

HIRE AN **APPRENTICE**

*Hire and train fresh,
diverse talent through PRCA!*

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS



ABOUT PRCA

WHO?

The Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) is the world's largest professional PR body. We represent more than 35,000 PR professionals in 70 countries worldwide. This includes many of the major consultancies in the UK, and currently has over 400 consultancy members from around the world including the majority of the top 150 UK consultancies. The PRCA also represents over 500 in-house teams, including many of Europe's leading corporations and UK public sector organisations, as well as hundreds of individual and freelance PR and communications practitioners.

WHERE

With offices in London, Singapore, Dubai, and Buenos Aires, we are a global advocate for excellence in public relations.

WHY

Our mission is to create a more professional, ethical, and prosperous PR industry. We champion – and enforce – professional standards in the UK and overseas through our Professional Charter and Code of Conduct. The Code compels members to adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice. We deliver exceptional training, authoritative industry data, and global networking and development opportunities. We also manage the International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO), the umbrella body for 41 PR associations and 3,000 agencies across the world, and LG Comms – the UK's national body for authorities raising standards of local government communication.

The PRCA delivers the Higher PR & Communications Assistant Standard, with the structured support of the Level 4 Diploma in PR. Both are nationally recognised. Flexible in structure, employers can tailor the Diploma using optional units to suit the needs of the business. Learners are placed in the workplace and complete on-the-job training and assessment.

How it works

- The PRCA can post and market your vacancy and run a thorough recruitment process, sending you a shortlist of candidates to interview.
- Once selected and hired, the apprentice is a full-time employee of the organisation.
- They are required to spend the equivalent of at least one day per week on apprenticeship work, which can be done from the office or remotely.
- A PRCA Apprenticeship Coach guides them through the qualification – sets and assesses assignments until they reach the assessment period.
- Assessment is competency based – the apprentice's daily work should provide the evidence for the qualification criteria.
- Apprentices' work-based learning is also supported by PRCA accredited webinars and classroom training courses.
- On completion of the Diploma, the learners sit an end-point assessment relating to the Standard, from which they will be graded Fail, Pass, or Distinction.



Duration and working hours

- It is an 18-month programme, with apprentices hired on a full-time contract over this period. 15 months is spent training, and the end point assessment lasts three months.
- Apprentices must work between 30 to 40 hours per week.
- The 18 months will commence from the apprentice's official induction date.
- The apprentice needs to be working whilst preparing for/completing their end-point assessment.
- All our apprentices are expected to spend at least 20% of their normal working hours (or one day a week) on their apprenticeship coursework, excluding PRCA training courses.

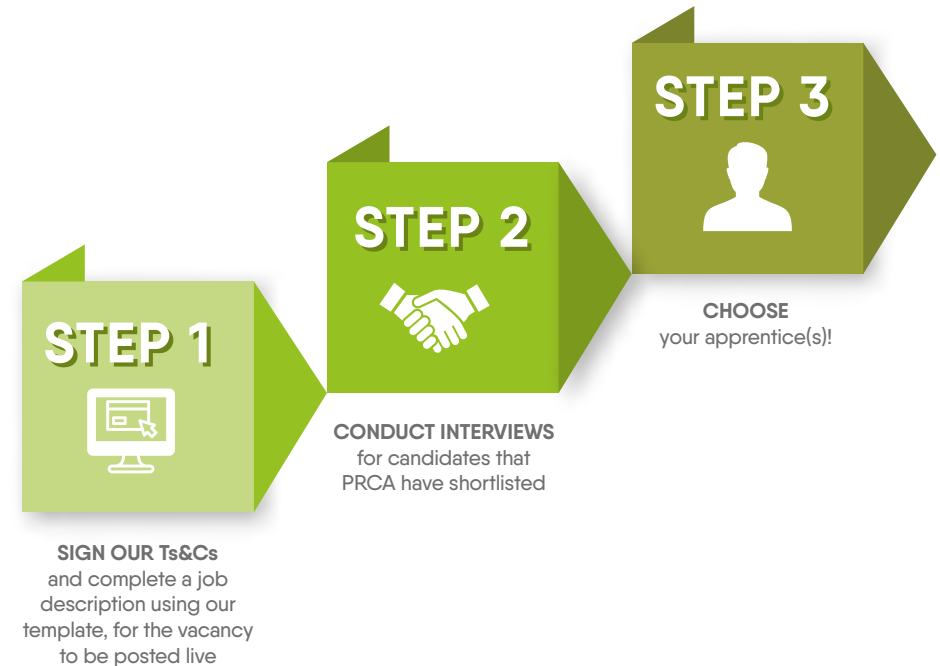
What your company can gain

- Apprentices bring a fresh approach and a positive attitude into the workplace, increasing staff morale.
- Apprenticeships increase staff loyalty and retention.
- The average apprentice increases business productivity by £214 per week.
- Apprenticeships can boost brand image, attracting both new customers and future high-quality staff.
- A more diverse workforce – apprenticeships invite candidates from a large range of backgrounds.
- A reduced staff turnover – 75% of PRCA Apprentices stay on with the same employer after their apprenticeship has come to an end.
- Until 30th September, the Govt. is offering a £3,000 monetary incentive for employers who hire new apprentices.
- Should you hire new 16-18-year-old apprentices, or apprentices aged under 25 with an EHCP, there is a £1,000 Govt. payment.

Costs involved

- The qualification costs £9,000 to deliver.
 - Levy paying employers can fully fund the apprenticeship through their levy pot.
 - Non-levy paying employers only pay salary+£450.
- PR Apprentices must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage for their age. The average annual wage of apprentices we have recruited is £17,000.
- Should you choose to use the PRCA recruitment service, this is £800-£1,000 (contact [Stephanie Umebuani](#) for a tailored quote).

Recruitment Process



Applicant pool

Applicants are mostly young people who have completed A-levels or equivalent and want to get started on a career. Due to the increasing expense of university, more bright and ambitious young people are taking this route into work. The average age of a PR Apprentice is 20 years old. We also take on graduates who have studied a degree completely different to PR, Communications, Journalism or Advertising.

Future prospects for apprentices

When the programme is completed, you have the choice of whether to bring them into permanent employment. We hope that employers will be able to interview apprentices for vacant jobs in their own organisation. Where this is not possible, the PRCA aims to support the apprentice in finding a new role.



I have an existing employee keen to do an apprenticeship. Can I take them on as a PR Apprentice?

Yes!

What is the role of PRCA?

PRCA are a specialist training organisation responsible for apprentices' off-the-job training. When you take on an apprentice, we will assign a coach who will work with you to make sure that the training is well planned. Once the apprentice begins, the coach will follow their progress, hold regular reviews, and deal with any issues that may arise.

What are my responsibilities as the employer?

You must give your apprentice an induction into their role and provide on-the-job training, giving them at least one day a week to focus on their apprenticeship work. It is a largely competency-based programme, so the apprentice provides evidence to meet the criteria needed – employers must set workplace PR activities to support this.

Each apprentice should have a manager who can attend regular reviews with the apprentice-coach. In the final three months, the apprentice's manager will support the apprentice through an end point assessment. Leading up to this, managers are required to choose a suitable campaign which the apprentice will be involved in which allows them to meet the criteria on the standard. As with all employees, you are also responsible for the wages of your apprentice.

What is an Apprenticeship Levy?

The Government introduced the Levy in April 2017 to ensure larger organisations dedicated a portion of their training budget to apprenticeships. The Levy is a payroll tax, set at 0.5% of a company's pay bill. The Levy is not charged on the first £15,000 of this percentage, meaning companies effectively only pay if their pay bill exceeds £3million. This affects around 2% of companies in England.

Employers manage their Levy funds via the Apprenticeship Service online portal. In 2018, the Government introduced regulations that allowed companies to co-invest their Levy funds with eligible partners, allowing companies without the means to fund apprenticeship training to take on apprentices.

How can I find an apprentice?

Leave that with us! PRCA has a wealth of young people around the country who have shown an interest in the apprenticeship programme. We can help you recruit, operating on a vacancy-by-vacancy basis where candidates need to apply each time one goes live to confirm their interest in your company.

How are apprentices assessed?

There is a range of assessment methods used to determine competency, most are carried out remotely or in the workplace. Each piece of evidence is uploaded to an online portfolio (OneFile). In the apprentice's final three months, they sit the end point assessment for the Standard (please see below).

What is an end point assessment (EPA)?

An EPA is the final step in the apprenticeship journey for employers and apprentices. The assessment allows apprentices to demonstrate that they've developed all the competencies (skills), knowledge and behaviours outlined in the PR & Communications Assistant standard, to prove they're able to do the job they've been training for throughout their programme. This assessment is administered by an external organisation, AIM, and includes a work-based project, presentation, and knowledge test. Managers will be required to select a suitable campaign prior to this period which the apprentice will focus on to meet the criteria and ultimately demonstrate occupational competence.

Should we put our apprentice on a fixed term contract?

We'd recommend the apprenticeship programme has some level of flexibility. 18 months is needed from the date of the induction; however you may need to be able to accommodate unforeseen circumstances such as health issues which might lead to time off work and a break in learning.

How often do apprentices attend 'college' training sessions?

Will I need to give them time off to study?

PRCA is the 'college' and provides training to help build apprentices' knowledge. The PRCA accredited training courses apprentices must attend are fully accessible predominantly online; each webinar is 90 mins long and each face-to-face/virtual classroom session runs 9:30-17:00. Apprentices are to spend minimum 20% of their working week on their apprenticeship. These are called off-the-job (OTJ) hours and are logged within the apprentice's e-portfolio. You can choose the apprentice's study day around your business' trends.

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Does my apprentice get paid holiday?

Yes, your apprentice will be entitled to the same holiday schemes as the rest of your employees. The apprentice must also receive the same benefits as all other employees.

Can I hire more than one apprentice?

Yes, you can hire as many apprentices as you want – there's no limit.

Is there an upper age limit for Apprenticeships?

No. Apprenticeships aren't 'just for young people' – anyone can study for an apprenticeship if they meet the key criteria. In April 2017, eligibility rules were altered to allow individuals to undertake apprenticeships at a similar or lower level than any previous qualifications they held, making it easier for people to retrain in a new field.

Who can deliver apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships training providers must be a member of the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP). The register is overseen by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), who conduct due diligence on all applicants. PRCA is registered as a supporting provider, Damar Training is the main contractor. Damar Training might appear in online searches.

Are apprentices eligible for maternity leave?

Yes. Like all employees, apprentices are entitled to statutory Maternity Leave of 52 weeks with Statutory Maternity Pay for up to 39 weeks. The [Apprenticeship funding rules](#) contain information on the action an employer must take if the apprentice requires a break in their apprenticeship due to illness, maternity, or other personal reasons.

Is there independent mental health support available for apprentices?

Yes. The PRCA runs several mental health support courses, support procedures for employers, and a confidential support line for Members.

The PRCA's apprenticeship application process has been nothing short of outstanding. Thanks to the organisation's in-depth and high quality training, we have taken on a new member of the team who is extremely proficient and knowledgeable within all elements of the PR industry. From liaising with our clients in a courteous and professional manner, our PRCA Apprentice has become an integral part of the Voice Communications team. It's been a pleasure watching him grow within the workspace and it's all thanks to the superb training that the PRCA has provided.

Megan House, Senior Account Manager, Voice Communications

As well as advertising, sourcing and filtering applications, PRCA provided us with a shortlist of pre-screened candidates, the calibre of which was excellent. Their support over the last year for our current apprentices has been a great help.

Fraser Sinclair, HR Director, Golin

The PRCA's apprenticeship service presented our agency with a selection of high quality candidates suited best to agency. Our apprentice was supported by a dedicated mentor and assessor who provided assistance and encouragement throughout the programme.

Sananur Meric, Senior Account Manager, Quantum PR

At Racepoint Global we are always on the lookout for talented people to join our team. Working closely with the PRCA, we had the pleasure of welcoming two apprentices to our team in June 2018. We've been impressed not only by their natural curiosity and thirst to learn but also by the level of support they receive from the PRCA. Now firmly embedded in our client servicing teams, the apprentices have added a new layer to the depth of young talent we are fortunate to have at Racepoint Global. We look forward to welcoming more PRCA apprentices and becoming a real powerhouse for nurturing the next generation of PR professionals.

Andrew Laxton, Managing Director and EVP, Racepoint Global

What have other companies said?

[Read more testimonials.](#)



For more information on the Apprenticeship Programme, contact Stephanie Umebuani MPRCA, Head of Apprenticeships, at:

☎ +44 (0) 777 668 3394 or +44 (0) 20 7233 6026

✉ Stephanie.Umebuani@PRCA.org.uk

Apprentices can be recruited at any point in the year, unless specified by the apprenticeship team. The PRCA's recruitment service takes approximately 6-8 weeks.



www.prca.org.uk/careers/pr-apprenticeship