



Fashion Studio Assistant Apprenticeship Fact Sheet

Introduction

Talent is key in fashion, not just design talent, which is traditionally developed through fashion and arts degrees, but also through skilled workers and business leaders that are vital to fashion's ecosystem. This new apprenticeship has been developed to broaden opportunities and training in those roles that are vital to supporting the Creative Director(s)/Designer(s) in a business. For employers, apprenticeships enable the training of individuals in the workplace, developing talent that directly fills business needs, often leading to increased employee retention rates. For the apprentices, it offers opportunities for those who would rather not, or could not, remain in further education, as they are able to learn whilst in employment. The cumulative benefits to the industry are even greater; it enables the industry to attract new talent into the industry, ultimately improving productivity. Note that the Fashion Studio Assistant Apprenticeship is open to businesses and apprentices registered and/or living in England only.

An apprenticeship is a job, not a qualification. Passing an apprenticeship demonstrates that a person shows competence in the job role. An apprenticeship is not just for young people, you can be any age.

Employing an apprentice is just like taking on any new employee. A business advertises the job role (the apprenticeship standard), interview candidates and then take them onto the payroll. The key difference is that the job role is largely predefined as part of the chosen apprenticeship standard and the business commits to their training on the job, both in the workplace and at a college/training organisation. Apprentices must be employed in a job that gives them the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills they need to pass the assessment at the end of the apprenticeship.

In summary:

- Apprentices must be aged 16 or over and combine working with studying to gain skills and knowledge in a specific job
- The Business must pay the apprentice at least UK minimum wage
- The apprentice must:
 - Work with experienced staff
 - Learn job-specific skills
 - Study during their working week (for example, at a college or training organisation)

What is the Fashion Studio Assistant Apprenticeship?

This is a new apprenticeship for the fashion industry, designed by a group of fashion employers with the British Fashion Council (BFC). This group created the job role ("standard") that all apprentices undertaking the apprenticeship will follow. The apprenticeship is at Level 3, which is equivalent of an A-Level qualification. Anyone can undertake an apprenticeship from the age of 16 upwards.

A Fashion Studio Assistant is a key position in the designer fashion industry, working alongside the team to create a collection. This apprenticeship will introduce candidates to the designer fashion industry, with experience gained in both product and commercial elements of a brand. The apprenticeship has been designed to focus on non-design roles in business. In a large company, this role would be more focused in the studio, but in a smaller company this role may also be involved in many other areas of the business. The content of the apprenticeship could be applied in other contexts, to be considered by designers and other businesses across the fashion industry, e.g. retailers, and assists the apprentices to move straight into the workplace in a variety of positions.

The apprenticeship starts in the heart of a designer business: the studio, to learn about how a collection is created, during which the apprentice will complete the 6 month foundation core elements of the standard (the job role) including areas such as critical path management. It will then lead to 12 months in a more focused area of the business, with the apprentice choosing to specialise in one of three pathways, depending on their preferences and the company they are in:

- Product Development and Production
- Sales and Operations
- Fashion Marketing and Communications

Following on from the 18 month training, the apprentice will undertake an Independent End-Point Assessment that has been derived by industry experts in this field and is delivered by an End Point Assessment Organisation. This tests the candidates to ensure that they have met the level required to meet the apprenticeship standard. The assessment will be taken in 2 steps:

- Work Based Project (Including Presentation and Discussion)
- Practical Test

The grades for both elements will be combined to confirm the overall achievement of Fail, Pass or Distinction.

In addition to the experience and training, the apprentices receive through the employer and training provider, the BFC as a partner working to pilot this new apprenticeship, will be facilitating a network for the first cohort of Fashion Studio Assistant Apprentices that will provide additional events and seminars.



Where can I access more detailed information about the job role?

The detail of the job role (known for apprenticeships as the Standard) for Fashion Studio Assistant can be found at the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) website by following [this link](#).

Other supporting tools such as, what apprentices will be asked to do during the end point assessment testing, training costs and information on training providers who offer this specific apprenticeship training, can also be found on the link above and by selecting "Find apprenticeship training providers" in the right hand menu.

Employing an Apprentice

You are responsible for paying your apprentice's wage, their training costs (which can be subsidised by government) and giving them their contract of employment.

Contract of Employment

You must offer apprentices the same conditions as other employees working at similar grades or in similar roles. This includes:

- Paid holidays
- Sick pay
- Any benefits you offer such as childcare voucher schemes
- Any support you offer such as coaching or mentoring

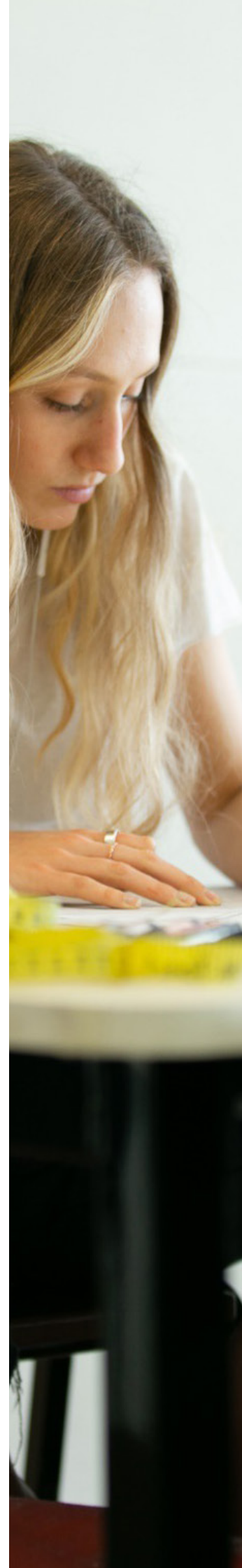
You must sign an apprenticeship agreement with your apprentice. This gives details of what you agree to do for the apprentice, including how long you will employ them for, the training you will give them, their working conditions and the qualifications they are working towards.

Wages Renumeration

You must pay apprentices at least the [minimum wage apprentice rate](#). The apprentice rate is below the full National Minimum Wage. However, the UK Fashion & Textiles and the BFC, in line with best practice guidelines recommend that they are paid the National Living Wage. This will widen access to apprenticeships and increase the pool of talent that employers can draw from, by giving opportunities to all, ensures that it appeals to all age groups, those in parts of the country where the cost of living is higher, or where there is competition for labour. [The National Minimum Wage calculator](#) works out the exact amount that you must pay an employee.

Training

The training required to pass the Independent End-Point Assessment will be undertaken by the apprentice at an accredited Training Provider. This will take place outside of their work in the studio. Their training must last at least 18 months, before they are able to sit the End-Point Assessment.



The [BFC](#) and the [UK Fashion and Textile Association \(UKFT\)](#) are working collaboratively in the promotion of the new Fashion Studio Assistant Apprenticeship through their extensive Training Provider network. For further information on new providers please see the list of accredited organisations on the [Institute of Apprenticeships website](#).

Please note that you must pay your apprentice for time spent training or studying for their apprenticeship, whether while at work, college or training organisation.

Providing that the apprentice has not been funded by the government to study in the same subject area at level 3 previously, and for businesses with a wage bill of less than £3million each year, you will pay 5% of the cost of training for the apprentice, with the government paying the rest (95%) up to the funding band maximum. At the current funding band the maximum an SME will pay for training is £400, paid monthly over 18 months. You could be eligible for extra funding depending on both you and your apprentice's circumstances. Further information on funding bands can be found [here](#).

In addition to the training whilst completing the apprenticeship, there is the option for the student to concurrently study the related qualification, the Fashion Studio Assistant Diploma, which is offered by UAL Awarding Body. Further information is available [here](#).

How do I get involved?

There are [5 key steps](#) to taking on an apprentice in England:

- Choose an apprenticeships framework or standard for an apprenticeship to suit your vacancy requirements, and at a suitable level
- Find an organisation that offers training for the apprenticeship or standard you've chosen. This will be your training provider. They will help you across all aspects of the apprenticeship process
- Check what funding is available and relevant to your circumstances
- Advertise your apprenticeship - your training organisation/provider will do this for you through the "find an apprenticeship" service
- Select your apprentice, complete an apprenticeship agreement and commitment statement with them to suit your vacancy/ requirements.

Further questions

Your chosen training provider will support you through the process, therefore we recommend you find your training provider early in the process.

If you are considering hiring an apprentice, you can get in touch with the UKFT for guidance, as well as further information about the support offered to the apprentice you take on.





Glossary

Apprentice: someone who has agreed to work for a skilled person for a specified period of time and in order to learn that person's skills.

Apprenticeship Standard: A standard contains a list of the skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice will need to have learned by the end of their apprenticeship. Standards are occupation- focused; they are not qualification-led. The learning happens throughout the apprenticeship and the apprentice is assessed upon completion.

End-Point Assessment: End Point Assessment is the name given to a series of tests an apprentice must take to prove their ability to do the job they have been training for. These tests take place at the end of an apprenticeship following a period of training and development often referred to as the 'on- programme' period.

Minimum Wage: The lowest wage paid or permitted to be paid specifically : a wage fixed by legal authority or by contract as the least that may be paid either to employed persons generally or to a particular category of employed persons.

Training Provider: A training provider is registered with the Education Skills Funding Agency to deliver the Fashion Studio Apprenticeship.