Everything you need to know about Apprenticeships…..

Apprenticeships allow you to combine work and study. You'll be employed to do a real job (normally for 4 days a week) while studying for a formal qualification, usually for one day a week either at a college, a training centre or in house (trained by the staff you work with). By the end of your apprenticeship, you'll hopefully have gained the skills and knowledge needed to either succeed in your chosen career or progress onto the next apprenticeship level.

Levels of apprenticeship

There are four different levels of apprenticeship:

- Intermediate (Level 2) - equivalent to five good GCSE passes.
- Advanced (Level 3) - equivalent to two A-level passes.
- Higher - equivalent to the first stages of higher education, such as a foundation degree.
- Degree - comparable to a Bachelor's or Master's degree / an equal alternative to university

If starting an apprenticeship at 16, you would apply for either an Intermediate or Advanced apprenticeship depending on the apprenticeship you are applying for and possibly the results you achieve in your GCSEs. You can, however, go to college / sixth form aged 16 – 18 and still apply for an Intermediate or Advanced Apprenticeship later when you finish college / sixth form. Plus, dependent on the qualifications you have achieved between the ages of 16 – 18, you might also be able to apply for a Higher or Degree level apprenticeship from the age of 18 onwards.

Types of apprenticeships

Not every job can be accessed via an apprenticeship pathway but most job sectors do offer a range of apprenticeship opportunities, with a wide range of specific roles on offer within each.
There are, in fact, over 400 different types of apprenticeship;



To see the range of apprenticeships that do exist:

https://apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/apprenticeship-category/industry-sectors/

https://www.ucas.com/explore/search/industry-guides?query=

However, it is important to realise that just because an apprenticeship does exist in a certain employment sector, there may be very few vacancies in that sector and, unfortunately, possibly none in your local area.

Securing an apprenticeship (where to find opportunities and vacancies)

1. **Through the Government website:**

   https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
   You can 'search' what vacancies are currently available by filtering (distance from your postcode, level of apprenticeship and key words in job title). It is worth remembering that as apprentices get paid, they may be able to travel further, not be restricted as much financially so that could open up opportunities in Bournemouth, Southampton, Bath etc.

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Through this site, you can also 'create an account'. By adding the same information as through the filter, you will be sent details that fit your match as they are advertised.

Wiltshire College's website show a number of apprenticeship vacancies normally taken from the Govt. website.
From Wiltshire College's website homepage, click on 'study with us' and under apprenticeships click on 'live vacancies'
Current vacancies - Wiltshire College & University Centre
It is worth noting that most apprenticeships that will be suitable for Year 11s, ie that have a start date after June will not be advertised until about March onwards. There are often fewer vacancies November – March but it's still worth checking regularly.
You cannot normally apply to Wiltshire College for an apprenticeship until you have sorted out the 'job' offer side of things although it is definitely worth contacting them as they may be able to offer you help and support in finding a vacancy.

2. **Apprenticeships in Salisbury website**



https://apprenticeshipsinsalisbury.co.uk/
This site showcases many of our local businesses who offer apprenticeships. Sometimes it will show live vacancies but often it will leave it up to the individual to contact the company directly to find out more and to make an expression of interest, ask for a meeting to discuss etc. Contact details can be found on each business' page of the website.

3. **Through employment websites**

For example, Indeed:
https://uk.indeed.com/jobs?q=apprenticeships&l=sp1+1rd&vjk=a3a67e63027d4eb8
They have a great range of vacancies and you can also set up alerts.

4. **Amazing Apprenticeships Vacancy Snapshot**

This site highlight some of the major companies who offer apprenticeships and provides links to their apprenticeship programmes:
https://amazingapprenticeships.com/vacancies/
Don't think that apprenticeships are only available in areas that the company is known for eg the RSPCA may have apprenticeships in IT, Marketing, Public relations, administration etc.

5. **Looking directly on company websites. Wessex Water is a good example:**

https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/careers/apprenticeships
They offer superb and very wide range of apprenticeships but do not advertise anywhere else (nor do lots of other companies)

6. **Taking the initiative of working at a company or just approaching a company in person or by email.**

Voluntary work, part time work and work experience are really good ways to get your foot in the door with a company, impress the employer and get your face known. Many of our students have been offered an apprenticeship following a period of work such as these. Even if a company have never offered apprenticeships before, if they are impressed with you, they may set one up so it's definitely worth asking.

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Rates of pay:

Apprentices get paid and minimum rates are set by the Government (although many companies and businesses pay higher than the minimum rate). What you will be paid will depend on a number of factors including your age, the level of apprenticeship you do and which year of your apprenticeship you are in. Minimum rates of pay can be found here:
https://successatschool.org/advicedetails/509/how-much-is-the-apprenticeship-wage

Back up plan

No matter how much you want an apprenticeship at 16, it is essential that you have a back up plan of a full-time college course in place in case you can't secure an apprenticeship or the apprenticeship you have secured falls through. You don't want to 'put all your eggs in one basket' by applying only for apprenticeships and then find in September you have nothing.

Can you apply directly to College for an apprenticeship?

It can be misleading as it often looks at first glance as if you can apply to college for an apprenticeship but you can't until YOU have first found the employer who has agreed to take you on as an apprentice. So you need to be proactive and look for and apply for apprenticeship vacancies (see bullet points 1 – 5 above) yourself. Once you have found an employer who will take you on as an apprentice, you can then apply to an appropriate college for the college 1 day part of the apprenticeship.

Think outside the box.

When thinking about specific apprenticeships or companies who might offer apprenticeships, don't assume that they offer only (or at all) apprenticeships in roles you would generally associate with the company. For example, Royal Mail offer apprenticeships but you can't do one as a Postie but you could do one in Engineering, Project Management or Finance.

If you can't secure an apprenticeship what are the alternatives?

Even if you don't get an apprenticeship to start in September of the year you leave, it doesn't mean that you will never get an apprenticeship; there will be various options available to you including:

a) Go to college for 1 year to do an associated course. For example, if you wanted an apprenticeship in hair and beauty or business but can't get one, go to College and do a year on a hair and beauty or business course and then at the end of your first year, apply to move into an apprenticeship.
b) Widen your horizons and go to College and do a completely unrelated course. At the end of this course, you can still apply for an apprenticeship in a different area. For example, between the ages of 16 – 18 you could study Sport at college and then at 18 apply for an apprenticeship as a plumber.
c) Take an alternative route; go to college and then at 18 move into employment or higher education with the qualification you have earned at college and not do an apprenticeship at all.



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Final important points to consider:

Securing an apprenticeship can be hard. Unfortunately, there will normally be more students looking for an apprenticeship than there are vacancies available. Competition for vacancies may be fierce.

There may be no vacancies locally in the job sector you are looking at. It might be that you will have more opportunities as you get older when you have more independence, for example, when you can drive and so extend the geographical area you are looking in.

However, remember, you will be paid for an apprenticeship. This means you are more likely to be able to afford transport costs that a full-time college student couldn't afford. So, for example, you might secure an apprenticeship in Southampton and commute to Southampton daily on the train.

Most apprenticeships, like college courses, have entry requirements; certain GCSE grades you will need in certain subjects. The majority of apprenticeships will require you to have a grade 4 minimum in both Maths and English. If you don't have grade 4 in Maths and English, there will still be some apprenticeships you can apply for but you will have considerably fewer to choose from.

Ask yourself, are you ready and actually wanting to move into the adult working world. College students will still have at least 13 weeks holiday a year, free periods / free days during the week, a later start time and an earlier finish time each day. As an apprentice, you will normally have the same working conditions as the adult employees you work alongside, for example, typically just 25 days holiday a year and a 9am start and a 5.30 pm finish every day.

To get an apprenticeship, you need to be proactive. There is much more work needed to secure an apprenticeship than applying for a college course. You will need to spend a lot of time searching for opportunities and probably be required to fill in a lengthy application form and also submit a CV and Personal Statement and attend an interview for every apprenticeship you apply for.

Remember, there isn't a right or wrong pathway into a profession. Apprenticeships are great, not for everyone but for many an excellent way to continue your education and training post 16. Apprenticeships aren't normally the only pathway into a profession so if you aren't able to secure one, you should still be able to find another pathway to move you into the area you want to move in to.



If you would like to discuss apprenticeship opportunities or have any questions, please email: asluman@magnalearningpartnership.org.uk

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