

Association of Apprentices Apprentice Council

The Association of Apprentices is a new user-led community that will help apprentices across the UK maximize their potential. We'll be offering some of the social elements that are often missing from apprenticeship programmes as well as offering additional professional development opportunities and career advice. But we want to be guided by you, so we are looking for a team of up to 30 apprentices (or recent apprentices) who can help us shape the Association as we build our website and move towards launch.

We'd like to meet online every few weeks to discuss the things that you think the Association should focus on, the content of our website and the future direction we should take. It doesn't matter what level or type of apprenticeship you're doing – we just want to hear your ideas and get your feedback. This is a great opportunity to put your mark on what we create so every other apprentice in the UK can benefit – and in return you'll gain experience of working on a major project, the chance to meet and collaborate with other apprentices and opportunities to develop your skills and enhance your CV.

You'll need to agree the time with your employer but we're only asking for a few hours a month of your time to join a Microsoft Teams/Zoom call where we will discuss things such as: what information, advice and guidance should we offer apprentices? What are the biggest challenges that apprentices face? Where do you think the gaps are for young people studying an apprenticeship? Should we allow people to upload their own content or chat in forums? What sort of events should we offer? As for the rest – you decide what you want to talk about.

Who can apply to be a Council Member?

If you'd like to join the Council, you need to:

1. Be doing an apprenticeship at the moment (it doesn't matter what level you're at or what you're doing), or have finished your apprenticeship within the last 12 months
2. Want to share your thoughts and ideas on how to improve things for apprentices in the UK
3. Have the time to commit to joining the Council meetings
4. Have your employer's agreement that you can take part (some of the calls may take place during at least part of the working day)

Who runs the Council?

The Association's Project Director will sort out all the logistics, including setting up the meetings and sending out any documents, but in terms of what is discussed – the Council members themselves will get to decide. We want the Association to not just be for apprentices, we want it to be shaped by apprentices too.

Two members of the Council will be invited to be the Chair and Deputy Chair. They will have additional responsibilities: as well as attending the fortnightly Council meetings, they will also take part in the Association's monthly Board meetings to pass on the Council's ideas.

What will the meetings be like?

We're at a really exciting early stage of our development so we want feedback on a lot of ideas, so we'll meet every two to three weeks for the first few months, and then the meetings may drop to once a month.

Most meetings will follow a similar format. Someone from the Association's team will give an update on the latest work we've done and then you'll be asked to give your thoughts and feedback on some particular questions.

We'll meet virtually using Zoom for now, but we hope that we might be able to hold physical meetings in the future.

How much time will I have to commit each month?

We estimate that meetings will last around 60-90 minutes and will take place every 2-3 weeks at first (because we'll have a lot to discuss in the early stages) and then may fall to once a month.

Do I have to attend all the meetings?

Don't worry if you don't think you'll be able to make all the meetings. We know that life's busy and you will sometimes have other priorities. As long as you think that you'll be able to make most of the meetings then that's fine. You can always provide any thoughts you have to the Project Director outside the meeting itself if you can't make it.

How long is membership of the Council?

We're asking apprentices to join the Council for a year. If you'd like to stay on after that, then there may be the chance to re-apply.

Will Council members get to do anything else besides attending meetings?

Council Members may be invited to join webinars or other events to represent the Association, but it won't be compulsory.

What if I'm worried about sharing my thoughts in front of everyone?

Don't be! The great thing is that there are no right or wrong answers to many of the things we'll be discussing. And if you have anything that you'd rather not say in a meeting, you can always email or call the Project Director, or one of the other Council members, and tell them privately.

Will I get paid?

We aren't offering payment for being a Council Member, but we will reimburse you for any travel expenses if you have to attend an event in person. If an apprentice needs to pay for anything else to be able to participate in the Council, then those costs can be discussed with the Project Director.

What's in it for me? What would I get out of being on the Council?

As well as the chance to help shape a really important part of the UK's apprenticeship landscape, you'll benefit from working alongside other apprentices and forming new professional networks. You'll have opportunities for additional training, mentoring or coaching from the businesses involved with the Association. You'll develop and gain experience in all sorts of useful skills including communication, teamwork and problem-solving. You'll have something extra-curricular to add to your personal statement or CV and you'll have access to senior business leaders throughout your time on the Council. Council members will also be named on the Association's website and possibly other materials.

What are you looking for?

We want people who have ideas and thoughts on how the Association of Apprentices can serve the UK's apprentice community. We are committed to the principles of fairness, consistency, meritocracy and equality of opportunity. We don't mind what level of apprenticeship you're doing, whereabouts in the UK you live, what industry you work in or what your plans for the future are. If you want to help us shape this really exciting organisation then we want to hear from you.

Who decides the membership of the Council?

All applications will be reviewed by the Association's Project Director. A shortlist will then be circulated to some members of the Advisory Panel for a final decision.

I'm interested! How do I apply?

It's simple!

1. Fill in the attached application form and email it to Fiona Burford, the Association's Project Director, on director@associationofapprentices.org.uk.
2. Ask your employer to email Fiona (at the same email address) saying that they've agreed you can join the Council.
3. The deadline for applications is Friday 11 December.