

Progressing beyond your Advanced Apprenticeships

Whether you've just started your Apprenticeship, are coming to the end or just thinking about learning new skills to support your career this guide aims to highlight the range of opportunities you could consider.

What level of qualification do I have?

By completing an Advanced Apprenticeship you will have a level 3 qualification. You might now, or at some point in the future want to think about continuing to study and gaining additional qualifications. A level 4 or above qualification is classed as Higher Education.

Level These qualifications include:

8	Doctoral degrees Award, Certificate and Diploma in strategic direction
7	Masters degrees Postgraduate certificate and diploma
6	Degree Professional Qualification
5	National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Professional Qualification Foundation Degree Higher National Diploma (HND) Diploma of higher education
4	National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Professional Qualifications Certificates of higher education Higher National Certificate (HNC)
3	Advanced Apprenticeship Advanced & Progression Diploma AS/A2 Level National Awards, Certificates, and Diploma National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)
2	Apprenticeship National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) GCSEs at grades A*- C Higher Diploma First Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas
1	National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) GCSEs at grades D-G Foundation Diploma Introductory Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

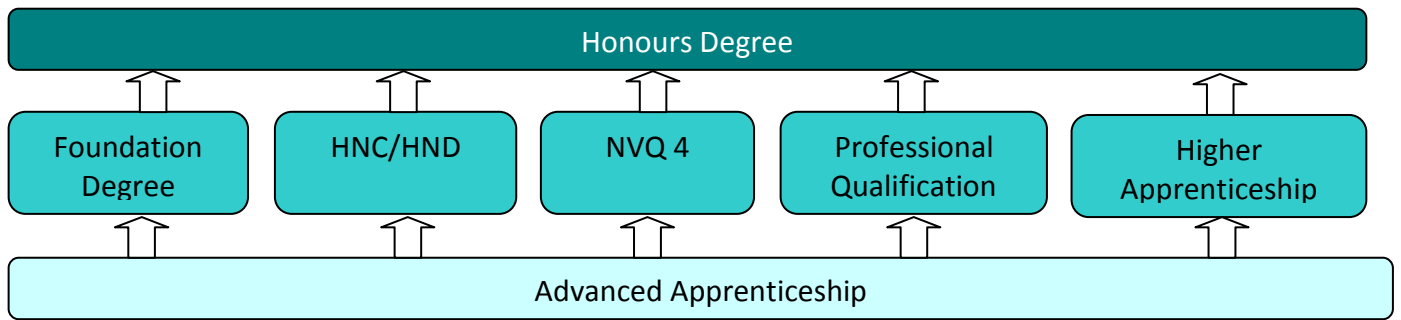
What could I do after my Apprenticeship?

Progressing to a higher level might include progressing to a Foundation Degree or a Higher National Certificate or Diploma (HNC and HND). There are also other opportunities such as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) available through colleges, universities and training providers where you can continue to develop new skills related to your professional area. If you do not want to progress to a higher level right now, you can study for a higher education qualification at any time.

Higher Education is not only about studying a full time three year Degree – there are many other options. There have never been as many part-time and vocational Higher Education programmes. **Over 40% of students in higher education are studying part-time, so you can continue to earn while you learn.**

What Can I Do Next?

Completing your Apprenticeship shows you have skills, qualifications and dedication to your career. Your Apprenticeship has equipped you with the relevant skills and knowledge to help you start your career and more Advanced Apprentices are now going on to obtain higher qualifications. There are lots of opportunities on offer that can help you progress your career further. Higher skills will give you an edge in the job market and should increase your chances of getting a good rate of pay, and getting promoted. The diagram below shows the different paths of progression that are available upon successful completion of an Advanced Apprenticeship should you decide to continue studying.



What are the benefits of Higher Education?

The qualifications you achieve are likely to have a direct effect on how much you earn. Employers pay most for skills that are specialised, require training and qualifications, are particularly important to their business and are in short supply. By 2020, 40% of the workforce will require higher level skills (skills associated with higher education).

People with higher level skills:

- are less likely to be unemployed
- can expect to earn more
- had double the average number of promotions at work

On average, someone with a level 4 qualification will earn £200 more per week than someone with a level 3 qualification – £10,000 a year.

I want to carry on working, can I still study?

If you apply for a work-related course, for example a Foundation Degree, Higher National Certificate or Diploma (HNC and HND) or NVQ4, you will be able to combine work and study. You can also use your place of work to provide the evidence of your learning and undertake project work. Foundation Degrees have a flexible delivery, for example in the evening, weekends, day release or online. You need to look for a programme that suits you best.

What type of Higher Education?

There are a wide variety of Higher Education courses and some examples are shown below.

Foundation Degree

What is it? Foundation Degrees combine academic study with work-based learning. Designed jointly by universities, colleges and employers, they are available in a range of work-related subjects.

Where could I study? Usually this will involve learning in the workplace as well as at university or college.

How long will it take me? They usually take around two years to complete a full-time course and part-time courses may take longer.

Where next? A university-level qualification in its own right, equivalent to the first two years of an honours degree. Once you've got a Foundation Degree you can 'top up' your qualification to an honours degree. This usually involves an extra year studying full-time (or the part-time equivalent).

Higher National Certificate/Diploma (HNC/HND)

What is it? HNCs and HNDs are work-related qualifications which are available in a wide range of subjects and can count towards professional membership.

Where could I study? They can be studied through higher education colleges and further education colleges depending on what is on offer locally.

How long will it take me? These are often studied part time whilst also working and take two years if studied full time or longer if part time.

Where next? You can also use the qualifications to progress within your current career, for example as a stepping stone to gaining professional status. You can also convert a HNC/HND to a Degree with extra study.

Degree

What is it? A degree is a course of academic study which leads to bachelor of arts (BA), bachelor of science (BSc), or bachelor of medicine (MB). They are the most common kind of higher education.

Where could I study? You can study for a degree at university, some colleges and via distance learning.

How long will it take me? Degrees usually take three or four years to complete full time but you can also study for a degree part time or through flexible learning and these take longer than 3 years to complete.

Where next? Most graduates use their degree to move into a job or profession. You could also use the qualification to go on to a postgraduate course of higher education, such as a masters degree or a PhD.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

What is it? NVQs are based on national standards for various occupations. They are a 'competence-based' qualification: this means you learn practical, work-related tasks designed to help you develop the skills and knowledge to do a job effectively.

Where could I study? You can study for NVQs through local colleges and Training Providers.

How long will it take me? Within reason, there is no maximum time limit to complete an NVQ. Generally an NVQ can take several years dependent upon what level you study.

Where next? You can also use the qualifications to progress within your current career, you could progress into a Professional Qualification or you might want to go and study a Degree.

Will I be able to cope with higher level study?

As an Apprentice you already have the technical knowledge and practical experience in your field. You have developed skills in time management, working with others and producing portfolio evidence. Like any new student to HE you will need to familiarise yourself with HE jargon, learn how to write reflective accounts of your work and how to reference your evidence. If you'd like to brush up on the skills to study at a higher level, the following resources can help give you a head start. Two Open University sites can help:

- Skills for Study offer a range of study skills materials. www.open.ac.uk/skillsforstudy
- OpenLearn project offers free course material on a range of subjects <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk>

Where to study?

If you are interested in progressing on to a Higher Education course you need to consider what type of course would be best for you. You should start by finding out what courses are available locally and then start to shortlist.

- Examples of Foundation Degree, HNC/HND and other provision e.g. NVQ delivered locally are available at: <http://www.life-pilot.co.uk/info-point/what-where-how-to-study/types-of-courses/>.
- You can also find a provider directly by looking at: <http://www.life-pilot.co.uk/find-a-college-university>.

How much will it cost?

Costs for courses vary, particularly for part-time learners as the cost is set by the institution. Part-time fees are often lower than equivalent full time courses and may not be as expensive as you might think. In addition, financial assistance is often available.

What financial support is available for part-time students starting 2010/11:

The main sources of financial help for part-time students are through:

- Fee Grant (help towards tuition costs)
- Course Grant (help towards study costs, such as books, materials and travel)

These grants do not need to be repaid.

You will not have to pay tuition fees if you are on an income below £16,845. The maximum Fee Grant you can get is based on how long it takes to complete compared to the equivalent full-time course. For the most intensive courses, the maximum available through the Fee Grant and Course Grant combined is £1,495 for 2010/11. How much you receive would depend on your personal circumstances and household income.

What financial support is available for full-time students (starting 2010/11):

The support package for full time students is made up of the Tuition Fee Loan (course fees), the Maintenance Loan (living costs) and you may be eligible to receive the Maintenance Grant and supplementary grants depending on your circumstances. Extra financial help may be provided from your university or college in the form of a Bursary, scholarships and access to learning funds.

To find out more about the financial help available for students in higher education you can visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.

Useful Contacts

www.life-pilot.co.uk

A South West resource for any adult who may be interested in studying at a higher education level. You can find contact details of all colleges and higher education institutions in the South West and find advice about applying for courses.

www.aimhigher.ac.uk

Provides general advice about higher learning issues and useful links to other sites, such as financial support and advice and guidance.

www.foundationdegrees.org.uk

This site provides more general information about Foundation Degrees, including information for employers.

www.fdf.ac.uk

A guide to foundation degrees including a course search facility.

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

A guide to financial support available for students from the government.

www.unistats.com

Allows prospective students to search, review and compare subjects at universities and colleges in the UK.

www.wvln.ac.uk

The Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network aims to remove barriers to progression for vocational learners, helping them to progress into and through HE.

Guide compiled by: Ali Rouncefield-Swales, WFDC Progression Coordinator, University of Bath
A.Rouncefield-Swales@bath.ac.uk