

DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Degree apprenticeships are an alternative to going to university. If you would like to gain a degree but are worried about the financial implications, then it will be worthwhile researching degree apprenticeships. They are still relatively new as an option, however the number of higher and degree apprenticeships available are rising. Such apprenticeships enable you to gain a BA (Hons) or BSc (Hons) just like your friends who chose to study for a degree on a full time basis. However you will not have a debt at the end of your studies if you choose this option. There are also many young people who are very keen to get out into the world of work and study part time immediately after their A Levels or equivalent study who may not be worried about the financial consequences of studying for a degree full time but whom simply just want to work, earn a salary and learn at the same time, higher and degree apprenticeships are ideal for these young people too.

What is a Degree Apprenticeship?

Degree apprenticeships can take up to 6 years to complete and you could gain a first degree (Level 6) or possibly a higher level degree like a Masters (Level 7). Higher apprenticeships are usually at Level 4/5. Whichever level, the apprenticeship will include academic study on a part-time basis at university or a college. The rest of the time will be spent with an employer in the workplace. You will spend 20% of your time working towards your qualification at a university or college and the other 80% of the time will involve learning on the job.

The structure of the academic study may vary, some employers favour day release, others block release, you may carry out some online learning and you will experience lectures, seminars, group tasks and have time for independent learning just like a full time student.

The on the job training will also vary according to the job role and the industry, however you will gain many skills and real life work experience. The skills and qualities you will develop will probably include: problem solving, flexibility, verbal & written communication, interpersonal skills, the ability to work under pressure and creativity, to name just a few. You will get a chance to put your theory learning into practice in real work situations. As you progress and develop you could be given more responsibility. However as an apprentice you will have a designated mentor to support you throughout.

Types of Apprenticeships

There are many types of degree apprenticeships, here are just some examples:

- Aerospace
- Architecture
- Building & Construction
- Business
- Catering
- Civil Engineering
- Cyber Security
- Education
- Engineering
- Healthcare
- Hospitality
- Law
- Manufacturing
- Midwife
- Nurse
- Retail
- Science
- Transport
- and many more.

Finance & Salaries

As a higher or degree apprentice your tuition fees will be paid by your employer/the Government and you will also receive a salary, which again will vary depending on the job and the industry in which you are working and training. The minimum wage for an apprentice is £6.40, this is for 16 – 17 year olds. Age 18 – 20 it is £8.60 and for 21 year olds and over it is £11.44, however these rates change every April.

What Qualifications, Skills & Qualities will I need to become a Degree Apprentice?

If you do decide to apply for a higher or degree apprenticeship, do bear in mind that they can be challenging but highly rewarding. You will need to be committed. Also competition for vacancies will be fierce.

To be accepted onto a degree apprenticeship you will normally need formal qualifications at a minimum of a Level 3. This could be A Levels, an advanced apprenticeship, NVQ or BTEC at Level 3 or an equivalent qualification, in a few cases the employer/university may decide to take someone who may not quite have achieved these qualifications but who has lots of relevant experience. You may also be expected to have a minimum of 5 GCSEs at A* – C / 9 - 4 normally including English and Maths. Also in order to apply you will need to be able to work in the UK, will not currently be undertaking full-time study and you will not already hold a degree in the job role. There are no upper age restrictions to start an apprenticeship.

Employers during their application process including any assessment tests and at interview will often look for the following:

- Team Work
- Numeracy Skills
- Communication Skills
- Motivation and Enthusiasm
- Flexibility
- Commitment
- Interpersonal Skills
- Creativity
- and more.

You may have gained such transferable skills whilst studying at school or college, through part time work or volunteering or even through your hobbies.

The Future

If you do decide to apply for a degree apprenticeship (Level 6) and if you are successful in your application and in eventually completing the apprenticeship and you have graduated, then you might choose to continue onto a Level 7 apprenticeship if available with your employer or you may decide to find a new role with the experience and skills you have

gained. Alternatively, your employer may decide to keep you on after your apprenticeship. Most do, especially as after all, they have invested a lot of time and money in you.