

October 2018



Recommendations	Institute for Apprenticeships	Government	Employers	Learning providers	Regulatory and professional	Office for Students	Response Institute for Apprenticeships
Apprentices' experience and outcomes							
1. The term 'degree apprenticeships' has negative associations for some potential apprentices, being linked in their perceptions to lower level apprenticeships. We recommend that the Department for Education (DfE) explores opportunities to introduce more aspirational terminology.							
2. The term 'degree apprenticeships' has negative associations for some potential apprentices, being linked in their perceptions to lower level apprenticeships. We recommend that the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) should commission urgent research into attitudes to different terminology.		X					Rejected: IfA has an internal data science team for continuous improvement, not research (no budget). Should there be any capacity in future there is higher priority research for IfA to focus on.
3. The IfA must ensure that the development of Standards is a more open and ongoing evolution, allowing greater input from learning providers before and after the establishment of the Standards.							Challenged: Input from learning providers in trailblazer groups is not precluded. Trailblazer groups are encouraged to engage early with education providers, especially around end point assessment. Reviews of apprenticeships are a formal way for learning providers to feedback on standards in operation (approx. 25% of consultation respondents were providers in pilot digital review)

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							<p>Rejected: Mandating HEIs as part of trailblazer groups as these are employer forums.</p> <p>Accepted: To weave best practice into IfA trailblazer guidance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with learning providers, especially around the EPA. • Engaging early to get the plan right first time. • Involving multiple universities to balance any vested interests. <p>Rejected: Possibility of convening expert triage panels as logistically difficult and risk of favouritism criticisms. Besides, bulk of new Standards now agreed.</p>
4. The Government needs to develop a centralised strategy to raising awareness among prospective apprentices, providing information about options, brokerage and establishing shared application platforms.							
5. Degree apprenticeships should be explicitly considered as part of the Office for Students (OfS) strategy for wider access, participation and retention.							
6. The OfS should support the Gatsby Benchmarks enshrined in the Government's Careers Strategy in terms of working with employers to deliver effective outreach and working with schools to deliver outreach that encourages learners to find the pathways that suits them best.							

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7. Employers need to consider representation of apprentices as a cohort in their organisation. For smaller employers and large employers employing small numbers of apprentices, it will be necessary to consider how to integrate apprentices into a community within their working environment and/or within their study environment.							
8. Employers and providers need to design programmes around maximising opportunities for teaching contact.							
9. The fact that degree apprenticeships are employer led must not create an incentive to train apprentices simply for a specific job, but rather for a career.							
10. Learning providers should provide opportunities for additional support in areas, such as maths and study skills, without which some apprentices will struggle.							
11. Employers should ensure each apprentice has a mentor – other than their line manager – who can ensure the apprentice receives the academic support they need and is able to build up and record a portfolio of evidence useful to work towards CEng/IEng.							
12. The IfA should review its policies to explore ways to introduce greater flexibility and to enable the banking of units and AHEP learning outcomes and UK-SPEC competences.		X					<p>Rejected: Change of approach to enable banking of AHEP learning outcomes or recognition of partial achievement credits as part of framework. IfA doesn't mandate how a degree apprenticeship is delivered, allowing for employer and provider flexibility. Providers can provide credits if they chose.</p> <p>Accepted: Clarification needed</p> <p>Referred to: Government. The framework only allows for the EPA. This is a government policy issue but to note that to</p>

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							date policy has focussed on the competent worker output and a move away from an accreditation of achievement approach
13. The IfA needs to act as a regulator to ensure an optimal balance of needs is achieved and the Government should examine whether the IfA has the necessary powers for this purpose.						X	<p>Rejected: Any changes to the IfA's statutory powers.</p> <p>Accepted: The IfA needs to ensure an optimal balance of needs is achieved. Believe this can be achieved without statutory change</p> <p>Challenged: Suggestion of employer dominated trailblazer groups – IfA already requires trailblazers to represent all interests on group including SMEs. IfA perceive themselves as already very active and effective in this area. IfA always has apprentices in mind; they also have an apprentice on funding approval panel.</p> <p>Referred to: The OfS who is the regulator.</p>
14. The measurement of the effectiveness of degree apprenticeships must adopt an evidence-based best practice approach in choosing appropriate metrics and should, unless necessity dictates otherwise, treat apprentices no differently from other students. However, the presentation of metrics in a way that recognises differences is essential. Working with the OfS and the Government, the IfA must clearly establish							<p>Accepted: Transparent monitoring and measures required. Need to take a later measure than the current DfE Apprenticeships Survey.</p>

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how it proposes to assess the quality of specific degree apprenticeship programmes and of the national scheme. This should include the performance indicators and methodology that will be used.							Through the Quality Alliance the IfA has produced a quality strategy and is developing an approach to evaluation. Will include output and input focuses and extend to evaluation of apprenticeship planning, duration and post EPA. Will include outcomes, employment, retention and pay data as well as information on future prospects. A dashboard is planned.
15. Apprentices should participate in the National Student Survey (NSS) and OfS must consider how to recognise apprenticeships in the TEF. Due consideration needs to be given to the potential impact on benchmarks for HEIs that provide a large number of apprenticeships.							
Developing partnerships between HEIs and employers							
16. A body of research into the effectiveness of – and a body of evidence into best practice for – degree apprenticeships needs to be developed, building on previous research into work-based learning. This should be undertaken by the OfS, by Advance HE and/or by the IfA, and it is the DfE’s role to ensure this responsibility does not fall between the cracks.							Accepted: Need for best practice research and body of evidence led by the IfA. No budget but would like to build capability. Challenged: IfA would want to look more broadly than Engineering, accepting that best practice will look differently in different occupational contexts
17. The IfA should develop a strategy for sharing best practice with all stakeholders.							Accepted: In full.

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18. The IfA should conduct systematic research to assess the take-up of existing support resources and whether there is a need to extend this to ensure there are clear and accessible guidelines and template agreements. This should take particular note of the needs of SMEs.							Accepted: IfA to monitor take up of existing resources and develop clear, accessible guidelines. These could include best practice evidence based as well as guidelines in future. Challenged: Trailblazers transcend big businesses, they are not employer dominated.
19. The principles, channels and opportunities for communication between degree apprenticeship stakeholders should be mutually understood and integrated into guidelines and agreements.							
20. In the short to medium term at least, the IfA should extend the role of the relationship manager to developing best practice approaches to degree apprenticeships and creating support documentation.							Accepted: Relationship managers will move away from standards approval now the bulk of standards are in place. Accepted: Need for improved IfA liaison with PEIs and HEIs.
21. The IfA and the Government should conduct a review into the particular challenges for SMEs in the delivery – and ensure that SME voices are heard in the development – of degree apprenticeships.							Challenged: Suggestion of employer dominated trailblazer groups – IfA already requires trailblazers to represent all interests on group including SMEs. Accepted: Can be highlighted in best practice guidance.
22. The Government should create opportunities and incentives to encourage the growth and spread of shared / group apprenticeship initiatives and the IfA should facilitate brokerage so that employers and HEIs can discover Group Training Associations and work with them.		X					Rejected: Any brokerage role. IfA can encourage, support and facilitate but key role must

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							<p>remain maintain quality threshold.</p> <p>Referred to: EPC should take that there is a gap in brokerage to DfE. Particularly no one doing it at higher levels with a few localised exceptions.</p>
<p>23. The IfA must conduct a continuous process of reviewing under-utilised Standards or those used by only a small number of employers.</p>							<p>Accepted: Need for Standards review. There is currently a risk-based approach to this working towards a regular evidence-based review now standards approval work well developed. If underused, IfA need to ask stakeholders why as part of review.</p> <p>Institute expects its occupational maps to be dynamic and will update when occupations change</p>
<p>24. Where necessary, steps should be taken by the IfA to ensure that, unless they serve a niche role, Standards have broad applicability to multiple employers. Apprenticeships should promote flexible employability skills and skills across different and ever-changing areas of engineering.</p>							<p>Challenged: Suggestion of employer dominated trailblazer groups – IfA already requires trailblazers to represent interests on group including SMEs.</p> <p>Rejected: Inclusion of employability skills in apprenticeships, even as guidance for trailblazer</p>

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							groups. Skills for role needed, not broader employability skills. Levy not intended to fund that.
25. The IfA should ensure Standards always align with pathways towards professional recognition.							Accepted (where conditions met): IfA is looking for standards to include wherever possible recognition of professional accreditation. Especially if a qualification is mandated by to access (be recruited by) that profession / be chartered in that profession – that normally means the qualification is included in that profession.
26. Intrinsic to the relationship between employer and training provider should be a clear schedule of regular and frequent communication – beyond the written reports on apprentices' progress.							
27. There should be a continuing professional development plan for key staff in both the employer and the HEI to ensure they are suitably skilled to support the apprenticeship programme and the apprentices themselves.							
Recognition of achievement							
28. The Government should consult on plans to reduce the complexity of possible outputs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • merging assessments; • blending assessments to ensure success in one contributes to success in the other (and vice versa); • obligations on employers to treat apprentices in the same way as any other employee on completion of their apprenticeship in terms of their rights to continued employment, subject to continuation of the need for the role (rather 							

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<p>than regarding them as low-cost labour and replacing them when the apprenticeship is complete);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assured progression towards professional recognition as a Standards requirement for all engineering degree apprenticeships. 							
<p>29. The IfA must ensure that there is significant expert input from professional engineering institutions in the setting of Standards.</p>							<p>Accepted: Better communication needed with PEIs and regulatory bodies. IfA to do more to include and work with professional recognition / accreditation</p> <p>Challenged: Professional institutes don't always want to work with them. Message: "work with us, we want to work with you".</p>
<p>30. Apprentices should be supported by employers and HEIs to develop reflection skills to monitor their own progress in terms of which skills they are developing and how. They should record their learning process and be able to present evidence of working towards achievement. recording evidence of professional development is also useful for an individual's professional review. A reflective portfolio, owned by apprentices, should be regular best practice – facilitating continuous assessment and feedback.</p>							<p>Rejected: Inclusion of employability skills in apprenticeships.</p> <p>Rejected: IfA mandated delivery approach.</p> <p>Accepted: Inclusion in best practice guidance.</p>
<p>31. The IfA should consult with employers and training providers on how best to ensure degree apprenticeships adopt a modular approach.</p>							<p>Rejected: IfA mandating how a degree apprenticeship is delivered, allowing for provider flexibility. Providers can adopt modular approach if they chose.</p> <p>Accepted: Need for clarification of rules around "one day at week" at college.</p>

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							IfA don't mandate how it's delivered.
32. The IfA should consider whether a link between credits and training programme milestones should be included in all degree apprenticeship Standards, ensuring that the timelines of the two activities are aligned.							<p>Rejected: Change of approach to enable banking of AHEP learning outcomes or recognition of partial achievement credits as part of framework. IfA doesn't mandate how a degree apprenticeship is delivered, allowing for provider flexibility. Providers can provide credits if they chose.</p> <p>Referred to: Government. The framework only allows for the EPA. This is a government policy issue.</p>
33. Industrial work packages should represent consolidation of university work packages and vice versa.							
34. Professional recognition should be built in to engineering degree apprenticeship Standards.							<p>Accepted (where requirements met): IfA is looking for standards to include wherever possible recognition of professional accreditation. Especially if a qualification is mandated by to access (be recruited by) that profession / be chartered in that profession – that normally means the qualification is included in that profession.</p>

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35. Professional bodies must give immediate consideration to opportunities to streamline the process for degree apprentices who achieve their degrees and pass their End Point Assessments (EPAs).							
36. Regulatory and professional bodies must give consideration to where in the sector additional professional registration assessors will come from and opportunities to streamline the process for degree apprentices who achieve their degrees and pass their EPAs.							
37. The OfS must conduct research into the non-completion trends of degree apprentices with particular reference to the demographics of apprentices.							
38. The Government and the IfA must urgently consider how to ensure non-completion (for reasons other than failure) is not a dead-end for the apprentice. Credit transfer and modularity would be helpful, alongside a funding resource that apprentices can access in case of premature cancellation of an apprenticeship programme. This fund should be sourced from the Apprenticeship Levy and/or employer contributions on a deposit basis.							Accepted: Non-completion – IfA need to understand why (problem with standard or something else?).
39. Consideration should be given to what support might be needed by apprentices when their employer makes them redundant.							Referred to: ESFA, who already manages businesses going bust. Clarity is needed on liaison between ESFA and HEIs and help needed establishing that relationship. Institute already working with ESFA to build in some protections for apprentices around End Point Assessment
A sustainable system							
40. The Government must urgently address the complexity of messaging around degree apprenticeships and the lack of informed and professional careers guidance in schools (from primary school onwards). Apprenticeships – particularly degree apprenticeships – must be reframed as (for many people) the best of both worlds: workplace experience and academic qualifications.							

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41. The Government needs to stimulate proactive brokerage between prospective apprentices and employers to make it easier for applicants to find and secure a suitable apprenticeship by entering a pool of prospective candidates from which employers can select individuals.							
42. For a five-year period, the Government should either immediately raise the engineering degree apprenticeship fees or provide catalyst funding to support the development of programmes.							
43. The IfA and Government must commission independent research to examine whether degree apprentices receive a learning experience comparable to traditional students, highlighting best practice in terms of achieving cost savings and identifying ineffective approaches as part of a growing body of evidence around what is bound to be a fast-evolving area of practice.							<p>Accepted: Need for best practice research and body of evidence led by the IfA.</p> <p>Challenged: IfA would want to look more broadly than Engineering.</p>
44. The DfE must ensure the current review of post-18 education funding considers support for degree apprenticeships.							
45. The DfE should look for opportunities to introduce more aspirational terminology and the IfA should undertake a study to assess the impact of current terminology and alternatives.							<p>Rejected: IfA has an internal data science team for continuous improvement, not research (no budget). Should there be any capacity in future there is higher priority research for IfA to focus on.</p>
46. The Government, employers and other engineering sector stakeholders should promote degree apprenticeships as not simply equal to a degree, but providing more than a degree, combining knowledge and understanding with workplace knowledge and competences.							
47. The Government should adopt metrics that incentivise school management to support pathways into degree apprenticeships as equivalent to other forms of higher education.							

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48. The Careers Strategy should be extended to guarantee access to continuous and contiguous careers support by professional practitioners as a right for all pupils throughout secondary education and ideally in primary schools.							
49. CEIAG practitioners need to be trained and registered in order to maintain their understanding of different routes and, in the context of engineering, to encourage individuals to look for accredited qualification.							
50. The OfS and the Government should explore ways to ensure evidence-based, early-intervention outreach is well funded and captures data to support understanding of what works.							
51. Employers should be allowed to offset the cost of independent and impartial outreach work against a proportion of their Apprenticeship Levy in the same way as they can currently use 10% of the levy to employ subcontractors. In order to avoid this becoming a means to offset the employers' recruitment costs, only independent and impartial outreach should qualify.							
52. Employers should look for opportunities for degree apprentices to act as ambassadors or mentors of secondary students, not only to support those students, but to further their own learning.							
53. Employers should recruit on the basis of a demonstrable potential to succeed in the academic environment as well as the workplace and should work closely with learning providers to understand how such potential may be assessed.							
54. If research demonstrates that the standards fail to protect – and enhance – parity of esteem, then the Government must be prepared to raise the funding for engineering degree apprenticeships permanently to avoid damage to their reputation.							
Implications for the devolved nations							
55. The Government must be mindful of the need for alignment between all devolved nations. International alignment and value should also be considered.							
56. Any new system in Wales should easily allow partnerships across the devolved nations, since many of the companies likely to be partners in offering degree apprenticeships would have offices, and draw apprentices from, across the UK.							