

'Aspire Apprenticeship' Programme

A programme for Year 12 & Year 13 students interested in apprenticeships



What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a real job with a training component. It allows you to earn while you learn, as well as gaining a nationally recognised qualification. Apprenticeships take between one and five years to completed and cover a wide range of industries.

- **EARN** - You get paid and train at the same time, with at least 20% of your time spent in off the job training, often at a college, university or with a training provider.
- **TRAIN** - You train to be fully competent in your chosen occupation.
- **LEARN** - You are on a career path - with lots of future potential for you.

Levels of Apprenticeships

There are currently four levels of apprenticeship: intermediate, advanced, higher and degree. They all involve a work-based learning programme and lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

- ♦ **Intermediate apprenticeships** are level 2 qualifications and are equivalent to GCSE passes at grades 4–9
- ♦ **Advanced apprenticeships** are level 3 qualifications and are equivalent to A level passes.
- ♦ **Higher apprenticeships** lead to qualifications at level 4 and above.
- ♦ **A degree apprenticeship** involves gaining a university degree while you work (level 6 or above).

(If you are applying for an apprenticeship as an alternative to university, you will usually apply for a Higher or Degree level apprenticeship, however if you are applying for a Law Apprenticeship, then these are usually advertised as Advanced Apprenticeships)



'Aspire Apprenticeship' Programme Structure

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 12	Introduction to higher & degree level apprenticeships Talks from ex-pupil apprentices Friday careers talks	What employers look for Employability skills and how to get them Friday careers talks	Futures week including: Talks from apprenticeship providers How to make yourself stand out Where to find vacancies
Year 13	Enrichment sessions, online tests, application forms, CV's, cover letters, assessment centres, interviews Talks from ex-pupil apprentices Mock interviews Friday careers talks	Ongoing help with applications Interview & assessment preparation Friday careers talks	Ongoing help with applications Interview & assessment preparation Friday careers talks

Employability Skills

Employability skills are core skills and traits needed in nearly every job. These are the general skills that make someone desirable to an organisation

They are skills that allow you to work well with others, apply knowledge to solve problems and fit into any work environment. They also include the professional skills that enable you to be successful in the workplace. These are also known as transferable skills because you can apply them to a job in any industry

Key competencies or skills are specific qualities that a company considers desirable for employees to possess. They are often used as benchmarks to rate and evaluate candidates during the recruitment process, especially when reviewing application forms and at interview.



Applying

Before applying for any apprenticeships **check your social media**. Employers may check to see if you are as professional as you seem on your CV and application. **Use a sensible email address** – create a new one if you need to. Employers may be put off by childish or inappropriate ones.

Application Forms

As well as offering training, an apprenticeship is a paid job. You'll need to apply for it in the same way you would apply for a job.

Here are some top tips to help you apply for an apprenticeship:

- ◆ Research the apprenticeship thoroughly. You'll need to know the role inside-out for your application and any possible interviews. Check if there's a number you can call for an informal chat about the role – don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure about anything.
- ◆ Make a list of your experiences, hobbies, and interests. Print it off and keep it in front of you while you apply. You need to compare and match your experience with what the employer or training provider are looking for in their job specification.
- ◆ Make sure you tailor your application to the job you're applying for. Tie in your experiences and hobbies with what you'll be doing in the apprenticeship. For example, if you're applying for an apprenticeship in engineering, talk about relevant projects you've worked on in science or maths.
- ◆ You'll need to be able to write about yourself. Ask teachers, friends, and family to list your three top qualities to give you a starting point.
- ◆ Talk about your skills and qualities, not just your hobbies. For example, if you've been the captain of the school sports team, this shows leadership and teamwork skills.
- ◆ The application form will be similar to a job application. You'll need to provide examples to prove what you're talking about. For example, if you say communication is a strength of yours, have evidence – like being on the school debating team – to back this up.

CVs

A CV (Curriculum Vitae), is a written overview of your skills, education, and work experience.

You may be required to upload a CV when applying for an apprenticeship.

Unifrog has an excellent CV builder, which takes you through step by step. **We will also provide detailed guidance to all Year 12 students.**

What to include:

- ◆ **Your personal details** (*e.g. name, address, phone number, email address*)
- ◆ **A personal statement** - In no more than five sentences, explain who you are, why you are interested in this particular apprenticeship, and your career aspirations. Your personal statement should relate to that job or industry, and be tailored around the apprenticeship you are applying for.
- ◆ **Competencies** – these are your key skills that you can link to either the job description, person specification and the employer's core values.
- ◆ **Work experience** (*the most recent first*)
- ◆ **Education and qualifications** (*most recent first*)



Covering Letters

A covering letter is a document sent alongside your CV when applying for jobs. It acts as your introduction and helps to sell the rest of your application.

Covering letters should not duplicate your CV or exceed one A4 page. Applications should always include a cover letter unless the job advert instructs you to do differently

What to Include

First paragraph should briefly say who you are and make it clear which apprenticeship you are applying for – there may be several different ones on offer.

Second paragraph - Say why you'd be a good person for the apprenticeship. To help you do so, read the job advert or job description carefully and give concrete examples of how you have the skills, experience or personal qualities that are required.

Third paragraph - Say why you want the apprenticeship. Be as specific as possible, so it's clear why you want this apprenticeship rather than just any apprenticeship you can get. You could choose to mention:

- ◆ why you want to work in the industry in question
- ◆ why you want to work for the employer in question
- ◆ why you want the type of job that the apprenticeship would train you up for
- ◆ why you want the training and qualifications that the apprenticeship would give you.
- ◆ Back up your claims by mentioning relevant experiences or aspects of your life that relate to the above

Interviews

Styles of Interview

Different employers will use different styles of interview or may combine a number of styles for each section of the process.

The most common styles are:

Telephone Interview

Video Interview

Face-to-face Interview

Group Interview

See below for detailed advice:

targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-interviews/46-apprenticeship-interview-questions-and-tips

Interview Tips

You Must Follow to Land a Job



Types of Interview

Two of the most common interview techniques are **behavioural** and **competency-based** interviews.

What is a behavioural interview?

Behavioural interviews are based on the idea that past behaviour can predict future action. The questions are designed to reveal the way an interviewee thinks and what motivates and drives them. The purpose is to understand if they are a good fit for the culture of the organisation.

Example behavioural questions include:

- ◆ Give an example of a time when you didn't meet a goal, and how you handled this.
- ◆ Tell me about a time you had to persuade someone who didn't like you to perform a task at work.
- ◆ Give me an example of your use of logic in decision making.

The above questions all ask you to tell a story of how you did something and why. There are no right or wrong answers here. The questions are designed to gain an understanding of how you think and act.

A good way to prepare for these questions is to study the company and try to gain an understanding of the culture. For example, are they innovative or more traditional? Does the department require rapid responses or a more considered approach?

Interviews

What are competency-based interviews?

Competency interviews are based on the skills needed to perform the job. Again, the idea is that if you've used these skills before, you will be able to perform them to the necessary standard again.

The interviewer will be looking for key indicators which demonstrate the requirements laid out in the competency.

Example competency questions include:

- ◆ Tell me about a time when you supported a colleague who was struggling with an area of work.
- ◆ Explain to me how you ensure that you deliver the best customer service.
- ◆ Tell me about a time when you had to respond to change in the workplace.

The aim here is to hit the critical indicators for the competency. So the first question above would relate to teamwork. The critical indicators could be: showing an interest in others; encouraging others; finding information to help others etc.

By tailoring your answers around the job specification, skills and the employers values or key competencies, you can find examples which show how your previous work experience applies to this role.

The 'STAR' Technique

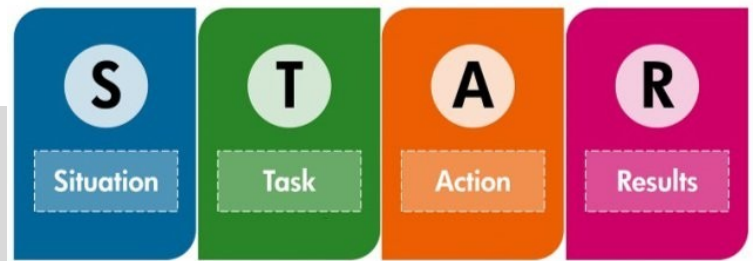
The 'STAR' technique is the preferred method of answering both behavioural and competency based questions.

It provides a structure to your response, with each area weighted differently. The STAR technique is used like this:

- ◆ **Situation:** provide a brief description of the "why" – 10% of your answer
- ◆ **Task:** provide a brief description of the "what" – 10% of your answer
- ◆ **Action:** provide a larger description of the "how" – 65% of your answer
- ◆ **Result:** provide a brief description of the outcome – 15% of your answer

This method of answering provides the interviewer with a complete picture of why you did something, what you had to achieve, how you achieved it and the outcome.

Focus on what you did and not what other people did. This is where you can showcase your abilities, skills and behaviours and highlight your understanding of the company you're interviewing for and your knowledge of the job role.



Other points to consider

Look at the company's core values (usually on their website) and think how you can incorporate these into your answers.

Preparing for interviews in this way may seem like a lot of work however, you will be able to ensure that you are the perfect fit for your ideal role and company.



Assessment Centre & Tests

Assessment Centres

If you have passed the initial application process, you may be invited to an assessment centre. This usually consists of multiple activities that are designed to put your knowledge, aptitude and personality to the test.

Assessment Day Activities can include:

- ◆ Case Study
- ◆ Group Exercise
- ◆ Presentations
- ◆ Role Play Exercises
- ◆ In-tray Exercises
- ◆ Psychometric & Aptitude Tests



During the exercises the employers will be assessing how you perform and conduct yourself.

- ◆ Be a confident team player and show case your interpersonal and team working skills
- ◆ Contribute to group activities but avoid being too passive or too dominant
- ◆ Build a rapport with other candidates
- ◆ Be passionate and show that you want to work for them and have a lot to offer.

For detailed advice see:

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-interviews/14-assessment-day-tips-for-school-leaver-programmes>

Psychometric Tests

A psychometric test is an assessment designed to show a candidates skills and knowledge in a specific field. The candidate does not need any prior knowledge to complete the test as the employer only wants to see your natural ability.

Types of Psychometric Tests

Numerical Reasoning Tests—When taking this test, candidates will have to answer questions on statistics, graphs, charts and figures

Verbal Reasoning Tests—These tests will assess candidates on verbal logic and how quickly they can digest and retain information from passages of text.

In-Tray Exercises—A business-related assessment that assesses how well candidates can prioritise tasks.

Diagrammatic Tests—Timed tests that assess your logical reasoning.

Situational judgement Tests—Psychological tests that assess how candidates would deal with work-based problems.

Inductive Reasoning Tests—Tests that determine how well the candidate can identify the logic within patterns.

Cognitive Ability Tests—Measures general intelligence.

Mechanical Reasoning Tests—This test is often used for technical roles and applies mechanical and engineering knowledge into it.

Watson Glaser Tests—Often used by law firms, it's designed to think critically about arguments.

For further information—<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips/psychometric-tests>

When to Apply



Where can I find vacancies?

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
<https://be-more.info/>
www.unifrog.org
www.ucas.com
<https://www.milkround.com/school-leavers>
<https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/>
<https://www.apprenticesandgraduates.co.uk/vacancies/>
<https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/>

When Should I Apply?

Different apprenticeships have different opening and closing dates for applications, and you'll need to apply individually for each opportunity that interests you – there's no equivalent of UCAS. However, while employers choose the timings that suit them best, they tend to fall into one of three broad categories:



Having an annual recruitment cycle. This involves having an annual start date for new apprentices to begin work and recruiting well in advance. This approach is most common at large employers offering higher apprenticeships, degree apprenticeships and accountancy-related school leaver programmes. Often the start date is in early autumn, around the time that friends will be heading off to university. Applications tend to open between September (in the previous calendar year) and March. Closing dates typically fall between late October and early May, so be on the lookout from the start of Year 13.

Recruiting apprentices for immediate start. Some employers advertise for apprentices as and when they need them, and want them start work straight away. This is quite common for opportunities that don't require A levels (such as intermediate apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships) and that are with smaller employers, or local branches of national chains.

Ongoing recruitment. A few recruiters describe their apprenticeship recruitment as 'ongoing'. This means that they are happy to receive applications at any time of year – however, there may not be a position available to start immediately, so be prepared to wait. You're more likely to find this approach with larger employers.

Useful Websites

<https://www.studentladder.co.uk/>

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/application-forms>

<http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/>

<https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/assessmentcentre/>

<https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk/>

<https://www.practiceaptitudetests.com/free-aptitude-tests/>

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/>

<https://www.allaboutschoollleavers.co.uk/>

<https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/advice/apprenticeship-interview-questions>

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>