

Are you prepared for the challenge of undertaking an apprenticeship programme?

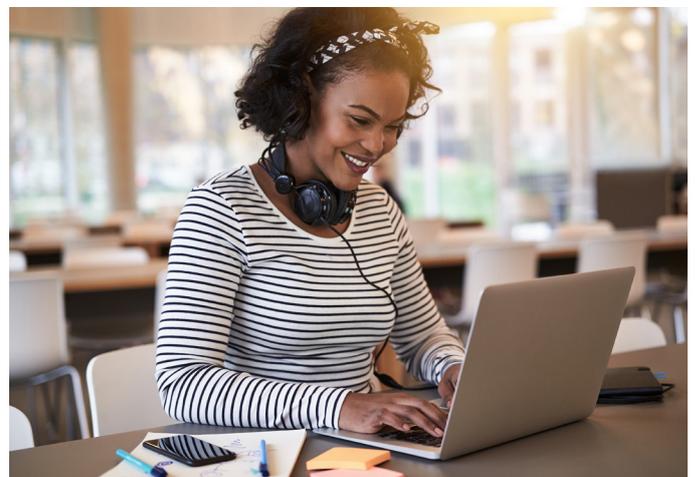


Congratulations you've started a new apprenticeship, that's great news. Looks like you're really ready for the challenge!

As part of your apprenticeship you will be required to study whilst working. There's no doubt that it can come with a bit of trepidation. Don't worry if you're nervous—you're not the only one experiencing a case of apprenticeship jitters. As you get prepared for the start, it's also important to get mentally ready for the start of your professional development. You'll be glad you did!

Take a quick run-through this "mental preparation" checklist and make sure you have given these topics some thought. Whatever the level of study of apprenticeship programme – from Level 2 through to degree level – these are some of the common challenges faced by apprentices during their apprenticeship journey. After you have read this, you will need to ask yourself two important questions. The first question you will need to ask yourself is:

Q1: Am I ready for some of the newness that is about to come my way?



1. Remind yourself that it's new for everyone

Starting an apprenticeship programme is a big change, and it's important not to get overwhelmed. Keep a level head by reminding yourself that this is a time of transition for everyone, not just you. Things might feel a bit uncomfortable on occasions, and that is ok. For instance, during the programme you will receive feedback from your tutor and mentor about how you can further develop your skills, knowledge and behaviours. You may construe this as personal criticism.....it is not meant to be ...it's about developing yourself. Accept that you're in the next stage of your professional and career development and it won't feel familiar for a while.

2. Commit to time management

If there's a sure-fire way to make studying hard on yourself, it is to procrastinate and not manage your time effectively. Get off on the right foot by being organised with your time to ensure a healthy work life balance during the programme. Check out digital tools and homework planning apps or get yourself a good weekly day planner if you prefer. The key is to plan your time, so you have time for it all. Create a detailed daily / weekly schedule that blocks out time for off the job learning. Stay organised and spend a few minutes at the end of each day planning for the following day.



3. Be open to new things

The apprenticeship will open your eyes to new ways of doing things, it will challenge old ways of thinking. You will meet new people from all backgrounds and places. The idea of the apprenticeship is to stretch and challenge your mind and the way you do your job. Make the most of this and embrace the idea of exploration!

4. Remind yourself it's OK to ask for help

With anything new, it's best to go in with a positive mindset, but as we all know, life has its ups and downs. Knowing where to turn for help is important. Make sure you know who to turn to at work and what your DFA mentor / tutor can offer, and any other resources that will give you a boost when you need it. Figure out how to manage your stress effectively and look for support amongst your line manager, work colleagues, and friends and family too: your support networks will be very important whilst undertaking your apprenticeship. As a new apprentice, your employer will have support mechanisms in place – make the most of them.

5. You'll need assertive communication skills to negotiate the 20% Off the Job requirement

Your employer has signed an apprenticeship commitment statement agreeing that you will be allowed to spend 20% of your working hours undertaking the apprenticeship. Please be aware of what constitutes as 20% off the job: it isn't just about attending workshops.

Make sure that you have agreed with your line manager how and when your 20% of your work time will be made available to you.

It is likely that this may result in you working on your apprenticeship in and amongst your working week and not having a full day to study.

So, having read these important challenges facing you when you commence studying for the apprenticeship programme, you will also need to ask yourself:

Q2: What am I going to do to ensure that I am ready to undertake and successfully complete my apprenticeship?

