

CHOICES

The monthly parent & carer guide to apprenticeships and technical education



SPECIAL EDITION FOR NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK
10 - 16 FEBRUARY 2025

PATHWAYS INTO HIGHER & DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

SUPPORTING UK SECURITY THROUGH AN APPRENTICESHIP

BBC BITESIZE CAREERS QUESTION OF THE MONTH

T LEVELS ARE A GREAT CHOICE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO BE JOB-READY AND CONFIDENT

HEAR FROM FERNANDA, T LEVEL STUDENT OF THE YEAR 2024

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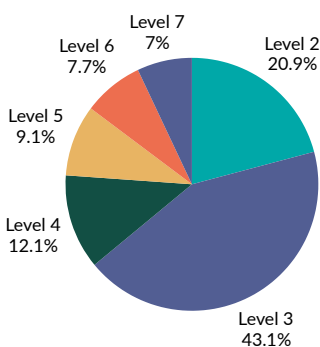
ACCESSING DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Degree apprenticeships are an increasingly popular option for many young people. In this article we explore the different ways that they can be accessed.

What is a degree apprenticeship?

Like all other apprenticeships, a degree apprenticeship is a real job with paid time to study. In the case of degree apprenticeships, the qualification an apprentice is studying for is a degree, or a degree-level qualification. The degree is exactly the same degree that you would study full-time, but you are working and gaining on-the-job experience alongside studying. The other significant difference to doing a full-time degree is that the apprentice doesn't pay any fees for their training or tuition.

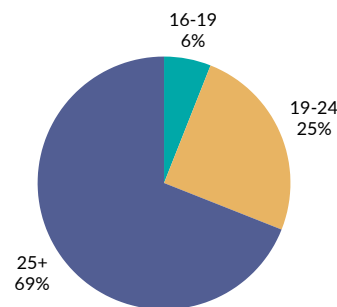
More than 150 degree apprenticeships are available in a range of subjects and they are offered by public and private sector employers, in conjunction with nearly 90 universities. Although degree apprenticeships are increasing in popularity, the majority of apprenticeships are taken at advanced level.



According to data from [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), degree-level (level 6 and 7) apprenticeship starts accounted for nearly 15% of all apprenticeship starts in 2023/24, whereas advanced apprenticeships (level 3) were 43.1%.

What age are most degree apprentices?

Although there are opportunities for school and college leavers to enter a degree apprenticeship straight from school or college, government data for the 2023/24 academic year shows that the majority of degree apprenticeships are actually started by those that are older, and therefore potentially more experienced in their careers.



According to data from [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), last year (2023/24) 69% of higher and degree apprenticeships were started by those aged 25+, 25% by those aged 19-24 and just 6% by those aged under 19.

Finding a degree apprenticeship

Some degree apprenticeships will be advertised for new recruits to apply for straight from school/college after A-levels or T Levels. In other situations, an individual may already be in employment, and their employer may offer for them to undertake a degree apprenticeship to support their personal and professional development, including progression from other levels of apprenticeship.

Who are they for?

It's the same criteria as for any apprenticeship, which is that apprenticeships can be for any individual as long as they are over the age of 16 and not in full-time education. Degree apprenticeships typically (but not always) have entry requirements, and often request that the individual holds a level three qualification such as A-levels, T Levels, an advanced apprenticeship or UCAS points.



Twice a year (October and January), Amazing Apprenticeships create a listing of thousands of higher and degree apprenticeship vacancies: amazingapprenticeships.com/higher-degree-listing



You can also search using vacancy platforms, such as the Find an Apprenticeship website: [gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)

Different pathways into a degree apprenticeship

A-levels



Kasia went from A-levels to a degree apprenticeship. Read about her story on pages 5 - 7.



T Levels



Fernanda went from a T Level to a degree apprenticeship. Read about her story on pages 8 - 10.



Previous apprenticeships



Daniel did a level 3 and then level 4 apprenticeship before moving on to a level 7.

Lauren did two level 3 apprenticeships, a level 4 apprenticeship and is now doing a level 7.

Zainab did A-levels, then a level 4 apprenticeship and is now doing a level 7 apprenticeship.

Read their story on pages 11 - and watch them speaking about their apprenticeships on this webinar:

amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/ask-webinar-using-the-levels-of-apprenticeships-to-progress-your-career-2/



University



Diina and Chris both started degrees, but realised it wasn't the right path for them. They both went on to apprenticeships.

Read more about their stories here:

amazingapprenticeships.com/unidays/



To find out more about degree apprenticeships, have a look at Amazing Apprenticeships' Rapid Read 'What is a degree apprenticeship?' amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/rapid-read-what-is-a-degree-apprenticeship

PARENT INSIGHT: SUPPORTING MY DAUGHTER TO REACH HER POTENTIAL

Meet Iwonka, who works with young people as a Lead Progress Coach at a further education college. Her daughter Kasia is a former Laboratory Science (Chemical Science) degree apprentice and WorldSkills UK 2023 silver medalist who represented the UK at WorldSkills Lyon 2024.



What's been a highlight of Kasia's apprenticeship journey for you personally ?

Watching her grow, watching her develop confidence, watching a change from somebody that didn't really believe in herself to somebody who's really blossomed and knows what she wants out of life now. And then taking part in WorldSkills UK has just really cemented that. I think it was there all along, but this journey has just brought it out of her and made her believe in herself and focus on the future. So, my highlight is watching my little girl become somebody that knows exactly where they want to go and how they're going to do it.

Did Kasia always want to become an apprentice?

When she was in sixth form college (doing biology, chemistry and maths A-levels), it felt like they wanted everybody to go to university as their next step. She knew she wanted to continue with chemistry and we were looking at universities for her, because it felt like that was the path that you're 'supposed' to follow when you're quite academic. We went round lots of universities on open days, but she wasn't very inspired. She ended up putting in a couple of applications for university, but she just sat down one day and said, 'I don't want to go to university, I'm not getting the buzz about it like all my friends are, I want to do a degree apprenticeship'.

How did you feel when she said she wanted to do an apprenticeship?

It wasn't what we were expecting, but we said that was absolutely fine and that we'd support her. My husband, Kasia's dad, did an apprenticeship, and I work with young people in a vocational further education college, so for me, apprenticeships are amazing! Another thing that went through my head was the debt. She'd come out with a degree and debt-free.

Another really important fact for me was that she'd get hands-on experience working for her employer and still learn and get a degree at the same time. So she'd be doing the theory and also have the practical experience of real everyday working life from her employer. I think it's an absolutely ideal situation for young people that they can go out into the real world, get those important employability skills, but then also be learning at the same time. We were, however, a little bit concerned she wouldn't get the apprenticeship she wanted to do and would maybe have to wait a year.



When did she start looking for her apprenticeship?

She came a little bit late to the party, because by the time she'd made the decision to look, a lot of apprenticeships had already been advertised. I was concerned that she'd missed the boat a little bit, and I didn't want to force her to go to university. We knew that degree apprenticeships were very competitive, but she was very lucky. She secured a degree apprenticeship for a chemical company.

How has Kasia found her apprenticeship?

It's been very full on, but really good. I think people need to go into it with their eyes wide open about the amount of work you have to put into it. She's had to make a lot of sacrifices in her personal life. She's missed out on nights out and holidays with her friends. But she was very focused and from day one she wanted to get a first-class degree, which she did! She's now working in Research and Development as a Customer Technical Services Chemist at Innospec Inc.

Has doing an apprenticeship changed Kasia?

She's really matured. When I look back to when she started the apprenticeship, she was quite a shy person, and now she'll take on the world! I believe that's through a combination of her learning at university and her real-life experience at work. Her experience with WorldSkills UK and participating in WorldSkills Lyon, known as the 'Skills Olympics', really helped with this too.



What advice would you give to young people and their parents and carers?

Get as much information as you can, read up on stuff, read up on apprenticeships. I'm not just talking about degree apprenticeships. Read up on different qualifications that you can get. Go for careers advice. Make decisions with information.

What would your advice be about staying resilient when applying for apprenticeships?

In my job, I see a lot of a lot of young people who fall down at the first opportunity and struggle to pick themselves up. If you are not succeeding at first, try and keep going no matter how hard it is. Have someone look at your application, get your CV checked and try and get some advice.

It is incredible that Kasia was awarded a silver medal at WorldSkills UK and went on to represent the UK at WorldSkills Lyon 2024. How did she get involved with WorldSkills UK, and how has it benefited her?

One day she came home and said she was going to take part in a competition. She said she was doing it to develop herself a little bit but wasn't expecting to win. She didn't place that first year, but she was encouraged to apply for the WorldSkills UK competition again the next year as they felt she had real potential. She ended up winning the regionals, then the nationals! She won best young chemical lab technician in the UK!

Taking part in WorldSkills UK and competing at WorldSkills Lyon 2024 has benefited her so much. It's taught her how to keep lots of balls in the air at the same time – she had to submit the dissertation for her degree the same week the WorldSkills UK nationals were on! It's also given her lots of confidence in herself and her abilities.



KASIA'S WORLD SKILLS STORY

"To say that I have had a confidence boost from the experience is the understatement of the century."



During her apprenticeship, Team UK star Kasia decided to set herself a challenge when she saw an advert to enter a regional WorldSkills UK competition.

What made you decide to apply for WorldSkills UK's national competitions?

I just happened to see an advert from the Royal Society of Chemistry which promoted the regional round of WorldSkills UK competitions. I thought 'why not' and set myself a challenge.

How did you get on?

After competing in the regional finals, I qualified for the National Finals, where I came second. WorldSkills UK took me to one side and said they would like me to join the squad of potential competitors for the international WorldSkills finals. I joined later in the cycle than everybody else and didn't think that I had a chance of being selected and of course I was totally stunned when I was.



What is the training like?

I have never been afraid of hard work, and as I wanted to do well, I had to put in hour after hour of intensive mindset and practical skills development to help make that happen. The WorldSkills UK family has been hugely welcoming to me, the camaraderie is terrific. My training manager, Mike, was hugely patient and supportive. Competing at this level was one of the most amazing and challenging experiences of my life, and whilst I didn't come away with a medal from WorldSkills Lyon in 2024, I was pleased with my progress and performance.

How has WorldSkills UK benefited you?

To say that I have had a confidence boost from the experience is the understatement of the century. I also now know that I thrive working under pressure! I am so grateful to have been a part of WorldSkills UK and Team UK, it has given me the opportunity to see new parts of the world, make my mum and dad proud, meet amazing people and grow both personally and technically. The WorldSkills UK team asks for nothing in return but your best effort, and as young people, we are so privileged to have such an incredible opportunity available to us, merited solely on hard work and talent, regardless of background. I hope to inspire and support more students to get involved in the future.

Discover WorldSkills UK

WorldSkills UK is a four nations partnership between education, industry and UK governments. It is a world-class skills network acting as a catalyst for:

- raising standards, through international benchmarking and professional development
- championing future skills, through analysis of rapidly changing economic demand
- empowering young people, from all backgrounds, through competitions-based training and careers advocacy

WorldSkills UK is a proud member of WorldSkills, a global movement of over 80 countries. WorldSkills supports young people across the world via competitions-based training, assessment and benchmarking, with members' national teams ultimately testing their ability to achieve world-class standards in the biennial 'Skills Olympics'.

To access the WorldSkills UK Careers Advice Toolkit and find out more about WorldSkills UK Competitions [click here](#).

T LEVEL STUDENT OF THE YEAR: FERNANDA



Crowned as T Level Student of the Year in the 2024 National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards, in this interview, Fernanda Vargas Mendez explains why T Levels were the best choice for her, and how they have supported her to access her dream career with IBM.

What made you choose to take a T Level?

I remember a time when I felt like my future was an unsolved puzzle. I didn't want to go down the traditional path of A-levels and university and I worried I'd never find something that I would like, especially as someone that would consider herself very creative. I was looking for a course that would allow me to explore my interest in technology and creativity simultaneously. When my school promoted the T Level Digital course, I saw an opportunity to dive into areas like app creation and coding, which I was passionate about, and it felt like a perfect balance of creativity and technical skills. I did consider other educational routes, but the T Level stood out because of its unique combination of practical experience and academic learning, providing me with a strong foundation in digital skills. It also felt like a more immersive and applied learning experience. For the first time, I felt like there was a path designed for people like me who wanted to build practical skills while exploring the tech world and enhancing the creativity I was born with.

Where did you do your industry placement and what did it involve?

I completed a 9-week industry placement at IBM, which was the most pivotal moment in my T Level journey.

I was most excited about the opportunity to work on real-world projects and be part of a professional team, but equally terrified, wondering if I was ready and if I'd be able to keep up. The placement was exactly what I needed. It allowed me to experience the reality of tech and AI at work, not just in theory but through hands-on projects. I was able to create real digital solutions, including the Holonet application, and manage a group of first-year T Level students during their placements for two weeks. These experiences were invaluable, providing practical insights into the industry and enhancing my leadership skills in the workplace.





Why do you think industry experience is important?

Industry experience is crucial because it bridges the gap between academic learning and professional application. It provides students with a first-hand understanding of how theoretical concepts are applied in real-world scenarios. This experience not only enhances employability but also prepares students for the challenges of the professional world. It equips them with practical skills, industry insights, and a professional network that are essential for career success. By the end of my 9-week industry placement, I was a different person. I'd learned so much, but even more importantly, I believed in myself more, and I saw that there were people and mentors who wanted me to succeed, who saw potential in me, and that gave me the strength to keep going.

Which skills did your T Level help you develop?

Throughout the T Level course, I developed numerous skills, including coding, project management, data analysis, and effective communication. Leading projects and presenting them to stakeholders greatly enhanced my confidence. The course has also improved my problem-solving and critical thinking skills, especially in the context of digital security and GDPR. The hands-on experience better prepared me for professional challenges in the field of AI and Analytics.

What was your favourite moment of your T Level course?

My favourite moment of the course was leading the Holonet project at IBM. Being able to create a music platform with a hologram projector and present it to senior managers and stakeholders was a significant achievement. It was a tremendous confidence boost and one of the main highlights of my T Level experience, showcasing the practical skills and knowledge I had gained.

Did doing a T Level open up opportunities you hadn't considered before?

Yes, the T Level significantly broadened my horizons. Initially, I was unsure of my career path and what opportunities would be available to me. The T Level provided me with numerous opportunities. My industry placement allowed me to work alongside professionals, manage projects, and even build on my leadership skills. It showed me that with the right skills and experience, I could pursue careers in various fields such as AI, digital solutions, or even higher education pathways like degree apprenticeships.

Have you always thought you might want to go on to work in this sector?

While I always had an interest in technology, it was the T Level course and my industry placement that solidified my ambition to work in the sector of AI. Additionally, the dynamic nature of the digital industry, with its constant innovations and opportunities for creativity, was a significant factor in my decision to pursue a career in this sector.



What did you do after your T Level?

After completing my T Level, I moved on to a Degree Apprenticeship in Digital Technology Solutions at IBM, focusing on the field of AI and Analytics. My apprenticeship has allowed me to further develop my skills while gaining invaluable work experience. The practical and theoretical knowledge I gained from my T Level has been directly applicable in my current role. This experience has opened up numerous opportunities for me to contribute to innovative projects and make a significant impact in the industry.

What would you say to someone considering a T Level?

If you're thinking about a T Level, I strongly recommend it. My T Level Digital course was a great mix of classroom learning and real-world experience. The projects and industry placements, like my time at IBM, gave me useful skills and confidence. T Levels get you ready for different futures, like apprenticeships, jobs, or more studies. T Levels are a great choice for anyone wanting to be job-ready and confident.

How did you end up securing your apprenticeship at IBM?

I secured my apprenticeship by making sure I was being completely myself during all of the interviews and assessment centres. Companies are looking for genuine people that bring value to their business. I'd encourage students to become good at being themselves as well as making a positive impact to the person that is interviewing you. Also, remember to relate everything back to how your skills will impact the industry you will be involved in.

How was the learning part of your apprenticeship delivered?

The learning part of my apprenticeship was delivered one day a week. Everyone has a different day depending on what is convenient. I prefer my University Day on a Friday.

How do you balance working with learning?

I balance working with learning by being very organised. As someone who works a 9 to 5 and does her degree at the same time, it is essential that you learn how to prioritise tasks and create firm boundaries that will keep your peace of mind. For example, I'd create a list of the 6 main tasks due in a week and order them by priority. Work your way from the top to the bottom of the list throughout the week.

What advice would you give to parents and carers about apprenticeships?

My advice to parents and carers is to let your children explore opportunities and encourage them to develop essential soft skills like communication and confidence. Support their growth by fostering their independence and embracing their interests. Help them find their way through education and life as you have more experience than them. These experiences will build resilience and prepare them for a dynamic world.



Discover more about T Levels:

To find out more about T Levels, please visit:
tlevels.gov.uk/



WORKING AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Meet Daniel, Zainab and Lauren, level 7 Finance Apprentices at the House of Commons

Please tell us about your apprenticeship.

Daniel: I am currently completing a level 7 apprenticeship at the House of Commons, studying towards the ACCA qualification. I am a part of a cohort of finance apprentices, and we are assigned placements which rotate annually across the three years of the programme. I joined the House in October 2023, and I am currently completing my second placement in the Improvement and Performance team. My first placement was in the Project Delivery cluster supporting a Finance Business Partner.

Zainab: I'm also undertaking the level 7 ACCA Professional Accountant Apprenticeship at the House of Commons. It's a 36-month programme consisting of ten exams, professional skills and behaviour assignments, and practical experience in the finance team. I joined the organisation in November 2023 and started the level 7 apprenticeship a few months later, which allowed me to settle into the finance team and understand my key roles and responsibilities.

Lauren: I am currently working at The House of Commons as a Finance Apprentice. I started my employment in January 2024 on a 3-year apprenticeship programme studying towards ACCA level 7. As part of my apprenticeship, I will be assigned to three positions across the House of Commons finance function over the three-year course. My first placement was within the Financial, Planning and Analysis team and I have just moved across to my second placement, which is in the Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS).





Lauren



Zainab



Daniel

Working at the House of Commons means you are part of something much bigger, regardless of which team you are based in. The variety offered by my apprenticeship means that I get to contribute to the work of Parliament in a number of different ways.

“I was so proud to have been awarded the job and thrilled to start my level 7 apprenticeship journey.”

What did you do before your House of Commons apprenticeship?

Lauren: Prior to working at the House of Commons, I started my career working in IT operations at a startup Xerox concessionaire. I completed my first two apprenticeships with the same employer and then decided I wanted to pursue my finance career and started my level 4 AAT Apprenticeship within a finance department at a telecommunications company. I was incredibly excited about the opportunity at the House of Commons and remember the joy I felt the day I received the offer. I was so proud to have been awarded the job and thrilled to start my level 7 apprenticeship journey.

Daniel: I started my career in finance quite early at seventeen years old, as a Finance Apprentice at a secondary school, working towards the AAT qualification. During my five years and ten months at the school I completed two apprenticeships and gained full MAAT AATQB status with the Association of Accounting Technicians.

Zainab: Following my A-level exams, I planned to study accounting and finance at university. However, whilst waiting for results day, I researched what a career in finance could look like and the kind of qualification required. That's when I stumbled across the level 4 and 7 apprenticeships on the accountancy body websites and understood how it's possible to become a chartered accountant through this programme. It was a no-brainer to choose this route, as the practical experience is just as valuable as the exams. As a result, I found an apprenticeship in the charity sector and completed the level 4 ICAEW Accounting Technician Apprenticeship.

Why did you choose to do the level 7 apprenticeship?

Daniel: Having already gained an accountancy qualification via the apprenticeship route, I knew that this model worked well for me, so I decided to begin applying for level 7 apprenticeships with the intention to study ACCA. Apprenticeships are a great way to gain practical work experience, while working towards a professional qualification, all whilst earning a salary.

Progressing through the levels of apprenticeships has allowed me to develop and gain the required skills and experience to apply for level 7 programmes.

Lauren: I am a keen advocate for apprenticeships as I believe they provide opportunities for people to learn on the job and gain professional qualifications.



Having completed three apprenticeship programmes, ACCA being my fourth in my career, I can emphasise the power of apprenticeships. I was confident that I wanted to proceed with the level 7 accounting apprenticeship because of my positive prior apprenticeship experiences as well as the excitement about the end goal: a chartered accountancy profession.

What are you working on at the moment?

Daniel: My current placement is within the Improvement and Performance team, which oversees all the improvement projects across Finance. More specifically, my role sits within the Performance and Value cluster. The focus of my team is to deliver zero-based reviews of our entire budget, aiming to drive better value for money. The work I do contributes directly to making the wider work of Parliament happen. Being in a role which is project-led is very different to your stereotypical accounting role. It is driven by the project you are in, rather than a month-end timetable.

Zainab: I am currently in the Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) team, the second of three rotations. We're responsible for setting the House's medium-term financial plan, monitoring financial performance, and adding value to the numbers by providing insight and analysis. Working at the House of Commons means you are a connected to something much bigger. It is amazing knowing that the work I do every day contributes to the wider work of Parliament and this helps me feel like I make a real impact.

What is a typical working day or week like?

Zainab: Given the nature of the work, no two days at the House of Commons are the same and so my responsibilities vary from month to month and depend on the business's needs. When I joined the FP&A team, I contributed to challenge packs, which are used to challenge and understand the key drivers of budget increases or decreases. Now that budgets have been approved, I'm looking forward to supporting the finance business partners with loading the budgets into our finance system ready for the new financial year.



Every month, I produce a report which analyses the type of purchases made on the card and the total cost to each team. I've built a strong relationship with the finance business partners as we work together to ensure the current GPC process is efficient and implement improvements.

Outside of my main tasks, I like to spend time on professional development, whether that be learning a new Excel formula to use in our regular finance report or learning a new tool altogether, such as Power BI, to create finance dashboards.

Lauren: A typical day, for me, working in the Parliamentary Digital Service finance department involves familiarising myself with the day ahead. Then I go onto my email inbox and action / respond to all emails. At 10:00am I join the team meeting, where we plan our work collaboratively to make sure we are on track with month-end and reporting deadlines.

As an apprentice I have a great opportunity to observe the team and attend meetings to absorb as much information as I can with minimal pressure. I also take note of everything (OneNote is my best friend) as I have found this helpful to look back on when the task comes around the following month. It's also a really good reflection tool as adding to my notes shows my knowledge is improving.

"It is amazing knowing that the work I do every day contributes to the wider work of Parliament and this helps me feel like I make a real impact."



How did you find your apprenticeship?

Daniel: I was actively searching for a level 7 apprenticeship and knew the qualification I wanted to study. In one regard it made it difficult as programmes like this are not always easy to find and when you do, the application process can be very competitive. I feel that it helped that I knew what I was looking for as I was able to dedicate my time to produce meaningful applications and not applying for roles half-heartedly. I was looking on lots of different websites, I found the House of Commons listing on LinkedIn, and it directed me to their careers page.

I remember the moment when I found the listing, and I thought to myself what an opportunity it would be to work for an employer like the House of Commons. I spent a few days writing my application, and then I was fortunate to get an interview a few weeks later.

“I was looking on lots of different websites, I found the House of Commons listing on LinkedIn, and it directed me to their careers page.”

Zainab: The House of Commons advertised the level 7 apprenticeship on LinkedIn. Given that I was already in the level 4 apprenticeship programme, I knew what to expect from the level 7 programme and how to succeed in the application process. In the interviews, I discussed the knowledge and skills gained during the level 4 programme and how I developed professionally. For example, I demonstrated how I can manage my time effectively and juggle my studies alongside my role.

Lauren: I first discovered my current position at the House of Commons on LinkedIn and found the application process very straightforward. I was familiar with apprenticeships as I started my career as an apprentice back in 2017 in Business Administration.

What are you proud of and what are your goals for the future?

Zainab: My goal is to qualify as a chartered accountant, and the apprenticeship makes this achievable. Looking back and reflecting on the number of exams I have taken whilst working full time, I realise it's been a challenging but incredibly rewarding experience, and I'm proud of how much I've completed since starting the apprenticeship.

Interested in finding out more about apprenticeships with UK Parliament?

UK Parliament offer many unique and exciting apprenticeship roles. Rather than cohort intakes, apprentices will join teams right across the organisation on an individual basis in roles such as Security, Education, Communications, Committees, Data and Digital, HR, Finance, Catering, Construction and many more.

UK Parliament is a fantastic place to kickstart your career, offering support, flexibility, and the ongoing career development that's sure to make your first steps add up to more.

Discover more about the apprenticeship opportunities available:
amazingapprenticeships.com/employers/uk-parliament



RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

Check out Amazing Apprenticeships' wide catalogue of free resources

Rapid Reads are a set of quick-read guides created for anyone looking to expand their knowledge of apprenticeships and other technical education routes.

These helpful resources cover a wide range of topics in the world of vocational education and are a great way to get the information you need in simple, quick, easy to read language.

Whether you're totally new to a subject or you're looking to fill in a few gaps in your knowledge, you're sure to find helpful information in our collection of Rapid Read guides.



View the collection of guides on the Amazing Apprenticeships website

Resources for everyone

Explore Amazing Apprenticeships' full range of inspirational and informative resources, including films, games, guides, posters, quizzes, presentations and more.

amazingapprenticeships.com/resources



APPRENTICESHIPS WITH DUNELM



Dunelm is the UK's No.1 homewares retailer, delivering value and joy to help more and more UK consumers create a home they love.

Dunelm offer a range of apprenticeships across the organisation, with something for everyone. All their apprenticeships offer the chance to learn and grow in a friendly and reassuring environment, where your child will be welcomed with open arms and feel a real sense of belonging. It is the perfect place for growing their skills and setting themselves up for success.



Dunelm strives to ensure their culture is inclusive and equitable, embracing and valuing diverse experiences, backgrounds and perspectives. They recognise the strength this brings to their teams and business and the benefit to the apprentice in feeling valued and being able to give their best.

From colleague networks, to diversity champions, and Wellbeing Buddies to Mental Health First Aid training, Dunelm is committed to supporting their staff in every area of their lives.

Meet the Employer profile

Learn more about what it's like to work for Dunelm and their apprenticeship offer:

amazingapprenticeships.com/employers/dunelm



Vacancies for 2025

Dunelm's apprenticeship applications opened in January 2025 for a September 2025 start.

Apprenticeship vacancies include:

- Digital Marketing
- Merchandising and Retail Management
- Data Science
- Buying
- Supply chain and logistics



You can view a webinar about apprenticeships at [Dunelm here](#).



Dunelm's top tips for applying

1. Visit one of the stores – have a look at what products they sell and how they sell them.
2. Make sure you're prepared – the more prepared you are for the interview, the more confident you will feel.
3. Ask questions – make sure you have some meaningful questions to ask.
4. Ask for help if you need it – contact the Recruitment team if you need accommodations to support your interview.
5. Be familiar with the role – re-read the job advert and remind yourself of the specific skills of the role.
6. Be yourself – it's natural to feel nervous but try to relax and show the real you.
7. Check your tech – some interviews happen virtually so make sure you have Microsoft Teams and a strong Wi-Fi connection.

MAKE THE MOST OF NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK!

BBC
BITESIZE
CAREERS



CELEBRATE THE WEEK WITH OUR RESOURCES

[BBC Bitesize Careers](#) has everything you need to help your child make the most of National Apprenticeship Week 2025.

Head online each weekday for free videos and fun quizzes that can be used at home or at school to inspire future career choices. Hear advice from experts and see young apprentices at work that help you explore whether an apprenticeship could be a good fit for your child.

MEET THE APPRENTICES MONDAY

Can comedians Russell Kane, Fatiha El-Ghorri and Sarah Keyworth cut it as apprentices? Start the week by watching zookeeper Charlotte, firefighter Sam, and Chloe at the F1 model shop show some top comedians what apprentices really get up to.

WORK WEDNESDAY

If your child is leaning towards an apprenticeship, help them figure out how to get one. Start with the [CV writing toolkit](#) or watch the [how to network episode of the podcast](#). You can also discover tips on what employers are looking for.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS THURSDAY

Help your child understand the meaning of transferable skills, and how the things they do in school can relate to the world of [work](#).

FUTURE FRIDAY

At the end of the week it's time to consider a range of future apprenticeships your child might enjoy and how to ace the job [interview](#).

Join Bitesize Careers online during National Apprenticeship Week for resources to support your child as they decide their next steps.



CHALLENGE TUESDAY

Try a fun and interactive quiz and watch the video podcast [Is an apprenticeship right for me?](#)

EMPLOYER INSIGHT

APPRENTICESHIPS

WITH FCDO SERVICES



FCDO Services

We caught up with Sarah from FCDO Services about what they do and their amazing apprenticeship opportunities.

Who is FCDO Services?

FCDO Services is a part of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), that focuses on security. We provide a range of secure services to the FCDO, other UK government departments and international partners. We're based at Hanslope Park, the FCDO's Milton Keynes site, and at its headquarters in King Charles Street, London. We also operate worldwide in over 250 destinations across 168 countries.

What do you do?

We protect the UK's physical assets, data, and people overseas. Our work spans secure digital and IT services, engineering, logistics, translation and interpreting, project management and so much more. We're also home to the UK National Authority for Counter-Eavesdropping (UK NACE). As technical security specialists, they've been protecting the UK from espionage since 1958 and remain the UK's experts on counter-eavesdropping. Our work is as varied and vital as it gets, but we never lose sight of our people. Their skills, aspirations and growth mean as much as the global mission we're on.

Which apprenticeships do you offer?

Each year, we offer a range of schemes including our popular level three (advanced) Engineering Technician apprenticeship, which has been running since the 1960s. Other schemes we operate include level three (advanced) Information Communication Technician, and level four (higher) Cyber Security Technologist. We have over 60 years of experience providing apprenticeships which provide a great foundation for your career. Find out more about the different apprenticeships we offer here: fcdoservicescareers.co.uk/career-areas/apprenticeships



What do your apprentices do?

As well as studying towards their qualifications, our apprentices gain hands-on practical experience. They're included in active projects, which sometimes means travelling overseas. We understand that this is often an apprentice's first time in a work environment, so also encourage the development of more general skills such as written and verbal communication, organisation and prioritisation.

What is unique about doing an apprenticeship with FCDO Services?

As part of the FCDO and the Civil Service, our apprentices can volunteer to support national and international events. We've been involved in events like the first AI summit that was held at Bletchley Park in 2023, and even the King's Coronation.

How would you sum up life as an apprentice at FCDO Services?

Joining FCDO Services isn't just about stepping into a role full of pride and purpose, it's about every individual having everything they need to reach their full potential and feel welcome and valued.

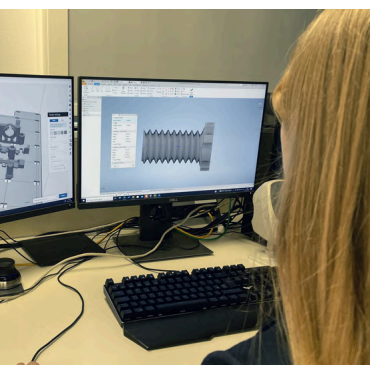
What are the benefits of working for FCDO Services?

By working with us you'll help keep people, information, and assets safe around the world. It's a role you can feel proud of; we aim to make every part of your career just as rewarding. That's why when you join us, expect to:

- receive a competitive salary, generous holiday entitlement and a Civil Service Pension
- have access to training and other development opportunities
- be able to use our on-site gym, nursery, café, and restaurant
- access interest-free loans on season tickets and bikes to help you get to work



Meet a former FCDO Services apprentice, who did a level 2 Supply Chain Warehouse Operative apprenticeship



How did your apprenticeship journey start?

I joined FCDO Services just over five years ago as a logistics apprentice. After sixth form, I had no idea where to start my career, until I discovered apprenticeships at FCDO Services.

Working for a government department that prides itself in inclusivity and personal development, along with the opportunity to travel with work, I knew it was a chance I couldn't miss.



What did your apprenticeship involve?

My experience as an FCDO Services apprentice was extremely positive, for my career and my personal growth. With a fully supportive team, I got stuck into work straightaway.

Over two years, I worked with colleagues in goods in, despatch, mail room and planning. I gained so much experience and developed as a person. When I joined, I was shy, but my confidence has grown a lot working with so many different people. This gave me the skills, experience and knowledge I needed to progress, setting a great foundation for my career.

I had no idea where to start my career, until I discovered apprenticeships at FCDO Services.

What did you do after you finished your apprenticeship?

After my apprenticeship, I was promoted to European Logistics planner. This was a huge step up. I developed a lot of new skills and confidence in this role as I had to be reactive because no day was ever the same.

With opportunities to diversify and gain more experience, I took an opportunity to work with our King's Messengers (KMs). This role included planning journeys and arranging visas. From this, I gained a broader view of how the organisation operates and learnt what makes journeys successful.

Have you been able to travel as part of your role?

After working with the KMs, I spent six months as a Logistics Officer travelling the world, delivering diplomatic bags securely to our Embassies. After visiting twelve countries, my love for travel was cemented and I knew I wanted a career that included it. I accepted an opportunity to become a Technical Security Officer based out of Washington DC and have never looked back.

What has your apprenticeship done for you?

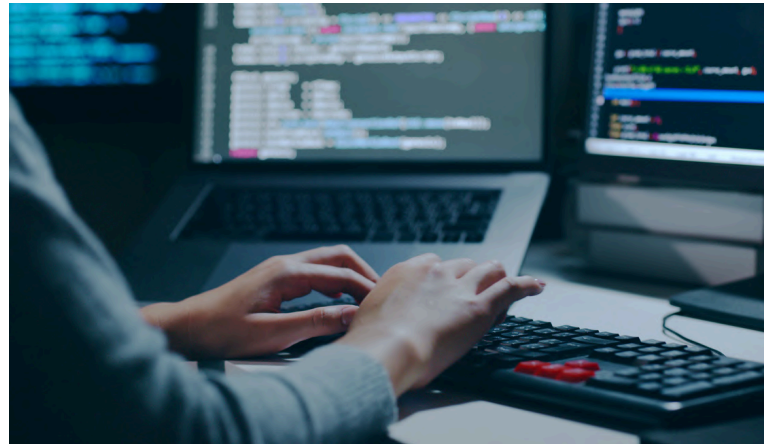
Without my logistics apprenticeship five years ago, I would never have had the opportunity to live and work overseas, but FCDO Services made me realise that anything is possible. The apprenticeship encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and try new things. When I applied, I had no technical experience, but FCDO Services will provide training if you are right for the job.



What would your advice be to others?

To anyone that is thinking about an apprenticeship with FCDO Services...go for it. The career development and opportunities are unmatched, the support and structure of the role is impeccable, and it's a place with the opportunity to have a long and interesting career.

After visiting twelve countries, my love for travel was cemented and I knew I wanted a career that included it.



FCDO Services are launching vacancies for the following apprenticeships on the 17th February 2025:

- Engineering Technician Level 3
- Information Communications Technician Level 3
- Cyber Security Technologist Level 4
- Building Services Design Engineer Level 6

Find out how to apply

All information on how to apply can be found on their website fcdoservicescareers.co.uk/applying-for-an-apprenticeship/apprenticeship

You can also find out about apprenticeships at FCDO Services by visiting their Meet the Employer profile on the Amazing Apprenticeships' website: amazingapprenticeships.com/employers/fcdo



FCDO Services

POST-16 OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SEND

ROUTES INTO APPRENTICESHIPS

Explore routes into apprenticeships for students with SEND

If your child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, you may feel your child needs additional support into work. There are alternative options available to help them into future employment.

Through discussions with your child and the educational establishment's SENDCO and careers adviser, you can explore the most suitable career path for your child. Below are two of the options.

What are the alternative career options for 16–24-year-olds with an EHC plan?

Supported internships

A supported internship is an unpaid personalised study programme that lasts between 6 and 12 months and offers rotations through different departments within a business. This programme will include maths and English where required. There is also an opportunity for them to gain other relevant qualifications to help your child be able to move into paid employment at the end of the supported internship.

The benefits the young person will gain from the supported internship:

- Develop skills valued by employers
- Build a portfolio of workplace employability skills
- Build personal and professional confidence

For more information on supported internships visit: skillsforcareers.education.gov.uk/pages/training-choice/supported-internship-with-an-ehc

Accessible apprenticeships

Your child will be employed and will have a job role with responsibilities as part of their apprenticeship. The employer and training provider is committed to providing employment suitable and supportive to the individual to build their confidence in the workplace while gaining apprenticeship qualifications and functional skills qualifications (unless the apprentice is exempt from functional skills).

Part of the commitment from the employer includes:

- Advertising the vacancies in an accessible way
- Adapting the recruitment process for the young person
- Providing an opportunity for a work trial

For more information visit:

skillsforcareers.education.gov.uk/pages/training-choice/apprenticeships

apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices/learning-difficulties-disabilities-support

disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/apprenticeships

You could also visit Amazing Apprenticeships' new SEND zone where you will find a range of resources to support you, including a special bundle of SEND Rapid Reads: amazingapprenticeships.com/send



HTQS: LUCY'S STORY



Lucy graduated with a Distinction in the Level 5 Foundation Degree in Science (FdSc) in Networking and Cyber Security, an approved Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ), at Newcastle College. She was drawn to Cyber Security as it's an important, ever-changing field, and she knows she can help people with her technical skills. She is going on to complete her Bachelor of Science degree in Computing and is looking forward to learning more about digital forensics and AI.

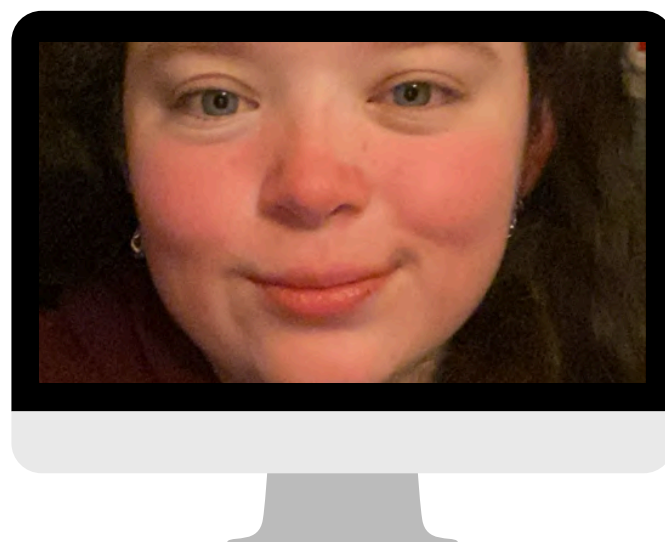
What did you do before your HTQ?

I studied my level 3 BTEC in Information Technology – this was during the pandemic, and I did a lot of learning remotely. I have preferred learning in person in my level 4 and 5 HTQ. I also did an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), looking at false memories, which I found really interesting. All of these prepared me really well for my HTQ - learning during the pandemic taught me resilience, my BTEC showed me that this subject area was for me, and my EPQ introduced me to research skills.

I also had to resit my English GCSE, but I managed that alongside my current studies and got a grade 5! It was a great relief and I'm proud that I managed it all.

Why did you choose this course?

I was looking at game design and game development, and I had also considered studying health and social care, but I kept being drawn back to cyber security. Then, when I looked more closely at networking and cyber security, I realised I can help an even wider range of people if I go into a field that touches so many people's lives for good. I watched loads of TV programmes where the tech leads are the ones to solve the problem and I wanted to do that myself. I could go on to work with the police in digital forensics, or work for the NHS as the digital data there is so important, or I could work in AI. So I chose the computing route and this HTQ course. I love the technical side of things and I love a challenge.



This HTQ course also felt great as it kept doors open for me, whether I want to go into work or keep studying, this course was great either way.

What was your course like?

We had two contact days a week on campus at Newcastle College. I loved it! I enjoyed the small class size as it meant I got loads of support from the tutors and lecturers, who are all experts in this area. The tutors were amazing and they all have a background in what they're teaching. When I considered university, I thought the class numbers would be too much. It was really easy to get one-to-one support during my HTQ.

The HTQ course was great for exploring the specialism – I knew I wanted to be in computing, but wanted to learn about the options available within the field.

The course is like a tapas of computing! I got to try lots of things in my favourite area, build my skills, and figure out my next steps. Plus the opportunity to do work-related and work-based learning was great. I linked up with a local cyber security business and got to see inside the company, complete projects with them, use their systems, and get to know the team. The work is really important – I had to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). I had weekly meetings with them and really built my project management skills. It was a really valuable experience and set of connections and I learnt a lot.

I was able to do a project that included Southwark and West Lancashire – these linked-up sites gave me a unique opportunity as I did a project where I built a network across all the sites and configured a firewall.

What was your favourite part?

The ethical hacking testing – I get to do more of that in my level 6 course next year. I also really enjoyed the open-source investigation module, which is essentially social media scavenging! It makes you aware of the use of online data and how important cyber security is.

I also liked how freeing the HTQ course is, you can lean into your interests and use the module guides per term to guide you. I did a whole project configuring a full network on my own from the design stage to completion, which was really rewarding.

I've also really enjoyed college life. I have had the opportunity to be part of the Student Union, I got nominated as Student Union President, and this has been a great experience. I've got to attend festivals and events in this role, being at Newcastle College gave me this experience I might not have got elsewhere.

What skills have you learnt on the course?

I've learnt so much. I've gained technical skills in my classes on ethical hacking, I've learnt programming and coding with Python. The technical language and terminology were challenging to learn, but now I love it. I've learnt the hardware and software elements of networks and firewalls. I also learnt lots of things that are useful in any field – leadership skills, project management, research skills, referencing correctly, critical thinking and writing. Learning how to write effectively is such a useful skill.

Did anything surprise you about the course?

I thought I wouldn't be able to do as much as I have, but I've had access to so many things! The physical hardware, the specialist equipment - I've been able to learn really practically. I was surprised they let me get my hands on so much specialist stuff!

I was also surprised that I am the only woman on my cyber security course. When I was studying at levels 2 and 3, there were more women on the course, but they've mostly gone into the games development side of things and I was the only one to go into the networking side.

What is next for you?

I graduated my HTQ with a Distinction! I am now going on to my level 6 course, also at Newcastle, and I am topping up to a Bachelor's degree. I will be doing BSc Computing and I am looking forward to my dissertation and the collaborative development module. I'm also really looking forward to learning more about Digital Forensics. I will also likely look at AI and the impact of it in my field. I might even collaborate with the employer I was working with again on my dissertation, depending on the theme I choose to pursue – I'm still making my mind up on the topic.

I would love to work as a network architect when I graduate. Although I might consider a master's degree or a level 7 apprenticeship, maybe looking at business management. I love to learn – which is a good thing because in computing, things are constantly changing!



Discover more about HTQs
















To find out more about HTQs and understand the range of options, please visit:

amazingapprenticeships.com/higher-technical-qualifications-htqs/

APPRENTICESHIPS UNCOVERED



Apprenticeships are grouped into 15 'routes'. Here we highlight two apprenticeships from each route that may be of interest to your child. You can explore all these apprenticeships and hundreds more by visiting: instituteofapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/

	Agriculture, environmental and animal care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal care and welfare manager (L3) • Countryside ranger (L4)
	Business and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiter (L3) • Coaching professional (L5)
	Care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church minister (L6) • Adult care worker (L2)
	Catering and hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitality manager (L4) • Pastry chef (L3)
	Construction and hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire safety engineer (L6) • Curtain wall installer (L3)
	Creative and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior grip (L2) • Audiovisual technician (L5)
	Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software tester (L4) • Digital device repair technician (L3)
	Hair and beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing and holistic therapist (L3) • Beauty therapist (L2)
	Education and early years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and skills mentor (L4) • Teacher (L6)
	Engineering and manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechatronics maintenance technician (L3) • Space systems engineer (L6)
	Health and science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports coach (L4) • Dispensing optician (L6)
	Legal, finance and accounting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor finance specialist (L3) • Assistant accountant (L3)
	Protective services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational firefighter (L3) • Intelligence analyst (L4)
	Sales, marketing and procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraiser (L3) • Trade supplier (L2)
	Transport and logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air traffic controller (L5) • Port operative (L2)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



As part of the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges programme (ASK), Amazing Apprenticeships are offering parents, carers, careers staff and teachers a schedule of fully-funded webinars throughout the year.

This series of informative webinars will provide an abundance of advice, information, hints and tips from expert speakers across the apprenticeships and technical education world. Each webinar lasts for 30 minutes and will take place on Zoom. Participants are required to sign up before the session and will receive an email confirmation and a reminder one hour before it begins. The webinars will be recorded and shared with all registrants after the session.



Book your free place and catch up on recordings of all previous webinars here: amazingapprenticeships.com/workshops-webinars

Date and Time	Title and Description
<p>Monday 10th February 2025 15:30-16:00</p>	<p>Exploring the range of apprenticeships With more than 700 apprenticeship standards, there is an apprenticeship for almost every job role out there! Join us to hear about some of the known and lesser-known apprenticeship job roles, the different industries and employers offering positions and how you can explore which apprenticeship could be right for you.</p>
<p>Thursday 27th February 2025 15:30-16:00</p>	<p>Using Find an Apprenticeship to search and apply The Government’s flagship system ‘Find an Apprenticeship’ is a great starting point for anyone considering applying for an apprenticeship. With more than 20,000 vacancies advertised each year, the platform provides a free way to search and apply for apprenticeships in England. Join this webinar to discover the new features on the site, including an enhanced application portal.</p>
<p>Monday 17th March 2025 15:30-16:00</p>	<p>Sharing information about HTQs with your school/college community Watch this webinar to hear how to share information with students, parents/carers and colleagues about HTQs to ensure good knowledge and awareness of these fantastic qualifications and support your school's work in meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks, as well as how to support students during the research and application process.</p>

Date and Time	Title and Description
Thursday 20th March 2025 15:30-16:00	<p>How to impress in the apprenticeship application process Hear directly from employers and apprentices sharing their advice on the best ways to impress in the apprenticeship recruitment process.</p>
Thursday 24th April 2025 15:30-16:00	<p>Preparing for Apprenticeship Assessment Centres The apprenticeship recruitment landscape is constantly changing, with many employers now utilising different methods to assess candidates, including assessment centres. Join us to hear from employers about how they work, what they're really looking for and their advice on how students can prepare.</p>
Monday 19th May 2025 15:30-16:00	<p>Apprenticeships for individuals with additional needs Many students have additional needs and may feel unsure about the support that will be offered by employers and training providers. Join us to hear about the flexibilities that can be offered and the support that apprentices will receive.</p>
Thursday 12th June 2025 15:30-16:00	<p>How to research and apply for HTQs If your child is looking for a post-18 qualification that is flexible, job-focussed and an excellent way to progress to a higher/degree apprenticeship, a full degree or a highly-skilled job, join us to find out more about HTQs.</p>
Thursday 19th June 2025 15:30-16:00	<p>How students can use the summer to start their apprenticeship research It's never too early to start researching apprenticeships and the summer can be a brilliant time to help to get ready. Join us to hear from experts explaining how to help students to get ready for when vacancies open up in the autumn.</p>
Monday 7th July 2025 15:30-16:00	<p>Finished year 11 or year 13 and want to find an apprenticeship? If you've just finished your course(s) and taken your exams, but aren't sure what you're doing next, or may want to change your mind about what you are planning to do, join us to find out about what to do right now to start finding an apprenticeship. You haven't left it too late!</p>

STAY UP TO DATE



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AMAZINGAPPRENTICESHIPS.COM



- Access a wide range of free resources
- Inspirational stories of real apprentices
- Advice from employers and experts
- Live vacancies
- Visit anytime, anywhere

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

If you have a story to share about apprenticeships or technical education - we would love to hear from you.

Please reach out to the Amazing Apprenticeships team below:



hello@amazingapprenticeships.com

