



Apprenticeships - A guide for specialist employers (England)

Contents

Introduction	3
What is a construction apprenticeship?	3
What is a managing agency?	3
How are apprenticeships delivered?	4
What is included in an apprenticeship programme?	4
What are the benefits of taking on an apprentice?	6
What commitment is required when taking on an apprentice?	7
What commitment can be expected from the apprentice?	8
What grants are available to contribute towards the cost of employing an apprentice?	8
What is a typical apprenticeship process?	9
How do I get started?	10
Appendix - Types of apprenticeship available	11



Introduction

This guide aims to introduce apprenticeships to employers, as well as outline how they work, what occupations are covered, how to take on an apprentice and what funding support may be available.

There is a wide range of benefits to you as an individual employer, your sector and the construction industry as a whole from taking on apprentices. What's more, there is funding available to support you through the entire apprenticeship programme.

What is a construction apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship in construction is a form of vocational training whereby the apprentice follows a ConstructionSkills approved framework to develop skills and knowledge and then demonstrates and evidences the application of these in a construction environment.

In order to complete a construction apprenticeship, the apprentice must have been employed during the apprenticeship, have demonstrated competence in the specified range of vocational skills and have an employed status at the time of completion. Achievement of the required level of competence is demonstrated within the workplace by way of an approved assessment process.

The core participants involved in a construction apprenticeship are:

- The **employer**, who is the primary provider of learning in the workplace, and supports the apprentice through mentoring, learning and payment of wages. A **specialist employer** is an employer who operates in occupations/sectors within the construction industry which are outside of the traditional trades such as brickwork and carpentry.
- The **apprentice**, who is expected to contribute to the productivity of the employer and to undertake the requisite learning.
- The **training provider**, which provides off-site tuition and administrative support to both the employer and the apprentice. For traditional apprentices the training provider would be colleges

or training centres. For Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes (SAPs) the training provider is the National Specialist Accredited Centre (NSAC) in partnership with a trade federation. This training can be undertaken on site at manufacturer's, supplier's or the employer's premises.

- The **Government**, which provides a financial contribution to the training costs of the apprenticeship.
- **CITB-ConstructionSkills**, which provides grant for in-scope companies.
- The **managing agency**, which sets up and monitors the apprenticeship as well as draws down and distributes the Government funding. In some cases the managing agency can be the training provider.

What is a managing agency?

A managing agency helps employers select a suitable apprentice that complements their business and works with the apprentices to identify appropriate college places. Managing agencies provide ongoing support and advice throughout the training period to both the apprentice and employer and must be able to demonstrate they have the necessary expertise to assist with specialist trades.

Their role is to:

- Access LSC funding on behalf of the apprentice and employer, reducing the bureaucracy for the employer.
- Provide information, advice and guidance to apprentices and employers.
- Comply with funding body and inspection requirements in terms of quality of provision and use of funds.
- Co-ordinate training programmes linking on and off the job learning.
- Deliver the statistics and achievements agreed by Government.
- Consistently offer high quality support to meet the needs of apprentices and employers.

How are apprenticeships delivered?



Apprenticeships can be delivered via two main routes:

1. Traditional Apprenticeships

Delivered by colleges of further education or the National Construction College (NCC). Traditional apprenticeships are delivered to conventional trades such as bricklaying or joinery but are also delivered to some of the larger specialist trades, such as roofing and flooring. Traditional apprenticeships are available to Level 2 (traditional apprenticeship) and Level 3 (traditional advanced apprenticeship).

2. Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes (SAPs)

Delivered by way of a partnership between trade federations and the National Specialist Accredited Centre (NSAC). SAPs, in conjunction with nationally recognised qualifications, now offer demonstrable

career opportunities to attract new entrants into sectors which in the past were not generally recognised. At this time SAPs are only available up to Level 2.

What is included in an apprenticeship programme?

The apprenticeship framework is designed to help train and qualify an individual for a career in construction, by ensuring that they obtain the right skills and knowledge to succeed in the construction industry.

Apprenticeships which lead to the achievement of a Level 2 Vocational Qualification normally take two years to complete but can, in certain circumstances, take less time. The exact amount of time for each apprenticeship varies by country, trade, college and apprenticeship route. Apprenticeships can also be carried out on a full- or part-time basis depending on the apprentice's personal circumstances.

SAPs, in conjunction with nationally recognised qualifications, now offer demonstrable career opportunities to attract new entrants into sectors which in the past were not generally recognised.

A construction apprenticeship is a combination of various qualifications and skills. All construction apprenticeships contain the following elements:

- A module on Employment Rights and Responsibilities (ERR). This is a mandatory requirement for all Government funded apprenticeship programmes.
- Transferable Skills (literacy, numeracy and communication skills). Apprentice candidates may be exempt from Transferable Skills depending upon the level of any existing qualifications, such as GCSEs, already held.
- Employed status.

In addition, depending on what type of apprenticeship the candidate is undertaking, the following requirements must be completed:

Traditional Apprenticeships

- Construction Diploma - the programme of technical training undertaken by the apprentice. This usually involves in the region of 20 weeks off-the-job training at a college of further education or NCC. The programme includes the relevant Vocational Qualification which has to be achieved to prove the apprentice's level of competence upon completion. In most cases the diploma is awarded by the Construction Awards Alliance (CAA).



Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes (SAPs)

- An industry approved training programme, developed in conjunction with the relevant trade federation, consisting of around 25 days off-the-job training backed up with on-the-job mentored training.
- Achievement of the relevant Vocational Qualification.
- The SAP is certificated by the National Specialist Team within ConstructionSkills with the certificate being endorsed by the appropriate trade federation.

Finally, a construction apprenticeship may also include the following elements:

- Personal learning and thinking skills.
- A skills test at the end of the programme, which is eligible for grant.

The requirements of both routes to an apprenticeship should be set out in a Construction Apprenticeship Scheme (CAS) Deed of Apprenticeship, which clearly states what is expected between the employer, apprentice and training provider.

What are the benefits of taking on an apprentice?

Apprenticeships are a great way to grow your business. This is because apprentices:

- Are work ready, so they immediately provide an employer with an individual who is productive.
- Bring a lot more than an extra pair of hands; they contribute energy and enthusiasm and provide supervisory opportunities by releasing more experienced staff from some or all manual work.
- Can bring insight and awareness to your existing employees through their exposure to new techniques, tools, equipment and technology gained during training.
- Help to build a stronger sense of teamwork by providing existing and more experienced employees with the opportunities to share and pass on their skills and knowledge.
- Enable progression planning to help address the issue of an ageing workforce.
- Contribute towards the ongoing quality of delivery by the company which results from having a competent and fully qualified workforce.
- Demonstrate your company's commitment to training and the development of your workforce.



What commitment is required when taking on an apprentice?

When taking on an apprentice, the employer must:

- Directly employ the apprentice.
- Provide proper supervision and training for the apprentice, in a safe manner, in all areas of work in the chosen occupation.
- Ensure all legal and contractual obligations relating to health and safety and employment law are met.
- Permit the apprentice to attend all necessary off-the-job training sessions, both at college or other locations, as required within the apprenticeship programme.
- Provide the apprentice with opportunities to practise and gain experience, under supervision,

in the range of work included in the apprenticeship programme.

- Provide the apprentice with all the necessary tools and equipment required to carry out the job safely and in accordance with all health and safety and other legislation.
- Provide or make available all necessary site or project documentation to support evidence of on-site supervised training.
- Allow access to the apprentice and the workplace by Vocational Qualification assessors to enable them to carry out the necessary workplace assessment of the apprentice as required to judge the competence of the apprentice.
- Allow ConstructionSkills' Apprenticeship Officers to conduct regular reviews of the apprentice's progress as required by the funding authorities.

The requirements of both routes to an apprenticeship should be set out in a Construction Apprenticeship Scheme (CAS) Deed of Apprenticeship, which clearly states what is expected between the employer, apprentice and training provider.



What commitment can be expected from the apprentice?



An employer can expect the apprentice to:

- Endeavour to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in their chosen occupation and make the necessary effort to pass all relevant modules, assessments, units, tests and examinations as and when required to secure the appropriate qualification.
- Observe all safety advice and follow safety procedures.
- Attend all necessary training sessions as required within the apprenticeship programme, including off-the-job training.
- Regularly attend work when not attending off-the-job training.
- Contribute towards the work of the employer and carry out their practical on-the-job training and work experience in a diligent and conscientious manner.
- Follow and comply with the employer's health and safety policy and any other legislation that the employer has in place.
- Attend all necessary training sessions as required within the apprenticeship programme.

What grants are available to contribute towards the cost of employing an apprentice?

The following grants are available to those employers in-scope and registered with ConstructionSkills.

Traditional Apprenticeships

- Apprentice registration grant
- First year attendance grants - paid quarterly
- Second year attendance grants - paid quarterly
- VQ Level 2 achievement grant
- Award of Apprenticeship grant - paid on final certification
- Third year attendance grants - paid quarterly
- VQ Level 3 achievement grant
- Award of Advanced Apprenticeship - paid on final certification

Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes (SAPs)

- Apprentice registration grant
- First year attendance grants - paid quarterly
- Second year attendance grants - paid quarterly
- VQ Level 2 achievement grant
- Award of Specialist Apprenticeship - paid on final certification

In 2009/10, employers were able to claim CITB-ConstructionSkills grants of up to £5,700 for a two year apprenticeship and £9,820 for a three year apprenticeship.

Full details of the amounts of these grants, as well as the terms and conditions that apply, can be found on the ConstructionSkills website at:

www.cskills.org/grant.

There are clear deadlines for claiming apprenticeship grants and employers must ensure that they meet these deadlines in order to receive payment.

Whilst apprentices who are between 16 and 18 years of age are fully funded, Government currently expects employers to contribute towards the cost of training for mature apprentices 19 years of age and over.

What is a typical apprenticeship process?

Traditional Apprenticeships

1. The employer contacts ConstructionSkills about taking on an apprentice.
2. If the employer does not already have an apprentice in mind, ConstructionSkills matches an apprentice to the employer prior to the apprenticeship commencing.
3. A ConstructionSkills Apprenticeship Officer visits the company and completes the apprenticeship paperwork. This includes advice on contract of employment, industry rates of pay, health and safety pre-placement check and confirmation of start date.
4. The apprentice attends an induction on commencement of the programme.
5. The Construction Apprenticeship Scheme (CAS) agreement is signed and returned within six months of commencing the programme.
6. The apprenticeship takes between two and three years, depending on apprenticeship route. On completion the apprentice receives a completion certificate and NVQ Level 2 or 3 qualification.

Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes (SAPs)

1. The employer contacts their trade federation or the ConstructionSkills National Specialist Team (NST) for information on the SAP scheme, grant funding and to register a candidate.
2. The trade federation or NST forwards all relevant paperwork to the employer for completion. This includes advice on contract of employment, industry rates of pay, health and safety pre-placement check and confirmation of start date.
3. The apprentice attends an induction on commencement of the programme.
4. The Construction Apprenticeship Scheme (CAS) agreement is signed and returned within six months of commencing the programme.
5. A ConstructionSkills Apprenticeship Officer visits the employer to undertake employer audit, followed by regular visits to monitor apprentice progress.
6. The apprenticeship takes two years. On completion the apprentice receives a completion certificate and NVQ Level 2 qualification.



How do I get started?

If you would like to commit to taking on an apprentice, follow these steps.

1. Is there an apprenticeship available which suits your operations? See the appendix for a list of those occupational areas for which either Traditional Apprenticeships or Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes are available.

2. For a Traditional Apprenticeship, contact your local ConstructionSkills regional office and ask to speak to a Company Development Adviser or Apprenticeships Officer. They will provide the necessary advice and guidance to help you. For the contact details of your nearest office visit

www.cskills.org/contact-us/offices.aspx

3. For a Specialist Apprenticeship Programme, contact your trade federation who may be able to provide you with the information you need to get started. For the contact details of your trade federation, contact NSCC on 0844 249 5351. Alternatively, you can contact the National Specialist Team at ConstructionSkills on 0300 456 5562 or by email at nstenquiries@cskills.org and a Specialist Adviser will make contact.



4. If the occupation in which you are interested in taking on an apprentice is not covered in the list of occupations shown in the appendix, there may be other alternatives or it may be possible to develop a bespoke solution. In this case, contact the National Specialist Team at ConstructionSkills on 0300 456 5562 or by email at nstenquiries@cskills.org giving details of the occupation for which support is required, and a Specialist Adviser will make contact.

5. If you need any further advice or information, contact the National Specialist Team at ConstructionSkills on 0300 456 5562 or by email at nstenquiries@cskills.org.

If the occupation in which you are interested in taking on an apprentice is not covered in the list of occupations shown in the appendix, there may be other alternatives or it may be possible to develop a bespoke solution.

Appendix - Types of apprenticeship available

Traditional Apprenticeships

Access

- Scaffolding

Civil Engineering Services

- Civil Engineering Technician
- Construction and Civil Engineering Services

Decorative Occupations

- Decorative Finishing and Industrial Painting
- Painter & Decorator

Plant Operations

- Plant Installation
- Plant Operator
- Specialist Plant & Machinery

Plant Mechanics

- Construction Plant Mechanics
- Plant Maintenance
- Plant Technician
- Small Plant and Tool Fitter

Trowel Occupations

- Bricklaying
- Craft Masonry

Wood Occupations

- Bench Joinery
- Shopfitting
- Site Carpentry

Other

- Built Environment Design
- Construction Contracting Operations
- Construction Operative
- Construction Site Supervision
- Formwork
- General Construction
- Maintenance Operations
- Road Building and Highways Maintenance
- Site Logistics
- Surveying Property and Maintenance



Traditional Apprenticeships – Specialist Trades

Access

- Accessing and Rigging Occupations
- Lightning Conductor Engineering
- Steeplejacking

Flooring

- Floor Covering
- Floor Laying
- Wall and Floor Tiling

Interior Systems

- Ceiling Fixing
- Fitted Interiors
- Interior Systems
- Partitioning
- Specialist Installation Occupations
- Suspended Ceilings

Plant Operations

- Demolition Operative
- Directional Drilling
- Piling Operations

Roofing Occupations

- Reinforced Bituminous Membranes (Built Up Felt Roofing)
- Roof Sheeting and Cladding
- Roof Slating and Tiling

Trowel Occupations

- Plastering (incl. Solid and Fibrous)

Wood Occupations

- Wood Machining

Other

- Associated Industrial Services
- Cladding Occupations
- Concrete Operations
- Demolition
- Erection of Pre-Cast Concrete
- Heritage Skills
- Industrial Building Systems
- Mastic Asphalt
- Post Tensioning Operations
- Specialist Concrete Occupations
- Specialist Installation Occupations

- Steel Fixing
- Stonemasonry
- Sub-Structure Work Occupations
- Thermal Insulation

Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes (SAPs)

- Diamond Drilling and Sawing
- Dry Lining
- Façade Preservation
- Flat Glass Glazing
- Land Drilling
- Lead Roofer
- Passive Fire Protection
- Resin Flooring
- Road Safety Marking
- Sealant Application
- Surface Preparation

Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes (SAPs) - Under Development

- Chimney Engineering
- Cold Rolled Steel Frame Systems
- Demolition Site Operative
- Hard Landscaping – Modular Paving
- Hire and Rental Desk Operative
- Industrial Concrete Flooring
- Insulated Concrete Formwork
- Load Bearing Stud Walls
- Passive Fire Protection
- Piling Site Operative (Not Rig Operator)
- Roofing Occupations
 - o Hard Metal (Copper, Zinc, Stainless Steel etc)
 - o Liquid Waterproofing Systems
 - o Single Ply
- Tunnelling
- Underpinning
- Wood Flooring Installation Operative

Note: If any occupation is not shown, there may be an alternative means of provision or the opportunity to develop a suitable programme for employers. For further information you should contact the National Specialist Team at ConstructionSkills on 0300 456 5562 or by email at nstenquiries@cskills.org.

Contributors

This guidance has been jointly compiled by ConstructionSkills, the National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC) and the Specialist Working Group of the Cross-Industry Construction Apprenticeship Task Force (CCATF).

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