How to recruit an apprentice guide

Enquiry centre
0845 606 1144
enquirycentre@cumbria.ac.uk
www.cumbria.ac.uk/HLAS
Wanting to recruit an apprentice? This guide will help you and your business with the steps you need to take to recruit and employ an apprentice and start them on their training course. It will also make you aware of your responsibilities towards the apprentice.

1. **Identify what you want your apprentice(s) to do.**

   - Under the new funding rules, an apprenticeship is a genuine job, the apprentice can be a new member of staff or a current employee that needs skills development in order to take on new role responsibilities. The important thing is that the apprentice must be gaining new skills, knowledge and behaviours to undertake the role you have identified.

   - Once you have identified the role, look on the Education Skills Funding Agency Website to see if there is an apprenticeship Standard available to meet your role requirements. For further details visit: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards)

The process below is designed for recruiting new employees but can also be used if you decide to offer an apprenticeship to existing staff and want to select the best candidate.

   - The role of the apprentice should be clearly set out in a job description so that people know what they are applying to do. A typical job description will include the following information:

   i. **Job title** - this should clearly explain the role you want them to take on.

   ii. **A summary of the key responsibilities of the job** - for this, think about what activities the apprentice will be involved in on a daily basis and summarise these as bullet points.

   iii. **The hours of work** - what will be the start and finish times and how many hours a week will they be paid for.

   iv. **The salary** — an apprentice must be paid at least the legal minimum wage.
v. Person Specification - this describes the attributes that the person you want to recruit should have and helps you when selecting from a number of candidates.

vi. Experience and Qualifications - if recruiting someone new, what qualifications and experience do you need your apprentice to have before they join your company.

The Apprenticeship Standard will contain role specific information which may help in the production of the job description and person specification.

2. Identify the selection process you will use
   • Identifying the selection process you will use to short list applications prior to going to advert, will help in phrasing of the advertisement. The selection process involves shortlisting applications against the Person Specification. Further selection then can involve interviews or an assessment centre where applicants are asked to carry out tasks relevant to the job. Notification of this process is often included in advertisement information.

3. Advertise the post
   • The post can be advertised using the National Apprenticeship Service’s ‘Recruit an Apprentice’ Service (www.gov.uk/recruit-apprentice) and your vacancy can be placed on this site by your chosen training provider.

This service is free of charge and allows apprenticeships to be advertised nationally.

   • The post can also be advertised in local media.

   • Information on how to advertise an apprentice post can also be found on the Cumbria Business Growth Hub. www.cumbriagrowthhub.co.uk/skills-and-training/apprenticeships

4. Shortlisting
   • Score each of the applications against the criteria in the Person Specification and select the number of people you want to see at the next stage.

5. Interview/Selection
   • Interviews are very widely used in the selection process. For the employer, the interview is an opportunity to:
     i. gauge candidates’ experience, ability to perform in the role and suitability for the team
ii. discuss details such as start dates and terms and conditions

• Structuring the interview helps improve its ability to predict performance in the job. A structured interview means that:
  i. questions are planned carefully before the interview
  ii. all candidates are asked the same questions
  iii. answers are scored using a rating system
  iv. questions focus on the attributes and behaviours or competencies needed in the job.

• Assessment centres are also used for selection. They require candidates to complete a number of tasks that reflect the reality of the job. Good practice in delivering an assessment centre includes:
  o They must be administered in a systematic way,
  o The tasks reflect the type of work an apprentice will be expected to do on the job
  o All candidates being given the same types and numbers of tasks to complete
  o All candidates being given the same time to complete a task.

This Employer Guide includes examples of a simple Job Description, a shortlisting form and an example of a presentation brief and interview questions that demonstrate the links between each stage of the recruitment process above.

6. Arrange for training programme

• Once you have selected and employed an apprentice, contact your selected training provider. The University of Cumbria has a team of Enterprise and Business staff who can advise you on the Higher Level Apprenticeships available and the process for applying and securing your funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Their contact details are given at the end of this guide.

7. Support apprentice

• Whilst the training provider will deliver the education and training content of the apprenticeship, you as the employer also have a number of responsibilities. These are covered in more detail in a separate University of Cumbria Guide but key responsibilities include:
  o Paying a legal wage
  o Providing ‘on the job’ support and guidance for the apprentice
  o Allowing the apprentice to complete ‘off the job training’ in their normal
work hours. (NOTE, Off the job training must represent a minimum of 20% of an apprentice’s paid hours)

- Not asking the apprentice to fund any part of their training
- Engage in regular reviews of progress with the apprentice and training provider
- Allowing the apprentice to complete the End Point Assessment

**Legal Minimum Wage**

The government legal minimum wage for all apprentices in their first year of an apprenticeship is £3.50/hour. Apprentices aged 19 and over in the second year of their apprenticeship must be paid the minimum wage for their age. However, you need to consider that to attract the right applicants, you may need to offer a better salary, especially for a Higher or Degree level apprentice. Many employers now use the National Living Wage (£6.70/hour for people aged 21-24 and £7.20/hour for workers aged over 25) as a minimum for apprentices. Remember your apprentice is an investment in your company’s future and setting the salary at the right level will attract better candidates.


**Further Guides Available**

- University of Cumbria Employer Guide to Higher and Degree Level Apprenticeships [www.Cumbria.ac.uk/guide1](http://www.Cumbria.ac.uk/guide1)
- University of Cumbria Guide to Employer responsibilities [www.Cumbria.ac.uk/guide2](http://www.Cumbria.ac.uk/guide2)
- University of Cumbria Employer Guide to Applying for an Apprenticeship [www.cumbria.ac.uk/guide3](http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/guide3)
Further Help and Guidance
The University of Cumbria’s Business and Enterprise Team are able to assist your business with its plans to take on Higher and Degree Level Apprentices. For more information about how we can help please contact us using the details below:

For General Enquiries:
enquiries@cumbria.ac.uk or
apprenticeships@cumbria.ac.uk

To Speak to a Business and Enterprise Manager:
enterprise.services@cumbria.ac.uk
Sample Job Description

This sample has only brief descriptions of the job responsibilities and person specification criteria as it is intended to illustrate the link between the Job Description, The shortlisting form and interview stage. Employers can add as much detail as is needed to their job descriptions as long as the criteria are not discriminatory and the short listing, interview questions and any tasks relate to the person specification criteria set in the job description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Apprentice Associate Project Manager (Level 4) (2-year apprenticeship)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A summary of the key responsibilities of the job</td>
<td>As a project Manager you will have the following responsibilities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Managing a range of development projects taking account of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Budgeting and Cost Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Business Case and benefits management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Project Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Resource management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Contract management and procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaging with stakeholders in a range of teams to identify needs and interdependencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Producing reports and risk assessments for projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivering presentations to meetings of stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Allocating and managing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hours of work</td>
<td>9.00 - 17.30 Monday to Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.00 – 16.00 Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 hour for lunch each day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 hours per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 days/ year paid holiday plus bank holidays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The salary</td>
<td>£6.70 / Hour in year 1 of apprenticeship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum wage for age from start of year 2 of apprenticeship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On successful completion of the End Point Assessment the qualified Project manager will be placed on the lowest point of Grade 5, (currently £22,000 per annum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution to a pension scheme is included in the package</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Person Specification

**Essential Criteria (All applicants Must meet these criteria to be considered for the job)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>How it will be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills and Characteristics</td>
<td>• Good planning and organising skills,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A knowledge of Project Management Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Effective written and verbal communication skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presentation and report production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience and Qualifications</td>
<td>• 4 GCSEs at grade C or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Application form and copies of certificates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Desirable Criteria (These criteria can be tested & scored through interview or exercises to select the best applicant)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>How it will be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills and Characteristics</td>
<td>• Leadership and management Skills,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Effective at working in a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presentation and report production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience and Qualifications</td>
<td>• GCSEs at grade C in Maths and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experience of working on a complex project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experience of working in a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Application form and certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Application form and interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Shortlisting form

(More than one form may be needed depending on the number of applications received)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of person Shortlisting</th>
<th>Date of shortlisting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
<th>Candidate 3</th>
<th>Candidate 4</th>
<th>Candidate 5</th>
<th>Candidate 6</th>
<th>Specific requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person Specification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory requirements (from Job Description)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates with any ‘No’ answers or less than 4 GCSEs at grade C are automatically rejected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 GCSEs At grade C or above</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Must be Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to relevant planning Skills</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Must be Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to relevant Organisational Skills</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Must be Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communications Skills, written application</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Must be Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of GCSEs at grade C or above</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Must be Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Person Specification Desirable Criteria, (from Job Description) Scoring:
- Application contains no specific mention of the desired skill/experience – 0 points
- Application mentions the skill/experience but no examples given – 1 point
- Application mentions specific skill/experience and gives example of application – 2 points
- Application mentions specific skill/experience and goes into detail about relevant experience – 3 points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Skills,</th>
<th>Management Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GCSEs at grade C in Maths and English</th>
<th>1 Point each for Maths and English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a complex project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in a team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite to Interview, Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Presentation and Structured Interview Scoring Form

(Note, for this example, the applicants will be asked to deliver a short presentation on a relevant topic and provide a handout for the interview panel to assess. They will then be asked a number of interview questions. The number of questions and spaces left for notes are kept to a minimum as this is a sample form for to illustrate the approach to recruitment and selection. More questions can and should be added). The candidate that scores highest would be the one selected for the post.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Read the following to the candidate as an introduction: All candidates have 10 minutes for their presentation and will be timed. You will be told when there is 1 minute left and you will be stopped at 10 minutes whether or not you have finished. After this we will conduct the formal interview. Your handouts will be looked at by the panel after the interview has finished. Have you and questions before your time starts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation brief:</th>
<th>Person Spec Criteria assessed (from Job Description)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prepare a 10 Minute presentation on what constitutes effective leadership and management skills and an example of where they have demonstrated these</td>
<td>Effective verbal communication skills and Leadership and management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare a handout to accompany the presentation with copies for the 3 people on the interview panel</td>
<td>Effective written communication skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Panel Notes:
Scoring Criteria that may be considered by the panel:
- Structure of presentation – Introduction, Main Content, Conclusion
- Delivery of Presentation – Easily understood, eye contact with panel, knowledge of topic (not reading from notes),
- Quality of handout – Well presented, no spelling mistakes, Logical structure, (introduction, main topic, conclusion), Concise and informative
Read the following to all Candidates before the interview: This introduction is read to all candidates. The approach we use to select a candidate is called a structured interview. This means that in order to ensure we are fair in our recruitment; all applicants will be asked the same questions by the same people. Please do not be put off by the fact that one person may ask the questions whilst others may record your answers. If you do not understand a question, please ask for it to be read again. If you wish to pass on any questions, you will have the opportunity to come back to them again at the end of the interview. You will also be given the opportunity to ask any question that you have about the job at the end.

Answers should be scored immediately after the interview on a scale of 1-4 based on the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Applicant gives a detailed answer demonstrating an understanding of the area backed up with examples of relevant experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Applicant gives detailed answer to the question but gives no specific examples of their relevant experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Applicant gives a basic answer to the question with no detail and no examples of relevant experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>RESPONSE WAS NOT RELEVANT TO ANY PART OF THE QUESTION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applicants must score at least 2 against each question to be appointed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions (for illustration only, normally more would be asked)</th>
<th>Person Spec Criteria Assessed (From Job Description)</th>
<th>Panel Notes</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Please describe a time when you have had to carry out a piece of work that required effective planning skills.</td>
<td>Good planning and organising skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a What skills do you think are necessary to enable someone to work effectively in a team?</td>
<td>Effective at working in a team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b Can you give any examples of where you have worked in a team and demonstrated these skills</td>
<td>Experience of working in a team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Can you describe for us what you think are the key principles in the management of complex projects.</td>
<td>A knowledge of Project Management Principles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further Information

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