifications, including degrees.



**Apprenticeships are
only for 16 to 18
year-olds**

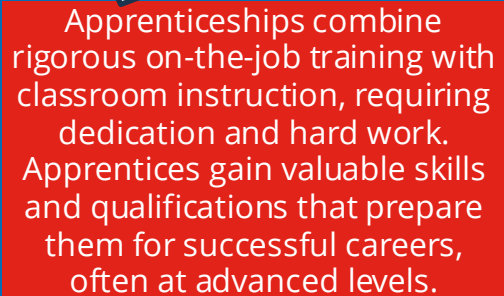
Apprenticeships are not just for 16 to 18 year-olds. People of all ages can benefit from apprenticeships, whether they are starting their careers, changing professions, or upskilling within their current jobs.

There is no upper age limit, making apprenticeships a versatile option for lifelong learning.

A University of Northampton Degree apprenticeship will enable you to study for a higher level qualification and gain you professional recognition, but they are only open to age groups over 18.



**An apprenticeship
is the easy way out
of education**



Apprenticeships combine rigorous on-the-job training with classroom instruction, requiring dedication and hard work. Apprentices gain valuable skills and qualifications that prepare them for successful careers, often at advanced levels.



**An apprenticeship
doesn't lead to a
full-time job**

Apprenticeships often lead to full-time employment. A significant percentage of apprentices secure permanent positions after completing their course.

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN APPRENTICESHIPS...

After finishing school or college, most students choose to go to university full-time or do an apprenticeship. It can be a challenge to make this decision, so let's go through the key differences.

You will get real-life experience working alongside your qualification

You will need to balance working and studying at the same time

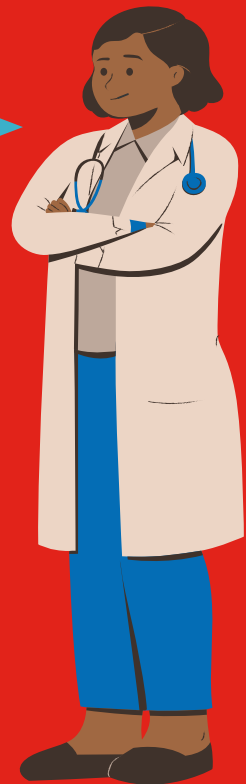
You will get paid a salary just like a normal employee

You will get a graduation ceremony when you finish

It is fully paid for, so there is no cost to you

You won't qualify for any student loans

You will choose the employer/location



AND UNIVERSITY

It's important for you to choose the option that is right for YOU.

You could have the typical university experience - gain independence and have fun

You pay for it yourself (through Student Loans)

Student accommodation is available to

You choose your subject and topics

You will receive on campus learning

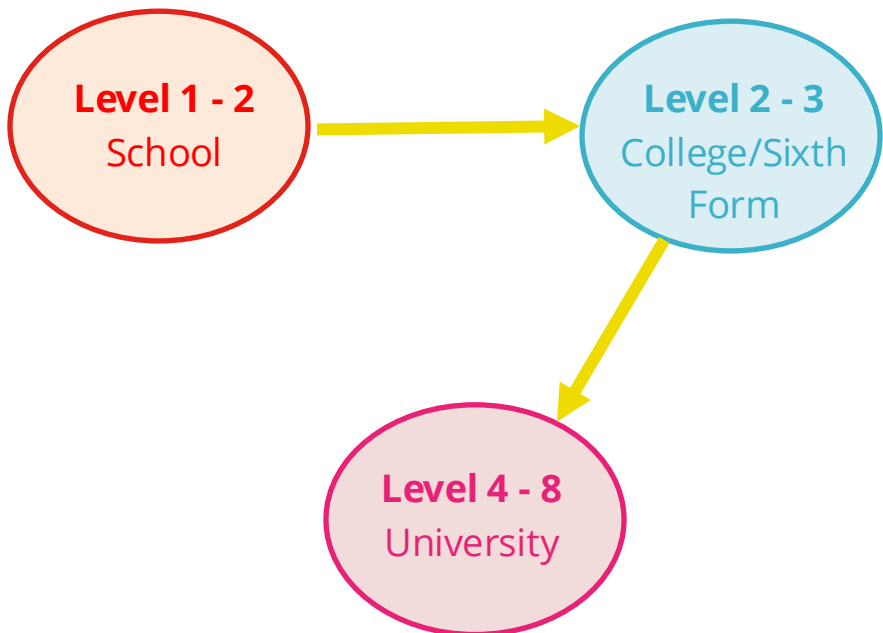
You choose where you go



APPRENTICESHIP LEVELS EXPLAINED

Apprenticeships in the UK are structured into different levels, each catering to varying degrees of experience and education. The duration of the course is typically longer for apprenticeships that offer a higher qualification.

The different levels provide a structured pathway for career development, allowing you to earn while you learn and gain valuable work experience.



Here is a breakdown
of the different paths
you could take.

Level 8 – Doctorate

Level 7 – Master's Degree / Higher & Degree
Apprenticeships

Level 6 – Undergraduate Degree / Higher & Degree
Apprenticeships

Level 5 – Undergraduate Degree / Foundation
Degree / Higher Diploma / Higher Apprenticeships

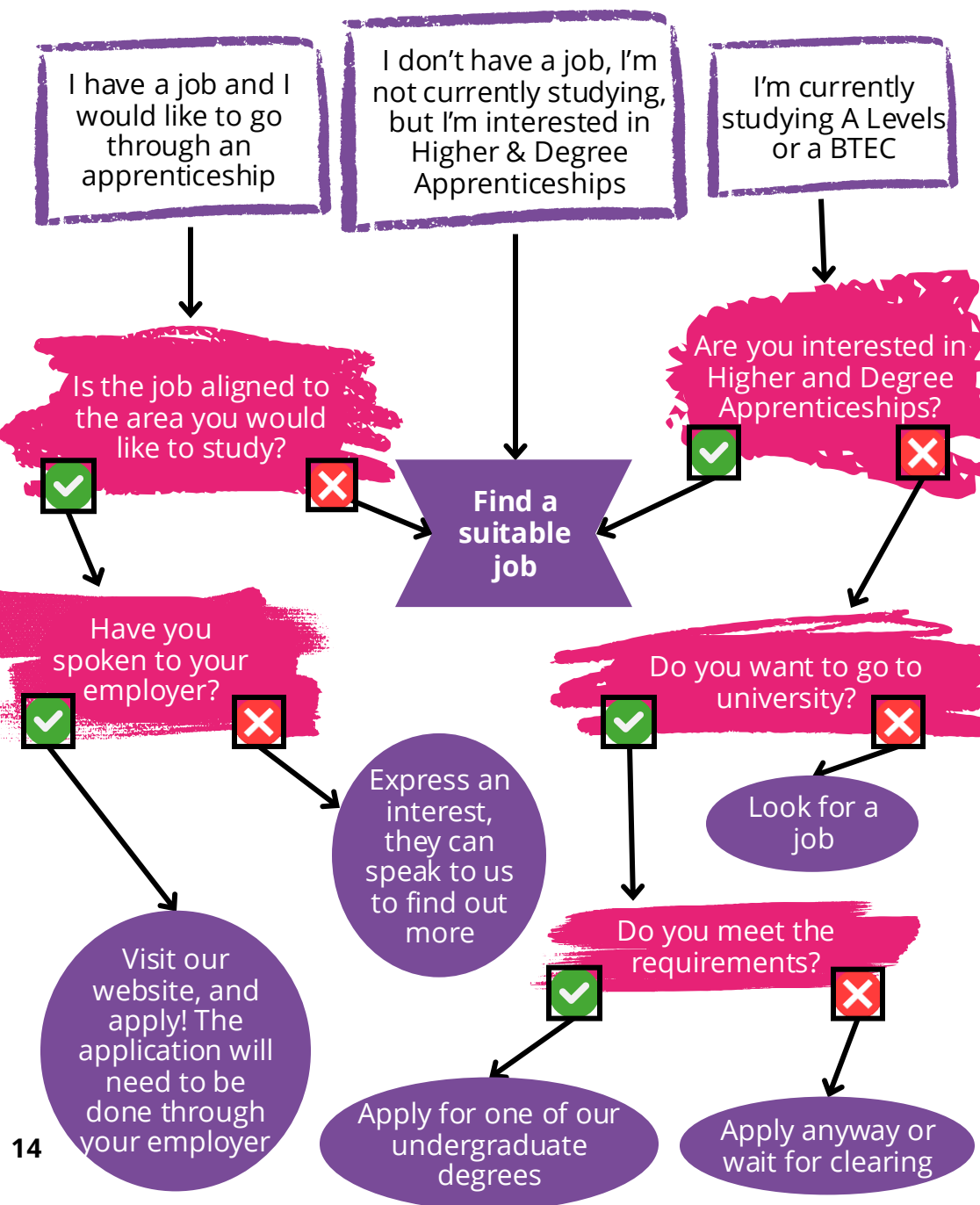
Level 4 – Undergraduate Degree / Foundation
Degree / Higher National Certificate / Higher
Apprenticeships

Level 3 – A Level / A2 / AS / BTEC Nationals /
Advanced Apprenticeships

Level 2 – GCSE / BTEC Firsts / Intermediate
Apprenticeships

Level 1 – GCSE / BTEC Firsts / Intermediate
Apprenticeships

WHICH PATH WILL YOU TAKE?



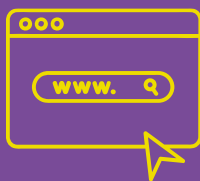
FINDING A SUITABLE JOB

In order to be able to do an apprenticeship, you must have a job role relevant to the topic you wish to study. There are different ways to find a job that is suitable for the course you would like to do.

We understand that it can be a daunting process but if you are willing to put in the hard work then the results will follow. Here are some tips to guide you.



Approach employers directly with a CV, express your interest in working for them as an apprentice



Visit the site: [gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship) to see what is available



Look at online job sites by typing in apprenticeship e.g. Indeed or LinkedIn

What types of companies offer these apprenticeships?

A wide range of organisations offer **higher and degree apprenticeships**, including:

- Large multinational corporations (e.g. Rolls-Royce, BAE Systems)
- Public sector organisations (NHS, Civil Service)
- Professional services firms (PwC, Deloitte)
- Engineering companies
- Financial institutions
- Technology companies

Many smaller and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) also offer apprenticeships, so it's always worth asking even if it's not advertised.

APPRENTICESHIP

APPLICATION JOURNEY

Now you know more about apprenticeships, all there is left to do is apply to the employer. Each apprenticeship is different and may require different information but here are the main steps to take.

Application Form

Submit an application to the employer, not the university.

CV

Match your skills with the job description in your CV and apply them to real examples.

Assessments

These tests are designed to measure your suitability for the job.

Cover Letter

Write a cover letter to back up the reasons why you're the right person for the job.

Interview

You will be invited for a face-to-face or online interview - don't forget to dress to impress!

Assessment Day

This may be a day full of tasks or activities, interviews, group projects, presentations and more.

Applications often open nearly a year before the start date, similar to graduate schemes.

At the University of Northampton we hold regular apprenticeship information sessions and offer one-to-one guidance through our dedicated apprenticeships team.

We recommend registering your interest through our website to receive updates about new opportunities.



I got the job!

Congratulations! Don't think it gets easier from here. Continue researching the company, plan your route and prepare yourself.

I didn't get the job - what now?

Rejection can be hard, but do not give up. Keep applying and look at ways to improve your CV.

I've not heard back - what does this mean?

Don't take it personally but also be patient. If you are really wanting to find out and you've not heard back for a while, make contact and you may get an answer.

WHAT OUR APPRENTICES HAVE SAID

We know apprenticeships are great, but you don't have to take our word for it. Take a look at what just some of our apprentices have said about their experience.

"I have a young family, so I felt a full-time programme would have been too challenging to manage. The learning style of a degree apprenticeship suited me, as I prefer the condensed, modular learning structure."

**Richard McNab -
Chartered Manager
Degree Apprenticeship**

"It has its challenging moments and you may feel as though balancing work, studies and a social life is difficult but it will be worth it and you are well supported at the University."

**Dawn Kennedy -
Occupational Therapy
Apprenticeship**

"As an apprentice, you get so much more exposure to different things so my advice for anyone considering taking this course is to go for it because it opens up so many doors."

**Christina Guevara -
Advanced Clinical
Practitioner Apprenticeship**

"I've had far more opportunities to make contacts and network within my industry than with a normal degree, thus furthering my knowledge and increasing opportunities available to me."

**Matthew Beecroft -
Non-Destructive
Testing Engineer
Apprenticeship**

EMPLOYERS WE HAVE WORKED WITH

We work with a diverse range of employers. We have worked with over 160 employers and that number continues to grow by the year alongside our apprenticeship courses. Below are just a few examples you may have heard of...

- Avara Foods
- Ayrshire Metals Limited
- Babcock Integrated Technology Ltd
- Bedford Borough Council
- Cable Management Warehouse Ltd
- Cadent Gas Limited
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Digital Manufacturing Centre Ltd
- Essentra Components Limited
- GKN Aerospace Services Limited
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Machinery World Ltd
- Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Ltd
- Midland Aerospace Limited
- Milton Keynes Council
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- NHS
- North Northamptonshire County Council
- Northamptonshire Children's Trust
- Peterborough City Council
- PJ Care Ltd
- Rolls Royce
- Shaw Trust
- West Northamptonshire Council

"The experience has been hugely positive. The level of education delivered is excellent and interacting with staff at the university has been easy to do, they help me as an employer navigate the apprenticeship pathway."

**Martin O'Dowd, Head of
Physical Healthcare, St
Andrews Healthcare**

"The victims who encounter a Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) graduate will be more likely to have a better experience with an officer who has a wider knowledge in policing."

**Damian Hiscocks, Force
Training Manager,
Northamptonshire Police**



**Scan the QR code to see the current
apprenticeship courses we offer.**



Contact Us

If you have any questions or would like to find out more about any of our apprenticeships, please visit our website:

apprenticeships.northampton.ac.uk

or email us on: **apprenticeships@northampton.ac.uk**