



# Empowering futures

A guide to our apprenticeships  
for parents and carers

# Supporting conversations about apprenticeships

As the young person in your life approaches the end of school or college, there are many exciting options for their next steps.

The world of work is changing rapidly, driven by advances in technology and innovation. We're no longer preparing young people for the jobs of today - but for the careers of tomorrow.

Apprenticeships have also evolved; they are now a first-choice, competitive pathway that offers real opportunities for growth and success. Apprenticeships combine practical experience with academic learning, giving young people the skills and qualifications they need to thrive in a fast-changing job market.

This booklet is designed to help you have informed and confident conversations about apprenticeships - what they are, why they matter, and how they can open doors to exciting careers in engineering and beyond.

## In this guide



# Who we are

Part of Babcock International Group, Cavendish Nuclear delivers critical nuclear solutions in Clean Energy, Defence, and Civil Decommissioning across the UK and internationally.

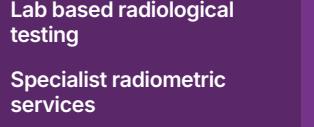
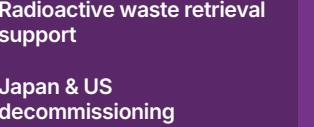
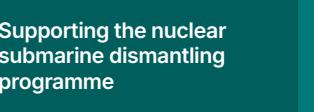
We support everything from building and operating nuclear power plants to safely decommissioning old facilities, helping clean up the nuclear legacy. Our work ensures energy security, supports national defence, and contributes to the UK's net zero goals.

Nuclear plays a vital role in achieving net zero by 2050. At Cavendish Nuclear, we focus on existing reactors, new builds, and developing advanced technologies for the future.

Babcock is a global defence company operating in the UK, Australasia, Canada, France, and South Africa, with exports to other markets. We deliver engineering, support, and critical systems to defence and civil sectors, focusing on affordability, availability, and capability.

Our 26,700 employees provide through-life technical and engineering support for assets, improving performance and reducing costs. This includes naval, land, air, and nuclear operations, frontline support, specialist training, and asset management.

## Delivering across the lifecycle in three key markets

	Design	Build	Operate	Defuel & Dismantle
 <b>Clean Energy</b>	 SMR and AMR development Designing new fuels facilities	 Key alliance partner for Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C	 Maintenance, outage and life extension for EDF reactors	 Defueling support to EDF power stations
 <b>Civil Decom</b>	 High integrity nuclear equipment and facility design	 Major projects engineering and integration	 Lab based radiological testing Specialist radiometric services	 Radioactive waste retrieval support Japan & US decommissioning
 <b>Defence</b>	 AWE delivery partner providing engineering solutions Critical nuclear infrastructure design	 Engineering and project support to Clyde and Devonport naval bases	 Supporting the nuclear submarine dismantling programme	

# Understanding apprenticeships

## What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a job with training. Apprentices spend most of their time working and learning on the job, supported by a training provider (such as a college or university). They follow an approved apprenticeship standard and complete an end-point assessment to gain a nationally recognised qualification.

## How it works



**Earn while you learn:** Gain hands-on experience working on exciting projects while studying part-time with a training provider.



**Structured training:** Weekly off-the-job learning with a training provider.



**Real responsibility:** Work on projects that make a difference.



**Support:** A line manager and mentor guide progress.

<b>MYTH</b> Apprenticeships are a “last resort”	<b>FACT</b> They’re now a competitive, first-choice pathway with clear progression.
<b>MYTH</b> Apprentices don’t get real qualifications.	<b>FACT</b> Many apprenticeships lead to higher and degree-level qualifications.
<b>MYTH</b> It’s only for trades.	<b>FACT</b> Apprenticeships exist across engineering, digital, finance, healthcare, and more.
<b>MYTH</b> University is the only route to high-skilled careers.	<b>FACT</b> Apprenticeships combine academic learning and professional experience - often with no student debt.
<b>MYTH</b> Apprentices are given the work no one else wants to do.	<b>FACT</b> Our apprentices are given real responsibility from day one, being placed on real life projects, making valuable contributions.

# Why choose an apprenticeship

*"I chose an apprenticeship because I wanted a practical route into engineering after being told university wasn't for me. Almost seven years on, it's the best decision I've made - I've built a career I love by learning on the job."*

**Olivia – Mechanical Engineering Apprentice – Accelerated Apprentice**

*"I chose the apprenticeship route into my engineering career because I knew what I wanted to do, whether I went to go to university or not, but felt the experience in industry would pay dividends in the early years of my career."*

**Raphael, Electrical Engineering Apprentice**

*"I chose a Project Controls apprenticeship because I learn best by getting stuck in. Being able to build my confidence, pick up real experience, and see how projects come together day to day felt like the right path for me."*

**Lucy, Project Controls Apprentice**

*"I chose to complete a level 6 apprenticeship as it's a direct route into industry, whilst still completing a degree. The combination of learning on the job and learning in a classroom from day one is invaluable; and ensures faster progression in comparison to others with limited practical experience. The networking opportunities are priceless and enable a foundation of support for building my own career."*

**India, Project Controls Apprentice**

*"I wanted to achieve a higher level of education without being in a school environment whilst achieving key experience in the career I want to pursue."*

**Julia, Project Management Apprentice**

*"I picked an apprenticeship because I wanted to learn while in a working environment and liked the idea of feeling like I was being developed as a skilled team member."*

**Cameron, Electrical Manufacturing Apprentice**

*"I chose an apprenticeship as I found it extremely valuable to learn from experienced individuals while becoming qualified through classroom education."*

**Billy Project Controls Apprentice**

# How to pick an apprenticeship



## 1. Identify your interests

Choose a career path that matches your goals and passions - you'll be working full-time for several years, so pick something you enjoy.

- » **Think about your strengths:** Do you prefer hands-on practical work or a desk-based role?
- » Talk to your Careers Advisor in school or college
- » What are your current progression opportunities related to the qualifications you are currently studying?

## 2. Research

Explore different companies and apply to more than one - this gives you options.

**Check the apprenticeship structure:** some include college days, others are fully workplace-based.

## 3. Understand your options

Read job descriptions carefully and ask employers if you have questions.

Look into daily responsibilities and skills you'll gain.

Don't just pick the first advert-explore all roles and use resources like YouTube for insights.

Research employer reputation, culture, and progression opportunities.

# How to pick an apprenticeship



## 4. Practical considerations

- » **Location:** Can you travel or relocate?
- » **Entry requirements:** Do you need GCSEs, A Levels, or predicted grades?

## 5. Speak to others

Talk to current apprentices, teachers, parents, or mentors for real insights.

## 6. Attend events

Visit career fairs and open days to meet employers and see workplaces.

- » Look out for local events like our Creating Futures Event and college open days for hands-on experiences.

# Pathways & progression

## Apprenticeship Levels (UK)

This refers to the qualification level an apprentice will achieve while completing a specific scheme.

Qualification level	Equivalent to
Intermediate (Level 2)	5 GCSEs (grades 9–4)
Advanced (Level 3)	2 A Levels
Higher (Levels 4–5)	Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND), or Foundation Degree
Degree (Levels 6–7)	Bachelor's Degree (Level 6) or Master's Degree (Level 7) <i>(These are called Degree Apprenticeships)</i>

## Progression examples

Discipline Lead	Project Director	Procurement & Supply Chain Manager
Principal Engineer	Senior Project Manager	Procurement & Supply Chain Specialist
Senior Engineer	Project Manager	Procurement & Supply Chain Apprentice
Engineer	Assistant Project Manager	
Apprentice	Project Manager Apprentice	

## Compare to University

- » **Apprenticeships:** salary, practical experience, industry network, qualification.
- » **University:** academic focus, campus life, broad theoretical grounding.

Many apprentices pursue degree-level study while working, blending both routes.



# Our top tips



- Ensure your CV and cover letter are up to date (we can spot AI answers!)
- Ask somebody to proof-read both documents before you apply

- Take your time
- Be thorough
- Keep it simple

- Do your research about Babcock & Cavendish Nuclear
- Make the right first impression; be on time and well presented
- Be prepared with questions for the interviewer

*Know the timeline!*

# FAQs

## Do apprentices get paid?

Yes. Apprentices are employed and receive a salary. Many employers also provide benefits such as holidays, pensions, and wellbeing support. (Check employer/job ads for specific rates.)

## What qualification do they receive?

Apprentices complete an approved standard and an end-point assessment, gaining a nationally recognised qualification. Many pathways lead to higher or degree-level awards.

## How is training delivered?

A mix of on-the-job learning and off-the-job training with a training provider (college/university). Schedules vary by programme.

## Will they miss out on university life?

Apprenticeships can include university study and student communities while maintaining employment. It's a different experience - more professional responsibility and income.

## What about progression?

Clear routes to higher responsibility, specialist roles, and professional registration. Many apprentices become team leaders, engineers, or project managers.

## Is travel required?

Some programmes involve travel to provider sites or different company locations. Employers share schedules in advance.

**Parent Tip:** Compare Offers  
Review job descriptions, training content, rotation options, support (mentors), and progression pathways - not just salary.

# Guiding without deciding

## Start the Conversation

- » "Do you prefer learning by doing or through classroom study?"
- » "Which subjects or projects have you enjoyed most and why?"
- » "What kind of environment helps you do your best work?"

## Keep It Simple

- » Talk regularly—don't make it a big, formal discussion.
- » Start early and make career conversations a normal part of everyday life.
- » Show genuine interest in what they want, even if their ideas change over time.

### Parent Tip:

Ask open-ended questions and listen without judgment. Your role is to guide, not decide.

### Parent Tip: Build Confidence

Focus on strengths. Help your child collect evidence: school projects, part-time work, self-directed builds, awards, and feedback.



# Next steps and resources

Find out how you can work with us to create a safe and secure world, together

[earlycareers.babcockinternational.com](http://earlycareers.babcockinternational.com)

Opportunities go live in the Autumn.

## Useful resources

- » Apprenticeships guidance (UK): [gov.uk/apprenticeships](http://gov.uk/apprenticeships)
- » Find an apprenticeship: [gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)
- » UCAS Apprenticeships: [ucas.com/apprenticeships](http://ucas.com/apprenticeships)
- » Destination Nuclear: <https://www.destinationnuclear.com/>

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# Notes



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