

Think Ahead

EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO ACCA APPRENTICESHIPS IN ENGLAND

All you need to know about funding, programmes, training, support and further study.

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ACCAn introduction to apprenticeships

ACCA is the world's most forward-thinking professional accountancy body. With more than 233,000 members and 536,000 students in 178 countries, we're also the number one choice for accountancy students worldwide.

We inspire, develop and continuously upskill financial talent. Employers know they can trust our apprenticeships to create future-proofed financial experts who boost business and lead the way to success.

An ACCA apprenticeship is a genuine job alongside an assessment and skills development training programme. It's a combination of learning and applying new skills on-the-job; and more formal training off-the-job – usually with one of our accredited third-party training providers. Apprentices earn while they learn, and employers gain the skillsets they need within their workforce to take them forward.

This guide will show you how simple and cost-effective it is to train your people through an ACCA apprenticeship. Our team's always happy to chat through your options and give advice too. We often bring in contractors to help fill vital resourcing gaps, but we've wanted to find a more sustainable and long-term solution to bringing in early and emerging talent to our business. We knew it was time to do something different. It also meant we could help early and emerging talent see the potential in accountancy, and a career in financial services, we have been able to grow and develop them resulting in their loyalty, so why wouldn't we? RSA

ACCAchieve real business growth

There are lots of reasons why businesses of all shapes, sizes and sectors choose ACCA apprenticeships for their finance and accounting talent.

Significant government funding

The government provides funding and financial incentives to help develop apprentices with soughtafter and specialist skills that will benefit your business as well as the wider economy. The specifics depend on the size of your business (which we'll come to later).

A globally-recognised qualification

The ACCA Qualification is the modern accountancy professional's benchmark. Some of our apprenticeships award the full ACCA Qualification. Others lay the groundwork towards it. All provide essential digital, ethical and analytical skills, and a unique toolkit of non-technical skills.

Grow your own talent

Whether you plan to train a current employee or someone new, the programme flexes. Everything is tailored so the apprentice develops the accounting knowledge, digital-first financial skills, business expertise and ambitious mindset to drive your business forward.

An investor in people

Studies show that finance professionals want to see a clear career path from their employer. Our apprenticeships help you show your commitment to developing your people – building loyalty with current employees and a positive employer profile to the outside world.

Increasing diversity

ACCA apprenticeships are open to everyone and can provide the opportunity to increase diversity within your business. It offers an alternative to traditional study routes and can remove barriers into the profession. 52% of our UK students are female, and we're always looking for ways to increase access to a rewarding accountancy career.

Succession planning

Beyond financial specialisms, our apprenticeships create accountants you'll pinpoint as future leaders within your organisation. Inspirational figures who can recognise your challenges and use their strategic, business and professional capabilities to address them.

ACCAssurance that our apprenticeships are right for you

So, what sets an ACCA apprenticeship apart? Aside from bringing a whole host of experience and expertise, we'll support you in a number of ways.

- ACCA qualifications are a benchmark of quality. As the world's most forward-thinking professional accountancy body, we award a series of respected apprentice qualifications – as well as membership to our exclusive and ever-growing global network.
- Flexibility is built into every apprenticeship. Start dates, duration, level of apprenticeship, training methods and more are all open for discussion. We make sure your apprenticeship is perfectly tailored to you.
- We only work with the best training providers. You can choose to deliver the entire apprenticeship yourself. But in most cases, a third-party training provider delivers the technical elements, offers advice, arranges funding and keeps the training on track.

• There's support with recruitment.

If you're looking for a new apprentice (or someone at any level), our ACCA Careers online job board is the market leading industry specific platform. Any employer can use it to support you in attracting the brightest talent.

- Global recognition comes as standard with ACCA. We're the world leaders in what we do. That means your apprentice will be working to the highest standards of quality to gain skills, knowledge and qualifications that are recognised internationally.
- A dedicated ACCA support team will be on hand. We are here for both you and your apprentices throughout the programme. They can answer any questions, advise on any aspect of the training and even make recommendations for further study.

Training is at the heart of what we do. When we bring in fresh apprentice and graduate talent, they become an important part of our succession plans, and we work to help them grow to hold senior positions and, in some cases, Partner. It's important to understand that when you grow your own people, they grow with the firm.

Kreston Reeves

ACCApprenticeships at a glance

We've built a market-leading blend of professional skills into our apprenticeships, aligned to the ACCA syllabus.

That means your apprentices will be trained to the same standard as someone studying outside of an apprenticeship – but with the added benefit of work experience, skills and behaviours training, and a significant contribution towards the cost of training.

No matter what level your apprentice joins us at, they'll build the expertise and experience to enjoy a successful accounting career – with a pathway to further study and degree-level qualifications.

- Funded access to a world-class accounting and finance education.
- Builds technical knowledge and soft skills.
- Uses real-life work scenarios and latest technologies.
- Developed by employers and designed to meet business needs.
- Produces forward-thinking strategic accountants.
- Includes business acumen and professional competencies.



ACCApprenticeships available in England

Level 4: Accounting Technician Apprenticeship

Typically completed in 12-18 months.

Covers the first part of the globally-recognised ACCA Qualification and builds essential knowledge of finance, accounting and business structures. Apprentices will be able to create and verify financial information for you.

Level 7: Professional Accountant Apprenticeship

Typically completed in 36 months.

Aligned to the full ACCA Qualification, apprentices gain leadership skills and a much deeper understanding of the drivers of change within business. On completion of the apprenticeship, apprentices can continue their journey to ACCA membership by completing the practical experience requirements. They can also go on to specialise and become a subject expert.

(Please note: levels, pathways and training providers differ in Scotland and Wales)

Level 4: Accounting Technician Apprenticeship

An entry-level route into ACCA and the accountancy profession

This programme trains apprentices to understand the structure and functions of different businesses; as well as create, verify and review accurate financial information.

They'll meet all the relevant ethical, professional and legal standards, and use their knowledge of business systems, processes and standard accounting practices to analyse financial information and make recommendations for your business.

The structure

Apprentices study the first three modules and exams of the ACCA Qualification (which make up ACCA's globally-recognised Diploma in Accounting and Business) before completing the Foundations in Professionalism module and the end-point assessment. On completion, your apprentice will gain the Diploma as well as the Apprenticeship award.

The minimum time to complete this programme is 12 months. Most apprentices complete it in 12-18 months and the only time limit is that students must complete their end-point assessment 12 months after taking their previous exam. This will be agreed between you and your apprentice. You can also choose to combine self-study, remote teaching and face-to-face tuition study styles.

Skills and knowledge covered

- Business and Technology: Has a strong focus on financial technology including cloud computing, blockchain, artificial intelligence, big data and data analytics as well as the risks related to data from cyber-attacks.
- Management Accounting: Techniques to support management in planning, controlling and monitoring performance.
- **Financial Accounting**: The underlying principles of financial accounting, and technical proficiency in double-entry accounting techniques.
- Foundations in Professionalism: An online interactive module covering professionalism, ethics and personal effectiveness.

Assessments

Our on programme assessments include on demand, online exams for each module. There's also an end-point assessment, the Technician Role Simulation (TRS) exam.

The TRS exam assesses the application of knowledge, skills and behaviours through a case study that reflects a typical accounting technician role.

The TRS exam also provides a smooth bridge to the Level 7 apprenticeship by helping apprentices develop the professional skills and behaviours essential to achieving ACCA membership and a successful accountancy career.

Apprentices must also submit a Portfolio (which includes their training log) and Reflective Statement (PRS) for review by ACCA.

What's next...

Once your apprentice has completed the Level 4 apprenticeship, they can continue their journey to ACCA chartered certified status and membership.

We offer various routes of further study, including flexible entry points into the Professional Accountant Apprenticeship (Level 7).

Level 4: Accounting Technician Apprenticeship





End-point assessment

Technician Role Simulation exam

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Portfolio & Reflective Statement

What next?

Continue the journey to membership by completing the ACCA Qualification or the ACCA Professional Accountant Apprenticeship – Level 7.

Undergraduate and Masters degree options are also available.

Level 7: Professional Accountant Apprenticeship

A funded pathway to the full ACCA Qualification

The Professional Accountant Apprenticeship has the power to help ambitious finance professionals become fully qualified and have a lasting impact on any business in any sector.

At the same level of a Master's degree, it follows the structure of our flagship professional accountancy qualification. There are also flexible entry points for those with prior qualifications and experience.

The structure

As well as a series of technical modules, Level 7 apprentices will complete ACCA's Ethics and Professional Skills module during their journey. This innovative and industry-leading module helps apprentices develop the ethical behaviours and judgement needed for modern business. The structure also offers some flexibility, allowing apprentices to choose particular modules to develop specialist technical excellence.

Apprentices typically complete the Level 7 apprenticeship in 36 months, though this varies depending on their entry point into the programme. Exemptions may also be available.

Skills and knowledge covered

- Inspirational leadership: There's an emphasis on organisational management, senior consultancy and advisory capabilities throughout the programme, ensuring your employees are ready to become pivotal figures for you.
- Greater world-view: Many of the modules mix technical elements with ethical and professional skills in particular an appreciation of sustainability issues.
- **Strategic brilliance**: Focusing on complex business issues and financial analysis, your apprentice will also be equipped to make strategic decisions that benefit your business.

Assessment

Level 7 apprentices take ACCA module exams throughout their training. They also need to pass an end-point assessment which includes our Strategic Business Leader exam. This is a pivotal case study based on a hypothetical scenario that assesses their knowledge, skills, behaviours and real-world understanding.

They also complete a Project Report. This is a critical reflection based on their relevant work experience, examining how they have used and developed their professional skills and behaviours in the context of their role, their organisation and wider stakeholders.

What's next...

Your apprentice can become an ACCA member after successfully completing the apprenticeship, provided they have 36 months' practical experience, some of which will be gained along their apprenticeship journey.

Level 7: Professional Accountant Apprenticeship



ACCAgreeing who does what

One of the key aims of apprenticeships is to focus on skills and behaviours, as well as theory and technical knowledge.

So, as an employer, you'll need to:

- Provide a practical period of work and training that lasts for a minimum duration of 12 months and pay a lawful wage for the time they are in work and in off the job training.
- Give your apprentice plenty of opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours to succeed. You must also make sure they're able to apply their learning in a live work environment – in effect, an instant benefit to your business.
- Provide an induction into their role, exposure to appropriate work, and time to study and take exams.
- Choose a training provider. We can make recommendations and introduce you. They will then work in partnership with you to structure the programme. Your chosen partner can also deliver all the technical elements, conduct assessments, check progress, and provide study materials, advice and support.
- Allow time for off-the-job training. This could be spent inside or outside the workplace, and could include theoretical learning (such as lectures, role playing or online learning), practical training (such as shadowing, mentorship, industry visits or attending competitions), or time spent writing assignments or studying for assessments.

- Decide with your apprentice whether more-formal training elements are completed on a day release, by self-study or online or a combination of all three. Your training provider will help you design a programme that suits everyone.
- Agree the terms of the apprenticeship with your apprentice and write a commitment statement which we can advise on. This can be part of their employment contract.
- If you're training a current employee, consider amending the terms of their contract to reflect the needs of the programme – for example building in study leave. However, you don't need to switch them to an apprenticeship contract.

With ACCA's help, we've been able to find talented people to join us and provide a high level of service for our clients.

Ascendant Partners Limited

Choose to offer ACCA Apprenticeships

STEP ONE

Choose to offer ACCA Apprenticeships

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

- Get in touch with our dedicated employer support team at **apprenticeships@accaglobal.com**.
- Choose the apprenticeship(s) that you want to offer.
- Choose your training provider and agree the cost.
- Confirm funding eligibility and set up relevant accounts.

WHAT ACCA WILL DO

- Give you all the information you need about our apprenticeships.
- Introduce you to a high-quality training provider.
- Support you with the decision-making process.

WHAT YOUR TRAINING PROVIDER CAN DO

- Give you all the information you need about their training programmes.
- Support you with all aspects of setting up your apprenticeships including funding and relevant paperwork.
- Help you to set up your apprenticeship service account if required.

STEP TWO

Attract and recruit your apprentice

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

- Advertise your apprenticeship, recruit your apprentice(s) or choose which current employee(s) to train.
- Finalise your apprenticeship agreement and commitment statement and ask your apprentices to sign all necessary contracts and agreements.
- Finalise your agreement with your training provider.
- Register your apprentice with ACCA.

WHAT ACCA WILL DO

- Help you with talent attraction through ACCA Careers our market leading industry specialist job board.
- Register your apprentice.

WHAT YOUR TRAINING PROVIDER WILL DO

- Register your apprentice with the government.
- Check eligibility for incentives.
- Finalise funding and payment.

STEP THREE

Train your apprentice

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

- Start your apprentice on their programme.
- Provide them with relevant on-the-job training.
- Give them time to complete their off-the-job learning.
- Make sure they're ready for their assessments.

WHAT ACCA WILL DO

- Provide the on-programme assessments.
- Mark your apprentices' on-programme and end-point assessments.
- Report your apprentices' results to you (large employers only).
- Issue qualifications and recommend further development options.

WHAT YOUR TRAINING PROVIDER WILL DO

- Provide study and support.
- Prepare your apprentice for all assessments.
- Conduct regular progress reviews, advising on additional requirements and when they're ready to take assessments.
- Organise funding and incentive payments and collect any required additional payments.

ACCAccredited routes to membership and chartered certified status

Once your apprentice has completed their programme, they can choose whether to continue working towards further ACCA qualifications or membership. This can be done through our apprenticeship pathways, university or traditional study.

We've partnered with Oxford Brookes University to offer ACCA students a BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting, which reflects modern employers' needs. And we've partnered with the University of London to offer an MSc in Professional Accountancy for ACCA affiliates and members.

These degrees are optional and can be completed alongside and after the apprenticeship to enable your apprentices to take their learning further.

We also offer a range of further qualifications and industry-leading professional development opportunities. In short, it's easy for ACCA accountants to stay at the cutting edge of the profession, fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to manage business' ever-changing financial and technological challenges.



* For all UK apprenticeships, GCSE's in Maths and English Grade 4/C and above are required before passing through the End Point Assessment.

** T Level in Accounting available from September 2022. ***Exemptions may be available.

Entry requirements

| | Entry requirements | Flexible Entry |
|--|--|---|
| ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN APPRENTICESHIP - LEVEL 4 (ENGLAND) | There are no set entry requirements, but your apprentice must have GCSE passes in English and Maths when they attempt the end-point assessment. You might also want to set your own additional entry criteria. | Options are available to start at ACCA's Foundations In Accountancy Levels 2, 3 or 4. |
| PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT APPRENTICESHIP – LEVEL 7 (ENGLAND) | Apprentices need to have 3 GCSE's and 2 A levels including Maths and English. They must have GCSE passes in English and Maths when they attempt the end point assessment. You might also want to set your own additional entry criteria. Qualifications held by the apprentice will influence their entry point into the programme. | Exemptions are available for those who hold relevant qualifications from another provider, e.g. ICAEW, CIMA. Exemptions are also available for some on-programme assessments for graduates with relevant accounting, finance or business degrees. |

ACCAvailable funds and incentives

The costs involved in ACCA apprenticeships can be surprisingly low, thanks to support from the government and the apprenticeship levy.

While funding is guaranteed, the exact amount and method for accessing it will depend on the size and type of your business.

The main cost to you is the employment of the apprentice, as they receive the same benefits as any other employee. The funding available will cover the cost of tuition fees and the End Point Assessment. You will need to pay for registration fees and exams, including any resits.

Full details of these fees can be found at: accaglobal.com/fundingapp

Most training costs are covered by the government. Employers also receive £1,000 for hiring an apprentice aged 16-18, or someone under 25 with an education, health and care plan or who has been in the care of their local authority.

Other incentives are also available, please check most recent government guidelines for information at: **gov.uk/employing-an-apprentice/get-funding**

The apprenticeship levy

A levy was introduced for all employers with a wage bill of £3,000,000 or above to raise funds for apprenticeship training. Employers pay 0.5% of their total payroll into the levy, which is then redistributed to fund apprenticeship training for all employers.

The 'estimate my apprenticeship funding' tool in your apprenticeship service account will help you calculate whether you pay the levy or not, what funds you have to spend on apprenticeships, and how much the government will contribute.

For more information, visit apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers

If you don't pay the levy

If you don't pay the levy, you pay just 5% towards the cost of training and assessment. The rest is paid by the government up to the funding band maximum. You'll pay the training provider directly and agree on a payment schedule.

If you employ fewer than 50 employees, the government will pay 100% of your training costs up to the funding band maximum for apprentices aged 16-18 or aged 19-24 with an education, health and care plan provided by their local authority. If you exceed the funding band maximum, you'll need to pay the additional costs.

Employers who pay the apprenticeship levy but don't use it all can choose to transfer up to 25% of their unused funds to a business of their choice, to help pay for training. £1,000 incentives are also available if you take on an apprentice aged 16-18 or 19-24 with an education, health and care plan provided by their local authority.

If you pay the levy

The apprenticeship levy is held in a fund that you can use for apprenticeship training.

The government also apply a 10% top up (for each \pounds 1 you pay, you have access to \pounds 1.10) and offer an allowance of \pounds 15,000 to offset apprenticeship levy payments.

If you don't have enough funds, you just pay 5% of the outstanding balance and the government pay the rest – up to a maximum of £8,000 for Level 4 and £21,000 for Level 7. Most training providers align to these caps.

If you have unused apprenticeship funds, you can transfer up to 25% of your levy funds to support another employer.

All levy payments are shared as vouchers and require a digital apprenticeship service account. You can set one up at **apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/ create-apprenticeship-service-account**

Levy transfers

Levy-paying employers can transfer up to 25% of their own apprenticeship funds to other employers (whether levy payers or not), through a government apprenticeship service account. This enables them to cover their training costs. For more advice on levy transfers, contact our team or your training provider.

ACCAnswering the big questions

Getting started

Which level apprenticeship should I choose?

We can talk you through the options, as it'll depend on your needs. There'll be other factors too, such as your apprentice's previous work experience, level of education and awards.

What is the ACCA Qualification?

Accountants who hold the ACCA Qualification are strategic finance professionals with the technical, financial and professional skills to excel in any sector, anywhere in the world. 92% of employers say ACCA people have the skills needed to drive their businesses forward. There's more at accaglobal.com

Funding

What is the apprenticeship levy?

Large employers operating in the UK with an annual wage bill of £3m or more automatically pay into the apprenticeship levy. Set up by the government, this levy pot can be used by all businesses to fund apprenticeships, whether they pay into it or not.

How do levy transfers work?

This will depend on the size of your business. Please get in touch with us and we can answer any questions you have.

As a levy-paying employer, do my training vouchers have an expiry?

Unused vouchers expire after 24 months. So, for example, a levy paid in September 2020 will start expiring from September 2022.

The expiry encourages levy-paying employers to invest in high quality training and prevent them from accruing very large balances. Any unspent levy funds within each financial year are used to support existing apprentices and pay for apprenticeship training for smaller employers.

If your apprenticeship lasts longer than 24 months, that's fine – as you pay the levy, new funds enter your account. Costs are spread over monthly instalments throughout the apprenticeship and the government always uses the oldest funds first. If you don't have enough funds, the government pays 90% of the balance due.

What happens to unspent levy funds?

All unspent levy funds are reallocated to other apprentices, who could be working in other organisations.

How can I calculate how much funding I'm entitled to?

You can use the National Apprentice Service's 'Estimate my apprenticeship funding' tool to give you a good idea of how much your organisation will have available to spend.

Structure

When do apprenticeships start?

Our apprenticeships are available all year round, so there's no need to panic about deadlines.

Can apprentices study in the evenings, at weekends or another time outside their contracted hours?

Yes, but only if you give them the time back in lieu as it needs to equate to 20% off the job training.

ACCAnswering the big questions

How much time needs to be spent doing off-the-job training?

In England, students must dedicate at least 20% of their time to off-the-job learning. However, this is very flexible – it doesn't have to mean spending one day a week in college. Off-the-job training can be delivered in a way and place that suits you, your apprentice and your training provider. For example, it could be a block of time in a residential setting or online learning that fits around your office hours.

Support

How will I know how much progress my apprentice is making?

Someone regularly checks in with your apprentice throughout the programme. This person will support your apprentice, conduct regular reviews to spot any skills gaps, and update you on their progress.

What kind of resources and external support will my apprentice receive?

ACCA and your chosen training provider will provide all the support they need, from study guides and tuition, to coaching, online courses and skills development.

Eligibility

Is there an age limit?

Apprentices need to be aged 16 or over. There's no upper age limit.

Can an apprentice be an existing employee?

Yes. You can choose to upskill a current colleague or recruit someone new.

Are apprenticeships only available at entry level or for low-skilled people?

No. ACCA apprenticeships are for everyone and are available up to the same level as a Master's degree. Some apprenticeships also offer additional professional qualifications, such as the ACCA Qualification.

If my apprentice already has a BA in accountancy, are they over-qualified?

No, so long as the apprenticeship is Level 7 or higher. Undergraduate degrees are equivalent to Level 6. This means only someone with an accountancyrelated Master's degree would be too qualified to fully benefit.

My employee is already studying for their professional qualification. Can they transfer to an apprenticeship?

Yes, as long as they have a least 12 months' study time left and are willing to complete any remaining components of the apprenticeship.

Can my employee complete an apprenticeship if they're part time?

Yes. It would depend on their working hours, but we can increase the length of the apprenticeship in line with government funding rules.

T Level in Accounting

Help build the workforce of the future

From September 2022 a new qualification will be available as an alternative to A levels. T Levels are a new, two-year qualification for 16 to 18-year-olds. Designed with employers, each T Level is equivalent to three A levels and helps young people develop the knowledge and practical skills needed to progress into employment or continue onto the ACCA apprenticeship or qualification.

Industrial placement

An industrial placement that lasts a minimum of 315 hours (approximately 45 days) is an integral part of the qualification and must be completed by all students. It provides young people with the opportunity to put their learning, knowledge and skills into practice in a real workplace environment and enables them to explore a future in finance. The placement is largely flexible and can often be run in a way that suits your needs.

Industry placements help your organisation:

- find solutions for entry-level skills shortages
- develop future talent for your business
- capitalise on new ideas, different skills and a fresh perspective

Take your business to the next level with industry placements and T Levels. Learn more at: **tlevels.gov.uk**

To find out how to get involved, visit: gov.uk/guidance/industry-placements





ACCArranging next steps

It's easy to get started. Get in touch and let us talk you through the options.

Please email us at:

apprenticeships@accaglobal.com

The first steps we can help you make are to:

- Choose the ACCA apprenticeship programme that's right for your business.
- Choose and appoint your training provider to help you with tuition and funding.
- Choose whether to upskill a current employee or recruit someone new.

Then, once your apprentice is registered, you'll start reaping the rewards.