



Plumber Apprenticeship Guide

What is an apprenticeship?

Enrolling in an apprenticeship is a fantastic way to get on the job training and an opportunity to earn money while you learn. Popularly an alternative option to perusing an education at university, an apprenticeship allows younger people to get an early start on learning a trade.

Along the way apprentices are able to earn industry-specific qualifications, helping them to become a fully-qualified tradesperson by the end of their apprenticeship, putting them into a strong position when it comes to seeking employment or starting their own business.

This structure of qualifications and workplace experience consist of the following:

- **The competence element (often an NVQ):** This enables you to demonstrate your workplace abilities and prove that you can do specific job-related tasks.
- **The BTEC technical certificate:** This will give you extra knowledge and understanding about the job you are training for.
- **Transferable Skills:** Factors such as Key Skills or Functional Skills cover more general work-related skills such as communication, team working, problem solving and using new technologies. In Wales, Essential Skills is required.
- **Employee Rights and Responsibilities (ERR):** In this part of the BTEC Apprenticeship you will learn about your rights and responsibilities in the workplace. On completion you will receive a BTEC Award in Workskills for effective learning and employment.
- **Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS):** As part of the BTEC Apprenticeship you will develop a series of underpinning skills that employers are looking for. Skills such as creative thinking, evaluation and team working are key to future employability, making BTEC apprentices more effective employees.

Apprenticeship levels explained

There are three levels of Apprenticeship available for those aged 16 and over:

- **Level 2 BTEC Intermediate Apprenticeships** - These provide the skills you need for your chosen career and allow entry to an Advanced Apprenticeship.
- **Level 3 BTEC Advanced Apprenticeships** - To start this Apprenticeship, you should ideally have five GCSEs (grade C or above) or have completed a Level 2 Intermediate Apprenticeship.
- **Level 4/5 BTEC Higher Apprenticeships** - These Apprenticeships work towards qualifications such as NVQ Level 4 and, in some cases, a knowledge-based qualification such as a Higher National Certificate or Diploma.

Your efforts will be rewarded throughout the process, as you will receive a separate certificate for each qualification you achieve, as well as receiving a certificate once you have completed and achieved all aspects of your Apprenticeship programme. The learning provider will help to coordinate your Apprenticeship and develop skills and knowledge, while your employer provides the practical experience to put those skills to the test.

Training can be classroom based, in a workshop or in a workplace, depending on the subject and on the learning provider.

Sources:

- <http://www.edexcel.com/i-am-a/parent-learner-btec-app/Pages/what-is-an-apprenticeship.aspx>
- <https://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide>

The Benefits

<http://www.edexcel.com/I-AM-A/PARENT-LEARNER-BTEC-APP/Pages/Why-choose.aspx>

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/be-an-apprentice/the-benefits.aspx>

There are plenty of great reasons to enrol on an apprenticeship, many of which are some of the great benefits to becoming a full-time apprentice! Here are just a handful of the many benefits that await you in an apprentice's role:

- Apprenticeships give you the opportunity to work for a real employer, earn a real salary and gain a real qualification whilst gaining valuable workplace skills and experience.
- All apprentices must receive the appropriate national minimum wage (£2.68 for under 19 and first year apprentices, £5.03 for 19 and 20 year olds and £6.31 for those aged 21 and over).
- Over 150,000 employers are offering Apprenticeships in more than 200,000 locations.
- Apprenticeships are available at Intermediate, Advanced and Higher (degree) level, covering more than 170 industries and 1500 job roles, from advertising to youth work via environmental engineering and nuclear decommissioning.
- Quality is key to Apprenticeships. All Apprenticeships must be at least 12 months long and lead to a national qualification that is respected by employers around the world.

How it works

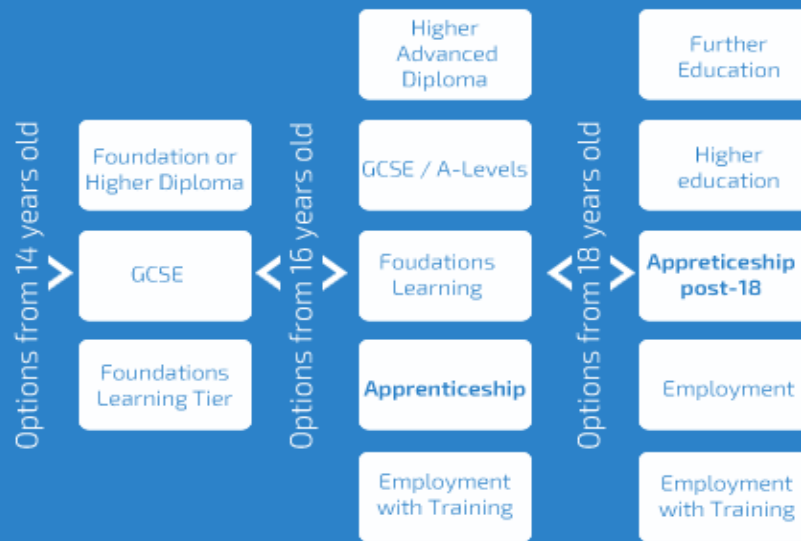
<http://www.edexcel.com/i-am-a/parent-learner-btec-app/Pages/career-progression.aspx>

<http://pearsonwbl.edexcel.com/i-am-a/parent-learner-btec-app/Pages/next-steps.aspx>

How it Works, Change to 'Career Progression'

<http://www.edexcel.com/i-am-a/parent-learner-btec-app/Pages/career-progression.aspx>

Career progression for apprentices is excellent, with a significant proportion of successful apprentices advancing to highly skilled jobs or higher education in a college or university.



Options from 14 years of age

The path towards enrolling in an apprenticeship can start at just 14 years of age. Opting for a Foundation or Higher Diploma, GCSE or Foundations Learning Tier will stand you in good stead for the second stage of options upon leaving high school.

Options from 16 Years of Age

Upon completion of the first options, you can continue to progress into the role of an apprentice at this stage, or continue your education in plumbing or engineering at a vocational college without getting a work placement at this stage.

Options from 18 Years Old

If at this stage you choose to continue down the path of an apprenticeship, you can continue gathering training and qualifications as a post-18 apprentice and moving towards full-time employment.

Fully Qualified

Once fully qualified, the world is open to you. You may wish to take the plunge and start your own plumbing business, or reap the financial benefits of becoming a senior plumber or engineer at an established plumbing company.

Qualifications

<http://www.totalpeople.co.uk/courses/apprenticeships/plumbing/>

Apprenticeships lead to a Competence Qualification e.g. (NVQ) at Level 2 or Level 3, a Key Skills qualification, like problem solving and using technology, and in most cases a technical certificate, such as a BTEC.

Your qualification progression won't stop at the Intermediate or Advanced Apprenticeship, the qualifications you gain as an apprentice can also help you to enter higher education. You'll usually need to have taken an Advanced Apprenticeship which leads to an NVQ at level 3. The NAS is working closely with UCAS to extend their system so that more qualifications gained during an Apprenticeship will contribute towards an individual's university application.

Below is an overview of the Plumbing Apprenticeship, outlining the qualifications you will achieve throughout your training as well as other important information such as course duration and funding.

- Apprenticeship in Plumbing & Mechanical Engineering Services (MES)
- NVQ Level 2 in Plumbing
- Plumbing Technical Certificate
- Functional Skills Application of Number Level 2
- Functional Skills Communication Level 2
- Employment Rights and Responsibilities

Do Apprenticeships Work

The results of two major Apprenticeship surveys were published on 14 May; these results showed that satisfaction amongst Apprenticeships is high. Almost nine in ten apprentices (89%) were satisfied, rising to 92% amongst completers.

For a look into the life of an apprentice plumber, visit the link below

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rb2hEsRQ280>

Q&A

Below are some frequently asked questions on the subject of apprenticeships, and the answers to them.

Am I eligible for an apprenticeship?

<http://www.don.ac.uk/courses/apprenticeships/faqs.aspx#1061>

To be eligible for an apprenticeship, you must be living in England and not taking part in compulsory full-time education or not holding a university degree. Entry requirements are flexible because Apprenticeships are not just based on academic achievement. Employers value your enthusiasm for work and desire to learn, so your practical skills and interest in your chosen area are very important.

Are there different types of Apprenticeship?

<http://www.themanchestercollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships/coursefinder>

Yes, there are different types of Apprenticeship available. Which Apprenticeship is right for you will depend on your experience and the opportunities in your area. However, all Apprenticeships include the following basic elements:

- An appropriate National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at either Level 2 or Level 3
- Functional Skills qualifications
- A technical certificate such as a BTEC or City & Guilds (included in most cases)
- Other qualifications or requirements as specified by the particular occupation

For ideas on which apprenticeship may be right for you, take a look at the list of courses available at The Manchester College.

<http://www.themanchestercollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships/coursefinder>

How long does an Apprenticeship take?

<https://www.kenttrainingandapprenticeships.co.uk/apprenticeships/how-long-does-an-apprenticeship-take.aspx>

Depending on the type and level of Apprenticeship, it will take somewhere between 1 and 4 years to complete. However, we average between 15 months & two years.

Do I get holidays?

<http://www.don.ac.uk/courses/apprenticeships/faqs.aspx#1061>

Like any other employee, you will receive at least 20 days holiday per year (and bank holidays). Your individual entitlement will be detailed in your terms of employment or training agreement from your employer. Just like any other job, your employer will have rules about how far in advance holidays need to be booked, and times that holidays cannot be taken.

How can I find Plumbing Apprenticeship Opportunities?

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

To properly qualify for an apprenticeship, you must first have secured an employment position (30 hours+ per week) with a relevant firm beforehand. Many training centres have strong connections with local plumbing firms and will help you secure the employment required to enter the course, so baring this mind, it might be a good idea to give your local college/training centre a call first when starting your job search.

What Tasks can I Expect to Carry out During a Plumbing Apprenticeship?

<http://www.plumbingapprenticeshipsuk.co.uk/8-tasks-that-you-will-carry-out-on-your-plumbing-apprenticeship/>

It will come as no surprise to you that an apprenticeship in plumbing is a very hand-on course, and there is no room for sitting around!

Tasks that you may be carrying out during work hours include:

- Constructing pipe systems
- Pressurising systems
- Detecting leaks
- Costing jobs and negotiating contracts
- Solving dimensional problems with applied maths skills
- Making adjustments to surrounding environment to accommodate new systems

- Clearing away debris
- Making the teas and coffees. (Something everyone needs to know how to do when starting a career as a plumber!)

Will I be paid During an Apprenticeship?

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

The apprentice 'National Minimum Wage' applies to all 16 to 18 year olds and to those aged 19 and over in the first year of their Apprenticeship.

If you are 19 or over and have completed 1 full year of your Apprenticeship your employer must compensate you at least the 'full National Minimum Wage' for your age group, so currently that is £4.98 for 18-20 year olds and £6.19 for those 21 and over.

You will be employed on a full time salary from day one. It is likely that you will be paid an hourly rate for the hours that you have worked. The exact amount will be up to your employer but as a rule it is usually no less than new entrants to work.

What Types of Plumbing Apprenticeships Are There?

There are 2 levels of plumbing apprenticeship available in *England & Wales*:

- Intermediate Level, aimed at career seekers who are completely new to the plumbing industry. Completion leads to an NVQ level 2 qualification in plumbing and is considered to be equal to 5 GCSE passes.
- Advanced Level, aimed at those already with an NVQ level 2 qualification and practical experience (generally those that have completed the intermediate level apprenticeship), offering study of more advanced areas, helping the candidate to gain the more specialist skills required for career advancement in the construction and building industry. Leads to an NVQ level 3 Qualification in Plumbing and is considered to be equal to 2 A level passes.

In *Scotland & Northern Ireland*, the **single (all inclusive) option** available is the 4 year scheme 'Modern Apprenticeship in Plumbing', primarily working towards the qualification 'SVQ (Scotland) or NVQ (Northern Ireland) level 3 in 'Mechanical Engineering Services (MES) Domestic: Plumbing'.

What does being a Fully Qualified Plumber Entail?

<http://apprenticeships.jtltraining.com/apprenticeships/what-it-involves/job-types/plumbing-apprenticeships.aspx>

Plumbers put in, look after and fix the plumbing inside and outside buildings. The exact job depends on the employer, though all plumbers have the skills and knowledge to get the job done properly and safely.

A plumber will need to be able to:

- work at height
- work alone or with little supervision
- travel

- build relationships
- read building and engineering drawings
- understand heating control wiring and circuit diagrams
- choose materials and equipment
- inspect and test installations
- diagnose and fix faults
- write reports

Qualifications

- EAL Plumbing (Domestic) NVQ Levels 2 & 3
- City & Guilds 6129 Certificate in Domestic Plumbing Studies Levels 2 & 3
- Level 2 Application of Numbers and Level 2 Communication Functional (Essential) skills
- CORGI Gas ACS assessment

Find A College

- <https://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide>
- <http://www.bournville.ac.uk/courses/apprenticeship-level-2-advanced-apprenticeship-level-3-in-plumbing/>
- <http://www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk/courses/further/plumbinglevels2-sep-2013>
- <http://www.cavc.ac.uk/en/employers/apprenticeships/>
- <http://www.ccb.ac.uk/public/courses/apprenticeships#.UsXCkbT2LWg>
- http://www.southampton-city.ac.uk/adult/course_view.asp?id=2152&area=adult
- <http://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/courses/Subject-areas/Apprenticeships/Pages/Apprenticeships.aspx>
- <http://www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk/news/acs-gas-courses>
- http://www.wolvcoll.ac.uk/apprenticeships/app_construction.asp
- <http://www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk/courses/courseinformation.aspx?id=CERCONL|NPPL&campus=Gra&keyword=>
- <http://www.hackney.ac.uk/sixth-form-centre-under-19/apprenticeships/>
- <http://www.lambethcollege.ac.uk/courses/plumbing-level-2-apprenticeship/>
- <http://www.leedscitycollege.ac.uk/index.php/subject/apprenticeships/young-people/>
- <http://www.ncn.ac.uk/content/apprenticeships/plumbing.aspx>
- <http://www.ncl-coll.ac.uk/employers/apprenticeships>
- <http://www.liv-coll.ac.uk/subjects/courselist/course/?crsid=316>
- <http://www.themanchestercollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships/courses/plumbing-0>
- <http://www.sheffcol.ac.uk/courses/list/401-plumbing-and-gas-fitting-apprenticeship/>
- <http://www.trafford.ac.uk/your-industry-sector/gas-plumbing-electrical>
- <http://www.westherts.ac.uk/sitesections/courses/subjects/apprenticeships/Items/AppPlumbing.aspx?cat=APP>

Find A Company

- <http://www.arthur-mckay.com/Career%20opportunities/apprentice-schemes>
- <http://www.britishgasjobs.co.uk/>
- <http://www.centrica.com/index.asp?pageid=15>
- <http://about-us.pimlicoplumbers.com/recruitments/pimlico-apprentices>
- <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>
- <http://www.indeed.co.uk/Apprentice-Plumber-jobs>
- <http://apprenticeships.jtltraining.com/>
- <http://www.jobisjob.co.uk/plumber-apprentice/jobs>
- <http://www.simplyhired.co.uk/a/jobs/list/q-apprentice+plumber>

Final Advice

Apprenticeships have so much to offer. By combining structured courses with workplace training and tutorship, learners can become a qualified tradesperson by the end of their apprenticeship. If you think a career in plumbing may be for you, you can begin your journey by applying for an apprenticeship through the Apprenticeships website.

<https://apprenticeshipvacancymatchingservice.lsc.gov.uk/navms/Forms/Candidate/Apprenticeships.aspx>