

NIE Networks Apprenticeship Programme

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## Frequently Asked Questions

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## 1. THE PROGRAMME

### 1.1 How long does the apprenticeship last?

The length of the apprenticeships we offer will depend on the programme and the level of qualification you are working towards. This can range from 2 to 4 years.

### 1.2 Do I have to study in my own time?

Yes, you will be studying to complete a vocational qualification in electrical power engineering and also a technical Level 3 diploma in electrical and electronic engineering. Both require independent study.

### 1.3 How many days a week will I go to Technical College?

You would usually need to attend one longer day per week.

### 1.4 Can I attend the Technical College close to home?

As the technical qualification is bespoke to NIE Networks all apprentices must attend together at the same college. This is currently delivered at the Northern Regional College, Ballymena.

### 1.5 Do I get travel allowance or accommodation allowance?

There are provisions in place to make a reasonable contribution to those apprentices with excessive travel or accommodation costs. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis and will be discussed with the successful candidates.

### 1.6 Do I have to be able to drive?

You will be working across Northern Ireland so it would be an essential requirement for you to learn when you are legally able to do so, and to have access to a vehicle.

It is your responsibility to get yourself to work each day.

## 1.7 As an apprentice, where will I be based?

Our training centres are based in Ballymena, Campsie (Londonderry/Derry) and Craigavon. During your apprenticeship training you will complete modules of directed training at one of our training centres.

You will also complete onsite placements and these could potentially be in various locations throughout Northern Ireland.

To support your training and development it's essential you can work at any location across Northern Ireland.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 What are the minimum entry criteria to apply for the apprenticeship programme?

It is essential that:

- You are 16 years old from the start date (September)
- You hold or expect to achieve 4 GCSE passes at Grade C (or equivalent) including Mathematics, English Language and a STEM related subject.

Please note, only those candidates who **clearly display** that they meet the above criteria will be progressed to the next stage of the selection process. For example, if your qualification is an Essential Skills, you must list the level (Level 2 would be accepted as an equivalent – if no level is provided you will not be shortlisted.)

### 2.2 What are the equivalent grades to GCSE's A-C in the new grading structure?

Grades 4 to 9 are equivalent grades to GCSE A\*- C. We won't accept Grades 3-U (D-G equivalent) within the new grading structure

### 2.3 Do you accept equivalent qualifications to GCSE's and A levels and qualifications attained outside the UK?

You will need to prove that your qualifications are the equivalent to GCSE qualifications. There are a number of companies who will provide a letter of comparability e.g. NARIC. The NARIC website can be found at [www.NARIC.org.uk](http://www.NARIC.org.uk). Please note companies may make a charge for this service.

### 2.4 I haven't received my results yet, can I apply?

If you are awaiting results you must list the qualification and state that the result is pending, when you expect to receive your result and your predicted grade.

Although any offers of employment will be conditional and we will only be able offer an unconditional contract once exams have been completed and results have been received.

### 2.5 Do you accept functional/essential skills in literacy and numeracy as an equivalent to GCSE's in English Language and Maths?

We accept level 2 essential skills as they are equivalent to a GCSE C. Level 1 in essential skill is equivalent to a GCSE D so we do not accept that as an equivalent qualification.

### 2.6 What age do I have to be to apply for the apprenticeship programme?

You must be at least 16 years old on starting date (usually September). Those who are 15 and in Year 12 are applicable to apply as long as they will be 16 by the start date.

## 2.7 Is there an age limit for the apprenticeship programme?

There is no upper age limit. As long as you are over the age of 16 at the start date (September) then you can apply.

## 2.8 Is the apprenticeship only for boys?

No, we are glad to say we have seen an increase in female applications and apprentices in recent years!

We are an equal opportunities employer and applications are positively welcomed from all backgrounds and appointments are made on merit following a fair, open and transparent selection process.

## 2.9 I am colour blind, can I apply for the apprenticeship?

Yes, we would carry out a visual test in relation to the relevant colours critical to your job role and primarily for your safety. You may still be suitable to enter our programme. It is your responsibility to notify us.

## 2.10 I am dyslexic; can I apply for the apprenticeship and receive help at the testing stage?

Yes, we can accommodate this and provide assistance where applicable. Please state this clearly on your application and also when contacting to confirm your attendance at the allocated date. It is your responsibility to notify us.

## 2.11 What if I already have a BTEC in Engineering?

This will be reviewed if you are successful. NIE Networks will consider the level and the units you have completed. There are certain modules which you may be required to complete as the technical qualification is bespoke to NIE Networks.

## 2.12 I have completed the 17<sup>th</sup> edition; do I need to complete an apprenticeship?

Yes you would have to complete our Apprenticeship Programme.

## 3. APPLICATION PROCESS

### 3.1 How does the current recruitment process operate?

The selection process covered four key stages, shortlisting will be determined through the following stages:

1. Online application form - applicants will have to clearly demonstrate they meet the minimum criteria at this stage

NIE Networks may decide to bring forward to the next stage of the selection process, only those applicants who appear, from the information they have provided on their application form, to meet the minimum criteria.

It is essential therefore, that applicants fully describe on the application form how they meet each of the selection criteria, giving specific examples as appropriate.

2. Aptitude test - this stage will assess shortlisted applicants usually on the following topics, spatial awareness, mental arithmetic, engineering problems and design problems.

The aptitude tests are conducted by an external assessor and individuals will be shortlisted at this stage based on the scores achieved.

3. Practical Assessment - this could be a practical skills test to test your hand skills or another suitable assessment based on the discipline we are recruiting for.

Individuals will be shortlisted at this stage based on the scores achieved

4. Competency based interview - we will invite shortlisted applicants to interview to see how well they match the essential qualities and personal attributes required for the position.

For each stage we will note our important dates on our NIE Networks Facebook page.

All applicants will be contacted at each stage. Even if you are unsuccessful you will be contacted via email to notify you.

### 3.2 When will I hear about the status of the application process?

We are unable to give specific dates as to when applicants will hear about their application status. We advise all applicants to use an email address that they themselves can check regularly as this is where all communication regarding their application will be sent.

### 3.3 What if I wish to change come information on my application?

You are encouraged to review your application to ensure you have completed all sections fully and to the best of your ability before submitting your application.

You are reminded to review your application for grammatical errors. Remember, your application is the first impression the company get of you, make it count!

Ask someone you trust to read through it before you submit it.

### 3.4 What will the aptitude test cover?

Key topics tested include spatial awareness, mental arithmetic, engineering problems and design problems.

### 3.5 Do you recommend any practical aptitude tests?

NIE Networks are not affiliated with any online practice tests. There are plenty of free practice tests available online.

### 3.6 Can you give me more information about the practical test?

To be fair to all applicants we can't give too much away about the practical test. You will get a full briefing about what the test will entail when you arrive. The skills tested will be linked to the skills required for the role.

### 3.7 What is a competency based interview?

Competency based interviewing assesses future performance based on past behaviour. It can give valuable insights into an individual's preferred style of working and help predict behaviour in future situations.

Questions will be asked to draw information required to support the key competencies of the role.

Questions may be worded in the format of "Can you give me an example when...?" or "Tell me about a time when you..."

Responses should be structured to describe a situation or task, the action you took and the end result.

### 3.8 Can I change the date of my tests?

We can review your date based on individual circumstances and where available. Due to the volume of candidates, changes should be kept to an absolute minimum.

### 3.9 Where will the various stages of the apprentice recruitment process be held?

It is anticipated the aptitude tests will be completed online from the comfort of your home.

The location of our practical assessments and interviews will be dependent on the covid-19 circumstances at the time. All stages of recruitment will be carried out with safety of employees and applicants at the fore.

The testing locations are subject to change dependent on circumstances. The various stages may be held across various sites, this may include Belfast, Ballymena, Craigavon and Campsie.

Location will be clearly stipulated on your correspondence email.

### 3.10 Will I receive notifications on how my application is progressing within the selection process?

You will receive an email acknowledgment as soon as your application has been submitted.



The shortlisting team will aim to contact all applicants within 2 weeks of the closing date. All candidates will receive written notification via email of the outcome of their application. It's recommended you check your junk mail filters to make sure you don't miss any important correspondence.

You are also encouraged to "like" us on Facebook at NIE Networks where we will usually post out when email correspondence has been sent for each stage of the process.

## 4. ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

### 4.1 Have another question which hasn't been captured?

Please email [kerri.pollock@nienetworks.co.uk](mailto:kerri.pollock@nienetworks.co.uk) with your query.