

When applying for an apprenticeship, it's really important to remember that you are basically applying for a job – not a university place, even if you're applying for a degree apprenticeship. There are more steps involved in applying for an apprenticeship because they're more competitive (because there are fewer out there) than a university place.

Once you progress past the application stage for an apprenticeship, there are a few different stages that might come next – not all apprenticeship schemes will have them, but most will have at least one. We've put together some top tips for each of these and included some good resources you can look at afterwards.

It might seem like a bit of a chore to go through all these steps, but even if you're unsuccessful it will be really good experience for applying for jobs in future.

Video Interviews (sometimes pre-recorded)

- Make sure your laptop or computer has a working webcam and if you need to install a particular program do this well in advance.
- If you have a poor internet connection, warn the company in advance. They may agree to an alternative format for the interview, like a telephone call.
- The questions will be very similar to a face-to-face interview, so prepare with this in mind.
- You should still dress smartly even if you're just in your bedroom! Think about the background too.

Face-to-face Interviews

- Look over your application form beforehand so you know what kind of examples you used to highlight your skills and experience – it's fine to use these again. It will also remind you what skills the company is looking for.
- Googling typical interview questions and practicing your answers is a great way to prepare. Practice out loud, maybe with a friend or family member, to get yourself used to them. You don't need to memorise your answers to these – people can tell when you have – but knowing which example you would use to highlight your communication skills means you'll be calmer and not floundering for an example.
- Remember to use the STAR or CARL technique. This helps to make sure you hit all the points you need to when answering interview questions. It works like this: Situation, Task, Action, Result or Challenge, Action, Result, Lesson. Give it a google to find examples, or check out our recommended resources on the next page.
- Researching the company in advance is crucial, and make sure you have a few questions to ask at the end of the interview.

Psychometric Tests

- While these may sound painful, they are standard for competitive apprenticeships with big companies.
- They can include: abstract reasoning, aptitude tests, numerical reasoning, personality tests, and verbal reasoning tests. They're all a bit like riddles and show your approach to problem solving and the ability to think carefully about a problem.
- You can find examples online, and often will be given a few practice questions before having to do your actual test.

Assessment Centre

- These are really common in the apprenticeship selection process – RateMyApprenticeship said that, in 2019, 88% of companies used an assessment centre.
- This is often the final stage of the selection process, is usually hosted at the company's offices, and involves multiple candidates.
- The day may start with ice-breakers and then involve some or all of the following: tests/individual tasks, group exercises, a face-to-face interview, and a presentation.
- The group exercise is about seeing how you work with others, it's not about proving you're the best and everyone else is rubbish. Be friendly and make sure to listen to everyone in your group.
- The individual task is usually problem-based, and may involve writing a response or doing something on Microsoft Excel.
- All the face-to-face interview tips above apply to an assessment centre interview too! This is likely the most important part of the day, so do your preparation.
- Some companies have switched to *virtual* assessment centres – usually they involve the same elements we've already mentioned. One thing to remember is that it can be a bit harder to get your 'voice heard' during group exercises on a video call, so try to contribute and show you are actively listening. Our tips for a video interview are relevant here too.

Resources

- [What to expect from a virtual assessment centre](#)
- [Preparing for an interview](#)
- [Preparing for an interview](#)
- [RateMyApprenticeship's guide to STAR method](#)

