

## Reference year 2016

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### UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

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**Q1. Is there an official definition of 'apprenticeships' in your country?**

	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

'Apprenticeships are full-time paid jobs which incorporate on and off the job training. A successful apprentice will receive a nationally recognised qualification on completion of their contract.' House of Commons Library.

Recognised apprenticeships are required to meet the devolved Government's minimum standards. In England this includes a minimum duration of 12 months, employed 30 hours, an English and maths requirement and include off the job training. Apprentices have the same rights as other employees and are entitled to be paid at least the apprentice rate of the national minimum wage. (More detail of the differences in minimum standards between nations below)

**Q2. Which apprenticeship schemes exist in your country?**

		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL: Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AT POST- SECONDARY / HIGHER LEVEL: Y	<input type="checkbox"/> AT SECTORAL LEVEL: N

Apprenticeships- this applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and is generally level 2 or 3 qualifications. This is generally upper secondary level.

Higher Apprenticeships- this applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and is generally level 4 to 8 qualifications. This is post-secondary level.

Modern Apprenticeships- this applies in Scotland and includes levels both upper and post-secondary level qualifications.

### Q3. Is there a legal basis for apprenticeships in your country?



The legal basis for apprenticeships is in labour law and in Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009[1] which covers apprenticeships in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In England the Government has announced that it would give apprenticeships the same legal treatment as degrees and protect the term “apprenticeship”, in the Enterprise Bill.

What distinguishes apprenticeships from common law is that individuals are engaged in a statutory ‘apprentice agreement’ which means they are given the same labour rights as other ordinary employees (though with an apprentice’s salary- more info below).

In the 2015 Queen’s Speech the Government set out its intention to create a duty to report on progress to meeting the target of 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020. Public sector bodies will be required to employ apprentices and be set targets to increase apprenticeship numbers. The Welfare Reform and Work Bill includes an obligation for the Government to report each year on the progress made towards meeting this target[2].

Legally there are two types of apprenticeship. Those governed by common law principles and those apprenticeships that must comply with an ‘apprenticeship framework[3]’ as published by devolved government. Government funding is only available for the latter.

It is likely that under both models that apprentices will have the same statutory rights as other employees. However, there are certain exceptions as apprentices are not entitled to protection against discrimination under the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, and those who are under the age of 19, or in the first year of their apprenticeship, are currently entitled to a lower level of minimum wage protection than other workers.

There is ongoing change within the development and content of approved ‘apprenticeship standards’.

In England ‘The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan (Oct 2013)’ set out the apprenticeship reform measures. Since 2014 no Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) frameworks have been developed and new apprenticeship standards have been developed by employer groups known as ‘trailblazers’. As such the removal of the old framework systems and their replacement with the new apprenticeship standards is expected to continue to enable the government to meet its 2020 vision[4].

In Wales and Northern Ireland there is currently undergoing a consultation to reform apprenticeships in Wales.

There is no reform ongoing of Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland.

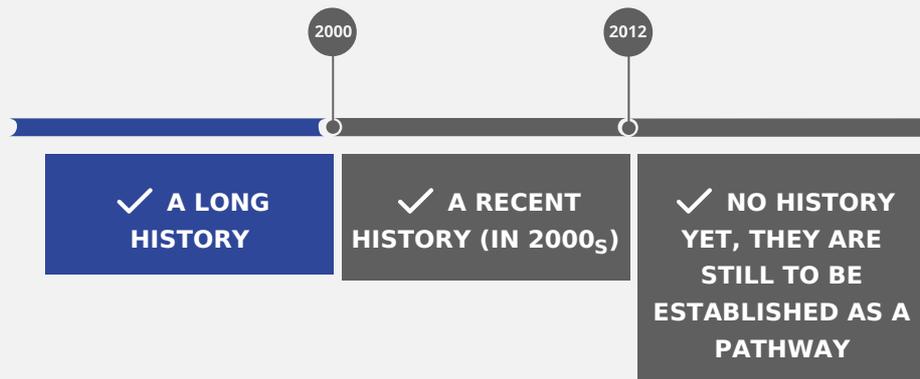
[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-in-england-v...>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-frameworks-li...>

[3] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/22/contents>

[4] <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN03052>

#### Q5. How well-established are apprenticeships in your country?



The history of apprenticeships in the UK goes back to the Middle Ages. However the level of state intervention in this country has varied over recent decades, from levy-funded programmes via the industrial training boards in the 1960s and 1970s, to no support or intervention at all in the early 1990s. [1] Recently apprenticeships have moved up the agenda with substantial government backing.

[1] <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmbis/83/830...>

#### Q6. Additional information to understand the specificity of apprenticeships in the country

The devolved nature of the UK means that although all apprenticeships are funded by the government that are differences in the components and structure of apprenticeships in England, Wales, NI and Scotland.