



INSTITUTE OF THE
MOTOR INDUSTRY
Driving the industry since 1920



An Insider's Guide to Automotive Apprenticeships

Whether you are only just thinking of applying for an automotive apprenticeship, are midway in the selection process or have been offered an apprenticeship already, you will benefit from the invaluable tips and information in this handy guide.

This guide has been put together in collaboration with Calex UK on behalf of:





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Introduction

Welcome to the first steps into the exciting world of the automotive industry apprenticeships!

Who is this guide for?

This guide provides you with an overview of what can be expected throughout this exciting stage of your career and training. It has been put together to help all potential apprentices understand what an apprenticeship is and the options available within the automotive industry.

Our apprenticeships cover the whole of the UK, however some of the information provided in this guide relates specifically to England.

For more information on apprenticeships not based in England please take a look at:

[Apprenticeships in Scotland](#)

[Apprenticeships in Wales](#)

[Apprenticeships in Ireland](#)

What will this guide cover?

This guide has been produced to help you to:

- Understand how an apprenticeship works
- Gain an insight into the retail automotive industry
- Learn about some of the job roles available
- Make an informed choice about your future
- Find apprenticeship vacancies
- Know what to expect during the recruitment process
- Prepare for interviews
- Succeed in your career

About The Retail Automotive Industry

Who are The IMI?

The Institute of The Motor Industry (IMI) is the professional body for individuals working in the retail motor industry and the authoritative voice of the retail automotive sector. The IMI's aim is to ensure that the automotive retail sector has a skilled, competent and professional workforce that is fully equipped to keep pace with the demands of new technology and changing markets. A key part of business for manufacturers and dealers is to encourage the best and brightest people to join their business in a variety of roles. One way which The IMI supports this is through our Autocity website and careers team.

The IMI Autocity

Autocity is the one-stop-shop for impartial careers information and advice from the IMI, specialising in careers within the automotive industry.

Whether you are a student looking at the options open to you, an individual looking to progress your career, a parent, teacher or careers advisor supporting others to make their career choices, www.autocity.org.uk is the place to start.

With free resources to download, videos to inspire, events to attend, competitions to enter and over 150 different [#MotorCareers](#) to choose from, Autocity provides all things automotive!

The Automotive Industry

The automotive industry influences everyone, from delivering goods on time, to commuters travelling to work and emergency services being able to respond to a crisis, The automotive industry helps keep the country moving!

The UK moves more goods by road than any other European country, which makes automotive one of the key industries, employing over half a million people and making it a major contributor of the UK economy.

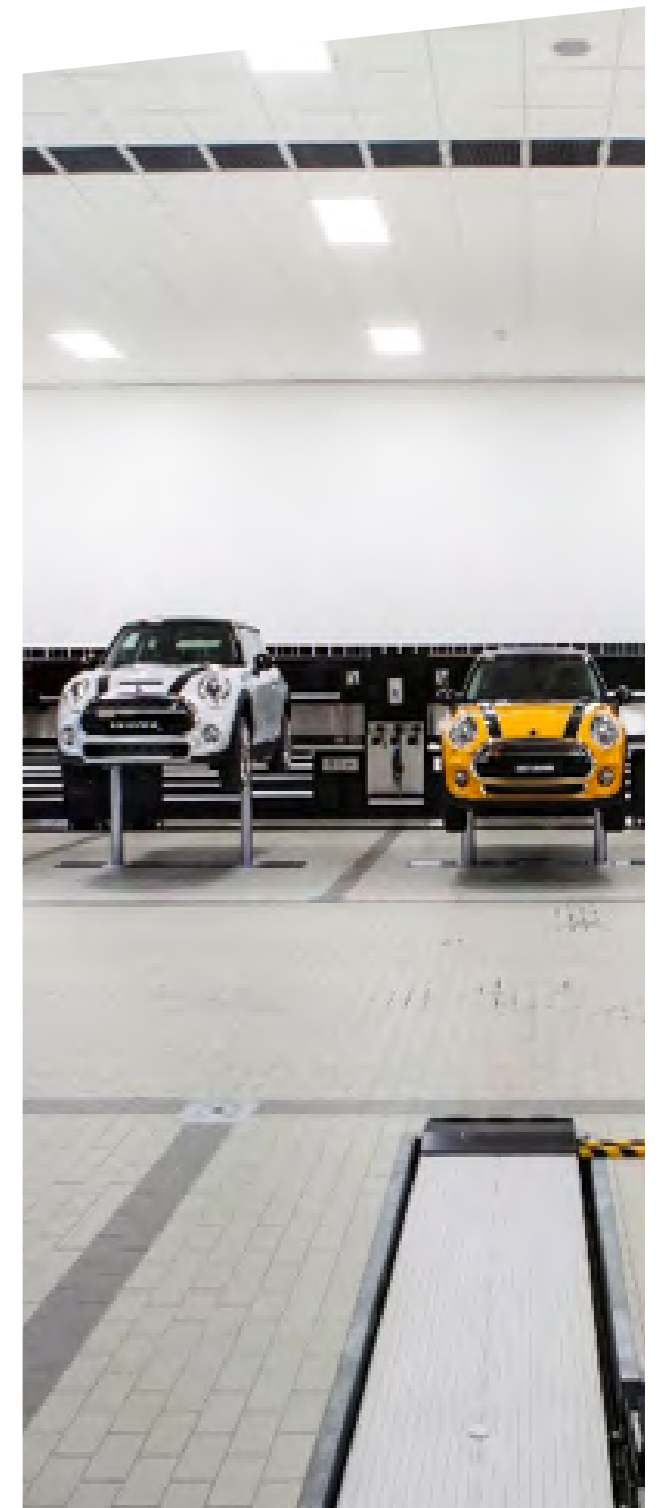
Today's vehicles are miracles of modern engineering, with The IMI you can be assured that you will receive the highest standard of training needed to move with the innovation of the industry.



People working in the industry are employed in:

- The selling of cars, lorries, vans and motorcycles to private and business customers
- Servicing and maintaining these vehicles to keep them safe and in working order
- Roadside assistance and vehicle recovery, helping motorists who have broken down or rescuing vehicles from the roadside
- Assisting people that want to rent a vehicle or lease a number of vehicles
- The motorsports sector
- Specialist rapid fit or 'Fast-Fit' outlets that are experts in tyre and exhaust fitting
- Carrying out repairs to bodywork and paint after a crash or damage
- Working in the parts sector, providing components to customers and businesses

As people become trained and experienced they can develop their careers further by becoming experts in their field, moving into a management role or training. Apprenticeships can open the door to many career options.



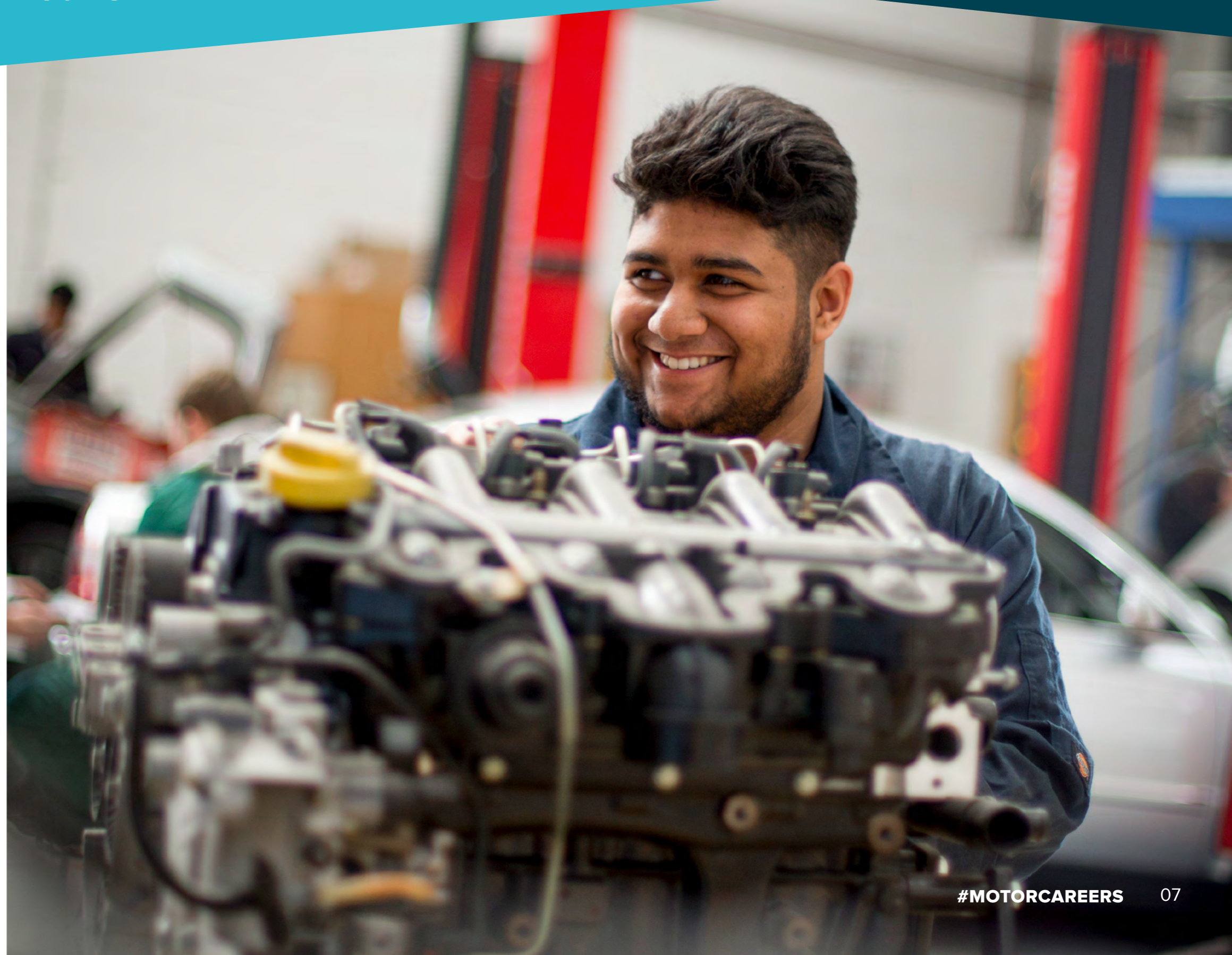
Job Roles within Automotive

Wherever your interest lies, it is more than likely that there is a job suited to you within the automotive industry.

Based all over the country, in every town, there will be opportunities for employment in the automotive industry - almost everywhere has garages selling, servicing, maintaining and repairing vehicles not to mention all the other workplaces related to the sector.

As you may know, there are over 150 job roles in the Automotive Industry so to help you understand some of them, on the next few pages you will find information relating to some of the most common job roles for apprentices, together with a list of some of the departments you might come across in a dealership including an explanation of what they are each responsible for.

Have fun exploring the possibilities that working in the automotive industry can offer!



Apprenticeship Job Roles

With so much to choose from, are you unsure on which career pathway to follow? If so, have a look at the job descriptions below of some of the most popular roles for apprentices. Also, take a look at www.autocity.org.uk for other job roles and a range of video clips with more information.

Service Technician

Technicians are trained in all areas of vehicle mechanics and electronics, from engine and exhaust systems to air conditioning and security features.

Service Technician vacancies tend to fall into three areas:

Light Vehicle Technicians - where 'light' means light vehicles, such as cars and vans up to 3.5 tonnes. Heavy Vehicle Engineers or Technicians - 'heavy' refers to vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, such as trucks and coaches.

Motorcycle Technician - working on bikes and motorcycles

Duties may include:

- Servicing vehicles – carrying out routine checks and everyday maintenance
- Repairing and replacing faulty parts and components
- Advising the Service Advisors about required repairs
- Producing time estimates
- Maintaining repair and service records

Parts Advisor

Parts Advisors are responsible for ordering, selling and managing stock control on a wide range of vehicle parts and accessories. The apprenticeship qualification for a parts advisor is a retailer apprenticeship which will not only focus on stock control but also customer service and sales.

Duties may include:

- Advising customers on how to solve a problem with their vehicle
- Taking orders from customers both face to face and over the phone
- Maintaining an ordered stock room and finding parts from stock
- Raising invoices for parts sold
- Ensuring the Technicians have the parts needed to complete their daily work.

Body Shop Technician/ Accident Repair Technician

Body Shop Technicians take care of the repair of vehicles after damage has occurred in an accident. Some Technicians are multi-skilled whereas others specialise in a specific area.

Body Shop Technicians Vacancies are usually advertised as:

Body Repair/Panel Technician – Assessing vehicle damage, removing and repairing Vehicle damage

Refinisher/Paint Technician – Paint repairs, spraying, refinishing and colour matching

Mechanical and Electrical Trim Technician/MET Technician - experts in identifying damaged mechanical and electrical components on vehicles

Duties may include:

- Assessing damage
- Making decisions on whether to repair or replace panels
- Removing damaged panels and components
- Repairing damaged panels
- Using welding and soldering equipment
- Sanding, masking, etching and priming panels prior to painting
- Selecting, matching and mixing paint
- Accessing and removing mechanical and electrical components
- Removing and fitting non-structural body panels
- Removing and re-installing mechanical and electrical systems
- Checking the finished repairs
- Keeping records of the work carried out

Sales Executive

Sales Executives or Sales Advisors are responsible for selling new and used vehicles and getting to know their customers.

Duties may include:

- Meeting with customers to discuss their needs before advising them on the most suitable vehicle
- Arranging test drives
- Negotiating sale and trade-in prices
- Working out finance agreements and packages
- Processing orders and completing paperwork
- Organising vehicle registrations and the delivery of vehicles

Service Advisor

Service Advisors deal directly with customers and act as a go-between for the customer and the Service Technicians. They will also look after the administrative and customer relations aspects of service department operations.

Duties may include:

- Interpreting customer concerns and liaising with the Service Technicians
- Booking in and scheduling vehicle services
- Responding to customer requests and liaising with them about any additional work that may be required
- Estimating time and costs associated with repairs
- Handling customer complaints

Business Administrator

Administrators handle the day to day tasks in an office to make sure things run smoothly. This sort of work requires a strong sense of responsibility, accuracy and attention to detail.

You could find yourself working in one of the following departments:

- Sales
- Parts and Service
- Accident Repair Centre
- Finance
- Distribution
- Technical Centre
- Marketing
- Business Development

Dealership Departments

Service / Body Shop Reception

Technical receptionists deal directly with customers both face to face and over the phone, arranging for the service or repair of their vehicle. Many technical receptionists start out as technicians or have an interest in cars, and use this technical knowledge to explain faults and repairs to customers.

Maintenance & Repair Workshop

Technicians service and maintain vehicles to ensure they are safe and reliable. Using hi tech equipment to diagnose and locate faults they replace work or faulty components or carry out routine service and maintenance to keep the vehicle operating at its optimum performance. There may also be technicians who work in specialist areas such as vehicle electronics or MOT testing.

Body Repair Workshop

With thousands of vehicles involved in scrapes every day, the work of the body repair technician combined with the vehicle refinisher ensures the customer is kept happy by returning their vehicle to them restored to a new condition. This involves replacing panels and adopting many unique techniques to straighten damaged bodywork and prepare surfaces before ensuring the paint is perfectly matched to the original colour.

Parts Department

Parts operatives carry out a vital task in a dealership making sure that the correct parts and components are available at the right time; keeping the vehicle in the workshop for the minimum time possible. Combining administration skills with sophisticated IT systems the parts department ensures that stocks of parts are easily identified and located. Many parts departments also sell parts and accessories directly to the public demanding different skills and abilities such as handling cash.

Sales Department

The sales department is usually where most of the general public first become involved with a dealership and creating the right impression is important. Buying a car is often the second largest purchase a person makes, after buying a house, so making the right choice is extremely important. Sales Executives use their knowledge of the vehicle range to provide help and advice to customers allowing them to choose the best option for them. Accurate paperwork is also important for the sales department and many use dedicated computer software packages to assist with processing sales orders.

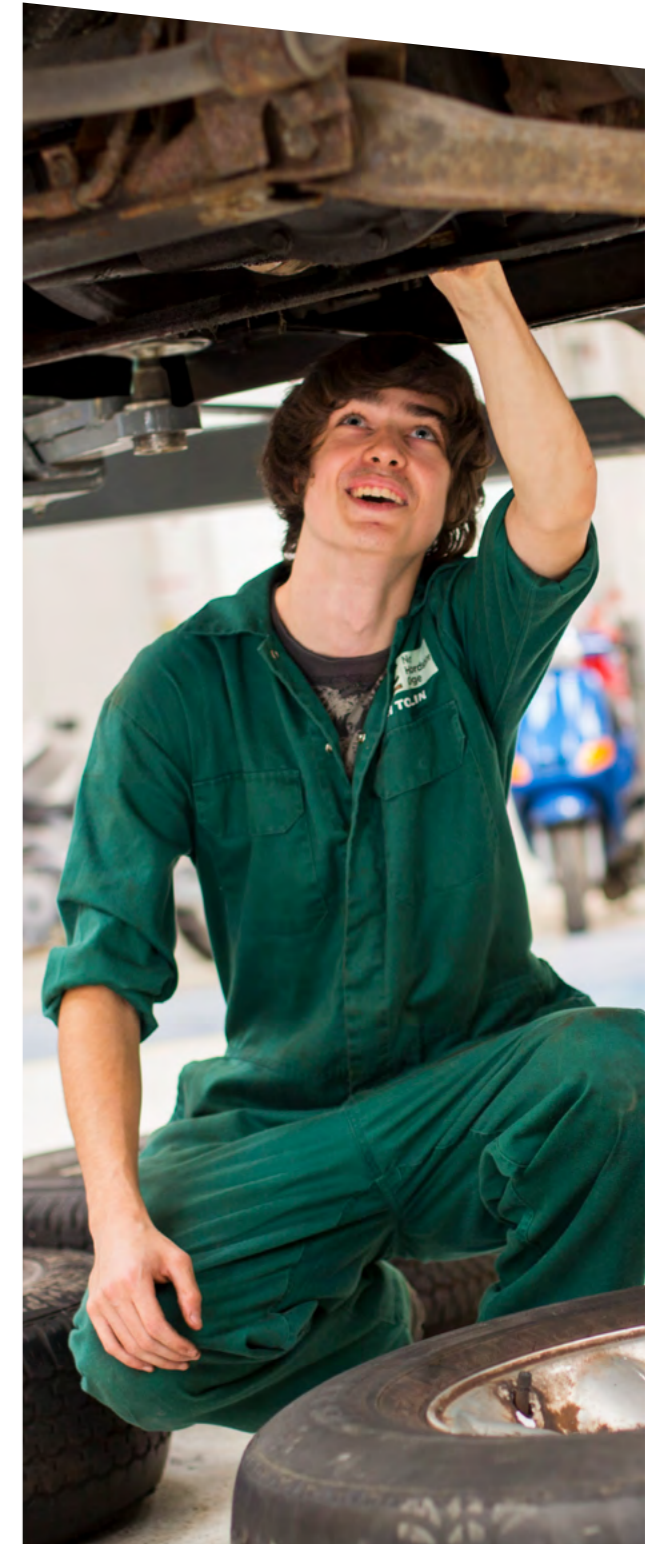
Business Administration

No dealership can run without good administration; from accountants to human resources, they keep the flow of documentation moving and records of vehicles, customers and staff are kept accurate and up to date. A large dealership will receive hundreds of forms, letters, bills and payments from suppliers, customers and manufacturers every day, all of which need to be directed to the relevant department or recorded and filed appropriately.

Opportunities for apprenticeships also exist in smaller, independent garages who many not have all of these departments.

These garages are usually privately owned and not directly linked to a specific manufacturer. This means that the people who work in them need to have a wide range of skills and knowledge as they will work on all types of vehicles.

The body repair industry also has many independent workshops where a variety of accident damaged vehicles are repaired and painted. Some concentrate on older vehicles, restoring classic cars, while others are experts at customising vehicles for special use. All of these areas require very specific skills and abilities.



Why Choose an Apprenticeship

Over the last decade or so, it seems that everyone has been focused on getting students into university, while apprenticeships, including those in the retail automotive industry, have been under-appreciated.

However, apprenticeships are actually highly desirable to young people for a variety of reasons and are also rapidly gaining in popularity with their influencers.

Some of the benefits of becoming an apprentice are:

- Begin following a career path while others remain in education
- Be paid to study, resulting in no student debt
- Work alongside professionals every day
- Learn skills that are not taught in the classroom
- Achieve nationally recognised apprenticeship certificate
- Gain valuable knowledge and experience
- Become a valuable employee

In fact, an apprenticeship is the perfect way to get onto the career ladder of your choice whilst still learning. You will get specific training to help you learn all about the industry and the particular job role you have chosen.

Not Just Big Brand Manufacturers

Automotive apprenticeships are not just reserved for those big brand manufacturers! They also exist in smaller, independent garages.

These garages are usually privately owned and not directly linked to a specific manufacturer. This means that the people who work in them need to have a wide range of skills and knowledge as they will work on all types of vehicles.

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All You Need To Know About Apprenticeships

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is full time paid employment combined with structured training in a specific field.

An apprenticeship will give you a broad understanding of the industry and the workplace whilst learning and gaining a recognised qualification within an Apprenticeship Standard.

From day one apprentices will receive 'on-the-job' training within their workplace and 'off-the-job' training delivered by a college or training provider.

Who is an apprenticeship suitable for?

To start an apprenticeship you must be:

- Minimum 16 Years of age
- Not in full time education – you can submit your application whilst still in school/college but must be in a position to commit to the apprenticeship full time.
- Living in the United Kingdom with right to work.

How long is an apprenticeship?

The duration of your apprenticeship can vary depending on which course you enrol on. It can be anywhere between one and four years.

An apprenticeship agreement will be signed at the beginning of your programme and will cover the recommended time to complete the qualification.

What are the New apprenticeship Standards?

Designed by groups of employers, the new apprenticeship standards were first introduced in 2014, to replace apprenticeship frameworks. In August 2020 all Frameworks were removed and the new apprenticeship standards have replaced them.

The standards outline the Skills, knowledge and behaviours (KSBs) required to carry out a certain job role, at the end of your apprenticeship you must pass an independent assessment demonstrating the KSBs.

When do apprenticeships start?

Whilst many apprenticeships start around August/September, employers actually recruit all year round.

What qualification level is an Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are available at various levels:

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeship = Level 2 qualifications (eg GCSEs or Scottish Nationals)
- Advanced Level Apprenticeship = Level 3 qualifications (eg A Levels, BTECs or Scottish Highers)
- Higher Level Apprenticeship = Minimum Level 4 qualifications (HNC/D, Foundation Degree or beyond)

What qualifications would I need?

Most employers will require you to have, or be predicted to achieve, a minimum of 3 x GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade A* to C/9 to 4 including English and Maths. Some will also look for an ICT qualification.

If you are successful in gaining an apprenticeship but have not achieved an A-C in Maths and English at GCSE, you will be required to complete functional skills in that subject to be able to complete your apprenticeship standard.

What skills and personal qualities are employers looking for?

Competition for apprenticeships can be fierce so it's not all about qualifications – employers also look for candidates to demonstrate other skills and personal qualities.

Recruiters will be trying to identify people that are excited by the prospect of working for them, have a passion for the industry and who stand out from the crowd.

The key behaviours which will be assessed during the recruitment process include:

- A willingness to learn
- Ambition
- Motivation
- Team working
- Problem solving ability
- Personal responsibility

How and where would I train?

Day to day you will learn 'on the job' with your employer and then 'off the job' training will either be through day release at your local college or block release with a national training provider, many of who have state-of-the-art workshops and training facilities.

When attending block release training expect this to be for between five and eight weeks per year. This may involve staying away from home to attend a National Training Centre where you will be very well looked after. All costs of travel and food are covered by your employer whilst on training.

You will be assessed throughout the year by your tutor and employer – you may also be assigned a workplace mentor to support your learning.

How Much will I be paid?

Apprentices are paid as per the Apprentice National Minimum Wage, set by the government – this is currently £4.15 per hour for those under 19 years of age or aged 19+ and in the first year of an apprenticeship.

For apprentices aged 19+, and not in their first year of an apprenticeship, the National Minimum Wage for their age will be paid. This currently ranges from £6.45-£8.20 per hour.

As an apprentice you must be paid for your normal working hours plus the time that is spent training. In addition you will get at least 20 days paid holiday per year, plus bank holidays.

Some employers may offer more than the minimum hourly rate and may also fund other expenses such as travel, food and accommodation whilst on block release training.

What other Support will I receive?

If you are between 16 and 24 years of age and studying IMI qualification or on an Apprentice Standard, you will be entitled to join the Institute of the Motor Industry as a Student Member. Registering as a Student Member is really simple to do and is free of charge.

The IMI will then provide you with regular updates and discounts as well as offering you student specific events and opportunities. On top of that you will also gain access to a web based platform aimed at supporting you throughout your apprenticeship.

Alternatively if you are 25+ or studying a related qualification from another training provider you could join the Institute of the Motor Industry as an Affiliate member.

Will I be classed as a student?

Yes, you will be classified as a student until the end of your apprenticeship and will be eligible to apply for an NUS card and receive many other student benefits.

How to find an Apprenticeship

There are a number of ways to search for an apprenticeship including making direct contact with potential employers. A list of potential employers is available to download via Autocity's [teaching resources](#).

However you can also search independently for current apprenticeship vacancies through the [National Apprenticeship Service](#) and of course, the IMI's own job search website [IMI Auto Jobs](#). There are also some further links to be found on the [Autocity](#) website.

An apprenticeship management organisation or a national automotive training provider will offer vacancies and provide support to potential candidates too.

In addition local colleges can assist you to find a suitable apprenticeship vacancy. As a first step you could attend an open Careers/Apprenticeship event, look on their website or make an appointment to meet with an advisor.



The Recruitment Process

The recruitment and selection process for apprenticeships is designed to be as simple, fair and supportive as possible. It will ensure you are given every opportunity to impress, ask those burning questions and to allow the recruiters to understand your strengths and suitability for the role.

Below you will see some steps as to what to expect, but this will of course vary from one employer to another.

Step 1 – Initial Application

Some job vacancy advertisements allow you to submit your CV while others ask you to complete an online application form.

This is the first opportunity for you to tell the recruiters a bit about yourself. This will require you to give them details about your qualifications and any work experience you may have. Remember to include details of any hobbies, interests or activities you take part in that would demonstrate the key behaviours mentioned earlier.

★ **TOP TIP** Take your time with your CV or application form, double-checking it for spelling and grammar accuracy. Definitely ask a parent or guardian to read through it for you!

Step 2 – Assessment

If you meet the eligibility requirements for the job you may be invited to participate in an assessment to measure your current working level. Typically these will be Maths, English and ICT based and should last no more than 20 minutes each.

Automotive employers also use **Mechanical Comprehension Assessments*** for potential Technicians (see below for example questions). You will either be sent a link to complete these online or alternatively you could be invited to attend an assessment day at a college.

★ **TOP TIP** If completing the assessment online, make yourself comfortable by sitting down to do this in an environment where you won't be distracted. As the sessions will be timed, be sure to allow enough time to complete all of the questions. Also, make sure you read all of the questions properly.

Step 3 – Telephone Interview

Candidates that successfully complete the online assessments are likely to be invited to participate in a short telephone interview.

This is an opportunity for recruiters to assess you further, get to know you and for you to get to know them by asking any questions you may have. For guidance on telephone interviews please read the next section.

★ **TOP TIP** Be sure to do your research on the apprenticeship role and the company itself before the telephone call – you could also prepare a question or two to ask. Finally, relax and be yourself.

Step 4 – Face To Face Interview

This is your chance to meet with your potential new employer. You will visit the workplace and sit down with them to discuss the opportunity in more detail.

It is also your turn to learn all about the employer and the apprenticeship on offer, whilst they will use this time to find out even more about you and why you want to work for them. For advice on face to face interviews please read the next section.

★ **TOP TIP** Show them how enthusiastic you are about the opportunity of an apprenticeship with their organisation. Present yourself in a professional way and demonstrate that you would be a great addition to their team.

Step 5 – Decision

The recruiters will then decide on your suitability for the position along with the other candidates.

The outcome should then be communicated to you soon after – **Good luck!**

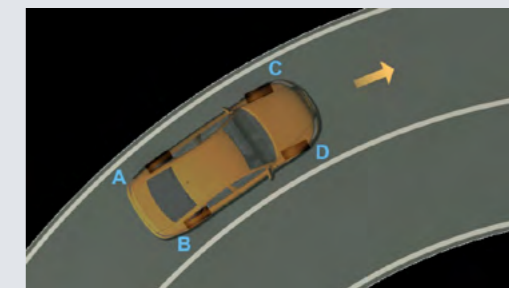
***Mechanical Comprehension Assessment**

A Mechanical Comprehension Assessment is designed to test your basic mechanical knowledge which is important to know when you are applying for an apprenticeship in a job role that relies on mechanical skills.

Example Questions

A car travels along a high speed right hand bend. Which tyre would generate the greatest heat?

- A Tyre A
- B Tyre B
- C Tyre C
- D Tyre D



If the crankshaft pulley rotates at 3000 rpm how will the alternator pulley turn?

- A Clockwise, faster
- B Anti-clockwise, faster
- C Clockwise, slower
- D Anti-clockwise, slower



Interview Advice & Guidance

What type of interview is it?

An interview can be carried out face-to-face, conducted over the telephone or via a video call. Most jobs will require a face-to-face interview before an offer is made, but this may be in addition to earlier stage interviews.

People can make the common mistake of thinking that the interview is less formal when it takes place on the phone, but it's important that you treat it in the exact same way that you would a face-to-face interview. Dress smart, keep it professional, and make sure you're fully prepared.

Smile! You can hear the difference on the phone.

The same goes for video interviews; Make sure your username is professional on the software you are using.

Know how to use the software for the interview, be that zoom, skype, google hangouts or GoToMeeting. Ask which one they will be using. Test the technology and connections before the interview

Think about your background – clean and tidy, neutral colours and remove any personal items that you don't want the interviewer to see.

Lighting – Adding a bit of extra lighting can make you look and feel great. Think about having two light sources on either side of you. Soft, natural lighting is best.

Look straight at the camera, this will appear that you are making eye contact

Make sure you remove distractions – Wife, husband, children and pets! Reduce the risks of having delivery drivers knocking repeatedly on your door!

Remember

For all interviews, you as the potential employee will need to be prepared to show you are the best candidate for the job as the employer will want to make sure he/she employs the right person, someone who can contribute the most to the organisation.

Plan and prepare or prepare to fail

Research the role, company's profile and background

Start by looking into their future goals and plans.

Conducting the interview with this in mind will make you seem like a good long-term investment. You should also be ready to talk in depth about the industry, the organisation, and the position you are applying for.

Think of questions to ask your interviewer

Participating actively during the interview gives a good impression of your level of interest in the job. It's a good idea to come prepared with at least three thought provoking questions to ask your interviewer. It's important you know the name(s) of those that will be conducting the interview.

Practice with a peer

If you have a friend who is also preparing for an interview, consider preparing together. Not only will this give you a way to structure your preparation, but it will also help you get comfortable with giving answers, telling anecdotes, and using appropriate terminology.

Anticipate questions from the interviewer

It's best to prepare for a wide variety of questions by thinking about your own career goals, long-term plans, past successes, and work strengths, but you should also brace yourself for the deceptively simple questions that most employers like to throw at their interviewees.

Prepare your outfit for the interview

As a rule of thumb, you should dress for the interview the way you would for the job itself. Choose subdued colours (blues, browns, greys, black) and make sure that your clothes are lint- and wrinkle-free. Avoid too much perfume, after-shave, or scented lotion.

Show up in the best possible shape

Make sure you know exactly how to get there (do a practice run) and just where to park so that you can arrive 15 to 20 minutes before the scheduled interview time. Go to bed early the day (or the days) before the interview so that you look rested and healthy on the big day.

For more information and help and support on interviews and CV writing please visit our Autocity website.



What Next?

Once the employer has seen all the candidates you should be informed of the outcome of your application within a few days, unless the employer has told you otherwise.

Hopefully you will have achieved your goal and it will be an offer of employment. Congratulations - you have the apprenticeship in the bag!

You will then receive several documents by email or post including contracts which will all need reading, signing and returning in order for you to formally accept the offer. You will also be given details of how your training will work and that all-important start date.

However, if you are unsuccessful don't be afraid to ask for feedback. Obviously not everyone who applies for the position can be offered an apprenticeship and there will be other opportunities, however any feedback you receive will be useful and will help you to prepare for next time.

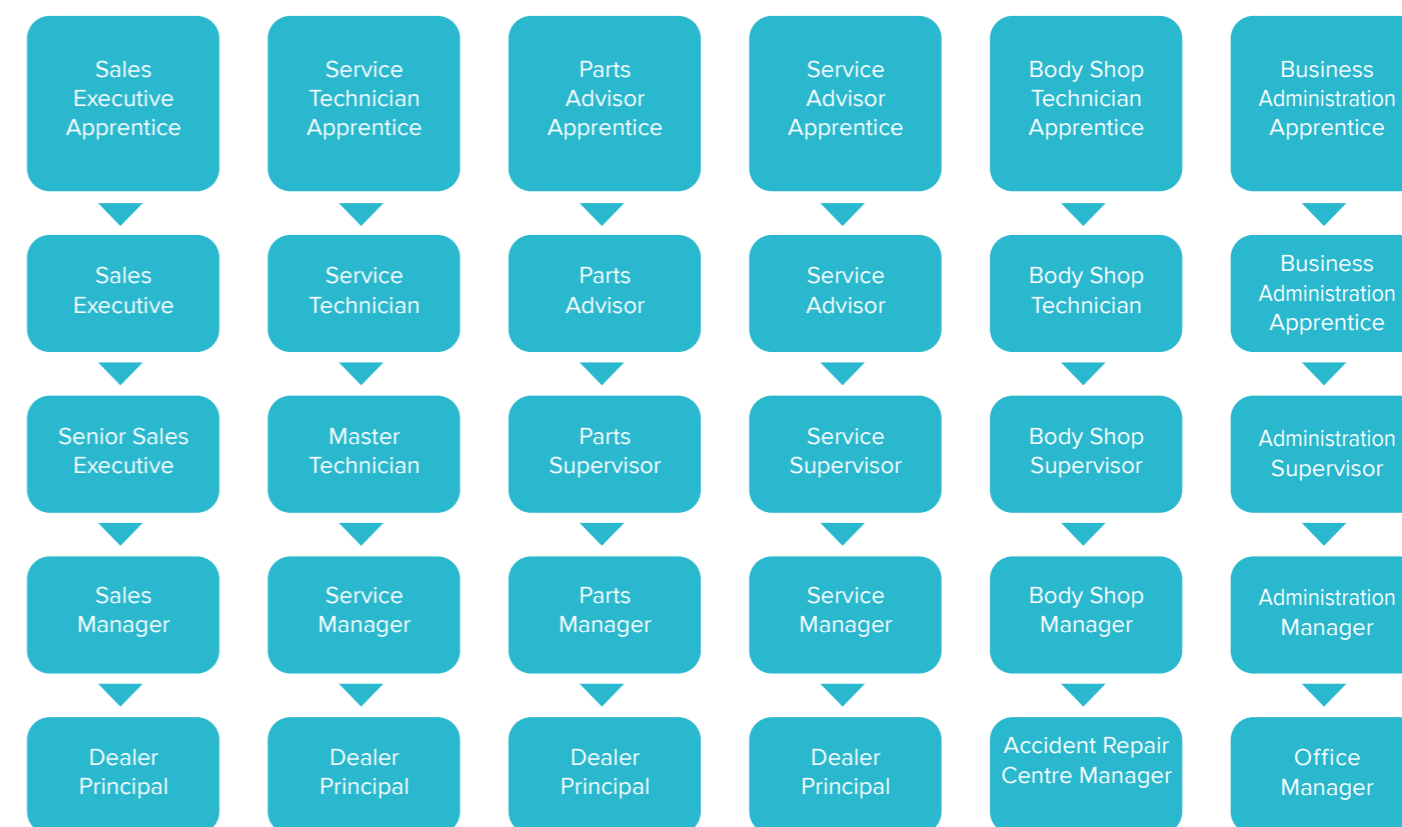
Also, do not be afraid to decline an offer if you decide that the role, employer or opportunity just isn't right. Don't feel you have wasted anyone's time, including your own, as at the very least you will have learnt how to succeed in the recruitment process and will have discovered what you do NOT want. You will no doubt soon move on to finding something which is perfect for you.



Career Progression

An apprenticeship programme is an excellent way for employers to ensure that they have high quality employees working for them. Employers generally recruit apprentices who show ambition and who work hard to achieve their potential. Ideally, they want you to take ownership of your own development and grow with them.

Here are a few examples of where your apprenticeship could lead ...



Whichever career pathway you choose, there is always scope for progression to the top.

Although a permanent position is not guaranteed, at the end of an apprenticeship a high percentage of apprentices are successful in being offered a full time role and continue to climb the career ladder with their existing employer.

Recognition and Reward

The IMI Skill Auto competitions set out to identify the most talented young apprentices working in the automotive sector. Run annually they are designed to raise standards, esteem and levels of expertise in technical skills across four streams of competition, Automotive Technology, Automotive Body Repair, Automotive Refinishing and Heavy Vehicle Engineering.

2019 proved to be an exceptional year with the introduction of Heavy Vehicle Engineering as a full competition cycle, sponsored by IRTE, and the introduction of new challenges for our competitors in all areas.

From an initial entry of over 300, 84 individuals took part in the practical heats in the Spring with only 24, 6 from each skill area, being invited to the national finals (World Skills Live) and the possibility of becoming UK champion.



Please contact the IMI Careers Team with any questions, queries or feedback you may have.

Email: careers@theimi.org.uk

Telephone: 01992 511521

Also published by the IMI Careers Team:

- Employability Toolkit
- Work Experience Toolkit
- #MotorCareers Parents' Guide
- Lesson Plans – Maths, Literacy, ICT and Business Studies
- Fun Activities
- Competition Posters & Workbooks
- Careers Pathway Maps

To download these resources free of charge please visit

www.autocity.org.uk