

A Guide to Hiring Apprentices





What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship programme combines working and work-based training with studying for a qualification; anywhere from GCSE to degree level. It is a way for individuals to earn while they learn, gaining valuable skills and knowledge in a specific job role.

How do they work?

Apprentices must spend **at least** 20% of their time in off-the-job training and it is up to the employer and training provider to decide how this training is delivered. It may include regular day release, block release and special training days or workshops. It must be directly relevant to the apprenticeship framework or standard and can be delivered at the apprentice's normal place of work, so long as it's not part of their normal working duties.

How long do they take?

The length of an apprenticeship depends on a number of factors, such as the level of the apprenticeship, the chosen sector, employer requirements and individual ability.

- Intermediate apprenticeships typically last between one year and 18 months
- Advanced apprenticeships are usually studied over two years
- Higher and degree apprenticeships take between three and six years to complete

How can it benefit me?

Hiring an apprentice is a productive and effective way for any business to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workplace.

Employers who have an established apprenticeship programme reported that productivity in their workplace had improved by 76% whilst 75% reported that apprenticeships improved the quality of their product or service.*

Other benefits that apprenticeships contribute towards include:

- Increased employee satisfaction
- Reduced staff turnover
- Reduced recruitment costs

How does the apprentice benefit?

Apprentices benefit from participating in a structured training programme which gives them the chance to earn while they learn. They will gain insight and skills which they wouldn't get from sitting in a classroom, and build experience in a working environment earlier than most of their peers. This gives them more independence and confidence, as well as the incentive of potentially earning more in the future and progressing quickly in their chosen industry.

Is my industry applicable?

It's a common misconception that apprenticeships are just for labour skills. You can offer an apprenticeship is just about anything: computer programming, gardening, catering, retail and childcare to name but a few.

How much do I pay?

Apprentices must receive a salary for the job that they are doing in line with minimum wage laws – this includes any time spent at college as part of their apprenticeship and paid holiday. For the employer there is also the cost of the supervision, support and mentoring that will need to be put in place to support the apprentice. However, the benefit of investing in an apprentice rather than an experienced employee is much greater and companies can recoup the cost many times over.

For levy-paying employers - Funding for apprenticeships will be available on the government's digital apprenticeship service.

For non-levy-paying employers - Costs are negotiated and agreed with the college. 90% of the total apprenticeship cost will be paid for by the government, with employers paying a 10% contribution directly to CWA. There are incentive payments available for taking on apprentices aged 16 to 18.

For organisations with fewer than 50 employees

The government is offering additional support by paying 100% of costs for their apprentices aged 16 to 18 and for those aged 19 to 24 formerly in care or with a local authority education, health and care plan.

Apprenticeship Levy

All UK employers who have a total employee wage bill of more than £3m a year pay a levy, set at 0.5% of their wage bill. The levy is a tax which aims to fund 3 million high-quality apprenticeships in England by 2020.

Each employer receives one annual allowance of £15,000 to offset against apprenticeships through a registered and approved provider, such as the College of West Anglia. This cannot be spent on anything else, such as internal training, apprentice salaries or the cost of setting up an apprenticeship. If employers do not spend their funds within 24 months, they will expire.

The allowance can be spent on a new apprentice or to up-skill/retrain an existing employee, as long as it is an approved apprenticeship and they are eligible for the programme.

Employers will use the government's digital apprenticeship service to calculate their apprenticeship funding and see how much the government will contribute to the cost of training. With our dedicated apprenticeship team, the College of West Anglia can provide you with the expertise and support to effortlessly guide you through the new system.

"Apprentices are integral to our business"

Paul Davis
Owner, Top To Toe Hair & Beauty



"Training is the cornerstone of our industry; therefore we have made it the cornerstone of our business.

Our strength is born from our apprenticeship programme and the success it has delivered. The benefits of apprenticeships are integral to the strategic growth and vision of our business."

"Apprentices are the future of our industry and an asset to our company"

David Rollins
Owner, Rollins Electrical



"At Rollins Electrical we find it rewarding to employ apprentices as they are the future of the electrical industry. We are proud to say that we have started them on their chosen career path. The apprentices we have this year have made up a fifth of our workforce and are an asset to our company and the college."