

Royal Ballet and Opera Apprenticeships

What part could you play?

INFORMATION PACK FOR CANDIDATES

PROPS CARPENTER APPRENTICESHIP

Provisional Schedule

Applications Close:

Mon 12th May 9am

1st Round Interviews (*online*):

w/c 2nd June 2025

2nd Round Interviews (*in-person*):

w/c 23rd and 30th June 2025

Start Date:

1st September 2025 (tbc)



Welcome,

Message from Alex Beard, Chief Executive

Thank you for taking the time to apply for a role at the Royal Ballet and Opera.

Extraordinary, world-class performances of opera and ballet are at the absolute heart of our vision here at the Royal Ballet and Opera.

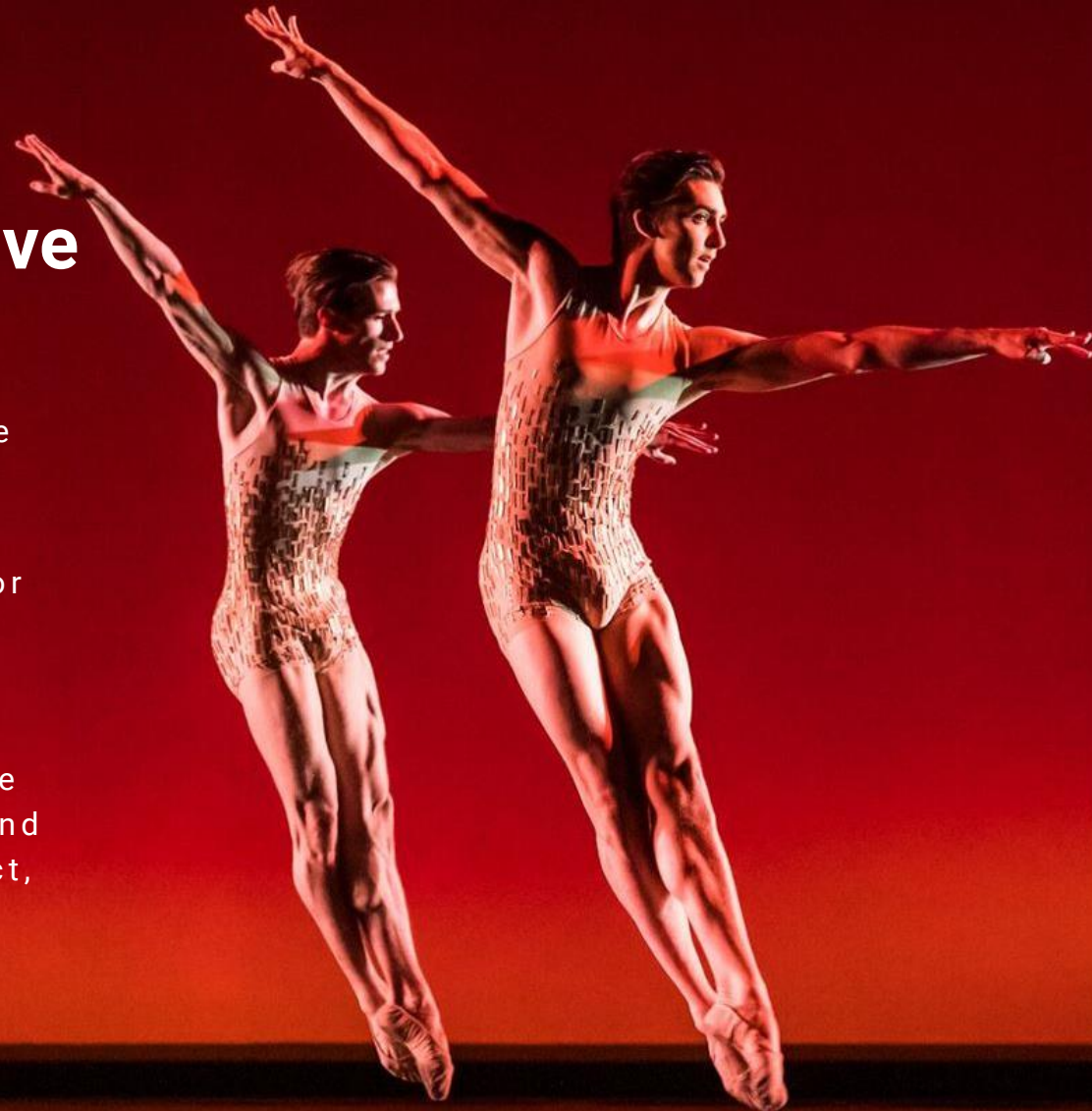
So, whether the audience is in one of our beautiful theatres in Covent Garden, watching around the globe in cinemas and online streaming, or taking part in learning and participation programmes up and down the country, we want as many people as possible to enjoy and appreciate these astonishing artforms.

None of this would be possible without the exceptional team of people who work here. People are centre stage of everything we do at RBO, and we built our culture on our core values: treating everyone with Respect, being Open in our mindset and approach, and striving for the Highest Standards in everything we do.

Everyone is welcome at the Royal Ballet and Opera, whatever your background or experience, and we look forward to your application.

Best of luck!

Alex



The Royal Ballet and Opera

The Royal Ballet and Opera is the UK's home of world-class opera and ballet. We are a cultural powerhouse, bringing together two world-class performing companies in one of the UK's leading arts institutions, supported by a cast of more than 3,000 employees, including technical staff, creatives, and freelancers.

Based primarily at the Royal Opera House in the heart of London's Covent Garden, with production and logistics sites in Thurrock and Aberdare, our work is enjoyed by audiences in our two theatres and globally through our streaming platform, cinema Season and company tours. Our work in schools and communities up and down the country is driven by our curriculum linked programmes, specially designed to inspire creativity, widen access to the arts and diversify the future of opera and ballet. These sit alongside industry-leading talent development projects, regional partnerships, our Young RBO scheme, and a raft of daytime events, family activities, tours, exhibitions, and concerts in our Covent Garden home. We are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2035.



Our Craftspeople



Every set, costume and prop that appears on the stage to create the spectacular worlds that help tell the stories of the Opera and Ballet is made by our highly skilled teams, these include:

- Scenic Carpenters
- Scenic Metalworkers
- Scenic Artists
- Props Makers
- Armourers
- Wig Makers
- Costume Makers

Behind the Scenes...



There are also teams of highly skilled people making the live shows happen; lighting experts, sound experts, stage build crews and flies and automation crews, on stage props, costume and make up teams.

These teams get the show up and running from rehearsal through to performance nights.

There are up to four different productions showing on our main stage in a week and a whole production can be stripped from the stage to make way for another in a matter of minutes.

As well as the teams who work directly on our performances, there is an army of people that support the day-to-day workings of the organisation.

These include:

- Visitor Experience
- Audiences & Commercial
- Learning & Participation
- Development, Advocacy & Public Policy
- Operations, Estates & Facilities
- Finance, Legal & Business Affairs
- Human Resources
- Information Technology

And we have Apprenticeships in these departments too!



Whatever the team, everyone who works at RBO has a passion for what they do and a shared interest in keeping this unique and brilliant theatre doing what it does best.

For that to continue into the future, we want to encourage fresh, passionate new talent into the building and our apprenticeship scheme plays a big part in that.

All departments across the organisation support the apprentices through their journey with us.

Apprentices at RBO get an authentic workplace experience in their specialist field and are fully integrated into the professional teams who are working on producing our live shows.



Where Do You Fit In?



We are interested in recruiting apprentices that first and foremost are curious, driven by working in a creative environment and are keen to learn new skills.

We don't expect our apprentices to be experts, but we do want people who foremost bring enthusiasm and willingness to learn from some of the best in the industry and who might teach us a thing or two!

We believe diversity is about making sure we can attract and develop talented people who bring more because of their different backgrounds, experiences, cultures and outlooks.

Recruiting and working with these talented people is just part of the work. We are committed to creating an environment where everyone believes they belong and can do their best work.

How Our Apprenticeships Work



RBO Apprentices are placed in a department relevant to their apprenticeship where they work as part of those teams across a working week that is regulated by the line manager in the department.

Apprentices are also supported by the Apprenticeships team to ensure each apprentice is happy in their placement and keep them on track throughout. The apprentices also support one another as a peer group; there are several opportunities to meet throughout the placements.

Apprenticeships are between one and four years in duration and have a mix of work and study. Each position is assigned a college that will support the qualification learning and a percentage of the working week of an apprentice is assigned for college work and study. This is either on day release, block release or remote learning.

As part of the Apprentice cohort you will join with other apprentices from the Royal Ballet and Opera taking part in events, training opportunities and activities to bring you together as a community.

You will be assigned a mentor who can help you make the most of your apprenticeship.

You will have regular pastoral sessions with the apprenticeship team who also manage any practical needs of your qualification or employment.

The Apprenticeships Team also connect with your college to ensure you are on track.

Your college course may be online, day or block release but we allow you time in your working week to fit this in.

You will earn National Living Wage which will increase by 2.5% in your second year.



What Are The Perks?

As an RBO Apprentice you will earn the National Living Wage while you qualify.

You will have the opportunity to take part in other training on offer to staff to add to your wider skills.

You will also benefit from all the Royal Ballet and Opera Staff discounts and offers.

These include:

- Staff offers on performance tickets and access to general rehearsals
- Subsidised canteen and coffee bar (at Covent Garden)
- Access to our Employee Assistance Programme providing 24-hour advice and counselling services
- Discounts on alternative and physical therapies provided in-house
- Discounted staff ballet, Pilates and yoga classes
- Discounts at the Royal Ballet and Opera Shop
- Concessions at a wide range of local Covent Garden shops, restaurants and gyms



Working with us, what to expect



Starting a new job can be daunting. At the Royal Opera House, we want to make that transition as smooth and easy for you as possible. We'll provide you with all the information you need before you start and will be on hand to answer any questions you may have about the role.

We are a big organisation, with more than 1000 staff and sites at Covent Garden, Thurrock and Aberdare. There will be plenty of people to meet and you'll have a structured induction, including tours of both our Covent Garden and Thurrock sites. This is a great way to orient yourself and understand how all the work comes together.

"The Royal Opera House has been an exceptional place to work and thoroughly supported everyone all levels during very difficult times"

"Working at the Royal Opera House has provided me so much joy in my life. I really do love working for such a great organisation and with lovely people."

"I absolutely love working here."

Props Carpenter Apprentice

What is a Props Carpenter and what do they work on?

A Props Carpenter in the performing arts is responsible for making props including furniture, using timber and other materials. The designer produces a design consisting of drawings, a model, or sometimes just a reference. From this construction drawings are developed and using these, the props carpenters bring the design to life. The Props Carpenter will also become proficient at metalwork as often one piece of furniture will be made from both wood and metal.

At the Royal Ballet and Opera, a carpenter in the props department is multi skilled to make range of props; from detailed wooden furniture such as chairs and tables, to structural supporting pieces for the wider props team to work on. They also restore and repair props from our repertory of productions, some props being more than 40yrs old. The props carpentry team must be skilled at interpreting designs and understanding materials that are suitable for realising the design. They must have an eye for detail, good problem-solving skills and an understanding of period styles and history.



What does a Prop Making department do?



Props makers contribute along with the set building team to bringing the Designer's vision to life – from interpreting their designs, turning them into three dimensional props that range in size and function, enabling the physical 'world' to come to life on stage. The props team work closely with other teams involved in the production process such as the stage management team, as props have to be practically suitable as well as visually effective.

The Props Carpenter Apprentice will work largely in in the Prop Making Department at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and will study on block release with the Building Crafts College in Stratford on an Architectural Joinery L2 and Craft Carpentry L3 pathway.

What will the apprentice do?

The apprentice will:

- Learn to work in wood; to measure, cut, drill, join and fix wood and other construction components using modern and traditional methods.
- Learn to select the correct wood type for the job, gaining understanding of the qualities of different wood types.
- Learn how to manufacture props to a high standard using carpentry and joinery techniques as well as use machines, power and hand tools safely and accurately.
- Learn to read and interpret technical and construction drawings, to ensure accurate and durable props are made that realise the Designer's vision.
- Learn to draw up full size working drawings.
- Work closely with the props carpentry team and the wider members of the props making team to manufacture props.
- Undertake repairs and maintenance of props, sympathetic to the designer's brief, for revival productions to return them to the original design ensuring visual and structural integrity.
- Follow safety protocols and maintain a clean and organised workspace.
- Collaborate with team members to meet project deadlines and quality standards.



Purpose of the Apprenticeship

The Props Carpentry Apprenticeship is an opportunity to train for a props carpenter role within the performing arts industry.

This Apprenticeship is a non-degree level, vocational training route. The role is a full-time position, and you cannot enroll in another course or get another job for the duration of the apprenticeship.

The Royal Ballet and Opera Apprenticeship scheme aims to create opportunities for, and support those who may not have had access to the arts and/or as an alternative route to a career in theatre for those who would face significant barriers to, have not embarked upon, or completed a degree course at university.

Applications are encouraged from candidates who are underrepresented in the Performing Arts and at the Royal Ballet and Opera including those from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, low socio-economic backgrounds and disabled people.

This apprenticeship is suitable for someone who enjoys craft carpentry/metalwork and is keen to develop their skills into a career in props carpentry.

This apprenticeship is NOT suitable for those who wish to pursue a career in theatre design of any kind. The Royal Ballet and Opera do not offer design-based apprenticeships.





Who will you be working with?

- Props Carpentry Team
- Wider Props Team
- Other Production teams
- Draughts People
- Stage Teams
- Health & Safety Team

What is involved?



- The apprenticeship will be based at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and the Building Crafts College in Stratford, E15, where you will study for a [Level 3 Craft Carpentry and Joinery Apprenticeship Standard](#).
- Part of the qualification will be achieved through the completion of a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how the relevant skills have been used in the workplace.
- College content will be delivered on block release from the workplace, usually in two- or three-week blocks.
- You will work 42.5 hours per week.

Props Carpentry Apprentice

- The apprentice will be supported throughout the apprenticeship by a college tutor, RBO technical and production staff and by the Apprenticeships Team.
- The apprentice will spend time working on both opera and ballet productions and will be required to work primarily at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and occasionally at the production workshop in Essex.
- There will be the opportunity to spend some work experience time at another workshop in another theatre venue/ performing arts setting during the second year of the apprenticeship.



All Apprentices will...



Work with the world's best

- Technicians
- Technical and Production Managers
- Stage Managers
- Performers
- Health & Safety Team

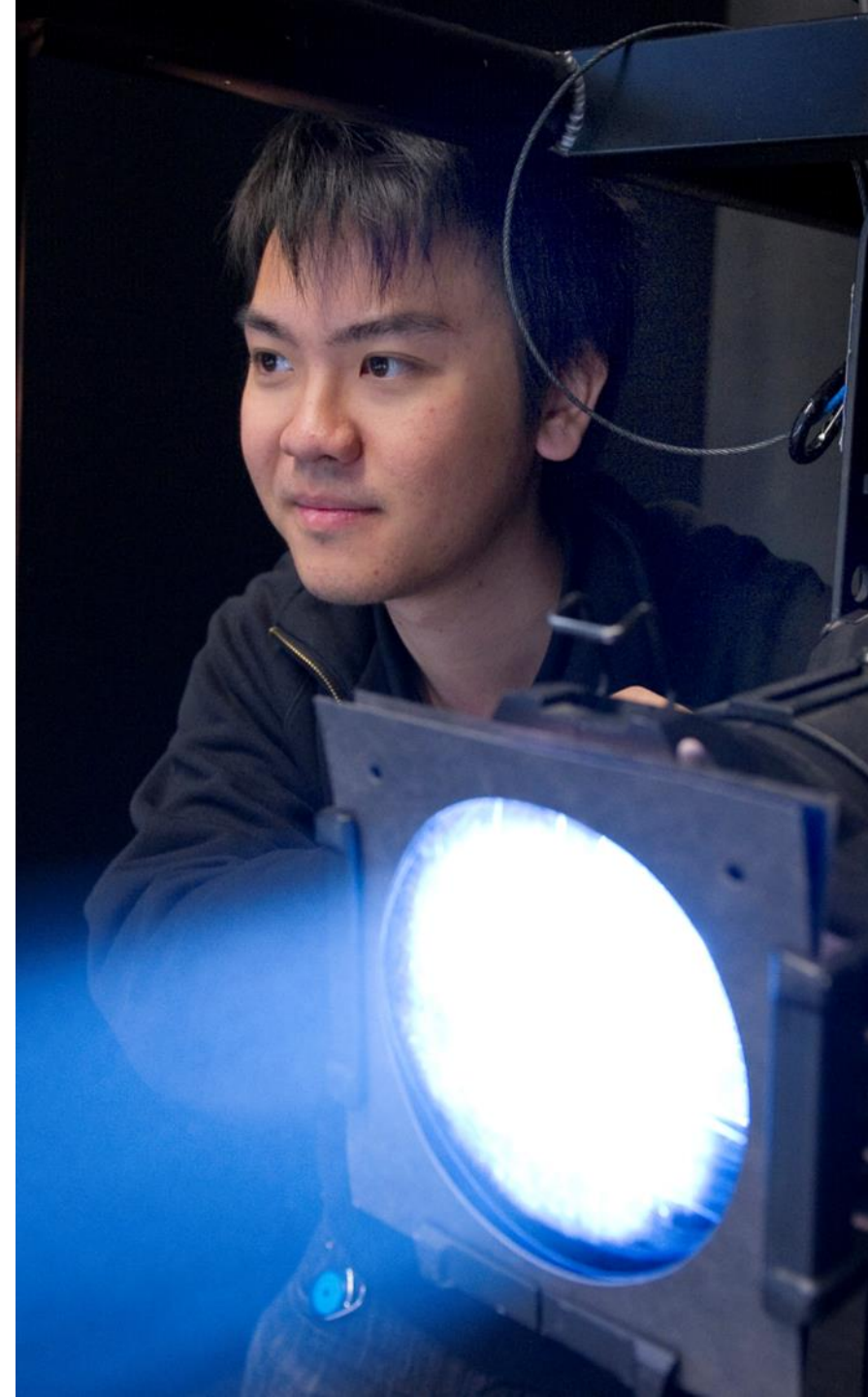
All Apprentices are expected to:

- Have a positive and responsible attitude to health and safety.
- Take responsibility for your own attendance, safe working, motivation, discipline and welfare.
- Submit learning logs and diaries to the Apprenticeships Team as required.
- Attend regular meetings with line managers and the Apprenticeships Team to review progress.
- Participate in additional training as necessary.
- Carry out any other reasonable duties as requested by the relevant HOD or Apprenticeships Manager.

What we are looking for in a Props Carpentry Apprentice

- Interest in interior features, in particular period features and an interest in history and/or art history
- Previous woodworking experience (this could be at school, youth club, local theatre or venue or amateur dramatics group).
- Previous involvement in creating scenic or backstage elements for shows (this could be at school, college, youth club, local theatre or venue, or amateur dramatics group).
- Good at working in a team.
- Strong drawing skills.
- An ability and enjoyment of working with your hands using various materials.
- A practical approach to problem solving.
- Good at practical, hands-on tasks.
- Punctual and good at managing your own schedule.
- Respectful and receptive approach to all health and safety requirements.
- Self-motivated to acquire new skills and knowledge.
- A helpful, positive and proactive approach.
- Willing to work at height.
- Good spatial awareness.
- Physically capable of undertaking the requirements of the job including good spatial awareness. Reasonable adjustments will be considered as part of your application.

Note: This Job Description reflects the current situation. It does not preclude change or development that might be required in the future.



Minimum Essential Requirements

- You must be **18 years old or over** 1st September 2025.
- You must **not** have completed a degree or equivalent level qualification in the UK or elsewhere (regardless of subject).
- You must have work authorisation for the UK.
- An interest in a career as a props carpenter/metalworker in the performing arts.
- Be committed to completing the college course which is an essential part of the Apprenticeship.
- You must not be working/studying elsewhere, this is a full-time opportunity.
- You must be able to commute to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (main work site) AND the Building Crafts College, Stratford.



Our Process

We operate a fair and open recruitment and selection process. Every role is open to all sections of society, and we welcome your application, regardless of your sex, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, different physical ability, age, gender identity or sexual orientation.

We particularly welcome applications from those who are female, from a global majority background and/or those who are disabled, as they are under-represented within our Technical Workforce. As a Disability Confident employer, we guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the essential minimum criteria for our vacancies.

Take a look at [these case studies](#) to hear some past apprentice stories.

Look at the criteria carefully, please do not apply if you don't meet the basic criteria for example if you are studying/studied at degree level.

See our frequently asked questions if you would like to know more or email your questions to apprentices@roh.org.uk



How to Apply

Scroll to the bottom of the advert on the RBO website and click on 'Apply Now'.

Complete our simple application form - we promise it is not too scary.

If you have any access needs and would like to complete the form in a different format - please contact us on hr.recruitment@roh.org.uk.

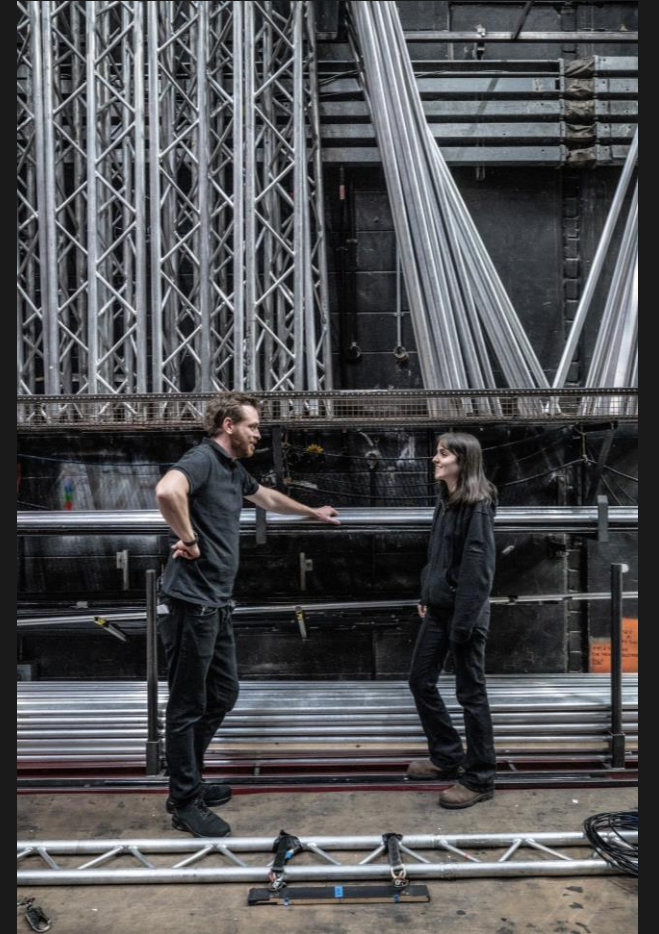


Top Tips for Applications

- First and foremost, read through the relevant Job Description and Job Pack carefully. Answers to your most common questions are contained in the pack, as well as information about the Royal Ballet and Opera and our work.
- Check the location of the apprenticeship you are applying for and the college provider we partner with for specific course delivery. Not all roles are based at ROH Covent Garden, and you may be required to attend college in another location. You must live within a commutable distance to your place of work **and** study before embarking on (and during) the apprenticeship so please consider the travel commitments/relocating implications before applying. You must budget for living and travel expenses from your salary.
- Take time to prepare your answers to **demonstrate** how you fit the criteria – we receive hundreds of applications to our apprentice programme so if you want to make yours stand out, take the time to prepare and think about how your experience fits the criteria. Make sure you have watched our Apprenticeships video on our website to understand what we offer.
- Show us your personality! Apprenticeships are vocational training positions, and we are not looking for the final product. What we are looking for is passion, enthusiasm, and dedication. We want to hire apprentices who will bring fresh energy to the organisation and will be the future of their chosen fields.



- Tell us about you in your own words. Speak truthfully about your experience and interests. We can tell when applications have been written by third parties, keen parents or AI technology. We want to hear from you, about you, in your own voice.
- Try to use real life examples in your answers. Whether from school, college, your studies, work experience, volunteering, or personal life, show us how you have transferable skills and a passion relevant to the role you are applying for. We understand many applicants will not have practical work experience and that is ok! Think outside the box when applying life examples to the questions and helping us understand why an apprenticeship is the right route for you.
- If you have any access requirements when submitting your application, please contact hr.recruitment@roh.org.uk. We currently only accept written applications but if this format is not suitable, let's have a conversation about how we can support you. We are also happy to talk directly to support workers and job coaches.



Top Tips for Applications cont'd

- Apprenticeships are a form of vocational training. The standard we award for this apprenticeship is Level 3 which equates to a pre-degree qualification. **If you have completed a degree (even in a non-related subject) you are overqualified, and we will not be able to consider your application.** Therefore, please do not invest time and energy in your application as it will be sifted out and you will be disappointed.
- There is no upper age limit on ROH apprenticeships, and they can also be a route to retrain and get into a new industry. However, you must be at least 18 years old at the start of the apprenticeship.
- You are applying to an Apprenticeship position, this means you will be required to undertake a college course throughout the two-years you are employed and are expected to work hard to complete the course including attending seminars/teaching, to submit course work/assignments and to pass the assessment at the end of the course.
- Prepare your answers to our application form in Word/Pages and save somewhere locally before copying and pasting into the form to make sure you don't lose your work and have a record of your application answers.
- All applications are reviewed by a shortlisting panel which includes the Apprenticeships Team and Hiring Departments. Applications are anonymised so the panel will only see your answers to the shortlisting questions against a candidate number. They are not given any information about your name, age, location, or any other personal details. The only exception is if you declare a disability in your application.
- Therefore, it is vital that you provide us with the information you wish to represent you in the shortlisting questions!

Good Luck!