



# Teacher Guide

How to help your students to apply for apprenticeships  
Version 1: March 2020

# How to help your students to... Apply for apprenticeships

## Introduction

This guide has been designed for use by form tutors, teachers and careers professionals who are supporting students in years 12 and 13, to research and apply for apprenticeships. You do not need to have any prior knowledge about apprenticeships.

The guide outlines the various ways in which you can support your students to apply for apprenticeships and support them through the entire recruitment process from initial research through to interview stage and beyond.

## Using this resource

This guide should be used in conjunction with the corresponding interactive 'Student Apprenticeship Guide', which offers lots of practical information and links to a wide variety of online resources which are available to help students at each stage.

Both resources can be downloaded from Amazing Apprenticeships:  
[www.amazingapprenticeships.com/resource/student-apprenticeship-guide](http://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/resource/student-apprenticeship-guide)



## Using the interactive Student Apprenticeship Guide

The interactive Student Apprenticeship Guide has been designed to be used digitally and does not need to be printed. We would recommend that you circulate the guide to your students electronically and encourage them to save it to a secure/personal profile area.



Students can then work through the different pages of the guide, saving their notes and accessing digital content to help them to expand their awareness of apprenticeships.

In each section, we have encouraged students to reflect on their personal situation and to discuss key aspects of their apprenticeship research with their teachers/parents/other.

## Aligning apprenticeships alongside UCAS

Many students will be applying through the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) for full-time university placements at the same time as starting on their apprenticeship search. Many of the techniques that they use and information that they collate for UCAS will be equally useful for their apprenticeship applications. The timelines for UCAS are very defined, as is the structure for applying to Universities, whereas with apprenticeships this is not the case, with vacancies arising throughout the year and companies following different application procedures.

However, more and more of the large companies are aligning their application window to that of UCAS and we are starting to see a more standardised recruitment process, which we have explored in more detail later in this guide.

## Tell us what you think

We hope that you find these resources useful and that they demystify the apprenticeship application process both for you and your students.

Should you have any questions or wish to provide any feedback please contact:  
[hello@amazingapprenticeships.com](mailto:hello@amazingapprenticeships.com) or telephone 01462 341191.

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# How to help your students to... Understand apprenticeships

It is important that all of your students understand what apprenticeships are and the benefits that they bring, even if they feel that they have already decided on their next steps after school.

The number of people starting an apprenticeship in England is increasing, both for school leavers and those who are already in employment. Many employers state that they are now using different approaches and techniques to attract talent to their organisation and apprenticeships feature strongly as part of this strategy. Some employers are starting to replace graduate intakes with apprenticeship programmes so that they can maximise apprenticeship funding opportunities.

The structure, design and methods of learning with apprenticeships are very different to full-time university and so it is important that your students grasp a basic understanding of the range of job roles available, the different levels of apprenticeships and when and how employers are likely to advertise their vacancies.

## Top tip

Researching and applying for apprenticeships cannot be left until after the UCAS process has been completed in January as many jobs will be advertised in the autumn term, for apprentices to start the following September.

## Refer to the following sections of the Student Guide to Apprenticeships

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
✓	✓	✓									

Check the key points of understanding in the corresponding Student Apprenticeship Guide as follows:

### Section 1: What is an apprenticeship?

- Apprenticeship opportunities are advertised all year round, although large companies tend to advertise October-January with a start date the following September. This will mean that students will need to look at apprenticeships alongside completing university applications.
- Apprenticeships are a job with both on-the-job and off-the-job learning and qualifications attached to them, meaning apprentices will benefit from a salary alongside gaining industry recognised qualifications and workplace experience.
- 20% of the apprentice's paid time must be spent 'off-the-job' undertaking further learning and skills development.
- Apprenticeships can be accessed at different levels ranging from intermediate to degree (including master's level). Although it might be tempting to only focus on degree level vacancies, students should also consider Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships even if they have A Levels for some jobs, they will not be able to access the higher level programmes without completing these levels first.
- Entry requirements will vary between different apprenticeship employers, and so it is important that students become confident in how to research the different job adverts and how to locate where the employer will state that certain skills or qualifications are essential or desirable.

# How to help your students to... Understand apprenticeships

## Section 2: Higher and degree apprenticeships

- Degree apprenticeships offer a route to a degree whereby the company and/or the government will pay for the tuition fees. Apprentices can therefore achieve a degree without incurring any debt, at the same time as earning a salary and gaining work experience.
- The degree completed within a degree apprenticeship is the same as one they would study full-time at university.

## Section 3: What are the benefits of an apprenticeship?

- There are many benefits to apprenticeships, which will be personal to the individual student.
- Being able to work and learn at the same time whilst applying the new knowledge and skills immediately in the workplace is extremely appealing to many young people.
- Apprenticeships offer a variety of different delivery models. Some learning may be classroom based, but the apprentice will also spend 80% of their time learning in the workplace from the colleagues around them.
- Legally, an employer must pay an apprentice the National Minimum Wage for apprentices, which will rise to £4.15 in April 2020. This is lower than the normal National Minimum Wage, but it recognises that some people will be going into their first job with no experience at all. The majority of employers will pay significantly more than the National Minimum Wage.

### How does this compare with applying for full-time university?

- In the same way that students will approach their research of Higher Education programmes, those considering apprenticeships will need to spend time researching their options and the different models of learning available with each employer.
- Students will also need to explore a range of different locations and employment settings, considering if they want to relocate or if they want to stay and work closer to home.
- Students will need to develop a better understanding of deadlines with apprenticeships as this is very different to applying to university where there is one main deadline. With apprenticeships the employer will set a deadline to receive applications, but this should not be the target. Some employers will close early if they receive a large response. Students will need to focus on submitting their application as soon as they can.
- Another difference is that students may need to continue to research opportunities throughout the year, having already completed applications to other apprenticeships. This is unlike the UCAS process whereby all research has to be done at the beginning and the 'sending off' of a student's UCAS application is seen as the end point of the research.

# How to help your students to... Explore the range of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are now available from Intermediate level through to Degree level, including level 7 (master's). Students need to consider all levels and types of apprenticeships, as many companies require students to have a base knowledge and skill (for example, through an advanced apprenticeship) before they can progress to a higher or degree apprenticeship.

The range of apprenticeships is vast and may contain many different job roles that the students will not have heard of before. This aspect of the research is very important as students may choose to ignore job titles that they do not understand, with companies that they have never heard of before. However, by exploring the detail behind the job title, they will discover a fascinating world of opportunities.

Students also need to remain open minded when considering the size of the employer they want to apply to. Many students will be attracted to large well-known companies with strong brands, however there are thousands of opportunities with smaller companies that they may not have heard of.

## Top tip

Students should not only look at higher and degree apprenticeships. There are many fantastic opportunities where the employer will require them to complete an advanced apprenticeship before progressing to a higher level.

## Refer to the following sections of the Student Guide to Apprenticeships

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Check the key points of understanding in the corresponding Student Apprenticeship Guide as follows:

### Section 4: Which apprenticeships are available?

- Students will find it useful to start by exploring the apprenticeship job roles that align with their personal interests. This way they can rule-in (and rule-out) different job roles available.
- The range of employers offering apprenticeships is vast and some students may disregard certain employers or sectors because of their perception of what will be offered. It is a good idea to think beyond the 'brand' of the company to see all of the supporting functions of the business. For example, almost every business will have job roles that cover marketing, business development, HR, finance, law etc. For example, with the NHS students may believe that they only offer health related apprenticeships, whereas the reality is that students could be considering the finance, HR or procurement apprenticeships they offer too.
- Being an apprentice doesn't mean you have to stay living at home. It is possible to relocate as an apprentice. Many companies offer help and support to those relocating for apprenticeships, but this information may not be publicised as part of the apprenticeship job advert. The information could be on their website or they may need to contact the HR department to see if any support is offered to relocate.

# How to help your students to... Explore the range of apprenticeships

## Section 5: Is an apprenticeship right for me?

- An apprenticeship is an excellent way to get started in a career. If a student has a particular career in mind, they will benefit from researching the apprenticeships available and determining if it is possible to reach their career goal through an apprenticeship.
- Apprentices will still be able to have a social life, but it will be a different experience to the traditional university lifestyle. All apprentices are encouraged to meet other apprentices and will quickly build their own social network – however they will still be expected to be at work each day and so they may find that their socialising takes place mainly at the weekends.
- Apprentices are not narrowing down their choices by selecting a particular job role or industry to work in. They will quickly find that many of the skills that they develop are transferable to a multitude of different job roles and industries.

## How does this compare with applying for full-time university?

- Students need to be encouraged to take a wide approach to searching for apprenticeships to begin with and then hone down on their choices. This is a similar approach to the UCAS process of considering a course type, then area to study etc.
- Encouraging students to undertake a wide search regarding apprenticeships that are available is similar to encouraging those applying to university to look beyond the Russell Group of Universities and also to consider the newer Universities which tend to offer more niche courses. The same research techniques apply - encourage students to think about employers and apprenticeship programmes that they haven't heard of as they might discover something brilliant.
- Encouraging students to consider intermediate and advanced apprenticeships rather than limiting themselves to higher and degree apprenticeships can be likened to students applying for a Foundation Degree first, to gain core skills required to study a degree. A good example would be students applying to study Art at University are often required to take a foundation degree first, regardless of how talented they are.

# How to help your students to... Tailor their apprenticeship search to their interests

Some students may already have a clear area of interest for a future apprenticeship, which they can then use to research the opportunities open to them. Other students, however, may know that they wish to apply for an apprenticeship but do not know which sector/industry to look at.

Getting started can sometimes feel like a huge task and many students will say that they don't know where to begin. Apprenticeships are real jobs and therefore, the vacancies are not always advertised in one place – but instead across a number of different platforms. This is very different to applying to full-time university and students may feel anxious that they are missing out on opportunities or that researching feels too complex.

The key activity here is to use the internet to support them to explore the opportunities and to realise that technology can help them to stay on top of where the vacancies are listed.

## Top tip

Using subject areas that students like and enjoy is a really good place to start. However, there are lots of apprenticeship opportunities in job roles and sectors that they may never have heard of before. Encourage them to keep their options open and to consider everything as a possibility.

## Refer to the following sections of the Student Guide to Apprenticeships

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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Check the key points of understanding in the corresponding Student Apprenticeship Guide as follows:

## Section 6: Choosing an apprenticeship

- Use the range of resources available on [www.amazingapprenticeships.com](http://www.amazingapprenticeships.com), including the posters available at <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/resource/subject-poster-bundle> to discuss the current subjects they are studying and to research some of the relevant corresponding careers.
- Utilise the independent careers provision through your school / college to help to discuss choices and options independently.
- High quality apprenticeships exist in small companies as well as the big brand names. Smaller companies tend to be less competitive to access, whereas the large employers may receive thousands of applications.
- It can be useful to research and consider the industries that are local to your school or college to see if they offer any apprenticeships that could be of interest. The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and National Careers Service both produce local and regional resources about the Labour Market.
- Many larger companies now offer Open Evenings to attract apprentices. Are any local organisations offering to speak to students and their parents?

# How to help your students to... Tailor their apprenticeship search to their interests

- Consider opportunities further away from your local area. Most students go to University away from home and many apprentices also leave home to move to new areas of the country to take up apprenticeship opportunities. Consider with the student how far away from home they would be prepared to move. Many companies offer support to those relocating.
- Discuss work experience that students have undertaken and/or Saturday jobs to help identify areas of interest.

## How does this compare with applying for full-time university?

- The concept of using favourite subjects as a starting point is similar to supporting those applying to university who are not sure of which course to apply for, as usually teachers will suggest looking at the subject(s) they like most at school.
- It is also the same process to consider where geographically they want to be. Students may want to use this point in their lives to leave home, but not be too far away. Many students might consider a 2-hour train journey to be the optimal geographical search area.
- The use of alumni, Careers Events and school careers interviews is the same irrespective of whether a student is looking for information to help them identify a suitable university course or an apprenticeship. Hearing from past students and being able to speak with employers in person is a valuable way to support all students.

# How to help your students to... Find apprenticeship vacancies

The government provides a vacancy service called Find an Apprenticeship. However, not all employers will use this system to advertise their opportunities. Your students will need to understand that they will need to look in lots of different places to find the apprenticeship opportunities, and that each opportunity will have a different deadline.

This needs to be stressed to your students so that they do not rely on one source only for finding an apprenticeship and they realise that they will need to utilise multiple search techniques. Unfortunately, there is no one place where all apprenticeship vacancies are advertised, nor is there one deadline that they must adhere to. This needs to be stressed to your students so that they do not rely on one source only for finding an apprenticeship and they realise that they will need to utilise multiple search techniques.

Additionally, their search is further complicated by the fact that they are applying for real jobs and therefore the adverts will be placed throughout the year as a vacancy/need is identified in that particular business.

## Top tip

Students should not focus on the advertising closing date for a vacancy as the target, as some employers may close their application window if they receive a high level of interest. Encourage students to be as ‘application ready’ as possible, meaning that when they see an apprenticeship vacancy that interests them, they should be ready to apply quickly, rather than procrastinating to the closing date.

## Refer to the following sections of the Student Guide to Apprenticeships

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Check the key points of understanding in the corresponding Student Apprenticeship Guide as follows:

### Section 7: Finding an apprenticeship

- The first step should be to ensure that students have registered on the Government website [Find an apprenticeship \[www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship\]\(http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship\)](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship) for alerts or emails when suitable jobs are advertised.
- Students also need to identify the companies that they are interested in working at and then register on each individual company’s website for job alerts.
- The government produces a ‘Higher and degree apprenticeship vacancy listing’, which is updated throughout the year, and can be downloaded from gov.uk:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships>
- Utilising personal networks through friends and family can be a really effective way to find apprenticeship vacancies.

# How to help your students to... Find apprenticeship vacancies

- There are a variety of careers fairs and events throughout the year. Some of these will be national, others will be local.
- University open days are a fantastic opportunity to research higher and degree apprenticeships as well as full-time degree options. The apprenticeship team at the university will be able to talk about the range of programmes that they offer and the employers that they are working with.
- Larger companies are beginning to align their apprenticeship vacancies more to the school terms, with adverts starting to appear in the autumn term with start dates the following September and they are employing on an annual basis.
- Smaller companies will be more ad-hoc with their adverts throughout the academic year based on the needs of their business.
- Refer students to Vacancy Snapshot on the Amazing Apprenticeships website: [www.amazingapprenticeships.com/vacancies](http://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/vacancies). This gives information about a whole variety of large employers and when they are likely to advertise Apprenticeship Vacancies.
- Other national recruitment websites will also list some details of apprenticeships which can be filtered by location and/or industry sector/company name.
- Disability Rights UK have written a guide 'Into Apprenticeships' and also offer a Student helpline.

## How does this compare with applying for full-time university?

- The search for apprenticeship vacancies is more complex than applying for university. There are different application systems, deadlines and entry requirements.
- Apprenticeships have different windows of opportunity and are available all year round, whereas applying to University has very clear deadlines of either October or January.
- University opportunities are all available in one place, the UCAS portal, and one application covers 5 choices, whereas apprenticeships are not advertised just on one portal and each opportunity needs a new application, making the process more time consuming.
- Unlike applying to university, the number of apprenticeship applications that an individual can submit is unlimited. It is recommended that they do not just apply for one or two vacancies, but that they keep their options and apply for anything that they feel they might be interested in.
- Students will potentially need support throughout the academic year in Yr 12 and Yr13 to help them be successful in securing an apprenticeship whereas supporting students with UCAS has clearly defined stages i.e. helping with the application, helping with interviews (if relevant), helping them select their Firm and Conditional choices.

# How to help your students to... Write an apprenticeship application

Each apprenticeship is different and the application and recruitment processes will vary between different companies. Some applications may require students to submit a CV with a covering letter, other applications will have their own application form with specific questions. However, these questions will often mirror parts of a CV and so it's still a very useful exercise to undertake.

There will be parts of the student's UCAS personal statement that will be very relevant to use (with a few tweaks) and once a student has prepared their first apprenticeship application, they should be able to use this as a starting point for other applications, although each application will need to be tailored to that particular opportunity.

The skill of researching the employer, identifying 'buzz words' within the job advert and then carefully and succinctly repeating these back to the employer within the application to show that they fit the criteria is an important skill that teachers will need to support students to develop.

It is also important that students realise apprenticeship applications should not be rushed and that if they really want to be successful, they are going to need to spend as much time and effort on their apprenticeship applications as they would do their university application.

## Top tip

Employers do value qualifications, but equally, they are looking for someone who is going to be the right fit for their company and who has made an effort to find out about their business and the industry. Demonstrating enthusiasm, a willingness to work hard to learn new skills and a commitment to the company through their application will help to impress the employer.

## Refer to the following sections of the Student Guide to Apprenticeships

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Check the key points of understanding in the corresponding Student Apprenticeship Guide as follows:

## Section 8: Applying for apprenticeships

- The application process for apprenticeships will vary between different employers, however taking time to prepare a CV and using the UCAS personal statement will be a good way to help to focus in on the most important activities and achievements.
- The skills of identifying 'buzz words' within the job advert and job description, then finding a way to include these back to the employer within the application is a good skill to develop.
- Developing a 'bank' of possible responses to different questions and saving these somewhere safe can be useful to save time, particularly if they want to submit an application quickly for an opportunity that is likely to be popular, or is closing soon.

# How to help your students to... Write an apprenticeship application

- Asking an independent person to ‘sense check’ the application can be a useful way to identify if any jargon has been used, or if any parts of the application do not read well or follow a logical order.
- Building up a list of ‘experiences’ is a useful activity to think back to any work experience, part-time work or volunteering activities that could demonstrate particular skills or interests to the employer.

## How does this compare with applying for full-time university?

- Writing a CV and covering letter does take a lot of attempts, like a UCAS personal statement, but once completed it can then be tailored for each apprenticeship position the student is applying for, so it is worth the time early on to get these core documents completed.
- There are many similarities between apprenticeship applications and UCAS personal statements. If the student has written their UCAS personal statement then it is likely that parts of this could be relevant to include within their apprenticeship applications (although they may need some tweaking)
- Students will usually make five university applications through UCAS. For apprenticeships, students need to be aiming to make at least five applications, this could be higher if there are jobs that they find that they are interested in. There is no limit to the number of apprenticeship applications that a student can make.
- Students making apprenticeship applications may be made conditional or unconditional offers, exactly the same as university applications.
- Students should be encouraged to apply for university, apprenticeships and any other programmes such as gap years, simultaneously.

# How to help your students to... Prepare for the apprenticeship recruitment process

As the growth of apprenticeship opportunities within businesses has developed, so too has the apprenticeship recruitment process. We now see businesses developing complex recruitment structures that will enable them to shortlist from thousands of applications through to their final recruits, utilising technology through online tests and video interviews as well as assessment centres.

Supporting your students to know what might be expected of them and the length of time this may take is crucial in keeping them prepared and motivated for the next stage of the recruitment process.

Most companies will provide detailed information about what to expect within an information pack which will be sent to candidates, or on their website. This should set out whether there will be a telephone or video interview, online tests (and which types of tests these include, ability and/or psychometric), assessment centres and anything else that they have decided to include.

## Top tip

As students are encouraged to explore their options and to potentially apply for both apprenticeships and full-time university simultaneously, they may find that they receive offers from employers as well as universities. It is important that they do not rush to decline anything until they are certain of all of their options.

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Check the key points of understanding in the corresponding Student Apprenticeship Guide as follows:

## Section 8: Applying for apprenticeships

- Many employers will use assessment centre days to bring a number of applicants together to participate in group activities so that they can observe how they interact with other participants and test out different skills and attributes. Ensuring that students have a good understanding of what to expect from an assessment day and developing a sense of awareness about how they present themselves is really important to making a good impression.
- A useful place to look is on Amazing Apprenticeships' [Vacancy Snapshot](#) as many employers have provided details of their recruitment cycle, including hints and tips for how to prepare
- Other places students could research for more information about a specific company's recruitment process could be on The Student Room, where students can connect through Chat Rooms with others who are experiencing or have experienced a similar process.
- Telephone interviews will often be used as a way to identify the applicant's level of interest in the opportunity that they have applied for. It is important that your students understand that this is still part of the apprenticeship recruitment process and so they will need to feel confident in answering the phone and thinking on-the-spot with good answers.

# How to help your students to... Prepare for the apprenticeship recruitment process

- If the student is asked to complete online tests, this could be a number of different types. Some companies will have programmes that test their English and maths, others will have aptitude/psychometric tests.
- Students will be able to find similar tests online and they should be encouraged to complete these first to practice beforehand, so they feel more comfortable and confident about taking the real test.
- Many companies use skype or other video-based methods for first round interviews where they can screen many students in a quick and cost-effective way.
- The ASK programme may be able to assist with running a mock Assessment Centre for students in your school. This is fully funded by the Department for Education and can be booked here:  
<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/request-support>
- Many companies use “competency-based interviews”, these test a number of specific skill (competency) areas by asking the student for examples of how they behaved in certain circumstances and these are used as predictors of future behaviour in the workplace.
- The job description can be used to identify the main competencies the company are looking for and many companies will look for Communication Skills, Team Skills, Problem Solving and then may ask for more specific competency sets depending on the job role such as Analytical Skills, Creativity, Planning etc.
- With all of these types of questions it is useful for students to implement the STAR approach to answers:
  - S = situation, describe the context for your example
  - T = explain the task and what needed to be achieved
  - A = describe the action they took
  - R = Conclude with the results they achieved, if possible, use quantifiable data.
- Advise students to develop a range of scenarios that they can use to answer competency-based questions.
- It is really helpful if students can practice delivering their answers to a person that they are not familiar with. This could be through a family friend or your school may have links within the community that may be able to help with this, e.g. often Rotary Clubs will support young people with interview practice or you

## How does this compare with applying for full-time university?

- The apprenticeship recruitment process, particularly for the more competitive programmes, is more like the graduate recruitment practices that we have seen in recent years. They are competing against other candidates and will need to be coached in how to perform successfully.
- Whilst many universities no longer interview students applying to their courses, those applying for competitive university courses and/or to the more elite universities can expect to be interviewed. The same recruitment methodology is used by Universities and others will include assessment centre approaches especially for subjects like Medicine in the shape of their Multi Mini Station assessment process.

# How to help your students to... Stay motivated

Students may need to go through the apprenticeship recruitment process with different companies a number of times before they succeed in securing their preferred role. They should always be encouraged to apply for a number of different apprenticeships at the same time, given the competitive nature of the job market.

This means that inevitably they will have to deal with disappointment and rejection when they don't always succeed and they will need to keep motivated to then go through the next recruitment round. This can be particularly difficult for some students who may never have faced rejection before, whereas others may take this in their stride.

Many students take rejection from a job very personally and it can be difficult to build up their resilience and then motivate them to go through this process again. It can often be the case that there was nothing "wrong" with their performance at selection and that there was just a better suited candidate who perhaps had more relevant experience. This is something that they cannot change and is beyond their control.

## Top tip

It can be really valuable and useful for those applying to apprenticeships to seek feedback on their application and/or interview if they are unsuccessful. Encourage students to speak to the employer or training provider to see if they can find out any specific examples of aspects that they could improve for future opportunities.

## Refer to the following sections of the Student Guide to Apprenticeships

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Check the key points of understanding in the corresponding Student Apprenticeship Guide as follows:

### Section 9: What happens if it doesn't work out?

- Apprenticeships are a competitive process and they will most likely not be successful in their applications for everything that they apply for.
- Help students to build up their resilience by considering and sharing their experiences of the apprenticeship recruitment process within the class so that others can be made aware of what they may experience.
- Students can ask for interview feedback, but this may not be detailed, particularly if employers do not have time to provide each interviewee with detailed feedback.
- A meeting with the School/College Careers Leader could help to identify whether the student could be looking at alternative careers/apprenticeships which may be more suited to them.

# How to help your students to... Stay motivated

## How does this compare with applying for full-time university?

- There are some similarities here for those students undergoing interviews for university courses, in that they will also face similar questions at each interview as the courses they are applying for will be closely related in terms of content, so reviewing performance after each interview should follow the same pattern.
- Probably the biggest difference though is that if students applying to university are not successful at the initial offer stage, they can then use UCAS Clearing to reapply to new Universities and Courses. The majority of students who want to go to university will be able to get a place to study, even if it is not at their first choice of establishment or their preferred course and therefore it can be easier to keep them motivated through the process. This is not the same for those applying for apprenticeships as there is no guarantee that students will be able to secure a place on an apprenticeship.
- Students should have a plan B when considering the apprenticeship route to cover for the eventuality that they may not be successful the first time. This could be a gap year, whereby this could be used to gain more relevant work experience to support future applications or in fact their plan B might be a University place.
- Students applying for apprenticeships may face more rejections than those applying to university and therefore they will need to build their resilience and have the support of teachers to encourage them to continue on their search.

# How to help your students to... Get ready for work

Having secured an apprenticeship, it is important to support your students in preparing for the world of work. Some of the suggestions below may seem second nature to you but for students, the apprenticeship will most likely be their first full-time job and the expectations of the workplace may be unfamiliar when compared to school life.

In the same way that students applying for university might be encouraged to think about budgeting and independent living, the same is true for those considering apprenticeships.

## Top tip

The transition from school to work is a big jump for many students. Speak to your school Careers Leader and local training providers to think about the support that could be put in place to help students to prepare mentally for this transition, before they have started exams or left your school/college.

## Refer to the following sections of the Student Guide to Apprenticeships

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									✓	✓	

Check the key points of understanding in the corresponding Student Apprenticeship Guide as follows:

### Section 10: Money, finance and funding

- There is a national minimum wage for apprentices, which is different to the main national minimum wage  
<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>
- Apprentices are entitled to the NUS Apprentice Extra card which gives them access to thousands of high street and online discounts.

### Section 11: Preparing for day 1 of your apprenticeship

- Those commencing an apprenticeship will need to practice their new journey to work at the time of day they will be travelling, experience the traffic conditions, bus/train/tube journey to find out how long it will take.
- Timekeeping is one of the most important elements of work life and it is really important to be consistently on time, in fact students should aim to always be there than their contracted time so that they are physically ready to start at the given time, rather than just arriving through the door.
- Dress right – check the dress code with the company before starting. Ensure that if they are buying new clothes, that they are comfy and that new shoes are broken to avoid sore feet on the first day (or that they take plasters with them).

# How to help your students to... Get ready for work

- Ensure that they are aware of any specific clothing regulations that may apply to their role and that they are prepared for these (hair, piercings etc)
- Paperwork – ensure the student knows what paperwork they may be required to take on the first day e.g. identification, NI number etc for the company to complete their records.
- Put their phone away on silent! Whilst students are used to having constant access to their phones, this will not be the case once at work. They need to be aware that companies will have their own policies on personal mobile usage during work time and the best practice until they are familiar with the rules is to put their phone away on silent as soon as they reach the premises and then only use it at designated break times.
- They will need to familiarise themselves with other company rules, especially the use of the internet at work for personal use.
- Have a good breakfast! Although they may be nervous, it is important to eat well before starting work, especially on their first day as they will not know when their breaks will be. Similarly, suggest that they take food to work to cover lunchtime, until they know what the arrangements are.
- Remind students that they are not expected to know everything when they start work and that it is important that they ask questions and clarify what is being asked off them rather than guessing! Employers will expect questions and this will be perceived as positive and not negative.
- Read all materials the company provide you with as part of the induction process and question anything that they are unsure of.
- Read the contract of employment – yes, it is a legal document and they will be required to sign it. They need to understand what they are signing up to and to ask questions about anything that they do not understand.

## How does this compare with applying for full-time university?

- There are some similarities with getting ready to attend university, especially in terms of ensuring all paperwork is completed on time. This relates to applying for Student Finance and securing University accommodation at one of the Halls of Residence for the first year.
- In the same way that those starting an apprenticeship will receive information about the company and important documents to read such as their contract of employment and company handbook, students going to University will also receive information about their induction and Freshers week, which is important for them to read before they attend.

# 10 ideas for teachers: Embedding the apprenticeship message

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Using relevant local examples to embed understanding can really help students to see the importance of being prepared and giving their apprenticeship applications the same level of attention as their university applications. Here are ten ideas from teachers about how to help your students further:

- 1** If you have any previous students who have followed the apprenticeship route into employment, use them as case studies. If you have contact details, ask them to visit the school and see if they would be willing to support other students, and/or come in and give a talk about their experiences. If they are not available in person, consider making a poster or creating a short film about their achievements.
- 2** If you do not have previous students who have successfully gained apprenticeships, consider using the [ASK programme](#) to provide apprentice ambassador speakers to share their apprenticeship journey.
- 3** Another source of support could be through companies that are local to your school who offer apprenticeship programmes, as many of these would be willing to come and talk to your students about the apprenticeships they offer and bring current apprentices with them. This could be ideal for an assembly slot or a PSHE/careers session.
- 4** Encourage students to build their personal network by engaging with people they meet, especially apprentices, and find out how they discovered their own apprenticeship scheme. Do they know of anyone in the industry/company they want to work in? If so, encourage them to ask about apprenticeships that may be available in the future and where these will be advertised.
- 5** Ask the student to research any local or national Careers Fairs that they could attend. If they cannot all attend, then consider allowing a small group of students to attend, gather information and then pass it back to their classmates.
- 6** Contact your local Chamber of Commerce or Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for any events that they are aware of that could be useful for your students to attend.
- 7** Social Media is a really valuable tool for finding Apprenticeships. Students can also create Linked In profiles for employers to find them when they are searching data bases for suitable staff.
- 8** Your school will most likely have an Enterprise Adviser linked to the school through the Careers and Enterprise Company. Consider asking your Careers Leader to see if the Enterprise Adviser might also be available to provide some expert ‘employer’ feedback about the applications.
- 9** Consider setting up a ‘top tips’ board, collating all of the advice and feedback received so that you can start to develop your own resources.
- 10** Utilise the resource ‘101 Amazing Apprenticeship Activities’ for a range of engaging activities to use with students, staff and parents:  
<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/resource/101-amazing-apprenticeship-activities-for-schools>

# CV checklist for teachers

Use this helpful checklist as a guide to ensure that your students have included the relevant information within their CV.

- Does the CV follow the expected structure? The most commonly used structure is for contact details, followed by a short personal statement, employment history, education/qualifications and then interests.
- The Personal Statement on a CV should be limited to one paragraph of 4-5 lines highlighting the student's strengths and what type of role they are looking for. Strengths such as hard working or enthusiastic should not be used as these are assumed qualities by most employers and therefore don't help the student stand out from other candidates.
- Employment History should include the dates worked and be listed with the most recent work first. This can include work experience and voluntary work and each description should be a brief few lines about the responsibilities of the position and any achievements made in that position.
- Education/Qualifications should start with the most recent School/College and include the predicted grades for the A Level/BTEC subjects which the students will be taking that summer.
- Interests – include interests to show a broader personality and especially those which may link to the industry/company you are applying to.
- Does the CV use bullet points and headings to make the different sections clear?
- Is the total length of the CV between 1-2 sides of A4?
- Does the CV include the details of two referees?
- Has the CV been spell checked?
- Has the CV been read by an independent person to spot any mistakes or jargon?

# Application and covering letter checklist for teachers

Use this helpful checklist as a guide to ensure that your students have prepared a good application for the apprenticeship vacancy.

- Does the application include evidence that they have researched the company they are applying to? Can they tell you what the role involves and what the core values of the business are? (these will be on the organisation's website but will involve the students needing to look beyond the front page).
- Do the answers provided address both elements to demonstrate that they understand the position as well as being a “good fit” with the culture of the company.
- Does the application meet the word count limit for each response? Students should be encouraged to use the full limit of this count whilst keeping their answers succinct and engaging.
- Check that the answers they prepare are specific, positive in their language and reflect the strengths of that student.
- If students are asked to apply with a CV and covering letter, then the covering letter needs to encourage the employer to open and read the CV.
- Some companies use Artificial Intelligence to pick out key words on internet applications to identify the ones they are interested in from the many hundreds of applications they may receive. It is therefore important to encourage students to use key words that may be required, e.g. if applying to Tesco, the application needs to mention Food as this is a core product.
- Covering letters/additional information should be concise and cover all the key points in the job advertisement, plus any other information that demonstrates their fit for this role e.g. relevant work experience.

# Fun ideas for encouraging students to share their experiences

We asked our teacher apprenticeship champions to share their ideas for how to have fun in the classroom, whilst covering valuable information about apprenticeships. Here are some of their ideas:



## **Encourage students to practice their handshake with others in the class.**

Is it firm enough? Too weak? Do they make eye contact? You could consider coming back to this each week at the beginning of the lesson to encourage them to feel familiar with shaking hands.



## **Encourage students to practice telephone interviews with each other.**

Having to answer questions on the spot will help them to feel more confident when the real telephone interview happens. You could even set it up so that one of your students calls the student's mobile from the school/college office unexpectedly!



## **It can be helpful for students to recount their interview experiences.**

Encourage them to focus firstly on the positives and get them to list what went well, which questions they thought they could answer confidently. Once they can recognise what they did well, they are likely to repeat these behaviours again next time.



## **Encourage students to share any examples of difficult questions that they have been asked through apprenticeship interviews.**

Set up a leader board in the classroom – see what the class agree is the most difficult question of the year. Of course, this is also a useful activity to encourage students to think about what a good response would be when faced with a difficult question.



**For more information and other free resources**

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