



# How to Secure Yourself an Apprenticeship

The ultimate, step-by-step guide to becoming an apprentice.



**Congratulations to Connor Stevenson!**

Highly Commended by the Association of Colleges and the National Apprenticeship Service

**How will this pack help me to secure an Apprenticeship?**

Do you want to be an apprentice but you don't know where to start? Or, maybe you have been applying for Apprenticeships but have had several set-backs? If the answer is yes, then this guide is for you!

This pack was created to help young people, by giving you step-by-step advice on how to secure an Apprenticeship; from creating a CV to cold calling local companies.

In order to provide you with first-class information and advice, we've brought together top tips from local employers, teachers, assessors, recruitment officers, careers advisors and current apprentices working at Bolton College.

Penney Charnock  
Catering Apprenticeship Level 2

<b>Bolton College's Apprenticeship Process</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Apprenticeships at Bolton College</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Your Apprenticeship Journey</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>First Steps</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CV Guidance - how to write a winning CV</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>CV Example 1</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CV Example 2</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Letter Guidance - writing to employers</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Covering Letter Example - writing for an advertised job</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Speculative Letter Example - enquiring if a vacancy exists</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Follow-Up Letter Example - showing further interest in a vacancy</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Telephone Techniques</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Telephone Interviews</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Interview Techniques</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Interview Questions</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Feedback Request Letter Example</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Bolton College's Apprenticeships: FAQs</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Job Log</b>	<b>30</b>

**Apprentices are a very important part of our business development**

# Bolton College's Apprenticeship Process

Use this chart to find out the next steps you need to take in order to become an Apprentice.



## Apprenticeships at Bolton College

Apprenticeships are a great way to learn a trade and gain practical qualifications, whilst still bringing home a decent pay packet. The benefits include:

- Working alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills
- Studying for a nationally recognised qualification
- Developing transferable skills: you will gain skills and knowledge that can be used across a range of jobs and industries.
- Enhancing future career prospects
- Building your confidence
- Higher Education (HE) progression opportunities

## Typical programme routes

Career progression is excellent for apprentices, and over the course of their careers, those with an Apprenticeship earn, on average, £100,000 more than those without.

Source: A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Apprenticeships and Other Vocational Qualifications, University of Sheffield, 2007

Some Apprenticeships already attract UCAS points or allow you to study for a Technical Certificate. Once the Apprenticeship has finished, there's the opportunity to carry on working, possibly to get promoted or to go on to Higher Education in a college or university.

The National Apprenticeship Service is working with UCAS to extend this system so that more qualifications gained during an Apprenticeship count towards an individual's university application.

## Which Apprenticeships are available at Bolton College?

Here are some examples of the types of job roles you can progress to from each one.

### Childcare

#### Types of job roles:

- Child-minder / Au Pair / Nanny
- Nursery Assistant
- Nursery Nurse
- Playgroup Assistant
- Playgroup Leader
- Playworker



### Supporting Teaching & Learning

#### Types of job roles:

- Classroom Assistant
- Learning Support Assistant
- Special Needs Assistant
- Physical Education & School Sports

### Catering & Hospitality

#### Types of job roles:

- Bar Person
- Canteen Worker
- Hospitality Manager (with management training)
- Kitchen Porter
- Trainee Chef

#### These may be within:

A nursery, retirement home, cruise ships, hotels, restaurants, barista (coffee shop) or an external catering company.

### Sports

#### Types of job roles:

- Community Coach
- Personal Trainer
- Swimming Instructor

## Business Administration



These may be within:

A bank, call centre, local council, estate agents, solicitors, doctor's surgery, financial services department, or an educational establishment.

### Types of job roles:

- Administration Executive / Officer / Clerical Assistant
- Bank Clerk
- Business Development Executive
- Junior Legal Secretary
- Junior Medical Secretary
- Marketing Assistant
- Medical Receptionist
- Office Junior
- PA or Secretary
- Paralegal Officer
- Receptionist
- Trainee Estate Agent

## Plastering

### Types of job roles:

- Dry Liner
- Plasterer

## Electrical Installation

### Types of job roles:

- Commercial Electrician
- Domestic Electrician

## Plumbing & Heating

### Types of job roles:

- Employed by a kitchen & bathroom fitter company
- Employed by a maintenance company
- Domestic Heating
- Gas Installation

## Roofing, Slating & Tiling

### Types of job roles:

- Roofing, Slating & Tiling

## Motor Vehicle Body & Paint Operations

### Types of job roles:

- Paint Technician
- Panel Technician

## Motor Vehicle & Repair

### Types of job roles:

- Auto-technician
- Foreman Mechanic
- Mechanic
- Oil rig worker
- Recovery Operator

## IT User, Practitioner & Digital Marketing

### Types of job roles:

- IT Application Specialist
- Data Administrator
- Digital Assistant
- IT Clerk
- Web Technician
- IT, Software, Web and Telecoms Professionals
- Field Operations (Line installer & repairer)
- Helpdesk Professional
- Support Technician
- Website Administrator
- Website Designer

## Health & Social Care

### Types of job roles:

- Healthcare Assistant
- Healthcare Support Worker
- Home Care Support Worker
- Key workers in residential, domiciliary or day services
- Mental Health Support or Outreach Worker
- Night Care Assistant
- Personal Assistant
- Re-enablement Worker
- Relief Team Worker
- Substance Misuse Worker
- Support Worker – supported living

### These may be within:

Retirement and residential homes, hospitals, outreach support centres and local councils.

## Nail Technology

### Nail Technicians may work within:

- Nail salons
- Beauty salons
- Cruise ships
- Spas

## Hairdressing & Barbering

### A Hairdresser or Barber may work within:

- Cruise ships
- Model agencies
- Salons
- Theatres
- TV companies



## Beauty Therapy

### Beauty Therapists or Technicians may work within:

- Cruise ships
- Spas
- Hotels
- Model agencies
- Salons
- Theatres
- TV companies

## Customer Service

### Types of job roles:

- Call Centre Advisor/ Customer Advisor
- Customer Relationship Manager / Co-ordinator / Team Leader
- Customer Service Trainee / Assistant
- Receptionist
- Sales Representative / Agent
- Telesales Executive

Apprenticeships are also now available in Brickwork, Creative Media & Design, Facilities, Laboratory Science, Management & Team Leadership and Warehousing.

## Accounting

### Types of job roles:

- Accounts Assistant
- Accounts Clerk
- Cashier
- Credit Control Clerk
- Finance Assistant
- Purchase Ledger Clerk
- Sales Ledger Clerk

## Painting & Decorating

### Types of job roles:

- Decorator (commercial, domestic)
- Industrial painter

## Carpentry & Joinery

### Types of job roles:

- Bathroom Fitter
- Joiner / Site Carpenter
- Kitchen Fitter
- Shop Fitter



# Your Apprenticeship Journey

We've split the process of becoming an apprentice into manageable steps - use this journey map for guidance and inspiration. You can tick to mark off your progress: ✓

- The first step and possibly one of the most difficult is deciding which Apprenticeship you want to complete. If you are still unsure, please see pages 5-7 for information on the various apprenticeships or visit [www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships)
- View our current vacancies at [www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies](http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies), or for advice email [apprenticeships@boltoncc.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@boltoncc.ac.uk)

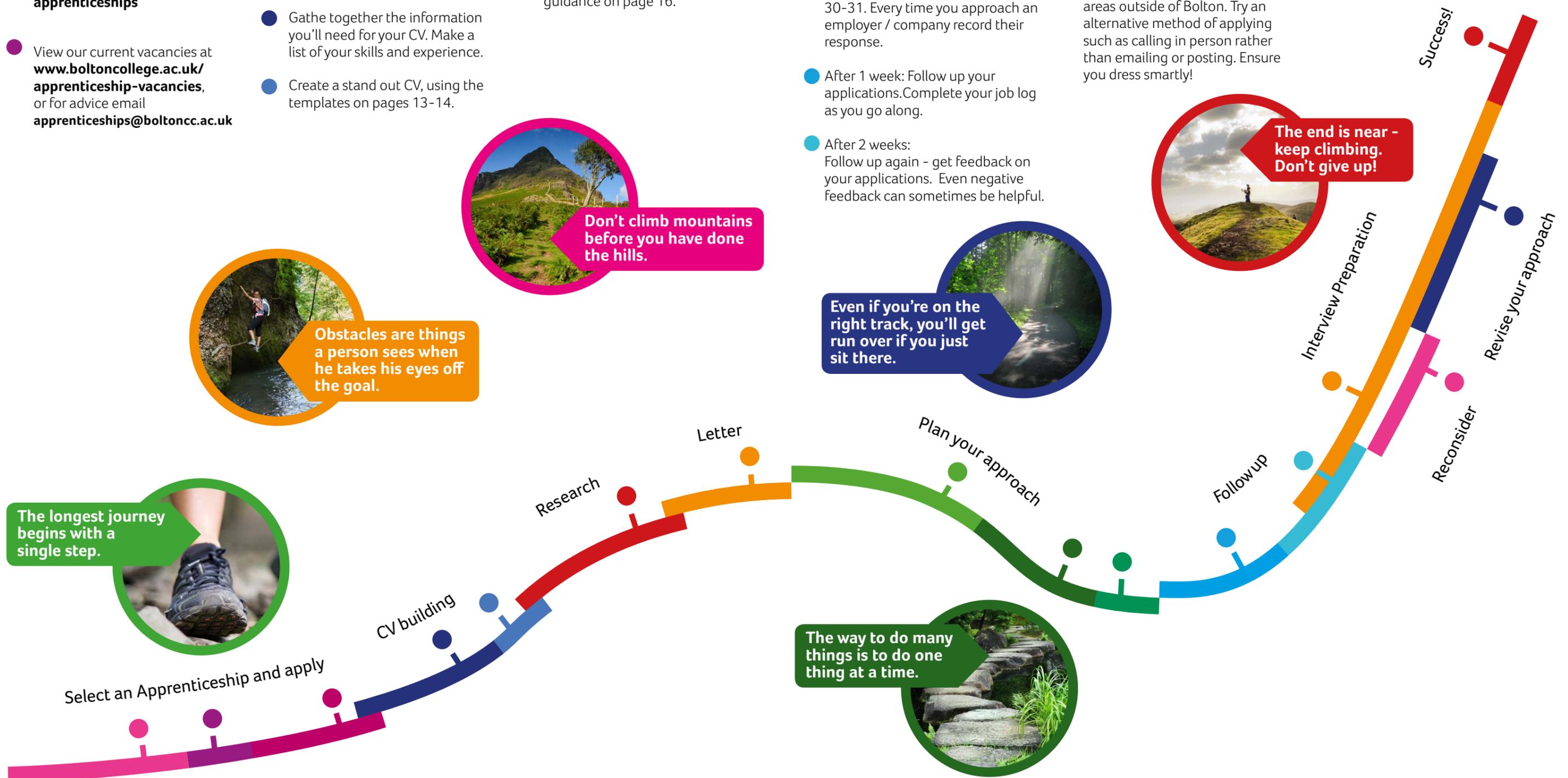
- Once we have received your application we'll invite you for an informal interview and an initial assessment. Your details will also be added to our talent pool database and you will be contacted if any suitable vacancies arise.
- Gather together the information you'll need for your CV. Make a list of your skills and experience.
- Create a stand out CV, using the templates on pages 13-14.

- Register and view current Apprenticeship vacancies on the National Apprenticeship Service website at [www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)
- Create a letter of application / speculative letter, using the guidance on page 16.

- Make a list of employers / companies you would like to work for. See pages 10-11 for help. Search the internet for each employer's address, email and telephone number. Decide whether you are going to contact them in person, by phone or by email.
- Plan a timetable of when you are going to approach these companies. Stick to your plan!
- Fill in your job log on pages 30-31. Every time you approach an employer / company record their response.
- After 1 week: Follow up your applications. Complete your job log as you go along.
- After 2 weeks: Follow up again - get feedback on your applications. Even negative feedback can sometimes be helpful.

- Secured an interview? Refer to pages 21-25 for advice on how to prepare for an interview and tips on how to answer interview questions effectively.
- If you didn't get an interview, visit [www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships) and view the Apprenticeship section. You might want to consider a different Apprenticeship route.
- No luck? Don't give up... Create a new log of employers / companies. Branch out: consider areas outside of Bolton. Try an alternative method of applying such as calling in person rather than emailing or posting. Ensure you dress smartly!

- Found an employer? Contact the Apprenticeship Team on **01204 482 036**, who will invite you in for a basic skills assessment. They will also liaise with your employer to ensure you get the support you need.



## First Steps

Now that you are sure which Apprenticeship you want to complete, the next step is finding an employer or a vacancy.

Competition for places with employers can be fierce, so you will need to show that you are committed, enthusiastic and passionate about the industry that you are hoping to enter.

If you are registered with Jobcentre Plus, ask them if they can put you forward for any free training or employability courses. Any training that you complete will enhance your CV and help to keep you motivated!

If the Job centre put you in contact with employment agencies, ensure that you maintain regular contact with them, as they often have members of staff that are employed to engage with local employers and secure vacancies for you!

Attend as many careers / jobs fairs as possible; employers attend these because they want to recruit!

## How do I find an employer?

We asked a selection of local employers what recruitment methods they generally use when recruiting a new employee. Here's what they said:

### Word of mouth / recommendation - 52%

Tell everyone that you are looking for an Apprenticeship - talk to friends, family, past employers and teachers

### Jobcentre Plus - 43%

Check daily

### Job search websites - 43%

Register with a variety of job search websites (find a useful list opposite)

### Company website - 35%

Check the careers, vacancy and jobs pages on company websites

### Recruitment agencies - 29%

Register with recruitment agencies that specialise in your chosen sector

### Casual / speculative applications - 24%

Email, telephone, send a letter or visit a number of employers on the off-chance that they may have a vacancy)

### Local newspapers - 19%

Check the job newspapers regularly, and look out for a recruitment night

### Social network sites - 5%

(Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)

Regularly follow company pages and look out for recruitment advertisements

The majority of the employers said that word of mouth, recommendation and the Jobcentre Plus are the most effective methods of recruitment.

## Hidden vacancies and speculative applications

Many vacancies never get advertised, so you need to be on the lookout. Check the local press for firms that are expanding or new businesses opening in your area. If you get in first, it will show an employer that you are resourceful and can use your initiative. Even if they have no current vacancies, they may retain your details for future reference.

## Useful job search websites:

Total jobs  
Reed  
TES / Eteach  
Indeed

jobs.bolton news  
Fish4jobs  
Your council jobs

To search for Apprenticeship vacancies, register your details with The National Apprenticeship Service at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk). Also, regularly check [www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies](http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies) and Jobcentre Plus: [www.gov.uk/jobsearch](http://www.gov.uk/jobsearch)

Before you start approaching employers and registering with job search websites, you must ensure that you have a winning CV. For support on how to write a high-quality CV, read on.

# CV Guidance - how to write a winning CV

## What is the purpose of a CV?

A CV is a brief representation of you; it is an advertising tool which should sell your skills, qualities and experience to an employer.

**You must remember that the main aim of your CV is to secure an interview!**

## How should I structure my CV?

There are many different types of CV, but there is no correct way to format your CV. You just need to remember that regardless of the CV format that you choose, it needs to 'sell' you in the best possible light.

- Skills based – This type of CV emphasises your personal qualities, skills and voluntary work rather than your employment. It is a very popular choice for school leavers, learners and graduates.
- Employment based – For those with a good, long work history. This CV will highlight your job-specific skills and experience.

89.5% of employers asked said that their preferred method of application is a CV with a covering letter. Therefore, don't forget to include a covering letter every time you send your CV to an employer.

## How to ensure your CV stands out from the rest – what employers suggest

Employers and recruiters are human beings, and, just like you and me, they get tired. Just imagine if you had over 50 CVs to look through, and you couldn't go home until you had done it. This is why it's important that your CV is clear, concise and stands out.

We asked numerous local employers, 'Which skills and qualities are of most importance when recruiting a new employee?' The results, in order of importance, are shown in the table below.

Qualities	Skills
1. Adaptability	1. Basic Skills
2. Initiative	2. Problem solving
3. Reliability & punctuality	3. Interpersonal & team work
4. Enthusiasm	4. Verbal communication
5. Flexibility	5. Job specific
6. Ability to work unsupervised	6. Academic & professional
7. Confidence	7. Written
8. Well organised	8. Management & leadership
9. Ambition & drive	

**What should you do with this information? If you possess these qualities and skills, ensure that your CV highlights them!**

Take a few moments to write five reasons why you want to enter the industry you have chosen. This will help provide you with a focus for your CV, letters of application and interviews.

## CV Example 1

Jane Bloggs  
123 Plodder Lane  
Bolton, BL1 1BB  
Telephone: 07979 123 456 / 01204 123 456  
Email: jane.bloggs@exampleemail.co.uk

### Personal Profile

I am a confident and enthusiastic young person looking for an opportunity to gain on-the-job training and qualifications within the Business Administration field. I have excellent IT and written communication skills, and I gained work experience in this sector through working for a local primary school. I am certain that this is the right career choice for me, and I am looking forward to starting work and learning new skills.

### Education/Qualifications

St Mary's Secondary School	Sept 2010 - July 2015
<b>GCSEs</b>	
Music	Grade A
Business Studies	Grade B
English Literature	Grade B
English Language	Grade B
Mathematics	Grade C
Double Award Science	Grade C, C
Physical Education	Grade C
<b>BTEC IT.</b>	Distinction

### School Work Experience

St Joseph's Primary School	July 2014
Two weeks' experience as an Office Junior within the school administration office.	
My duties included:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photocopying and printing important documents - maintaining confidentiality</li> <li>• Filing alphabetically</li> <li>• Answering telephone calls in a professional manner and directing calls appropriately</li> <li>• Typing and posting letters, including using the franking machine</li> <li>• Any other tasks asked of me – following instructions and being flexible</li> <li>• Working as part of a team – developing my verbal communication skills</li> </ul>	

### Voluntary Work / Achievements

Duke of Edinburgh	May 2015
3 core units:	
<b>Voluntary work</b> – I assisted with the running of the school tuck shop two lunchtimes per week. My duties included ordering stock, assisting with the finances and serving customers. This experience involved using my initiative and working unsupervised.	
<b>Fitness</b> – Two-day expedition, which I completed successfully. As a team of four, we were given a map that we used to navigate ourselves from point A to point B. This involved 10 miles of walking and overnight camping. The expedition helped me to develop problem-solving and teamwork skills.	
<b>Skill</b> – I am a very enthusiastic and committed guitar player and I practise most days of the week.	

### Additional information

I am confident using a variety of software packages, including Microsoft Word and Excel, and I have excellent typing skills. In addition, I am responsible for looking after my younger brother and sister at weekends whilst my mother is at work. This shows that I am a mature and trustworthy young person.

**Excellent references supplied on request**

Always tell the truth on your CV!  
Employers will refer to your CV during the interview and you will be asked to give examples of when you have used these skills and qualities.

**DO**

- Use a clear font style and size
- Use clear subheadings
- Format and align sections
- Keep the length to 2 single-sided A4 pages
- Use a sensible email address!

**DON'T**

- Use photographs
- Print on coloured or poor quality paper

Joe Bloggs  
123 Plodder Lane  
Bolton  
BL1 1BB  
Telephone: 07979 123 456 / 01204 123 456  
Email: joe.bloggs@exampleemail.co.uk

## Personal Profile

I am a confident and hardworking young person looking for an opportunity to gain on-the-job training and qualifications within the plastering trade. I have a good knowledge of the trade and excellent communication skills, in addition to having undertaken practical work experience in this field. I am certain that this is the right career choice for me and I am looking forward to starting work and learning new skills.

## Job-Specific Skills

- Health & Safety awareness - CSCS card holder
- Competent using the appropriate tools for the trade, including trowel, hawk and spirit level
- Team player but can also be trusted to work independently
- Reliable and punctual - excellent school attendance record and references
- Full, clean driving licence

## Education/Qualifications

### Bolton Secondary School 9 GCSEs including:

Sept 2009 - July 2014

Physical Education	Grade B
Mathematics	Grade C
English	Grade C
Science	Grade C

### BTEC Extended Certificate in Construction (Level 2) - Merit

Units included:

- Exploring Health & Safety
- Associated Theory & Underpinning Knowledge
- Practical Plastering

### BTEC Certificate in Construction (Level 1) - Merit

Units included:

- Building Maintenance Skills
- Moving and Handling Resources
- Developing Bricklaying, Carpentry & Joinery, Painting & Decorating, Plumbing, Electrical Installation and Plastering Skills.

## Paid Employment

### S&J Construction Temporary Labourer

July 2014 - August 2014

Typical domestic contracts included: new homes, flats, extensions and refurbishments.

My duties included:

- Assisting the plasterers with their work and cleaning working areas
- Loading out materials within the working areas
- Assisting with constructing, repairing and restoring walls and other surfaces
- Mixing up and heavy lifting
- Abiding by Health and Safety regulations and carrying out own risk assessments
- Working weekends and evenings and travelling to various locations
- Any other duties asked of me

Only detail your grades if they are A\*-C.

If you **do not have any A\*-C grades**, write the following: GCSEs in the following subjects: Mathematics, English and Science.

If you **have up to three A\*-C grades**, write the following: 10 GCSEs, including Mathematics Grade C, English Grade C and Physical Education Grade C.

## School Work Experience

### Bloggs & Sons Plastering Ltd Two weeks' experience as a Trainee Plasterer.

July 2013

My duties included:

- Assisting the qualified plasterers with the completion of jobs within domestic and commercial properties (including social housing)
- Tiling kitchens and bathrooms, dry lining and skimming
- Using the appropriate tools in a safe manner
- Working as part of a team, ensuring that jobs were completed on time
- Liaising with customers in a polite and professional manner
- Arriving on time every day, also working weekends – attendance records available

## Additional information

- CSCS card holder – in date until July 2016
- First Aid Certificate – in date until July 2016

## Hobbies / Interests

In my spare time, I attend the gym three nights a week in order to keep fit and healthy. I play football for my local team, which shows that I am committed, reliable and a team player. I am also responsible for arranging the weekly tournaments, which requires good organisational skills.

References supplied on request

## Achievements / Voluntary Work

Try and think hard about the extra activities that you have done. This could be:



- Being a school prefect
- Sports mentoring
- Assisting with the family business
- Fixing computers for friends and family
- Being part of a band
- Sports or musical achievements
- Childminding for your siblings
- Organising events or sports matches
- Co-ordinating groups i.e. drama or dance groups.

Don't forget to bullet point the skills and qualities that you have gained from these activities.

## References

When an employer asks for your references, you need to include one from school/college **and** one from your work experience/past employers. These cannot be friends or family members!

# Letter Guidance - writing to employers

**Why send a covering letter?**  
Because, as mentioned previously, 89.5% of the employers that we asked said that their preferred method of application is a CV with a covering letter.

## Covering Letter Example

### What is a covering letter?

The majority of job adverts ask for a CV along with a letter of application or covering letter. Alternatively, job search websites may ask you for additional information once you have attached your CV.

A covering letter should accompany your CV every time you send your CV to an employer - whether that's by post, email, job search website or by hand.

The aim of your covering letter is to explain which job you are applying for and to grab the employers' interest so that they read your CV.

Your covering letter should aim to:

- Detail your interest in the job and the **company!**
- Highlight your skills, qualities and experience relevant to the role that you are applying for; don't just copy your CV - relate this to the job advert.
- Highlight any additional aspects that are not on your CV; i.e. full driving licence and own vehicle.
- Be positive and show your personality; don't let someone else write it for you.
- Be structured like a formal letter (see the example).
- Be targeted not generic! Do not send the same letter to numerous employers.

### Speculative Letters

What is the difference between a covering letter and a speculative letter?

A covering letter is in response to a job that you have seen advertised, whereas a speculative letter is when you have not seen a job advertised but you are enquiring as to

whether they may have a vacancy suitable for you. You can source a list of employers via **www.yell.com** (this is the online yellow pages).

**Top tips for speculative applications**  
If you decide to write to an employer to find out if there are any potential jobs:

- Spend a little time doing some background work. Find out as much as you can about the company that you would be interested in working for.
- Find out if they offer the types of jobs that you are interested in.
- Do not send one generic letter / email to numerous companies, as this will just be a waste of your valuable time. Speculative applications need to be targeted.



Jane Bloggs  
123 Plodder Lane  
Bolton  
BL1 1BB  
Telephone: 07979 123 456 / 01204 123 456  
Email: jane.bloggs@exampleemail.co.uk

Mr. Smith  
Business Manager  
Business Solutions  
Bolton  
BL3 3BB

1 September 2015

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am very interested in your recent job advertisement for a Business Administration Apprentice, as advertised on the National Apprenticeship website, reference number 155268. I have enclosed a copy of my CV for your consideration.

I am about to leave school with predicted GCSE grades A-C in nine subjects, including Business Studies, English and IT. I have excellent keyboard skills and I am competent using various IT packages, such as Microsoft Word and Excel. In addition to this, I have completed two weeks' work experience as an Office Junior at a local primary school. This experience enabled me to develop many skills, including telephone skills, team work and filing skills, which I feel would help me to successfully complete an Apprenticeship in Business Administration.

I would particularly like to work for Business Solutions because your company takes great pride in offering the highest quality customer service, and you support employees with their professional development. Excellent customer service and continuing professional development are areas that I personally feel are important; therefore, I am sure that, if given the opportunity, I would become a valuable member of your team.

I am a very enthusiastic and approachable young person, and I am eager to work alongside experienced professionals in order to learn new skills. I hope that you will consider me for interview, for which I can make myself available at any time to suit your convenience.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Bloggs

Jane Bloggs  
Enc. C.V

Remember, the aim of your covering letter is to attract the employer's interest so that they read your CV.

Your opening paragraph needs to get straight to the point but also show **enthusiasm**.

★ **Top tip:** A weak covering letter means your application is likely to be tossed into the rejection pile, before your CV is even read. ★

## Speculative Letter Example - enquiring if a vacancy exists

Joe Bloggs  
123 Plodder Lane  
Bolton  
BL1 1BB

Telephone: 07979 123 456 / 01204 123 456  
Email: joe.bloggs@exampleemail.co.uk

Mr. Jones  
Plastering Manager  
Construction Trades Ltd  
Bolton  
BL1 1BB

1 September 2015

Dear Mr. Jones,

Having recently completed a *BTEC Extended Certificate in Construction* (Levels 1 and 2), I am now extremely keen to secure employment as an Apprentice Plasterer within your team at Construction Trades Ltd.

*There is a variety of funding available to encourage organisations to employ young apprentices, which could help towards the costs of wages. I hope that this is of interest to you, and for further information, I ask that you contact Bolton College's Apprenticeship Team: apprenticeships@boltoncc.ac.uk / 01204 482 036.*

As you will see from the enclosed copy of my CV, I have gained over two months' valuable experience working as a Plasterer's Labourer, which has enabled me to develop various job-specific skills. These include:

- Carrying out own risk assessments
- Working to customer and building specifications
- Working as part of a small team
- Communicating effectively with customers

I am flexible with working hours and willing to travel, and am currently awaiting my provisional driving licence so that I can start lessons immediately. I have already purchased various plastering tools, and I am looking to expand my toolkit once I have secured employment.

I am a very enthusiastic and confident young person, eager to work alongside experienced professionals in order to learn new skills. I hope that you will consider me for interview, for which I can make myself available at any time to suit your convenience.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Bloggs

Joe Bloggs  
Enc. C.V

Include information within your letter that is not on your CV, but ensure that it is specific to the job role you're seeking.

**Top tip:** Search for job vacancies within your sector in order to identify the skills and qualities that employers regard as desirable or essential. ★★

Your speculative letter can be printed and posted to employers along with your CV. Alternatively, you can hand it in personally to employers, or copy and paste it into the main body of an email.

## Follow-Up Letter Example - showing further interest in a vacancy

Jane Bloggs  
123 Plodder Lane  
Bolton  
BL1 1BB

Telephone: 07979 123 456 / 01204 123 456  
Email: jane.bloggs@exampleemail.co.uk

Mr. Smith  
Business Manager  
Business Solutions  
Bolton  
BL3 3BB

1 September 2015

Dear Mr. Smith,

I submitted my CV earlier this month, with a covering letter enquiring as to whether you would consider me becoming part of your team as a Business Administration Apprentice.

I am very interested in working for Business Solutions and I believe that my skills and GCSE qualifications would be an ideal match for this type of position.

If necessary, I would be happy to resend my CV or to provide any further information that you might need. I can be reached on 01204 123 456 / jane.bloggs@exampleemail.co.uk

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Bloggs

Jane Bloggs

### Finding a job: Out of the box ideas

- Visit places where people from your industry gather and talk to people working in the profession e.g. construction trade centres.
- Do your college lecturers have any contacts that you could speak to?
- Map out all local employers in your field (use yell.com listings combined with Google Maps).
- Ask employers for an unpaid trial. (Be sure to set a fixed duration for this, with a review at the end and make clear that you would like a satisfactory trial to lead to a permanent position.)

Ensure your social media profile pictures and name(s) are appropriate - a growing number of employers check future employees' profiles on social sites. ★

# Telephone Techniques

As we have previously discovered, many employers do not need to advertise their vacancies because they receive so many speculative applications.

Although applying speculatively can be frustrating, and can appear to have a relatively low response rate, if you do find an employer with a vacancy, there will usually be less competition. Therefore, it is worth spending time making speculative applications.

## Things to find out

Research the company and find out:

- Do they offer the types of positions that you are interested in?
- Where are they based?
- What is the company ethos / mission statement?
- What is the name of the manager or recruitment manager?
- What do they look for in an employee? - look at their person specifications on the jobs / careers page

★ It's better to call in the morning because employers will prioritise their tasks early in the morning and may not be able to spare you any time in the afternoon. ★

Before and during the call:

- Write down what you want to say – this can be similar to your speculative letter.
- Do you know anyone at the company who may be able to recommend you? If yes, then mention them during the call. Be careful! Ensure that they are a good employee and that you have informed them that you may be mentioning their name.
- Anticipate the employer asking some interview-type questions – prepare your answers! (For tips on how to answer interview questions, see the interview techniques section of this booklet).
- Greet them, "Good morning, my name is Jane Bloggs..."
- Be clear and confident.
- Be clear about what's in it for them; i.e. possible government funding, they only have to pay you a minimum of £3.30 an hour, they can train you to their standards, etc.
- Ask if they are free at any time for you to visit them to discuss it further.
- Ask them to keep your details on file for future vacancies.
- Ask for their email address so that you can email them your CV.
- Keep trying! Analyse what you did that was successful and what you could improve on – the more you do it the better you'll get!

# Telephone Interviews

While you're actively job searching, it is important to be prepared for a phone call at a moment's notice. You never know when a recruiter might call and ask if you have a few minutes to talk.

Record a sensible answering machine message on your mobile phone. ★  
★ A silly message will not create a good first impression!

## Preparing for a telephone interview

You need to prepare for a phone interview just as you would for a regular interview.

- Keep your CV in clear view so that you're ready to answer questions.
- Have a short list of your accomplishments available to refer to.
- Have a pen and paper handy for taking notes.
- If the time isn't convenient, ask if you could talk at another time and suggest some alternatives.
- Clear the room! Evict the kids and the pets, turn off the stereo and the TV, and close the door.

## During a Phone Interview

### DO

- Keep a glass of water handy, in case you need to wet your mouth.
- Smile! Smiling will project a positive image to the listener and will change the tone of your voice.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use the person's title (Mr. or Ms.) and their last name. Only use a first name if they ask you to.
- Take your time - it's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.
- Give short answers.
- Remember that your goal is to set up a face-to-face interview. After you thank the interviewer, ask if it would be possible to meet in person.
- Most importantly... **be enthusiastic!**

### DON'T

- Smoke, chew gum, eat, or drink.
- Interrupt the interviewer.

# Interview Techniques

So you have been offered an interview - congratulations! Now it's important to make sure that you are properly prepared. Before a job interview, it is important to think about all the reasons why you are attending it and what you have to offer the organisation.

Remember, when interviewing for an Apprenticeship, the employer is not expecting you to have lots of experience; they just want to see that you are enthusiastic about the job, willing to listen and learn, and that you are reliable.

## Preparing for an interview

**1**  
Do your homework! Find out as much as you can about the company and what the job will involve. If you know anyone that works for them, ask them for advice.

**2**  
Double check the time and date of your interview.



**3**  
Plan your journey. Do a trial run and ensure that you arrive on time or early.



**4**  
The night before your interview, decide what you are going to wear.



**5**  
Organise all of your certificates (GCSEs, sporting achievements, etc.) and any information that you need to take with you, such as identification and licences.

**6**  
Know your CV, word for word.

**7**  
Think about the questions that you may be asked and plan your answers.



Not all interviews are conducted on a one-to-one basis. You might be invited to other types of interviews. Here are some examples:

- Group interviews
- Skills or ability tests
- Work trials

81% of employers asked said that they would consider an applicant who had the right attitude and enthusiasm, but no experience.

95% of employers asked said that they use 1-2-1 interviews as part of their recruitment process.

If you are unable to attend an interview, please notify the employer as soon as you are able. Employers' time is very valuable and failing to tell them will ruin your chances of rearranging your interview.

We welcome apprentices. They are the skilled employees of the future.

Jackson, Jackson & Sons  
(Construction & Engineering)

## First Impressions And Non-Verbal Communication (NVC)

Remember - **first impressions last!** We all make judgements based on first impressions, and employers will do the same.

**Dress Code** - This is one of the most important areas of non-verbal communication. Appropriate dress code for an interview:

**Female:** Smart trousers / skirt, blouse and jacket. No short skirts, low cut tops or flip flops.

**Male:** Black trousers, smart black shoes, shirt and appropriate tie, plus a suit jacket if you feel comfortable. No trainers, boots, t-shirts or shorts!

**Eye Contact** - Maintain eye contact to show that you are listening and are interested in what the interviewer has to say.

**Posture** - Posture can also show how attentive and enthusiastic you are. Try not to slouch or lean on the chair / table. Keep your posture open, by not folding your arms or legs.

**Facial Expressions** - Facial expressions are difficult to control, but try to smile and not to frown. Enthusiasm and understanding can also be conveyed by simply nodding your head.

**Gestures** - Using your hands whilst you talk can often emphasise what you are saying, and highlight your enthusiasm.

**Always** shake the interviewers' hands when you meet them and when you leave.

**Always** thank the interviewer for seeing you, and reiterate how interested you are in the company and the role.

Finally, **try to relax and be confident!**

We're led to believe that university is the only route to success. Not going to university doesn't mean your life is over, nor does it mean you can't be successful. We're here to inspire, advise, give you opportunities and help you to succeed in your chosen path. Welcome to the University of Life!

Not Going to Uni  
[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)

# Interview Questions

Do you have difficulty knowing how to answer interview questions? Or, maybe you have never had an interview before?

This section will provide you with common interview questions and tips on how to answer them effectively.

## Preparing questions for an interview



Although you cannot predict what questions you will be asked in an interview, you really can help yourself by preparing answers for some common questions.

When preparing your answers, remember **STAR**.

**S** – Situation: Describe the situation and background - set the scene

**T** – Task (or Target): Explain the specifics of what was required (When? Where? Who?)

**A** – Action: What did you do? (Skills used, behaviours, characteristics)

**R** – Result: What was the outcome? What did you learn?

## What are competency-based questions?

- Competency-based questions ask you about your behaviour in specific circumstances, which you then need to back up with concrete examples.

### Q. Tell me about yourself.

- Keep to the point.
- Don't include details that they already know, such as your name.
- Prepare your response in 3 steps and then put those steps together:

1. Work out what the 3 most important qualities are for the job. Begin your answer by stating that you have these qualities.
2. Say where you last worked (or mention the job that is most relevant to the role that you are applying for) and pick one or two things that you have achieved at that job.
3. Say why you want to work for this particular company, show enthusiasm and knowledge of the industry, and state why you want this job role.

### Q. What attracted you to this job?

- Be enthusiastic!
- Talk about what appeals to you about the job and the company.
- It would also be beneficial to talk about why this type of Apprenticeship interests you; for example, because you have some related experience and skills.
- **Do not** say that the salary, benefits or hours attracted you to the job!

### Q. What do you know about our company?

- The key to this question is research. If you are prepared, you should be able to answer this easily. Research their company 'ethos' or 'values'.
- Look at the company's website, Facebook page, LinkedIn page, or search for items about the company on Google News.
- Phone the company and ask them to send their brochure or marketing leaflets for you to read in advance.
- The company will want to hear lots of praise, such as how fantastic you think they are, and what a good reputation they have.
- You can also mention how much you would like to be a part of their company, and how well you would fit into their team.

If you have not had any part-time jobs, then simply talk about the work experience that you gained at school.

### Q. Describe a situation where you worked in a team.

The interviewer needs to assess how well you relate to other people, what role you take within a group, and whether you are able to focus on goals and targets.

- Remember STAR!
- Outline the situation, your particular role and the task that the group faced.
- Describe any problems that arose and how they were tackled.
- Say what the result was and what you learnt from it.

### Q. You haven't got any direct experience for this position. How will you get up to speed?

- You need to show the employer that you are realistic and that you know how to learn quickly.
- Mention your **transferable skills**. Transferable skills are skills that you have acquired during any activity in your life, be it through jobs, hobbies, voluntary work, parenting, or educational projects. This applies to virtually any skill that may be relevant to your next job.

If you are unsuccessful at interview, ensure that you contact the company and ask for feedback. If you do not gain this feedback, you will not know how to improve your interview skills.

You can request feedback over the telephone, by letter or by email. Please see the next page for an example of a letter.



## Feedback Request Letter Example

Jane Bloggs  
123 Plodder Lane  
Bolton  
BL1 1BB

Telephone: 07979 123 456 / 01204 123 456  
Email: jane.bloggs@exampleemail.co.uk

Mr. Smith  
Business Manager  
Business Solutions  
Bolton  
BL3 3BB

30 September 2015

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to interview me for the position of Business Administration Apprentice, on 21st September 2015.

Although I was unsuccessful in my application, I still found the interview to be a valuable learning experience. I understand that there was a great deal of competition for the post.

I would like to improve my application and interview skills, and I would be most grateful if you could provide me with some feedback on my performance, so that I may do better in future.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Bloggs

Jane Bloggs

You may choose to email the interviewer rather than send a letter. Set it out like a letter, including your contact details. You may choose to sign off with "Kind regards," rather than "Yours sincerely."  
If they have not sent a reply within a week, feel free to send another email to make sure that they received it.

## Bolton College's Apprenticeships: FAQ's

### How do I get an Apprenticeship? How can I apply?

**To become an Apprentice you need to have an employer.** Is this something that you already have?

**If the answer is yes**, and you have already been successful in finding an employer who is willing to support you in your Apprenticeship, you can call the Apprenticeship Team on **01204 482 036**.

You will be asked to provide details of who you are, along with your employer's details. You will then be invited in for an interview, and to complete the Basic Skills assessment.

We will contact your employer, and once they have confirmed that they are happy to support you in the Apprenticeship, you will be offered a place on the course and given a start date.

**If the answer is no**, you will need to do the following:

- Visit our website at **[www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships)** for information and details on when to apply. Apprenticeship applicants must be aged 16 or over, have finished their school education, have gained any required entry qualifications (or are awaiting the outcome of these exams) and be ready to start work straight away.
- View our current vacancies on the National Apprenticeship Services website at **[www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies](http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies)**
- Submit an application form online. We will update you on the progress of your application and then invite you into college for an informal interview and initial assessment. We'll also let you know if any other suitable vacancies arise.



# Bolton College's Apprenticeships: FAQ's continued

## What does an Apprenticeship involve?

An Apprenticeship is a real job with training. So, you can earn while you learn; picking up recognised qualifications whilst being paid a wage by your employer.

As an employee, you will be working at the company alongside attending college or taking in-house training for your qualification (depending on your Apprenticeship).

Your employment should cover a minimum of 30 hours per week, but in a small number of circumstances this may not be possible. In such cases, employment can be for 16 or more hours per week.



## Can you recommend any employers?

We can recommend you to any of our employers that have current vacancies at the time of your enquiry. You can also view and apply for our current vacancies on the National Apprenticeship Services website at [www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies](http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies). Alternatively, you can search online business directories, such as [www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com), to find employers in your area and approach them to see if they will employ you as an apprentice.

## Is there an age limit for Apprentices?

There is no upper age limit on Apprenticeships; however, there is limited funding for Apprentices aged 19+.

## When will I start College?

Most areas work on a 'roll-on roll-off' basis, meaning that there are staggered start dates throughout the year. For example, if you find an employer in December, you can start your Apprenticeship straight away and we will arrange a college start date with you.



## What Apprenticeships are on offer?

Accounting - Activity Leadership(Coaching) - Barbering - Beauty Therapy - Brickwork  
Business Admin - Carpentry & Joinery - Catering & Hospitality - Childcare  
Clinical Healthcare - Customer Service - Design - Domestic Heating & Ventilation  
Electrical Installation - Exercise & Fitness - Facilities Hairdressing - Health & Social Care  
IT - Lab Technicians - Management Manufacturing - Marketing - Nail Technology  
Painting & Decorating - Plastering - Plumbing - Professional Cookery - Roof Slating & Tiling - Supporting Teaching & Learning - Supporting Teaching & Learning (in Physical Education & School Sport) - Team Leading - Vehicle Body Repair - Vehicle Maintenance  
Vehicle Refinishing - Warehousing & Storage

## What is the Apprenticeship wage?

The current Apprentice National Minimum Wage is £3.30 per hour (as of 1st October 2015). This applies to all apprentices aged 16 to 18, and to those aged 19 and over in the first year of their Apprenticeship. However, as your skills develop, many employers tend to increase wages; in fact, research shows that an average apprentice earns £225 per week in the UK.

If you reach age 19 and have completed the first year of your Apprenticeship, your employer must pay you at least the National Minimum Wage for those aged 18-20 (currently £5.30).

If you are already aged 19 or over, and have completed the first year of your Apprenticeship, you must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage for your age (£5.30, rising to £6.70 for those aged 21 and over).



## What is an initial assessment?

An initial assessment is a basic skills test to see what level you are currently working at and to see if any support may be required.





# How to Secure Yourself an Apprenticeship



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