

Degree Apprenticeships

Response to HEFCW Consultation Questions:

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

A number of employers have questioned the robustness of the competence element of the Degree Apprenticeship in Engineering (some have made representations to SEMTA in this regard). Higher Apprenticeships include a work-based competence qualification which the current work-based project in the degree apprenticeship does not sufficiently replicate.

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?

Demand in engineering is high and will continue to grow if the issues around the competence requirements and different entry points to support progression are addressed.

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?

The Further Education and Work Based sectors have much experience of recruiting Apprentices and Higher Apprentices. In addition they have strong and well established links with employers to deliver apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships from which degree apprenticeships are a progression route. Engaging colleagues from those sectors could prove beneficial in this regard.

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

There is inequality in the funding for Higher Apprenticeship and Degree Apprenticeships. For example the Higher Apprenticeship in Engineering which contains a Foundation degree is funded at a lower rate than the first two years of a Degree Apprenticeship.

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

Whilst there has been a decline in the numbers on the Higher Apprenticeship route this is not as much as we had predicted. There is still strong demand for the Higher Apprenticeship as many still want to do a Foundation degree or an HNC as a route to a degree top up.

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

Consideration needs to be given to consistency in the delivery of Degree and Higher Apprenticeships. For example Essential skills, Prevent, Welsh language, citizenship, health and safety which Higher Apprentices are required to achieve/ complete. These are not included in the Degree apprenticeships.

We recommend that more consideration be given to the Higher Apprenticeships. The dual progression routes and the progression pathway between the Higher Apprenticeship and the Degree Apprenticeship could be given more consideration and/or more effectively communicated.

Some learners prefer to complete a Foundation degree and at that point decide whether to top up to a degree by completing the level 6. Hence they would follow a Higher Apprenticeship and then potentially top up to a degree by taking the final year of a Degree apprenticeship. Many learners and their employers prefer this more vocational route.

Coleg Cambria (January 2020)