

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a
Sgiliau
Gradd Brentisiaethau
EIS(5)DA02
Ymateb gan Prifysgol Metropolitan
Caerdydd

National Assembly for Wales
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
Degree Apprenticeships

Evidence from Cardiff Metropolitan
University

Inquiry into Degree Apprenticeships: Cardiff Metropolitan University

Please find our responses to the questions posed by the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee:

Question 1: Have any issues become apparent during the rollout of degree apprentices and what lessons can be learnt from their introduction?

Response:

The timing of bid approvals provides a very small window for the employer to recruit before the start of the academic year, compounded by the requirement to provide evidence of employer demand and commitment. This has meant universities have not been able to guarantee the funding thus delaying apprenticeship recruitment in some cases.

Question 2: Was the process and criteria used for approving proposals from providers to deliver degree apprenticeships satisfactory?

Response:

The change in issuing authority from the Tech Partnership to Instructus caused unnecessary delay. The approval of frameworks were required before

validation of the degree itself could take place. However, the advice and support provided by the Tech Partnership was extremely helpful. The criteria for approving proposals was satisfactory and provided a framework for the design of the programme.

Question 3: What are your views on the demand for degree apprenticeships and how that demand should be managed, both in terms of the range of frameworks and demand from employers and learners?

Response:

Demand for degree apprenticeships is increasing in areas and sectors outside digital and advanced manufacturing, particularly where employers have a national skills agenda (Levy paying employers). The opportunity for these employers to access funding in England in occupational areas outside those funded in Wales provides a challenge in terms of recruitment and upskilling. The opportunities and activities that are taking place across the UK provides an indication of the need for a wider range of frameworks in Wales.

Similarly, the approach taken in England to widen the funding opportunity to Level 7 degree apprenticeships has led to an increase in enquiries from Welsh based learners and employers, particularly in health, business and professional services, where professional body accreditation is mandatory and accredited via Level 7. These also reflect the highest levels of higher apprenticeship provision in Wales. In addition, the Level 7 offering will enable progression for the existing digital degree apprenticeship frameworks.

Demand based on evidence, identified by the Regional Skills Partnerships ensures that future employer demands are met. Consideration should be given to the level of individual higher apprenticeship frameworks that are completed and currently being delivered in Wales to date, as an indication of demand and progression opportunities.

Question 4: To what extent should activity aimed at widening access feature in degree apprenticeship recruitment, and how can this be used to ensure that cohorts are representative?

Response:

The recruitment and selection of degree apprenticeships is highly competitive; to date the level of applicants has exceeded the number of vacancies therefore it is imperative that employers are encouraged to support the widening access agenda in the recruitment of the most suitable applicant. In support of this, the promotion of degree apprenticeships as an option for those who are eligible should encourage and support interest from non-traditional learners. However, whilst universities can support the promotion of degree apprenticeships that feature widening access, recruitment and selection is at the discretion of the employer and is driven by individual employers approach and strategy for attracting applicants from those groups that are underrepresented in the workplace.

Question 5: Do you have any comments on the cost of degree apprenticeships, how degree apprenticeships are funded and the level of funding committed to them?

Response:

Whilst the delivery model for degree apprenticeships differs from a traditional full-time undergraduate degree, the level of learning and teaching support is equitable, therefore the level of funding that is currently committed to them

should remain. It is appropriate and fair that funding is allocated based on any Recognition of Prior Learning exemptions.

Question 6: How has the degree apprenticeship pilot impacted on other level apprenticeships, if at all?

Response:

The Data Science degree apprenticeship has provided a progression pathway from the Level 4 higher apprenticeship in Data Analytics. The university has worked alongside the apprenticeship provider to identify employers and potential learners interested in pursuing this progression opportunity. Learners are able to use these credits to enter the degree apprenticeship in the second year (Level 5).

The alignment of qualifications that make up an apprenticeship framework at Levels 3 and 4 is vital for the learner to understand the progression pathway to a degree apprenticeship and for the university to be able to match programme content at the next level, with that taught via the apprenticeship framework.

Question 7: Should any aspect of the approach to delivering degree apprenticeships change and if so, what should be the future direction?

Response:

No change in approach to delivering. Future direction is highlighted in previous responses.

