

Apprentice Employment Guide



Top tips and advice to support you in your next career steps



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Next steps after your apprenticeship

Whether you've completed an intermediate, advanced, or higher qualification, there are a host of options after completing your apprenticeship where you can put your new skills and experiences to great use, and further develop your career.

Find a new job or role

Just as you're not stuck in a career after an apprenticeship, you're also not tied to the same company either. You may be looking to branch out, and don't be afraid to. Backed by workplace experience, there are many opportunities open to you. You can speak to your local job centre, or browse numerous job sites online, such as Indeed, Monster, or TotalJobs.

You may be happy in your role and looking to change company, but you may also be looking to try out a new role. Don't be intimidated by making this change – if you have a real interest in this new position, you can rely on all the experience and transferable skills you'll have gained on your apprenticeship to adapt.

You'll be surprised by how many employers recruit people for roles they have little experience in, as they'll be able to demonstrate the skills and experience from other roles to help them settle in.

Go into Further Education

A whole range of further education options are open to you after an apprenticeship, including university if you fancy it. Some careers explicitly need a degree if you're looking to change career. You'll also have plenty of money to spend at university after earning and learning on your apprenticeship!

Having built yourself a solid foundation of skills and experience, backed up with an NVQ qualification, you can also progress onto an advanced and higher apprenticeship. These apprenticeship levels will involve more complex variety of skills, and also the knowledge to progress onto a team leader or supervisor position.

Remember, finishing an apprenticeship is only the start of your career, and there are many options available to you after gaining valuable skills, experience, and qualifications.



The earlier you start planning for your journey to employment the more options you'll have!

Your route to successful employment

Follow these 3 steps

Step 1 Get to know yourself

(identify your strengths, interests and personality)



Step 2 Research the options



Step 3 Set yourself SMART targets and goals



Step 1: Get to know yourself

(identify your strengths, interests and personality)

Have You Got The Edge?

The Edge is the professional advantage you need in the world of work to advance and succeed.

Listen and watch these wise words from spoken word artist and LifeSkills Ambassador, George the Poem, to help inspire you to get ahead.

Recognising your existing skills and developing new ones will not only help you prepare for the world of work but will help you stand out against the crowd when applying for jobs.

Try our range of interactive tools and advice to give yourself the edge.

barclayslifeskills.com

Developing your skills

Continue to develop generic skills like communication & problem solving.

Focus on those that aren't already a strength

Get more experience - Don't underestimate the values – take every opportunity



Explore **Open University Free Courses** to boost your skills



Discover free coding courses and more at **Google Garage**

Step 2:

Research the options

Safe job searching

The vast majority of job interviews are perfectly straightforward – you attend the interview, and everything goes well. Whether you hear about an opportunity through the Job Centre or through an advertisement online, there are a few simple common sense rules that you should always remember for your own safety.

Taking these basic steps will help you make sure that your job search is safe and trouble free.



- Tell a relative or friend where you're going and what time you expect to be back
- Arrange to be collected from the interview if it takes place outside working hours
- Find out as much as you can about the company before the interview, especially if there are no details in the job advert
- Make sure the interview takes place at the employer's premises, if not, then in a public place
- Take your mobile phone with you – make sure it is charged and has credit



- Apply for a job which seems to offer too much money for very little work
- Agree to continue the interview over drinks or a meal, even if it seems to be going very well
- Let the interviewer steer the conversation towards personal subjects that have nothing to do with the job
- Accept a lift home from the interviewer



Finding a vacancy: where to look for jobs

There are alternative ways to find vacancies – newspapers and job websites are the most common.



Direct approach

Call into companies and leave your details with them



Advertise yourself

On social media, eg. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter



Internet

See page 16 for useful sites



TV & radio



Local business directories

Such as yell.com



Job Centres

Contact your local Job Centre for more information about getting into work



Newspapers

Check the jobs section of your local newspaper



Employment agencies

Often temporary or unskilled work



Shop windows or newsagents adverts



Writing on the off chance

eg, speculative letter to companies



People you know

Friends & family who work for a company



Aspire employment & skills advisor

Will be able to help you look for training and work



Search for careers on the
National Careers Service



Useful websites
barclayslifeskills.com
icould.com/buzz
careersbox.co.uk
U-explore.co.uk



Step 3:

Set yourself SMART targets and goals

Think about what you can do to develop your skills and set yourself realistic goals for achievement that can support your CV.



Job search websites		
Indeed	www.indeed.co.uk	National vacancies
1 job	www.1job.co.uk	National vacancies
Jobsite	www.jobsite.co.uk	National vacancies
Total jobs	www.totaljobs.com	National vacancies
UK Net Guide	www.uknetguide.co.uk	National vacancies
Monster	www.monster.co.uk	National vacancies
JobServe	www.jobserve.com	National vacancies
Reed	www.reed.co.uk	National vacancies

Retail		
Retail choice	www.retailchoice.com	Retail vacancies
Potteries shopping centre	intu.co.uk/potteries/jobs	Retail vacancies - Stoke
Sainsbury's	sainsburys.jobs	Sainsbury's vacancies
Tesco	www.tesco-careers.com	Tesco vacancies
Asda	www.asda.jobs	Asda vacancies
Morrisons	www.morrisons.jobs	Morrisons vacancies
The Grocer	jobs.thegrocer.co.uk	Retail vacancies - national



Hospitals/ care

UK Health Service	www.jobs.nhs.uk	Hospital vacancies
Nuffield hospital	www.nuffieldhospitals.org.uk	Private hospital
University Hospital N Staffs	www.uhns.nhs.uk	Local hospital vacancies
Castle Rock	www.crg.uk.com/homecare	Healthcare agency
Carematch	www.carematch.org.uk	Local care work
Health Jobs	www.healthjobsuk.com	Health sector jobs

Councils

Staffordshire County Council	www.staffordshire.gov.uk	County Council
Stoke Council	www.stoke.gov.uk	City Council vacancies
Stafford Borough Council	www.stafford.bc.gov.uk	Borough Council vacancies
Newcastle Borough Council	www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk	Newcastle vacancies
Staffs Moorlands Council	www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk	Moorland Council vacancies
Cheshire East	www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/home.aspx	Borough Council

IT

CW Jobs	www.cwjobs.co.uk	IT vacancies
IT Job board	www.itjobboard.net	IT vacancies
Hays IT	www.hays.co.uk/it	IT recruitment agency

Sales

Simply Sales	www.simplysalesjobs.co.uk/	Sales vacancies - National
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Using social media for employment searches

Use social networking to your advantage but be aware of how it can damage your reputation

- Friends sharing photos of you online
- Inappropriate tweets that you have been tagged in
- Inappropriate Facebook posts you have been tagged in
- Being tagged somewhere they are not
- Being mentioned in an inappropriate blog post

It's all about balance

- Keep it professional, but not too professional
- Show how happy you are to get involved in volunteering, complete a project, play in a sporting team or even win an award
- The pride you have in your hobbies and interests tells employers that you're not all about work - funny gifs and holiday snaps with your mates show a healthy work-life balance
- Don't publish a status or leave tagged photos of yourself online that could paint a less than desirable picture
- You can use the web to promote yourself to employers and find work
- Sharing achievements using WordPress or Blogger
- Tweeting achievements, discussions or work using Twitter
- Sharing achievements using Facebook
- Sharing photos of sporting events or work using Twitter, Instagram or Facebook
- Creating an online CV using LinkedIn
- Connecting with like-minded people and industry leaders, getting your name out there

Using LinkedIn

Use an appropriate email address not something like - i-am-so-funny@really-bad-email-address.com

Top 10 biggest job hunting mistakes

- Failing to proofread CV or covering letter
- Misunderstanding the role
- Unprofessional media profiles
- Neglecting your network
- Taking rejection to heart
- Trying to wing it at interviews
- Being too familiar
- Applying for advertised jobs only
- Being afraid to stand out
- Being afraid to ask for help



Check out Barclays Life Skills videos for more top tips at www.barclayslifeskills.com

What is a CV?

Your CV is an advertisement for YOU! It sells your skills, experience and personal qualities.

CVs can be:

- **Chronological:** show your education and work experience in date order
- **Functional:** highlight your skills first
- Like any advert, your CV needs to be attention grabbing and honest

Tools and support to help you structure your CV

For some vacancies you may need to provide a covering letter to the company. Below are a couple of examples that you could use:

Known vacancy letter

Cover letter for a vacancy you have seen advertised and you would like to work at/for:

Mrs J Hunter
Churchwood Industries
Highwood Industrial Estate
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire

8 Temple Lane
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1HP

Dear Mrs. Hunter,

I wish to apply for the job of Trainee Office Junior as advertised in the Evening Sentinel on Wednesday.

I am 18 years old and left having gained GCSEs in English, Maths and Graphics. Since leaving school I joined a Modern Apprenticeship scheme taking my NVQ Level 1 in Administration. I am very interested in this type of work and have been gaining useful experience in my work placement, who have also said they will give me a reference if necessary.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Brown

Speculative letter

Cover letter that you could send to a company you would like to work at/for:

Drive & Save
Repairs Department
123 Sandy Lane
Tamworth
b99 2xz

96 Smithy
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 4JN

To whom it may concern,

I am 18 years old and in 2018 I left Bridge School having gained my Maths, English and Information Technology. I have just completed my NVQ Level 2 in Motor Vehicle studies, my placement being at Blackshaws garage. I am very interested in gaining employment in this field and I feel I have the required ability and experience.

If any vacancies should arise in the future within your motor vehicle department I would be very grateful if my application could be considered.

I am also enclosing my C.V. to assist you further.

Yours faithfully,
Pat Adams



Tailoring your CV



Always tailor your CV to each job and highlight the skills the employer is looking for:

- Compare the skills it mentions to those on your CV
- Critique your CV – is there a skill that you need to demonstrate better
- Think about what experience you've got to meet that skill

Want to stand out?

- Get Social Action onto your CV

You are in a great position at Aspire to get involved in social things that impact the community. These types of activities set you apart. Fundraising (cake sales), leading stuff, involved in projects, volunteering – these things show planning skills, problem solving, communication, etc. Do local stuff too.

Further tips and advice

- Education and Employment - list the most recent first
- Include work experience and part-time work
- Leave the employment history blank if you have not had a job before
- The application form will probably also ask for medical details and possibly nationality/ ethnic background
- You may also be asked to list any criminal offences
- Take a photocopy of the completed form so you can refer to it before your interview
- Fill in as much additional information as you can in relation to the role and how your skills match the duties of the job
- Before you start it may be a good idea to get a photocopy of the application form, or just the page that is the hardest to complete, for example the space for qualities or reasons you want the job
- Read through the form making sure you know which information goes where
- If you haven't got a photocopy use a pencil first
- Write clearly and neatly and make sure get the spellings correct
- Try to fill in all the sections but do not repeat information that has already been listed
- Put down all your skills, interests and qualifications even if they are from voluntary or non-paid work
- If you wish, a short covering letter stating why you want the job or your qualities/experience can be added if the form does not give you the space to note this
- Keep a copy of the form – you can see what you have said, should you be questioned on it in an interview
- Never lie or exaggerate – you'll get found out!

Curriculum vitae (CV)

Employment and skills advisors can help and give you a template to get you started. Here is an example of how a CV could look:

Joanna Anybody

47 Anywhere Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 8LP

Telephone: 01782 529475/ 077986 256894 **E-mail:** joannaanybody@gmail.com

Personal Profile

An outgoing individual who is quick to learn new skills, with a flexible, adaptable and reliable approach. A motivated person who works well within a team setting and individually. Looking for a work environment where current skills and qualities can be utilised to the full and further developed through and training available.

Skills and Abilities

- Good team member and able to work alone if necessary
- Possesses initiative, drive and ambition
- Totally trustworthy, honest and have a high level of patience
- Punctual and flexible
- Reliable and adaptable

Employment / Work Experience

McDonalds restaurant, Elton Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Part-time Work summer 2010

Waitress: Help in the kitchens to prepare fast food, general kitchen work, serving customers, handling cash, taking orders, customers service.

Primrose Café, Malton Rise, Stoke-on-Trent

For 2 weeks in May 2010, I worked at Primrose Café where I helped staff to take orders from customers and serve teas and coffee. I was willing to help wherever I was needed and was given the responsibility of taking the cash to the bank on a Friday at the end of my second week. I really enjoyed my placement and learned a lot about customer service and how to work under pressure as it was very busy at times.

Education and Training

2005-2010 any comprehensive school, Newcastle-under-Lyme

GCSE passes in English, Science(double), Maths, History, Art, Computer Studies, Graphics

Interests and Achievements

I enjoy using computers and recently started a word processing course in my spare time as I believe it will be useful in my future career. I studied computer at school and was awarded a certificate of achievement for my project on the use of computers in supermarkets. I was a member of my school rounders team during my final year at school and helped to organise matches and fund raising for the new school mini bus so that the team could go to away matches. Fund raising events included baking for the Spring Fair. In my spare time I have worked voluntarily at a lol charity shop. I have found the experience to be very useful and rewarding and my confidence when working with the public had increased.

References available on request

Interview skills

Stages of an interview

Introduction – the interviewer may...

- Ask you what you know about the organisation
- Tell you more about the role and organisation
- Ask you why you applied for the post and/or why you are looking for something new
- Ask you for a brief history about your experience and skills

Middle – the interviewer may....

- Ask you what relevant skills, knowledge and experience you have specific for the role
- Ask you for examples of work you've done or projects you've been involved in
- Be looking to see whether you are the right fit for the team? Have you got the right attitudes and behaviour? Are you polite, friendly, etc.

End

- Ask you what is next for you career-wise or progression
- Ask you what do you like to do outside of work
- Ask you if you have any questions about the role



Use the STAR method to answer the interview questions

STAR method

Use the model answers below

1. Situation

Describe what was happening and where

A. I was working on a school project in Microsoft Teams

2. Task

Explain what you were doing

A. We needed to create and advertise a perfume themed on 'winter', but we weren't getting anywhere

3. Actions

Describe what actions you took and the skills you used

A. I arranged an extra planning session to organise responsibilities and monitored progress

04. Result

Describe the outcome and what you achieved

A. We achieved a good score in the final judging and the group appreciated my organisational skills

Common

Interview questions



Getting an interview means the company is interested enough in your application to “have a look” at you, so you are over the first hurdle and this is a great opportunity.

Prepare for the appointment

- Plan what you’re going to wear
- How are you going to get there and where is it exactly?
- Do you know anything about the company, eg what do they do/make?

- What can you tell me about yourself?
- Can you list your strengths?
- What weaknesses do you have?
- Why should I consider hiring you?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- What motivates you?
- What makes a good team player?
- Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

In the interview

Make sure you make eye contact with the interviewer, and that you speak clearly and give lots of detail about yourself and what you’ve been doing.

Questions you could ask

Make sure you carry out safe internet research, visiting the company website, looking at their corporate section, recent news and any videos.

- Do I get any training?
- Who would I report to?
- Is there any overtime, what hours?
- Am I on a trial period – how long?
- How soon will I hear the outcome of this interview?

Questions they may ask

- Why do you want to work here/ why did you leave your last job?
- What sort of experience do you have – have you done this work before?
- How do you cope with pressure?

Tip: What are your weaknesses? It can feel awkward to discuss your weaknesses in an environment where you’re expected to focus on your accomplishments. However, when answered correctly, sharing your weaknesses can show that you are self-aware and want to continuously get better at your job. Remember to start with the weakness and then discuss the measures you’ve taken to improve.

Interview tips

- ✓ Practise answering some common questions
- ✓ Every question is an opportunity to ‘sell’ each of your skills, like teamwork or communication
- ✓ Remember to use specific examples
- ✓ If you’re not sure what a question means, ask
- ✓ Interviewers may ask challenging questions - respond positively and be honest
- ✓ Remember, the interviewer doesn’t expect you to be perfect



Top tips about what you should do after your apprenticeship

After completing an apprenticeship, you could continue to train for an advanced, higher, or degree level apprenticeship, or a related vocational qualification. Alternatively, you could go on to university, or take a professional qualification that leads to a specific job role.

You can always contact PM Training for more advice and guidance.



You should be:

On time, polite, smartly dressed, confident BUT respectful



Don’t be:

Chewing gum, smoking, lying about your past, aggressive/cocky



Visit the National Careers website for local contact information and career events.



For more video tips and advice – visit our website pmtraining.org.uk



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