

WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU? UNIVERSITY VS. APPRENTICESHIPS

This guide is designed to help you think about whether an apprenticeship or university might be the right next step for you. There are no right or wrong answers, it's about what suits your learning style, goals, and current circumstances.

Work through each section honestly and go with what feels most like you. At the end, your answers should give you a clearer idea of which pathway could be the best fit.

APPRENTICESHIP



UNIVERSITY



Q1: WORKING LIFE

Where would you like to spend the majority of your day?

Apprenticeships are paid full-time jobs, giving real responsibility, expectations, and workplace experience from day one.

University is full-time study, with the option to work part-time, giving more time in education before starting work.

Q2: LEARNING STYLE

Do you have a preferred style of learning?

Apprenticeships are practical and hands-on, combining real work and projects with some classroom-based study.

University focuses on lectures, essays, exams, and independent study, with limited practical, hands-on experience.

Q3: CAREER CLARITY

Do you already have a clear idea of the career or industry you want to pursue?

Apprenticeships focus on a specific role or skillset, teaching the knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed, whilst developing wider workplace skills.

University degrees focus on academic understanding of a subject, often starting broad in the early years before specialising later.



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Q4: MONEY

Have you considered the financial impact of each route?

Apprenticeships are fully funded, and you earn a salary while you learn, starting at least at the National Apprenticeship Wage.

University tuition fees are around £9,535 per year for most UK students (2025/26), with additional living costs to consider on top.

Q5: INDEPENDENT LEARNING

How much guidance and structure in your learning is important to you?

Apprentices work closely with experienced colleagues and get ongoing guidance and support from their employer and training provider.

University students are responsible for their own learning, requiring self-discipline and motivation to complete their degree.

Q6: ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Do you currently meet UK Right to Work and residency requirements?

Apprenticeships are paid roles and usually require the Right to Work in the UK, plus around three years' UK residency to access government funding.

University can be a more accessible option if you don't meet apprenticeship eligibility, for example as an international student or recent arrival in the UK.

The most important thing to remember is that there is no right or wrong answer, and no rush to decide. What works for those around you may not be right for you as everyone's goals, circumstances and strengths are different.

Apprenticeships and university are both options at any age, and both offer long-term benefits. The right choice is simply the one that fits you best, right now.