The other Plan A

Degree apprenticeships, Higher apprenticeships and two Year degrees

Degree Apprenticeships

**What are degree apprenticeships?**

Launched in 2015 degree apprenticeships are a job where the employee receives a degree during the course of their work. Aimed at 18 to 19 year old school leavers apprentices work a minimum of 30 hours a week for their employer. Learning fits around that work commitment and requires flexible learning modes such as day or block release, distance or blended learning. Degree apprenticeship programmes have been developed through a collaboration between the Tech Partnership and higher education institutions. With government backing, a network of graduate employers and universities have joined forces to train a highly skilled workforce for key industries.

**What are the entry requirements?**

Academic requirements vary from programme to programme. Places are limited and competitive, they should be considered as difficult to secure a place as a competitive Russel group university. If not more so given the current ‘buyers market’ environment of higher education. The market for degree apprentices is in its infancy, there are currently only around 1,000 active degree apprentices as opposed to 1.75m undergraduates.

**For example**

* EY degree apprenticeship in Digital Innovation (London) requires 3 A Levels in any subject
* EY Business Apprentice programme (Newcastle) requires 3 A Levels in any subject
* GCHQ Cyberfirst degree level apprenticeship in cyber security requires 3 A Levels in any subject at C or above.
* Jaguar Land Rover programme requires two A Levels to include Maths and an additional Mathematical/Physics/Chemistry/Technology or Engineering subject at C Grade or above.

**What’s available and what are the career prospects?**

Although degree apprenticeships do not guarantee a permanent job, apprentices are highly employable graduates. Building a relationship with an employer over a programme of work and study will open doors into an industry. **Retention rates for apprentices are around 80%.** (2016 data), graduate data from the same period puts the figure at 90% in either work of further study within six months.

There are currently 24 degree apprenticeships in different industries on offer. These programmes – and some of the companies supporting them – are listed below:

* Aerospace Engineering
* Aerospace Software Development
* Automotive Engineering
* Banking Relationship Manager
* Bespoke Tailoring
* Chartered Legal Executive
* Chartered Manager
* Chartered Surveying
* Construction
* Defence Systems Engineering
* Dental Technician
* Digital and Technology Solutions
* Electronic Systems Engineering
* Healthcare Assistant Practitioner
* Laboratory Science
* Licensed Conveyancer
* Nuclear Science
* Operations Manager
* Outside Broadcasting Engineering
* Power Systems
* Product Design and Development
* Solicitor
* Technical Support Engineering

**Benefits**

Degree apprenticeships are for high achieving school leavers who have the academic rigour to attend a top university combined with the social and intellectual maturity to work in a professional environment. They should be considered and marketed as an elite programme.

In terms of selling the degree apprenticeship the following should be considered.

* It is an **elite option**, not a fall back option. You achieve a full Bachelors or Masters degree at **zero cost.** Whilst training you receive a **competitive salary**, salaries depend upon programme location and applicant.
* The **EY** programme offers starting salaries of between £21-22k, this increases each year and upon completion of the programme earnings will be above that of the an equivalent graduate entry post.
* The **Jaguar Land Rover** programme starts on £18,500, this increases by 10% every six months and by the end of the programme employees can expect a ‘starting salary’ of circa £35,000.

Higher Apprenticeships

**What are higher apprenticeships?**

Designed for students who are aged 18 or over higher apprenticeships are similar to degree apprenticeships, indeed some overlap in terms of outcomes. In general, higher apprenticeships have a lower entry threshold than degree apprenticeships and the academic outcome is a Level 4 or Level 5 qualification (unlike the Level 6, bachelor’s degree gained from a degree apprenticeships).

In practical terms they operate in a similar manner to any other apprenticeship, successful applicants become employees of the company and receive on the job training in combination with studying for a Level 4 or 5 qualification via block release.

**What are the entry requirements?**

The entry requirements for higher apprenticeships can vary. However, *most* employers require applicants to have a minimum of two A-levels, or an advanced apprenticeship. Entry standards may be lower than degree apprenticeship in some instances though competition levels are still high due to the applicant to place ratio and the fact that for some higher apprenticeships applicants with only GCSEs are also eligible.

**For example**

* Higher Apprenticeships at Boots (East Midlands) 3 A Levels at C or 240 UCAS points.
* The ACCA Accounting Technician Apprenticeship (England). Grade GSCE A-C/4-9 English and Maths.
* CGI IT and business apprentice. 64 UCAS points across two A-Levels (or equivalent) at grade C or above (excluding General Studies) including a computing/IT/STEM subject gained in the same academic year or a completed Advanced IT Apprenticeship. Also a minimum of five A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalent), including English, Maths and Science.

**What’s available and what are the career prospects?**

Higher Apprenticeships are currently available in the following sectors: Business & IT, Construction, Creative, media & the arts, Customer service & retail, Energy, Engineering & electrical, Finance, Health & care, Hospitality & travel, Manufacturing, processing & logistics, Public services and Vehicles & transport. Once you have completed a higher apprenticeship, you will be eligible to apply / transfer onto a degree apprenticeship or university degree.

**Benefits**

Higher apprenticeships are for ambitious and mature school leavers who have the academic ability to attend a Russel group or below university. They should be considered and marketed as a viable and attractive alternative to a generic humanities’ degree programme.

In terms of selling the higher apprenticeship the following should be considered.

* It is a **comparable** **option to university**, not a fall back option. You achieve foundation degree or full bachelor’s degree at **zero cost.** Whilst training you receive a **competitive salary**, salaries depend upon programme location and applicant.
* The **Boots** programme has a starting salary of £14,000-£15,999. There is a progression pathway to the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship. Opportunities are available in Branding, Trading, Marketing, Supply Chain, Finance, Global Brands and Engineering.
* The **CGI** programme has a starting salary of £14,000-£15,999. Opportunities for internal career progression and the benefit of working for one of the world’s largest IT providers.

Two year degrees

**What are two year degrees?**

Often referred to as **accelerated degrees**, two year degrees are exactly what they sound like. Instead of the traditional three years of studying that an undergraduate degree usually takes, two year degrees condense it by a year. You’ll learn the same information, but in a shorter period of time. This often involves having shorter term breaks and staying at university throughout the traditional summer holiday break. They are favoured option of Universities Minister Jo Johnson, it is seen as a way to offer great value for money and competition in the University market.

**What are the entry requirements?**

Institution and course dependent. A two year LLB (Hons) Law programme at the University of Buckingham requires threes B’s at A Level. A Management & Leadership BA (Hons) Degree at Coventry requires 104 UCAS points. Despite their accelerated nature, two year programmes often have lower entry requirements than comparable three year programmes due to the type of institution that offers the course.

**What’s available and what are the career prospects?**

There are currently only a few providers of accelerated degrees in the UK, the market faces a mixture of scepticism and open hostility from the establish universities. As of 2016 Buckingham, Greenwich School of Management and Coventry University all offer accelerated degree programmes. They lack a sufficient range of data for accurate career prospects, it is assumed they will be in line with the data for comparable three year courses at those institutions.

**Benefits**

The principal benefit of the accelerated programme is a **cost incentive**. The saving of not having to complete three years and the faster entry in to the wage economy. The data from the University the Buckingham below outlines their projected cost savings.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Buckingham** 1 | | **Other UK Universities** | |
|  | **Tuition** 3 | **Living Costs** 2 | **Tuition** 3 | **Living Costs** 2 |
| Year one | £12,444 | £8,200 | £9,250 | £8,200 |
| Year two | \*£12,444 | £8,200 | £9,250 | £8,200 |
| Year three | 0 | 0 | £9,250 | £8,200 |
| Sub-total | \*£24,888 | £16,400 | £27,750 | £24,600 |
| **Total** |  | **£41,288** |  | **£52,350** |

Summary  
Comparison of features and benefits of the different apprenticeship options

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Degree Apprenticeships** | **Higher Apprenticeships** | **Two year degrees** |
| **Outcome** | Full BSc or Msc degree. | Level 4/5. Option to progress to L6 Batchelor’s degree. | Full BSs or BA Batchelor’s degree. |
| **Entry requirements** | Very competitive, interview critical component, entry requirements vary – often 3 A Levels C or above. | Competitive, interview critical component, entry requirements vary – 2 to 3 A levels or UCAS points. | Not considered competitive, entry requirements vary – 3 B’s to 104 UCAS points. |
| **Availability** | Currently circa 1000, programme is two years old and is expected to expand significantly over time. | More mature than the Degree Apprenticeship programme, circa 28,000 places available. | Limited to two institutions, favoured option of Universities Minister Jo Johnson. |
| **Career prospects** | Limited data, retention with company 80%. | Limited data, retention with company 80%. | Work or further study University average 90%. |
| **Positives** | Zero cost and zero debt degree.  Work experience gained in a relevant field.  Competitive starting and finishing salary. | Zero cost and zero debt L4-6 qualification.  Work experience gained in a relevant field.  Attractive starting and finishing salary.  Possibly reduce the University drop out phenomenon. | Lower cost than a standard 3 year degree programme. |
| **Negatives** | Miss out on University experience. | Miss out on University experience. | Limited institutions and courses on offer. |