



ESSENTIAL GUIDE

TO

SCHOOL & COLLEGE LEAVER OPTIONS

2016-17

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Welcome to the AllAboutSchoolLeavers Essential Guide to School & College Leaver Options

Created by the team behind AllAboutSchoolLeavers.co.uk and MyCareerSpringboard.org, this guide is packed with useful information about the exciting and innovative options available to young people leaving school or college.

We've got the low-down on the new Degree Apprenticeship programmes, as well as vital statistics on some of the UK's top school and college leaver employers.

We've also got information on key industries that young people might want to move into, and the various career paths they can take to get there.

This guide is a streamlined version of the full AllAboutSchoolLeavers *Ultimate Guide to School & College Leaver Options*, which is full of useful features on apprenticeship training, university Clearing, and choosing the right university; as well as gap years, further information on various routes into industries, and more detailed profiles on top employers.

Your school can order the *Ultimate Guide to School & College Leaver Options* by contacting us.

We would like to say a massive thank you to the contributors below for making this year's *Essential Guide to School & College Leaver Options* possible, and hope that you find this publication useful.



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01 Pathways

It's easy to think that doing A-levels and then applying for university is the best option for all young people, but there are many other great ways of starting off in the world of work.

Apprenticeships are getting more popular and varied by the year – the government is committed to creating three million new programmes by 2020 – and now the recently launched Degree Apprenticeships even offer a way of gaining a university qualification without tuition fees, while earning a full-time salary. These programmes began in 2015 and we think they're real game changers.

School leaver programmes also offer a way of gaining a university degree and/or a professional qualification, such as the accreditations people need to work in accountancy or finance. Usually aimed at those leaving school after gaining A-levels, these are a well-paid alternative to university and a great way to start a career with a high-profile company.

In this chapter we outline all these alternatives to university, and more.

Intermediate Apprenticeships

Intermediate Apprenticeships are the first level of apprenticeship, a Level 2 qualification – equivalent to five good GCSE passes. Intermediate Apprenticeships are designed to equip apprentices with the skills to thrive in the world of employment.

Intermediate Apprenticeships generally last around 12-18 months, although they can be longer or shorter. On these programmes, apprentices spend most of their time working for an employer and learning on-the-job, but they also spend some time at a training institution or local college. They will study towards vocational qualifications that are relevant to their job, such as an NVQ Level 2. An Intermediate Apprenticeship will improve basic skills too – if apprentices don't have GCSEs in English and maths they will usually be required to take a basic numeracy and literacy test.

In practice, this might mean apprentices spend two days a week at college and three days in the office or workplace. Alternatively, they might only go to college once a fortnight (or maybe even less). Some employers use a 'block training' approach, concentrating the required off-the-job training into weekly or fortnightly slots across the year.

Intermediate Apprenticeships are offered in all sorts of areas and industries, with all types of companies, in everything from construction and engineering, to tourism, publishing and IT.

Intermediate Apprenticeships are perfect for people who want to move on to the next level – an Advanced Apprenticeship. They are a prerequisite for those schemes, but are also useful for young people who want to stay in education and training without doing A-levels, as everyone born on or after 1 September 1997 must now remain in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday.



Qualifications & training

Intermediate apprentices work towards nationally recognised vocational qualifications at Level 2, equivalent to five GCSEs (grades A*-C), including a competence qualification, a Functional Skills qualification and, in some cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification.



Typical entry requirements

Usually applicants are required to have two or more GCSEs (grades A*-C) or equivalent. Alternatively, applicants might have to sit a numeracy and literacy test.



Potential career progression

From an Intermediate Apprenticeship, apprentices can go on to do an Advanced Apprenticeship or secure a related job.



Pay

The Apprentice National Minimum Wage is £3.30 an hour, but many employers pay their apprentices more than that. The Apprentice National Minimum Wage applies to all 16-18-year-old apprentices and those aged 19 and over in the first year of their apprenticeship; after the first year of the apprenticeship, people who are aged 19 and over must get paid the full National Minimum Wage for their age group.

Advanced Apprenticeships

Advanced Apprenticeships are a step above Intermediate Apprenticeships, and are designed for more challenging roles and developing advanced skills at qualification Level 3 – equivalent to two A-level passes. They offer the chance to access great training, develop skills and gain qualifications while working for an employer.

As a guide, Advanced Apprenticeships generally last around 24 months, although they can be longer or shorter. On these programmes, apprentices spend most of the time working for an employer and learning on-the-job, but they also spend some time at a training institution or local college, gaining qualifications at Level 3. These will include a Level 3 competence qualification, a Functional Skills qualification and a relevant knowledge-based qualification.

In practice, this might mean apprentices spend two days a week at college and three days in the office or workplace. Alternatively, they might only go to college once a fortnight (or maybe even less). Some employers use a 'block training' approach, concentrating the required off-the-job training into weekly or fortnightly slots across the year.

Advanced Apprenticeships are offered in all sorts of areas and industries with all types of companies, in everything from animal care and education, to media, retail and law.

Advanced Apprenticeships are perfect for people who want to move on to the next level – a Higher Apprenticeship. They are a prerequisite for those schemes, but are also useful for young people who want to stay in education and training without doing A-levels, as everyone born on or after 1 September 1997 must now remain in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday.



Qualifications & training

Advanced apprentices work towards nationally recognised vocational qualifications at Level 3, equivalent to two A-level passes, including a competence qualification, a Functional Skills qualification and a relevant knowledge-based qualification.



Typical entry requirements

Usually applicants are required to have five GCSEs (grades A*-C) or equivalent, or to have completed an Intermediate Apprenticeship.



Potential career progression

From an Advanced Apprenticeship, apprentices can go on to do a Higher Apprenticeship or secure a job in a relevant industry. They may also use the qualification to gain access to some school leaver programmes (in the construction industry, for example) and courses at Further Education college, dependent on individual entry requirements.



Pay

The Apprentice National Minimum Wage is £3.30 an hour, but many employers pay their apprentices more than that. The Apprentice National Minimum Wage applies to all 16-18-year-old apprentices and those aged 19 and over in the first year of their apprenticeship. After the first year of the apprenticeship, people who are aged 19 and over must get paid the full National Minimum Wage for their age group.

Higher Apprenticeships

Higher Apprenticeships are at qualification Levels 4, 5 and even 6 – equivalent to a higher education certificate, higher education diploma or a foundation degree. All levels can include vocational qualifications and academic qualifications.

Higher Apprenticeships are a great option for school and college leavers who are looking for an alternative to university. As a guide, Higher Apprenticeships take at least 12 months, but many programmes last up to 18 months or two years. Some Higher Apprenticeships even last as long as five years.

On these programmes, apprentices spend most of the time working for an employer and learning on-the-job, but they will also spend some time at a training institution, college or university. They will study towards vocational or academic qualifications that are relevant to their job, such as the ATT (Association of Tax Technicians) or the CTA (Chartered Tax Adviser) qualifications if completing a Higher Apprenticeship with a tax and accountancy firm, for example.

In practice, this might mean apprentices spend two days a week at college and three days in the office or workplace. Alternatively, they might only go to college once a fortnight (or maybe even less). Some employers use a 'block training' approach, concentrating the required off-the-job training into weekly or fortnightly slots across the year.

Higher Apprenticeships have not been available for as long as Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships, so there are currently slightly fewer positions on offer when compared with the other levels. However, programmes are still available in a wide range of industries and roles, from tax and accountancy, to construction management, mechanical engineering, web development and even space engineering.

A Higher Apprenticeship can be a great choice for ambitious school leavers, especially for those who have done relatively well in their GCSEs and/or A-levels, or who have completed an Advanced Apprenticeship, but want to progress without taking the university route.



Qualifications & training

Higher apprentices might work towards a Level 4 – 6 competence qualification, Functional Skills or a knowledge-based qualification such as a foundation degree, or HND. Qualifications at Levels 4 and 5 are equivalent to a higher education certificate, higher education diploma or a foundation degree. Qualifications at Level 6 are equivalent to a degree or a graduate diploma.



Typical entry requirements

Usually applicants are required to have a minimum of two A-levels or equivalent, or an Advanced Apprenticeship.



Potential career progression

Often, at the end of a Higher Apprenticeship, apprentices will be at the same level as employees who took the university route and then a graduate scheme; it is likely they will be offered a job with their apprentice employer. If they choose to move on they will have professional and/or academic qualifications tailored to the industry they have trained in, making them extremely employable.



Pay

The Apprentice National Minimum Wage (£3.30 an hour) applies to all 16-18-year-old apprentices and those over 19 in the first year of their apprenticeship; after the first year, those over 19 are paid the full National Minimum Wage for their age group. Those on Higher Apprenticeships could earn salaries as high as £23,000.

Degree Apprenticeships

Degree Apprenticeships are the latest model of apprenticeship to be developed, seeing apprentices achieve a full bachelor's or master's degree – at Levels 6 and 7. While Degree Apprenticeships must last a minimum of one year, the programmes generally last longer than this, typically up to four years, though there is no fixed maximum duration.

Degree apprentices are not eligible for student loans but their tuition fees are often paid in full by the apprentice employer, or at least in part, and they are paid a salary as full-time employees, like all other apprentices.

Degree apprentices split their time between university study and the workplace and will be employed throughout – gaining a full bachelor's or master's degree while earning a wage and getting real on-the-job experience in their chosen profession. In practice, this might mean apprentices spend two days a week at college or university and three days in the office or workplace. Alternatively, they might only go to college or university once a fortnight (or maybe even less). Some employers use a 'block training' approach, concentrating the required off-the-job training into weekly or fortnightly slots across the year.

Degree Apprenticeships also offer the rare opportunity to gain experience and form working relationships with high profile, well-respected companies – potentially even more advantageous than the academic qualifications on offer.

Degree Apprenticeships are very new – they were launched in 2015 – but are already being embraced by prominent employers in various industries such as aerospace engineering, laboratory and nuclear science, public relations, and the digital sector.



Qualifications & training

Degree apprentices work towards a full bachelor's or master's degree – at Levels 6 and 7 – but also engage in work-based learning and training, the same as at other apprenticeship levels.



Typical entry requirements

Degree Apprenticeship applicants have the same (if not higher) standards to meet as university applicants. Depending on the apprenticeship, a certain number of UCAS points, often in specific A-levels, will be required, or certain standards must have been achieved on other apprenticeships in a relevant job.



Potential career progression

Those completing Degree Apprenticeships are especially employable as each programme has been designed with the industry's needs in mind. Groups of businesses, universities and colleges develop bespoke degree courses that allow students to build up skills and experience relevant to that particular industry, making them very employable in the future. Degree apprentices will often be offered a job with their employer at the end of the programme, but if they decide to move on they will have a very attractive set of skills and qualifications with which to progress in their chosen industry.



Pay

The Apprentice National Minimum Wage (£3.30 an hour) applies to all 16-18-year-old apprentices and those over 19 in the first year of their apprenticeship. After the first year, those over 19 must get paid the full National Minimum Wage for their age group. However, many Degree Apprenticeship employers will pay more than this: a £16,000 starting salary, for example, with regular pay reviews.

School Leaver Programmes

School leaver programmes aren't as easy to define as apprenticeships, as they vary from company to company and from industry to industry. A good way to think of these programmes is as 'secondary school graduate schemes'.

School leaver programmes tend to be offered by large companies in industries like accountancy, finance, engineering, retail, IT, hospitality and tourism. Typically, high-achieving A-level students are offered places, with the chance to work towards a university degree and/or professional qualification, while earning a decent salary and gaining a wealth of on-the-job experience.

Most companies will sponsor or part-sponsor the school or college leaver's education and, in return, they will usually be required to work for the firm on a full-time or part-time basis.

School leaver programmes tend to be lengthier than apprenticeships, lasting between three and seven years. The programmes are usually broken down into stages. For example, students might spend one year at university, before working full-time for the company for the next two years, or they might work at the company and study for a degree or professional qualification on a part-time or distance learning basis.



Qualifications & training

As school leaver programmes aim to provide a genuine alternative for students who would have otherwise gone to university, employers put plenty of emphasis on the qualifications offered. Some programmes are centred on attaining a bachelor's degree or foundation degree, while others might focus on the achievement of a professional qualification, such as an ATT (Association of Tax Technicians), CILEx (Chartered Institute of Legal Executives) or ICAEW CFAB (Certificate in Finance, Accounting and Business). A few schemes offer trainees the chance to obtain a degree and a professional qualification as part of the same scheme.



Typical entry requirements

Since school leaver programmes are positioned as the more 'elite' school leaver opportunities, most companies specify a minimum number of UCAS points or a minimum number of A-levels in their entry requirements. This could be anything from requiring two A-level passes to 320 UCAS points. Entry requirements vary from company to company, but overall employers will be looking for bright, ambitious candidates with an interest in their industry, keen to start work.



Potential career progression

When a school leaver trainee comes to the end of a school leaver programme, they are usually offered a position within the company. This is not a legal obligation – both trainee and company can choose whether they want to continue the employment or not – but there are lots of advantages to retaining school leavers, and many companies make a point of offering positions on their graduate programmes to trainees upon completion of their school leaver programmes. At EY, for example, as with many organisations, some Directors and even Partners started at the firm as school leavers.



Pay

School leaver trainees have the same rights as standard employees: they are paid the National Minimum Wage, £5.30 per hour for 18-20-year-olds and £6.70 for 21-24-year-olds, which is higher than the Apprentice National Minimum Wage. School leaver programmes offer a handsome salary and benefits package, which can sometimes be as high as £25,000 and beyond.

Sponsored Degrees

Sponsored degrees come in different shapes and sizes. They can broadly be divided into three types: sponsored degree programmes, sponsored degrees and student sponsorship.

Sponsored degree programmes

As well as studying for a degree at university, students are often regarded as permanent employees of the company and receive a salary. The schemes are often devised with a particular university, and some or all of the course fees are usually paid for by the employer. Students might attend university on a part-time or distance learning basis while working for the employer, or they might go to university full-time, spending holidays working for the company. Employers might also guarantee a job or a graduate scheme place upon qualification.

Sponsored degrees

Some universities offer degrees that are sponsored and devised in partnership with a consortium of employers and/or professional associations. Students might be sponsored wholly or partially, and might complete placements with one consortium employer. Or a degree might be devised with, and sponsored by, a single employer, whose involvement is likely to be more comprehensive. For example, students on a sponsored scheme might receive a bursary and have a year-long placement and two summer placements with the employer. Depending on academic and placement performance, they might also be offered a job or a graduate scheme place upon qualification. These students only earn a salary during their placements, but the programmes guarantee great work experience and help young people tackle the cost of a university education.

Student sponsorship

Some companies sponsor a small number of students on a degree course, or sponsor a promising student irrespective of their degree/university. Some students even approach companies themselves in the hope of gaining sponsorship.

Employers might cover a student's fees, or give a one-off token amount to the student. In return, students might take up a summer placement with the company, work with them after university, or they might have no obligation at all.



Qualifications & training

Students completing sponsored degrees will all gain a university degree, but the workplace experience and training they receive will vary between programmes and sponsors.



Typical entry requirements

Sponsored degree applicants (or at least those applying to more formal programmes) are subject to the same requirements as university applicants: they are usually expected to have a minimum UCAS tariff (340 points, for example) and submit a strong application via UCAS.



Potential career progression

Some trainees are obliged to continue working for their employer for a certain period following the programme; for others this is optional. Those not offered employment with a sponsor will have a degree and extensive work experience, making them extremely attractive in the job market.



Pay

Those on structured sponsored degree programmes often earn a standard salary, around £15,000 on some schemes. Those on less formal programmes, or working only during holidays, will earn at least the National Minimum Wage for their age for the hours they work, but rates can vary between employers.



Traineeships

A traineeship is an education and training programme that incorporates work experience, preparing young people for their future careers by helping them to become work ready.

Designed for people aged between 16 and 24 who do not yet have the required skills or experience to get a job, traineeships provide the essential work preparation training, English and maths support, as well as the work experience needed to secure an apprenticeship or employment.

A traineeship has three core elements:

- A high-quality work experience placement with an employer.
- Work preparation training, provided by the training organisation.
- English and maths support, if required, provided by the training organisation.

Traineeships can last anything up to a maximum of six months, with the programme's content tailored to the needs of the business and the individual. Trainees

will learn what's expected of them in the workplace – gaining experience of time keeping and teamwork, for example – and develop links with local employers. The work placement element to the traineeship will also help them broaden their CVs for when they apply for future positions.

One unique aspect to a traineeship is how it allows for flexibility: employers and mentors tailor the training to the trainee's requirements, so they can get the most out of the time on their programme.

If the host company is looking for apprentices or new employees, trainees may also be able to interview for these at the end of their traineeship, from the informed position of having worked for the company already. Unfortunately traineeships are not paid positions, but trainees may be able to expense their travel and meals.

To be eligible for a traineeship, applicants should be aged between 16 and 24, and qualified below a Level 3 qualification. To find a programme visit www.gov.uk/find-traineeship.

02 Industries

Arguably, the most important part of any school leaver's journey is figuring out what they want to do, and what industry they want to work in.

In this chapter we take a look at 10 key industries that school leavers could move into, and outline the various roles on offer in each industry.

We also outline the various pathways that a school or college leaver could take to get into that industry, whether it's the classic 'A-levels and university' path, completing an apprenticeship or series of apprenticeships after GCSEs, or a school leaver programme, for example.

For more detailed information on these industries and the various routes into them, including the top employers in each industry according to the AllAboutSchoolLeavers Top Employers for School & College Leavers Awards 2015-16, see the full Ultimate Guide to School & College Leaver Options.



Accounting & Professional Services

Professional services are the various types of specialist assistance provided to a company from external sources: accounting, auditing, tax, financial advice, risk management and consulting. Accounting is a tool to understand the financial position of the business in terms of sales, costs, cash flow and liquidity (its ability to repay debts). Those in accountancy ensure that a business pays the correct amount of tax, sometimes helping business owners by highlighting potential overpayments of tax, and when costs can be discounted against tax payments. Accountants can also offer other services, like helping to raise finances, business planning and investment consultancy.

If a school leaver is analytical, commercially aware – on top of business, financial and political news – and good at prioritising, this could be the industry for them. Professional services are also critical to the success of the UK economy, representing 15% of UK GDP, 14% of employment and 14% of exports; so those training in this sector are likely to be in demand.

Professional services firms offer many different career paths: accountants, management consultants and lawyers all provide professional services to their clients.

School leavers hoping to move into this industry have many options open to them. Those leaving school with GCSEs could do an Intermediate Apprenticeship in an area like accounts or credit control, and have the option to move onto an Advanced Apprenticeship in a related field, and subsequently perhaps a Higher Apprenticeship.

Those leaving school with A-levels could do a school leaver programme or sponsored degree in an accountancy-related field, or even a Degree Apprenticeship in business, finance and law. Despite this being a competitive industry, school leavers at all levels have plenty of ways to access it.

Banking & Finance

Banking and financial services is a huge industry, covering everything from every-day retail banking to complex wealth management for 'high net worth individuals'. If a school leaver is a quick learner with a head for numbers, and works well under pressure, this could be the industry for them.

Retail is the area of banking that most people and businesses experience, either inside their local high street branches, or over the phone and via the internet. This huge area of banking boasts a broad range of career options, from bank tellers handling cash in branch, to customer service representatives, to bank managers and financial advisors.

Investment banking is another part of this industry, including capital markets services – underwriting debt, for example, or assisting with company deals, such as mergers and acquisitions. Debt resolution is a service that people in this industry provide, used by individuals with too much debt to pay in full, but who do not want to file bankruptcy and wish to pay off the debt eventually. Another area in the industry is private banking, providing banking services to 'high-net-worth individuals' – people with assets worth £20 million or more.

School leavers hoping to move into this industry have many options open to them. Those leaving school with GCSEs could do an Intermediate Apprenticeship in financial advice administration or underwriting, for example, with the option of then going onto Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships in related fields.

Those leaving school with A-levels could do a Higher Apprenticeship, school leaver programme or sponsored degree in a business or finance-related field, or even a Degree Apprenticeship in finance. It's competitive, but the standard university route isn't essential for breaking into this industry.

Creative Industries

Careers in the creative industries are broadly split into two categories: art and design – including drama and music – and the media. It's a huge industry, with many options for school leavers.

Careers in art and design can span many different specialist areas, from graphic design, painting, photography and prop design, to architecture, animation, and art conservation. Fine artists, photographers, and designer craftspeople – jewellery designers, silversmiths and woodworkers, for example – tend to have freelance careers rather than being directly employed full-time, but there are structured ways of getting into these roles, such as apprenticeships in particular crafts, and secure jobs at the end of the process.

Art also encompasses the performing arts: music and drama. As well as being actors or musicians, those specialising in these areas often go onto become teachers, community arts workers, theatre directors, arts administrators, and even music therapists.

The media industry encompasses everything from newspapers, magazines and websites to broadcast journalism, social media, film production, video games and book publishing. When it comes to PR – public relations – people on this side of the industry help manage reputations. That could be for a huge international company, a charity, a local council, or even a band.

As it's such a diverse industry, there are many ways of moving into this sector. Those with GCSEs could take an Intermediate Apprenticeship in costume and wardrobe, then move onto an Advanced Apprenticeship in fashion and textiles, for example; or those with A-levels could take a Higher Apprenticeship in creative and digital media. Obviously the university route is a great choice too, with everything from graphic design to animation on offer.

Energy & Utilities

If a school leaver is a fan of science and practical problem solving, then the energy and utilities industry could be the place for them. Utilities are the everyday services that keep our homes, buildings, towns and cities going: electricity, gas, water and sewers. A huge variety of different careers are available, ranging from technical and engineering roles to managerial and sales positions.

The energy side of the industry is particularly varied; school leavers could find themselves working outdoors on site, on land or out at sea, in an office, or even in a laboratory. This sector requires specialist scientists operating in the research and development energy, especially important with the increasing necessity for more environmentally friendly energy solutions. Research, planning and development roles include data analysts, planners, software developers, GIS technicians (who make maps and customised geographic information systems), environmental analysts, oceanographers, ecologists, aerodynamics specialists, technical experts, scientists, mechanical and electrical engineers.

School leavers hoping to move into this industry have many options open to them. Those leaving school with GCSEs could do an Intermediate Apprenticeship in gas engineering or building maintenance, for example, with the option of then going onto Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships in related fields, such as energy maintenance or as a technical trainee. Those with A-levels or a related Higher Apprenticeship could also consider a power engineering Degree Apprenticeship.

Those leaving school with A-levels could also do a school leaver programme in power transmission engineering, or a university degree in areas like energy and renewables, or project management.





Engineering

Engineering is all about solving problems using specialist technical and practical skills. If a school leaver has good STEM skills – science, technology, engineering and maths – as well as an analytical mind, this could be the industry for them.

Hardware and infrastructure engineers work with the physical parts of computers, networks and telecommunications apparatus. Aeronautical engineers deal with air and spacecraft, while automotive engineers work in the design and production of cars, vans/trucks, motorbikes and buses. Simulation engineers use computer programmes and computer simulation technologies to model engineering projects in a virtual environment. Robotics engineers are concerned with the design, production, application and maintenance of complex robots. Civil engineers work with the built environment: providing engineering expertise on buildings, dams, bridges and all kinds of major construction projects. Mechanical engineering involves the design, production and maintenance of mechanical systems, machines, tools and apparatus that use heat and mechanical power to operate, such as pistons. Two other highly specialist areas of engineering, which require a slightly different scientific background, are chemical and biotechnological engineering. Chemical engineering uses chemical and biological scientific techniques to transform raw materials into functional products and substances. Biotechnological engineering combines biological science with engineering principles to create a variety of products, like medicines, biodegradable plastics and biofuels.

You must be highly skilled to work in engineering, but university definitely isn't the only route into the industry. School leavers could go to further education college for courses in STEM, for example, or undertake Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships in construction engineering. Those with A-levels could do a Higher Apprenticeship in space or civil engineering, or a Degree Apprenticeship in power engineering or aerospace engineering, as well as considering the wealth of engineering-related courses at university.



Hospitality & Tourism

If someone loves people and providing great customer service, wants a job that doesn't mean they're stuck in front of a computer screen all day, or just thrives when making sure people are having a great time, then hospitality and tourism could be the industry for them.

From waiting tables and cooking in kitchens, to managing hotels and taking people on tours of museums, or even running a bar or night club, the sector is packed full of interesting jobs.

Careers within hotels and accommodation can vary greatly depending on their size, location and customer base, for example, and every establishment requires managerial staff to oversee the general operations, as well as financial, marketing, human resources and administrative staff.

Careers in catering, food and drink also sit within this industry, whether that's kitchen porters and chefs or specialist coffee baristas and cake decorators. People in catering could be waiting tables in five star restaurants, mixing speciality cocktails in bars, managing the food and drink at weddings or festivals, or even curating meals at corporate parties and events.

In tourism, there are jobs on both sides of the process: helping customers decide where to go, and assisting them once they get there. Roles such as holiday representatives (working in resorts), tour managers, tourism officers, tourist information centre officers and roles in travel agencies, all sit within this industry.

School leavers with GCSEs could do an Intermediate Apprenticeship in travel and tourism, or hospitality services, or a course in tour guiding or professional cookery at further education college. Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships are available in areas like hospitality management, and degrees in hospitality, leisure, recreation and tourism are available at university.



IT & Technology

IT and technology involves everything from safety when making purchases online, to ensuring office systems keep running, to developing better, faster computers and phones, to coding and programming. Our modern world needs the people who work in this industry. If a school leaver is interested in this fast-moving, forward-thinking sector, and has logical and mathematical skills, then it could be the place for them.

People who choose to go into the hardware side of the industry will work with the physical parts of computers, networks and telecommunications apparatus. People who go into the software side will work with the programmes that make computers or telecommunication systems function effectively, or with applications for mobile phones.

Some people who work in IT and technology choose to work in a less hands-on technical role and become involved in IT consultancy careers, simultaneously analysing and assessing other companies' IT systems and their business requirements. School leavers who move into this industry could also work in cyber security and coding, demand for experts in these areas is growing all the time.

There are many options in terms of accessing this industry. School leavers with GCSEs could head to further education college and do courses in areas like IT, telecommunications or information security, for example, or Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships in IT support and software testing/development. Those leaving school with A-levels could go onto a Higher Apprenticeship in cyber crime, or even a Degree Apprenticeship in computer games technology, as well as considering the range of IT and technology-related courses at university. Those with A-levels could also consider a sponsored degree with an IT company.



Law

Besides solicitors, barristers and judges, there is an array of other career paths within this sector, from legal secretaries, paralegals and legal executives to solicitor advocates, coroners, lecturers and court clerks. If a school leaver is academically impressive with good commercial awareness (staying up-to-date on developments in the business, commercial and political world), has great interpersonal skills and a keen interest in legal issues, this could be the industry for them.

Solicitors – a type of lawyer – are the first point of contact for clients, providing legal advice, and when a case escalates to court liaising with both the client and representing barrister throughout the case, undertaking legal research, collecting evidence, and instructing the barrister ahead of court hearings and trials. Barristers (another type of lawyer) are usually self-employed and hired by solicitors to represent clients in court cases.

Legal secretaries provide a high level of administrative support for lawyers and legal executives. They help with the day-to-day tasks involved in running a legal services or law firm. A legal executive is a lawyer who has followed one of the prescribed routes to qualification set out by the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX).

University isn't the only way to access this industry. School leavers with GCSEs could do an Intermediate Apprenticeship in legal administration and go onto an Advanced Apprenticeship as a paralegal officer or legal advisor, for example. Those with A-levels or a relevant Advanced Apprenticeship could do a Higher Apprenticeship in litigation or claims; and school leaver programmes are available allowing those with A-levels to train as chartered legal executives.



Property & Construction

This industry is all about the built environment. Architects, builders, painters, plasterers, surveyors, plumbers and electricians all sit within this sector; creating and maintaining the structures around us, taking care of everything from installing the pipes in the walls of a building to designing entire towns.

After they've been designed by architects, construction projects need to be planned and managed throughout the project lifecycle, and consequently, technical consultants, such as surveyors and civil engineers, are needed to provide expert advice. Then there are the construction teams who do the actual manual labour – these professionals are the heart and soul of the industry. Roles in this side of construction range from building service engineers, roofers and carpenters to stonemasons, bricklayers and scaffolding teams. When it comes to building interiors; plumbers, electricians, painters, plasterers and decorators are all required to complete projects.

Beside the technical and practical job roles on offer, estate agents also sit within this industry. Estate agents market commercial and residential property, acting as negotiators between buyers and sellers.

School leavers with GCSEs wanting to move into this industry could do Intermediate Apprenticeships in skills like carpentry and joinery, or go to further education college to do courses in site management and the built environment. Advanced or Higher Apprenticeships in areas like technical and site supervising, or project management, are available, as well as school leaver programmes in quantity surveying and asset management. University degrees in architecture, quantity surveying or construction management are also a great option.

Public Sector

The public sector includes local councils, the NHS, government departments, the police, fire services, housing associations and the Civil Service. Careers in this industry are all about working for the public: if a school leaver has an enthusiasm for politics, policy issues and current affairs – and wants to make a difference in other people's lives – then this could be the industry for them.

Working as part of the Civil Service can be one of the most exciting and rewarding ways of working in the public sector, helping the government manage and administrate public services, and to develop and implement its policies. Civil servants are employed within central government departments, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Ministry of Defence. They also enjoy one of the most comprehensive benefits packages across the country.

Careers within local councils can be a rewarding role in the industry, taking responsibility for local services such as housing, recycling and community centres. The NHS also offers diverse roles, including administrative, IT and other support roles, as well as jobs for doctors, nurses and other medical staff. There are 45 local police forces in the UK, and three special police forces – like the Serious Organised Crime Task Force – so there are plenty of opportunities in this area too.

School leavers with GCSEs wanting to move into this industry could do apprenticeships with the police, British Army or local council. For school leavers with A-levels, apprenticeships with MI5 and in the Civil Service is an option, as are courses in public services or environmental health at further education college. There are university degrees in subjects such as social work or town planning.

Retail

Retail is just as much about working on the shop floor and building up a rapport with customers as it is about visual merchandising and buying products behind the scenes. If a school leaver has an eye for making products appealing in a shop window, or talking someone around to their way of thinking, but most of all, excellent communication and customer service skills, then this could be the industry for them.

Roles in this industry are available in every kind of shop you can imagine: clothes stores, supermarkets, department stores, computer stores, sports shops, music shops, book shops, and many more. Every store needs shop floor staff, sales assistants, loss prevention staff and store managers who are responsible for making sure stock is on the shelves and transactions are processed, for example. Retail managers need the ability to lead and motivate a team, excellent communication skills, a strong commitment to customer service, the ability to work under pressure, as well as a strong knack for speedy decision-making.

Every shop is also designed and set out in a certain way. This enhances customers' shopping experience and encourages them to buy things that they may not even have considered purchasing before they came in. These decisions are made by people working in visual merchandising, display design and store design/layout. Shops also need to keep up with market trends, fashions and public interest, so they need buying staff, such as fashion buyers.

School leavers wanting to work in retail could do Intermediate Apprenticeships in visual merchandising, or stockroom and sales skills, or Advanced Apprenticeships in areas like style advice and team leading. There are courses available at further education college in subjects like retail design and fashion retail. University degrees are available in a wide range of relevant subjects, such as retail marketing and fashion visual merchandising and branding.

Transport & Logistics

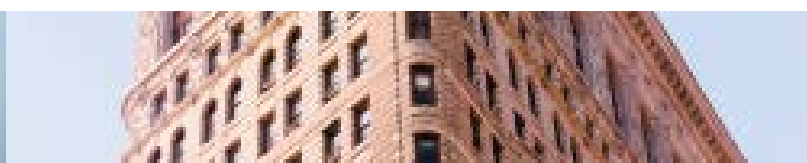
If a school leaver is a good decision-maker, can handle a lot of responsibility early on and has excellent analytical, IT and people skills, a career in transport and logistics could be right up their street.

The industry is all about moving things, storing things and supplying things, from people and animals to goods and services. Consequently, there is a diverse range of careers available in this exciting, fast-paced and ever-changing sector.

Before goods can be transported they normally need to be stored somewhere. People who work in warehouse, storage and inventory management make sure that the right goods are available and organised before companies export and ship large orders.

Trade routes, railway lines, motorways and cycle paths don't just spring up out of nowhere: a lot of meticulous planning and organisation is required before any route can be constructed. This is where careers in transport management and planning fit in. Transport and logistics operations also tend to require a lot of vehicles, machinery and infrastructure (railway sleepers or overhead wires, for example), so professionals are needed to ensure these are available. Then, professionals working as HGV drivers, cycle couriers, train drivers, or in passenger service and postal teams actually move the people, goods and services.

School leavers could do apprenticeships related to logistics, transport planning and technician roles, as well as courses at further education college in transport management and driving (periodic training). Those with A-levels could also do sponsored degrees in mechanical engineering or standard university degrees in areas ranging from maritime transport and logistics to business logistics and transport management.



03 Featured Firms

Our featured firms pages are full of information on top UK employers for school and college leavers.

We outline what each employer does, what opportunities and programmes are available at which companies, and where these opportunities are.

For more detailed information on these employers and their opportunities, including the prizes they won at the AllAboutSchoolLeavers Top Employers for School & College Leavers awards ceremony 2015-16, please see the full version of this publication: the *Ultimate Guide to School & College Leaver Options*.



Sector: Financial services

Programmes available: Advanced Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 2,500 - 3,500

Starting salary for school leavers: £16,000

No. of school leaver vacancies: 10

Locations available: Aberdeen, Edinburgh and London



Sector: Professional services

Programmes available: Degree Apprenticeships and school leaver programmes

No. of employees: 100+

Starting salary for school leavers: Apprenticeships – £14,100, Horizons school leaver programme – £18,000 (pro-rata) over eight months

No. of school leaver vacancies: Unspecified

Locations available: London



Sector: Construction

Programmes available: Intermediate, Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 36,000

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive salary dependent upon role

No. of school leaver vacancies: 150+

Locations available: Various UK locations



Sector: Construction / Engineering

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 1,001 - 5,000

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive

No. of school leaver vacancies: 30+

Locations available: UK / Nationwide



Sector: Accountancy

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 3,500

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive

No. of school leaver vacancies: 100

Locations available: Various UK locations



Sector: Accountancy

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 320

Starting salary for school leavers: £12,750-£14,000

No. of school leaver vacancies: 12

Locations available: Various UK locations



Sector: Accountancy

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 690 approx.

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive

No. of school leaver vacancies: 15+

Locations available: Cheltenham, Kent, London, Manchester, Midlands, Reading



Sector: Training provider

Programmes available: Advanced Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 25

Starting salary for school leavers: A minimum of £3.30 per hour while on apprenticeships

No. of school leaver vacancies: 27

Locations available: London, South West England, North West England



Sector: IT and business process services

Programmes available: Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships; sponsored degrees

No. of employees: 65,000

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive (apprenticeships), £14,100 (sponsored degree programmes)

No. of school leaver vacancies: 80 (apprenticeships), 50 (sponsored degrees)

Locations available: Various UK locations



Sector: Banking and financial services

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 51,000

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive

No. of school leaver vacancies: Up to 10 per year

Locations available: London



Sector: Professional services

Programmes available: Higher Apprenticeships and sponsored degrees

No. of employees: 210,000

Starting salary for school leavers: £21,500 (London)

No. of school leaver vacancies: Not specified

Locations available: London



Sector: Logistics

Programmes available: Intermediate, Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 5,000+

Starting salary for school leavers: Circa £15,000 per annum

No. of school leaver vacancies: 15

Locations available: Warehouse Operations – Various UK locations
Network Planning – Basingstoke
Global Freight – Basingstoke



Sector: Technology

Programmes available: Higher Apprenticeships and school leaver programmes

No. of employees: 400,000

Starting salary for school leavers: £15,000

No. of school leaver vacancies:

Apprenticeships - 80 ; School leaver programmes - 30

Locations available: Various UK locations



Sector: Electronics / Technology

Programmes available: Advanced Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 117,000

Starting salary for school leavers: £8,220 p/a with salary reviews every six months

No. of school leaver vacancies: 30

Locations available: Manchester, Birmingham, Belfast, the North East of England, Scotland, Sunbury and the Greater London area. Republic of Ireland to be confirmed.



Mercedes-Benz

Sector: Automotive / Engineering

Programmes available: Advanced Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 3,500

Starting salary for school leavers:

Apprentice National Minimum Wage (£3.30 per hour - £132 per week) but many of our dealerships choose to pay above this rate

No. of school leaver vacancies: Over 250

Locations available: Nationwide vacancies. The Apprentice Academy where block training takes place is in Milton Keynes.

MOORE STEPHENS

Sector: Accountancy

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 880

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive

No. of school leaver vacancies: 10

Locations available: London, Reading, Birmingham



Sector: Construction

Programmes available: Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships; school leaver programmes

No. of employees: 15,000

Starting salary for school leavers:

Competitive (apprenticeships); £15,000 (school leaver programmes)

No. of school leaver vacancies: 100

Locations available: Various UK locations



Sector: Accountancy

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 1,600

Starting salary for school leavers:

Competitive

No. of school leaver vacancies: 40+

Locations available: Various UK locations



Sector: Accountancy / Public sector

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 800

Starting salary for school leavers: £23,610 (London), £18,122 (Newcastle)

No. of school leaver vacancies: 12

Locations available: London and Newcastle

NOMURA

Sector: Financial services

Programmes available: Advanced Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 27,000

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive

No. of school leaver vacancies: 15-20

Locations available: London



Sector: Professional services

Programmes available: Work experience, School and college leaver jobs, Sponsored degrees

No. of employees: 16,000

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive plus benefits

No. of school leaver vacancies: 161

Locations available: UK-wide



Sector: Training provider

Programmes available: Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 250

Starting salary for school leavers: £150 - £350 a week

No. of school leaver vacancies: 100+

Locations available: Aberdeen, Kent, Birmingham, South West, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kent, Leeds, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Thames Valley, Surrey



Sector: Retail

Programmes available: Intermediate Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 3,000

Starting salary for school leavers: £128.70 - £136.50 per week (dependent on location)

No. of school leaver vacancies: 200

Locations available: Various UK locations



Sector: Financial services

Programmes available: Higher Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 1,600

Starting salary for school leavers: 18 approx.

No. of school leaver vacancies: Competitive

Locations available: Bristol, Guilford, London, Salisbury and Southampton



Sector: Automotive / Retail

Programmes available: Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships

No. of employees: Over 1,400 across the Robins & Day group

Starting salary for school leavers: Hourly rate of £4.00

No. of school leaver vacancies: 40+

Locations available: UK wide



Sector: Accountancy

Programmes available: School leaver programmes

No. of employees: 3,500 in the UK

Starting salary for school leavers: Competitive

No. of school leaver vacancies: 80 approx.

Locations available: Nationwide



Sector: Retail

Programmes available: Intermediate Apprenticeships

No. of employees: 13,000 approx.

Starting salary for school leavers: £115.50 - £129.50 per week (dependent on location)

No. of school leaver vacancies: 150

Locations available: Various UK locations

Like what you're reading?

This *Essential Guide to School & College Leaver Options* is a streamlined version of the AllAboutSchoolLeavers *Ultimate Guide to School & College Leaver Options*, which is full of useful features and information on apprenticeships, school leaver programmes and sponsored degrees. There's also helpful advice on apprenticeship training, university, the Clearing process and gap years.

It also includes information on various routes into key industries, and more detailed profiles on the UK's top school and college leaver employers.

You can order the *Ultimate Guide to School & College Leaver Options* by contacting Georgia Leefe.



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