



GetMyFirstJob

# Guide to the Future

Focus on Apprenticeships

[www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk](http://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk)

# hi.



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**I was in the exact same position as you a few years ago. I was told that the pressure was on to get a career that would make me (and our family) proud. I wasn't told about half of the opportunities that are available now, so I am doing my best to let school and college leavers know about all of the options that are available to them.**

After school I went to college and got my A-Levels, they were good enough to get me into a great university, but I decided against it. Instead, I chose to do an apprenticeship at GetMyFirstJob which has led me down a great path and four years later, I have a first-class Honours degree in Business, Leadership and Management. The best part is, I didn't have to pay for the degree and got paid the whole time!

If you don't know what you want to do yet, don't worry. I didn't know when I left school and neither do 28% of other people at school or college. But there are limitless opportunities at your fingertips, you might just not know about them yet! Did you know that jobs in creative and STEM occupations will more than double over the next few years? Your dream job might not even exist yet! It's fair to say that we know someone who has chosen every route you can think of to start their career and from our experience there is no right or wrong choice.

If you are preparing to leave school or college (or know someone who is) and need some guidance on what to do next, you will find all the answers here. This guide will tell you the first things you need to know about choosing what you want to do with a focus on apprenticeships. But most importantly, my top tip for you is to not turn anything down when you're starting out.

**Jenny Dallas**  
Head of Candidate Engagement



# Your options after school

When you finish school or college, there are so many options available to you and although they won't determine your career path your choice will lead you a certain route. When it comes to choosing your career, your opportunities are almost endless. We want to make it easier for you to know the ways you can go about getting your foot on the career ladder.

Life has a funny way of making sure that you end up where you're meant to be, so don't worry if you think you've chosen the wrong thing or something different to your friends or family. Some people may be better suited to the traditional route of going to university, others want to go exploring on a gap year, some would much rather get straight into the workplace and make their mark that way.

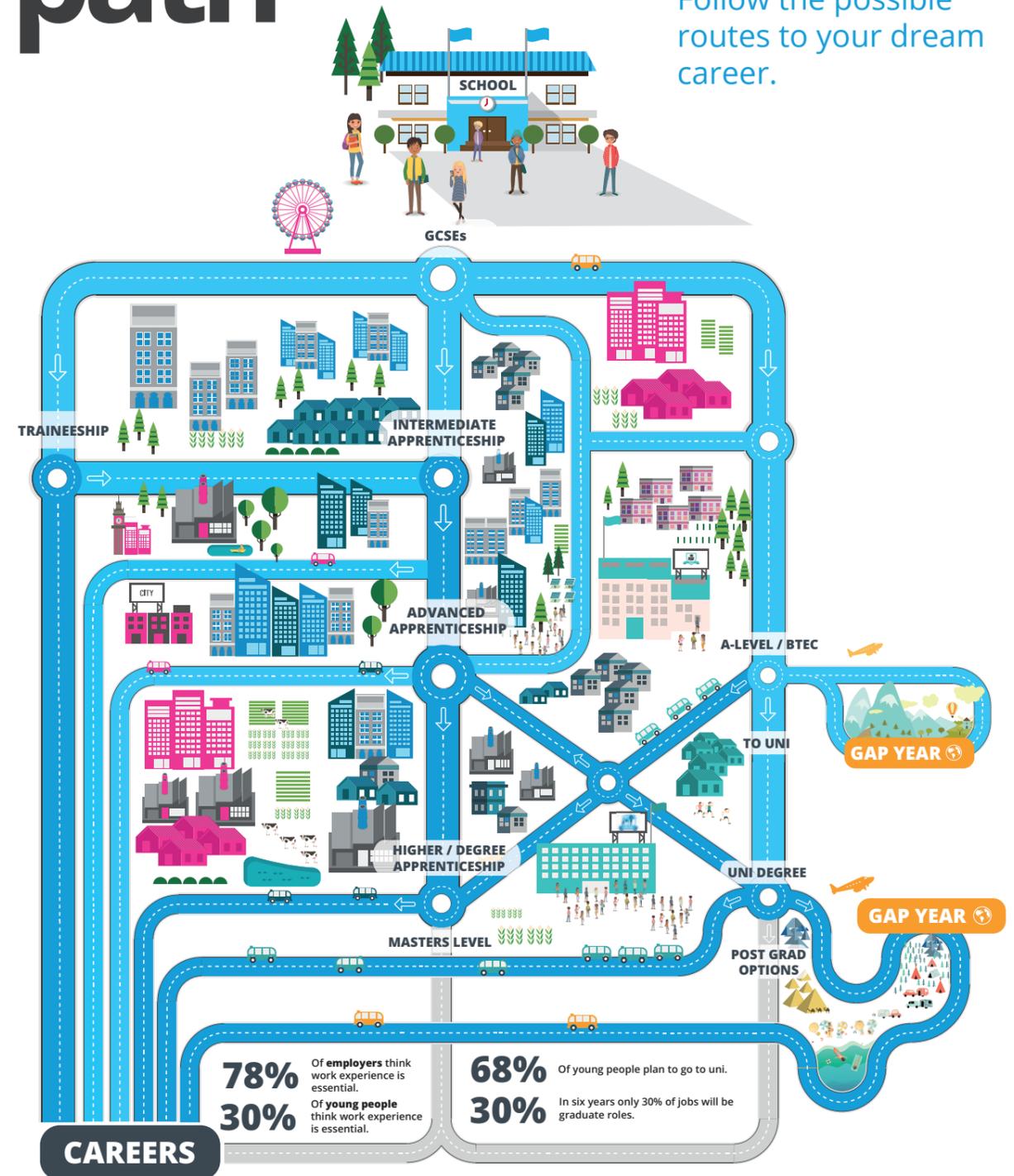
The most important thing that you need to remember when you're looking for opportunities is you. Make sure that you choose something that you want to do and will make you happy, after all your choices now will shape your whole career!

You can use our 'choose your path' map to see where your options will lead you. You can also explore different options on the GetMyFirstJob website:

[www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk/choices.aspx](http://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk/choices.aspx)

# Choose your path

Follow the possible routes to your dream career.



# What are Apprenticeships?

**An apprenticeship is a full-time role where you spend 80% of your time in work doing your job, and the remaining time studying towards a qualification that you don't have to pay for. They are a useful way of exploring the workplace, gaining specific training for the job roles you want, and learning without a debt attached. Not forgetting the fact that you'll even be getting paid whilst you study for a qualification that can take you further!**

When you're looking for an Apprenticeship opportunity, it's all about exploring the many different options available (in over 170 industries) to find one that's right for you and your future - and it's ok if you don't currently know what that is. We'll explain all of the different options to you in this simple guide.

Apprenticeships are valued by employers and will help you to develop your career prospects. You'll be learning essential skills and gaining knowledge of the workplace, and you'll have a head start in your industry. In fact, employers believe that Apprentices are 15% more employable than people with other qualifications.

It's also a great opportunity to develop the skills that will help you in the future - including communication, organisation and responsibility, to name just a few - and you're likely to be working within a team of experienced people. Overall, an Apprenticeship offers you the chance to complete a qualification whilst learning about the workplace and gaining valuable, practical experience.

Our guide hopes to offer more in-depth information about Apprenticeships as an educational career that is often forgotten. Around two-thirds of young people claim to be interested in them over more traditional routes to work such as University, but 40% claim their teachers have never discussed the idea - so here's your chance to get to know Apprenticeships and all that they can offer.

To search and apply for Apprenticeships, visit [GetMyFirstJob.co.uk](https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk)



# Types of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a great way for you to start your career, no matter what industry you're interested in or how academic you are - there is bound to be an opportunity which is up your street.

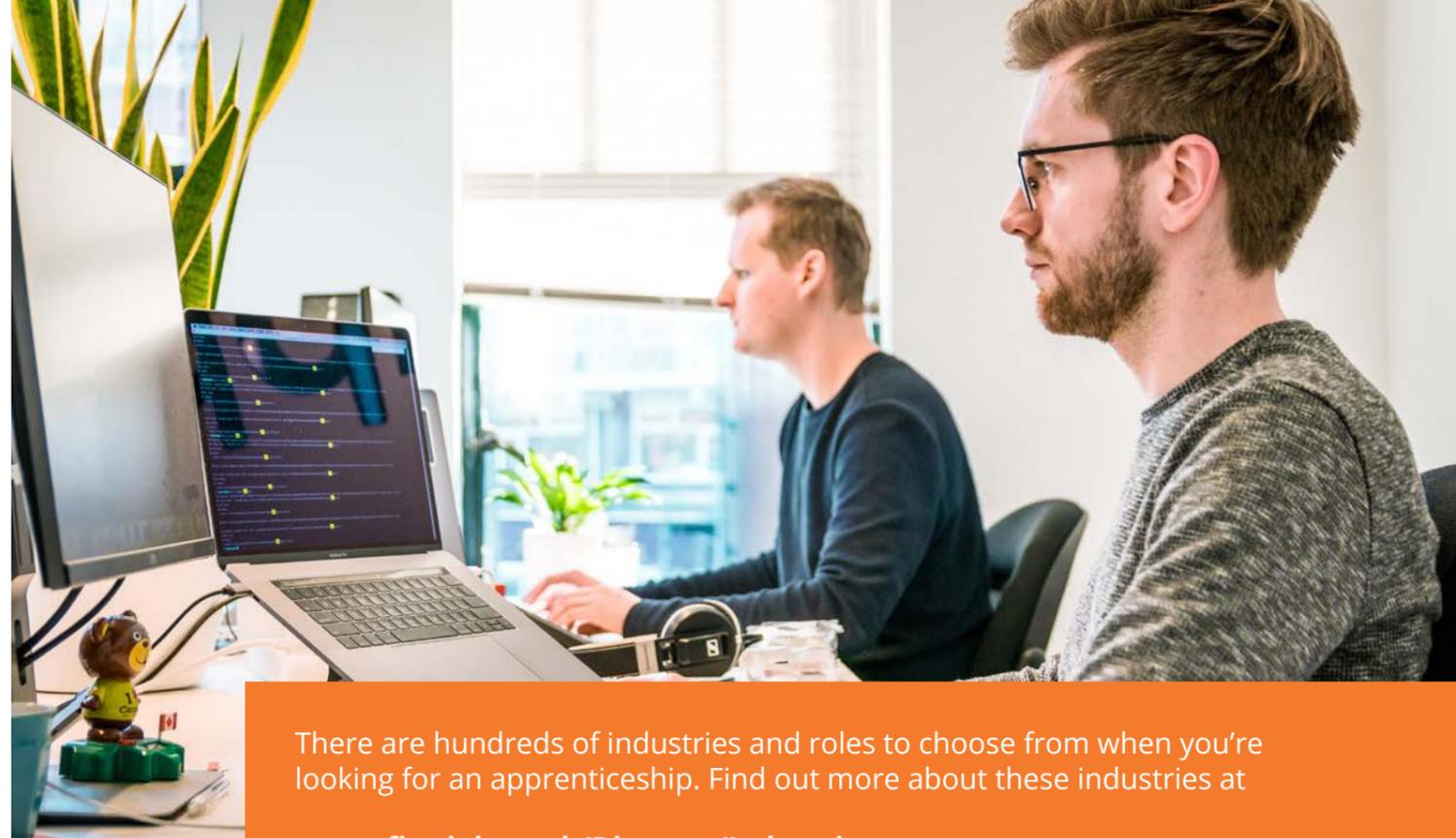
If you don't want to do an apprenticeship right after school, that's OK because you can do one at any time. You could choose to do one after college or in your early twenties if you want to train in a different industry. Although they have been designed for school and college leavers who don't have much industry experience, they are open to anybody.

## Apprenticeship levels

If you start looking for apprenticeships, you'll notice that there are different levels available. These range from the equivalent of passing your GCSEs all the way through to a Master's degree, so no matter what your grades are, you'll find something right for you. Here is a breakdown of the apprenticeship levels:

| Type of apprenticeship | Level   | Level equivalent   |
|------------------------|---------|--|
| Intermediate           | 2       | 5 GCSE passes (grade A*-C or 9-4)                                |
| Advanced               | 3       | 2 A Level passes / Level 3 Diploma / International Baccalaureate |
| Higher                 | 4/5/6/7 | Foundation, Bachelor's or Master's degree                        |
| Degree                 | 6/7     | Bachelor's or Master's degree                                    |

Depending on the apprenticeship you choose will also determine the type of training you get. If you choose to do an apprenticeship in construction or engineering, it's likely that your training will be in a factory so you can learn on the job how to do things. Other times, you could learn by being in a college or even university getting lectures about new techniques in the industry such as in marketing or accounting.



There are hundreds of industries and roles to choose from when you're looking for an apprenticeship. Find out more about these industries at [getmyfirstjob.co.uk/Discover/Industries.aspx](https://getmyfirstjob.co.uk/Discover/Industries.aspx)





## Intermediate Apprenticeships

If you start looking for apprenticeships, you'll notice that there are different levels available. These range from the equivalent of passing your GCSEs all the way through to a Master's degree, so no matter what your grades are, you'll find something right for you. Here is a breakdown of the apprenticeship levels:

An Intermediate (Level 2) Apprenticeship is a great starting point if you don't have many GCSEs or much experience. You'll gain helpful qualifications as well as practical experience in the workplace, and there are opportunities in a very wide range of industries.

An Intermediate Apprenticeship can help you kickstart your career in mostly anything that interests you, though the work you complete will be relevant to the sector and job role and decided by your employer.

### How does it work?

Apprentices typically work between 30 and 40 hours a week, and also have additional training to help them towards their qualifications which may be completed in a college or an outside training provider.

### Duration

Typically, an Intermediate Apprenticeship can last between 12 months and 2 years, depending on the programme you choose to do.

### When could I do it?

The entry requirements vary, as some employers ask for at least two GCSEs (A\*-C or 9-4 in the new system), but some may not need any. It all depends on your individual job role and employer's preferences; you can often find these details on the apprenticeship job advert.

### What qualifications could I gain?

Intermediate Apprenticeships are generally considered to be equivalent to five GCSE passes (A\*-C or 9-4 in the new system), and other qualifications such as NVQ Level 2, BTEC first diplomas and certificates, OCR Nationals, and Key Skills Level 2. Assessment is usually at the end of the programme and involves both on the job training and academic learning.



## Advanced Apprenticeships

An Advanced Apprenticeship helps you to gain further knowledge as well as work-based skills and experience in a specific sector. They are available in a wide range of industries, with many different job roles available to help you kickstart your career. This kind of apprenticeship is perfect for you if you have good grades but don't have very much industry experience but want to get your foot on the career ladder.

### How does it work?

Apprentices study for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) whilst working full time for an employer. You'll receive on the job training for a specific role, learning from experienced people, and develop practical work skills – as well as the academic learning that may be given by an outside training provider.

### Duration

Apprentices are expected to work for at least 30 hours a week, and courses can last anywhere between 1 to 3 years depending on the Apprenticeship you choose.

### When could I do it?

Entry requirements vary depending on the employer or job role (check the specific vacancies), but you will usually need at least 5 A\*-C (9-4 in the new system) grades at GCSE level.

### What qualifications could I gain?

An advanced Apprenticeship is considered equivalent to: 2 passes at A Level, Advanced Extension Awards, International Baccalaureate, Key Skills Level 3, NVQs at Level 3, BTEC diplomas, and OCR Nationals. You also have the chance to gain relevant technical qualifications depending on your employer.



## Higher Apprenticeships

A Higher Apprenticeship is a great vocational alternative to University, offering a qualification that can be the equivalent to a degree, with no tuition fees and the ability to earn a wage whilst you learn. This means that competition is strong, with a limited number of vacancies available for school/college leavers.

### How does it work?

Higher Apprentices work at least 30 hours a week, with most training gained from the workplace alongside part-time study provided by a training provider. Apprentices complete an assessment at the end of their programme, testing their academic learning and their occupational competence developed through on-the-job training. You will attend college once a week, or in blocks of a week or more. Employers do not guarantee they'll keep you on after, but this happens frequently.

### Duration

A Higher Apprenticeship will typically be completed in three or four years, though some could take as long as five years.

### When could I do it?

Higher Apprenticeships are open to those with A-Levels or the equivalent qualification such as a Level 3 or 4 Apprenticeship or Scottish Highers. Academic requirements vary according to the programme, but a majority require on average at least 240 UCAS points to apply. Additionally, some employers require relevant experience to the Apprenticeship topic, such as STEM fields.

### What qualifications could I gain?

The qualification that you could gain really depends on the industry that you go into, but it will be at least the equivalent to a foundation degree. If you have a role you're interested in, have a look on the job advert and it will detail exactly what you could achieve.



## Degree Apprenticeships

A Degree Apprenticeship is a relatively new option for college leavers, which combines university study and paid work. Apprentices gain a bachelor's or Master's degree and the cost of their University fees are covered by the government and their employer. Though they are only available in England and Wales, applications can be made from all parts of the UK.

### How does it work?

The Apprenticeship combines academic study at a University in partnership with the employer. The Apprenticeship involves part-time academic study at a University, with most of your time spent with your employer. A Degree Apprenticeship includes an assessment at the end of the programme in the workplace, testing both the academic learning and occupational competence of the Apprentice which is developed during on-the-job training.

### Duration

Typically, a Degree Apprenticeship takes around three years to complete, though some course may last up to six years.

### When could I do it?

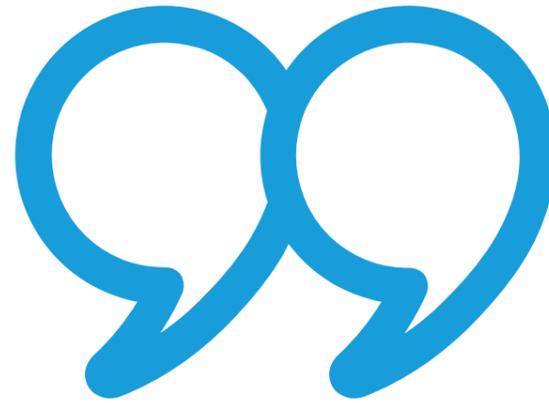
Degree Apprenticeships are open to those with A-Levels or the equivalent qualification such as a Level 3 or 4 Apprenticeship or Scottish Highers. Academic requirements vary according to the programme, but a majority require on average at least 240 UCAS points to apply. Depending on the degree apprenticeship you choose, you may need an A-Level in a specific subject.

### What qualifications could I gain?

At the end of your degree apprenticeship, you would have gained your degree. You also could have gained additional qualifications from your employer or training provider depending on what apprenticeship you choose. If you have a role you're interested in, have a look on the job advert and it will detail exactly what you could achieve.

## Tom's story:

(Degree Level Technology & Business Apprentices)



*"I knew I'd like to do an Apprenticeship from around the age of 16.*

I could see that I enjoyed learning and benefited from actually doing something, rather than sitting and listening. I really enjoyed computing, partly because it was technical but also as technology is such a fast moving environment - my Apprenticeship is the perfect medium between business and these technical interests. I would definitely recommend an Apprenticeship to anybody considering it; I think that people largely underestimate what you'll achieve and that as an apprentice, you can see the progression in the long term.

However, I believe it is important to make clear that they are not for everyone. Within Visa there are endless opportunities from the Apprenticeship scheme. I have had so many chances to travel, meet new people and therefore build up a network of connections. At Visa, I'm treated just like any other member of staff and I get the same benefits as everybody else. I started looking for Apprenticeships on GetMyFirstJob and the Gov.uk website. I wanted to be involved with a large brand that offered noticeable long-term career progression. I enjoy working here because I can see what I do in the real world - I've worked on projects that I see being used by people in my daily life. Throughout this Apprenticeship with Visa, you spend six months in different teams and rotate around them, and during the final year you choose the team you'd prefer to work in. This means that all of us have different experiences and work on separate projects. If you decide to do an Apprenticeship, make sure you meet as many people as possible when you do it. Connections are important.

I don't think there's a better way to build your career than an apprenticeship. You can see your career panning out with every day, and Visa can offer great paths to reach all your career goals. It's preparing me perfectly!"



## How to find Apprenticeships

Almost every job that is currently on offer is advertised somewhere online, so you'll be able to find everything that is on offer there. We're not exaggerating when we say you could find thousands of jobs online! There are a number of different ways that you can find an apprenticeship online including the National Government website and also GetMyFirstJob.

GetMyFirstJob specialises in helping people find their first jobs including apprenticeships and other early career opportunities, so it is a great place to start.

All you need to do to find apprenticeships is go onto [www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk](http://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk) and start searching! Once you have found something that you're interested in you can create your profile and start applying for things with one click - it's as easy as it sounds!

That's not the best part, after you're registered and you're finding apprenticeships, employers and training providers will also be looking for you. They will be able to get in contact with you if your profile matches the role that they're advertising for and offer you an interview there and then!

If you're not too sure what you want to do yet, you could do an online test such as our Career Quiz (<https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk/Develop/CareersQuiz.aspx>) which will work out your skills and see what skills match to job opportunities near you.

# Talking to parents about your options

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Some parents may have a set idea about what you should do in the future, whether that's going to university, or joining the family business. However, it is important to keep your choices open and consider all the opportunities you have. To help your parents or carer understand what you're thinking, we have compiled some useful advice on how to talk to them about it - but remember, the decision is ultimately yours.

## **Explaining your options**

If you're worried that your parents may not be accepting of what you want to do after you leave school, it is important to think it through first. Make a list of benefits about each option you have and plan how each could improve your career. This would not only help you make sure it's the right decision, but also help you when you talk to your parents, showing them you really have thought your future through.

## **Be open with your decisions**

If you're considering a degree Apprenticeship as an alternative route to university, make a list of all the potential benefits it may have. This could include things like the fact that you will be earning a wage to support yourself, gaining valuable work experience or that you won't have the same debts as full-time students will. Also, this shows them that you have taken time to consider what it is you want to do, and that you're choosing the path ideal for you.

## **Be prepared to listen**

Listen to your parents' concerns about the options you are considering. It might not always be that they are stubborn about what they want you to do, it may just be that they do not understand your choices. They may be more open to these if you show you are willing to listen to their point of view. For instance, they may just be worried that if you've chosen to go to University or move away for an Apprenticeship that you will be unsuited to living so independently - or they might just miss you! There are a number of resources on [GetMyFirstJob.co.uk](http://GetMyFirstJob.co.uk) that you can use to support you too

# Apprenticeship Timeline

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Here is a guide to what your Apprenticeship process may be like - keep in mind that this may vary greatly depending on the role you choose to apply to.

## FINAL YEAR OF SCHOOL/COLLEGE

This is when you will have to become serious about which path is best for you. Do you want to study at University? Or become qualified through a different path, such as Apprenticeship. If it is an apprenticeship you decide on, you will need to start thinking about what kind will be best for your prospects, and make sure you have the necessary qualifications for your role.

## APPLY FOR APPRENTICESHIP

At this stage you need to start making some important decisions. For example, you should have a good idea about what industries you wish to enter or a specific job role in mind. You might also want to have in mind a specific employer who wish to work for and apply to, so keep your eye out on the opportunities they have on offer. Once you have decided this, you can sign up on our website where you will be able to upload your CV and find the Apprenticeships we have on offer that you can apply to.

## ASSESSMENT DAY/OTHER TESTS

Sometimes you will be expected to complete an assessment day or even be given other tests to find your compatibility for the role. This means it is important to be prepared to do some research before the day, so you will perform your best. However, some companies may not have an assessment day, so it really depends on which role you have applied for.

## GAP YEAR

A gap year is an excellent chance to broaden your horizons and learn independence before starting your career. Some people choose to gain work experience and save up for a year, or volunteer. Other people may choose to travel, or even take part in a combination of these options.

## INTERVIEW

This may be face-to-face, over the phone or through a video call. You may even have to complete a group interview initially, or at a later state of the application process. Make sure you are confident, well presented, and have prepared some common answers so you are ready. For more tips on how to prepare please see our Ready for Work section in the guide.

## START APPRENTICESHIP

You've got the job! Now it's time to make the most of your Apprenticeship. Your Apprenticeship can last anywhere from a year to six years depending on the Level and role you have applied for. There are many different Apprenticeships available ranging from Intermediate to Degree, so it is important that you have chosen the one that's right for you. To see tips on how to handle your first day, please see our Ready for Work section later in the guide.

## FINISH!

Now that you have your Apprenticeship certificate, you can choose to go onto a job, a Higher Apprenticeship or even University - the choice is endless.



# Defining your personal brand

In cooperation with



In a nutshell, a personal brand is the story of you – your unique combination of skills, experiences and attributes is what makes your personal brand. By developing the story of you, your history and your aspirations you become a self-packaged brand that employers want to be a part of – its not all about work and education.

Here's our simple steps to help you develop your personal brand:

## 1. Identify your skills, strengths and talents.

Talk to friends, family, colleagues & teachers to find these out.

## 2. Identify your core values

This is down to you, think about what really matters to you, your passions. This could be anything from travelling the world to getting on the latest tech as soon as it is out.

## 3. Define your purpose

You need to work out what you're trying to achieve. Are you looking for a lifelong career, to try something new or learn the skills to become an entrepreneur?

## 4. Align your purpose to your strengths

For example, if you love meeting new people and making conversation that could really help you become an entrepreneur!

## 5. Decide on your professional image

From what you wear to your interview or to work, the language you use (both in person and written) right down to the font you use in your CV; it all gives a visual impression of you.

## 6. Create emotional appeal

Mention and refer to your beneficial personality and character traits, if you can't stand people in a bad mood and strive to make people happy use it to your advantage!

## 7. Make an impact

You want to be remembered, if there is something original or different about you, encompass it into your personal brand.



# CV Tips

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An employer's first impression of you is often your CV, so it's crucial that you get your CV right so you can stand out in front of other applicants. We've put together 10 top tips that you should think about when you're creating your own CV.

**1. First impressions.** An employer or recruiter will have an impression of you from the moment they see your application. Your profile, CV and phone manner all play a role and that's before they've even met you!

**2. Clear structure.** You want a recruiter or employer to pick up your CV and find what they need, rather than having to search for information, they don't have the time!

**3. Formatting.** The formatting of your CV often reflects on you. If the content is all out of line, with inconsistent headings and fonts, you could come across as disorganised.

**4. Spelling & grammar.** We're always told to watch our spelling and grammar, but when it comes to building your CV it is essential. An almost instantaneous judgement is made.

**5. Contact details.** You want a prospective employer to contact you, so don't make it difficult for them to find out how.

**6. Personal summary & introduction.** This is crucial – it is telling the reader who you are and what you can offer them.

**7. Employment history.** Providing an outline of your previous roles, responsibilities and notable achievements will give an employer an idea of what you can do.

**8. Irrelevant content.** Your CV should be an accurate reflection of your skills, experience and personal brand.

**9. Tailor made.** Don't overlook the importance of tailoring every CV to the job you're applying to.



# Boosting your CV with extracurricular activities

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Adding extracurricular activities to your CV can show employers your interests and your individuality. It will help employers and recruiters know that you have a range of skills that you apply to many situations. It can sometimes also help in an interview situation, if you play cricket, football, do park runs or have a passion for rowing (to name a few), your interviewer may talk to you about your interest to help you feel at ease.

We know it can be difficult to choose what to put into your CV, so we have provided some helpful explanations and examples for you to use!

## Sport clubs

Playing a sport can demonstrate many of your skills, from teamwork to dedication and drive. It doesn't matter whether it is at a local team or event, from school or just a group of friends getting together and playing in local leagues or if you do a sport independently like swimming, running or cycling. It's a great way to make your skills, interests and abilities stand out. You may even volunteer at weekends or help out younger children with coaching.

## Foreign languages

Whether you are bilingual or you have a passion for learning languages, make sure that you discuss it on your CV. Not only does speaking another language widen your choices to opportunities such as translating, but there are also other ways that it can strengthen your CV or give you the job over another candidate.

## Volunteering, Mentoring & Fundraising

Mentoring, fundraising or volunteering are all great ways you can show how you contribute to society. Whether it be mentoring another student at your school, college or university, raising sponsorship to take part in a charitable event, volunteering at a local charity shop or event, such as a park run, or festival.

## Being a Prefect or Student Rep

Talking about how you were a prefect, student rep or something similar will immediately put you in a positive light to employers. That's because it means that your teachers, school, college or university trusted you to put you in a position of responsibility and you were happy to help out more so than some of your peers.

# Keeping motivated when looking for jobs

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It can be difficult when you're looking for jobs, for many reasons. There may be pressure on you to get a job quickly and quite often employers don't get back to you if you don't have an interview. That's why it's really important for you to stay motivated during your job search:

## Start your day off right

Applying for jobs is a job in itself, so start your day right, set yourself an alarm, have a good breakfast and start working by a time that you set yourself. By starting a daily routine, it will help you with your job search.

## Give yourself daily goals

It can be difficult to say that you want a job by a certain date – it's not that easy. So set yourself small goals each day. This could be 'finish my CV', 'write a cover letter' or even 'apply for at least 2 jobs'.

## Give yourself breaks!

You still deserve a break when you're looking for jobs, so give yourself weekends and evenings to relax if you need to. Also don't be afraid to give yourself breaks during the day if you need to!

## Ask friends and family for help

It can be quite overwhelming when you're looking for a job. Be honest when you're talking to friends and family, if you're struggling you want them to know so they don't put any more pressure on you. They'll also be able to help proofread your applications!

## Stay positive and get feedback

If you're not offered a job that you applied for, make sure that you ask for feedback. It will help you for other opportunities that you apply for. If you're told about a weak spot, don't let it get you down you can just work on it and turn it into an advantage.





[www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk](http://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk)

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