

Parity of esteem: Thoughts and issues in relation to engineering degree apprenticeships

Robin Mellors-Bourne, CRAC

Perceptions within higher education?

- Lessons from experience....
- Professional Doctorate vs. PhD ?
“Some of our best candidates we transfer to a PhD”
- Part-time degrees:
“Individuals should have the right to study part-time and should not be disadvantaged because they choose to do so. An accessible higher education system will have parity of esteem at its heart. This does not mean using the same system for full and part-time modes of study; rather it means considering the needs of both student groups and ensuring they have equitable support and opportunity.” OU, Wales

Issues for employers/providers...

- **NB. This will not all be about school-leavers...**
(44% of all apprentice starts in 2015/16 were aged 25 and over)
- There is, and will be, an issue of parity of esteem in schools, especially those with weaker careers support, but **before we get that far...**
“There is a lack of information and advice about higher and degree apprenticeships, particularly in comparison to other progression routes”
“Teachers, advisers and students are confused by these services”
“From the point of view of young people, the apprenticeship application process appears complex, confusing and opaque”
(Progression Pathways 2017: Pathways through higher education, UCAS, 2017)

Schools (et al.)...

- Assume most schools/pupils do not know about degree apprenticeships
- It will be worse still amongst parents
- But there is evidence that a positive message around apprenticeships in general is beginning to get through (*in a range of schools...*)

Responses

- Provide **simple** messages for careers advisers and HE advisers (NB. Providing CPD for teachers is not a proven way to improve knowledge of detailed aspects of STEM careers advice)
- What more could UCAS – which is driven by the universities – do?
- Administrative data (destinations post-18) – need to make it easy for schools to complete the ‘IMD’ return (data on pupils’ destinations when they leave school), so that this works for degree apprenticeships...
- Learn from the accountancy sector, which has been running degree courses like this for > 5 years
- Also see the recommendations in “*The power of part-time*”, UniversitiesUK, 2013