



Talent Development Through Higher and Degree Apprenticeships





What is Higher Futures?

Businesses need appropriately skilled and competitive workforces to achieve their growth ambitions. Higher Futures is an impartial skills service provided by the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the first of its kind in the UK.

Our team of Employer Skills Brokers work with employers in Swindon and Wiltshire to understand challenges they are facing around skills gaps and talent development and work with them to provide solutions through partnerships with FE colleges, Universities and training providers.

The apprenticeship levy represents an exciting opportunity for employers to develop an even more diverse, skilled, qualified and sustainable workforce and Higher Futures work with employers to help them understand the levy and how

they can maximise their return on investment from it.

The benefits for businesses and employers:

- Tailored, flexible specialist support to fit business needs.
- Local access to the expertise of class leading universities, colleges and providers from around the UK.
- Increased productivity and motivation achieved through up-skilling of staff.
- Talent pool access and development including access to the military community.
- Opportunities to collaborate with similar businesses to develop courses to meet local industry needs.



- Cost effective training solutions that save time and money.
- Access to free impartial information, guidance and advice
- A dedicated Account Manager working to tailor a solution.

The benefits for employees:

- Achieve portable qualifications that will support career development
- Recognition of prior learning so that employees can complete a qualification quicker.
- Improved job satisfaction and the opportunity to learn in an environment with like-minded people.



“The Skills Service allowed us to develop a better understanding of the Degree Apprenticeship landscape, and help to kick start the program at Appsbroker.”

Ben Greatorex, L&D Manager



What are Higher and Degree Apprenticeships?

Higher and degree apprenticeships are a different pathway to following the traditional route of going to university as a full time student. They offer all the benefits of higher education with none of the cost for learners.

Higher Apprenticeships

Higher apprenticeships cover all levels from 4 through to 7 covering a variety of job roles in different sectors including:

- Business & IT
- Construction
- Creative, media & the arts
- Customer service & retail
- Energy
- Engineering & electrical
- Finance
- Health & care

- Hospitality & travel
- Manufacturing, processing & logistics
- Public services
- Vehicles & transport.

Higher Apprenticeships offer a work-based learning programme and lead to the following nationally recognised qualifications:

- Level 4 and 5 – equivalent to a higher education certificate, higher education diploma or a foundation degree or
- Level 6 – equivalent to a bachelor degree

Degree Apprenticeships

Degree Apprenticeships are designed by industry to bring together the very best in higher and vocational education. Apprentices achieve a full Bachelor's or Master's degree as a core component of the apprenticeship.



On a Degree Apprenticeship, students will be tested on their academic learning, as well as their wider skills and ability to do a job. They will be assessed either using a fully-integrated degree co-designed by employers and higher education institutions, or using a degree plus a separate end-test of their professional competence.

A degree apprenticeship is at level 6 and 7 and will contain a full Bachelors (level 6) or Masters (level 7) degree or equivalent professional qualifications.

Students will be working full time and fitting in the equivalent of a full time degree alongside their work. There should be a minimum of 20% spent studying. It might take a bit longer than studying full time – for example, 4 years instead of 3, but they will achieve exactly the same degree.



CONNECT TO BETTER

“The support with training and recruitment was first class, Jo Mills was exceptional to work with, we would recommend her to any other business. Higher Futures have supported our company during this transition to make the whole process seamless”.

Kevin Bell, Site Manager



Benefits for Employers and Employees

Degree apprenticeships offer employees a competitive advantage of gaining valuable work experience whilst completing their degree. When you combine this alongside the fact that your education and training will be paid for in combination by the Government and employer, higher and degree apprenticeships become an attractive, attainable and rewarding route for those looking for paid employment alongside gaining a valuable qualification.

Higher and degree apprenticeships provide a cost effective option for succession planning and talent development. One of the key challenges that businesses face on a daily basis is how to recruit and retain a skilled workforce; through the apprenticeship route, there is the opportunity to create a durable pipeline of talent into your organisation that really understands the culture and ethos of the company that the employee is training within.

The requirement that all apprentices need to spend a minimum of 20 per cent of their employed hours in off-the-job training is often perceived by employers as a challenge and barrier. With the

Haine & Smith
OPTICIANS

“Jo Mills is efficient and friendly with top notch communication skills” Haine & Smith rated the service as “outstanding” and would recommend the Skills Service to other businesses.”

Kay Saunders, Marketing Manager



expert advice and guidance from the Higher Futures team, this important principle of apprenticeships can benefit employers and their apprentices.

Our apprenticeship programmes are designed and tailored to individual learners and their employers. In our experience, with sound apprenticeship guidance, employers appreciate this 20 per cent requirement, working with us to develop employer led training solutions that include quality of the on-the-job learning, supervision, exposure to skills-development opportunities and the opportunity to work alongside experienced team members.

Apprenticeships increase staff loyalty and retention as they encourage employees to think of their job as a career and to stay with the company for the long term. Employees trained in-house tend to be highly motivated, committed and supportive of the businesses' objectives. Providing apprenticeships to existing staff makes them feel valued, an integral part of the company and that you are committed to investing in their future.

Increase your company's bottom line – as funding is available for each apprentice you recruit, you do not need to spend as much recruiting new staff. You can also calculate a tangible return on investment of an apprenticeship.

Funding

In April 2017 the Government changed the way Apprenticeships are funded with the introduction of the apprenticeship Levy for employers with an annual pay bill above £3million.

There is still funding available for those who are non-levy employers with an annual pay bill below £3million or if you have no funds remaining in your Levy account. This is known as 'co-investment' funding where the employer will pay 10% and the government will fund the remaining 90%.



Real Stories

Don't just take our word for it, let's hear from real apprentices in Swindon & Wiltshire about how they are taking advantage of opportunities and from business owners how enthusiastic, motivated staff studying Higher and Degree apprenticeships benefit them.



Degree Apprenticeships at Zircon Software

Dave, 22 and Spencer, 21, are Degree Software Engineering Apprentices at Zircon in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. Both had different experiences of University but found an apprenticeship suited their career path better.

Dave told us his story:

“I completed a Robotics degree at University but when I was job hunting afterwards I found a lot of entry level roles

were looking for more experience than I had, the job market was very competitive and I found myself re-assessing my options. I feel the value of degrees has reduced, I have personal experience of three older brothers going to University, my oldest brother got a job much more easily – a degree was enough but now employers want to see your experience as well. I saw this apprenticeship online and felt I was actually applying for a job not just a course. An apprenticeship appealed to me because it is a flexible option, allowing for learning but also getting lots of experience on various projects and therefore allowing me to specialise in the future. I would advise others to give the degree apprenticeship a chance as there is no debt, but to pick your employer/course carefully, don't settle for less.”

Spencer had a slightly different experience of University and chose an apprenticeship too:

“I left my University course as I found the course wasn't for me, I wasn't aware of apprenticeships when I was making my decisions as the school didn't push them. My career plans are to become a software developer and this course suits me great, it's a nice mix and I can keep learning which this apprenticeship will offer, much of the content would not have been covered at University. I feel there is good flexibility in the apprenticeship module choices. My advice to others would be around A-Level time, look for yourself, do the research as there is more to it.”

David Owen, MD, on his experiences so far:

“The company has a very informal and open culture which seems to appeal to the apprentices, but we are able to offer them lots of variety in their job roles too. We held an open day with around 7 applicants, carried out assessments and team building activities. We actually only had 2 positions but couldn't decide so took on 3 apprentices! We now have a long term

recruitment plan based around apprentices. I think a new generation is emerging, the 'University only' route is fading and for the younger generation apprenticeships will become the way forward."

Higher Futures were a part of Zircon's journey. Jo Mills, Employer and HEI Skills Broker from Higher Futures met David at JobFest in February of 2107. David specified that Zircon were looking to attract and grow talent within the Computer Science area. Higher Futures provided some initial information around apprenticeships and introduced him to the relevant training provider who specialise in Software Development and Technology apprenticeships.



Higher Level Apprenticeship at Avon Protection

Joseph White, 19, is working at Avon Protection based in Melksham on a Higher Level apprenticeship in ICT. He supports colleagues via the helpdesk across the world including the USA, Italy and several UK sites.

We began by asking Joseph about his school background and his experience of apprenticeships previously.

I attended Wiltshire College for two years completing Level 2 BTEC and Level 3 City & Guilds in Information Technology. I enjoyed the courses a lot but felt I had more to learn and wanted to continue into higher education. My Mum worked at Wiltshire College and put me in touch with the department who dealt with apprenticeships. I acquired more information on apprenticeships and found what is now my current role on the Gov website. The application process was simple regardless of the fact that I had no prior knowledge of apprenticeships. I was interviewed and began my role in November, then my college course commenced in January – but I already feel I have learnt more in these two months than I did in two years at College.

We asked Joseph what his future ambitions were and what would he tell others about apprenticeships?

After this two year course I will probably look to complete a degree and would consider doing this via an apprenticeship at Level 5/6. My friend is actually doing the same course as me, but full-time at college, which means they are paying standard fees via student loans. I am lucky to be getting experience in the workplace and learning about the business at the same time, which I may not have had if I was enrolled full-time. I would say that this is a great benefit of an apprenticeship, as well as the huge amount of work experience you get.



How can Higher Futures Help you?

We're committed to working with you to ensure that skills-gap challenges and barriers are overcome so that your business can innovate and grow.

To know how we can best support you, we need to find out more about you and you would probably like to know more about us.

So, why not arrange a free no-obligation meeting with one of our Skills Broker's today and once we fully understand your requirements we will let you know how we can best support you.

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Bespoke Training



Apprenticeships



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