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OxfordshireApprenticeships



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Employer Factsheet #1 – The Basics

What is an Apprenticeship?

An Apprenticeship is a work-based learning programme where the Apprentice is employed by a business and is working towards a specific, recognised qualification.

Apprenticeships are only for young people, right?

Wrong! Anyone who has officially left school can become an Apprentice whether they're 16 or 60+.

How long does an Apprenticeship last?

An Apprenticeship must normally last a minimum of 12 months although many last much longer. It varies depending on the sector and Apprenticeship level – something like an Intermediate Business Administration Apprenticeship can be done in 12 months whereas a Higher Level Engineering Apprenticeship can take 3+ years.

How does one fit into my business?

First and foremost you need to identify that you have a need for an Apprentice and a real job to offer them. An Apprentice must be a paid employee of a company and must be employed for a minimum 30 hours per week, for a minimum of 12 months as above. If you're unsure then contact Oxfordshire Apprenticeships info@oxfordshireapprenticeships.co.uk

They're not worth as much as a degree though, are they??

It depends on what the job is and what skills and experience levels you need in someone to do that job. Apprenticeships are now available at levels equivalent to GCSE right up to Post Graduate levels through new "Higher Apprenticeships", and are absolutely a viable alternative. A recent employer survey listed "Higher Apprentices" as the most valued desirable recruits among business. See **Employer Factsheet #3 – "Training"** for more information on training levels.

Do I pay the salary?

Yes - an Apprentice is YOUR employee. There is a National Minimum Wage for Apprentices applicable to those aged 16-18 and for the first 12 months of their Apprenticeship for those aged 19+. From 1st October 2015 this National Minimum Wage increases to £3.30 per hour. All other Apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age. See **Employer Factsheet #2 – "Money"** for information on sector and local rates. Most businesses pay more than the National Minimum Wage and as a result find it easier to recruit and retain a skilled, motivated workforce.

Who pays for the training?

Government funding for the 'off-the-job' training is available depending on the sector and the age of the Apprentice. See **Employer Factsheet #2 – "Money"** for more information. Additional and/or on-the-job training is generally the employer's responsibility.



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Do Apprentices have a special contract?

An *Apprentice Agreement* **must** exist between employer and employee. This can usually be achieved with a standard statement of particulars, a contract of employment or a letter of engagement. For more information, go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template>.

What about sole traders or home-based businesses?

There is nothing within legislation to prevent either sole traders or home-based employers from employing an Apprentice. Any issues arising from those types of arrangements would be picked up via Health & Safety and risk assessments undertaken by your Training Provider.

What happens once the Apprenticeship is finished?

That's up to you. You are not obligated to find another position for your Apprentice once they complete their training although most employers see the value in retaining the skills and experience that they have helped their Apprentice gain during their Apprenticeship.

It's wise to establish this before you start. Knowing whether a company will actively seek to retain them once training is complete could be significant in the eyes of a potential applicant. It will also help you to think about how you could use Apprentices to aid succession planning, for example.

I can't afford any extra staff but could one of my existing team do an Apprenticeship?

Yes, anyone who has officially left school can do an Apprenticeship – it's just that not everyone will be eligible for funded training. Anyone who holds a university degree (or any other Level 4 qualification), for example, will be ineligible for government funding for an Apprenticeship.

What if I can't find training relevant to my business?

There are around 250 types of Apprenticeships covering more than 1500 job. However there are some jobs or trades that are so specialist or rare that specific Apprenticeship training is hard to find. In this scenario, you could always think about whether a more generic Apprenticeship could benefit your business – remember that you may be able to provide product and service training on the job. See **Employer Factsheet #3 – “Training”** for more information on training options.