

Entry Routes: A Brief Guide for Theatres

Introduction

UK Theatre, Society Of London Theatre and Creative & Cultural Skills have created this information sheet to introduce employers to the learning and skills landscape, which we appreciate can sometimes feel like a confusing area of work. In this document we will cover:

1. Understanding Entry Routes - Work-related learning opportunities
2. Key players: Government departments, agencies and bodies
3. Common terminology
4. Levels of learning and example qualifications

This guide applies to England only. For more information on Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, or for further guidance, or information on anything in this document, please contact Creative & Cultural Skills at info@ccskills.org.uk

Understanding Entry Routes - Technical Routes, Occupational Maps and Pathways

Technical routes were created as part of the [Post-16 Skills Plan](#) and are structured around clusters of occupations that share common knowledge and skills, and offer progression to and through skilled employment. This is an approach taken by a number of countries deemed to have a strong technical education/skills system. Informed by the new apprenticeship standards (see link above), sources of labour market information, and the wider expertise of employers, **occupational maps** for fifteen technical education routes in England have been developed.

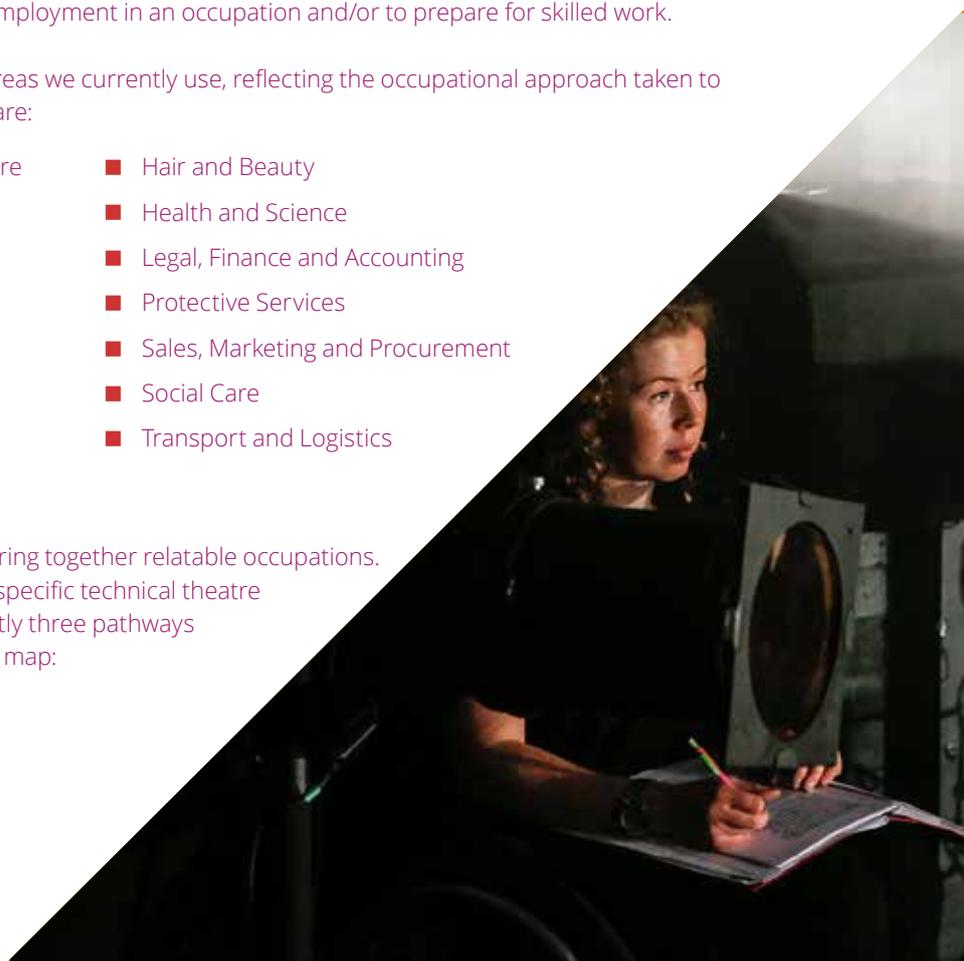
Since 2019 this approach has been maintained by the Institute for Apprenticeships. Individuals pursuing technical education through either apprenticeships or college-based provision (like T-Levels) will be working towards the same goal – achieving the requirements defined by employers for skilled employment in an occupation and/or to prepare for skilled work.

Route titles are slightly different to the subject areas we currently use, reflecting the occupational approach taken to shaping these training pathways. The 15 routes are:

- Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care
- Business and Administrative
- Catering and Hospitality
- Childcare and Education
- Construction
- Creative and Design
- Digital
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Hair and Beauty
- Health and Science
- Legal, Finance and Accounting
- Protective Services
- Sales, Marketing and Procurement
- Social Care
- Transport and Logistics

In each route there are a set of **pathways** that bring together related occupations. For the Creative and Design route, the one with specific technical theatre occupations identified within it, there are currently three pathways set out within the associated occupational route map:

- Craft and Design
- Media, Broadcasting and Production
- Cultural Heritage and Visitor Attractions



T Levels

T Levels are new, two-year level 3 technical study programmes equivalent to 3 A levels. They are designed with employers to prepare individuals to enter into an occupation or progress onto further study. They provide a mixture of:

- Technical knowledge and skills specific to their chosen industry or occupation guided via a dedicated technical qualification
- An industry placement of at least 315 hours (approx. 45 days) in their chosen industry or occupation
- Relevant maths, English and digital skills
- Other occupation specific training requirements e.g. license to practice certificate

T Levels are one of three major options for students to study at level 3 (after completing GCSEs) alongside apprenticeships for those who wish to study and train for a specific occupation 'on the job', and A levels for students who wish to continue academic education.

T Levels are designed to make students *ready for* the job, whereas apprenticeships at the same level will make students *competent in* the job.

A Levels

A Levels are also level 3 qualifications. They tend to follow classroom-based programmes of study and are academic qualifications, concerned with gaining broader knowledge of a subject.

Technical qualifications focus on helping someone gain competence or understanding in an occupation or vocational field.

Apprenticeships

A formal apprenticeship must be recognised by Government and approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. An apprenticeship is a job that allows someone to gain competence in an occupation whilst learning how to do the job, and consists of three core elements:

- **On the job learning** – this is the job the apprentice has been employed to do and makes up approximately 80% of an apprenticeship
- **Off the job learning** – this is delivered by a registered apprenticeship training provider and makes up approximately 20% of the apprenticeship
- **Functional skills in English and Maths.** This only applies where an apprentice has not achieved GCSE English and Maths at an agreed level – this would typically be GCSE grade A*-C, or 9-4 in the current grading system, for a Level 3 apprenticeship

Work experience

Work experience is generally aimed at young people of school age in Years 10 and 11 (15 and 16-year olds). A work experience placement is usually brief (one or two weeks) and provides an opportunity for a young person to gain experience of working in an industry or sector. Expected learning objectives and expenses should be agreed at the beginning of a work experience placement and a relevant responsible adult, such as the young person's teacher, should be involved in helping set up the placement and monitoring the student's progress during it.

There are occasions where work experience placements might be offered to post-16 learners such as those undertaking vocational training at a College.

It is recommended that work experience is always short term and aims to provide a basic and general introduction to the working environment.

Any work experience placement offered as part of a government employment or training programme should adhere to the guidelines of the respective programme e.g. an industry placement as part of a new T level is more than basic work experience. Guidance to help employers offer a T Level placement can be found [here](#).



Internships

An internship provides an entry-level career development opportunity which is beneficial to both the employer and intern, but unlike an apprenticeship this does not need to include formal training or a need to achieve a certificate at the end. There is no legal minimum employment length, as there is with an apprenticeship.

Internships are often considered in relation to graduates, but there is no formal, legal definition of an internship, they can be for anyone. However, Creative & Cultural Skills has a best practice definition of an internship, which is:

- A short-term opportunity (ideally no more than six months)
- A paid entry-level job, where the intern fulfils 'worker status' under the contractual relationship with their employer
- The first experience of a sector or role, or the 'next step' on from, for example, a volunteering role
- A defined job role with a dedicated job title, unless the intern is undertaking a work shadowing role only

Sometimes internships feature as part of a formal programme of study, such as sandwich degrees offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Where an internship or industry placement becomes a formal requirement as part of a programme of study i.e. if the learner does not satisfactorily complete the placement they cannot pass their programme of study, then National Minimum Wage obligations may not apply.

For guidance on why internships in most instances should be paid, please refer to Creative & Cultural Skills' [A Best Practice Guide to Recruitment for Creative Leaders](#). This might help you avoid inadvertently breaching National Minimum Wage regulations.

Volunteering

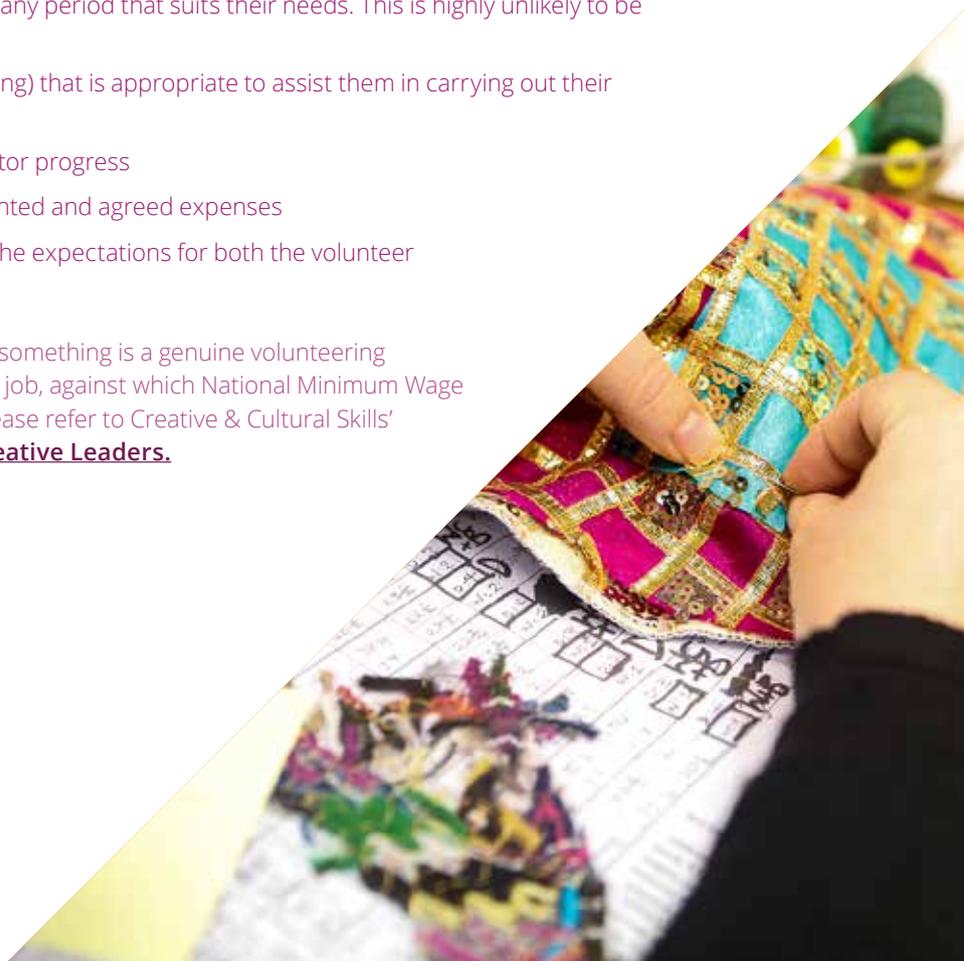
Volunteering is any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.

Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation.

A volunteer is not classified as an employee or worker under UK law, if the person does not have an employment contract with the organisation. All volunteers should be:

- Able to volunteer an amount of time over any period that suits their needs. This is highly unlikely to be full time i.e. Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm
- Offered training (and any protective clothing) that is appropriate to assist them in carrying out their voluntary duties
- Assigned a mentor or supervisor, to monitor progress
- Reimbursed genuine, necessary, documented and agreed expenses
- Offered a volunteer agreement to clarify the expectations for both the volunteer and organisation

It's important that employers understand when something is a genuine volunteering opportunity and when it might risk tipping into a job, against which National Minimum Wage obligations would apply. For guidance on this please refer to Creative & Cultural Skills' [A Best Practice Guide to Recruitment for Creative Leaders](#).



Key players

There is a plethora of agencies that operate in the learning and skills environment, making it hard to know who is responsible for what. Here is a list of those you're most likely to see referenced and what they're responsible for:

The Department for Education (DfE)

The Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, further and higher education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

The DfE is responsible for:

- Teaching and learning for children in the early years and in primary schools
- Teaching and learning for young people in secondary schools
- Teaching, learning and training for young people and adults in apprenticeships and further education
- Teaching and learning for young people and adults in higher education
- Supporting professionals who work with children, young people and adult learners
- Making sure that local services protect and support children (safeguarding)

There are 18 agencies and bodies that the DfE works with directly (sponsors). Those that are most likely to come up in learning and skills discussions with Theatre are:

Ofqual

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England, concentrating on: GCSEs, A levels, AS levels, and vocational and technical qualifications. They are independent of government and report directly to Parliament.

Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. In Higher Education this function is fulfilled by QAA. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education is an independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education.

Office for Students

The Office for Students (OfS) acts as the regulator and competition authority for the higher education sector in England. They are responsible for distributing Government funding to higher education providers.

Education and Skills Funding Agency

The ESFA is a single agency accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults, including apprenticeships. They fund academies, further education, sixth-form colleges and training providers and manage the National Careers Service, the National Apprenticeship Service and the Learning Records Service.



Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

The IfATE is responsible for developing, maintaining and approving apprenticeship standards for England, this includes advising on the amount of Government funding that can be spent on training for each apprenticeship (managed by the ESFA).

The IfATE is also responsible for the development of the T-Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), they host the industry panels (groups of employers) that support their design and approval.

Office of the Children's Commissioner

The Office of the Children's Commissioner promotes the rights, views and interests of children in policies or decisions affecting their lives. They particularly represent children who are vulnerable or who find it hard to make their views known.

Student Loans Company

The Student Loans Company is a non-profit making government-owned organisation that administers loans and grants to students in universities and colleges in the UK.

Social Mobility Commission

The SMC is an independent statutory body. In line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, it is a continuation of the body previously called the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. They monitor progress towards improving social mobility in the UK and promote social mobility in England.

Social mobility is the link between a person's occupation or income and the occupation or income of their parents. Where there is a strong link, there is a lower level of social mobility. Where there is a weak link, there is a higher level of social mobility

Common Terminology

It's not uncommon to be part of learning and skills discussions that reference things that may mean absolutely nothing to you, we can be guilty of using terminology that is unique to this area of work. We hope some of the following definitions provide some clarity.

Apprenticeship Standard

An apprenticeship 'trailblazer' refers to the group of employers that have formally come together to help develop a new apprenticeship standard for a specific occupation in England. Although a Standard is not a qualification as such, they set the content for an apprentice's learning journey and the specific knowledge, skills and behaviours the apprentice will be assessed against at the end of their apprenticeship to ensure they have met competence in the occupation (are able to fulfil the requirements of the job role). In brief, they present as a comprehensive job description. Apprenticeship Standards are written by a Trailblazer.

N.B. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Apprenticeship Standards aren't used but Apprenticeship Frameworks are. These describe the occupation that someone can train for via an apprenticeship and are typically underpinned by two separate or a combined knowledge and competency based qualification.



Trailblazer

An apprenticeship 'trailblazer' refers to the group of employers that have formally come together to help develop a new apprenticeship standard for a specific occupation in England. Apprenticeship Standards cannot be developed without a trailblazer group, and this group must be approved and recognised by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). The trailblazer must work to the IfATE's published processes when developing a new standard and must work closely with a dedicated representative from the IfATE throughout. The trailblazer should be representative of the organisations that would employ someone in the associated occupation, including the type, size and geographical spread.

ATA

ATA stands for Apprenticeship Training Agency. ATAs recruit, employ and arrange training for apprentices on behalf of employers, and are therefore responsible for managing the HR and payroll requirements for apprentices employed by them. To be eligible to operate as an apprenticeship training agency, organisations must be registered on the register of approved ATAs. Organisations listed on the register have been through an application process with the ESFA.

Employers would use an ATA if they do not wish to/are unable to employ an apprentice directly, but they would host the apprentice (provide the work opportunity) for some, or all, of an apprentice's employment contract. The host employer is always responsible for paying the apprentice wage which they would allocate to the ATA to manage on their behalf.

ATAs typically charge employers a small fee for providing this service.

ATAs support **Flexi Job Apprenticeships**.

Apprenticeship Levy

In 2017, the Government changed the way apprenticeships were funded in England, which included the introduction of an employer levy.

The levy is paid by employers with an annual pay bill of £3million or more and is deducted each month from an employer's PAYE bill by HMRC, like a tax. It represents 0.5% of an employer's annual wage bill over the £3million.

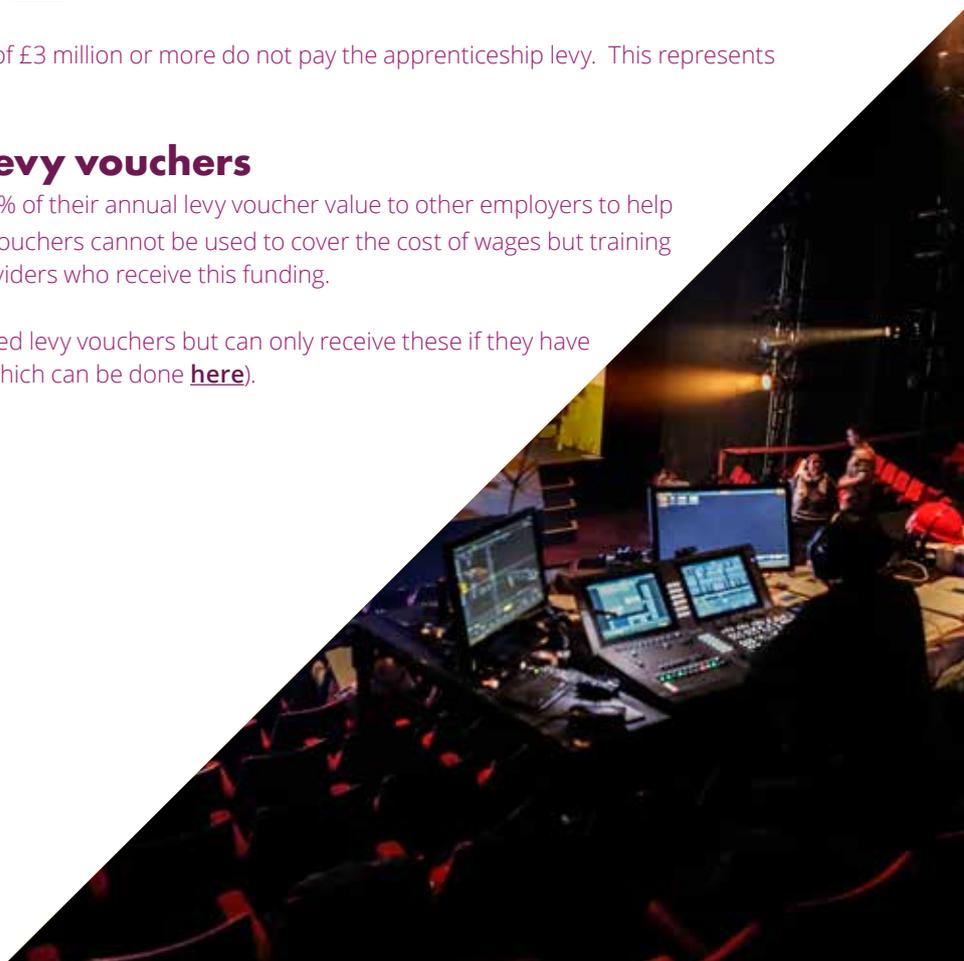
Levy payments are turned into monthly apprenticeship vouchers for employers to spend on apprenticeship training and include a 10% contribution from Government. They are spent through an employer's digital apprenticeship service account. Details of how to set up an account can be found [here](#).

Employers that do not have an annual wage bill of £3 million or more do not pay the apprenticeship levy. This represents 98% of employers.

Levy transfer/transfer of levy vouchers

Levy payers have the option to transfer up to 25% of their annual levy voucher value to other employers to help cover their apprenticeship training costs. Levy vouchers cannot be used to cover the cost of wages but training only. It is registered apprenticeship training providers who receive this funding.

Non-levy paying organisations can use transferred levy vouchers but can only receive these if they have also set up an apprenticeship service account (which can be done [here](#)).



Progression pathways: levels of learning

In England, qualifications are pitched at levels 1 to 8. To give you an example of how these fit together and where they might feature in a learning journey please see the table below.

N.B. the level represents the difficulty at which the learning is pitched, **not** the expected duration or type of qualification/study programme. The table includes some examples of

academic, vocational and technical training options that are an equivalent level of difficulty to each other. This table serves as an example of difficulty levels, and is not an exhaustive list of all qualifications. Levels of learning represent the difficulty at which a qualification is pitched.

1	GCSE grade 1-3 (D-G)					
2	GCSE grade 4-9 (C-A*)	BTEC First Diploma	Customer Service Practitioner Apprenticeship			
3	AS & A Levels	T Levels	Creative Venue Technician Apprenticeship	Foundation Diploma in Arts & Design		
4	Higher National Certificate	Higher Education Certificate	First full-time year of a Bachelor's Degree		Assistant Technical Director (Visual Effects Apprenticeship)	
5	Higher National Diploma (HND)	Foundation Degree	Higher Education Diploma	Second full-time year of a Bachelor's Degree	Operations/ Departmental Manager Apprenticeship	Bespoke Tailor & Cutter Apprenticeship
6	Final full-time year of a Bachelor's Degree	Broadcast & Media Systems Engineer Apprenticeship				
7	Postgraduate Certificate	Masters Degree	Creative Industries Production Manager Apprenticeship	Solicitor Apprenticeship		
8	Doctorate (PhD)					

Level of difficulty

For further guidance or information on anything in this document please contact Creative & Cultural Skills at info@ccskills.org.uk