

# A Guide to Construction Apprenticeships for Students

The Construction Industry is a vital employer in the Northern Ireland economy. It offers you the opportunity to create and to build. Both craft and professional careers cover a wide range of construction activities such as bricklaying, carpentry & joinery, stonemasonry, architecture and civil engineering. There are also behind the scenes roles such as buying, marketing, finance and IT. The construction industry is diverse and embraces all kinds of projects such as office buildings, schools, hotels, roads, bridges, hospitals and houses. It also includes repair, maintenance and alteration projects. Large or small, the project is built by people with the ingenuity, skills and education to create. This could be your world.

One of the routes into construction is through an apprenticeship and this guide explains the different apprenticeship routes available to you.

## What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is where you will be in employment from day one, earning a wage and also attending a college or local training provider usually one or two days per week in order to obtain a recognised qualification. Apprenticeships take between two and four years to complete and are available in a variety of roles. They are available from Level 2 to Level 7 (Postgraduate Degree level) for construction.

## Who are Apprenticeships for?

To take part in an Apprenticeship programme you will need to:

- Have reached the minimum school leaving age in Northern Ireland (16 years)
- Be employed or be about to take up paid employment in Northern Ireland
- Be working a minimum of 21 hours per week on a permanent contract
- Meet all the entry requirements of the chosen apprenticeship (for example some apprenticeships will require GCSEs)
- Meet a number of eligibility considerations, for example if you are a non-EU national or a public sector employee, or if you have previously achieved a recognised vocational qualification



## What qualifications do I need to become an Apprentice?

For some apprenticeships there are minimum entry requirements, such as GCSEs. The training supplier you choose can advise on these.

## What are the benefits?

- Earning a salary and having paid holidays
- Gaining a recognised qualification
- Working alongside experienced staff
- Excellent career progression
- Opportunity to become self employed
- Increased future earning potential
- No Student Loan debt

## Types of Apprenticeships

There are various levels of apprenticeship to apply for depending on your current skills and qualifications. Apprenticeships have equivalent educational levels:

Apprenticeship	Equivalent Educational Level
Apprenticeship Level 2	5 GCSE passes
Apprenticeship Level 3	2 'A' Level passes
Higher Apprenticeship Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7	Foundation Degree and above

All apprenticeships include elements of “on” and “off” the job training leading to industry recognised standards or qualifications.

Further information can be found on the NIDirect website on the following link:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships>

## ApprenticeshipsNI (Level 2 & Level 3 Apprenticeships)

The Northern Ireland Executive, through the Department for the Economy supports apprenticeship training at Level 2 and 3 through the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

Level 2 is the first apprenticeship level and the one that most new apprentices choose.

You can either progress from Level 2 to Level 3 or go straight in at Level 3, depending on your ability and the qualifications you already have.

It usually takes up to two years to complete one level and up to four years to finish the two levels depending on their complexity and your ability.

The following are just some of the apprenticeships that are available through the ApprenticeshipsNI programme:

- Joinery
- Painting & Decorating
- Bricklaying
- Wall & Floor Tiling
- Roof, Slating & Tiling
- Stonemasonry
- Plastering

## Find out who delivers construction ApprenticeshipsNI training in your area

Click [here](#) or log on to <https://www.citbni.org.uk/Careers/Training-Providers-for-Apprenticeships.aspx>



## Higher Level Apprenticeships

If you have completed 'A' Levels or equivalent, you may be interested in a Higher Level Apprenticeship, which offers the opportunity to gain quality training and a recognised higher qualification while in paid employment.

A Higher Level Apprenticeship is an apprenticeship with a targeted qualification currently between Level 4 (HNC equivalent) to Level 7 (Postgraduate degree level). It can help you develop professional and technical skills, as well as gaining recognised higher qualifications while in paid employment.

The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme chosen, but will be a minimum of two years.

Download the list of Higher Level Apprenticeships and training providers [here](#) or log on to <https://bit.ly/3U13B2Q>.

Further information can be found on the following link: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeships>

Apprenticeships are available in other roles that construction employers require through the Apprenticeships NI and Higher Level Apprenticeship Programmes including IT, Finance and Administration. Find out more [here](#) or log on to <https://bit.ly/3k9kd66>

## How much will it cost?

You have no tuition fees to pay for ApprenticeshipsNI or Higher Level Apprenticeships as this is all funded by the Department for the Economy.

## How much will I get paid?

Your employer will pay you just as they would any other employee. The National Minimum Wage is a minimum amount that workers in the UK are entitled to be paid however some employers pay more than this. See link for further guidance:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/national-minimum-wage-and-living-wage>

## Where do I find construction Apprenticeship opportunities?

You can search online for apprenticeship opportunities, including Higher Level Apprenticeships, from a range of employers and within a range of occupational areas across Northern Ireland on the following link:

[www.JobApplyNI.com](http://www.JobApplyNI.com)

A good way to know if a construction apprenticeship is for you is to do work experience with a construction company. Work experience opportunities can also be identified on the link above.

This is not the only way to find apprenticeship opportunities; you can send your CV to prospective employers, keep a check on newspapers and social media.

## Traineeships

If you are 16 years old or over and not currently in employment or working within your chosen occupational area, the traineeship programme could be for you.

A Traineeship gives you the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in the sector you are interested in, while also improving your employability skills, English and Maths and achieve a Level 2 qualification.

Traineeships are available in different occupations and normally take up to two years to complete on a full-time basis. Whilst enrolled on a Traineeship you will not be employed, but you will have a work placement with an employer. Once you successfully complete your Traineeship you will receive a full Traineeship Certificate plus other qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A\* to C (including English and Mathematics qualifications at level 2).

Following your Traineeship you can either progress into Further Education at Level 3 or onto a Level 3 apprenticeship if you are employed.

To find out more information including entry requirements and trainee support click [here](#) or log onto <https://www.citbni.org.uk/Careers/Traineeships.aspx> or contact your local college.

Construction employers will be looking for people who have the right aptitude, but they also want people with the right attitude and who have a genuine interest in the construction industry and with a real desire to get stuck in and to learn.

## CITB NI Apprentice Grant

If you find employment with a CITB NI Registered Employer that employer may be eligible to receive a grant of up to £6,500. Terms and conditions apply. To find out more about this grant the registered employer can contact the CITB NI Grants Support team on 028 90825466 or queries can be emailed to [Grants@citbni.org.uk](mailto:Grants@citbni.org.uk).

## Occupational profiles

Information on apprenticeships in the construction crafts industry, including what's involved; skills and knowledge needed and progression routes for apprentices for some of the occupations can be found [here](#) or log on to <https://bit.ly/3weCdCW>

## Apprenticeships Contact Details

If you want more information on the Apprenticeships programme, contact the Department for the Economy:

Email: [Apprenticeships@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Apprenticeships@economy-ni.gov.uk)

Email: [Higherlevelapprenticeships@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Higherlevelapprenticeships@economy-ni.gov.uk)  
(Higher Level Apprenticeships enquiries)

## More useful links and information:

[www.citbni.org.uk/careers.aspx](http://www.citbni.org.uk/careers.aspx)

[www.goconstruct.org](http://www.goconstruct.org)

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers)

Check out the latest Department for the Economy Careers Occupational Information Unit Bulletin for Construction [here](#) or log on to <https://bit.ly/4eCGy6t>.

## An Apprentice journey

Click on the case study below to discover Harry's journey into construction, or visit <https://www.citbni.org.uk/Careers/Careers-Videos.aspx> to access our full library of career case study videos.

## Why choose Construction?

### DESIGN, CREATE, MAINTAIN... Construction, be part of it!

By joining one of Northern Ireland's largest industries you will have chosen a career that's challenging, exciting and rewarding.

You'll be joining an industry that's respected around the globe. The UK has a reputation for world class design, inspirational architecture and the highest quality building work.

There are over 170 roles in construction, from building design and craft based roles to management. It's not just about the trade occupations such as joinery, bricklaying and plastering there are professional and support roles too.

Northern Ireland has recently completed key construction projects that highlight the industry's innovation and expertise. From the transformative Belfast Transport Hub to the South Lake Leisure Centre, and the restoration of King's Hall to Ulster University's new Belfast campus, these projects showcase the diverse opportunities in construction. Students pursuing this field can help shape both urban landscapes and local communities, leaving a lasting legacy.

The construction industry offers a great opportunity for career progression and the opportunity to start your own business.

## What next?

- Decide which occupations you think you would be interested in and what the work would involve
- Consider what qualifications you will need
- Contact employers and check the various websites and media to identify apprenticeship opportunities
- Identify and contact your local training provider

CITB NI  
Nutts Corner Training Centre  
17 Dundrod Road  
Crumlin BT29 4SR  
[www.citbni.org.uk](http://www.citbni.org.uk)

Tel: 028 9082 5466

Email: [info@citbni.org.uk](mailto:info@citbni.org.uk)

For an online version of this flyer log on to <https://www.citbni.org.uk/Careers.aspx>

*All information correct at time of print - check links for any updates.*

