

A Guide to Construction Apprenticeships for Parents/Guardians

As a parent/guardian you want your child to get the best start in their career. You can feel worried if your son or daughter decides not to pursue further or higher education. However there are many options available to young people after they leave school, and in this guide we outline information and benefits about Apprenticeships as a key route into a successful career in construction. Apprenticeships are becoming an increasingly popular alternative to university as apprentices can gain applied and relevant work experience. Your child will earn while they learn, plus there are no tuition fees.

What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is where your child 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 the Apprenticeship programme your child 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 they are a non-EU national or a public sector employee, or if they have previously achieved a recognised vocational qualification.



What qualifications does my child need to do an Apprenticeship?

For some there are minimum entry requirements, such as GCSEs. The chosen training supplier can advise on this.

What are the benefits?

- Earning a salary and paid holidays
- Gaining a recognised qualification
- Work alongside experienced staff
- Excellent career progression
- Increased future earning potential
- No Student Loan debt

Types of Apprenticeships

There are various levels of apprenticeship to apply for depending on your child's 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 level and the one that most new apprentices choose. Your child can either progress from Level 2 to Level 3 or go straight in at Level 3, depending on their ability and the qualifications they 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 the trainee's 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 Apprenticeship training in your area

Click [here](#) or log on to <https://bit.ly/4dKwGXc> and talk to a training provider about the entry criteria for the apprenticeship that your child is interested in.



Higher Level Apprenticeships

If your child has completed 'A' Levels or equivalent, they 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 your child 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 ApprenticeshipsNI and Higher Level Apprenticeship Programmes including IT, Finance and Administration. Find out more [here](#) or log on to <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships>

How much will it cost?

Your child has no fees to pay for ApprenticeshipsNI or Higher Level Apprenticeships training as this is all funded by the Department for the Economy.

How much will my child get paid?

Their employer will pay them 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, from a range of employers and within a range of occupational areas across Northern Ireland on the following link:

www.JobApplyNI.com

A good way of introducing your child to construction apprenticeships is to identify work experience opportunities with construction companies across Northern Ireland. Their school careers teacher may have a list of contacts in a variety of areas or could offer advice about finding a placement. These are not the only way to find apprenticeship opportunities; your child can send their CV to prospective employers, keep a check on newspapers and social media.

Traineeships

If your child is 16 years or older and not currently in employment or working within their chosen occupational area, the traineeship programme could be for them.

A Traineeship gives your child the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in the sector they are interested in, while also improving their employability skills, English and Maths and achieving a Level 2 qualification plus other qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A* to C (including English and Mathematics qualifications at level 2).

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 they will not be employed, but they will have a work placement with an employer. Once your child successfully completes their Traineeship they will receive a full Traineeship Certificate.

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

To find out more information including entry requirements and trainee support click [here](#) or log onto 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.

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

Email: higherlevelapprenticeships@economy-ni.gov.uk
(Higher Level Apprenticeships enquiries)

More useful links:

www.citbni.org.uk/careers.aspx

www.goconstruct.org

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 Apprentices Journey

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

CITB NI

Nutts Corner Training Centre
17 Dundrod Road
Crumlin BT29 4SR
www.citbni.org.uk

Tel: 028 9082 5466
Email: 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.



Why choose Construction?

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

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

They'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.

As part of the construction team your son or daughter could contribute to the construction of award winning projects such as the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre on the Causeway Coast and the restoration of Mount Stewart House in County Down.

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

What next?

- Discuss with your child what occupations they think they would be interested in and what the work would involve
- Consider what qualifications will be needed
- Contact employers and check the various websites and media to identify apprenticeship opportunities
- Identify and contact your local training provider