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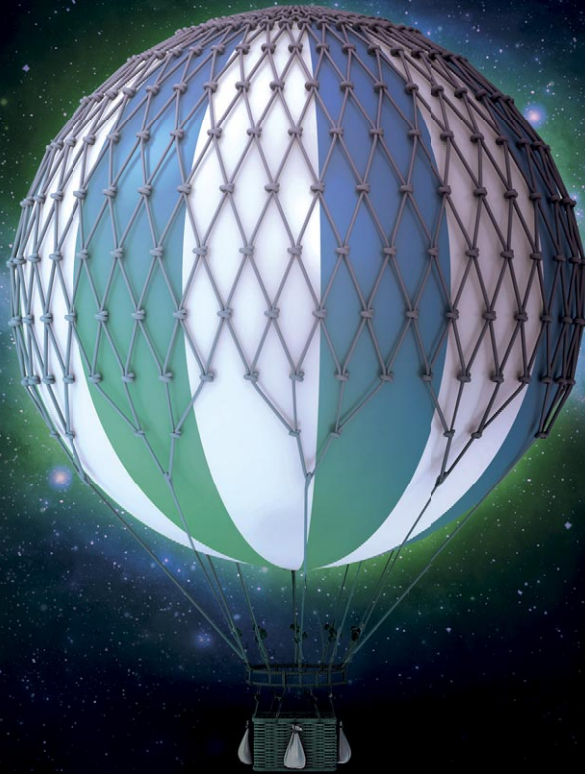
Inspiring decisions,
unlocking potential

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PATHS TO PROFESSIONAL CAREERS

A PARENT'S GUIDE

2020



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Support your child on their career ladder

Tips for talking to your child about their career journey.

‘Support your child to investigate potential avenues for their career based on their interests. Encourage them to be self-reflective as research indicates people are more successful in careers that closely align to their interests and strengths. Be reflective yourself to ensure you aren’t passing your own biases on to their career choice.’

David Barnes, senior manager of early careers, BDO

‘Many school leavers have no idea what career they want, so don’t despair if your child is in this camp. Encourage them to research employers – to discover early careers opportunities and whether they suit your child’s values and skills. Don’t research for them! Employers look for drive; if you do the work, your child won’t be able to demonstrate this convincingly.’

Kim Hardman, UK apprentice programme manager, AstraZeneca

'When you and your child are looking into universities, don't just focus on the degree – go along to open days and get a sense of life on campus. Ask about mentoring programmes, international exchange opportunities, internships, scholarships and awards. These can improve their CV, build their confidence and even lead to once-in-a-lifetime experiences!'

Jane Scott, director of marketing and communications, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

'As a mum to a strong-willed 14-year-old daughter, I'm lucky to work delivering school leaver opportunities. Without this experience, I'd be following the 'go to university' approach when discussing next steps. So, my advice is: find out about the options available together, don't dismiss anything and consider employers alongside academic options.'

Kate Ross, apprentice foundation manager, IBM

'I would urge parents to consider apprenticeships for their child. There is now a huge range of opportunities combining valuable work experience with study for a qualification. Many former apprentices gain management roles and become a hugely important part of a workforce.'

Cat McGurren, Europe early careers lead recruiter, Fidelity International

Career choices – taking the first steps

Considering a wide range of options will help ensure your child is informed enough to begin climbing their career ladder.

Some people have their mind set on a career as a doctor or a journalist from an early age. But what if your child isn't sure? You might find it helpful to work through the following pointers with them.

1. Find their motivation

It's important for your child to be motivated by their career choice, both in terms of working hard to get the grades they need and progressing their career when it comes to starting work.

Encourage them to think about what's important to them in life. Money? Helping people? Being creative? This may help to guide their research into careers.



Their interests can be another useful starting point. If your child is a Formula 1 fan, would they enjoy designing cars as an automotive engineer? If their weekends are spent shopping, how about a career managing a store – or even a whole chain?

Also consider with your child which subjects they are good at and what other skills they have. Perhaps they are good at speaking in front of large groups of people or working out and sticking to a budget. Keep these skills in mind when reading about different jobs.

2. Learn what's required

Many careers are open to young people regardless of the subjects they've studied for their A levels, Scottish Highers or undergraduate degree. This is often (but not always) the case in areas such as business, finance, law and the media. So it's fine if your child doesn't feel ready to decide yet or wants to change path later on.

However, some careers do require a particular degree or vocational training path and often specific subject choices for A levels/Scottish Highers, too. This tends to be the case in areas such as science, medicine and engineering. So it's a good idea for your child to start thinking about careers now, in order to make subject choices that leave open doors to careers that might appeal. Encourage them to work through the careers that do require particular subjects and decide whether they are happy to rule them out or they would prefer to keep these options open.

3. Look beyond the stereotypes

Suggest that your child should take a quick look at as many career areas as possible, rather than instantly ruling any out on the basis of stereotypes or assumptions. Plenty of engineers wear suits and go to business meetings – and engineering employers are very keen to hire more women. Many IT

professionals spend more time talking to clients about their needs than they do writing code. Lots of lawyers have jobs that don't require them to defend people accused of unpleasant crimes.

4. Be wary of 'safe' choices

Take care if your child is considering an option because they think it is a 'safe choice' or a 'good job', rather than out of intrinsic interest. IT and law, for example, have a 'solid' image but it may be harder than you think for your child to get their first job and not all roles will offer a high salary. Trading in an academic or vocational path your child will enjoy for assumptions about a 'guaranteed good job' may lead to disappointment.

5. Take a closer look

Got a shortlist? Find out more with online research. Read information about different career sectors at **targetcareers.co.uk** and take a look at the websites of some employers in these sectors. Then try networking. You and your child can ask your family and friends if they have any good contacts, attend university open days and school leaver job fairs, and look for employers who are willing to offer work experience. ©

More help from TARGETcareers

- To get lots more help with choosing a career, head to **targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/choosing-your-career**.
- Read overviews of careers in 14 key areas at **targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors**.
- Find out which careers need certain degrees by visiting **targetcareers.co.uk/uni/choices-about-uni**.



School Leaver Opportunities

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Steer

through the school leaver opportunities

**We can help you and your child navigate
the world of work-based opportunities.**



Apprenticeships, school leaver programmes and sponsored degrees usually involve working for an employer and studying for relevant qualifications, although exactly how your child's time is split between the two will depend on the scheme and the employer.

Bear in mind that different organisations refer to their opportunities in slightly



different ways, so it's important to look beyond the name of the opportunity and find out exactly what the employer is offering, such as in terms of qualifications and pay. You can find out more about what to research with your child on page 20.

Apprenticeship levels explained

There is an official national framework for apprenticeships that sets out four types of apprenticeship, each offering qualifications at different levels:

- Intermediate (level 2) apprenticeships are equivalent to GCSEs.
- Advanced (level 3) are equal to A levels.
- Higher (levels 4 and 5) lead to a qualification that is equivalent to a higher education certificate, higher education diploma or a foundation degree.
- Degree (levels 6 and 7) result in a bachelors or masters degree.

This framework is set by the government. An opportunity must meet specific criteria to be able to call itself an apprenticeship.

Higher and degree apprenticeships are typically open to applicants with A levels or equivalent qualifications (such as Scottish Highers, an advanced apprenticeship or an NVQ level 3).

An apprentice will typically attend college or university either one day a week (day release) or for a week or more at a time (block release). The cost of an apprenticeship (and any tuition fees) will be covered by the employer and the government.

Scheme lengths vary; the higher the qualification involved, the longer the scheme will be. Higher and degree apprenticeships typically last between three and five years. Employers don't tend to guarantee that

there will be a job at the end of it but in practice they are typically keen to keep employees on.

Some employers – particularly accountancy firms – refer to school leaver programmes. These are generally similar to higher and degree apprenticeships. However, the term 'apprenticeship' necessitates a level and period (minimum of 12 months) of training that isn't required if the term 'school leaver programme' is used. So, it's important to check that your child will gain the qualifications and training they hope to.

Sponsored degrees explained

There are two types of sponsored degrees. The first (known as a degree apprenticeship) operates in a similar way to higher apprenticeships: your child will work for their employer, earn a wage, study for a degree part time (either by attending a local university or through distance learning) and have their tuition fees paid for them. Their degree is typically chosen by the employer – and it may even be involved in designing the content of the course.

The second type is where an employer offers partial financial support to students who are attending university full time in the traditional way and are studying a subject that relates to the employer's business. Typically, the student will complete paid work with the employer during university vacations. They may also be required to work for the employer for a minimum period after graduation. This form of sponsored degree is most frequently provided by engineering companies (find out more about how to get into engineering on page 39). ©



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Is work or uni the best fit for my child?

Would your child prefer a traditional university experience or earning while learning? Here are the main factors to consider.

What is life on an apprenticeship like and how does it compare to going to university full time? Once you and your child have got a sense of what to expect from the different experiences on offer, your child will be able to make the best choice for them.

Options for independent living

If your child decides to go to university in the traditional sense, they are likely to share a

house or flat with other students and be responsible for buying and cooking their own food, washing clothes and paying bills. This introduces them to living independently, while allowing them to share the experience with others in the same position. However, moving away is not essential if your child attends a university close enough to home for them to commute on a daily basis.

An apprenticeship might be too far away for your child to commute to, requiring them

to leave home. Even if it isn't, there should still be the option for your child to move out if they want to, as they will probably be earning enough to pay rent. They might be able to share accommodation with other apprentices, but there's no guarantee that they will be living with people their own age. Does your child think they are ready for that level of independence?

Some programmes include placements based in different locations or short overnight trips (find out more on page 21), while some university courses allow students to study abroad as part of their degree.

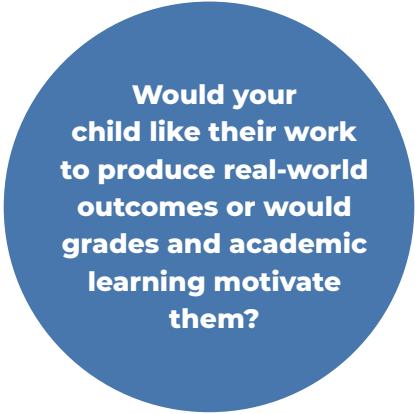
Academic freedom or real-world results?

Most degrees give your child some freedom to choose which topics they study. Many courses also include a project or dissertation, allowing them to focus on the aspects that they are most passionate about. If your child's apprenticeship includes a degree, the topics they study will typically be chosen by their employer and relate to their working life. Would your child prefer the freedom to learn about what they like?

At university, the main outcome of a piece of work will be a grade. Vocational courses, which may include laboratory sessions or work placements, provide more opportunities for students to apply what they've learned to real-world situations, but even these aim to develop a student's understanding from an academic or theoretical, rather than practical, perspective. On an apprenticeship, however, your child's day-to-day work will have a clear purpose and help their employer work towards its business goals. They may see their work have an impact on clients and possibly even on profits. Would your child like their work to produce real-world outcomes or would grades and academic learning motivate them?

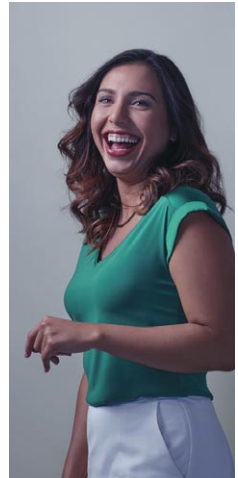
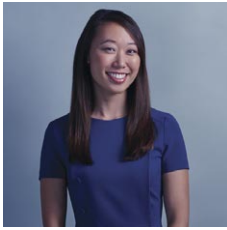
Flexibility or structure?

Universities typically expect students to spend around 35 to 45 hours a week studying. Science subjects tend to have around 20 contact hours a week and arts subjects even fewer, meaning that most of your child's time will be spent in private study. It's up to your child how much time they commit, as there is less direct supervision than at school. Would your child be motivated to put in the hours by themselves? Equally, they might value having control over their schedule and the flexibility to pop round to friends' rooms for a cuppa or stay up late without an early start for work the next day.

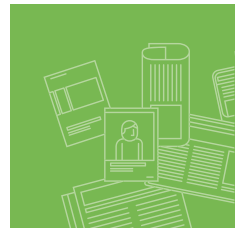
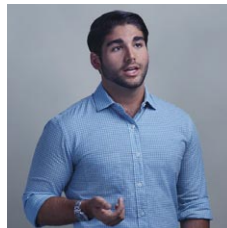
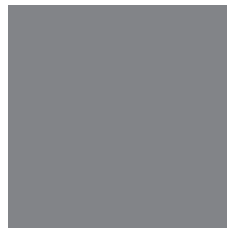
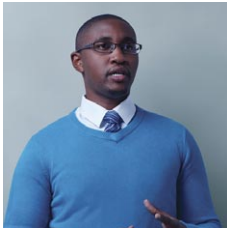


Would your child like their work to produce real-world outcomes or would grades and academic learning motivate them?

Apprenticeships tend to have more of a nine-to-five structure. Your child may benefit from this, as their time is usually all theirs once each shift is finished and it offers a clear distinction between work, study and other areas of their life. However, if the programme involves working towards a degree or professional qualification, they will attend sessions at college or university



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during work hours but may also need to study at home in their own time – especially as the exam period approaches.

Opportunities to socialise

As a full-time student your child would mix largely with people of their own age. There would be opportunities to socialise with people they live with, people on the same course and those they meet through extracurricular activities. Universities allow students to share and develop interests with other people through societies – such as sports, theatre and political societies. However, at busy times of the year your child may need to prioritise studying over these activities. If your child is more engaged when they interact with others and share ideas, they might be happier working with colleagues every day on an apprenticeship, rather than spending a lot of time on independent study.

On an apprenticeship your child would have colleagues of all ages. It's likely that there will also be the chance to meet others of the same age, though – both at work and while studying for qualifications. Finding out how many apprentices the employer takes on each year could give you an indication of how many young people they may have to socialise with. Some employers run clubs and activities or, alternatively, your child might be able to find a club in the local area that interests them.

Work experience and keeping options open

Going to university in the traditional way allows your child to explore a wide variety of career options before making a decision. Students can get work experience during vacations, fit part-time jobs or volunteering around their studies, try career-related activities on campus and make use of the

careers service. Some courses incorporate a year in industry, while others include work placements that students attend on certain days each week. A lot of graduate jobs don't require students to have studied a particular subject, so your child won't be limited to one career after graduating. However, some jobs do require a specific degree. Your child should find out whether this is the case if they have a strong interest in a particular career.

Apprenticeships provide excellent work experience in their particular field. Many will train your child for a specific job, but some will give them the chance to experience different areas of the business. If your child doesn't know what career they want, or has several different ideas, then an apprenticeship is probably not for them. If the programme includes a degree, then this will be transferable to other careers – however, your child may be asked to explain why they chose to train in one career and apply for jobs in another. Qualifications below degree level are less likely to help if your child wants to change career completely. It's also worth checking whether your child is expected to work for the company for a set period of time after finishing the programme and whether this is something they are enthusiastic about. ©

More help from TARGETcareers

- See targetcareers.co.uk/uni/choices-about-uni for which careers do and don't require a specific degree.
- For more information on whether university or work would suit your child best, go to targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/work-v-uni.



AstraZeneca Apprenticeships



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For more information, please visit careers.astrazeneca.com/students



Thinking about their bank account



If your child chooses an apprenticeship they will avoid student debt, but will they earn as much as a graduate overall?

There's no 'one size fits all' answer to the question of whether school leavers will be better off financially if they go to university full time or join an employer at 18 on a higher apprenticeship. It depends on the career they want to get into and the particular courses or programmes they are considering.

Earnings v. debt

If your child goes to university, they are likely to leave with student debt, which will then



accrue interest. Student Finance, which is linked to the government, offers two types of student loan: one for tuition fees, which is paid directly to the university, and a maintenance loan to help cover living costs. The total amount your child repays will depend on how quickly they pay it off and whether they have paid back all their debt 30 years after they graduate (at which point any remaining debt is written off).

Repayment will be deducted from your child's monthly wage once they're earning over a certain amount: currently £25,725 or more in England and Wales (expected to rise to £26,575 in April 2020) and £18,935 or more in Scotland and Northern Ireland (expected to rise to £19,390 in April 2020). They will not need to pay anything while they're earning less than this. The more your child earns during their working life, the more they'll pay back – so the amount they pay for their degree will be more or less in line with the financial benefit they gain from it.

See our advice on 'University fees and funding' at targetcareers.co.uk/uni/choices-about-uni.

Thinking long term

Will your child be better or worse off financially if they start full-time work sooner, instead of going to university? If they manage to get a place on an apprenticeship that gets them to the same earning level as graduates in the same length of time – and that's as good for their career in the long term – then they will be better off not going to university. This is often the case with employers who offer the chance to do a degree part time while working. Examples in finance include Barclays' higher

apprenticeship in leadership and management and PwC's Flying Start degree programmes. Examples in IT include CGI's and IBM's degree apprenticeships.

However, not all apprenticeships are designed to put apprentices on a par with graduates. In these cases they might find that in the long term they will earn less than those with a degree. Make sure your child's research includes finding out about the qualifications they need to progress in the long term. For example, in engineering, if they eventually want to become a chartered engineer (the highest level of qualification), it's easiest if they have a masters degree (see page 39 for more on getting into engineering). Also check whether any professional qualifications offered to school leavers are the same as those taken by the organisation's graduate recruits.

Ignoring 'average' salaries

It's wise not to get too fixated on statistics relating to average salaries for all graduates or school leavers. Media reports about how much graduates earn often don't give the full story about their figures. Also, salaries vary so much, particularly for graduates, that averages aren't much help in predicting what your child personally might earn.

Take a look instead at our 'How much will I earn?' articles for the career sectors of interest on targetcareers.co.uk, which will give you a feel for graduate and apprentice salaries in different industries.

Also, remember that school leavers start working at a younger age and may have had several pay rises by the time graduates of the same age join the company. ©

Getting backstage experience in the world of work

How your child can take a look behind the curtain and find out what different careers involve before committing to a role.

Work experience will help your child learn about the different careers that interest them and what they do and don't enjoy.

It will also help them to:

- develop the skills that employers and universities value, such as communication, teamwork and time management
- experience what working life is like
- increase their confidence, independence and professionalism
- enhance their employability and boost their CV, university personal statement and job applications
- meet people who could help them in their future career – and perhaps find a potential future employer. @



Formal work experience opportunities

- **Work experience placements.** Often lasting up to a week at a company, arranged by your child's school/college or independently. Many large employers advertise opportunities on their websites and [targetcareers.co.uk](https://www.targetcareers.co.uk). Your child (perhaps under your supervision) could also approach smaller, local businesses over the phone or by email to say they'd be interested in work experience, check if this is possible and ask about the preferred way of applying. You should follow your child's school/college's safeguarding guidelines – they will also have a list of approved employers.
- **Work shadowing.** Your child will observe one person to gain insight into their job, usually just for a day. These opportunities aren't advertised, so professionals will need to be approached directly. If any of your family members, friends or neighbours work in an area your child is interested in, you could ask if they'd be willing to help.
- **Employers' insight days or weeks for school leavers.** Some employers offer students the chance to spend a day or more seeing for themselves what working for them would be like. Your child may also get some handy tips on how to apply for its apprenticeship programme. You can find these at [targetcareers.co.uk](https://www.targetcareers.co.uk) and on employers' careers websites.
- **School leaver careers fairs and employer events.** Careers fairs allow students to meet lots of employers in one go and ask questions. An event run by one employer will give your child a deeper insight into that organisation, for example via an open evening.



Other activities that count as work experience

Beyond formal work experience opportunities, there are plenty of ways that your child can develop useful skills and get a feel for what they enjoy. They may even be taking part in some of these activities already.

- **Volunteering and fundraising.** Your child could volunteer at a charity shop, help with outdoor conservation projects, become a volunteer police cadet or take part in the National Citizen Service. Find out more about opportunities for young people at #iwill and vInspired.
- **Extracurricular activities.** These include: being part of a sports team or other club; taking part in a theatre production; writing for a student newspaper; joining the school debating society; being a Scout or Guide; and completing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- **Competitions.** Encourage your child to research whether there are competitions in areas that interest them, for example in design, creative writing, photography, maths or engineering.
- **Part-time jobs.** Your child could try their hand at babysitting or a paper round, get a part-time job in a supermarket or café at the weekend or look for a temporary job in the holidays. Attractions such as zoos and garden centres often hire more staff for the summer.
- **Personal projects.** If your child designs and makes something themselves, such as through a DIY project, website or blog, they may well develop the problem-solving and creative skills that employers look for. Another option is learning a language independently.
- **Positions of responsibility.** These could include being a head boy or head girl, sports captain, house captain, school council member, peer mentor or having a leadership or committee role in a club.
- **Summer school.** Several universities run these, usually for up to a week. They can help your child build their knowledge of a subject and decide whether they'd enjoy studying it full time – and whether they'd enjoy university life. Summer schools are quite common for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. You can find out more on universities' websites and via The Sutton Trust and Headstart.

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Employers' programmes – dig out the facts

Where can you and your child learn more about schemes and what information should you unearth?

If your child is thinking of joining an employer to 'earn and learn', it's a good idea for both of you to research the opportunities they are considering. Before getting started, make sure your child knows what career they want, so they can assess whether the programmes available are appropriate routes.

Where to research

Using a range of sources will give you the best chance of gaining answers to all your questions and thereby help your child to make well-informed decisions. Below are some options to consider.

- Take a look at **targetcareers.co.uk** and employers' websites for the basic details of programmes.

- Ask friends or family members if they have any contacts working at a potential employer.
- Visit careers fairs or open days attended/held by employers your child is interested in (see the box on the next page).

What to research: qualifications

Find out what qualifications your child would gain. Use **targetcareers.co.uk** to assess whether these would get your child into the right career at the right level – go to 'Career sectors', then choose the relevant area.

There is a national framework for apprenticeships that defines the level of qualifications on offer (see page 8). However, there is no such framework for other school leaver programmes. Some employers offer

school leavers the chance to study for the same professional qualifications as their graduate recruits, such as the ACA qualification from ICAEW. Professional qualifications certify that you have the training and skills needed to do your job to a high standard; in some industries such as accounting they are essential to progress your career. Check the detail of what is on offer carefully.

If a degree is mentioned, check whether it is a full bachelors degree or a foundation degree (the equivalent of two thirds of a standard university degree), if this is important to your child.

What to research: the contract

Typically, recruiters do not guarantee that employees will be kept on at the end of the programme; however, in practice they often want to keep them. Be aware of whether your child would be offered a permanent or fixed-term contract initially but don't reject opportunities on this basis. Try to find out how many apprentices the employer kept on last year – perhaps by asking at careers fairs and open days.

Take note of whether there is a 'tie-in' period after training has ended. You may also want to investigate what would happen if your child dropped out of the scheme part-way through – for example, whether they would have to repay any training costs.

What to research: support available

Think about the types of support your child might benefit from. Would they have a buddy or mentor? Would there be help with finding accommodation? Does the employer have groups or activities through which your child could make friends, such as social events,

an LGBTQ+ group or a women's network? Take a look at page 28 for information on wellbeing and support during apprenticeships.

What to research: the travel required

Depending on their role, your child may travel frequently. They might visit different offices or clients while maintaining a regular base, or move around different parts of the country. Make sure your child is happy with the amount of travel involved and the logistics of combining this with time at college or university. Check also whether the costs of travel are met by the employer. This is information that you're likely to have to gather in person.

What to research: as good as a graduate?

It's worth asking how, once your child has finished the programme, their career prospects would compare with those of a graduate recruit. Would they be doing the same kind of work? How would their salary compare with that of a graduate of the same age? Would your child's prospects for career progression and promotion be the same as a graduate's? Once again, this may involve discussing at careers fairs or open days. ©

Careers fairs

There are lots of careers fairs held around the country. The following will help you get started.

- www.worldskillsuk.org
- www.nationalapprenticeshipshow.org
- www.prospectsevents.co.uk

Apprenticeships with WSP

• CIVIL ENGINEERING • BUILDING SERVICES ENGINEERING • RAIL ENGINEERING • PROJECT MANAGEMENT • QUANTITY SURVEYING

As one of the world's leading engineering, professional services and technical consultancy firms, at WSP, we're passionate about the big questions. And big answers, naturally. For us that's all about reaching beyond the expected to do work that'll make a profound impact felt long into the future.

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There's no such thing as a typical day at WSP. Our apprentice roles are varied and learning will be fast paced. One day can be completely different to the next. Our apprentices will have the opportunity to learn new skills using specialist software suited to the area of the business they are working in. They may be involved with taking concepts and ideas from architects or engineers and creating software drawings and designs and, where possible, getting the opportunity to visit site and see the projects they've been working on coming to life.

To apply to our programme:

- For a degree apprenticeship you'll be in your final year or have completed either your A Levels (or equivalent qualification type) with grades BBC to include Maths or Further Maths with a Physical Science or a Level 3 BTEC Extended Diploma with grades DDM or above in a related subject
- You'll have five GCSEs (or equivalent qualification type) at grade C / Level 5 or above which must include English, Maths and Science with a least a grade B / Level 6 in Maths..

Desired Skills:

- You'll be enthusiastic and have the creativity to think outside the box
- You'll help to stretch and inspire us, communicating any new ideas you have and keeping everyone in the loop
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What if we can?

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For more information and the links to apply, please visit our website at:
www.wsp.com/ukapprenticeships





Putting universities under the microscope

Considering the following questions will help your child choose the most suitable degree courses to apply for.

Once your child knows what degree subject they would like to study, it's worth drawing up a shortlist of universities that they are interested in. You can then do some further research with your child to narrow this list down. They can apply to a maximum of five courses via UCAS. Degrees in the same subject can differ between universities, so it's important to look into each course in as much detail as possible.

You might not be able to find all of the following information on the university's website. If you can't, you or your child could contact the relevant course admissions tutor or ask in person at an open day.

Researching courses

- What content is covered? Does this match your child's interests?
- Do the lecturers' backgrounds and research areas tie in with the topics your child wants to learn about?
- How many hours of contact time are there each week and how is this divided up (eg into lectures, tutorials and/or lab sessions)?

- How many hours of study are students recommended to do by themselves each week? If your child is planning to work part time, could they fit this in?
- Are students assessed by coursework, exams or both, and what proportion of their final grade does each element count for?
- What are the student satisfaction ratings for the course?
- What jobs have past students gone on to do?
- How much are the tuition fees and are there any extra costs?
- What are the relevant department's ratings for research and teaching quality?
- Is the course taught at one of the university's main locations or further afield?
- Are there any opportunities to study abroad for part of their degree?

Questions about vocational degrees

- Is the course accredited by a relevant professional body?
- Which employers do past students now work for?
- What percentage of graduates find work in the relevant industry?



- What links does the course have to employers? Are there opportunities for students to meet them, get sponsored by them or do work placements with them?
- What modules are included? Do these relate to your child's career interests?
- Have any of the lecturers worked in the relevant industry?

Researching universities

- How highly ranked is the university overall?
- How employable are its students? What facilities and initiatives does it have to help them become more employable?
- Where is it located? How much would it cost to live there and would the university provide accommodation?
- How long would it take your child to get home for a visit or to commute if they plan to live at home?
- Does the university have clubs and societies that relate to your child's outside interests – or could they find these elsewhere locally?
- Does the local area offer the facilities and opportunities to carry out the activities they want?

Visiting universities

Encourage your child to visit universities and departments to meet or listen to the academics who would be teaching them and current students. Are people welcoming? Do they sound passionate about their subject? Open days and taster courses are a good chance to do this. You can find out more about taster courses on the UCAS website (www.ucas.com). Parents can usually attend open days with their children, but take a step back and encourage your child to speak and ask questions themselves.

Have a good wander round to see the facilities – labs, lecture halls, libraries etc –

and what the atmosphere is like. Head further afield to explore the local area. Would your child feel at home?

Impressing graduate recruiters

Knowing what employers like in their graduate recruits could also help your child to make a decision.

- Some recruiters prefer prestigious universities. So investigate higher-ranked institutions if your child is predicted good grades, but find one where they will feel inspired and supported.
- Almost all recruiters want graduates to have taken part in activities outside of their degree. So consider whether a university has clubs or volunteering programmes that your child would like to join. If they plan to live at home they might be best at a university that doesn't require a long daily commute so they have time for other interests. @

More help from TARGETcareers

Go to targetcareers.co.uk/uni where you'll find:

- information about university rankings
- a university course search
- university profiles
- city guides
- help on applying to university via UCAS
- degree subject guides
- university reviews – find out what current students think about their universities
- a Degree Explorer tool to help your child discover which subjects they might enjoy studying.

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Search 'Atkins Apprenticeships' to find out more.



CONSTRUCTION: A CAREER LIKE NO OTHER

There's so much more to the construction industry than simply working on building sites. While the bricklayers and the tilers are still vital, there's a huge range of exciting and varied roles in construction.

Whether you prefer an active job where you're out and about, or an office-based role that relies more on planning and paperwork, you'll surely find something engaging and exciting in construction. As well as house building, there's commercial building — which covers everything from offices to football stadiums — and infrastructure, which includes roads, bridges, water, electricity and more. There's also off-site manufacture, which is concerned with components and parts that are built in factories and then transported to the relevant site.



HOW TO GET INTO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

There are many different entry points into the industry.

Apprenticeships: If you're aged 16 or over and live in England, Scotland or Wales, you can apply for thousands of apprentice positions online. You'll need to successfully undertake an interview and an induction, but this is a brilliant way to get started straight from school. Find out more in the 'Spotlight' section.

Traineeships: If you find academic work difficult or don't think you will leave school with good qualifications, a traineeship could be the ideal solution. Ranging from a couple of weeks to six months in length, a traineeship will help to build your skills to prepare you for a job or an apprenticeship.

Work experience: If you think construction could be right for you but you want to 'try before you buy',

why not try to organise some work experience alongside your studies? Some first-hand experience might help you to find out if the reality matches the expectations. It'll be good for your CV and offer an invaluable opportunity to shadow experienced professionals.

Applying for jobs: If you're looking to go straight into the world of work by going for existing full-time roles, make sure your CV is up to scratch before you start applying. Alternatively, if you need to fill in an application form, make sure you read it very carefully and ensure the right information goes in the right places.

Whatever your skills and aspirations, you're sure to find a role within the construction industry that plays to your strengths and helps to develop you on both a professional and a personal level.

SPOTLIGHT ON APPRENTICESHIPS

Many construction professionals started their careers as apprentices. Apprenticeships can be a route into Higher Education or university, and you can study for Higher/Degree Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are a great way to start in the industry if you want to earn while you learn.

Apprenticeship facts

- Length of study depends on the level of apprenticeship. They will be from one to five years, usually at a local training provider;
- They focus on a specific job role, where you'll learn the skills required;
- There are approximately 100 roles in the construction sector which can be accessed through apprenticeships — with more being added
- As an apprentice you'll earn as you learn, so there are no tuition fees and you're on a wage throughout the course.

National Apprenticeship Week

NAW is an annual week-long celebration of apprenticeships across England. Apprentices across the country will be celebrated throughout the week, with engagement and events in schools and colleges nationwide.

To find an event near you, check out the website nawevents.co.uk — it could be your first step into an exciting and rewarding career!

If you want to learn more, the GoConstruct website (goconstruct.org) has a huge amount more information about how to pursue a career in the construction industry.

GOCONSTRUCT.ORG



OPEN DOORS WEEK: REAL SITES, REAL PEOPLE, REAL CAREERS.

Ever wondered what happens on a construction site? This is your ticket to go behind the scenes. Annually every March, hundreds of sites across England, Scotland and Wales are opening their doors to the next generation of construction workers.

From skyscrapers to underground projects, the industry's professionals are ready to show you around. There's a diverse range of career paths in the construction industry, so come and see people at work and get a taste of what they get up to on a normal workday.

Construction isn't just a job, it's a career: and it's one where you can specialise in the areas you're passionate about. Watch as environmentally conscious designers

and builders use state-of-the-art tech to protect our planet, speak to the crane operators that construct from 265 feet off the ground, and learn how history and archaeology play a huge part in our industry.

With over 158,000 new jobs happening in construction over the next five years, you could become one of 2.7 million people in the industry. And, best of all, all the opportunities provided through Open Doors Week are completely free of charge!

Visit opendoors.construction to find out more.



If your child is dealing with – or has previously had – a mental health problem, you might be worried about their transition into the workplace or university. Ultimately, whether this is the right step is a personal decision for you and your child, but this article offers some topics and services to consider.

What to talk about

Your initial discussion can be vague to avoid putting pressure on, but discussing the four points below could help you to make sure your child has thought about mental health associated with work or higher education.

1) What support is offered?

Apprenticeships. When looking over the careers section of the employer's website or speaking to representatives at careers fairs, find out how apprentices are supported. Will a buddy or mentor be on hand to help them

to manage work and to respond to their questions? Is an employee assistance programme in place (see page 32) or does HR offer equivalent policies/initiatives?

Universities. Take a look at the university website to find out what's offered. Your child may benefit from letting the university know about a mental health problem before they start – or early on when they do. This will help them to get support during the first few weeks, which can be a crucial time. Caroline Dower, head of counselling at Durham University, recommends declaring a mental health problem on the UCAS form. Reassure your child that it won't impact offer decisions but will help the university to prepare to provide support.

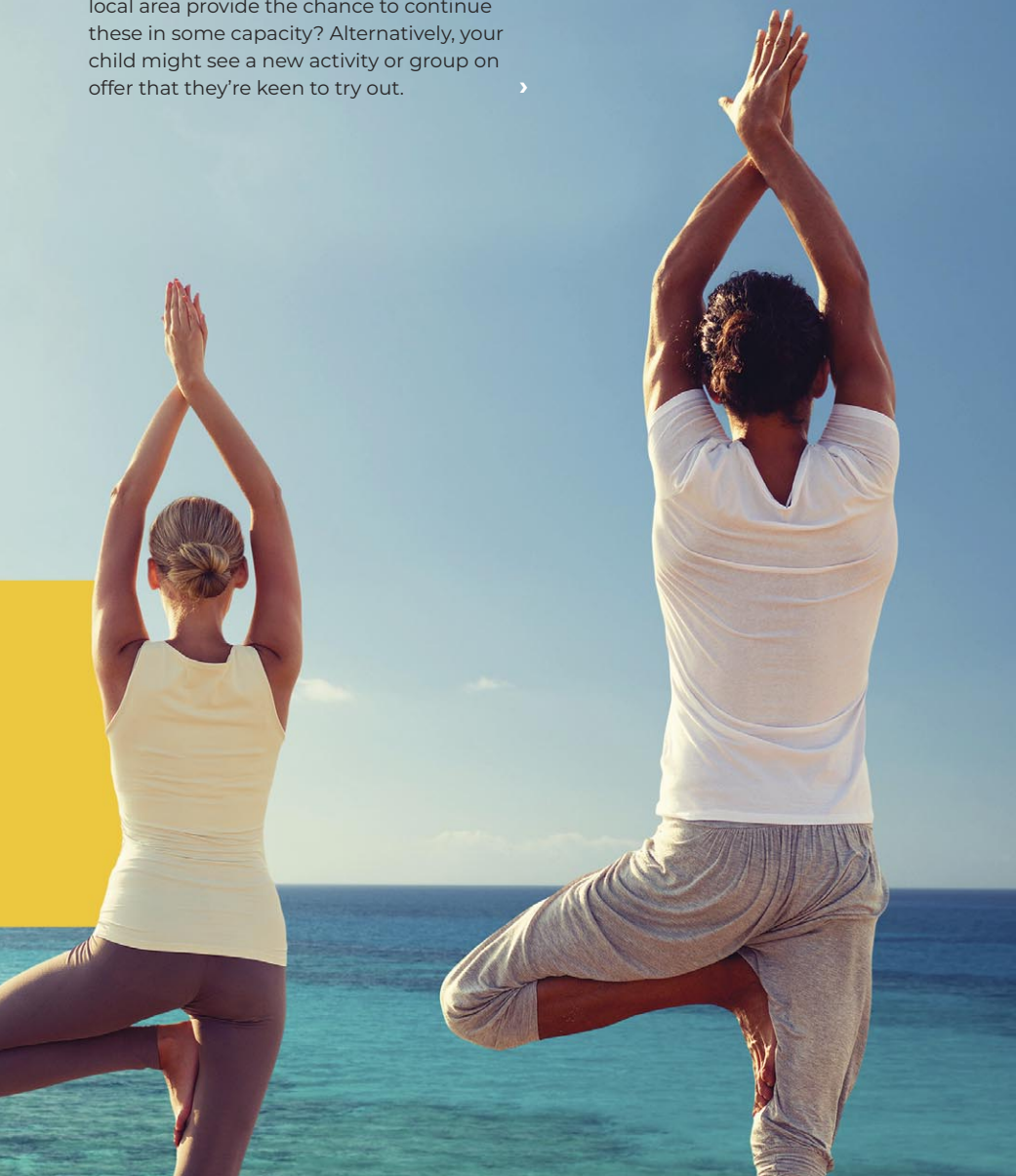
2) Spending spare time

Apprenticeships. Think about the things your child enjoys doing and that has led them to make friends, build confidence or

Mental health matters in the workplace and at uni

Suggestions for helping your child if they struggle with their mental health – before and during an apprenticeship and university degree.

gain interests in the past – such as sports clubs or volunteering. Does the employer or local area provide the chance to continue these in some capacity? Alternatively, your child might see a new activity or group on offer that they're keen to try out. >



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GUIDE TO YOUR FUTURE

2012

Research by



Universities. Most universities offer numerous societies and clubs, so encourage your child to take a look. 'Volunteering, community activities and part-time work can push students' heads out of the bubble,' says Caroline. These might help your child to gain perspective if and when they find university stressful.

3) Communicating problems

Who are the people your child can talk to? This list will probably include family and/or friends. Consider also how your child best communicates their problems. Are they more comfortable using email or text, or would face-to-face communication be better? This could help you too, as it might be the best way to 'check-in' with them.

Apprenticeships. Think about who they might talk to in their workplace, such as a line manager or buddy. As well as providing support with the work itself, a manager will often be able to help your child to reduce stress (eg through time management techniques) and to access support.

Universities. Your child should have a supervisor who will be available to discuss any problems with academic work. Most universities also have a mental health adviser (or equivalent) to give advice on finding the appropriate support. If your child is feeling nervous about making new friends or leaving old ones, Caroline suggests starting to build relationships early on: 'Facebook messenger might be a good way to do this. However, keep in mind that people sometimes only share upbeat feelings; if you're nervous, you're not the only one.'

4) Avoiding triggers and magnifiers

Consider what could cause or worsen problems, along with how your child might avoid this. If there are aspects of life or education that have contributed to issues in the past – and you feel it's OK to bring them

up now – think about how these might come up at work or university and what your child might do to avoid a lapse or relapse.

Apprenticeships. 'The challenges faced by the move into employment can include feeling isolated from friends, the pressure to be successful in a new role, and worries about money and job security', says Claire Davies, interim head of operations for the access to work mental health support service at Remploy. You may want to discuss with your child how they might prepare to manage some of these.

If triggers include stress or bullying, the 'How to be mentally healthy at work' document by the Scottish Association of Mental Health (SAMH) provides really useful advice for coping with these problems in the workplace. Go to www.samh.org.uk/documents/HowToBeMentallyHealthyAtWork.pdf.

Universities. Caroline suggests that living away from home for the first time sometimes causes problems: 'At a university like Durham, many of our students have been very high-achieving at school. Higher education is a step up and you are likely to be one of many academically-able students in your cohort, so you might feel that there's a challenge to your identity'. Again, you could your child discuss how might work through these potential difficulties.

Where to direct your child

If you think your child might be reaching a time of crisis in their mental health, make them aware of the services available.

Mental health charity Mind provides a list of services on their website about what to do in a crisis: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/getting-help-in-a-crisis. This even includes what to do if you feel you can't get the help you need.

Some mental health conditions are covered by the Equality Act 2010, which could mean your child is entitled to ask for reasonable adjustments for exams or work. See the Mind website for more information on this, too: www.mind.org.uk.

General services in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland

For an apprenticeship or university located in England, your child should have a Mind service local to them. For Scotland and Northern Ireland, the equivalent services are the Scottish Association of Mental Health (SAMH) and Inspire Mental Health. What's offered will differ according to the location, but classes to improve general wellbeing (such as jogging or gardening) usually run alongside one or two initiatives dealing more directly with mental health (eg counselling sessions or peer support groups).

You'll find what's offered in the area local to your child by visiting the relevant website. For Mind, go to www.mind.org.uk; for SAMH, go to www.samh.org.uk, and for Inspire Mental Health, go to www.inspirewellbeing.org/our-services/inspire-mental-health.

Further information about the services available for different mental health problems can be found on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/how-to-access-mental-health-services.

Apprenticeships: Remploy

The access to work mental health service offered by Remploy is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. As Claire Davies, head of operations for this service, tells us, 'This service supports individuals with depression, anxiety, stress or other mental health issues and provides confidential work or apprenticeship-focused mental health support'.

Typically, this will involve an initial face-to-face meeting, then ongoing support over the phone for up to nine months. 'Working with a specialist adviser, the young person will develop a step-by-step support plan based on the challenges and barriers they are facing,' says Claire. 'For instance, the support plan might work on how your child can build a strong relationship with their line manager, making the process of disclosing a mental health condition less stressful.'

Take a look at Remploy's website for more information: www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth.

Apprenticeships: an employee assistance programme

Some employers offer an employee assistance programme – a scheme to support employees dealing with personal problems that might have a negative impact on their work performance, health or wellbeing. These generally include services such as counselling. You may be able to find out whether a company offers this from their website or this might be a question for you or your child to ask at a careers fair.

Universities: Student Minds

Student Minds organises peer support groups and staff-led workshops at various universities across the UK. Take a look at its website to find out which universities are involved, as well as resources for parents and for students experiencing various challenges: www.studentminds.org.uk.

Universities: counselling and wellbeing advice

Most universities offer counselling or mental health advisers, as the bare minimum. Caroline says that the help offered by Durham includes: psychological wellbeing advice through workshops, group events, the provision of online psychoeducation modules and mental health advisers. ©

The three degree myths – don't be tricked



Gain some certainty if you can't see the wood for the trees when investigating university courses on the basis of career prospects.

Don't believe everything you hear about graduates' chances of getting a job. We've put together our top three myths to guide you.

Myth one: arts degrees won't get you a job

Truth: An arts degree is a good start to a broad range of careers. Some graduate jobs require a particular subject or range of subjects but many roles are open to graduates of any subject. There are also conversion courses for graduates who want to change direction after their degree.

Many employers ask for at least a 2.1 (the second highest degree grade). So if your child wants, for example, a job in retail banking after they graduate – a route that is open to graduates of all subjects but typically requires a 2.1 – they would be far better off with a 2.1 in English than a 2.2 in maths.

Myth two: a sensible subject is better than one you will enjoy

Truth: As per myth one, academic success is a big factor in employability. Getting good grades requires motivation and it's far easier to stay motivated about something that

interests you. At university, it is students' own responsibility to turn up to lectures and study independently, with no-one checking up on them. If your child chooses a subject they enjoy, they will be less likely to neglect their studies.

Myth three: vocational degrees lead straight to a job

Truth: There's sometimes a mismatch in expectations as to what a vocational degree will provide. Students can assume that it will focus on the skills employers seek; their lecturers may view it as an academic background to an area.

Employers typically favour graduates who have experience outside of their degree, gained through work experience or extracurricular activities, even if their course was vocational.

Different industries' recruitment needs vary according to the state of the economy. Outsourcing can take jobs abroad, while recruitment caps can be brought in in public sector roles. An area that's booming when a student applies for their degree might not be once they finish their studies. ©

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Spotlight on finance

Find out how to begin a career in accountancy, banking, insurance or actuarial work.

There are two routes into most finance careers. Your child could go to university full time and then apply for a graduate job, or join an employer after their A levels or equivalent and start earning while they learn. In both cases there are opportunities to gain professional qualifications (and these are essential if your child wants to become an accountant or an actuary).

Many finance employers offer internships for university students, which can sometimes lead to a graduate job offer, though other work experience is also welcomed. Along with minimum A level requirements for apprenticeships and graduate programmes, companies normally ask for five GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade C or above, including maths and English.

Accountancy

Whichever route your child chooses, once they've started their job they'll work towards

qualifying as a chartered accountant. Most school leaver programmes last five years, although some only last four. The first two years are spent working towards a basic qualification plus a higher apprenticeship; the following two or three towards a professional qualification. Some firms offer a combined degree and professional qualification programme – these usually take four to six years.

Graduates take at least three years to qualify as chartered accountants after being hired. As some firms have relaxed their entry criteria, it is now possible to enter the profession with a 2.2 degree (the second highest grade). Arts degrees are as welcome as numerate degrees, though there's often a numeracy test as part of the application process.

Insurance and actuarial work

A number of insurance companies and related organisations (such as the insurance market Lloyd's) offer apprenticeships. These typically

require 96 to 120 UCAS points* depending on the employer. Most insurance graduate programmes request a 2.1 degree in any subject and some have a minimum requirement for A levels or equivalent. No specific professional qualifications are needed to work in insurance, but both apprentices and graduates often have the opportunity to gain a qualification from a professional body such as the Chartered Insurance Institute.

A few companies recruit school leavers onto apprenticeships in actuarial science, which is closely related to insurance and involves calculating the risk of something happening. These programmes typically require 104 to 136 UCAS points* with at least grade B in maths A level (or equivalent). Actuarial graduate programmes require a 2.1 degree – a numerate subject is normally preferred – as well as grade B in maths A level (or equivalent) and 112 to 136 UCAS points*.

Trainee actuaries must study for internationally recognised professional actuarial exams with the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA). Both graduates and those who have entered through an apprenticeship route can qualify as actuaries in this way. Apprentices will sometimes study a lower-level qualification (such as certified actuarial analyst) during their apprenticeship and then move onto the IFoA qualifications in their next role after the apprenticeship has finished.

Banking and investment

Several banks' retail and corporate divisions hire school leavers onto higher apprenticeships. Recruiters typically ask for 80 to 112 UCAS points* and may also seek customer service experience. Graduate programmes in retail and corporate banking typically require applicants to have a 2.1 in any subject, and some request a minimum number of UCAS points (normally between 112 and 128)*.

However, some retail banks welcome applications from graduates with a 2.2.

To get into investment banking, applicants usually need a university degree at a 2.1 or above and around 128 UCAS points*. The degree can be in any subject but there is often a numeracy test as part of the application process. A relevant internship is a must.

There are both graduate and school leaver opportunities in investment management. A few firms offer apprenticeships, which typically require at least 96 UCAS points*. Graduate programmes in investment management typically require a degree in any subject at 2.1 or above, and some have minimum A level (or equivalent) requirements: 128 UCAS points*, for example. ©

* This is based on the UCAS points system introduced in September 2017.

More help from TARGETcareers

Visit targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors/finance for the following:

- an overview of job roles and employers in the finance industry
- information on professional qualifications in accountancy, actuarial work, insurance and investment management
- advice on choosing a university and a degree if your child wants a finance career
- typical salaries in finance
- an interview with an actuarial apprentice.

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY I'D JUST GO TO UNI AND LEARN ALL THE THEORY, WHEN I COULD JUST DO AN APPRENTICESHIP AND PUT IT INTO PRACTICE AT THE SAME TIME.

Tatiana Peters

Engineering Apprentice and winner of National Apprenticeship Service's Advanced Apprentice of The Year 2019

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www.mbdacareers.co.uk



Spotlight on engineering

Explore the paths into engineering and the grades required.

Would-be engineers who intend to complete their A levels, BTEC or Scottish Highers can either study for an engineering degree before starting work or join a higher or degree apprenticeship programme with an engineering employer.

A level subjects

If your child wants to take a degree in engineering they need an A level (or equivalent) in maths. In many cases they will also need physics. Some chemical engineering degrees ask for maths and chemistry instead; some ask for all three. For some very prestigious universities it is helpful also to have further maths. See the extended version of this article at targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors/engineering for more details.

To get onto an engineering higher or degree apprenticeship your child will typically need maths and science A levels. Some employers specify which science subjects they want your child to have studied.

The university route

Your child could study a particular area of engineering, such as mechanical engineering or civil engineering, or keep their options open with a general engineering degree. They can also choose between a course that leads to a bachelors-level qualification (BEng) or one that leads to a masters-level qualification (MEng).

Many engineering employers run internships and placement years for students seeking work experience, as well as graduate schemes for those who have completed their degree. Some engineering degrees include a placement year as part of

the course. There are also many jobs for graduate engineers with companies that don't run formal graduate schemes. These are often with smaller organisations.

Joining an employer at 18

A number of engineering employers run higher and degree apprenticeships, which are aimed at those who've just finished their A levels (or equivalent). Some offer the chance to gain a bachelors degree; others offer a foundation degree, a higher national diploma or higher national certificate.

All programmes involve combining a job with part-time study, and the employer will typically pay all of the tuition fees. If your child does well their employer is very likely to offer them a permanent job once they finish the programme. It may also support them to continue their studies to a higher level.

Several engineering employers also offer sponsored degrees. Find out more about sponsored degrees on page 8. ©

More help from TARGETcareers

- Pick up a copy of TARGETcareers *Construction, Engineering & Property*.
- Visit targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors/engineering for more on engineering careers, including:
 - an overview of types of jobs and employers in engineering
 - advice on choosing an engineering degree or higher apprenticeship
 - engineering salaries.

Spotlight on IT

Discover ways your child could kick-start their career in technology.

There are IT jobs available at many different levels and offered by employers in every sector. If your child is doing well academically it makes sense for them to start a little way up the ladder, either by going to university and getting a graduate-level job, or by starting work after their A levels (or equivalent) with an employer who will train them.

Uni first, job later

It's possible to get into an IT career as a graduate with any subject. However, broadly speaking, the less technical your child's degree the fewer roles will be open to them. Bear in mind:

- Some technology employers require an IT-related degree. This is particularly the case with smaller employers.
- Some technology employers accept subjects such as engineering, science or maths for IT jobs but won't accept arts or humanities.
- Some technology employers accept graduates with any degree and train them up. To beat the competition for these jobs, a strong academic record and evidence of an interest in technology will help.

There is a wide range of IT degrees available. Your child could choose a broad, technically focused subject such as computer science or something a bit more specialist such as computer games design. See targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors for our advice on degree choices for IT careers.

Maths at A level or equivalent is typically needed to get onto a degree in computer science or similar at a leading university, often at A or A-star grade. Less prestigious universities don't always ask for A level maths (or equivalent).

Starting work at 18

Degree apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships will allow your child to start work in IT after their A levels (or equivalent) and study towards higher level qualifications at the same time. See page 8 for more detail on how such programmes work. Lower levels of apprenticeship are also available.

To get onto a programme that includes a degree or foundation degree your child will typically need three A levels (or equivalent). UCAS points requirements tend to vary between 98 (CCC) and 120 (BBB)*. Often their A levels need to include at least one or two science, maths or technology subjects.

There are also numerous higher apprenticeships in IT that don't include university study. Entry requirements for these vary widely, so it's important to carry out research for each opportunity. ©

* This is based on the UCAS points system introduced in September 2017.

More help from TARGETcareers

Visit targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors/it-and-technology to find out more about careers in IT, including:

- an overview of the types of jobs and employers in IT
- typical salaries
- advice on choosing an IT degree.

earlycareersatfidelity.com/apprentices



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