Apprenticeships Explained – Frequently Asked Questions

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a job that combines practical training with study. Apprentices will earn a wage while working alongside experienced staff to gain job specific skills. They will be given time to study – the equivalent of one day a week.

How old do I need to be to enrol on an apprenticeship?

Anyone can enrol on to an apprenticeship as long as they are over 16, there is no maximum age.

For Islington Council Apprenticeships - anyone aged 16 or over, who has reached the statutory school leaving date, can apply for an apprenticeship; there is no upper age limit. Applications are encouraged from Islington residents, Islington school leavers and Islington care leavers.

Always check the eligibility criteria on the apprenticeship job advert before submitting an application.

What levels of apprenticeship are there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Equivalent educational level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 GCSE passes at grade A*–C or 9 – 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 A level passes/Level 3 Diploma/International Baccalaureate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>4, 5, 6 and 7</td>
<td>Foundation degree and above</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>6 and 7</td>
<td>Bachelor’s or master’s degree</td>
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How much money can apprentices earn?

All apprentices in their first year and those under age 19 earn a minimum of £4.15 per hour. The Treasury has announced the next increase in minimum wage for apprentices will be in April, with the rate going up from £4.15 to £4.30. This is the minimum apprentices can earn - many employers pay a lot more and offer their apprentices a competitive salary. This is also dependent on the sector, region and apprenticeship levels.
An apprenticeship wage rises in line with progression through an apprenticeship or if the apprentice is older. It is worth bearing in mind that apprentices receive training in their chosen job at no extra cost.

The Apprenticeship Pay Survey 2016 estimated the average gross hourly pay received by apprentices in Great Britain was £6.70 an hour for level 2 and 3 apprentices which is equivalent to nearly £14,000 per year.

The average starting salary for a degree apprenticeship in 2019 was £17,800 per year, according to the Incomes Data Research (IDR)

Some employers will choose to pay the London Living Wage to the apprentices. Islington Council is a London Living Wage employer – the annual apprenticeship salary is £19,802 per annum.

**Will I be entitled to annual leave?**

As an apprentice you will be entitled to at least one and a half days' paid holiday for every month of your training - you will also get bank holidays. Check your contract of employment to see what you have been given. You also have the right to at least 24 hours free from work in a week or 48 hours free in two weeks.

**Where can I apply for an apprenticeship?**

You can see apprenticeships advertised in many places online, though the government portal [https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship) is a very good place to start.

Visit Islington Council’s apprenticeship page to see the openings we have coming up [https://www.islington.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/apprenticeship](https://www.islington.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/apprenticeship)

**When can I start an apprenticeship?**

Apprenticeships can start at any time of the year, this depends on the employer and their needs. Employers advertise in the same way they would for jobs. However, many apprenticeships are linked to a college course and in some cases this means the apprenticeships starts in the autumn to fit in with the academic year.

**What is the difference between apprenticeships and internships?**

An internship does not carry employed status – it is not a job, it is more like volunteering or work experience.

While both offer hands on training, an internship is usually unpaid and short-term. Apprenticeships also have classroom based learning attached, meaning you will take part in
a structured training plan focusing on industry-specific skills. An internship will not lead to a qualification, but an apprenticeship will.

Can you apply for apprenticeships if you are already working?

Yes. There is nothing stopping you applying for an apprenticeship if you already have a job, though in most cases you will need to leave that job to take up the apprenticeship post as an apprenticeship is a full time commitment. Make sure to plan your notice period at your current job to coincide with the start date of the apprenticeship you are applying for.

Some apprentices might fit another job in at the weekend or during evenings if their apprenticeship hours don’t clash – but remember, there is a large amount of independent study involved during non-working hours so having an additional job may be too much for some people.

Can you do an apprenticeship if you have an EHC (Education, Health & Care) plan and/or special education needs?

Yes you can and in some cases you will be able to access extra support. An apprenticeship is a job – so it’s no different from applying for a job with SEN needs – you will likely see a section on the application form asking whether you have any disabilities or health needs to declare. Apprentices have the same employment rights as non-apprentices and the same protection from unfair discrimination.

There may be flexibility around the English and maths qualifications you would need to complete your apprenticeship. As with any other job, you can request extra support known as ‘reasonable adjustments’ for help with the application process and for support on the apprenticeship itself (both at work and while studying).

The government provides extra funding to support apprentices with SEN. Payments of £1000 each are available for training providers and employers with apprentices aged 19-24 who have an EHC plan.

What is a traineeship?

A traineeship is not an apprenticeship differs in many ways. They are shorter than apprenticeships, less of a commitment and are not paid. If you are aged 16-24 and not quite ready for an apprenticeship, a traineeship is a shorter term education and training programme with work experience to help you gain experience and knowledge. More information on traineeships can be found at https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship

More information about Apprenticeships can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/become-apprentice