



An easy guide to woodworking apprenticeships

For Employers in England



Apprentices are...

- "...people who work to our quality standards."
- "...our route to expanding the business."
- "...committed workers with the skills we need."
- "...familiar with our working methods and practices."
- "...the generation who'll take over as our tradesmen retire."

As BWF members know, apprentices

"...are *essential* to the future of our business."

This publication counts towards your CPD (cat.4):



The woodworking CPD programme

Background

The woodworking sector employs the highest ratio of apprentices in the construction sector. Apprenticeship reform opens up new opportunities for employing older apprentices and retraining individuals. This guide runs through the basics of hiring an apprentice for a BWF Member. The focus of the guide is trade skills, however, it is worth remembering that other core skills including administration and finance can be supported via apprenticeships.

What are the benefits of taking on an Apprentice?

- You can reduce costs by having highly trained staff
- Create a pool of talent and a skilled workforce
- Expand your business
- Nurture talent to improve your services
- Fill the skills gaps in your business
- Ensure they work to our working methods and practices
- Staff that work to our quality standards
- Give your business a creative boost
- Construct stronger business foundations
- Inspire the future generation

What age range can an Apprentice be?

Apprenticeships can be any age from 16 upwards. Anyone in England over the age of 16 can apply for an apprenticeship and benefit from the opportunities offered.

What is an Apprenticeship Agreement?

An Apprenticeship Agreement is an agreement between you the employer and your apprentice under which the apprentice undertakes to work for the employer. The agreement is a contract of service and states that it is entered into, in connection with a qualifying Apprenticeship framework. It reflects that the Apprenticeship is primarily a job rather than training.

It normally includes;

- the length of the apprenticeship
- The training you will give them
- Their working conditions
- The qualifications that they are working towards

You can write your own agreement, or download one from

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template>

Or use the agreement provided by your training provider.

What type of training will they receive?

Apprentices receive various types of training comprising a 'Framework' and must achieve all the set milestones to receive the full Framework award. The elements include:

- A knowledge-based technical certificate to underpin the practical skills
- A Vocational Qualification showing competence (usually NVQ Levels 2 or 3)
- Training in essential 'life' skills such as Communications and IT

Frameworks Available Through the Apprenticeship Scheme:

Apprenticeship	Qualification	Studying	Applications (Examples)
Bench Joinery (To be renamed Architectural Joinery when the new Standard is introduced)	Bench Joinery at NVQ Levels 2 & 3 (CSkills)	<p>Produce setting out details for bench joinery products</p> <p>Mark out from setting out details for bench joinery products</p> <p>Manufacture bench joinery products</p> <p>Set up and use fixed and transportable machinery</p> <p>Manufacture shaped doors and frames</p> <p>Manufacture stairs with turns</p>	Joinery Workshops, Furniture, Shopfitting Workshops
Site Carpentry & Joinery	Site Carpentry & Joinery at NVQ Levels 2 & 3 (CSkills)	<p>Carry out first and second fixing operations</p> <p>Carry out first fix roofing and stairs</p> <p>Carry out first and second fixing double doors and mouldings</p> <p>Set up and use fixed and transportable machinery</p>	Site work including shop fitting, 1 st & 2 nd fix sites, Joinery Workshops, Shopfitting Workshops
Wood Machining	Wood Machining at NVQ Levels 2 & 3 (CSkills)	<p>Principles of machine manufactured joinery</p> <p>Setting and operating various fixed machines</p> <p>Setting and operating NC/CNC machines</p>	Joinery Workshops, Shopfitting Workshops, Furniture, Kitchen Companies, Garden, Sheds, Timber Merchants
Shopfitting Joinery	Shopfitting at NVQ Levels 2 & 3 (CSkills)	Producing Components to specification and fitting on site, Frames, Shop Fronts & Frames, Doors, Sashes, Panelling, Cladding and Units, increasing in Complexity	Shopfitting Workshops, Working on Sites to Install Goods

Tooling Technology (Saw Doctoring)	Tooling Technology - Saw Doctoring at NVQ Level 2	<p>Study, work orders or samples to determine specifications</p> <p>Attach guides, fixtures or jigs to machines so that operations are performed safely</p> <p>Adjust stops, guides, feed for safe operation</p> <p>Select the direction and speed of rotation of equipment</p> <p>Programme and control Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines</p> <p>Adjust parts to maintain conformity of work within specifications</p> <p>Undertake mechanical repairs to machinery</p> <p>Maintain a clean and safe work environment</p> <p>Understand basic operation of woodworking machinery</p> <p>Change and use abrasive wheels</p>	Extending knowledge for those already in the timber industry, Service Engineer, Tool Room Engineer
Furniture, Furnishings & Fitted Interiors	Furniture and Wood Processing Level 2 (NSAFD)	<p>Covering planing and sawing</p> <p>Units from Profiling, Jointing, or CNC machinery</p> <p>Units from Tooling, maintenance, marking out, manufacture, enquiries, wood as a material, sanding, boring and edging machinery</p>	Small workshops through to large factories of Furniture Manufacturing

Engineered Wood	Engineered Wood at NVQ Levels 2 & 3 (NSAFD)	<p>Prepare drawings from specifications or determine job requirements by examining drawings and specifications</p> <p>Produce working drawing, jigs templates or prototypes for production assembly of products using computer technology</p> <p>Select and prepare timber and manufactured board</p> <p>Select correct adhesives for various applications</p> <p>Trim and glue joints and fit parts together to form sections of furniture</p> <p>Assemble components and fit ironmongery</p> <p>Fabrication of glass systems</p> <p>CAD</p> <p>Finish items using a range of techniques</p> <p>Repair damaged components</p>	Companies that manufacture Trusses, Decks, Panels, Glulam, LVL, CLT fabrication
Wood Fuel Production	Producing Wood Fuel at NVQ Levels 2 & 3 (NSAFD)	<p>Be able to prepare to produce wood fuel</p> <p>Be able to produce wood fuel</p> <p>Be able to finish wood fuel production</p> <p>Know how to produce wood fuel and safely</p> <p>Know how to use wood fuel equipment</p>	Producers of Wood Fuel and Associated Industries

Wood Products Manufacturing	Wood Products Manufacturing at NVQ Levels 2 & 3 (NSAFD)	<p>Prepare drawings from specifications or determine job requirements by examining drawings and specifications</p> <p>Produce working drawing, jigs templates or prototypes for production assembly of products using computer technology</p> <p>Select and prepare timber and manufactured board</p> <p>Select correct adhesives for various applications</p> <p>Trim and glue joints and fit parts together to form sections of furniture</p> <p>Assemble components and fit ironmongery</p> <p>Fabrication of glass systems</p> <p>CAD</p> <p>Finish items using a range of techniques</p> <p>Repair damaged components</p>	Marking Out, Interpreting and Using Information, Assessing Materials for Quality, Maintaining Tools, Producing Jigs, Manufacture, Sawing, Planing or Assembly of Wood Products, Finishing, Spraying, Attaching Fittings, Packing; Storing, Fabrication of Glass Systems, Glazing. All skill sets suitable for medium to larger joinery manufacturing businesses
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On-the-job training is provided by your company, at your premises; off-the-job training is given at college on day-release (or sometimes week-release) or training can be delivered by your apprenticeship training provider in the workplace.

What is a Traditional Apprenticeship?

A Traditional Apprenticeship combines studying at college (or training provider) with experience on-site over a two to three-year period. This is the most common way to get qualified and is available across the England

How do I recruit an Apprentice?

If you wish to recruit an apprentice, you can visit the government website link:

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>

On the above link you will find a host of interesting links. One in particular is headed 'Apprenticeship recruitment: employers and training organisations' if you click on this link, it will lead you through to a page of documents – a useful one headed 'Employer guide to apprenticeship recruitment'

<https://sfacontactforms.azurewebsites.net/employer-enquiry>

The above link takes you to an Enquiry Form where you can register your interest to take on an Apprentice. There is also a telephone number that you can call to gain advice 0800 015 0600. You can let the Agency know about your vacancies for free and they will facilitate working between training providers and you the employer to help you find appropriate candidates.

Two useful websites full of information are: <https://www.getingofar.gov.uk/employers> and <https://www.goconstruct.org/>

Another route to finding an apprentice is to contact CITB; they have a team of Apprenticeship Officers that will be able to guide you through the Apprenticeship route. If you are in scope (i.e. registered with CITB) CITB will help you by arranging training for your apprentice with a local college or your nearest training provider. They will help with paying all college or training provider examination fees, helping you complete the paperwork needed to claim grants and giving advice on expenses available to cover accommodation or travel costs, their address is:

<http://www.citb.co.uk/citb-apprenticeships/about-apprenticeships/>

You can visit their dedicated website to careers within the construction industry and register your vacancy, their address is: <http://www.citb.co.uk/bconstructive/> follow the link for employers.

You can also contact local colleges and schools to see if there is a potential student looking for an Apprenticeship placement.

The BWF [Wow I Made That](#) advice portal for aspiring woodworking apprentices also allows to promote your interest.

Once you have chosen your Apprentice you will need a training provider

You can arrange to send your Apprentice to a local college or nearest training provider. They should be quality assured and approved to deliver training. They will help you through the paperwork process and assessment of the Apprentice.

Should you decide to use CITB, they will arrange this for you and help you with all the paperwork.

The BWF are also working with Centres of Excellence that can offer training, for further information please contact the BWF on 0844 209 2610

How much should I pay my Apprentice?

You must pay your Apprentice at least the Apprentice Minimum Wage, the most up to date information on this can be found on the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

How much financial support is available for the training costs?

If you're an employer with a pay bill over £3 million each year, you must pay the Apprenticeship Levy to the government from 6 April 2017. The levy is based on 0.5% of their class 1 secondary NIC. You can see our [Guide to Paying the Apprenticeship Levy here](#).

Non-levy paying employers will share the cost of training and assessing their apprentices with government - this is called 'co-investment'.

From May 2017, in the majority of cases, you will pay 10% towards to the cost of apprenticeship training and government will pay the rest (90%), up to the funding band maximum. You as the employer must pay your apprentices a wage.

Generally, the amount you can get for training, varies depending on whether the candidate is:

- Aged 16 to 18 – less than 50 employees – all training costs paid up to the funding band maximum
- Aged 16 to 18 – more than 50 employees – 90% paid by government, 10% by you up to the funding band maximum
- All students aged 16 to 18 – you the employer, is entitled to £1000 incentive bonus from the government, £500 paid at the start and £500 paid at the end!
- Aged 19 upwards - 90% paid by government, 10% by you up to the funding band maximum

If costs go over the funding band maximum, you have to pay the difference.

How much financial support is available for the me the employer?

You may get a £1,000 apprenticeship grant if your apprentice is 16 to 18 years old. You can call the National Apprenticeship Service on 0800 015 0600 to check eligibility.

Employer Grants from CITB England - Apprenticeship Grants:

Grant Name	Amount Employer Can Claim
2-year apprenticeship to achieve NVQ 2	£6,000 max per apprentice
3-year apprenticeship to achieve NVQ 3 and inclusive of the 2-year grant	£10,250 max per apprentice

To qualify for the financial support, you need to be registered with CITB and meet the requirements, follow this link for further information:

<http://www.citb.co.uk/grant/grants-available-201617/apprenticeship-grant-england-wales/>

Are you thinking of qualifying existing staff?

Enabling existing staff to gain qualifications helps differentiate your company from competitors, demonstrating your commitment to training.

Renewing the interest and commitment of existing staff comes through giving them opportunities to learn, qualify and pass their skills on to others.

Refreshing skills is equally vital: one of the top three reasons for staff leaving is said to be lack of new learning opportunities.

CITB England offers a range of grants covering non-apprentice training & development, and technical, managerial and professional training, see below for information.

Retaining skilled people is as important as creating them. Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development shows that employers who reward apprentices with the highest wages have the highest rates of retention.

Other Training Grants Available

Grant Name	Amount Employer Can Claim
NVQ Achievement Grant inclusive in 2/3-year apprenticeship grants, but can be obtained outside of apprenticeships e.g. OSAT	£400 per achievement
Craft Non-Apprentice Grant Level 2 VQ for achievement of NVQs not undertaken as part of a full apprenticeship framework	£3,525 per achievement
Craft Non-Apprentice Grant Level 3 VQ for achievement of NVQs not undertaken as part of a full apprenticeship framework	£2,625 per achievement
Day-rate Grants when part of a company training & development plan or under short-duration training	£25 per half day £50 per full day
Supplementary Payment available on top of all grants including apprenticeship grants for employers that pay a levy and on time to CITB	10% on top of any claimed grants

Terms and Conditions apply. These are the published CITB rates that are available under the 2016/17 Grants Scheme.

There are a host of other grants available to fund training through the grant scheme. For more information on claiming grants and full terms and conditions, please visit:

<http://www.citb.co.uk/levy-grant/grants-available-201617/>

On-site Assessment & Training (OSAT)

Experienced, existing staff can be assessed (and given additional training) at your premises to achieve NVQ qualifications Levels 2-5 under OSAT. The BWF OSAT Programme provides a dedicated and tailored solution in both craft and office based occupations and is delivered in partnership with specialist training provider Didac Ltd. <http://didac.co.uk/>

or contact the BWF for further information on 0844 209 2610 | iain.mcilwee@bwf.org.uk

About the Wood Industry Training Forum:

The BWF offers a range of training solutions and other services through the WITForum (Woodworking Industry Training Forum) that are tailored for the joinery industry.

With over [40 training services now available](#) through the Forum (from machining to management to timber training), there is no better place to get quality, comprehensive and tailored training solutions for the joinery industry. We work closely with the CITB and have expertise in helping you tap into the right funding stream to support your training.

Where to go next:

[Find a Course from the British Woodworking Federation](#)

[Find out more about the BWF Online Training Academy](#)

Woodworking careers: Wow! I made that!



The 'Wow I made that' campaign aims to provide information, advice and guidance to young people interested in a woodworking career in the joinery industry.

[Follow the campaign on Facebook.](#)

To support this campaign we have now also launched the Wow I Made that Websie - www.wowimadethat.co.uk

Note: Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of advice given, the BWF cannot accept liability for loss or damage arising from the use of the information supplied in this publication.