

A guide to recruiting and employing apprentices

Finding the right apprentice for your organisation can be a daunting task if you are not used to the recruitment process.

This booklet has been designed to help you through the apprenticeship recruitment process, particularly if you are a small or medium sized employer. You may already have existing HR processes that cover all or part of the apprenticeship recruitment process, however we hope you will find that the unique support service Luton Adult Learning offers from recruitment to selection a straightforward process.

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Why recruit an apprentice?

There has never been a better time to recruit an apprentice into your organisation. Apprenticeships can help businesses across all sectors by offering a route to encourage new talent. An apprentice will work alongside your experienced staff to gain job specific skills ensuring a workforce that has practical skills and qualifications needed now and in the future.

An apprenticeship is a paid job with training. They are work-based learning programmes, linked to specific job roles, designed by Sector Skills Councils who work with businesses to develop course content. A framework of qualifications makes up the full apprenticeship requirement.

“Because apprenticeships are based in the workplace employers get the skills they really need. They are vital to the future success, not only of businesses across the country but also for a vibrant economy.”

David Frost, Director General, British Chamber of Commerce

Who are apprenticeships for?

An apprenticeship is a way for both young people and adult learners to earn while they learn in a real job, gaining a real qualification and a real future. Hiring apprentices helps businesses to grow their own talent by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

Apprenticeships are open to all ages.

Apprentices must be:

- Over the age of 16
- Not in full time education
- Eligible to work in England

How long do they take?

Depending on the sector and job role, an apprenticeship can take anything between one and five years to complete. It is a package of training and qualifications.

Types and levels of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are available in a wide range of industry sectors with employers from large national companies to smaller local companies. They are available at intermediate, advanced, higher and degree level, covering more than 170 industries and 1,500 job roles, from advertising to youth work via environmental engineering and nuclear decommissioning.

Training

Most of the training is on-the-job at an employer's premises, working with a mentor to learn job specific skills in the workplace. Off-the-job training is provided by a training organisation (sometimes referred to as a training provider) and may be delivered in the workplace or through day or block release at premises away from the working environment. Luton Adult Learning is an ESFA approved training provider.

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Employer responsibilities

Apprentices are aged 16 or over and combine working with studying for a work based qualification from GCSEs or equivalent up to degree level. Apprentices can be new or current employees. An Apprenticeship can last from 1 to 4 years, depending on the level of qualification the apprentice is studying for.

You must be able to offer a genuine job role, a contract of employment long enough to complete an apprenticeship, the opportunity with support to gain knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to achieve an apprenticeship

You must pay the apprentice at least [the minimum wage](#) during their placement with you. Luton Borough Council currently pay; £4.05 per hour

Your apprentice must:

- work with experienced staff
- learn job-specific skills
- study for a work-based qualification during their working week

As the employer you must give your apprentice an induction into their role and provide/allow 20% off-the-job training. You are responsible for paying your apprentice(s) salary and issuing their Contract of Employment. As an employee, the apprentice receives the same rights as other employees and must follow employer policies and procedures.

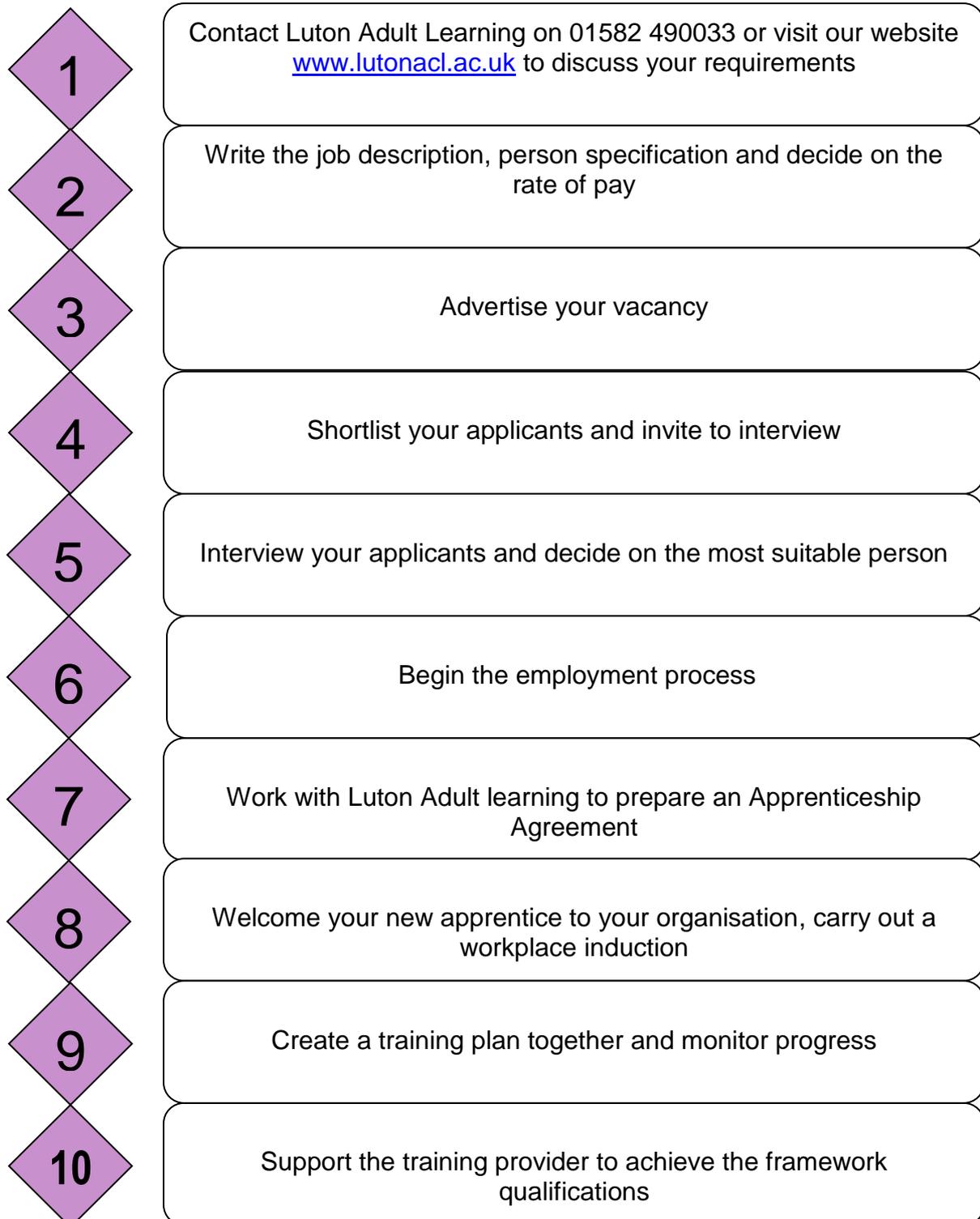
- Ensure that apprentices understand and follow your health and safety practices and procedures
- Report any accidents, incidents or near misses in the workplace immediately to Luton Adult Learning.
- Allow Luton Adult Learning to carry out a health and safety assessment of the workplace
- Hold a current employers and public liability insurance and vehicle insurance where appropriate
- Provide PPE where appropriate
- Ensure adequate and competent supervision
- Contribute to progress reviews
- Allow your apprentice time to study and attend training sessions within their working week

Exit and progression

Although there is not always a guarantee of employment at the end of an apprenticeship, we do aim to give apprentices all the skills and experience to be able to secure further employment. We deliver careers advice and CV writing guidance workshops to any apprentice coming to the end of their contract.

The recruitment process

Luton Adult Learning can support and guide you through the process encouraging good practice, promoting equality and diversity and complying with relevant legislation



The application process in more detail

Initial contact

Call our Employment Engagement Officer who will visit you and discuss your specific requirements and agree what type of apprentice framework or standard best suits your needs.

Job Description and Person Specification

Write the person specification and job description for your apprentice, decide how much to pay your apprentice. Writing a person specification and job description will help you to decide what kind of person you are looking for and they will also assist you in writing the job advert.

Person specification

A person specification should include essential and desirable knowledge criteria, previous experience and the specific skills you're looking for in the successful applicant.

Job description

A job description should include a job title, the main duties and purpose of the role, information about the company and the job location.

Planning the interview

Identify dates you (and the rest of the interview panel) are available to hold the interviews on. Be realistic about the number of applicants you will have time to interview, allowing enough time for preparation and discussion before and after the interview.

Advertising the vacancy

Luton Adult Learning will produce a vacancy advert by transferring details from your job description into the apprentice vacancy template which we will then advertise on the National Apprenticeship Vacancy website and on Luton Borough Council's website. Your vacancy will be nationally and locally promoted to attract interest from a wide range of people searching for an apprenticeship. This service enables you to advertise your vacancies free of charge and find applicants who match your specific criteria.

The 'Find an apprenticeship' website captures the information that you will require so that it is easy to compare all of the applicants' skills and experiences.

The information captured is

- Education
- Qualification(s)
- Work Experience
- What are your main strengths?
- What skills would you like to improve during this apprenticeship?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- Is there anything we can do to support your interview?

Screening

Decide on your shortlisting criteria, Luton Adult Learning will screen your vacancy applications for eligibility as they are submitted and send you a list of suitable applicants for shortlisting.

Shortlisting

Shortlist your applicants and invite successful ones to interview. Luton Adult Learning will send a letter to those who are not successful. Write your interview questions. A representative from Luton Adult Learning can be part of your interview panel if required.

Ensure you advise the applicant of the following:

- Where and when the interview will be taking place
- Any additional information you would like them to bring along
- If you'd like them to do a practical test, ask them to bring suitable clothing / equipment
- The name and job titles of the interview panel members.
- You should also ask the applicant if they have any special requirements you should be aware of.

Preparing for interview

Preparing well for the interview makes it easier for both you and the applicants. The most traditional interview method is to ask questions but you could also include activities or tasks.

Preparing your questions

Make sure you know the job description and person specification well so that your questions can help you compare applicants. Plan some questions which allow applicants to talk about their past experiences. Make notes about any information in their applications you're not clear on or that you would like to know more about.

Two or more people should conduct the interview and ensure you're clear on who will deal with each topic. Also think about what information the applicants may want to know from you regarding your organisation and the job.

It is quite likely that the majority of applicants will be aged 16 – 24 and therefore might not have a great deal of experience outside of the educational environment. By tailoring your questions to reflect this, you will be able to gain a greater insight into their attitudes and behaviours. Having standard questions you ask all the applicants can help make the process more equitable and fair. When preparing questions, it can also be helpful if you come up with ones that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

Preparing an individual or group task

Creating an additional task for applicants to complete needn't be expensive. Activities can be an excellent way to assess interpersonal communication skills. You will be able to make a judgement about a specific skill or see how well they mix with other people. You don't have to be an expert to be able to plan a task, here are some examples used by other employers:

- Use a social event (such as having lunch) to assess confidence and communication skills
- Ask applicants to use equipment or materials to make something to assess planning and problem solving skills and the creativity of individual ideas
- Ask a group of applicants to discuss a professional scenario to assess leadership and influencing skills
- Invite applicants on a tour of your premises to assess their level of interest in your organisation

On the day of the interview, make sure you have given the panel copies of:

- Job description
- Person specification
- Job advert
- List of interview questions
- Scoring grid for applicants
- List of applicant names and times of interview
- Applicant application forms/CVs

Also remember to:

- Set up the interview room
- Ensure there are no interruptions for example, putting a sign on the door
- Organise a waiting area for applicants

The interview

It is your responsibility to set the atmosphere for the interview for example, ensure that you:

- Welcome the applicant to your organisation
- Introduce yourself and other members of the panel
- Explain the format of the interview
- Outline the job role and how it fits within the company

Getting the best from your applicant

It is important that you keep control of the interview and allow the applicant time to think and answer your questions.

Remember there are no right or wrong answers, and this may be the first interview that they have attended. If they can't think of anything help them out, use 'probe questions' to get the best response. For example, how, what, why, where, who?

- How did you feel about that?
- What would you do differently if you did this again?

Closing the interview and recording feedback

Allow the applicant time at the end to ask any questions that they might have and explain the next stages in the recruitment process, giving them an idea of the timescales involved. Lastly, thank the applicant for attending. Ensure you write up accurate notes as soon as possible after the interview, to record what has been said.

Select your ideal applicant; give feedback to the unsuccessful applicants.

Post Interview

Carry out pre-employment checks, references, DBS etc. Inform the Employer Engagement Officer at Luton Adult Learning who will be able to advise you if there are any bursaries, funding or grants that may be available and help you to access them.

An employer, working with an approved Government-funded training organisation, can receive up to five grants in total. Businesses that have received the grant have used it for equipment, accommodation and additional specialist training. The grant is available for apprenticeships, subject to eligibility and availability.

Incentives

If aged 16-18, 19-24 Care Leaver or has EHC you will receive an additional payment of £1,000 which will be paid £500 only 90 days after their start date and £500 at 365 days after their start date.

Starting work

Apprenticeship Agreement

You must sign an apprenticeship agreement with your apprentice at the start of their apprenticeship. This gives details of what you agree to do for the apprentice, including:

- Length of the Apprenticeship
- Training and qualifications they work towards and achieve
- Working conditions

Commitment Statement

You must sign a commitment statement with your apprentice and us the training provider at the start of their apprenticeship. Both, agreements and statements will be provided by the training provider.

Why is an Apprenticeship Agreement required?

The ASCLA (Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) introduced the requirement for an apprentice to be employed under an Apprenticeship Agreement as part of the standard completion conditions for an apprenticeship.

What is the status of the Apprenticeship Agreement?

The ASCLA makes it clear that the Apprenticeship Agreement is a contract of service, and not a contract of apprenticeship. This reflects the fact that an apprenticeship is primarily a job rather than training. It also means the apprentice does not have any additional rights over those of other employees.

Regular supervision

An apprentice, especially if young, will need supervision and varying degrees of support. This may be their first job. At the workplace induction it would be beneficial to set up a training plan. Things to consider would be:

- List the skills and knowledge needed for the job role (job description, H&S requirements, safe use of equipment)
- Discuss the requirements of the learning programme
- Identify the apprentices prior knowledge and understanding
- Discuss individual objectives
- Identify what gaps need addressing
- Plan how to fill these gaps, remembering that learning doesn't have to be formal, it may be covered with shadowing, online research, mentoring
- Draw up a training plan and regularly monitor and review progress

Your apprentice should follow your organisations policies on induction, probation and reviews. Below are a few examples of how you can support your apprentice in the workplace.

Setting SMART Objectives:

Specific -state exactly what they will be expected to do (often after a development activity has taken place)

Measurable- you both need to be 100% clear when the objective is achieved and this will only be possible if it is clear how the objective will be measured

Achievable - the objective must be stretching but it also needs to be a realistic one, given any constraints such as current knowledge or skills, support, resources

Relevant - it must be relevant to their longer term aims (workplace, framework or career)

Timebound - this is the specific date that the objective will be assessed

Induction and regular 1:1s to discuss:

1. Timekeeping
2. Meeting job requirements
3. Standard of work
4. Initiative
5. Relationship with colleagues
6. Relationship with superiors
7. Sickness record

Probationary Periods:

- 6th Week Probationary Report
- 12th Week Probationary Report

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- 20th Week Probationary Report
- 30th Week Probationary Report

Feedback – Behavioural / Constructive

X **Personality statement** – no evidence, based on our own assumptions

Example ***“Why are you being so lazy?”***

- ✓ **Behavioural statement** – a direct comment on something we have seen or not seen/ heard or not heard

Example ***“Why haven’t you finished that report?”***

- ✓ **Positive feedback** – praise for success

Example ***“Great job. That was a really well written report - straight to the point with no unnecessary waffle”***

X **Negative feedback** – criticism for failure

Example ***“That report was dreadful”***

- ✓ **Constructive feedback** – suggestions to improve performance

Example ***“Perhaps next time you could use spell-check or get someone to proof-read your report before submitting it”***

Other Feedback Tips:

- Be specific as to what you are giving feedback on
- Suggest choices rather than giving orders
- Define the impact of the individuals behaviour on others
- Don’t attempt to speak directly *for* others
- Try not to overuse positive feedback – use in conjunction with constructive
- Deliver negative or constructive feedback privately, and as soon as possible
- Avoid words such as ‘but’
- Don’t exaggerate

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is my apprentice subject to the same terms and conditions as other staff in my team?

A: Yes, all apprentices have a contract of employment which will be for at least 12 months. You do need to bear in mind the age of your apprentice and you may have to make some allowances for this e.g. informal one-to-one meetings to ensure their understanding of the rules. Holiday, sickness, probation and all other organisational policies apply to your apprentice as per other staff.

Q: My apprentice has got A Levels so can they go straight onto a Level 3 Apprenticeship?

A: There are differences between academic and vocational qualifications. Broadly speaking, academic courses are concerned with developing students' knowledge, while vocational courses are concerned with developing a person's ability to demonstrate skills and knowledge by performing particular tasks in the workplace. In general terms, a Level 2 Apprenticeship is aimed at new recruits who are working at a daily operational level within their sector. A Level 3 Apprenticeship is aimed at those who are looking to progress into a supervisory or management role. Ideally, those progressing to an Advanced Level 3 Apprenticeship should have completed an Apprenticeship at Level 2.

Q: How much time should I allow my apprentice to work on their qualifications during office hours?

A: Once they start their competence (work-based) qualification, they must be allowed 20% paid, off the job training, if they require English and Maths this is on top of the 20%. It would be helpful if the apprentice was allowed some time in the workplace to gather and upload evidence to their portfolio. Although the length of time is up to the individual employer, we would suggest 2 hours per week for a Level 2 and 3 hours for a Level 3 qualification. Any work over these hours is expected to be done in the apprentice's own time.

Most apprentices attend some classroom delivery followed by exams. In addition to the support provided by the classroom tutor, apprentices are expected to revise for the exams in their own time.

Q: My department wants to offer a non-Apprenticeship contract to the apprentice but they are only half-way through their Apprenticeship. Can this be done?

A: Whilst we are keen to celebrate success and encourage progression into permanent job roles, early promotion into these roles does not always lead to success. In our experience, early promotion can lead to apprentices failing to achieve their qualifications. When recruiting, employers look to candidates who have experience and qualifications so, whilst a promotion enhances their salary, a failure to achieve qualifications is not helpful in the long term. We encourage all employers to retain their trained and qualified apprentices (a "grow your own staff" approach) and welcome the offer of more permanent jobs towards the end of their Apprenticeship.

Caseload Officers

All apprentices have an allocated Caseload Officer whose role is to liaise between training provider, employer and apprentice to ensure that quality standards are adhered to, information relevant to each party is shared and the framework is completed successfully.

It is not the role of the Caseload Officer to become involved in, assess or in any way review the academic areas of the Apprenticeship framework which is the sole territory of the teacher/assessor/programme lead. If a learner has concerns regarding their learning they MUST be referred to their assessor/teacher/programme lead.

A Caseload officer will offer pastoral support to the apprentice, complete ILP's, progress reviews, health and safety, equal opportunities monitoring.

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Useful Links:

Luton Adult Learning: www.lutonacl.ac.uk or you can call 01582 490033

Luton Borough Council: www.luton.gov.uk

Find an Apprenticeship: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

National Apprenticeship Service



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Download our free AV mobile search app to access live job vacancies in your area

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