

Choosing the right apprenticeship for you

It's one of the most important decisions you'll make, and getting it right will kick-start your career. So if you're thinking of taking on an apprenticeship, here are some tips from a careers adviser to help you decide which is right for you.

Step one – Why do you want to do an apprenticeship?

- Have you considered all the possible different pathways you could take?
- How much do you know about apprenticeships, the qualifications you can gain, the assessment methods, what's involved, and the different levels available?
- Are you ready for work? Can you manage and balance the demands of work and study?
- What are the advantages of this pathway for you at this stage? What are the possible disadvantages? Take a look at the [pros and cons of apprenticeships](#).

Step two – Do you have a particular career or sector in mind?

Yes – It would be useful to research your ideas further. You can [find information about different careers](#) on [ucas.com](#), or job profile sections of your national careers website. Pay close attention to the entry requirements – is an apprenticeship a valid pathway into the career you're interested in?

No – If you're not sure what you want to do longer term, you should think carefully about whether an apprenticeship is the right option for you. Apprenticeships are designed to provide a route into a specific career or sector, and so potentially can narrow your future options more than other pathways. [Find out more about higher education](#) and [other post-18 options](#).

Top tip: Consider using an online careers guide to help you identify possible careers/job families that match your interests. No computer programme can tell you what you career you should or shouldn't be doing, but they can be a helpful starting point for your research, and a good basis of a discussion with a careers adviser.

Step three – Search for and compare vacancies

Start by finding two or three vacancies for the kind of job roles and apprenticeships you're interested in.

Research and check out the employer's website for any details and information you want. Remember, you can contact the employer and university, college, or training provider to ask any questions you might have.

Step four – Get advice

Now you can narrow down your choices, but before you apply, it is really important to discuss your ideas further with teachers, parents, and a careers adviser.

Call the helpline number or visit the website for the region of the UK you live in:

- **England** – [National Careers Service](#) – 0800 100 900
- **Wales** – [Careers Wales](#) – 0800 028 4844
- **Scotland** – [My World of Work](#) – 0800 917 8000
- **Northern Ireland** – [Northern Ireland Careers](#) – 0300 200 7820

Step five – Time to apply!

There are no fixed deadlines for apprenticeships, and vacancies can occur throughout the year – although larger firms tend to recruit from September. When you search for apprenticeships, each vacancy will specify how you need to apply.

Remember to check any apprenticeship start dates to make sure you are going to be available if you haven't finished at sixth form or college yet!

Good luck!