



Your Guide to Apprenticeships

Foreword

The challenge of providing accurate, impartial and objective careers guidance to young people has never been greater. Young people face a bewildering range of career opportunities and have access to an equally bewildering amount of information of variable quality. At the same time, the new duty on schools and colleges to provide careers guidance has been extremely challenging.

Decisions about the relative merits of employment-based or higher education based routes are no longer as straightforward as they might have been in the past. The range of apprenticeships available to young people at different levels has expanded. At the highest levels, these provide an alternative way of achieving degree level qualifications without incurring the levels of debt. Competition is often as fierce for apprenticeships as it is for university places and young people need strong support from their schools and colleges if they are going to compete successfully for available places.

ASCL has been working closely with the Education and Employers Taskforce (EET), the National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) and employer organisations to help school and college leaders to enable their students to navigate this complex area. There is still much to do in order to ensure that there is good communication about the range of apprenticeships available and the detail of these career routes that may not be familiar to many parents and teachers. This short guide is therefore designed to provide ASCL members with essential information and sources of further advice and support.



Brian Lightman, ASCL General Secretary

Ofsted

"Inviting working professionals, such as recent apprentices, into schools to give students first-hand insights into the breadth of the jobs market and its recruitment demands is a great example of the sort of good practice Ofsted expects schools to include when providing young people with effective independent careers guidance."

**Karen Adriaanse, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI),
National Lead for Careers Guidance**

Introduction

ASCL welcomes the government's ambition to make it the norm for young people to further their education by doing an apprenticeship or by going on to university – or, in the case of some Higher Apprenticeships (HAs), do both. ASCL recognises the need for more than one well-regarded progression route for young people.

Did you know?

- In 2013, over 500,000 people started an apprenticeship.
- Almost 115,000 of these were 16 to 18 year olds.
- More than 150,000 businesses already offer apprenticeships and this number grows every week.
- Competition is fierce for many apprenticeships.



What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are an excellent way for young people to gain qualifications while they learn on the job and at the same time earn a wage. They provide young people with the first step in their chosen career as well as the opportunity to develop and progress to higher levels.

An apprenticeship is essentially a set of qualifications within a 'framework' and most follow a standard format that comprises:

- A National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)
- Key transferable skills
- A Technical Certificate
- Functional skills in mathematics and English

Apprentices are employed by an employer or organisation that pays them at least the minimum wage and provides them with practical experience and support to achieve their apprenticeship framework. Apprentices receive on and off the job training to gain the

knowledge and skills required for the job. Training can be classroom based, in a workshop or in a workplace, depending on the subject and occupation.



Apprenticeship levels

There are three levels of apprenticeships:

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeship (Level 2)
- Advanced Level Apprenticeship (Level 3)
- Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4 up to Level 7)

Types of apprenticeship

There are more than 250 different types of apprenticeships available in England offering 1,400 job roles in a wide range of sectors, including engineering, professional services (business administration, finance, banking, legal), health, hospitality, public services, agriculture, construction, leisure, media, retail, arts and technology.

Higher Apprenticeships

Higher Apprenticeships can be an excellent alternative for students who have completed A levels and might want a different route to traditional university study.

Following significant government investment, there are now over 40 Higher Apprenticeships to choose from. More and more professions are offering apprenticeships at bachelors and master's degree level including opportunities in law, health and entrepreneurialism.

Increasing numbers of businesses are offering apprenticeships alongside their more traditional graduate/under-graduate entry programmes.

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), as part of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), supports employers to offer high-quality apprenticeships throughout England.

NAS is responsible for increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities and provides a dedicated, responsive service for large and small employers or organisations.

As well as employers or organisations, NAS supports students seeking an apprenticeship. Apprenticeship Vacancies Online (<http://tinyurl.com/appren-vacancy>) enables students to search the thousands of live vacancies posted by employers.

With up to 17,000 quality apprenticeships available online at any time, Apprenticeship Vacancies Online should be the first port of call for any student looking to find an apprenticeship.

Once registered, students can access a wealth of information as well as hints and tips on how to identify and secure a suitable apprenticeship. Further support is also available from the National Careers Service. www.direct.gov.uk/NationalCareersService

Schools and colleges can play an important role by signposting young people to the site (www.apprenticeships.org.uk) and supporting them to access further information on apprenticeships.

In order to meet their statutory duty to provide independent and impartial information, advice and guidance to students, more schools and colleges are choosing to provide parents and students with information on apprenticeships.

How to invite apprentice volunteers to come into your school or college



Exposing students to real-life apprentices, and successful individuals who began as apprentices, is not only a powerful way of raising student aspirations but also an excellent way to provide students with information, advice and guidance on apprenticeship progression routes and the world of work.

Inspiring the Future (www.inspiringthefuture.org) is a free service that sees people from all sectors and professions volunteering to visit schools and colleges to talk about their job, career path and the education route they took. There are also volunteers who can help give feedback on pupils CV's and carry out mock interviews. There are currently over 11,500 volunteers from 3,500 companies ranging from archaeologists to zoologists and apprentices to CEOs. Many of the volunteers are current and former apprentices who can talk with young people about what an apprenticeship is and how you apply for one. It is quick, simple and free to find people to come into your school/college to talk about apprenticeships and what they are really like.

Inspiring the Future is managed by the Education and Employers Taskforce (EET), which works closely with all the key national organisations representing business, the workforce and teachers in schools and colleges, including ASCL. Who have been working in partnership with the EET since 2009.

Volunteers can be simply accessed through a secure online service. To find apprentice volunteers in your area, register free at www.inspiringthefuture.org Alternatively, if you require any further information or would like someone to come and talk to you about how your school or college could benefit from using Inspiring the Future, please email enquiries@inspiringthefuture.org

Next steps

There are a few easy steps every school/college can take to support their students to find out more about apprenticeships. These include:

- Adding the NAS website **www.apprenticeships.org.uk** to your website and intranet.
- Request your free NAS pack that includes a number of resources such as lesson plans, marketing materials and student workbooks. Schools/colleges can get their pack from EET by emailing **enquiries@inspiringthefuture.org**
- Exposing students to volunteers who can speak about apprenticeships by registering with Inspiring the Future and inviting volunteers to come in and talk to students.
- Contact Karleen Dowden, ASCL's Apprenticeship, Employability and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Specialist, to discuss how you can practically and effectively embed apprenticeship IAG into your careers education programme. Email **karleen.dowden@ascl.org.uk** or call 0116 299 1122.
- The Skills Show is taking place at the NEC in Birmingham, from 13 to 15 November 2014 and is the largest careers and skills event in the UK. Students can 'have a go', hear from experts from a wide range of occupations and be inspired by some of the most talented young people in the UK competing to be crowned World Skills UK Champion in their chosen skill area. For more information go to **www.theskillsshow.com**

The Skills Show Experience is a nationwide programme of over 220 events throughout the year which inspires over 200,000 young people to unlock their potential and shape their future. Find out more online at **<http://tinyurl.com/SkillsShowEvent>**

Further support is available from the following organisations:

National Apprenticeship Service **www.apprenticeships.org.uk**
T: 08000 150 600

Inspiring the Future **www.inspiringthefuture.org**
T: 0203 206 0510

National Careers Service **www.direct.gov.uk/NationalCareersService**
T: 0800 100 900



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