

Apprentice Salaries – Do They Matter?

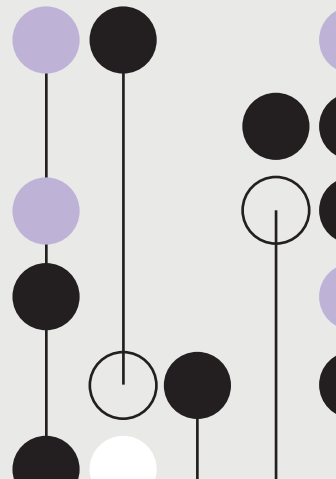
Hiring a Modern Apprentice in today's economic climate is a sound business decision. As an employer you bring fresh talent into your workforce, pass on existing skills, and working with QA, provide that young person with training, leading to a nationally recognised qualification.

A good salary pays more in a year than the average post-degree student debt

With the average post-degree student debt in Scotland running at £14,000*, an apprenticeship paying £18,000 pa is an extremely attractive proposition for young people considering their future careers.

Apprenticeships.Scot vacancy page for May 2025 showed an average salary £17,095 per year for Computing and IT apprentices. We believe if your salary is £17k+, we will be able to fulfil your role in a timely manner with a talented young person.

*Student Finance and Wellbeing Study (SFWS) Scotland 2023-2024: main report



Seven good reasons why you should pay apprentices a competitive starting salary

01

There is only so much good talent out there

The talent pool for apprenticeships in Scotland is compact. SDS (Skills Development Scotland) reports show the number of 16–19-year-olds in Scotland looking for employment is static around the 5,000 mark. There are many employers fishing in this pool. It is so important to be one of the outstanding employers in the eyes of potential candidates.

02

It creates a favourable impression, and an expectation of a good level of output

The truth is, that higher salaries tend to incentivise a culture of high output. When your apprentices perceive they are getting paid more than apprentices at other companies, it often compels them to expend extra effort. They will work harder to demonstrate they deserve that money.

03

Your company reputation wins, and word-of-mouth recommendations may improve

Like any other role, attracting the right person means paying a salary attractive to the candidate and affordable for the employer. News gets around. The top apprenticeship employers pay good starting salaries and ensure their training is exciting and interesting. In turn, apprentices spread the word, and can bring in equally committed candidates for your business.

04

Employees will not want to leave

A good starting salary and an engaging training programme makes apprentices more likely to stay with you for the long term. And the longer someone is at your company, the better they understand your business. You will not have to spend money on new hires and repeat advertising, or waste time onboarding new employees. 96% of QA apprentices go on to full time employment.

05

Employees can focus more attention on their work

When money is less of a concern, your apprentices can more fully focus on their projects. They will have fewer worries about staying financially afloat or about being unfairly compensated. That can make them more present, leading to higher levels of productivity and better quality of work.

06

You will get better quality candidates, quickly, beating the competition

It is a fact that roles paying lower salaries take longer to fill – sometimes up to 3 months – do not in general attract large numbers of applicants, and offer you, the employer, less choice. Marketplace competition is strong. Large retail outlets like Tesco currently pay £11-£12 per hour. According to Glassdoor, crew members in McDonald's in Glasgow earn £18,900 per year.

07

You will be fairly rewarding people

According to a recent report, in-work poverty in Scotland is gradually increasing. One in five people of working-age in Scotland are living in poverty. Paying people more is just the right thing to do. Amongst the early careers workforce this is perceived as moral and helps push a culture of equality and social responsibility. Something most employers care about.



The benefits outweigh the costs

Right now, every business in Scotland is feeling the pressure – rising National Insurance contributions are making it harder than ever to hire the talent you need without making tough sacrifices elsewhere.

But there's a smarter solution.

Let's compare:

Scenario 1:

You hire for a £25,000 role.

- You'll pay nearly £3,000 in NI contributions alone.

Scenario 2:

You hire an apprentice at a competitive £18,000 salary.

- No NI contributions
- £7,000 saved on salary
- £3,000 saved on NI
- £10,000 back in your budget to reinvest where it matters most.

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