

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru  
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a  
Sgiliau  
Gradd Brentisiaethau  
EIS(5)DA19  
Ymateb gan Newport Wafer Fab

National Assembly for Wales  
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills  
Committee  
Degree Apprenticeships  
Evidence from Newport Wafer Fab

### **Re: Degree Apprenticeship Review**

We are currently running a Degree Apprenticeship programme with USW and the following are the key learn we have had from setting up this programme

Degree Apprenticeships are a extremely valuable qualification programme for attracting new employees to our sector and upskilling existing employees.

The programme was easy to set up and USW has been very consultative in its approach to our sector requirements. The demand for this programme is high, last year year we started with 5 students to see how it would run and fit in with our engineering/advanced manufacturing operations. We now have 15-20 people requesting to start the programme and this is without formally offering it. Students are extremely happy with the delivery and have been recommending it to colleagues and for new recruits. This has also helped our diversity : it was 20% female on the first course, this year it will be 50%, attracting females engineering is difficult however this programme is making a difference.

The Semiconductor Degree Apprenticeships solves many of the key issues within our Career Development Strategy, giving a clear direction for learners from BTEC onward. It has also been designed with our specialism in mind covering key elements of knowledge such as photonics that other qualifications do not offer. This flexibility allows for innovation and development of new concepts and ideas, whilst delivering the generic statutory degree requirements. (Bespoke Solutions for industry variations)

Funding for this programmes need to be established and reviewed, for key sectors where the skills pipeline on industry requirement is low it should be fully funded until we have attracted the numbers required to meet sector/economic requirements. Alternatively, funding should be targeted to area where Welsh Government wishes to drive growth. I would also advise reviewing the take up statistics and following 3 year review and those Degree Apprenticeships with limited impact should have reduce funding.

The set up of Degree Apprenticeships takes time and to ensure take up – some should be designed for cross-industry use – this creates a flexible workforce, This would mean aligning the qualification and the prior learning the criteria to enable crossover. What this will do is give career options to the students enabling them to change direction if necessary at a later stage on the career journey without a loss of prior learning.

Industry now needs to made fully aware of the advantages of this programme, they will need support understanding the contents – to confirm all Universities I spoke with were happy to work with industry to develop the programmes – against the existing frameworks.

The Degree Apprenticeship has enable us to create Career Road Maps for all Engineering Positions – it allows us to motivate and entus the next generation of enginners to take an Apprenticeship rather than go to university full time. This has a significant impact to business as they are apply the learning immediately and the return on investment and productivity is seen by business at an earlier stage. We still

need student to go to University full time to gain qualifications, however, we then have to spend time training them to apply the theoretical knowledge to the workplace environment/industry. Degree Apprentice gives us an advantage of apply knowledge as they learn.

The Degree Apprenticeship is now essential to us moving forward we have developed Level-2 to Level 8 programme. The ability adapt the programmes needs clarification as technologies change units/modules will need to change however I am sure the Universities will support this requirement.

Overall, our experience of the Degree Apprenticeship has been outstanding we wish to continue with this route of learning as the advantages and results we are seeing far exceed our expectations and is making a significant difference to our industry/sector.

Thank you for considering our feedback and if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me as this is an important issue and the Degree Apprenticeship is key to our sector development strategy moving forward. This is due to the results we are seeing and the demand for this programme.

Kind Regards

**Joanne Daniels**

Learning and Development Manager