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APPRENTICESHIPS

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**HOW TO WRITE A
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Getting Started

Self-employment involves working for yourself instead of an employer. This could involve anything from running/managing a business, through to selling goods/services as a trader on a regular basis. Self-employment in the UK is at its highest level since records began, with around 4.6 million people working for themselves, making 15% of the total workforce self-employed. There are plenty of reasons to go self-employed but there are downsides too, working for yourself might seem like an appealing option but it isn't right for everyone.

This guide will help you assess your suitability for self-employment, consider your options and develop a business plan to start you on the road to self-employment.

Business Types

There are several types of business that can be run by someone who is self-employed:

Sole Trader

Owned and managed by you alone, all debts and profits would go directly to you.

Social Enterprise

These businesses benefit society or the environment and their profits contribute towards the economy.

Freelance / Consultancy

Using your expertise to work on a casual basis – usually from home, for a range of companies.

Limited Company

Ownership is divided into shares and split between shareholders – meaning the actual owners may not be involved in running the business.

Franchise

Businesses are already established and are owned by an organisation. They can then sell the right to use their business model, meaning they're able to manage a tried and tested business with limited start-up costs.

Charities

Income from these businesses is made through grants and donations, rather than trade.

Partnership

Similar to sole trading but would involve working with two or more people.

You can find out more about the requirements and obligations of each format here:

www.gov.uk/business-legal-structures

Market Trading

There are a growing number of indoor and outdoor street markets. This route can act as an excellent starting point for anyone wanting to learn how to manage a business.

www.gov.uk/government/news/apprentice-stars-top-10-tips-for-market-stall-start-ups

Advantages

to being Self-Employed

The advantages of being self-employed can include...

- Freedom to fit work around your family life
- Answering to only yourself and your clients
- Potentially earn an average of 45% more
- Variety of work and day to day activities
- More job satisfaction
- You can choose your own team (or work alone)

Disadvantages

to being Self-Employed

The disadvantages of being self-employed can include...

- Not being certain of a regular income
- Having to arrange your own sick pay and pension
- No holiday pay
- Longer working hours with no structure
- Lose division between work and home
- It can be isolating
- Increased responsibility and pressure
- More paperwork (tax etc.)

Questions to ask yourself before becoming self-employed

To make sure self-employment is the right career path for you, you should consider the following...

- Do you know what you want to do and is it a realistic option?
- Are you qualified, or do you need further training/qualifications?
- Can you afford to be self-employed?
- Are you determined and focused enough to commit your time and effort to making your business a success?
- How do you intend to fund your business (e.g. grants, bank loans, investors, crowd funding)?
- Can you run your business from home or will you need to find some property?
- How will it affect your personal life/commitments?
- Are you aware of the legalities?
- Do you have a business plan?

To explore if self-employment is right for you visit:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDBTH9uusYM

Naming the Business

You can use your own name or trade under a business name, just remember that your business name is a powerful asset and you want to ensure you can both use it and protect it. When choosing a business name please make sure you do not:

- Use the terms 'Limited (Ltd), Public Limited Company (PLC), Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) or their Welsh equivalents
- Use sensitive names unless you have permission
- Suggest an association with government or local authorities
- Use a name that is too similar to a registered trademark or an existing business in the same area or sector – infringing on anyone else's rights to use that name

To help you choose a name you can...

Check the name

Check the Register of Limited Companies to see if anyone has a limited company with that name already - www.companieshouse.gov.uk

Find a domain

If you need a domain name for a website, you can find out if it is available on www.theukdomain.uk

Explore trademarks

on www.gov.uk/how-to-register-a-trade-mark

Protect the name

You can find out more about protecting your business name at www.gov.uk/intellectual-property-an-overview

Richard Branson's tips

For Richard Branson's tips on how to start a business visit: youtube.com/watch?v=SlPd1i5cGHE

Bill Gates tips

For Bill Gates top ten rules for success visit: youtube.com/watch?v=wq-gba5nMrc

INTERVIEWS

How do competency based interviews work?

Competency based interviews (sometimes referred to as situational or behavioural interviews) are increasingly superseding other interview formats within the selection and assessment scene. Competency based interviews differ from semi structured/informal interviews by being highly structured, often with a static and inflexible list of questions which candidates shall be asked. However, competency based interviews also differ from other structured interviews by being tailored specifically to the competency framework of the role applied for. Generally speaking, candidates will be asked a list of questions regarding their previous experience and possibly asked questions regarding how they would act in hypothetical situations. Interviewers may also have a set list of probing questions, which will help explore the candidates experience in more depth.

Competency based questions will be standardised, to ensure that all candidates receive similar or identical questions, ensuring reliability. Research has shown that structured, competency based interviewing is the most effective method of selection interview, outperforming less structured interviewing in their predictive power. Furthermore, competency based interviewing has been shown to compliment assessment centre exercises and psychometric tests, increasing the overall validity of the selection process when used in combination. Competency based interviews will usually last for one hour and telephone interviews may also be conducted as competency based interviews.

What does a competency based interview assess?

Competency based interviews provide the candidate with an opportunity to provide evidence for their level of competence. Employing organisations will conduct a job design for a particular role, developing what's known as a competency framework. This competency framework will usually consist of 4-6 key competencies, which are essential to performance in that particular role. For example, in an investment banking role, analytical thinking is likely to be considered a key competency by many organisations. Similarly, in a human resources role, interpersonal sensitivity may be considered a key competency in many organisations. Competency frameworks are custom made by the employing organisations and will vary depending on the organisations culture, sector, industry etc. The competency based questions during the interview will search for evidence of competencies

within the framework, helping employers gauge a candidates understanding/experience within a particular skill set. Competency frameworks are designed to be appropriate to both the duties of the role, and the immediate level of the role, therefore non-management roles are unlikely to incorporate leadership ability into the competency framework of the role. As with other interview styles, competency based interviews provide interviewers with insights into candidates such as politeness, professionalism, enthusiastic etc.

Although competency based interviews are designed to limit bias through standardisation, often interviewers will still be influenced by first impressions, good or bad "vibes" and other subjective influences unrelated to the competency framework, so bare this in mind.

What should you know before a competency based interview?

Before a competency based interview, researching the role and what it entails is essential. Although competency frameworks are tailor made by each organisation, candidates are advised to try and predict the key competences of the role applied for. For example, highly specialised roles, such as sales roles, will usually call for a similar set of key competencies across multiple organisational contexts as the skill set will largely remain the same.

However, competency frameworks for more general positions, such as general management roles, may vary significantly across different organisations. Occasionally, organisations

may explicitly state the competency framework for the role, providing candidates with the competency framework before the interview or even during application to the position. Similarly, the entry requirements/essential experience section of a job advertisement may provide insights into the roles competency framework. Skills/experience deemed essential is often synonymous with key competencies, therefore candidates can expect to receive competency based questions regarding that subject.

Competency based interview advice

The following tips and advice can be useful when preparing for, or performing well in, a competency based interview:

- 1 Research the role: Gauging an idea of what the competency framework looks like, requires research into the role itself. Similarly, finding out about the employing organisation, their culture, their mission and their overall strategy may also provide insights

into the kind of skills and experiences they are looking for in employees. Understanding of the role, although perhaps not a competency in the framework, is still likely to be assessed during any interview and candidates are well advised to find out as much as possible.

2 Think about evidence: Prior to the interview, candidates must think of examples which highlight evidence for particular competencies. Think of a time when you had to utilise leadership skills, had to utilise strong numerical ability, or a time when interpersonal skills were the key to success. These historical situations are the lifeblood of a competency based response, interviewers will frown upon candidates which take 10 minutes during the interview just to think of a situation which they expressed a competency. Have a list of previous experiences at hand ready to provide the interviewer upon request.

3 Interview experience: Interview experience is a highly valuable commodity and gaining as much as you can will only serve you well. Students often have career services which may include mock interviews. Candidates are advised to gain as much interview experience as possible, as this will help familiarise you with interview format, layout and structure, making the experience feel more natural in future. The more job savvy candidates may even consider applying to jobs which they have limited or no interest in, simply to gain interview experience.

4 Stay calm: Although a moderate amount of anxiety or nervousness is a natural reaction to interviews, excess anxiety can only serve to hamper your interview performance. Therefore, candidates are advised to avoid getting too nervous before hand. Showing up to the interview with time to spare, getting adequate sleep the night before and engaging in in-depth preparation beforehand can serve to limit feelings of anxiety before an interview.

5 Ask for feedback: Most interviewers will provide constructive feedback after making decisions based on the interview. Even if candidates are successful at the interview stage, it is advised to get feedback on interview performance. This feedback can be used to improve future performance on competency based interviews and provide invaluable information into avoiding previous interview mistakes.

What questions to expect

The competency based interview questions are based on a typical competency framework. The basis for all competency based interviews is a list of key competencies which the recruiting organisation holds as important for the role. For example the competencies we have used here are:

- Organisational Ability
- Interpersonal Skills
- Problem Solving
- Judgement
- Innovative Thinking
- Integrity and Ethics

We have selected these competencies because they are some of the most commonly used, however bear in mind that each company will have their own list of competencies they are looking for. Targeted questions are then constructed in order to measure these competencies.

TOP TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CV

Here are some hints and tips to start you off.

Produce a different version of your CV for every job you apply for, highlighting your key skills and experience most relevant to the job description and requirements.

Always word process your CV and print it out on good quality A4 paper.

As a rule don't use more than 2 sides of A4 paper.

Only include information that is relevant to your application. You do not need to put your marital status, family details or date of birth, unless specifically asked for.

Remember that when a recruiter is sifting through a huge pile of CVs what they most want to see is how you will add value to their company. Make sure you give them plenty of reason to read beyond the first paragraph of your CV.

Include achievements in and out of work and quantify them whenever possible.

Never lie on a CV, it can only lead to trouble.

Be honest about any hobbies or interests you include – do not add things to impress as you may get caught out at interview. However, do try to include those hobbies and interests, which will make a positive contribution to your employment, e.g. voluntary work, club membership or charity work.

Employers are most interested in your recent experience, particularly your current or last job, so include more information about your responsibilities and achievements for these jobs and less detail for earlier jobs.

Keep the layout simple, uncluttered with clear section headings and well-organised information that is easy to follow.

If you have had many jobs, you could group some together or summarise periods of time. There is nothing worse for a recruiter than reading every two week contract you have had in the last ten years.

Do not include a photo unless requested.

For periods not in paid employment, highlight any voluntary work, training or activities that you did.

COVERING LETTERS

Why bother to write one at all?

Including a covering letter with a CV or application form adds a personal touch, shows professionalism and gives you yet another opportunity to remind the employer of your strong points. Producing a personalised letter shows the employer that you have a genuine interest in the job and in his/her organisation.

A covering letter assumes that you are applying for an advertised post so be sure to include details of the vacancy title and any reference numbers on the letter. For a direct speculative approach, you should state why you are writing to them. Write a short summary of your skills and experience but do not repeat the whole content of your CV.

In your letter you should say:

- Why this particular role interests you
- Why you want to work in this sector / career
- Why you have applied to this particular organisation

Top tips for covering letters:

- Type in the same font and size as your CV.
- Keep it short, use only one side of A4.
- Where possible use the recruiter's title and name e.g. Mr Jones (remembering to sign off yours sincerely).
- In the case of speculative enquiries, it is best to try and elicit the named contact for an organisation in advance of your letter writing.
- Date the letter.
- Include all your contact details.
- Make sure the recruiter can read your signature.
- Don't use abbreviations (I'm, can't) or acronyms.
- Check it for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Check the formatting.



Facebook is a popular, free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.

Even though social media is one of the most popular ways for people, companies, and organisations to connect in today's world, for many people it's still hard to know how to get started. Although it can be intimidating, it's worth your time to learn the basics so that you can be more successful in the professional world. Employment through social media is becoming increasingly popular. With more and more employers choosing to advertise their vacancies online, isn't it time you set yourself up?

- **92%** of companies use social media for recruiting.
- **66%** of companies use Facebook.
- **73%** successfully find a job through social media.
- **3 of 4** hiring managers & recruiters check candidates' social profiles.
- **29%** of job seekers use social media as their primary tool for job searching.
- **31%** of employers saw an increase in employee referrals.
- **1 of 3** employers rejected candidates based on something they found on social media.
- **Only 36%** of firms are not engaged in social media recruiting

The simplest way of finding a job on Facebook is asking, ask your friends, family and networks if they know of any available positions. This way they know that you are looking and can keep an eye out for you. It can be daunting or embarrassing for some to ask but "if you don't ask, you don't get."

Although Facebook still isn't a core method of finding a job in today's market, it can be a very easy way to lose one if you're not careful. You need to make sure that your Facebook wall is either suitable for viewing by potential employers or sufficiently protected by your privacy settings.

If you already have a personal Facebook profile it is worth checking your security settings and making sure your profile is appropriate. If you have a Facebook account, you may want to skip to the pages on online safety and networking. If you are new to Facebook, the next section will talk you through everything you need to make yourself a Facebook page.

- Defining yourself is the first step. Try to figure out what your personal brand stands for. In order to do this, you need to get to know yourself or figure out what you want to be. The important thing is that you plan ahead. There should not be any inconsistencies in what you represent. Your story needs to be cohesive. You also need to think about how other people will react to your brand. Future interactions are extremely important but most importantly, you will need to work with what you already have since that is the only way of being genuine. Whether it is what you are or what you would like to be, it needs to be a part of you.
- Choose your friends carefully. It is not just advice your parents gave you when you were young, it is also great advice for building a strong network. You need to choose who you share your information with, as well as whom you are "seen" with. If you are trying to build a brand out of yourself, you should focus on interacting with people who you are building that brand for, your boss, colleagues, a future employee and the likes of that.
- Decide on a strategy. Yes, you should have a branding strategy. Maybe it is too strong of a word but it does include everything you need to do. You need to analyze how you are being perceived and what your current brand stands for. Think of ways how you can change that for the better and start implementing the plan on a daily basis at a time and speed manner that lets people adjust to the improved you. You should also choose content carefully, so it would fit in with your desired brand effect.

- Change your privacy settings. If you are serious about creating a brand out of yourself, you need to filter information and content you put out there. Depending on your wishes and/or preferences, you can limit the information viewed on your profile to certain groups, or let even people who are not your Facebook friends have access to it. If you want to attract more Facebook connections, it would be wise to let some information be accessible to the public (aka the ones you are not friends with). However, you should never reveal too much personal information. On the other hand, your work information, successes, and education information can only do you good if left with unlimited access. That kind of information can attract fellow colleagues, people with similar interests and finally strengthen your personal brand.
- Turn off the tagging option for pictures. This way, you will protect yourself from spam, malicious attacks or even good friends who just do not care about their Internet presence. You will avoid embarrassing photos from that night out on the town or anything of the sort.
- What you should do next is make a vanity URL. If your name is Roger Hargreaves, for example, your vanity URL could be www.facebook.com/RogerHargreaves. If you use the Facebook e-mail address, it could be rogerhargreaves@facebook.com. It makes your profile more accessible and recognizable.
- Fill in professional details. Unlike some networks, Facebook lets you explain what you do, not just what your position at the firm is. So, explain what your jobs consist of in a few choice words and make it sound as interesting and crucial as you want it to be perceived. Differentiate yourself from other people in the same profession by doing just that. Many of them will just write "sales advisor" and there are plenty of those. In addition, be sure to add your complete education information. You never know which successful ex classmate might be on a lookout.
- Do networking properly and increase your "friend" base by interacting with your Facebook friends on a regular basis and importing contacts more often. Engage with your existing friends over quality content with a fresh personal approach to things, making your brand more appealing and distinguished.
- Post updates. Let your network be aware of your opinions, things you care about, clever thoughts on current events. Or post articles that carry the message you want to be heard from you. Bear one thing in mind, do everything according to your pre-existing strategy (point #3). It should follow a certain image you want to create for yourself but it must never appear as disingenuous.
- Put up a professional-quality profile photo. It should be decent, in every way possible. However, that does not mean that you shouldn't be attractive in it. Some say that is it best to have a picture of you smiling, as opposed to one posing, as it gives away a more positive and light-hearted feel. You should complete it with a professional outfit. Avoid pictures with glasses of alcohol or cigarettes at all costs.
- Link your Facebook page to your blog or Twitter page or any other social network if its contents adhere to the strategy. This way you can raise interest in yourself and what you do. The more people visit your blog or read your thoughts, the stronger your personal brand is. If something does not fit into the brand vision you had, do not link it. Be sure that you do not use the same username or e-mail address for those of the accounts that do not suit your branding needs.
- Start running a new Facebook page or a group. If you have a significant number of Facebook friends, you can increase it even furthermore by starting a new page. This way you can promote your business, your interests and of course yourself. By making a group, you will connect with other community members. People who are interested in the same matter will connect with you and your network will be growing organically, as well as your brand.
- Use Facebook events to your advantage. You can promote an industry event or a gathering of your peers. You should open the event to everyone interested and attract new people to your circle of acquaintances. Once you have set the event, keep engaging with the attendees by posting fresh updates. By organizing events like this more than once, you can establish yourself as an important figure in your respected community.

For an overview of what has been discussed in this guide, please visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyIHns5_Nk



Visiting a Jobs Fair

If this is your first time visiting the Jobs Fair then you may be wondering how it works? What do you have to do? Where do you go? And how do you get the most out of this recruitment event?

Here are some tips to help you make the most out of this event.

Speak with all the exhibitors

Everyone who is in attendance today is looking to recruit staff, you may also be surprised to find what it is they are recruiting for! Take the time to speak with all of them, discuss your skills, qualifications, experience and previous work experience. Even if they don't have the position you are looking for they may know someone who does.

Use the Job Boards

Unsure where to begin? Visit our Job Boards placed around the event. The exhibitors recruiting here today have posted their vacancies on them. This will give you an idea of what vacancies they are recruiting for.

Application Zone

Have an application you want to fill out and return right away, look for our application zone, this is a designated area for you to fill in your application and turn it in the very same day! Unsure where the application zone is located? Ask the organisers on the day!

Network and get contact information

The Jobs Fair can be thought of as a big open professional networking event. This is your chance to give your CV a personality and make a lasting impression. Speak with the exhibitors, make a great first impression, hand them your CV/application and ask for a business card so you can follow up with them after the event.

Be confident

Believe in yourself, your skills and your experience. Greet all the exhibitors with a warm smile, firm handshake and a can-do attitude.

Ask the organisers

Have a question? Ask one of our event organisers! They can be found in the Jobs Fair branded t-shirts.

About Apprenticeships

What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is an in-work training program that allows you to work with professionals in a specific industry, earn a weekly wage, and gain accredited qualifications in that field. It gives you a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience to help you kick start your career in your chosen field.

Apprenticeships are a great option for people who like a more practical approach to learning and whether you are looking for your first job, or are already in employment, an apprenticeship can give you the opportunity to do this.

What level of Apprenticeships are there?

Intermediate Apprenticeship

- Level 2
- 12-18 months
- Equivalent to 5 GCSE's A*-C

Advanced Apprenticeship

- Level 3
- 18-48 months
- Equivalent to 2 A-Levels

Higher & Degree Apprenticeships

- Levels 4,5,6,7
- 24 months +
- Equivalent to foundation degree+, Bachelors or Masters

What industries offer Apprenticeships?

Currently there are over 1,500 apprenticeships offered in a wide range of industries this includes...

- Accounting / Finance / Banking
- Business & Administration
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Logistics
- Events
- Retail
- Health and Social Care
- Science and Pharmaceuticals
- IT
- Telecommunications
- Leisure and Tourism
- Hospitality
- Legal and Law

Many more apprenticeships are being developed along with new standards to widen the choice of apprenticeships available

What qualifications will I get?

Most apprenticeships include the following elements:

A competency based qualification, which you'll need to achieve to qualify for your apprenticeship certificate. This qualification shows that you are competent in performing the skill, trade or occupation your apprenticeship requires.

A technical knowledge qualification, to show you have the necessary technical skills, knowledge and understanding of theoretical concepts as well as knowledge and understanding of the relevant industry and its market.

Functional Skills/ GCSE's to help you achieve a good standard of literacy and numeracy.

8 reasons why you should attend a Jobs Fair?

1 Speak directly face-to-face with the people in charge of HR. Meeting someone face-to-face builds trust and respect much faster.

2 Hundreds of vacancies to apply for on the day from various employers. Make use of our application zone to speed up this process!

3 Various employers that attend will conduct “mini interviews” on the day.

4 Get tips and advice from exhibitors on how to improve your CV.

5 Be prepared to discover new opportunities. You could learn about opportunities that you hadn't even considered!

6 It's more than a “Jobs Fair”. You can speak to exhibitors about training, apprenticeships, volunteering, self-employment and more!

7 Networking opportunities – You may not end up with a job at your first career fair but you might make a contact who can help get you a job down the road.

8 Practice your communication skills – By speaking to multiple exhibitors on the day, you will enhance your interview technique before that all important first interview. Therefore, building your confidence.