

Applying to Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships can offer incredible opportunities for many students, but can be tricky to find and successfully apply for. Thorough research and preparation can greatly improve success in navigating the sometimes confusing apprenticeship landscape. This guide outlines the expectations that the college has of your son/daughter, what they can expect from us, and how you can best support them through this process

“Jack has been offered a Trainee Estimator role with construction firm Wates. This starts as a Higher Apprenticeship (HNC) moving eventually onto Degree and Chartership status.

“My name is Nabila. I had never heard of Cisco, and didn't know who they were or what they did, But now, I am officially a proud Cisco Cross-Functional Degree Apprentice, along with Chloe (also from ASFC).”

Our Expectations

- **Experience!** We expect all students to seek out work placements, virtual work experience and industry masterclasses to give them a taste of the sectors that they might want to go into. We expect all students to look at opportunities promoted
- **Research!** We expect students to take on all the information provided in tutorials, use the resources they are signposted to - and ask for help if they need it! The range of opportunities as an alternative to full time higher education is broad, and can be complex to understand. The types of roles available can vary tremendously depending on the industry, the employer or the professional body involved, as can the pay and other benefits, terms and conditions and the amount or level of training included. We expect all students to check the details of each vacancy carefully before applying.
- **Consider!** We expect all students to consider both apprenticeships and full time university options. In fact, students are able (and advised) to apply to both routes. If your son/daughter is lucky enough to be offered both, we can help them to make an informed decision when the time comes. Students should look at a wide range of industries, employers and roles, at least at the start of the search process. Not only will this improve chances of success but might show your son/daughter options they hadn't previously considered.
- **Ask!** We strongly recommend that students seek advice before the summer as this gives them time over the holidays for research and to gain experience. Once your son/daughter begins their apprenticeship hunt in earnest, support will be available from the Careers Department and their Senior Tutor. We are able to help with all aspects of this process, from searching and writing applications right through to providing mock interviews and assessment centre support.
- **Respect!** When trying to secure a role, timing is everything and deadlines are final. Unlike the UCAS process, there is no single application portal so students will need to complete multiple searches and applications over the year. Some roles can be advertised almost a year in advance (in September of A2 year), and the numbers of vacancies tend to increase as time goes on, particularly at the turn of the New Year. Employers may stop taking applications if they get enough interest before the advertised date, so students are advised to apply early.
- **Work Hard!** Opportunities are usually limited in number in any role or with any one employer, and can be very competitive. Getting past the application stage is only the start, and even that can be challenging! If your son/daughter gets to the later recruitment stages they'll need to be very well prepared for the range of activities they might need to do next, including taking part in interviews, assessment centres, presentations or employer experience events. Help is available with all of this - they just need to ask!

What Students can Expect from Us

- Time and support in tutorials to research apprenticeships and search for opportunities. Senior Tutors will take your son/daughter through this process step by step, as well as preparing them to talk about their skills and experiences in applications and interviews

- Opportunities for feedback and support writing applications. It is really important that applications are tweaked to focus on exact vacancies, job descriptions and person specifications, so there is no limit to how many times students access this support.
- Well written and supportive references that focus on the transferable skills and personal qualities that employers most want to see in an applicant
- Advice and guidance about apprenticeships, applications and assessment centres/interviews
- Mock interviews available for all students

How can you help?

- Take part in the conversation – it is really important that you are part of this conversation and so we actively encourage all parents/carers to have regular discussions with their son or daughters about their aims and ambitions and where they are up to with their applications
- Help keep morale up after rejections. Unlike the single application process of UCAS, applying for apprenticeships is a lot more like applying for jobs. Students may need to complete multiple applications, have multiple interviews and unfortunately receive multiple rejections before finding the perfect fit. Please reassure your son or daughter that this is normal and does not mean that they should give up!
- Ask for help! If there is anything that you don't understand about apprenticeships or the application process, please do not hesitate to contact the college. It may also be helpful to look at the following resources
 - <https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>
 - <https://www.asfc.ac.uk/about-us/parents-and-carers>
 - <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers/resources-for-parents#>
 - www.unifrog.com has an Apprenticeship tool built in with lots of hints and tips, application support and an apprenticeship finder. Parents can log in too! Simply use – “asfcparents” as the formcode

“Over the past few months, Jack has spent hours of his own time, his study day and his free periods working both alone and with College staff on making applications, preparing for interviews, assessments and presentations, and creating and practising presentations, all while keeping up with his coursework and holding down part-time work. This job outcome is richly deserved, and is a fine example of the power of determination and persistence. Jack has also grown tremendously in confidence during this time, and all of this will stand him in great stead in the future. Well done Jack!”