THE TWIN-TRACK
APPRENTICESHIP
TOOLKIT

APPRENTICESHIPS

UNIVERSITY

SUPPORT IN APPLYING FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAMME ALONGSIDE A DEGREE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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What is the Twin-Track Apprenticeship Toolkit?

The Twin-Track Apprenticeship Toolkit has been designed to support post-16 students to apply simultaneously for both an apprenticeship and a degree. It provides the information schools and settings need to help students to research, apply for and secure apprenticeships. Covering a broad range of topics, from awareness raising about apprenticeships to developing an apprenticeship strategy to support teachers and students, this toolkit:

- considers the latest policy developments

- provides tailored advice and guidance

- includes examples of effective practice from post-16 leaders who have successfully supported students in securing apprenticeships

The toolkit has been developed by the Post-16 leaders at HFL Education, a leading national provider of school improvement and business support services, training and resources – helping schools, settings, and trusts to deliver a great education for their children.

Updates, news and guidance about post-16 support for your school / trust from the HFL Education Post-16 team.
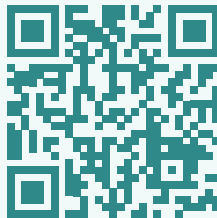
The toolkit includes best practice from several secondary schools, and from young people who have been encouraged through this process with the support of their teachers and careers leads. It has been designed to promote the apprenticeship route as a viable career option for students.

This toolkit aims to:

- **raise awareness of an apprenticeship as an equally aspirational and viable route to a degree**

- **improve school culture and increase the promotion of apprenticeships**

- **improve teacher knowledge and confidence to enable and inspire students to apply for apprenticeships via the twin-track approach**

- **support post-18 progression and retention rates**

Teachers would like more students to consider apprenticeships and to make applications to programmes, but teachers often communicate that they lack confidence in advising and supporting students. In contrast, the sequence of events leading to a successful degree application via the UCAS portal is deeply embedded in the sixth form calendar and well understood by the majority of teachers.

Our twin-track approach advocates the need for a more integrated and effective timeline of activity, for sixth form students to build their confidence in researching and applying for an apprenticeship alongside a suitable university option.

This toolkit has been created to signpost school leaders to resources that will help them plan and implement an apprenticeship support programme, in line with the UCAS time frame. It contains advice, tools and resources that will help school leaders promote the apprenticeship pathway alongside the degree route, and to encourage more students to apply for both simultaneously. It will be particularly useful to professionals such as heads of sixth form, career leaders, subject teachers, and heads of Year 12 and Year 13.

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CHAPTER ONE:

UNDERSTANDING APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships have become a key government policy in the UK. They are seen as a tool to increase national productivity and social mobility, and to improve individuals' wage and employment prospects. They have been designed to level up opportunities all over the country and make it easier for people to train to gain the skills they need to secure well-paid jobs in industries with skills gaps. These industries include health and social care, engineering, digital, clean energy, and manufacturing. They present an opportunity to improve the diversity and inclusion of the workforce by targeting underrepresented groups of people.
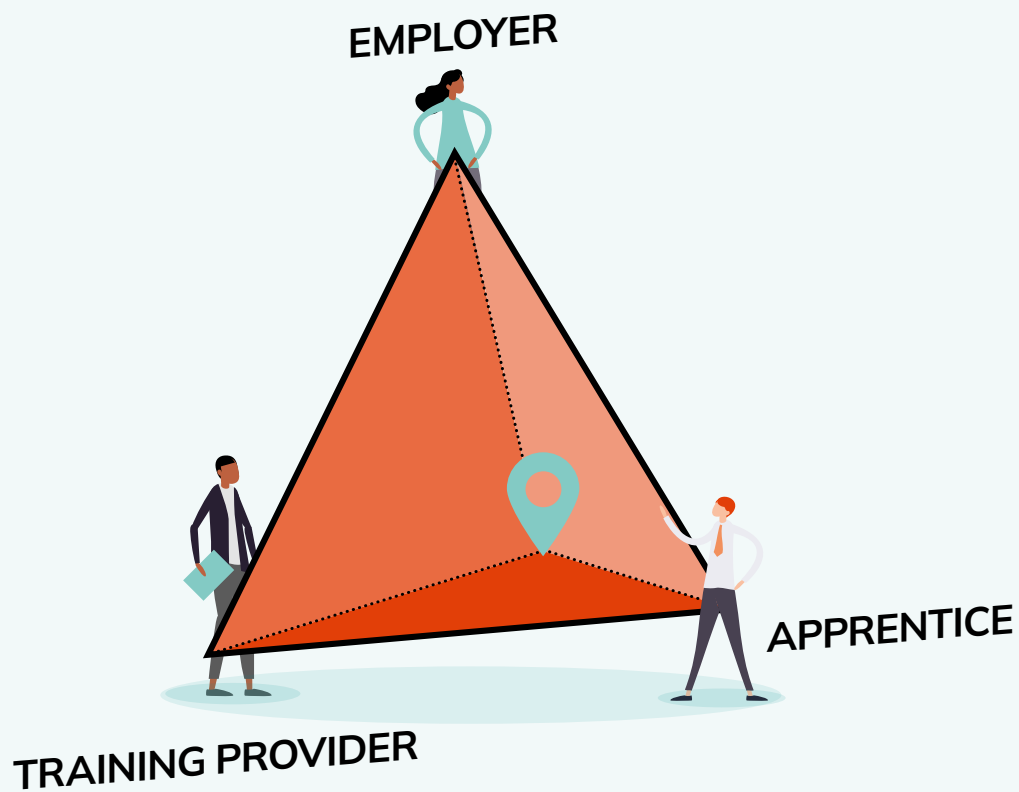
WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

An apprenticeship is a job-based training programme that allows students to gain the skills and experience needed to achieve success in a specific occupation or industry. An apprenticeship consists of a partnership between:

- **an apprentice**

- **an employer**

- **an approved training provider**

All three elements are equally important and necessary for a successful relationship and partnership to work.

An apprenticeship typically involves a combination of on-the-job training and off-the-job learning, and leads to recognised qualifications and opportunities for young people to progress within an organisation. Apprentices are paid by their employer and are entitled to the same benefits as other staff, e.g., holidays and sick pay.

EMPLOYER

APPRENTICE

TRAINING PROVIDER

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WHAT DO THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVELS MEAN?

There are different entry levels for apprenticeships. The right level for a student may depend on their age, their experience and the qualifications already achieved; or even on the occupation, industry or specific requirements of the employer.

An apprenticeship programme can be made up of a mix of levels, allowing the opportunity for the apprentice to progress to a higher level of apprenticeship as they gain more skills and experience.

Apprenticeships last between one and seven years, depending on the final qualification. They provide a genuine opportunity for students to earn as they learn and to enter the world of employment straight after their GCSEs or after sixth form.

LEVEL	APPROXIMATE DURATION	
INTERMEDIATE	12–18 MONTHS	Intermediate level apprenticeships lead to a Level 2 vocational qualification. They provide a basic introduction to a particular occupation or industry and are designed for young people who have achieved fewer GCSE qualifications.
ADVANCED	12–24 MONTHS	Advanced level apprenticeships lead to a Level 3 vocational qualification. They provide more advanced training in a particular occupation or industry and are suitable for young people with five GCSE passes or equivalent.
HIGHER*	3–5 YEARS	Higher apprenticeships lead to a Level 4 or 5 vocational qualification. They are designed to provide higher-level training in a particular occupation or industry and suitable for young people who have achieved a minimum of two A levels or equivalent.
DEGREE*	3–7 YEARS**	Degree apprenticeships lead to a full bachelor's or master's degree. They are ideal for young people who want to work towards a degree while also gaining practical, on-the-job experience. They are suitable for young people who have achieved a minimum of two A levels or equivalent.

*Higher and degree apprenticeships provide qualifications equivalent to those gained through full-time university study.

**Degree apprenticeships usually take between three and seven years to complete, depending on the course and the delivery model. They are a recent addition to the system and are seen to offer both a partial solution to skills shortages and an opportunity for organisations to diversify the intake of apprentices and graduates. They are pitched as a highly credible alternative to going to university, and they have undoubtedly been a key factor in improving the image and public perception of the programme in recent years. This route is a very compelling option for students to gain a degree without the debt – the programme is free to students, as the funding for the training comes from the apprenticeship levy.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) has responsibility for the quality of apprenticeship standards. Apprenticeships are created and released through IfATE, and you can keep up to date with the range of apprenticeships available and find out more on the IfATE

website: www.instituteforapprenticeships.org.

Schools have had a legal duty since January 2018, under the Provider Access Legislation (PAL), to inform all students in Years 8–13 about apprenticeships and other approved technical qualifications. The PAL was strengthened in 2023, so it is now mandatory for schools to provide two encounters for students in Years 12 and 13 (although these are optional for students to attend).

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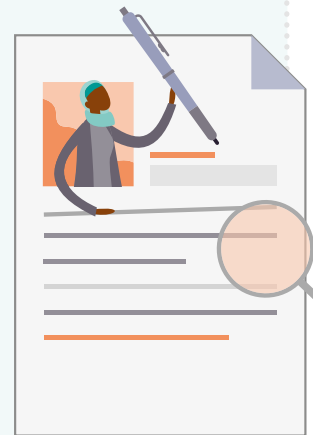
APPRENTICESHIPS RESOURCES

AMAZING APPRENTICESHIPS

Amazing Apprenticeships work with schools, colleges, and employers to promote the benefits of apprenticeships and technical education. They have developed a comprehensive range of resources, which are regularly updated, including posters, videos, and guidance sheets. These promote the benefits of apprenticeships and help young people and their parents learn more about the opportunities available.

RAPID READ

Amazing Apprenticeship rapid read resources are available as free downloads and are a great way to expand knowledge on a range of topics, including:

- **What is an apprenticeship?**

- **Apprenticeship levels explained**

- **Hints and tips for parents and carers**

SPRINGPOD RESOURCES

The Springpod platform provides students the opportunity to gain experience, develop skills and research careers. The **"Apprenticeships explained"** series includes short videos that provide summaries of key topics such as **"Degree Apprenticeships Vs University"** and **"How to convince my parents"**.

RESOURCES FOR UNIFROG SCHOOLS

Unifrog offer a complete and comprehensive careers package full of advice and information at every stage of the careers journey, for students in Years 7–13. The platform provides resources for students and lesson activities for teachers and leaders. A full outline of how Unifrog resources can be used to support students applying for apprenticeships is included in Appendix A.

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CHAPTER TWO:
THE TWIN-TRACK TOOLKIT OUTLINE

Thinking about what to do after school is almost always a difficult decision for young people. There can be a lot of pressure to make the right choice, especially considering the long-lasting impact of any decision. Going to university to study for a degree is still the most popular education option for school leavers, but an increasing number of students are considering other options such as an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships now offer a viable route to many careers that were once only accessible through university degrees. Opportunities for an apprenticeship are available in a wide range of industries such as media, law and finance; and apprenticeships provide entry to all types of careers, including medicine and the health care sector. With more young people realising the value of the apprenticeship route, building confidence and expertise in helping young people apply for opportunities is key.

Aligning the windows of support for both university degrees and apprenticeships allows students the opportunity to consider both pathways equally and to apply for an apprenticeship as well as meeting key UCAS deadlines. This toolkit spans the full two years of study in a post-16 setting, with a tailored programme of activity for Year 12 and Year 13 students. The twin-track planning tool provides a term-by-term summary of activity to be completed in Year 12 and Year 13, highlighting the areas that students need to consider at each stage.

Some of the activities within the planning tool may be embedded and sequenced within the PHSE curriculum. All sixth form students should receive a full programme of input in Year 12, which showcases all the opportunities on offer such as enterprise and employability activities. The wider programme may form part of the post-16 curriculum, with opportunities for students to learn about different careers and the relevance of their subjects and learning in the classroom.

Year 12
Autumn term:
CAREER PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING

APPRENTICESHIPS
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Year 12
Spring term:
EXPLORING PATHWAYS

APPRENTICESHIPS
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Year 12
Summer term:
BOOSTING SKILLS

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Year 13
Autumn term:
MAKING APPLICATIONS

APPRENTICESHIPS
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Year 13
Spring and Summer terms:
PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENTS

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THE TWIN-TRACK TIMELINE

YEAR 12 AUTUMN TERM: CAREER PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING

- Provide students with career advice at enrolment
- Share termly careers programme, giving details of drop-in sessions, employer talks, external events, etc.
- Enable students to sign up to school careers portal and introduce personal career action plans
- Provide careers assemblies, covering post-18 destinations, goal setting and raising aspirations
- Encourage students to research local labour market information (LMI) and emerging industries
- Record student competencies, skills and strengths
- Start to explore post-18 destinations
- Provide a post-18 progression event for students and parents, with equal time dedicated to the launch of UCAS and the apprenticeships process
- Complete career questionnaires

YEAR 12 SPRING TERM: EXPLORING PATHWAYS

- Share termly careers programme, giving details of drop-in sessions, employer talks, external events, etc.
- Work through personal career action plans with students
- Discuss chosen subject areas at this stage and enhance research further into post-18 pathways and sectors
- Develop students' awareness of apprenticeships through the use of webinars, guest speakers (including employers and school alumni who have gone into apprenticeships) and webinars
- Begin to explore university courses and potential universities
- Identify early-entry* and degree apprenticeship applicants and hold an information briefing for students and their families
- Plan National Careers Week and National Apprenticeship Week programme for students and families
- Research work experience for the summer and prioritise work experience for students who are interested in following the apprenticeship or employment route
- Register students on UCAS
- Offer mentoring support

YEAR 12 SUMMER TERM: BOOSTING SKILLS

- Share termly careers programme, giving details of drop-in sessions, employer talks, external events, etc
- Work through personal career action plans
- Student research on universities and courses, with preparation for the personal statement
- Student research on apprenticeship job roles, creating a list of companies to apply to (look at organisation mission statements, core values, etc)
- Additional reading and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- Students complete draft personal statements for UCAS
- Students are supported to write CVs for apprenticeships
- Provide personal branding session, including how to develop a social media presence
- Develop students' confidence and communication
- University open-day visits, including for degree apprenticeships
- Students complete initial sections of the UCAS application (except course choices)
- Individual guidance sessions to confirm career choices, subject choices, university courses and apprenticeship interests
- Drop-in workshops planned for students and parents to support applications for UCAS (lunchtime and twilight sessions)

THE TWIN-TRACK TIMELINE

YEAR 13 AUTUMN TERM: MAKING APPLICATIONS

- Students firm up course choices

- Students complete remaining sections of UCAS application and submit

- Students enter and prepare for entrance exams for early-entry* UCAS courses

- Workshops covering apprenticeship application processes

- Finance sessions for parents and students, covering apprenticeships as well as university

- Apprenticeship promotion activities, delivered by training providers

- For students who are applying for degree apprenticeships: preparation for interview (including telephone and video interviews)

- For students who are applying for degree apprenticeships: preparation for assessment centre activities

YEAR 13 SPRING AND SUMMER TERMS: PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENTS

- Workshops covering apprenticeship application processes

- Apprenticeship promotion activities, delivered by training providers

- For students who are applying for apprenticeships: preparation for interview (including telephone and video interviews)

- For students who are applying for apprenticeships: preparation for assessment centre activities

- Students supported in accepting and finalising university offers

*Early-entry courses include applications to Cambridge and Oxford (Oxbridge), in addition to medical, veterinary and dental courses, as well as many applications to conservatories.

To support more students in applying for both university degrees and apprenticeships, schools may find it helpful to group students into three broad categories:

1) students applying for competitive programmes, including degree apprenticeships

2) students applying for both an undergraduate degree and an apprenticeship

3) students aiming to secure a place on an apprenticeship programme

STUDENTS APPLYING FOR COMPETITIVE PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Degree apprenticeships are popular with students and parents, and are extremely competitive (with some attracting 10 times the number of applicants as for Oxbridge). A set of good grades forms only a part of a successful application. Recruiting students for degree apprenticeship programmes can be likened to the graduate recruitment process, where there are often several stages of the assessment process such as online assessments, psychometric testing, and attending an assessment day. This is especially the case for students applying to the larger and more prestigious degree apprenticeship programmes.

Extra preparation for early-entry students and those applying for competitive degree apprenticeship programmes should start at the beginning of Year 12. It is advised that these students have a specific programme of support in place to help them progress onto their post-18 destination. The programme of support for these candidates should include input from sixth form staff and other staff members from the school such as subject specialists, heads of careers, careers coordinators, academic tutors, and senior leadership team members.

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Advancing Access

Advancing Access provides resources that support students in applying for degree apprenticeships, including:

- **"Helping students to apply for degree apprenticeships"**

- **"Studying degree apprenticeships – how to support students' decisions and applications"**

Students benefit from the support from staff trained in reference writing and can be guided by teachers' advice on specialist knowledge, based on the subjects they teach. Teachers can support with mock interviews, mentoring students, and delivering sessions that work to their strengths and in line with their expertise and experience. Some activities may require support from external specialists, which may include preparing students for interviews. Schools can also benefit from working in collaboration with other sixth form centres to deliver specialised support services to students, or to forge strong relationships with careers professionals and other organisations that can offer support for these candidates.

STUDENTS APPLYING FOR BOTH AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE AND AN APPRENTICESHIP

Students applying for both a degree and a higher-level apprenticeship will require support in maintaining motivation beyond the deadline for their UCAS application, as most apprenticeships are advertised and recruited for in the spring and summer terms. Having a member of staff who knows where their interests lie and can guide them towards relevant employers and opportunities is of real value. Students who are applying for degrees and apprenticeships can adapt their personal statement and use it to support an apprenticeship application, as per this **UCAS guidance**. Those students will also need to be prepared for interviews and assessment processes that a university is unlikely to require.

STUDENTS AIMING TO ONLY SECURE A PLACE ON AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

Students who choose the apprenticeship route require a specific programme and can be supported on this route throughout their time in the sixth form. Many firms will recruit throughout the academic year of a student's Year 13. Smaller firms that follow a less structured recruitment process may recruit later than the larger, higher-status programmes.

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CHAPTER THREE:

HOW TO GET THE BEST FROM THE TWIN-TRACK APPRENTICESHIP TOOLKIT

Careers education for post-16 students should focus on preparing them to secure the right pathway after sixth form and encourage them to fully research all their options. Determining long-term career goals, carrying out individual research, and keeping abreast of changes in courses and entry requirements are important skills that students need to develop after joining the sixth form.

YEAR 12 AUTUMN TERM:
CAREER PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING

There are several career planning tools that provide resources to support sixth form students in critically examining their career goals and aspirations, and becoming aware of the post-18 pathways available to achieve their preferred future.

UCAS CAREER PLANNER

The UCAS Career Planner is an excellent tool, full of practical ideas and inspiring activities for teachers to work through with students, highlighting the key issues and questions they need to consider during Year 12 and Year 13.

Download and print the free planner

The front side of the planner is designed for students. The reverse side provides guidance for teachers on the activities that can be used to develop students' understanding of the post-16 careers process. There are several follow-on activities for teachers to explore with students and resources for them to use, including PowerPoint documents that can be adapted for different year groups.

AMAZING APPRENTICESHIPS CAREER PLANNER

The **Amazing Apprenticeships career planner** includes key resources for you to share with students, parents and carers, along with ideas to help you support your careers provision.

UNIFROG

Unifrog is a hub for students and teachers to track and monitor students' career journeys. All post-16 learners have access to the student dashboard and can access a full careers library, online webinars, and open learning courses to enhance their careers research. The platform allows students to explore their personal skills, qualities and interests, and to research opportunities, and it guides them through the careers process in Year 12 and Year 13. Students can also take the personality profile and interests profile quizzes.

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THE NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE

The **National Careers Service** offers free, up-to-date, impartial information, advice and guidance on careers, education, apprenticeships and skills.

The **Get the Jump hub** provides everything students need to know about the choices available to them. Young people can speak with an expert careers adviser at no cost to help them find their next step in education and training.

The **National Careers Service skills assessment** can help students find out what interests and motivates them, and what they can do with the skills identified in their profile. Students can then explore careers based on their assessment results.

The **skills health** check is a more in-depth collection of assessments, generating a report that can help students identify their personal and work-based skills. This information could be helpful when students are applying for an apprenticeship or preparing for an interview.

For students interested in apprenticeships and technical study, the National Careers Service guidance on **volunteering** could strengthen their job and study opportunities.

LOCAL AUTHORITY CAREERS SERVICE

Your local authority might provide information, advice, guidance, work-related learning and wider support for students in your area.

MORRISBY

The Morrisby **Profile Online Psychometric Test** provides an objective statement of a person's underlying ability, personality and career preference, and the results can support career planning. Verified by the British Psychological Society, it is an interactive online assessment that tests a learner's verbal, numerical, abstract, spatial and mechanical aptitudes, and describes their interests and personality. The information is blended to generate suggestions around careers and future job areas.

The Morrisby assessment can help Year 12 students with their career action planning by supporting them in investigating the best routes for them to achieve their goals. The results can also encourage them to explore courses they may never have considered.

MOTIVATED BY MONEY?

Future Fit has identified the **top 43 jobs** in multiple industries with significantly higher salaries, where careers range from finance and technology to engineering. The information details the average salary, alongside the starting and highest salary for each job.

Students can use the Career Pilot Careerometer tool to compare up to three jobs, and to assess different factors such as salary and working hours.

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION (LMI)

It is important to help understand the qualifications, skills and employment opportunities that will have value in the labour market of the future. Accurate and up-to-date information about labour market changes and predictions can help students explore the career sectors and industries that are of interest to them. Your local authority or borough should be able to provide the labour market information for your local area.

For the national picture of economic activity in the UK, the **Office for National Statistics** illustrates the key employment, unemployment, and other economic-related statistics for the UK.

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YEAR 12 SPRING TERM: EXPLORING PATHWAYS

Most students and their families will be aware of university as a post-18 progression route, but many will be unfamiliar with the range of opportunities available if they progress onto an apprenticeship. There are many sources of information that schools can use to help students explore the full range of opportunities available to them.
The **"Sixth Form Apprenticeship Guide"** 👆 is a comprehensive interactive guide for students, which they can download and use to track their progress.

PROMOTING APPRENTICESHIPS VIA THE ASK PROGRAMME

The government-funded **Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK)** 👆 programme for schools and colleges is designed to give schools and settings free support to develop and transform how students think about apprenticeships. Mapped against the Gatsby Benchmarks, the programme has a wide range of resources accessible to teachers for use with students and colleagues, to help them find out more about apprenticeship opportunities. Schools can discuss their needs with their local delivery partner and book activities that will best meet the needs of students, teachers, parents and carers.

The support is varied and is delivered by local experts. It can be personalised to meet the requirements of your school or setting and could include an "Inspiring apprenticeship awareness" assembly, apprenticeship application workshop, careers fair attendance, a teacher CPD session or a whole range of other options. To request support, submit an online form:
Request support (apprenticeships.gov.uk) 👆

CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE COMPANY (CEC) PROVIDER DIRECTORY

The **CEC Provider Directory** 👆 allows careers leaders and teachers to search for providers that can help them deliver careers support such as enrichment support, employability and skills training, and work experience and other activities, to help schools achieve their Gatsby Benchmarks.

APPRENTICESHIPS.GOV.UK WEBSITE 👆

The government's apprenticeships website provides a wide range of resources designed to help students discover more about their career options and the pathways available.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Amazing Apprenticeships **Apprenticeships: Hints & Tips for Parents & Carers** 👆

Amazing Apprenticeships **"The Parent Perspective" Podcast** 👆

Apprenticeships.gov.uk 👆

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NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

National Apprenticeship Week 👆 is a celebration of the positive impact apprenticeships make to communities, businesses and the wider economy. It takes place in February each year, and **Amazing Apprenticeships** 👆 publish resources to help schools promote apprenticeships during the week.

Once learners have explored sectors and career roles that appeal to them, they can create a shortlist of programmes they would like to explore in more detail. At this stage, students will want to investigate the qualifications and skills required for each job role. Students need to use the time in Year 12 to consider the apprenticeship programme available and to research opportunities, ahead of making applications in Year 13.

ORGANISATION	
Apprenticeships.gov.uk **Instagram – @gov.apprenticeships and @FireItUpApps** **Facebook – FireItUpApps** **LinkedIn – Apprenticeships** **X – @Apprenticeships / @FireItUp_Apps**	The Apprenticeships.gov website allows you to access resources created to help young people make informed career decisions. There are a variety of resources available to explore. Use the **Top 100 Employers** 👆 database on the Apprenticeships website to identify the employers that have done the most to provide apprenticeship opportunities. **Find an apprenticeship** 👆 – The government's "Find an apprenticeship" service is the main way to search for a degree apprenticeship. This lists all available apprenticeships at all levels.
Unifrog **Instagram – @uni.frog** **Facebook – Unifrog** **LinkedIn – Unifrog** **X – @Unifrog**	Students registered with a Unifrog account have access to the full careers library. The apprenticeship search tool updates every 24 hours, with apprenticeship vacancies taken from a variety of websites. This tool can be used to make shortlists of vacancies of interest and compare vacancies by factors such as salaries, deadlines and start dates. Shortlists are saved, so teachers can track which students have made apprenticeship shortlists and what they've been selecting. Unifrog will show opportunities to students (more apprenticeships, activities to complete, etc) based on what they have been shortlisting.
UCAS.com	UCAS publish a list of jobs (including internship opportunities). **Browse jobs	UCAS** 👆 UCAS publish a list of degree apprenticeship jobs. **https://careerfinder.ucas.com/jobs/degree/#browsing** 👆 UCAS Apprenticeships **https://www.ucas.com/apprenticeships-in-the-uk** 👆 UCAS ultimate guide to finding an apprenticeship **Ultimate Guides – Finding an apprenticeship (ucas.com)** 👆
RateMyApprenticeship	The RateMyApprenticeship website publishes a list of the top 100 employers of apprenticeships, rated by school and college leavers.

ORGANISATION	
Amazingapprenticeships.com **Instagram – @AmazingAppsUK** **Facebook – Amazing Apprenticeships** **LinkedIn – Amazing Apprenticeships** **X – @AmazingAppsUK**	The site includes apprenticeship opportunities with major employers **https://amazingapprenticeships.com/vacancies/** To receive all the latest information and free resources for parents and students, subscribe to receive the Amazing Apprenticeships monthly newsletter: **Newsletter – Amazing Apprenticeships**
National Careers Service **Instagram – @national_careers_service** **Facebook – National Careers Service** **LinkedIn – National Careers Service** **X – @NationalCareers**	Provides information, advice and guidance to help students make decisions on learning, training and work. Features information on Skills assessment, Exploring careers, Find courses, among others
Uptree	Uptree is a free professional networking platform, supporting students to get work experience and find apprenticeships. It has lots of downloadable resources (e.g., CV, covering letter).
Springpod	Springpod allows young people to explore a career, course, or sector before they apply. The **Classroom to Boardroom** apprenticeship chat show explores the world of apprenticeships through real-life success stories of apprentices working at leading organisations such as Accenture, Pret A Manger and Jaguar Land Rover.
NotGoingToUni	With lots of helpful advice and ambassadors from different sectors, this platform educates students on the alternatives to university. **NGTU	Home (notgoingtouni.co.uk)**
Prospects	**Prospects** provides a searchable listing of degree apprenticeships.
Local businesses	Employers advertise apprenticeship opportunities on well-known jobs websites and through their own websites, and are often present at large jobs fairs. Check for vacancies directly on specific employer recruitment sites.
Social media	Many businesses consider social media as a great way to share information and opportunities with young people, and a growing number of organisations use their platforms to share updates about apprenticeships. Following the employer or their careers page can keep students updated on new or vacancy information.
Specialist websites / sector-specific sites	Students considering apprenticeships in a specific field are advised to search specialist websites that provide apprenticeship listings.
Career and job fairs	Job fairs and apprenticeship events, and workshops in your desired field. They are also a great opportunity to network and make connections.
Networking	Students can reach out to their network of family and friends, who might know of openings for work experience or apprenticeships or make introductions to relevant contacts.

HIGHER AND DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Demand for degree apprenticeships is on the increase, as more employers, FE colleges and universities, and students and parents realise their advantages. As there are insufficient places available to meet student demand, they continue to attract highly motivated candidates with good, if not exceptional, A level results. Entry requirements for degree apprenticeships vary significantly between programmes and industries, but overall, the programmes offered by the more prestigious companies will secure candidates that demonstrate a strong academic record and aptitude. The competitive application and selection process, together with a limited number of positions available, means degree apprenticeships are appropriate for select students. Students are advised to research job roles thoroughly to ascertain what they entail and to check the roles align with their long-term career aspirations.

Degree apprenticeships are appealing to students, as the course tuition fees are paid by their employer, they earn a salary, and they will usually get a degree without any student debt. The recruitment process for most degree apprenticeship programmes is just as competitive as those for Oxbridge and other top universities. They are not suitable for all students because of the demands of combining a job with the educational element of the apprenticeship, which may well include a professional qualification relevant to the industry. As well as balancing their work commitments, an apprentice will be expected to contribute to the same standards as everyone else in the workplace and will also need to keep on top of their studies.

You can discover more about higher and degree apprenticeships on the **UCAS** website.

Advancing Access is a free-of-charge support service for teachers and advisers, designed to encourage more students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds to progress to the UK's most competitive universities for degrees and **degree apprenticeships**.

A starting point to explore higher and degree apprenticeship vacancies is **Amazing Apprenticeships' biannual listing**, published in February and November. With over 350 vacancies and key details such as the location, application opening and closing dates, and apprenticeship start dates, this a key resource for applicants. The publication is ideal for students looking for a Level 4–7 apprenticeship.

Unlike the fixed deadlines that exist when applying for undergraduate degrees on UCAS, there is no nationally set timescale for apprenticeships, and students will need to be aware of individual organisations' recruitment cycles. Each company offering an apprenticeship will have a different application process and timescales, and students will need to be prepared for the process to avoid missing out. With vacancies appearing during the autumn term of Year 13, and with some posted as early as September, with a start date for the following year, being organised is key. Larger companies will have a set timetable that they follow to recruit apprentices, and this will be more common for students applying for a degree apprenticeship. Where smaller firms might follow a less structured process, recruiting later in the year, students will require a detailed understanding of the assessment process and the skills needed for each programme.

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WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience provides young people with valuable insights into the sector of their choice. Whether they get the chance to experience an employer for a few hours, a day or a week, they will have the opportunity to learn about what different jobs entail and to explore what they might like to do as a career in the future. Spending time in the workplace also allows students the opportunity to build up their CV and develop new skills, which they can reference at an interview.

Many students, particularly those from racially minoritised or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, find securing high-quality work-experience opportunities a challenge, as they may not have established networks through families and friends. In recent years, access to virtual work experience has grown, which can provide a more accessible way to increase students' understanding of roles in different sectors.

- **Speakers for Schools** is a charity whose aim is to level the playing field for young people across the UK when it comes to accessing high-quality work experience. They offer regular virtual opportunities, alongside regionally based work placements.

- **Springpod** partners with employers to create interactive learning programmes for students.

- **Forage** covers a large number of industry sectors and offers virtual work experience opportunities set by employers.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a great way for young people to develop and enhance skills and gain experience and insights in the workplace. It can help students grow their confidence in the workplace and is a good addition to a student's CV. It is also a great option for students wanting to give back to a community they support, from working with children or animals to helping at a local hospital or lending a hand at a national or international charity. Students can sign up to receive emails providing regular updates from the **National Council for Voluntary Organisations** (NCVO), which can help students find their local volunteering centre. Other websites worth exploring for guidance and volunteering opportunities are the **NHS Volunteers**, **Volunteering Matters**, and **Reach Volunteering**.

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YEAR 12 SUMMER TERM: BOOSTING SKILLS

RESEARCHING APPRENTICESHIPS

Many teachers support apprenticeship applications for students not wanting to go to university after the UCAS deadline in Year 13, where this does not leave sufficient time to prepare students for the application and assessment processes involved with this pathway. The support for students to research apprenticeship areas of interest and opportunities should start in Year 12.

After registering on the website and creating an account, students are ready to search and apply for vacancies. They can set up text and email alerts for the types of apprenticeships they're interested in, and request notifications for when a new job is added on the site or vacancies are available that match their chosen criteria. Many sites also allow students to manage multiple applications and keep track of their applications. Some job search engines allow students to upload their CV so that employers can view their details and contact them directly.

Students need to develop their skills in researching apprenticeships, taking proactive steps to identify suitable apprenticeship vacancies. As part of this process, they will need to check the criteria for each apprenticeship programme and note down information about the specific employer and apprenticeship programme requirements.

Students will need to be guided in how to apply for apprenticeships, and parents and teachers can help them make a start by directing them to research the following criteria when searching for vacancies:
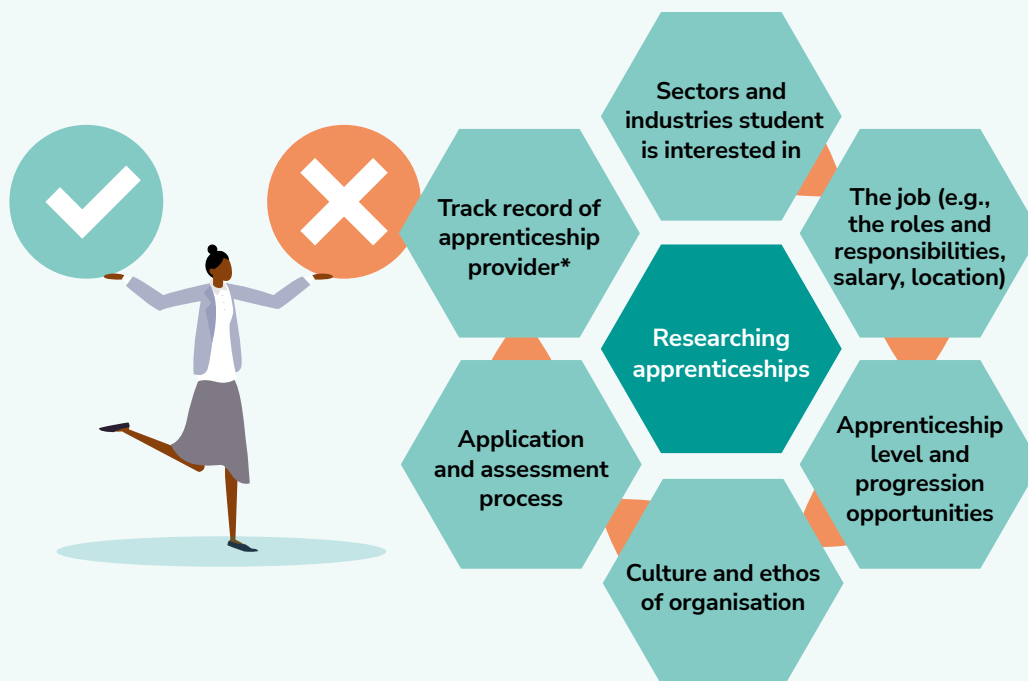
*Paying particular attention to their completion rates (what proportion of their learners finish their apprenticeship) and their Ofsted reports (which provide an external quality assessment of their provision)

Schools can encourage parental engagement by providing regular communication and opportunities for them to support their children through the process. **The Parent Perspective Podcast** from Amazing Apprenticeships is an excellent resource to promote to parents and carers, and supports them to feel informed and confident in providing careers support and guidance for their child.

INCLUSIVITY

Amazing Apprenticeships provides guidance on finding inclusive employers.

They have also produced a **Care Leavers Guide.** **The Care Leaver Covenant** also provides support for care leavers, including listing career opportunities for them. Information on the care leavers' apprenticeship bursary can be found here: **Apprenticeships bursary for care leavers.**

TOP TIPS FOR STUDENTS

✓ Note down the employers/job roles you are interested in exploring further, and where and when they advertise vacancies.

✓ Use broad job titles or roles to increase the options that appear in the search.

✓ Search for roles at different levels, and do not limit your search to just higher-level apprenticeships. There are some excellent opportunities for students at Level 2 and Level 3.

✓ Most apprenticeships have pathways to work your way up within the organisation, so check what opportunities there are for progression.

✓ What information do you want to know about the apprenticeship or employer, and how will you find this out? Is there a chat feature on the website? Do they offer webinars? Are there any resources from the employer explaining the programme?

✓ Follow employers on social media to receive their latest news and additional information about what they do and when they recruit.

✓ Does the employer offer any tips about how candidates can be successful when applying?

✓ What is the assessment process? What is the plan to prepare for success?

✓ Look out for insight days and work experience opportunities with employers in the sector.

DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING

A MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) is a free, online course designed to offer a taste of higher education to learners. Students can use MOOCs to supplement their careers research and use the **MOOC.org** platform to gain a deeper understanding of the subjects they are passionate about. MOOCs provide a flexible and accessible way for students to broaden their education, gain new skills, and prepare for future academic and career opportunities.

WRITING A CV

An apprenticeship application will invariably require the submission of a CV. **Amazing Apprenticeships** provides guidance on how to write an effective CV, and there are also Unifrog guides to support students. Springpod also offer a masterclass in **How to become employable.**

Organisations such as **Inspiring the Future** and **Founders4Schools** connect local workplace volunteers with schools and can offer workshops on CV writing.

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DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

Students should be encouraged to create a **LinkedIn profile** to help them develop a network, and to connect with employers with whom they are interested in working.
The Springpod **Masterclass on Personal Branding** contains practical tips on how to create a "personal brand".

MANAGING OPEN-DAY VISITS

Students who are considering degree apprenticeships might start visiting university open days during the summer term of Year 12. The **Apprenticeship.gov** website has a useful guide to help students understand what to look for on these days.

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YEAR 13 AUTUMN TERM: MAKING APPLICATIONS

Students may find it challenging to stay on top of apprenticeship applications alongside making their UCAS applications, and they may begin to feel disheartened if they do not hear back from organisations or if their application is unsuccessful. It is important for students to remain positive and develop the resilience to overcome these setbacks and continue to apply for opportunities until they achieve success.

It is essential that students know that there is a member of staff at school who supports them by keeping up to date with their application journey, and helping them set goals and stay motivated. Communication with parents is key too, to ensure that they can convey the same messages. Students are likely to receive one-to-one support from tutors and teachers for their UCAS applications, and it is important that this is replicated for apprenticeship applications.

Apprenticeships.gov's **A Guide to Apprenticeship Applications** is a useful resources to share with students and all those who are supporting them.

GUIDING STUDENTS APPLYING FOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES

Teachers shared their top tips on how teachers and careers tutors can support students in their apprenticeship applications:

1) Sign up to alerts on a wide variety of websites, sharing vacancy opportunities with students.

2) Survey students to ask how they want to receive apprenticeship vacancies. Advise students to set up a separate email address to manage apprenticeship information and to sign up for everything.

3) Encourage students to sign up to webinars, even if they can't attend them due to clashes with lessons, so that they can access recordings.

4) Communicate apprenticeship vacancies to students via a general platform such as Google Classroom if the employer offer is broad, and via a direct communication method (email, via Unifrog, etc) when the vacancy is targeted to individual students.

5) Ensure that other members of staff who teach or support the students are kept updated about their progress and plans.

6) Be aware of students applying for degree apprenticeships – the process of preparing students will need to be earlier than other apprenticeships, as many of the larger programmes open in October of Year 13.

7) To support communication with parents, send resources, newsletters and bulletins to parents as well as students, and add them to communication platforms, e.g., Google Classroom, to keep them updated.

8) Devise a spreadsheet or use the Unifrog locker function to track and monitor student progress. Agree targets with students to ensure completion of tasks. Use this to motivate students through challenging periods, e.g., when managing multiple application processes, or working through varied assessment schedules.

9) Provide dedicated apprenticeship application support sessions for students. Incentivise attendance at "lunchtime apprenticeship club" with pizza!

10) Examine job roles to identify the qualities and transferable skills the employer is looking for.

11) Educate students on key words to be used in applications, to circumvent algorithms.

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TOP TIPS FOR STUDENTS WHEN MAKING APPLICATIONS

✓ The apprenticeship search can be highly competitive, and you may face rejections on the way. Keep a positive attitude and stay persistent in your search.

✓ Be patient and use your time to keep applying for vacancies and improving your search and application skills.

✓ Develop a process to manage applications – this will help when applying for multiple vacancies. Use an app on your device that can help you organise application timescales – calendar and to-do list apps are great at keeping you on track and allowing you to set alerts in advance of key deadlines.

✓ Keep a record of passwords for each site.

✓ Follow employers on social media to receive their latest news and additional information about what they do and when they recruit.

✓ Register to receive information and guidance on the application process as well as updates on when roles open with employers or key organisations.

✓ Does the employer offer any tips about how candidates can be successful when applying? What is the assessment process? What is the plan to prepare for success?

✓ Follow application instructions carefully and answer all the questions set by the employer. Submit all documents requested for each application.

✓ Remember to tailor your application for each apprenticeship, ensuring your CV and cover letter highlight your relevant skills and enthusiasm for each role and the organisation.

✓ After applying, follow up with the organisation to inquire about the status of the application and to express your continued interest.

YEAR 13 SPRING AND SUMMER TERMS: PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

The recruitment process for an apprenticeship can be lengthy, involving various stages such as an application form, psychometric tests, an assessment day and an interview. The assessment process can take anything from a few hours to a few days to complete, depending on the employer and nature of the job vacancy.

The Springpod podcast series Clicking Apply takes a deep dive into the recruitment process after an applicant applies for an apprenticeship and provides helpful advice for students around what to expect. **Top Tips for a Virtual Assessment Centre**, also from Springpod, is also a useful resource.

PREPARING FOR AN ASSESSMENT CENTRE

- Psychometric tests are a key component of the apprenticeship application process, designed to measure natural aptitude and personality traits. The tests will be selected depending on the skills the employer wishes to assess and may include tests such as numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, diagrammatic reasoning, and situational judgement tests. Students will need to familiarise themselves with these tests, as they are unlikely to have come across them before, using websites such as **Practice Aptitude Tests.**

- Group exercises demonstrate how effectively candidates can communicate and work as part of a team, and the tasks can vary from a discussion on a topic area to a more hands-on puzzle-solving activity. Employers are able to see which candidates display natural leadership qualities and the different roles candidates take on as part of the assessment. By creating scenarios that reflect real situations, employers are also able to see how much the candidates understand the sector and observe how the candidates behave during the tasks.

- Case studies are another way for employers to assess how candidates perform in a work situation as well as their problem-solving abilities. Candidates may be presented with a company information pack, containing data and other facts and figures, and be tasked to analyse and review the findings and provide recommendations to a company problem.

- Written tasks cover a number of skill areas such as the level of communication skills, mastery of language, and grammar and spelling. Candidates may be asked to write a report, assess and analyse some information, and present a report to management or write a press release. These tasks are ideal for job roles that require a high level of written communication skills.

- Presentations are an ideal way for an employer to observe a candidate's thought process and level of confidence. A topic area will often be shared by the assessor in advance so there is sufficient time to prepare.

Many schools organise mock assessment days for students, where the specific activities selected will be informed by the nature of the role to be filled, and by the knowledge and skills expected of the successful candidate. This allows students to experience standard exercises that may be set by the employer, alongside competency-based activities. **The ASK programme** offers mock assessments.

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

An interview is an opportunity for students to show their passion and dedication, and why they're the ideal candidate. They can be daunting, but preparation is key. Most employers would advise students to be authentic and to maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude, and to see this part of the recruitment process just as much as a way of exploring whether the organisation is the right fit for them as it is for the employer to assess if they're the right candidate for role.

There will always be opportunities within an interview for students to discuss their academic and career goals, to highlight their relevant skills and experiences, and to showcase not only their achievements but also their journey and the obstacles they've overcome. Many employers use video interviews, which is a format that most students and teachers will be unfamiliar with.

Springpod's **Learn Lounge** webpage has a host of video guides, made in conjunction with well-known employers, that provide students with an insight into what an interview entails and how to prepare for it. Try these as a starting point:

- **How to ace a strength-based interview**

- **How to make a good impression: Application and Interview Tips**

- **How to Master Your Video Interview**

Apprenticeships.gov has produced a **Guide to Apprenticeship Interviews** to download.

Schools can utilise staff members, local employers and professionals, and parents to give up their time, to provide an excellent mock interview experience in line with current recruitment practices. Feedback should always be given to students on how to improve their technique.

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APPENDIX A

UNIFROG RESOURCES

In line with the twin-track process, the Unifrog platform can guide students through the complete post-16 careers programme and provide opportunities to investigate both the degree route and apprenticeships. Teachers can use the platform to track student engagement and to view evidence of student interactions remotely, and to plan and assign lessons and navigate through the resources and secure the right post-18 destination.

> Students complete the Unifrog personality quiz to learn about their personality type. The test should take approximately 10–15 minutes and allow students to learn about their skill set and the careers that might suit them in the future.

> Their personality type will guide them to the careers library or subjects library, allowing them to view the job guides and career profiles that are best suited to them.

> The "Jump to" section of the platform allows students to narrow their focus on a specific sector and work through the job guides in more detail.

> Students select job profiles to their "favourites" profile, and then change the selection whenever they wish to. They can create a personal shortlist, aiming to narrow the choices down to 3–5 job profiles.

> The Interests section of the Unifrog system allows students to consider careers suited to them, based on their interests. The careers selected, based on the result of the quizzes, will include jobs that match their interests.

> Students can use the information shortlisted to select university courses from around the world, showing details of entry requirements, key dates, and specific eligibility criteria. This section of Unifrog allows students to work through information covering scholarships, activities such as summer school and residentials, and details of contextual offers.

> The apprenticeship section of the website allows student to search a variety of different apprenticeships, selecting standards and frameworks that interest them. They can choose which ones they're happy with once filtering their locations and apprenticeship levels. The list of opportunities is refreshed every 24 hours.

> Apprenticeship programmes can also be shortlisted, and this allows students to compare both pathways within a sector. Employers look for competencies that indicate how suitable a candidate is for the role, and students will need to assess their suitability for the vacancies.

> The Unifrog tool allows students to create their CV, which can be edited at any time. Learners can record their personal abilities, experiences and employability skills via the Activities and Competencies section of the platform.

> Researching and planning careers ideas, and logging entries within the personal shortlist, will allow students to view a record of their post-18 destinations.

> The locker function within the Unifrog platform allows students to keep a record of all their documents and progress on the platform. It is also a place for teachers to upload key information such as the personal reference.

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YEAR 12 AUTUMN TERM: CAREER PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING

LESSONS IN THE UNIFROG RESOURCES LIBRARY TO SUPPORT CAREER PLANNING

Note: all lessons require the teacher delivering the lesson to have a Unifrog account.

TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	TIME	ONLINE OR OFFLINE
Post-18 – Choices, Choices Overview of all possible post-18 pathways	15 and 60 mins	Both
Is a UK apprenticeship right for me? Short video and quiz	15 mins	Offline
Using the Apprenticeships tool to find the best fit Using the Apprenticeships tool filters to browse vacancies	15 and 60 mins	Both
Applying to an apprenticeship Apprenticeship structures and application processes	15 and 60 mins	Both
Preparing for an apprenticeship or job interview Reviewing job descriptions and reflecting on relevant skills and experiences	15 and 60 mins	Both
Coping with change: entering the world of employment Strategies to prepare for an apprenticeship	15 and 60 mins	Both

YEAR 12 SPRING TERM: EXPLORING PATHWAYS

Unifrog written apprenticeship guides are available in a range of sector areas, including law, business administration and management, engineering, marketing, creative industries, and IT and software development

Unifrog apprenticeship webinars, including: Apprentice panel: hear directly from apprentices; How to find your perfect apprenticeship

YEAR 12 SUMMER TERM: BOOSTING YOUR SKILLS

Researching apprenticeships with Unifrog

The Unifrog apprenticeship search tool updates every 24 hours with apprenticeship vacancies taken from a variety of websites, including:

- National Apprenticeship Service

- UCAS apprenticeship search

- Directly from large employers (e.g., KPMG, EY)

This tool can be used to make shortlists of vacancies that are of interest; and compare vacancies by factors such as salaries, deadlines and start dates. Shortlists must be saved, so teachers can track which students have made apprenticeship shortlists and what they've been selecting. Unifrog will show opportunities to students (more apprenticeships, activities to complete, etc), based on what students have been shortlisting. Students can also use the platform to map their curricular, super-curricular and extra-curricular achievements against competency-based assessments and record their interactions and engagement via the Interactions tool. The interactions may include one-to-one career meetings, work experience, and visits to universities or careers education events both in and out of school.

The Unifrog "Quick Tasks" folder lists activities that take 10–15 minutes for students to complete, covering topics such as:

YEAR 12 AND YEAR 13 TASKS	RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS
Post-18 options	Tasks and search tools for apprenticeships, UK universities and Oxbridge
Wider reading on school and college subjects	The "Geek Out" section in the Subjects Library covers resources on chosen subjects such as podcasts, TED Talks, books, films and journals. There is also a "Read, Watch, Listen" tool.
Writing your personal statement	The personal statement tool allows students to brainstorm ideas, save previous versions, and get feedback from teachers on the tool.
Recording post-18 intentions	Students can use the platform to record which pathway they would choose to work towards for their dream career, be it university, a job, an apprenticeship or another route.

There are also resources on:

- how to ace job and apprenticeship interviews

- how to ace your CV

- how to write a winning cover letter

YEAR 13 AUTUMN AND SPRING TERM: PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Unifrog apprenticeships videos and guides, including "How I got in" – a selection of videos showcasing how students achieved success with employers such as Dyson, GSK, Met Office, Ford Motor Company, EY, Experian, Severn Trent, Schroders, and Unilever.

There is also a Unifrog lesson on preparing for an apprenticeship or job interview.

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APPENDIX B

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

APPENDIX B – USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

- **Advancing Access**
- **Amazing Apprenticeships**
- **Apprenticeships.gov**
- **Care Leaver Covenant**
- **Career Pilot**
- **Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)**
- **Forage**
- **Founders4Schools**
- **Future Fit**
- **Inspiring the Future**
- **Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)**
- **MOOC.org**
- **Morrisby**
- **National Careers Service**
- **Not Going to Uni (NGTU)**
- **Office for National Statistics**
- **Prospects**
- **RateMyApprenticeship**
- **Speakers for schools**
- **Springpod**
- **UCAS**
- **Unifrog**
- **Uptree**

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APPRENTICESHIPS

UNIVERSITY

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