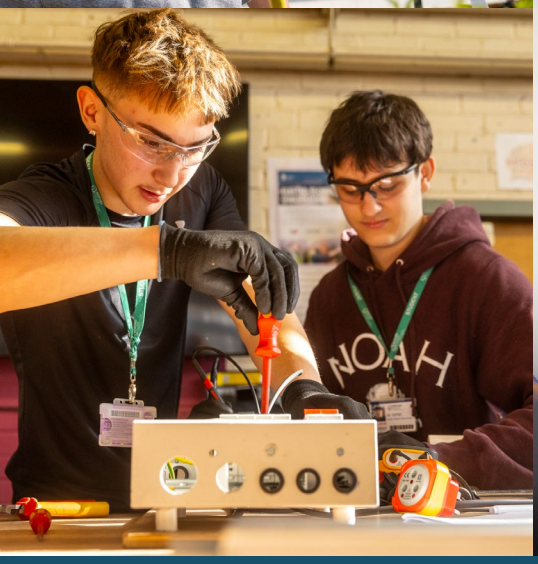




THE BEDFORD COLLEGE GROUP







EMPLOYER GUIDE TO APPRENTICESHIPS







THE BEDFORD COLLEGE GROUP APPRENTICESHIPS

WELCOME TO THE BEDFORD COLLEGE GROUP

We are proud to work alongside around 760 employers who see value in providing apprenticeship opportunities to over 1,600 apprentices within their businesses.

Our dedicated Business Engagement Account Managers and Apprenticeship Recruitment Advisers will collaborate closely with you, the employer, ensuring you receive support and guidance at every stage of enrolling your apprentice onto their apprenticeship programme.

"The Bedford College Group are incredibly helpful in supporting us with bespoke training and apprenticeships that we require for our business. They also provide an excellent quality of learning that allows our apprentices to expand their knowledge and gain confidence in the roles they cover on site."

Angela Bryden
Tata Steel

LET'S MEET AND EXPLAIN ALL THINGS APPRENTICESHIPS TO YOU!

We want to ensure you have all the information you need before proceeding - that's why we are keen to meet with you to walk through the apprenticeship process, answer your questions and explore how it can align to your business needs.

Contact us!

Our Business Engagement Team is ready to assist you as you begin your journey supporting an apprentice.

01234 291747

training@bedford.ac.uk

HOW THE FUNDING WORKS

Levy Employers

Levy paying employers will pay 100% of the agreed amount of the apprenticeship standard funding band. This amount will be deducted from your levy via your apprenticeship service account on a payment schedule.

Non-Levy Employers

As a non-levy employer the government will pay 100% of the apprenticeship training costs up to the funding band maximum for apprentices aged **16 - 24.**

If your apprentice does not meet this criteria, you will pay just 5% towards the cost of training and the government will contribute the rest, up to the funding band maximum.

Apprenticeship Funding Bands

All apprenticeship standards are placed into a funding band, within a 30-band funding structure, with the upper limit ranging from £1,500 to £27,000. Skills England provides recommendations to the Department for Education on the appropriate funding band for each standard and it reviews existing standards' funding bands on a regular basis.

Apprenticeship Service Account:

All employers hiring new apprentices are now required to set up an Apprenticeship Service account.

Scan the QR code to register or sign in to your account

INCENTIVE INFORMATION

£1,000 is available for all employers who hire an apprentice:

- aged 16 to 18
- aged 19 to 24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or who has been in the care of their local authority

The payments will be issued in 2 equal instalments for each apprentice.

SME Hiring Incentive

From 1st October 2026, non-levy paying employers will be able to get a payment of up to **£2,000** when recruiting new apprentices aged 16 to 24.

This will apply to those starting an apprenticeship from 1 October 2026, providing they've joined their employer within the past 90 days. The first payment will be made once the learner has completed the first 90 days of their apprenticeship and the second payment is paid 365 days after the apprenticeship starts.

£3,000 Youth Jobs Grant (all employers)

Employers of any size will be able to claim £3,000 when they hire an eligible unemployed young person aged 18 to 24 through the youth guarantee / Youth Jobs Grant route (for example, someone who has been on Universal Credit and out of work for a defined period). Where that hire is also taken on as an apprentice, this payment can sit alongside other eligible incentives.

National Insurance Savings

You pay 0% Class 1 National Insurance for apprentices under 25 years old.

For further information on incentives, please scan the QR code

Disclaimer: While we make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this guide, funding and eligibility rules are set by the government and may change. All incentives are subject to availability, eligibility criteria and updates.

TRANSFERRING FUNDS

Employers can transfer unused funds in their account to any number of other employers, for any number of apprenticeships.

They can transfer up to the annual maximum transfer allowance of 50%. For example, employers could transfer funds to other employers in their supply chains or work with regional, local or sector partners.

Employers can transfer unspent levy funds to other employers through the online pledge function in their apprenticeship service account. Employers can specify the amount of their funds available for transfer. They can also define the criteria of the apprenticeship they wish to support.

This pledge is then advertised on search funding opportunities. This enables other employers, training providers and intermediary bodies to see what opportunities are available. Potential receiving employers will be able to apply for these pledges through their apprenticeship service account.

Alternatively, if an employer already knows who they want to send a transfer to then this can be done through a direct transfer connection.

Receiving employers can use transferred funds to pay for the training and assessment cost (up to the funding band maximum) of their apprenticeship.

For more information on transferring funds, please scan the QR code



T: 01234 291747

OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

Off-the-job training is an essential component and a mandatory requirement of an apprenticeship.

Furthermore, off-the-job training is defined as learning which is undertaken outside of day-to-day work duties and leads towards the achievement of the apprenticeship. This training takes place within the apprentice's normal (contracted) working hours. The off-the-job training must be directly relevant to the apprenticeship. The minimum off-the-job training for each apprentice will depend on the apprenticeship standard they are enrolled on. This will be discussed with you prior to commencement of the apprenticeship.

Off-the-job training can be covered by:

- **College attendance**
- **Work shadowing**
- **Observing skilled workers**
- **Learning new tasks**
- **Leading on new projects**
- **Working on assignments and revision activities**
- **Completing job reports**
- **Accessing practical training at work**
- **Developing a portfolio (OneFile)**

APPRENTICESHIP OFFERING

Aviation

Level 3 Aircraft Maintenance Technician

Level 4 Engineering Manufacturing Technician - Aviation

Construction Trades

Level 2 Bricklayer

Level 2 Carpentry & Joinery Pathway 1 - Site Carpentry

Level 2 Carpentry & Joinery Pathway 2 - Architectural Joiner

Level 2 Fitted Interior Installer

Level 2 Painter and Decorator

Level 2 Property Maintenance Operative

Level 3 Craft Bricklayer

Level 3 Craft Carpentry & Joinery Pathway 1 - Advanced Site Carpenter

Level 3 Craft Carpentry & Joinery Pathway 2 - Advanced Architectural Joiner

Plumbing & Gas

Level 3 Plumbing and Domestic Heating Technician

Electrical

Level 3 Installation and Maintenance Electrician

Technical & Professional Construction

Level 3 Civil Engineering Technician

Level 3 Surveying Technician

Level 4 Building Services Engineering Senior Technician

Level 4 Civil Engineering Senior Technician

Level 4 Construction Site Supervisor

Level 4 Construction Quantity Surveying Technician

Engineering

Level 2 Engineering Operative

Level 3 Engineering Fitter

Level 3 Mechatronics Maintenance Technician

Level 3 Engineering Technician - Product Design and Development Technician Pathway 11

Level 3 Engineering and Manufacturing Support Technician

Level 3 Engineering Technician - Toolmaker and Tool and Die Maintenance Technician Pathway 12

Level 3 Machining Technician

Level 4 Automation and Controls Engineering Technician

Level 4 Lead Engineering Maintenance Technician

Level 4 Engineering Manufacturing Technician

Motorsport

Level 2 Engineering Operative (Motorsport)

Motor Vehicle

Level 2 Autocare Technician

Level 3 Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician (Light Vehicle)

Level 3 Vehicle Damage Paint Technician

Land-Based

Level 2 Horticulture and Landscape Operative

Logistics

Level 2 Express Delivery Operative

Level 2 Express Hub Operative

Level 2 Large Goods Vehicles (LGV) Driver

Level 2 Urban Driver

Level 3 Supply Chain Warehouse Operative

Level 3 Transport and Warehouse Supervisor

Level 4 Associate Project Manager

Business Services

Level 2 Customer Service Practitioner

Level 3 Customer Service Specialist

Level 3 Business Administrator

Finance

Level 2 Accounts or Finance Assistant

Level 3 Assistant Accountant

Human Resources

Level 3 HR Support

Digital

Level 3 Information Communications Technician

Sales

Level 4 Sales Executive

Childcare & Teaching

Level 3 Early Years Educator

Level 3 Teaching Assistant

Hairdressing

Level 2 Hair Professional - Hairdressing

Apprenticeship units

Apprenticeship units offer short, flexible training in key skill areas for existing employees aged 19+.

Designed to help businesses rapidly upskill their workforce, these courses enable staff to adapt to evolving roles, master new competencies and address critical skill gaps.

For more information, please contact our Business Engagement Team.

If you're interested in an apprenticeship standard not included in this guide, please contact our Business Engagement Team. We are committed to supporting employers meet local skills needs.

Email: training@bedford.ac.uk

Call: 01234 291747

ENGLISH & MATHS

English and maths are an essential part of every apprenticeship and each apprentice will have English and maths skills developed as part of their programme.

Apprentices who have not already achieved their GCSE grade 4/C (or other equivalent English/maths qualification) may need to achieve Functional Skills Level 2 English and maths qualifications, as part of their apprenticeship.

Should apprentices need to complete Functional Skills English and maths, they will be fully supported to complete these by our dedicated Functional Skills team at The Bedford College Group.

"Working alongside Bedford College for Neville has made such a difference. Their knowledge and support has been invaluable - there is always someone available to answer a question and make you feel at ease. We look forward to our continued working relationship with Bedford College"

Krystal Bailey
HR and Social Value Coordinator
for the Neville Trust Group

READY TO RECRUIT OR ALREADY RECRUITED?

Whether you have an apprentice you would like to enrol or you have an apprenticeship vacancy, we have a dedicated Apprenticeship Recruitment Team who can manage the process for you.

If you are an employer looking to recruit an apprentice, our Apprenticeship Recruitment Team will support you with this. They can advertise, review and send over candidates for you to shortlist and interview. All we will need from you is a job description and some information regarding the vacancy - we can manage the rest.

If you are an employer who has already identified an apprentice or has an existing employee who you would like to enrol onto an apprenticeship, then our Apprenticeship Recruitment Team will complete a pre-enrolment process with your apprentice. Your designated Apprenticeship Recruitment Adviser will liaise with you to keep you informed of the progress.

It's time to enrol your apprentice!

Your apprentice will be contacted and asked to complete an initial assessment (English & maths) and a skills scan to identify their starting point. Your apprentice will also be assigned a designated Training Co-ordinator who will support their apprenticeship journey once they are enrolled, from induction through to completion.

You will be introduced to your apprentice's Training Co-ordinator at your apprentice's pre-enrolment meeting. Following this initial meeting, you and your apprentice will be invited into the College for an induction, where all the relevant enrolment paperwork will be concluded.

bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk/apprenticeships

Enjoy the journey!

Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything you need to discuss - we are here to guide you and your apprentice every step of the way.

FAQs

How much do I need to pay my apprentice?

Employers can pay their apprentice(s) as much as they like provided it is not below the National Minimum Wage (NMW) for apprentices, which is £8.00 per hour (effective from 1st April 2026). This applies to 16-18 year old apprentices and those aged 19 and over in the first year of their apprenticeship. If they start working with you before they are enrolled onto their apprenticeship, they should not be paid below National Minimum Wage for their age during this time. Their hourly rate can revert to apprenticeship minimum wage once they have been enrolled.

Do I need to employ my apprentice or can they be self-employed?

The apprentice must have a contract with you, which is long enough for them to complete the apprenticeship successfully (including their apprenticeship assessment). Apprentices cannot be individuals who are self-employed.

Do I need to pay my apprentice when they are at college?

The wage for apprentices applies to both time spent on the job plus time spent training.

Is there an upper age limit for apprenticeships?

No, apprentices can be any age; however the funding varies depending on age.

What is the apprenticeship assessment?

Apprenticeship assessment is the final stage of an apprenticeship. It is an impartial assessment to determine whether your apprentice has developed the skills, knowledge and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard.

SAFEGUARDING

Creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment is a shared commitment between the College, the employer and the apprentice. Together, we all have a responsibility to promote wellbeing and ensure that apprentices feel safe, respected and supported wherever they are learning and working.

Apprentices have the right to be safe and to feel safe, whether they are at home, in college, in the workplace or out in the community. We are committed to working in partnership with employers to ensure that both college and work settings provide a positive, secure and supportive environment in which apprentices can thrive.

We encourage apprentices to speak to us if they are worried about themselves or someone else, or if they feel they are being harmed, bullied, pressured or made to do something they do not want to do. Concerns may relate to experiences within the workplace, college or outside of these settings.

Employers, college staff and apprentices all play an important role in recognising concerns and taking appropriate action. If an apprentice has a safeguarding concern, they should speak to one of the following:

- a Designated Training Co-ordinator
- their College Tutor
- a member of the College Safeguarding Team

If they have any concerns at all, our staff are trained to support them. They can contact the safeguarding team via email or telephone using the contact details below:

Northamptonshire

01536 413004

safe@tresham.ac.uk

Central Bedfordshire

01582 349641

safeguardingcbc@bedford.ac.uk

Bedfordshire

01234 291888

safe@bedford.ac.uk

If they would prefer to raise a concern anonymously, they can do so through the Report and Support section of the College website.

or visit
bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk

EQUITY & DIVERSITY

The Bedford College Group welcomes the diversity of our learners.

Whether studying on our campuses or in the workplace, all our learners are entitled to develop their skills and knowledge in a supportive environment free from discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment. Encouraging equity and preventing discrimination are good for businesses in many ways, including:

- reducing the chance of complaints, disciplinary action or an employment tribunal claim - and avoids the costs and disruption to the company
- improving team spirit - an employee or groups of employees who are being discriminated against are likely to be unhappy, less productive and demotivated and this can have a negative impact on all employees
- reducing the likelihood of staff leaving as a result of discrimination, which also reduces the costs of recruiting, training and settling in new staff
- enhancing the reputation of the company as a progressive and inclusive employer
- having a diverse workforce that can bring different ideas and solutions and help a company better understand and meet diverse customer expectations

To encourage equity and prevent discrimination you should:

- take prompt action to stop harassment or bullying as soon as it is identified
- ensure that offensive comments are not dismissed as banter
- investigate when complaints are made and keep a record of any action taken
- use your judgement to correct behaviour that could be considered offensive and remind employees and learners of company policy on these matters. Please visit www.acas.org.uk for an example of an Equality and Diversity Policy which you can adapt to suit your business
- if applicable, be prepared to take reasonable steps to ensure the working environment is accessible to all employees and learners, for example, ensure that toilets, changing facilities and eating areas can be used by everyone

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BEDFORD COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY CENTRE
Part of The Bedford College Group

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY CENTRE
Part of The Bedford College Group

NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR LOGISTICS
Part of The Bedford College Group

NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR MOTORSPORT
SILVERSTONE
Part of The Bedford College Group

SHUTTLEWORTH COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY CENTRE
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TRESHAM COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY CENTRE
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DISCLAIMER: While every effort is made to ensure that the information within this guide is correct at the time of printing, some details may be subject to change. The Bedford College Group reserves the right to make amendments to the study programmes or other details, and to make cancellations or changes if student numbers are insufficient.

FSC