

LESSON 3

Apprenticeships in Ireland

60 minutes

Strand 1.2: Understanding my Progression Opportunities

Participating

Outcome LCW.M1.S2.PROG.5

Outcome LCW.M1.S2.PROG.1

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Explore the earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship model in Ireland. Compare two real programmes using key terms like SOLAS and employers, then write a half-page investigation on the one that matches your goals.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M1.S2.PROG.5	investigate education and training opportunities available to students post-senior cycle.
LCW.M1.S2.PROG.1	identify the diversity of progression opportunities available to them.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain the earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship model in Ireland
- Outline craft and consortia apprenticeships and the roles of SOLAS, employers and education providers
- Summarise one real apprenticeship that interests you, covering entry, duration, day-to-day work and progression

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Apprenticeship	A structured programme where you are employed and trained on the job while also completing off-the-job learning, leading to a recognised qualification.	An electrical craft apprenticeship with an employer and block-release training
SOLAS	The state agency that oversees Further Education and Training in Ireland, including the national apprenticeship system with employers and education providers.	National apprenticeship listings and standards coordinated with employers and ETBs or education providers under Generation Apprenticeship
Earn while you learn	The apprenticeship model where you receive a wage from your employer while you train and study toward the qualification.	A first-year apprentice paid by their employer while attending college blocks
Craft and consortia apprenticeships	Craft apprenticeships are the established trade routes (for example electrician or plumber). Consortia apprenticeships are programmes designed by groups of employers working with education providers, often in newer areas such as ICT, finance or hospitality.	A craft electrical apprenticeship versus a consortia-led ICT or hospitality apprenticeship

BEFORE THE BELL

- Confirm device access to CareersPortal, apprenticeship.ie (Generation Apprenticeship), Qualifax, or the school-approved source list.
- Have two fallback programme names ready from the live directory (one craft, one consortia) for students who struggle to choose.
- Students create Apprenticeship Investigation in the Strand 1.2 Digital Portfolio folder if the file is not there yet.
- Check apprenticeship.ie or solas.ie for the latest provider roles as the system expands.
- Confirm students can reach CareersPortal, apprenticeship.ie (Generation Apprenticeship), Qualifax, or the school's approved apprenticeship information source on their devices. Have two fallback programme names ready from the live directory (one craft, one consortia route) without doing their research for them. Remind students to create Apprenticeship Investigation in the Strand 1.2 Digital Portfolio folder if that file does not exist yet.
- On screen this lesson: options comparator.

Apprenticeships in Ireland

HOW THE LESSON RUNS

5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
35 min	activity	Compare Two Real Apprenticeships
8 min	content	Think About It
4 min	content	Take It Further
3 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open with a quick show of hands: who could name a current Irish apprenticeship beyond the traditional trades? Use the gap honestly. Many students still picture only construction; consortia programmes now sit alongside craft routes across a wider range of sectors (check the live Generation Apprenticeship directory for current titles).

Remind the room that the pathways map they made in an earlier lesson was only a first sketch of the options, and that today they take one of those options and fill it in with evidence rather than guesses.

5 min Key Terms

Keep this to five minutes and stay with three things: craft versus consortia, the earn-while-you-learn model, and the way SOLAS, the employer and the provider each hold part of the route. Those three are enough to make the research honest, and the history of apprenticeship reform will eat the research time if you follow it.

Preferred student sources: CareersPortal, the Generation Apprenticeship site (apprenticeship.ie), Qualifax, and named employer careers pages. Confirm the school-approved source list before the lesson if your network filters differ. Check apprenticeship.ie or solas.ie for the latest provider roles as the system expands.

35 min Compare Two Real Apprenticeships

On screen: options comparator

SUGGESTED TIMING

- Minutes 0-3: set the two-option rule, create-or-open the file, and the homework rule for unfinished headings
- Minutes 3-20: comparator research and weighting (Part 1)
- Minutes 20-35: start the half-page investigation (Part 2); circulate for empty cells and vague day-to-day claims; anything unfinished is homework before the next pathway lesson

LOOK-FORS

- Both options are real current programmes, not invented titles
- Entry and duration are specific enough to check
- Day-to-day is more than "you learn on the job"
- Progression names a next step (advanced craft, QQI level, job role, HE advanced entry)
- File exists in Strand 1.2 with the five headings above

DIFFERENTIATION

If research access is limited, pair students on shared sources but each still writes their own half-page. Students sure they will never take an apprenticeship still complete the investigation: the outcome is understanding providers and pathways, not committing to the route. Support: offer two pre-chosen current programmes from the live listings. Extension: named employer application route (see Take It Further).

8 min Think About It

Keep this oral. Pull two or three pairs to share one fit factor (pay, location, hands-on work, progression). Push past "I like practical work" toward something checkable from their half-page.

4 min Take It Further

This is stretch work for students who finish early, so let the rest of the class leave it and move on with the closing steps rather than waiting for it. Strong stretch work is a named employer contact route, not another generic paragraph.

3 min What you covered

Spot-check that every student has created or opened Apprenticeship Investigation in Strand 1.2 with a named programme and the five headings, not a title alone. Flag empty day-to-day sections for homework completion before the next pathway lesson.

TEACHING MOVES

- Open with a show of hands on prior knowledge of apprenticeships beyond traditional trades.
- Limit the key terms explanation to five minutes: craft vs consortia, the model, and SOLAS / employer / provider.
- During the comparison activity, circulate to assist with filling the grid completely; insist on specific facts per cell.
- Use pair sharing in the discussion to highlight personal fit factors.
- Remind the class of the pathways map from earlier Strand 1.2 progression work as the baseline this lesson deepens.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Choosing only traditional trades; point to consortia options on the live Generation Apprenticeship listings.
- Leaving cells empty in the comparator; require a minimum specific fact in each cell before writing the investigation.
- Writing vague day-to-day work; prompt for specific details from the sources used, or leave the heading for homework rather than inventing content.
- Assuming the investigation file already exists; confirm create-or-open at the start of Part 2.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Offer two pre-chosen current programmes for the comparison task.
- Extension: Add a named employer application route to the investigation.
- Support: Allow the half-page write-up to be completed as homework if time is short.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Apprenticeship Investigation: half-page on entry, duration, day-to-day and where it leads