

# MAKING APPRENTICESHIPS WORK

Exclusive data and insights briefing  
for FE Week Annual Apprenticeship  
Conference delegates





# DEMAND FOR APPRENTICESHIPS FROM SCHOOL AND COLLEGE LEAVERS IS OUTSTRIPPING SUPPLY

## 1. UCAS data shows there is an increasing demand for higher and degree apprenticeships from school and college leavers.

- > In 2020, the UCAS New Applicant Survey showed 17.7% of 18-year-olds in England applying through UCAS said they were also applying for a degree apprenticeship.
- > By 2021 this figure rose to 18.3%, an increase of 0.6%, representing around 50,000 degree apprenticeship applicants.
- > This only represents English 18-year-olds that were also applying to university or college at the time and so actually represents an underestimate of the total demand from this group.
- > This is in the context of UCAS research which highlights 1 in 3 students do not receive information regarding apprenticeships (**Where Next? March 2021**) at school or college, and a lack of understanding of this provision, with individuals struggling to navigate this route (**Where Next? Apprenticeships, May 2021**).
- > More broadly, we know that 343,000 of 750,000 people who have set up a UCAS

account have expressed an interest in apprenticeships. Business, Engineering and Medicine represent the largest groups.

## 2. While the Government's apprenticeship reforms in England have led to an overall increase in the number of higher and degree apprenticeships, the number of starts for those under-19 has remained low and is massively outstripped by those 19 and over.

- > In 2020-21, the number of higher and degree apprenticeship starts (Level 4 and above) for under 19s was 3,600 (4% of the total).
- ## 3. UCAS forecasts that without intervention, the supply of higher and degree apprenticeships opportunities will be further squeezed.
- > UCAS forecasts that the number of 18-year-olds applying to university or college will increase by 30% between 2021 and 2026. This will result in over 350,000 English domiciled 18-year-old applicants, up from 270,000 in 2021.
  - > If the proportional demand for apprenticeships remains at the same level, this would result in 15,000 additional students applying for degree

apprenticeships, leading to a total of 65,000 (as a minimum).

- > In UCAS' view there is a need for a degree apprenticeship supply strategy across Government and employers to meet this increased demand and ensure that these students have suitable, high-quality opportunities available to them.
- ## 4. UCAS can help connect employers to school and college leavers who are interested in apprenticeships.

In this context of increased competition, it is UCAS' role to support students making increasingly critical choices and help them to discover and assess all their options side by side.

- > UCAS' UK-wide apprenticeships portal – **Career Finder** – has thousands of vacancies across England and Wales.
- > UCAS is working with employers to help improve access to careers and apprenticeship advice through its channels.



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Statistics related to demand for HE and apprenticeships

England-only figures	
Number of 18-year-old applicants to HE in 2021	271,525
Number of 18-year-olds accepted to HE in 2021	237,495
Number of higher and degree apprenticeship starts by under-19s (DfE: 2020-21)	3,600
Estimated number of 18-year olds who applied for a degree apprenticeship alongside a HE course in 2021*	50,000

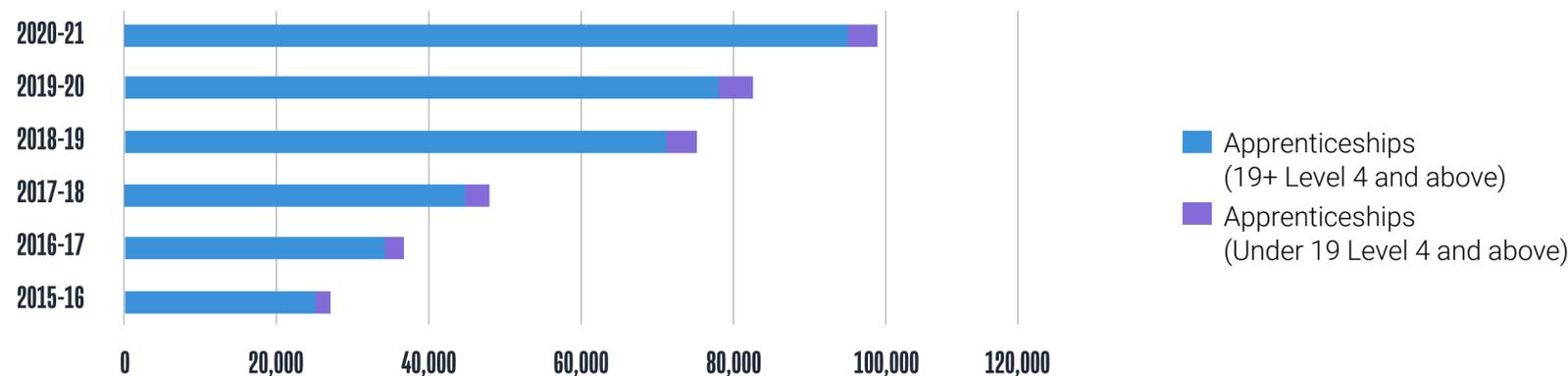
\*UCAS New Applicant Survey 2022

## Increasing the number of higher and degree apprenticeships for school and college leavers

- > The number of higher-level apprenticeships (Level 4 and above, including degree level apprenticeships) has been increasing year-on-year.
- > Most of this increase is down to increasing numbers of those aged 19 and over taking apprenticeships.

Level 4+	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Apprenticeships (19+ Level 4 and above)	25,410	34,480	45,060	71,070	78,230	95,170
Apprenticeships (Under 19 Level 4 and above)	1,760	2,100	3,100	3,990	4,230	3,650

## Higher level apprenticeships have increased in England, but largely down to those 19 or over



Source: DfE Explore Education Statistics (Accessed January 2022)



Data from the UCAS 2022 pre-applicant database shows which students are most interested in apprenticeship opportunities:

Subject	Engineering	Business	Medicine / Health	Agriculture	Architecture, Building and Planning	Computer Science
Percentage interested	55%	51%	34%	60%	55%	53%
Number interested	83,000	94,000	70,000	6,000	19,000	59,000

Source: UCAS pre-applicant database (PAD) 2022

**More than 94,000 students** interested in **business courses** are also interested in apprenticeships

**83,000 students (55%)** interested in **engineering courses** are also interested in apprenticeships

**70,000 students** interested in **medical courses** are also interested in apprenticeships

**60.7% of students** interested in **agriculture courses** are also interested in apprenticeships

**55.1% of students** interested in **architectural, building, and planning courses** are also interested in apprenticeships

**53.3% of students** interested in **computer science courses** are also interested in apprenticeships

What UCAS currently does in the apprenticeships space

- > **Employer profiles** – For the first-time employers are able to create profiles on UCAS and showcase their offer to students. These include Jaguar Land Rover, Vodafone, Rolls Royce, Sky and Keir Group – some of the top apprentice employers in the country.
- > **Industry guides** – These let students explore what an apprenticeship in a particular occupation might look like with tips about how to get there. There will be opportunities for more employers to feature on these pages.
- > **Careers Quiz** – This tool helps students understand what areas of work might interest them and suggests paths to get there. The tool has been used more than 500,000 times since it launched in September. This is two and a half times more than our previous tool during the same period.
- > **Career Finder** – Our apprenticeship portal – A record 1.5 million searches in the last 12 months, up 50% from last year. These searches have resulted in 265,000 applications, up 54% from last year.
- > **Careers education, information, advice and guidance** – Each year there are 30 million unique visits to ucas.com, with students exploring content across the full range of post-secondary options, including technical education, apprenticeships and flexible learning. UCAS’ network of circa 4,000 advisers support students across the country with their next steps.
- > **Events** – 160,000 young people attend our national programme of physical and virtual exhibitions. UCAS Discover Apprenticeships event saw almost 5,000 attendees as part of National Apprenticeships Week.