

**Mr Russell George AM**

**Chair, Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee**

**National Assembly for Wales**

**5th March 2020**

Dear Mr George,

Further to your letter of 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 relating to the request for information for the inquiry into degree apprenticeships in Wales, detailed below are the responses to each of your questions.

Please note that SEMTA is now trading as Enginuity, however for the purpose of consistency in answering your questions (in bold) I have continued with our previous name.

**1. The process and means used by SEMTA by which each of the combined qualifications is validated or approved to be included within the degree apprenticeship framework and whether any validating or approval panel uses external industry experts to examine the combined qualification's suitability?**

Each combined qualification is intended to meet the current and future needs of employers and is designed through a partnership between employer organisations and a Higher Educational Institution (HEI). The qualification must reflect the breadth and depth of technical knowledge & occupational competency content required by the employers wishing to use the qualification in a specific sector, whilst meeting the academic requirements of HEI/university degree standards and professional registration, and also to qualify for inclusion on the Qualification Wales (QW) database.

Employers contributed to the programme definition and the resultant specification was developed with involvement from Welsh Government representatives who signed off the final specification and were present at many of the employer/HEI engagement events. This specification is the basis against which degrees that are to be included in the framework are approved.

For consistency SEMTA appoints a technical consultant, who originally acted as the Framework Developer and was integral in the original employer/ HEI engagement, to carry out comparisons with the specification criteria and make the judgement and recommendations to the approval panel as to whether qualifications meet the specification. SEMTA's technical staff then check that the qualifications meet the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales (SASW) requirements.



## **2. Whether any of the combined qualifications in the framework were required to be modified in any way from their on-campus variants and if you could provide some case studies to help illustrate the modifications made?**

We do not have a specific case study, however we can confirm that all of the combined qualifications listed in the framework were either developed from scratch to meet the specification requirements by universities, or adapted from existing degrees specifically for the Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Degree Apprenticeship in Wales. Although some of the content may be similar to that in other existing degrees, as engineering concepts are universal, the structure and integration with competency aspects is unique to each combined qualification.

## **3. Whether SEMTA monitors modifications to the combined qualifications as they go through their university's annual or periodical reviews?**

We do not currently have a mechanism to monitor modifications automatically or directly, however we request that universities inform us of any changes and would expect that were those changes significant, then a new mapping against the specification would be required and requested.

As part of our ongoing process of continuous improvement we are considering how we might better gather this information and whether the universities are required to disclose this level of information to the HEFCW and whether we could automatically be informed of changes or request an annual statement from universities that describes any changes that they may have made.

## **4. What the process is when a modification is identified as being needed in a combined qualification?**

The HEI should currently contact SEMTA and are required to complete a form to explain the reason for any change and a full description of the amended qualification including all learning outcomes and assessment criteria. We charge a nominal £100 fee for this process to cover costs. Re-approval of modified qualifications would follow the process explained in Question 1 whereby SEMTA's Technical Team would review and check that the amended qualification still meets the specification and the SASW requirements.

If the suggested modification differed significantly from the specification document and there was a good case presented as to why, then this might instigate a framework review and be sent for consultation via the Framework Developer with relevant stakeholders to establish whether the specification may need to be amended and then qualifications re-approved.



# Enginuity

Once revisions are completed, the designated framework developer submits to SEMTA's Issuing Authority (IA) to review, approve and re-issue the framework via the online mechanism.

During the development of the existing Degree Apprenticeship the AFO website was used as the Framework Library and to record the IA actions, however this has now shut down and is hosted on the ACW site, the transfer of all frameworks from one system to another having been completed in Autumn 2019. With effect from 1st May 2020 the IA role will be carried out by a Welsh Minister and we have received a letter from the Welsh Government confirming the transfer of this function.

## **5. How the on-the-job training requirement of a minimum of 500 hours is documented and evidenced, and whether it is listed in the combined qualification programme specification as being a requirement for being awarded the degree?**

A documented record of on-the-job hours was not specified as a requirement of the degree being awarded.

On page 88 of the [live apprenticeship framework document](#) on the ACW website it states for framework certification that:

*“Providers will not be required to record individual on the job training hours. However for certification purposes, the provider will be required to declare that the apprentice has completed the on-the-job training hour requirement as set out in this Apprenticeship framework.”*

*“These hours may vary depending on previous experience and attainment of the apprentice. Where a learner enters an apprenticeship agreement having previously attained or acquired the appropriate competencies or knowledge, this prior learning needs to be recognised and documented using the relevant RPL procedures (as off-the-job above)”*

If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

*Jacqueline Hall*

Dr Jacqueline Hall  
Head of Policy & Strategy