

Apprenticeships Q&A

Gary Riches, Head of Employer Services



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Due to the high volume of questions from the College's apprenticeships Q&A live chat session with Gary Riches, all questions were unable to be answered. As promised, the ten most frequently asked questions have been collated and answered for you.

Q. If I'm successful in getting an apprenticeship, what will I get paid?

A. Any apprentice in the first year of their apprenticeship, regardless of their age, is entitled to a minimum hourly rate of £4.15. If an apprentice is over the age of 25, then in the second year of their apprenticeship they would be entitled to a minimum hourly rate of £8.72. All apprentice rates of pay can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>.

Q. My son/daughter has been furloughed, they do some college work at home but will this count towards their apprenticeship and will they get more than 80% pay?

A. Yes the training will count towards the off the job training element of the apprenticeship, but only if it links directly to the apprenticeship framework/standard. Where training is undertaken by furloughed workers, at the request of their employer, workers are entitled to be paid at least the appropriate minimum wage for this time. In most cases, the furlough payment of 80% of a worker's wage, up to the value of £2,500, will provide sufficient monies to cover these training hours. However, where the furlough payment does not meet the appropriate minimum wage for the time spent training, employers will need to pay the additional wages.

Q. How will you decide on grades from the day release programme in apprenticeships?

A. It depends upon the awarding body. Most coursework, assignments and tests that have been carried out prior to lockdown will contribute towards grades anyway so this will still happen. You would need to get in touch with your Course Tutor to find out the specifics but if you have been working towards your targets successfully then it is likely that you will achieve those grades. If not, your Tutor will be in touch to arrange any alternative online teaching for any rework.

Q. I went to the College's Big Apprenticeship Event in February and was told to send my CV to companies later in the year. How do I know where to send it?

A. Create an account on the Government's Find an Apprenticeship website (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>). This will highlight any opportunities within your region and you can send your CV/apply online. The College will also advertise any current opportunities when they have them, if that's what the employer requests.

Q. My son/daughter wants an apprenticeship in engineering, will companies still be recruiting under the current circumstances?

A. Companies are still recruiting and some are carrying out interviews via video calls - however, the start date for apprenticeships will fall in line with government guidelines. We are working closely with all of our employer partners so we're aware of their situation, but I'm sure you'll agree this is a sensitive time for employers.

Q. If I'm not successful in gaining an apprenticeship will there be alternative courses available at the College instead?

A. Most definitely! You can visit the College's website www.hartlepoolfe.ac.uk to learn more about the courses on offer. As the College has very strong industry and employer links, organisations often recruit apprentices who are studying on a full time course at the College.

Q. What happens to my apprenticeship if I have to self-isolate?

A. The first thing to do is talk to your employer and training provider, they will advise whether to continue with your apprenticeship or take a 'break in learning'. If you continue then you should get an increase in e-learning from your provider and possibly, your employer. If you have a break of less than four weeks in your apprenticeship while you are in self-isolation then the planned end-date of your apprenticeship will not be affected. If the break in learning is four weeks or more, your training provider will report this to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) so that your planned end-date for your apprenticeship can be re-planned upon returning to learning, taking into consideration the length of your break.

Q. What grades do I need to get onto an apprenticeship?

A. It depends on the type of apprenticeship. If it is an advanced apprenticeship then GCSE grade 4 (or a C from previous years) and above should be enough, if it is an intermediate apprenticeship then slightly lower grades may be adequate. There are no fixed pre-requisite grades as it depends upon the employer and what they are looking for. You could get onto an apprenticeship with slightly lower grades if you interview well and then take extra maths/English lessons when you start your apprenticeship.

Q. Can I progress with my studies after my apprenticeship?

A. Definitely yes! It may be possible to progress from an advanced apprenticeship to a higher or degree apprenticeship. Alternatively there should be a course to progress onto if you wish to further your career. Most employers and providers, particularly colleges would encourage you to do this.

Q. I have already completed an apprenticeship but recently thought about a career change. Can I become an apprentice again?

A. Of course! Apprenticeships start at level two and are available all the way up to level eight (PhD). You are able to progress through all of those levels as long as there is sufficient new learning each time. You have to carry out an initial skills assessment prior to enrolling to an apprenticeship, which takes into account your previous knowledge and experience, if that shows you are eligible for that apprenticeship then you are good to go!