

# UCAS' guide to apprenticeships in Scotland

Everything you  
need to know



**UCAS**  
Apprenticeships

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# Earn while you learn – study an apprenticeship

## Inside this guide you'll find:

- apprenticeship key facts
- the difference between a uni degree and a Graduate-Level Apprenticeship
- who they are for
- what they involve
- what apprenticeships are available
- entry requirements
- how and when to apply
- tips from unis offering Graduate-Level Apprenticeships



# Ten things you need to know about apprenticeships

**1. An apprenticeship is a real job with training.**

As an apprentice, you are expected to work hard, and are given real responsibilities, a contract of employment, holiday, and sick pay – exactly the same as any other member of staff! You will also gain a qualification, and valuable skills and experience.

**2. You will work towards a qualification.**

You will be supported by a training provider (a university or college), that will help you achieve your qualification and make sure you complete your apprenticeship.

**3. An apprenticeship usually takes between one and four years to complete.**

It depends on the level of apprenticeship/qualification you are taking, and what you have achieved so far.

**4. Apprenticeships have changed.**

Modern and Graduate-Level Apprenticeships are alternatives to traditional, full-time university or college courses, and there is a wide range of Modern Apprenticeships available.

**5. There are currently 19 Graduate-Level Apprenticeships available in four subject areas/industries.**

There are also more than 80 types of Modern Apprenticeship across hundreds of job roles.

**6. The majority of apprentices (around 92%) stay in employment.**

If they do change companies, it's usually because they're able to compete for a better job, perhaps with more pay or more responsibility.

**7. Graduate-Level Apprenticeships offer the benefits of higher education.**

This includes the opportunity to earn a salary from day one, so you will actually get paid to study.

**8. Graduate-Level Apprenticeships are still quite new.**

This means there are only a limited number of vacancies at the moment, but it's expected that the number and range of vacancies will grow over the next few years.

**9. You can progress from a Foundation or Modern Apprenticeship to a Graduate-Level Apprenticeship.**

If you complete these programmes, you can apply to become an apprentice at the next level of apprenticeship or education.

**10. You can apply for Modern and Graduate-Level Apprenticeships at the same time as applying to uni or college.**

Applications for apprenticeships are usually made directly to the employer, through their own application process. Details of how to apply will be given on each apprenticeship advert.

# What's the difference between doing a degree at uni and doing a Graduate-Level Apprenticeship?

Both routes offer the opportunity to gain a full degree qualification, but there are some key differences.

- Apprentices split their time between university or college and the workplace, and are employed throughout the course.
- Traditional degrees offer a broader choice of courses, subjects, subject combinations, and the range of modules you can cover. Graduate-Level Apprenticeships have been developed with employers, so the course content is industry-specific.
- Graduate-Level Apprenticeships are focused on developing the skills and knowledge for specific jobs and careers. They include transferable skills, considered relevant by industry, employers, and universities and colleges. Traditional degree courses, on the other hand, offer a wide range of career prospects. Some are focused on particular professions which still require a traditional degree that cannot yet be attained with a Graduate-Level Apprenticeship. Others offer different options after graduation, with students going on to a variety of job roles and career destinations.
- The experience of student life will be different for apprentices. Traditional on-campus learning, with the social life it offers, can be particularly important to some students. While Graduate-Level apprentices do experience some elements of campus life, they are first and foremost employees.
- You will be paid a wage throughout your apprenticeship, and as an employee, further funding through SAAS won't be available. The earning potential of Graduate-Level apprentices and graduates is high – significantly higher than non-graduates. Of course, this varies depending on the job roles and careers you choose to go into.





# Who are apprenticeships for?

**Modern Apprenticeships** are designed for Scottish statutory minimum school leaving age – for most people, that's 16.

**For a Graduate-Level Apprenticeship**, you must be resident in Scotland to apply, and:

- the employer's premises must be in Scotland
- you must have the right to live and work in Scotland
- some vacancies may be for aged 18 and over, because of specific workplace or health and safety requirements. There is no upper age limit
- if you've already done a degree with SAAS funding, you can still do a Graduate-Level Apprenticeship if it's a higher level qualification
- any international applicants must contact the university/college and employer to check any additional eligibility criteria

**Apprenticeships aren't the 'easy option'**. Holding down a full-time job and studying takes commitment and hard work, and it won't be right for everyone, just as a traditional degree course is not for everyone. So do your research and find out if there's a way to get to the career or job role you want through an apprenticeship. This will help you decide if you would prefer to study full-time at a university or college, or if you would prefer to go into the workplace.

**Apprenticeships may suit someone who:**

- has a clear idea of the job or career they want to pursue, and is willing to commit to a vocational pathway
- is ready to start work with an employer, as an apprenticeship is primarily a job
- wishes to continue to study at a higher level, and would prefer a more practical and work-related approach to study
- is well organised and able to cope with the competing demands of working and studying at the same time

**It's competitive out there...**

There are only a limited number of apprenticeship vacancies at SCQF Level 8 and above, but this is likely to change – [www.apprenticeships.scot](http://www.apprenticeships.scot) is a good source of information about vacancies.

# What does an apprenticeship involve?

- Apprentices are employed to do jobs, and spend most of the week at work, where they can focus on learning to do the job. You could be learning from colleagues across all levels of the business, typically working closely with someone more senior who will coach you and review your progress.
- You will also spend time attending a university, college, or training provider, or training at work.
- For Graduate-Level Apprenticeships, your university or college attendance will be agreed between you, the employer, and the learning provider.
- There are different attendance models, e.g. one day per week (day release), in blocks of a week or more (block release), or online study. Some providers use a combination of options. Like any degree or higher education programme, Graduate-Level Apprenticeships require self-study and project-based learning, for you to complete in your own time.
- You will complete assessments at different points in the programme.
- You can find out more about the range of apprenticeships available on the **My World of Work** website, [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk).



# What apprenticeships are available?

There is a wide range of apprenticeships, offering the opportunity to enter careers in anything from engineering and software development, to accountancy.

## Foundation Apprenticeships

These are usually taken alongside Highers and National 5s, starting in your fifth year at school (S5). You'll spend time at college and with an employer getting practical work experience.

You can then progress into work or onto a Modern Apprenticeship, or another course at a university or college. Foundation Apprenticeships are available in:

- business skills
- civil engineering
- creative and digital media
- engineering
- financial services
- hardware and system support
- scientific technologies
- social services – children and young people
- social services and healthcare
- software development

The Foundation Apprenticeship programme is still expanding, so what you can do depends on where your school is. Foundation apprentices are not employed.

## Modern Apprenticeships

There are over 80 Modern Apprenticeship frameworks – from healthcare and financial services, to construction, engineering, travel, and creative and digital media.

Modern apprentices are employed, and gain an accredited qualification which is recognised by the industry. You can find summaries of each type of Modern Apprenticeship and the related job roles on the **My World of Work** website – [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk).

# Graduate-Level Apprenticeships

There are currently four courses available in:

- IT – software development
- IT – management for business
- civil engineering
- engineering – design and manufacture

New courses are planned and in development, including:

- engineering: instrumentation, measurement, and control
- business management: financial services
- construction: built environment

# Universities and colleges offering Graduate-Level Apprenticeships

- University of the Highlands and Islands
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Robert Gordon University
- Glasgow Kelvin College
- Heriot-Watt University
- Edinburgh Napier University
- University of the West of Scotland
- University of Dundee
- University of Strathclyde

Other universities are likely to offer these programmes in 2018.

Find out more on the Skills Development Scotland 'Apprenticeships Scotland' website at [www.apprenticeships.scot](http://www.apprenticeships.scot).





# What are the entry requirements for apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are available at three levels. Each level has different entry requirements, which may depend on the skills and qualifications you hold.

SCQF level	Entry requirements
<p><b>Foundation Apprenticeships</b></p> <p>The same level and credit value as two Scottish Highers SVQ 2–3 / SCQF 5–6.</p>	<p>Designed for S5 – S6 students, these combine school learning, college learning, and work experience, and are studied alongside other school subjects.</p> <p>Entry to each is different, but generally you should be working towards National 5 qualifications and have the capacity to work at SCQF Level 6. Depending on the Foundation Apprenticeship subject, you may need to be studying particular subjects.</p>
<p><b>Modern Apprenticeships</b></p> <p>These are available at SCQF levels 5 to 11.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SCQF Level 5</b> – considered to be the same level as National 5.</li> <li>• <b>SCQF Level 6/7</b> – considered to be the same level as two A level or Advanced Higher passes.</li> <li>• <b>Technical Apprenticeships at SCQF Level 8/9</b> – considered to be the same level as HND or DipHE.</li> <li>• <b>Professional Apprenticeships at SCQF Level 10/11</b> – considered to be the same level as an honours degree/master’s degree.</li> </ul>	<p>You may need three or more National 4s to apply for a Modern Apprenticeship (or Standard Grades at general level) depending on the framework you are doing. Depending on the job role and the qualifications you already have, you might be able to start at a higher level.</p> <p>Check apprenticeship vacancies at <a href="http://www.apprenticeships.scot">www.apprenticeships.scot</a> to see if there are any specific subjects and grades you need to have.</p>
<p><b>Graduate-Level Apprenticeships</b></p> <p>Graduate-Level Apprenticeships are available at SCQF levels 8, 10, and 11.</p> <p>These work-based learning programmes enable apprentices doing the Level 10 apprenticeship to achieve a full honours degree.</p> <p>Levels available are equivalent to a full degree through to a postgraduate (Level 11) award, which can allow you to progress to a master’s degree.</p>	<p>Entry requirements vary depending on the specific job and apprenticeship framework. Most employers will be looking for similar qualifications to those required for a degree course, with some expecting or requiring you to have studied subjects related to the apprenticeship you’re applying for. Check apprenticeship vacancies to see if there are any specific subjects and grades you need to have.</p>

The level of apprenticeship you start at will depend on the kind of job you’re applying for, the qualifications you already hold, and any previous work experience. You usually start an apprenticeship at the level appropriate to the job and your skills and qualifications.

Each apprenticeship vacancy will set out the entry requirements and qualities the employer is looking for. Entry requirements are designed to recognise a candidate’s skills and experience, too. So if you don’t have the formal qualifications listed, this does not necessarily mean you won’t get accepted – it’s always worth getting in touch with the university or college to discuss your situation.

# Where can I find apprenticeship vacancies?

You can find and apply for apprenticeships on the Apprenticeships Scotland website at [www.apprenticeships.scot](http://www.apprenticeships.scot).

## How to apply

Each apprenticeship vacancy will specify how applicants need to apply – applications are usually made to the employer.

## When to apply

Apprenticeship vacancies appear throughout the year. Each vacancy will state a deadline for applications and start dates. Don't wait until the deadline to make an application – some companies close their recruitment as soon as they have a sufficient number of suitable candidates.

Vacancies with larger firms start appearing from September, but most are advertised from January or February onwards. Smaller businesses might start recruiting a month or two before the job starts.

You can find hints, tips, and advice to help you with your application at [www.ucas.com/apprenticeships](http://www.ucas.com/apprenticeships).





# Tips from unis and colleges offering Graduate-Level Apprenticeships

- 1. What are the key features and aptitudes of successful applicants?**

Willingness to work hard, because you will be studying and doing a full-time job, as well as confident and mature to handle their responsibilities in the workplace. Academically, they can have different types of qualifications.
- 2. What are the biggest challenges for young people doing a Graduate-Level Apprenticeship?**

Just making enough time to do everything in the day calls for great time management skills.
- 3. What advice would you give to students who are considering an apprenticeship but aren't sure if it's for them?**

Try to get some work experience in the sector you're interested in. Go to university and college open days and talk to the people who are delivering the programmes to find out more. There is a range of different study options, so think about what would suit your learning style. If you really aren't right for it, don't do it. Traditional degrees are very valuable and give people time to explore different options.
- 4. What are the top three things you look for in an application?**

Enthusiasm for the subject. Academic ability so we don't set up applicants to fail. And, finally, the applicant's character. This is really important – they need to be mature enough to enter the workplace, and dedicated enough to work and study at the same time.
- 5. What do you consider when deciding whether or not to interview applicants?**

They have to pass some basic grade thresholds, and online tests for numerical skills, aptitude, and attitudes.
- 6. What tips would you give applicants for their interviews?**

Remember you are being interviewed to be an employee, as well as a student. You need to present yourself as a person who can contribute in a real job. So, find out as much as you can about the company and the role, so you can ask intelligent questions.
- 7. Where can students get support when they are doing an apprenticeship?**

The employer will provide all the normal HR type support, as well as mentoring and line management, and input on career development in the company. Higher education providers will provide support with learning development and all the normal pastoral care, information, and advice that any other student would get.
- 8. What's your top tip for young people thinking about applying for an apprenticeship?**

Go for it! It's a really great opportunity that has the potential to set you up well for the rest of your life.

**Get advice, support,  
and guidance about  
apprenticeships  
direct to your inbox!**

- Keep your eyes peeled for a **'Pick your path'** email.
- Click **'Send me stuff about apprenticeships'**.
- Get info about finding the right apprenticeship for you, CV writing, interviews, and more **straight to your inbox!**

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