

Your Guide

to getting an apprenticeship



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Hello,

The Essex County Council Apprenticeship Promotion & Brokerage Hub have put together this Guide to support you in your search for an apprenticeship. We hope you find it helpful.

Please feel free to call **03330 139 858** (Mondays to Fridays office hours) if you would like to speak to a member of the team. We are here to assist you.

Good luck!

The Apprenticeship Hub Team

Tel: 03330 139 858

apprenticeships@essex.gov.uk

What is an apprenticeship?

It's a real job, with real training, meaning you can earn while you learn and gain a nationally recognised qualification.

What are the benefits?

- Earning a salary and paid holiday leave
- Free qualifications
- Work experience and transferable skills
- Excellent progression opportunities

What levels are there?

Apprenticeships are now available up to degree level and beyond. There are various levels of apprenticeships to apply for depending on your current skills and qualifications.

- **Intermediate** Level 2: Equivalent to 5 GCSE passes at grades A* to C (or grades 4+)
- **Advanced** Level 3: Equivalent to 2 A level passes.
- **Higher** Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7: Equivalent to Foundation degree and above.
- **Degree** Levels 6 and 7: Equivalent to Bachelor's and Master's degree.

All apprenticeships include elements of on and off the job training leading to industry-recognised standards or qualifications.

How much will I be paid?

The Apprentice National Minimum Wage as of April 2018 is £3.70 per hour. Most employers choose to pay more.

Young people aged 19 or over who have completed the first year of their Apprenticeship will be entitled to the National Minimum Wage relative to their age. See www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates for more information.

How to apply for an Apprenticeship

How we search and apply for jobs has changed dramatically over the years. Nowadays, nearly all job search activities happen electronically. Since the employer isn't likely to see your face and interact with you until you are invited to an interview, your paperwork and follow up must be on point.

An increasing number of companies use applicant tracking systems to sift through CVs and applications. This will determine whether a recruitment manager sees your application or not. You therefore need to ensure your applications will pass any applicant tracking system. Spelling and grammar need to be accurate and your applications should include relevant keywords to evidence that you have tailored your application to the vacancy for which you are applying.

CV (Curriculum Vitae)

A good CV will contain the following information:

- Your full name, address (including postcode), telephone numbers (preferably home and mobile numbers) and your email address.
- Your personal profile (i.e. a brief summary of your skills/experience and what you are looking for).
- Your employment history/ work experience including volunteering experience.
- Details of your education (schools and colleges attended) and qualifications gained or predicted.
- Your hobbies and leisure activities.
- Full name and contact details of one or two referees.

Your CV must be well presented, easy to read and contain **no spelling or grammatical mistakes**. Make sure your CV is tailored to the position you are applying for and is clear and concise. (Preferably one side of A4 paper but no more than two).

Your CV contains confidential information. Place it in a sealed envelope addressed to 'The Manager' if you are dropping it off to a potential employer.

A template for a CV can be found on page 20 of this guide.

Covering letter

A covering letter is a letter /email which you would typically send to a potential employer, along with your CV or application form. It gives you the opportunity to set out why you would be the ideal candidate for a specific job. **Therefore, covering letters must always be tailored to the apprenticeship opportunity you are applying for.** Set aside plenty of time to read the job description and research the company.

If your covering letter is being sent by email, use a similar style and language to how you would handwrite a letter. Make sure the subject title of the email includes the name (and reference numbers if applicable) of the vacancy you are applying for. You might want to set up a read receipt on your email.

A template for a covering letter can be found on page 22 of this guide.

Interviews

Being successful at job interviews is generally a combination of being suitable for the job and preparing for the interview. The more interviews you have, the easier it becomes!

Before the interview

Preparation is key. Do your research. The company website is your starting point (if there is one). Try and find out as much as possible about the company. Check out recent Facebook/Twitter feeds for the company. The next step is to research the wider industry, changes the

industry might be facing or new products that have come into the market. Impress the interviewer with your knowledge and the fact that you have taken the time to do some research.

Make sure you know the name and job title of the person(s) interviewing you. Use the Internet to try and find out something about their role in the company as it will show that you have done some research and are taking your application seriously.

Think through the answers to some of the questions you may be asked. If you are not sure, contact apprenticeships@essex.gov.uk so we can assist you.

Take a copy of your CV and your cover letter/application. Make sure you know and can explain everything in these documents as they are likely to be referred to in the interview.

Physically prepare for the job interview. Get a good night's sleep and make sure you eat and drink before the interview.

Dress appropriately

The way you present yourself will influence the outcome of the interview. In most positions, there will be times when you are representing the company to clients etc. If you're not sure what to wear, then find out (ask a good friend or even the employer). Make sure you'll be comfortable. Think about the image your clothes will project and how this fits in with the role you're going for. Make sure your clothes are clean and well ironed and your shoes are clean and polished.

Look up the address and plan how to get there. If you have the time, it might be worth making a trial run so you are confident of the route and how long it will take. For your personal safety, make sure you inform a friend/ relative if you are attending an interview (where and when) and when you reasonably expect to be back. If using public transport (bus, train etc.), you can plan your journey via this website www.traveline.info

At the interview

Arrive at the interview with at least ten minutes to spare. First impressions really count. A good, reasonably firm handshake and looking the interviewer in the eye are very important. Be aware of your body language: make sure you sit straight and if you tend to use your hands a lot whilst talking, consider holding your hands together on your lap.

Try and come across as confidently as possible. However, don't worry, it is normal to feel nervous and the employer will understand.

General Interview questions

Try to answer questions with specific examples. Think of a good example that relates to the question. Put it into the context of something you faced whilst at school, on work experience or draw on an example from one of your hobbies.

Tell me about yourself

Remember to speak about the things which will evidence employability skills e.g. any teams you are in, any achievements, part time jobs, hobbies and interests. The interviewer will want to find out as much as possible about you and whether you are going to fit in with the team.

Why do you want to work here/ what attracts you about this position?

This is a question which will help you to prove to the interviewer that you've done your research about both the company and the position.

Tell me about a time when you did something which didn't go to plan. How did you deal with this?

Here, you should think of a time when you were able to turn a negative into a positive and learnt from the experience.

How would you handle the following situation: an angry customer or a missed deadline?

The best way to tackle this is to use examples of where you've had a similar situation. You should say that you remained calm, professional and supportive throughout the situation and that the situation was resolved successfully.

Do you have any questions?

It is a good idea to think of a few questions ahead of the interview. If it is easier, write them down. This will also prove that you have prepared for the interview.

At the end of the interview, make sure you shake hands and thank the interviewer for seeing you. Remember to ask when you are likely to hear if you have been successful.

What to do after a job interview

Following up with an email will make you stand out from other applicants. Take the opportunity to thank the employer for seeing you and say that you hope you will be considered for the position.

If you aren't offered the position, politely ask the employer/ interviewer for some feedback on the areas they feel you should improve to be successful at your next interview. Most employers will be happy to help you. This feedback is invaluable and crucial to help you improve your future performance.

Telephone interviews

An increasing number of employers are carrying out the first interview over the phone. This is a great opportunity for the employer to find out how you will come across to any of their clients you may speak to on the phone.

When answering the phone, make sure you speak slowly and clearly. You should sound enthusiastic and polite.

If you have listed your mobile number and you get a call from an unrecognised number, it is safe to assume that it could be someone calling about a role. Take a couple of deep breaths and prepare yourself for the call.

It is a good idea during these interviews to keep a copy of your CV with you. One of the benefits of a telephone interview is that you can have a cheat sheet. This way you will be able to check what you have written should an awkward question arise.

You should make sure that you speak directly into the telephone and are in a quiet place so you can hear and your voice is not drowned out.

Finally make sure you have a pen and paper at hand to take notes if needed.

Skype & Video interviews

The use of Skype interviews in recruitment is on the rise.

Our top tips for success:

- ✓ Double check the day and time of the interview.
- ✓ **Prepare:** check your Internet connection and your speakers/microphone are working ahead of the interview, make sure you choose a suitable background (e.g. a plain wall) in a quiet location and that you will not be distracted (by your relatives, pets or mobile phone).
- ✓ Dress professionally and have all your relevant documents at hand (CV, covering letter, applications, qualifications, etc.).
- ✓ Look into your computer's camera (not the screen) to make 'eye contact' with the interviewer.
- ✓ If you are not used to being filmed and 'talking' into your computer, practise with a friend.

Advice on applying for Apprenticeships in the digital age



A number of businesses now employ staff to ‘check out’ the social media activity of prospective employees. There are many cases of young people not being invited to interview because of the content of their social media accounts. However, when used wisely, social media can be a fantastic tool to enable you to research a company, find out what people are saying about that company, check out who their competitors are and potentially establish contacts with people in the industry which may help you be better prepared for your interview.

Each social media network has its own unique characteristics and best practices. What you post, how you post it and who you interact with on a daily basis can have a great impact on how recruiters and hiring managers view you as a potential candidate. If appropriate, make sure that your accounts are locked down from public view and that you have applied the correct privacy settings.

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) is a free to use professional social media platform that allows its users to connect and communicate. LinkedIn enables you to network, post and highlight your skills and experience to an audience of recruiters.

Here is a link to an informative video that will help you get started with LinkedIn

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjOdHd0Fz8k&nohtml5=False

Our top tips for LinkedIn:

- ✓ Ensure you make your profile public – this will allow everyone to view your skills and experience.
- ✓ Use a professional picture.
- ✓ Have a stand-out summary and headline – this is similar to a personal profile on a CV that makes you ‘unique’. It may be worth adding ‘seeking employment’.
- ✓ If you are looking for a specific role; ensure that you mention this too.
- ✓ Start adding professional contacts & following pages of companies you are interested in. New vacancies are very often posted in their news feeds.
- ✓ Ask your connections for recommendations/ skills endorsements - this will add credibility to your Profile.
- ✓ Keep active on LinkedIn: log into your account regularly to check feeds for new opportunities and possible messages from potential employers. Consider downloading the LinkedIn App to access your account on the move.

Email accounts

When you start to apply for jobs, it's a good idea to set yourself up with an additional email account that you only use to apply for vacancies. You can register for a free email account from a number of different sites (creating a new email account only takes a few minutes). Try to make the account sound professional and sensible by having the email address as **firstname.lastname@email.co.uk** or similar format. It is also a good idea to check that your mobile phone voicemail message sounds professional too. Completing online applications can be time consuming. Ensure you allow yourself enough time to complete, check and submit your applications. If you are still not sure, ask someone you trust to read and check your application.

Have a pen and some paper handy to make notes as well as a print copy of your CV to help with inputting your qualifications/ employment dates etc.

Save your work as you go. When writing long paragraphs, make sure you save a copy on an open Word document on your PC as some online applications systems can time you out.

Keep a record of all your applications (job title, name of employer and date of application), preferably on a spreadsheet so you are able to follow them up later on. It is a good idea to set up an electronic folder on your computer so you can file each of your applications.

Keep applying

- Don't take it personally if you're getting rejections.
- Make sure you contact a member of the team who will be happy to offer help and maybe suggest a different approach.
- If you have secured an apprenticeship opportunity, remember to let us know **apprenticeships@essex.gov.uk**

Training Providers

What is a Training Provider?

A Training Provider is an organisation that will deliver or arrange your off the job training. Training providers work with businesses and young people to ensure that everything is in place for the apprenticeship. As an Apprentice, off the job training will typically account for 20% of your time.

Some local Training Providers who offer Apprenticeships

(Please note that the list below is not exhaustive).

Name	Contact details
ACL (Essex County Council)	Tel: 03330 139 502 Acl.nostoppingme@essex.gov.uk
Catch 22	Tel: 02392 222 770 apprenticeships@catch-22.org.uk
Catten College	Tel: 01206 366 199 info@cattencollege.co.uk
Colchester Institute	Tel: 01206 712043 ci.apprenticeships@colchester.ac.uk www.colchester.ac.uk/apprenticeships
Debut Training	Tel: 01268 560 552 (Helen Lungley)

For further information on apprenticeships go to:

www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk

www.future-talent.com/schemes/apprenticeships

www.ucas.com/apprenticeships-in-england

<https://successatschool.org/advice/apprenticeships>

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/apprenticeships

www.essexprovidernetwork.com

www.aimapprenticeships.co.uk

www.apprenticeshipconnect.co.uk

www.facebook.com/LondonInsuranceLife

Occupational areas

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accounting ▪ Business Admin & Paralegal ▪ Customer Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operations Delivery Officer ▪ Credit Control ▪ Childcare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching & Learning Support in schools ▪ Management ▪ Adult Care/Healthcare |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Service ▪ Retail & Sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IT User ▪ Team leader |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Administration ▪ Customer service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hairdressing ▪ Childcare ▪ Health and Social Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accounting ▪ Air Conditioning/Refrigeration ▪ Bricklaying ▪ Business Administration ▪ Carpentry ▪ Chefs/Hospitality ▪ Childcare ▪ Creative Arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Service ▪ Dental Nursing ▪ Electrical ▪ Hairdressing ▪ Health and Social Care ▪ IT ▪ Management ▪ Motor Vehicle ▪ Painting and Decorating | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pharmacy Services ▪ Plumbing ▪ Technical Theatre/Events ▪ Sport ▪ Supporting Teaching and Learning ▪ Warehousing/Storage ▪ Welding and Fabrication |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beauty (NVQ Levels 2 & 3) | | |

Name	Contact details
EASI Hairdressing Academy	Tel: 0800 690 6823 or 01206 579949 enquiries@easihair.co.uk www.easihair.co.uk
Eden Training	Tel: 01702 680 068 info@edentraining.co.uk www.edentraining.co.uk
Harlow College	Tel: 01279 868100
ITEC Learning Technologies	Tel: 01268 286929 info@iteclt.co.uk
JET Hairdressing Academy	Reception@j-etraining.com
PROCAT	Tel: 01268 662 444 (select option 3) recruitment@procat.ac.uk www.procat.ac.uk
QA Apprenticeships	Tel: 07968 214339 sarah.curtis@qa.com www.apprenticeships.qa.com
South Essex College	Tel: 01702 220 593 apprenticeships@southessex.ac.uk www.southessex.ac.uk/apprenticeship-vacancies
Tendring District Council	Tel: 01255 686 306 ctrack@tendringdc.gov.uk
The Lightbulb Ltd	Tel: 01268 270 648 andrea@thelightbulb.net

Occupational areas

- Hairdressing and Barbering

- Early Years
- Teaching & Learning Playwork

- Business Administration

- Health & Social Care

- Hairdressing & Barbering
- Accountancy
- Business and Administration

- Childcare
- Construction
- Engineering
- Journalism
- IT

- Retail Management
- Social Care
- Teaching Assistant

- IT Level 2
- Infrastructure Technician Level 3

- Cyber Security Level 4
- Business Administration Levels 2 & 3

- Also offering an IT Study Programme for 16 – 18 year olds who are not quite ready for an apprenticeship.

Hairdressing/Barbering

- Engineering (Mechatronics Manufacturing, Welding, Light Motor Vehicle, Heavy Vehicle Rail Engineering, Air Conditioning)

- Building Services (Carpentry, Electrical Installation, Plumbing, Property Maintenance)

- IT Systems and Networking & Web Software Development Levels 3 to 6 (degree level Apprenticeships)

- Cyber Security Level 4
- Digital Marketing Level 3

- Project Management Level 4 & Business Administration Levels 3 & 4

- Accounting & Finance
- Business Administration/ Management

- Construction
- Hospitality & Catering
- Engineering
- Hair & Beauty

- Logistics & Transport
- Education & Training
- Health & Social Care

- Business Administration Levels 2 to 4

- Customer Service Levels 2 & 3

- Team Leading Level 2
- Management Level 3

- Customer Service Levels 2 & 3
- Business Admin Levels 2 & 3

- Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Levels 2 & 3

- Warehouse & Storage Level 2
- Health & Social Care Levels 2 & 3

CV Template

Your turn! Write your own CV

Full Name

Full postal address with postcode

Home/Mobile numbers

Email address

Summary of your skills & experience and the types of roles you are looking for (and how far you are prepared to travel if applicable).

Key Skills

(detail any particular and relevant skills/ strengths eg. 'IT literate, Fluent in Spanish, Excellent organisation skills', try to keep to three main skills)

-
-
-

Employment history

Please list here relevant voluntary and paid work experience(s), each time giving details of dates, name of company with location, job title held and brief description of your duties/ responsibilities. Please remember to list these in **reverse chronological order** i.e. starting with the most recent one.

Example:

Month year to Month year:

Debenhams

Chelmsford

Sales Assistant

Duties included greeting customers, dealing with their enquiries, processing card and cash payments, putting stock out and keeping the shop floor tidy.

Education and qualifications

Please give details of your educational history, again starting with your latest position.

Remember to give details of your achieved / predicted grades

Example

September 2017 to present: Chelmsford High Sixth Form College
Currently working towards AS levels in English language, Mathematics, Science and History.

Or

September 2012 to June 2017: Chelmsford High School
Achieved GCSE grades in English language (grade X), Mathematics (grade Y), History (grade Z), Music etc.

Leisure and hobbies activities

(Don't be tempted to make things up to make yourself sound more interesting- you may be asked about your interests at the interview)

References (always ask permission of the referee(s) first before listing their details on a CV. Try and keep to two references, ideally two employers or an employer and a school reference)

Full name

Job Title

Organisation name

Full postal address

Telephone number

Email Address

Full name

Job Title

Organisation name

Full postal address

Telephone number

Email Address

Covering Letter Template:

Applying for a job/work experience requesting an employer to consider you.

«Your full name»
«Your full postal address
including postcode»
«Your phone number»

«Date»

«Person's name»
«Name of company»
«Company address»

Dear «name» (if you know them),
Sirs / To whom it may concern (if you don't),

Re: (name of position/vacancy – include vacancy number if applicable)

I wish to apply for the position of as advertised in

Highlight the skills, competencies, qualifications and experience that you have that match those required in the job specification.
Remember to give examples and make sure you have covered each point.

Explain why you wish to work for this specific company.

I enclose my CV to support my application.
I would be pleased to attend an interview with you and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely (when you know the person's name),
Yours faithfully (when you don't know the person's name),

Your Name

Do you know a business that would like to recruit an apprentice?

Maybe it's a company that offered you work experience or someone you know personally?

The apprenticeship Promotion and Brokerage Hub can give you advice on recruiting an apprentice and help you promote your vacancy **FOR FREE**

Call us now 03330 139858
or email apprenticeships@essex.gov.uk

Don't delay, contact us today.



This information is issued by:

**Essex County Council
Employability & Skills Unit**

Contact us:

apprenticeships@essex.gov.uk
**www.essex.gov.uk/Education-
Schools/Apprenticeships**
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The information contained in
this document can be translated,
and/or made available in alternative
formats, on request.

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