



The Guardian Jobs employers' guide to emerging sectors and trends in apprenticeships

This handy guide outlines the wide variety,
scope and potential of modern apprenticeships

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Welcome to The Guardian Jobs guide to emerging sectors and trends in apprenticeships

This guide takes a look at some of the up and coming sectors for apprenticeships, explaining how they're changing workplace training, and advising how your business can get involved if there isn't yet an apprenticeship standard for the post you want to fill.

When you hear the word "apprentice", chances are an image comes to mind of young workers training in the construction, engineering and manufacturing trades.

These traditional apprenticeships are still available, popular and successful, but in recent years accredited apprenticeship training has been broadened to include a huge number of other sectors and industries.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, which is responsible for overseeing the development of different types of apprenticeship standards and plans, recently launched its 400th standard: fashion studio assistant^[1].

Launching the new standard, Caroline Rush, chief executive of the British Fashion Council, said that apprenticeships were a great way for her industry to recruit.

"Inspiring more young people to work in the creative industries without necessarily having to take the university route will help ensure the fashion industry continues to attract the best talent," she says.

The Institute is also developing standards for an assistant puppet maker, a church minister and a marine surveyor, to name a few.

Global bank HSBC is one employer that has started to offer apprenticeships in less traditional areas, including a four-year degree-level apprenticeship in commercial banking.

"We have learned that the model works for a wider range of business areas than we initially thought," says Iain Heath, the bank's head of emerging talent. "As a result, we've started to recruit apprentices into a more diverse set of business lines, with a focus on growth areas where accessing talent may be more challenging."

The message is clear. Apprenticeships today span the full spectrum of available careers.

And if there isn't an appropriate scheme available for your industry, you can be part of developing one as an economical and efficient way to train the next generation.

¹. <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/news-events/400th-new-apprenticeship-launched-in-london-fashion-week-for-fashion-studio-assistants/>



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The changing face of apprenticeships

The training needed for a modern workforce is changing fast as we enter what some refer to as the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” - characterised by a fusion of technologies that blur the boundaries between human and machine intelligence.

Apprenticeships are changing too, with on-the-job training available in sectors that weren't traditionally associated with these schemes, such as digital marketing, video-game design and scientific research. At the same time, the high cost of university tuition is encouraging young people to look elsewhere after GCSEs.

All of this is being reflected in the latest statistics, which show that apprenticeships are being undertaken in many different sectors. More than 40 per cent started today are undertaken by those aged over 24, and 57 per cent of them are at an advanced or higher level - equivalent to A-levels or a foundation degree.

Many apprentices themselves believe the term is misunderstood, and say people are surprised to learn about the different levels and sectors available.

“I believe that a lot of people think that apprentices are low-paid employees making coffee and sitting around,” says Whitney Boateng. “When I tell people that I'm a cyber security analyst doing a technology degree apprenticeship at Barclays, they're surprised that such apprenticeship vacancies exist.”

Here are some other lesser-known apprenticeship opportunities.

Maritime caterer

This two-year Level 2 apprenticeship is the equivalent of five GCSEs and was created jointly by a group of cruise ship and ferry operators, along with the Royal Navy. As well as learning cooking skills and food safety, apprentices learn a variety of shipboard safety duties.

Advanced dairy technologist

This Level 5 apprenticeship lasts for three years. Apprentices learn the fundamental processes of milk chemistry; how to make butter and cheese by hand and machine and develop new dairy products and processes.

Funeral director

This one-year Level 3 apprenticeship (equivalent to two A-level passes) teaches the skills to lead a funeral service, as well as the understanding of the legal processes surrounding funerals, and assisting in the preparation of coffins and the deceased.

Cultural heritage conservation technician

This Level 4, two-year apprenticeship (equivalent to a foundation degree) was created by museums and public bodies including the Museum of London, the V&A and Historic England. Among other things, apprentices learn how to preserve cultural artefacts in archives and collections.



By gender

49% of apprenticeship starts were by women and 51% by men.



By sector

83% of all apprenticeship starts were in four subject areas: business, administration and law; health, public services and care; engineering and manufacturing technologies; and retail and commercial enterprise.

Sectors by apprenticeship starts in 2017/18 (in thousands)

111	Business, administration and law
88	Health, public services and care
59	Engineering and manufacturing technologies
54	Retail and commercial enterprise
23	Construction, planning and the built environment
18	Information and communication technology
9	Leisure, travel and tourism
7	Agriculture, horticulture and animal care
6	Education and training
1	Arts, media and publishing
0	Science and mathematics

By age





By region

Sectors by apprenticeship starts in 2017/18 (in thousands)

- 23 North East
- 43 West Midlands
- 34 East Midlands
- 45 Yorkshire and The Humber
- 58 North West
- 43 South West
- 37 East of England
- 53 South East
- 37 London
- 5 Other

By level





Five key emerging sectors

In line with the changing world of work, the types of apprenticeships that companies need are changing fast. Many of the sectors in which apprenticeships are growing are related to digitisation, or are those, such as health and social care, in which changing demographics are fuelling demand.

Government statistics show that the number of apprentices starting in the information technology (IT) space has risen from 13,000 to 18,000 since 2013/2014^[3], while apprenticeship schemes in the construction and planning sector are also rising.

Here are some of the most exciting areas for new apprenticeships.

1. The healthcare sector

Sector figures show that there were 88,000 apprenticeship starts in the health, public services and care sector in the 2017/18 financial year, making it the second-biggest sector for apprentices.

Apprenticeship standards are available for paramedics, midwives, occupational therapists and podiatrists, to name a few, while new standards being developed include training for clinical associate psychologists and sonographers.

Victoria Sylvester, who runs apprenticeship training group Acacia, says apprentices are critical to the sector.

“Apprentices add value to the health and social-care workforce, and ensuring there is a focus on progression routes available for apprentices means they can be the leaders and drivers of the sector in the future,” she says.

As you might expect, the NHS takes a lead in healthcare apprenticeships (see stepintothens.nhs.uk/apprenticeships), with apprenticeships being offered by individual NHS employers, such as healthcare trusts. The Government now requires public bodies to have 2.3 per cent of their workforce on apprenticeships, which has given NHS apprenticeship recruitment a boost.^[4]

However, many other employers offer healthcare apprenticeships as well, including care homes and private hospitals.

“Apprenticeships can be delivered in a flexible way that ensures the apprentice is acquiring knowledge and learning skills and behaviours required for the environment that they work in, as well as developing transferable skills that can be used across the sector,” says Sylvester.

She advises healthcare businesses to choose their training partner carefully. “Providers have to be registered with the Education and Skills Funding Agency on the register of apprenticeship training providers to be approved to deliver,” she says. “I would always recommend undertaking due diligence of providers, including checking Ofsted reports, previous track record, experience in the sector, financial stability and references from other employers. It can be confusing knowing who to choose, however the right choice is fundamental.”

2. Creative media and the arts

Apprenticeships in the creative industries take on many forms, from fashion design through to 2D artists (visual effects) and digital marketing. They also include more traditional skills-based craftsmanship training, such as that given to apprentices making leather goods for luxury fashion company Mulberry.

As well as apprenticeships in creative companies such as television studios, video game producers and photography groups, it’s possible to find creative apprenticeships in more traditional sectors, since almost all industries need creative skills in areas such as digital marketing and design.

Many well-known companies are turning to apprenticeship schemes to improve their recruitment strategies. Zaynah Din is a creative apprentice in digital marketing, and one of Facebook’s first two apprentices. As well as training through apprenticeship group WhiteHat, she already manages Facebook campaigns, including the Chelsea Flower Show 2019. “It’s been insane but fulfilling,” she says of her first 18 months. “I started in the design team then moved to the digital side. I’ve worked independently on projects and have been able to travel.” At the end of her time as an apprentice, Din will have earned a Level 3 diploma.

“People are surprised when I tell them I’m an apprentice at Facebook. There are so many stereotypes of what an apprentice is. I think people believe it’s not as valuable as a university qualification - or for those who don’t want to go to university - but there are so many ways to be an apprentice, and at so many levels,” she says.

3. Charity and not-for-profit

The charity and not-for-profit sector is one of the more surprising areas in which apprentices are making their mark. Charities, as well as corporations, pay the apprenticeship levy if their pay bill is high enough. Many are taking advantage of the training budget available to bring on new staff in a huge variety of areas - from business administration and finance to more specialist subjects such as youth work and engineering.

Charities are also acting as “trailblazers” - proposing and developing new apprenticeship standards that apply specifically to their sector - so that, together with training providers, they can employ apprentices with the skills they need.

New standards include a degree-level apprenticeship in social change, with the first apprentices joining a course at Queen Mary University of London from September 2019.

Charities including the Scout Association, the British Red Cross and the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) are partnering with Queen Mary on the new course, which the chief executive of the Scout Association, Matt Hyde, says will help the charity to recruit the staff it needs.

“Not only does the degree apprenticeship provide a pathway to a stable career but it encourages talent from diverse backgrounds, which is so desperately needed in the social sector,” he says.

“The curriculum has a mix of multi-disciplinary work-based modules designed to help those on the course earn, learn about and save the world.

“The apprenticeship is offered at this level because we want to develop new talent through a combination of fostering the critical thinking needed to analyse societal challenges with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to establish solutions to those challenges.”

Jamie Hilder, degree apprenticeships manager at Queen Mary, adds that charities and universities will benefit from the partnership. “Degree apprenticeships meaningfully push the boundaries of how higher education institutions interact with their external stakeholders and add real value in new and unforeseen ways,” he says, adding: “One of the central purposes of this programme is to help the charitable/voluntary sector address legacy diversity issues by attracting and developing the next generation of charity sector leaders from what have been traditionally difficult-to-reach backgrounds.”

4. Government

A large number of apprenticeship roles are available within the government. Both national and local government must meet the public sector apprenticeship target that requires public bodies with 250 or more employees to have an average of at least 2.3 per cent apprenticeship starts relative to its overall workforce numbers.[5]

Within national government, the Civil Service is committed to offering 30,000 apprenticeships by 2020.[6]

Roles available in national Government are extremely varied and include permanent apprenticeships in the policy department of the Civil Service, as well as digital and technical apprenticeships with the Met Office. Apprentices can also join the Ministry of Defence as training and business managers for the Army Cadets.

Deanna Blake, 21, decided to become an apprentice with the Government’s Communication Service. “I was interested in media and communications and knew that an apprenticeship in this field would enable me to gain first-hand experience,” she says.

5. House of Commons Library: Apprenticeships Statistics: England. No: 06113. 11 Feb 2019, p14

6. <https://www.civil-service-careers.gov.uk/ways-to-join/>



“I’ve learnt how the government communicates its crucial messages to the public and how communications teams work together to shape and disseminate these messages. I’ve created and distributed press releases, produced tweets and graphics, created briefings for senior colleagues for critical meetings in the House of Commons and had the opportunity to shadow different government departments.”

There are also local government opportunities, with most councils offering apprenticeship programmes in roles such as customer services, property services, human resources and finance.

Some local authorities, such as Cornwall Council, are offering degree-level apprenticeships to current staff, using the levy to upskill them as well as to attract new recruits. The council offers apprenticeships in 32 different subjects, from Level 2 to Level 7 – including degree-level and Level 3 civil engineering apprenticeships, and Level 3 communications and digital marketing roles.

5. Education

Since last year, it has been possible to become a teacher through the apprenticeship route. Other school-based roles are also available, including teaching assistants, premises staff and administration specialists. Training is also available in early years education.

Dr Victoria Brook, head of initial teacher training for Middlesex University London, which runs one of the first teaching apprenticeship programmes, says there are currently seven apprentice teachers studying at the university, with four taking on primary teaching and three secondary.

At present, apprenticeship teaching standards are very similar to the government-funded Schools Direct route into education, which also involves on-the-job training. “It has the advantage that schools can spend the apprenticeship levy, but if there are other things they could spend it on then Schools Direct is also a good choice,” she says.

Teaching apprenticeships are for postgraduates only at present, but Dr Brook adds that there’s a lot of discussion around the possibility of an undergraduate teaching apprenticeship that she believes could “fill a gap”.

“One good thing has been that, with apprentices, the off-the-job training requirement is very clear, so our offering in that respect has been more carefully mapped,” she says. “It has given us the opportunity to think about that afresh.”



How your sector can get involved

Could you be a trailblazer?

Want to take on an apprentice but can't find the right training?

Become a trailblazer

In order to access funding from the apprenticeship levy, your trainees must be training within either an older apprenticeship framework or a new apprenticeship standard. But if you're in an industry where there isn't an applicable standard or framework available, you can work with others in your sector to create one as part of a "trailblazer group".

This must involve at least ten employers from your sector - of different sizes and from different areas of the country.

The members must get actively involved in the development of an apprenticeship standard, and should intend to use it themselves.

There's more about trailblazer groups, including a downloadable guide and list of existing groups, on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education website (see Useful contacts).



Case studies and further information

Employer case study: Chris Brammall, director and founder, CB Arts

Architectural metalworker Chris Brammall, who runs CB Arts in Cumbria, took on his first apprentice, Alasdair Burrows, 19, a year and a half ago. He says apprentices are an “incredibly important” way to keep traditional craftsmanship alive.

“The only way you can learn this industry is to work in it. Apprenticeships give you the opportunity to nurture creativity, flair and passion and watching Ali grow as he becomes more confident and develops his skills is just brilliant,” he says. Burrows trains at Furness College, as well as spending days learning with Brammall.

“The hands-on nature of the apprenticeship scheme means we get to focus on developing techniques and skills that I myself have developed over the years and that are required in delivering the scale and range of metalwork projects we’re involved with,” says Brammall.

Burrows himself says he chose to become an apprentice because he knew what he wanted to do. “You don’t need a degree to work as a blacksmith,” he says. “I have studied at a college as part of the apprenticeship but one can learn so much in the workplace. I’ve also avoided student debt.”

Apprentice case study: Khaliqa Amani, 22, support officer - premier distribution, HSBC UK

Khaliqa Amani originally intended to study medicine at university. Despite securing a place on a course, she was not able to pursue it due to issues with her tuition-fee loan. Researching other avenues, she came across the apprenticeship programme with HSBC UK. “It looked like a great opportunity to study, work and succeed without incurring university debt,” says Amani.

“One of the biggest challenges I faced was the perception my family and friends had about apprentices as being looked down on - and not classed as smart, hardworking individuals. I was a straight-A student and through my apprenticeship I’ve been able to gain professional qualifications and progress in my career very quickly - even becoming a finalist at The Asian Apprenticeship Awards 2018.

“I am a practical learner so it suited my learning style. It has been an amazing experience. You learn on the job and gain transferable skills along with a professional qualification. I’ve also learned from experienced colleagues. Choosing an apprenticeship programme was the best decision I’ve made.”





Useful contacts

There's a wealth of information about apprenticeship. Try the following websites for more help in setting up your scheme.

The National Apprenticeship Service

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk>

Careers Wales

www.careerswales.com

Skills Development Scotland

www.apprenticeships.scot

Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland

www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships

UK government

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-guide-for-employers>

<https://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide>

<https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk>

The Institute of Student Employers

www.ise.org.uk

The National Careers Service

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/home>

The Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org>





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