



Funding for Engineering Degree Apprenticeships

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Issues of funding for Degree Apprenticeships in Engineering

Key questions posted in paper

- > Should there be additional funding for degree apprenticeships by employers to guarantee long-term sustainability of delivery? Would employers be willing to provide such additional funding?
- > Would employers be interested in contracting HEIs to offer additional services?
- > What action could HEIs take?

HEA's views are based on

- > Working with HEPs on developing Degree Apprenticeship strategies, curriculum design for DAs and working with a Trailblazer group
- > Facilitating conversations across the sector about the challenges and opportunities of Degree Apprenticeships
- > A history of supporting the sector to develop excellent higher level teaching and learning

Funding issues are common to all Degree Apprenticeships

Understanding and negotiating problems of funding is an institutional issue; clear institutional strategies for degree apprenticeships will enable decisions based on risks, costs and rewards

Costs of delivering Apprenticeships

- > What did the costing templates for these DAs include / exclude? Do they reflect reality?
- > Have you completed costing models for your DA programmes?
- > Do costs outstrip income? Or are margins small?
- > Clear view of costs will inform:
 - Whether to engage at all
 - Decisions on whether and how to develop 'lighter' approaches to delivery (and balance with concerns of quality)
 - Setting clearer expectations of what contribution from employers (mentoring, support, facilities, materials) is required
 - Approaches to employer engagement, e.g. Lots of Small employers or few large employers?
 - Whether and how to lobby Trailblazers and government

Seeking additional funding from employers

Providers can already charge more than the funding cap, so the question is how can providers convince employers that the price charged represents a high return on investment?

- > Some apprenticeship standards directly refer to the costs of apprenticeship far outstripping the levy funding available for them:
 - Product Design and Development Engineer: training and assessment “will cost circa £46K to deliver but will provide a very high return on investment in providing a pipeline in tackling scarce skills”
- > What appetite from employers for paying more than funding cap?
- > If current cohorts have paid a specific price, how would HEPs justify increased prices for future cohorts?

Supporting employers to maximise apprenticeship success

Larger employers are already signalling concerns about their capacity and capability to support apprenticeships; HEPs can offer solutions as additional services

Issues for employers

- > Organisations wishing to develop their workforce through apprenticeships need to invest in support from the workplace (CIPD, 2017; Unionlearn, 2014)
- > Large employers are signalling a lack of readiness:
 - Limited opportunities for meaningful higher level learning in the workplace
 - Inadequate management and supervision arrangements
 - Workforce development strategies still based on other forms of high skills recruitment
 - Up-skilling existing workforce through apprenticeship
- > What about smaller employers?

Additional services HEPs can offer

- > Professional development for in-house mentors and supervisors at larger employers
 - Clear message to employers: Effectively facilitating higher level learning requires investment
 - Professionalise and promote recognition of this role: HEA accredited schemes and PG Certs with Associate Fellowship and Fellowship
 - *Academic Professional Apprenticeship Standard*
- > Flying squads of workplace mentors and supervisors for smaller employers
- > One stop shop for apprenticeship needs: implies strategic partnership

What action could HEPs take?

Lobbying government may not be enough; proactive engagement with Trailblazer groups is also essential; we need to provide evidence to support our position

Proactive: Lobbying as a whole sector about funding caps (but careful: FE providers offering HE appear to be less concerned about funding...)

Reactive: Responding to consultations as individual organisations

ESFA and the Institute for Apprenticeships

Apprentice

Provider

Employer

For **new** standards: engage early; contribute sector knowledge; make friends!

- Assessment Plan heavily influences the cost.
- True integrated DAs may provide the space for lower cost delivery.

For **existing** standards: still engage!

- Encourage active review of progress (not review after 3 years);
- Offer Trailblazers compelling evidence and clear suggestions from improvement