

Degree Apprenticeships in Construction  
and Built Environment  
The Emerging Landscape

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The Harold Samuel  
Educational Trust

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# Acknowledgements

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**UCEM** is an independent University College with over 4,000 students studying worldwide. The institution is committed to excellence in teaching and to providing strong employability outcomes to increase professionalism and contribute to a better Built Environment. UCEM delivers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees accredited by professional industry bodies, as well as apprenticeship programmes at both level 3 (A-level equivalent) and level 6 (degree level).

**CHOBE** comprise Heads of Schools/Departments in UK Universities responsible for research, knowledge transfer and learning in the fields of Construction, Property and Surveying. CHOBE's mission is to support and represent with a voice of influence those with strategic responsibility for the development and delivery of graduate and postgraduate education.

The **Harold Samuel Educational Trust** is a charity for the promotion, advancement and dissemination of knowledge of surveying, auctioneering, estate management and other areas of knowledge associated with the profession of the land.

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Thanks, are also extended to provider representatives who completed the project's questionnaire.

Note:

- Unless stated otherwise 'built environment higher education' in this report means Construction, Property and Surveying.
- All website references were reviewed on 9th and 10th June 2018.

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# Foreword

Degree apprenticeships represent a huge opportunity for the built environment industry to address the growing skills shortage identified by employers and professional bodies. I was fortunate enough to chair the Built Environment Skills Summit which included a range of leading figures from across the industry. The Solutions to the Built Environment Skills Crisis report<sup>1</sup> made a number of key recommendations for action to enable the industry to meet the demand for more than 158,000 additional construction workers over the next five years<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that degree apprenticeships have a major role to play in addressing this challenge, specifically by helping to meet demand for skilled labour at professional and managerial levels.

For too long apprenticeships have been associated with low level programmes and basic qualifications which carry little recognition from employers. Now for the first time Government-sponsored apprenticeship programmes are available which include Honours degrees from a choice of universities and lead directly to Chartered membership of the most prestigious professional bodies in the built environment.

Degree apprenticeships will also provide an opportunity to address the alarming decline in part-time student numbers at undergraduate level which has occurred since the 2008 financial crisis. Since then we have seen the number of new starters per year fall 63% from 267,000 in 2008/09 to 100,000 in 2016/17.<sup>3</sup>

For young people wishing to enter the industry a degree apprenticeship offers a gilt-edged opportunity to acquire a fully-funded degree, several years of paid work with a participating employer and achieve a professional membership which provides a launchpad to a successful career. The benefits of this scheme compared to a full-time degree programme involving high levels of student debt are obvious.

For employers degree apprenticeships can make a valuable contribution to improving the diversity of their workforce, helping them to recruit from under-represented groups and bring in young talent to complement their graduate recruitment programmes.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will be able to use degree apprenticeship programmes to develop a different type of provision alongside their courses for full-time undergraduate students, and to forge closer productive relationships with key employers but this opportunity is not without challenges for all the stakeholders involved. For example:

- Employers will need to introduce new processes to support apprentices, ensuring they have the opportunity to develop competences in the workplace which enable them to achieve professional membership;
- To ensure that degree apprenticeships are truly employer-led, Government will need to create an enabling environment in which employers have greater control of apprenticeship content, while retaining oversight of the overall system;
- HEIs will have to adopt new ways of working to align their programme delivery model to the needs of employers, including day release, online and blended learning and delivery at employers' premises in some cases.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ucem.ac.uk/media/Built-Environment-Skills-Summit-Report-UCEM.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn%202017-2021/csn-london-2017.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/HEinEngland/undergraduate/parttime/>

I am pleased to see that this report provides strong evidence of the future potential of degree apprenticeships and highlights examples of emerging good practice that will enable this vital initiative to succeed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Wheaton', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ashley Wheaton

Principal, University College of Estate Management

# Background

The 'Degree Apprenticeships in Construction and Built Environment: The Emerging Landscape' project was originated to provide a comprehensive picture of built environment degree apprenticeships and was at its most active in 2017. This report reflects the path towards the present situation and sets out emerging issues before making recommendations intended to support successful implementation of built environment degree apprenticeship.

Key objectives of the project included to:

- Identify **impacts and issues** up to the present time identified and contextualised to built environment higher education;
- Establish **the emerging situation** through desk research and by taking views of key parties to be involved in longer term implementation including through interviews with individuals representing employers, policy and support and professional institutions in addition to questionnaire survey of and interviews with representatives of providers;
- Encourage those in built environment higher education that want to participate in degree apprenticeships **by identifying and unwrapping impacts and issues** in a meaningful way;
- **Publicise and promote** the contribution of built environment higher education to implementation of relevant apprenticeships.

# Methodology

The aim of the project was to provide a comprehensive picture of the emerging landscape of built environment degree apprenticeships. The context of the project, therefore, was to determine several aspects of the degree apprenticeship and the focus of the project was on the empirical knowledge rather than on theoretical assumptions. These project categories influenced the project to strategically adopt ambiguous mixed-methods research (AMMR)<sup>4</sup> with inherent qualitative research approach. This allowed the project to capture a deeper understanding of the policy, development and implementation of degree apprenticeship from more experienced practitioners by going into further detail, in addition to gathering views of those preparing to implement.

The strategy undertaken for sampling was purposeful sampling (Holloway, 2005)<sup>56</sup> for two reasons: (i) to reflect/represent the population's diversity and (ii) to discover emerging theory. At the same time, the sample size was determined by the concept of "theoretical saturation". The participants, for these reasons and the obvious features of the project, were higher and further education providers, employers, and representatives of professional institutions, and those involved in central policy and support to implementation. The project was conducted in three stages.

## Stage One:

### **Initiation of themes through an extended review of literature, policies and developments**

An extended review of literature, policies and developments was carried out through a desk research. Drawing on the findings of the desk research, telephone interview protocols were developed and tailored to fit with the backgrounds of interviewees in the next stage.

## Stage Two:

### **Identifying overarching patterns and intertwined themes through telephone interviews with those involved in development and implementation of degree apprenticeship**

Initially, the interviewees who represented central policy and support to implementation outside of built environment higher education as such, though considered to be the most relevant professional institutions were contacted. These included three respondents (two of which were involved with trailblazers and one who had led drafting of degree apprenticeship standards and assessment plans); four employers (who were in profession such as surveying, major contractor and housebuilding, and three of these were involved with trailblazers and all were either employing or planning to recruit built environment degree apprentices). These interviewees had wide experiences of being involved in trailblazers and thus contributed to several topic areas such as the apprenticeship levy, attitude towards apprenticeship, experience of its use and potential impact on the apprentices' talent development approaches, social mobility and diversity.

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<sup>4</sup> Holt G, and Goulding J. Conceptualisation of ambiguous-mixed-methods within building and construction research. *Journal of Engineering, Design and Technology* 12.2 2014. 244-262.

<sup>5</sup> Holloway I. (ed). *Qualitative research in health care*. Maidenhead, Open University Press; 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Patton M. *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. 3 ed. London, SAGE; 2002.

## **Stage Three:**

### **Comparing and categorising themes through investigation of provider response by questionnaire and telephone interviews**

A questionnaire (Appendix 1) was developed based on the research finding from the interviews undertaken in the Stage Two. Questionnaires were piloted with two individuals representing the most experienced and those at an earlier stage of involvement. Following this pilot, the questionnaire was administered and deployed electronically. The contacts' knowledge and information from the HEFCE administered Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund (DADF) universities and further education colleges running or planning to run built environment apprenticeships at degree level were identified in the Stage One. These institutions identified participants through contacting them to take part in the questionnaire.

Likewise, the members of the Council of Heads of the Built Environment (CHOBE) were contacted to complete the questionnaire within various Higher Education Institutions. 25 questionnaire responses were received. The responses were from all universities in receipt of DADF phase one support for built environment and three further education colleges. Respondents were asked if they were willing to be interviewed - ten participants were selected for interviews, mainly on the bases of discipline and length of their involvement with degree apprenticeship. Among these were the three further education colleges because of their experience and one university that provided an ability to compare the new system with its predecessor. The contribution of the participants can be considered as substantial as the universities that were interviewed accounted for over 72 per cent<sup>7</sup> of built environment degree apprentices recorded for 2016 – 17.

This methodology allowed the achievement of the aim of the project and provided a comprehensive picture of the emerging landscape<sup>8</sup> of built environment degree apprenticeships.

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<sup>7</sup> Commissioned HESA student record dataset

<sup>8</sup> Willman A, Stoltz P, Bahtsevani C. Evidensbaserad omvårdnad. En bro mellan forskning och klinisk verksamhet. Studentlitteratur; 2006.

## Structure of report

The report begins with a review from the initial announcement of degree apprenticeship up to roughly when the project ended its most active phase in late 2017. Section 2 draws on the interviews with central policy, support, employer and professional institution representatives with reference to such as notifications from Government and its agencies, surveys, academic research and media reports. Section 3 is based on responses to the provider questionnaire and provider interviews, and is referred in the same way as section 2. The report ends with conclusions and recommendations. Insight into recruitment of degree apprentices and their preparation for end – point assessment is provided in Appendix 2.

## Executive summary

### Apprenticeship Reform and Initial Implementation

The reform of apprenticeship sits within wider reform of vocational education and training. This is massive change. Moving from apprenticeship frameworks to standards set by employer – led trailblazers reduced the role of Sector Skills Councils which controlled content in the previous system and augured the end of national occupational standards, the basis of qualifications used inside and outside apprenticeship. The change to the apprenticeship levy moved much of the system’s administration to employers in addition to most of delivery funding, and impacted providers. The introduction of end – point assessment affected awarding bodies (in addition to providers, apprentices and employers) and draws professional institutions in to a greater extent than previously, including in built environment.

Wolf’s 2011 ‘Review of Vocational Education’ paved the way for ‘The Richard Review of Apprenticeship’ in 2012. Wolf also made the case for what is now the Apprenticeship Levy. Richard’s approach was to base apprenticeship on briefer standards drafted at a high level of expression by employers rather than Sector Skills Councils channelling employer views. End – point assessment which judges competence against apprenticeship standards is probably the most fundamental change from the previous system other than the apprenticeship levy.

Government granted funding to the Higher Education Funding Council for England for the Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund. In its first round, built environment development was supported in nine universities. In its second round, more colleges were involved including as lead partner and alone. Arrangements for provider registration changed while providers were forming bids for the Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund’s first round.

The only available reformed apprenticeship at degree level in built environment in the project’s active stages was Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship. In 2016 – 17 it was one of the top three performing degree apprenticeships, so is relatively popular. Other built environment degree apprenticeships not being available was a significant problem and still is. By the end of the project, this issue was joined by criticism of the allocation of non – levy provision funding and that funding band maxima potentially too low to deliver degree apprenticeships.

## **Employers, Professional Institutions, Policy Development and Support**

Perceptions of why degree apprenticeship was introduced included increasing productivity, matching provision to employer need and bringing universities (particularly) closer to work based learning including by using apprenticeship with their own staff. It was felt that post 1992 universities would get involved more than others but for example, the University of Cambridge and Imperial College are now registered apprenticeship providers.

More employer interviewees said they would retain graduate programmes than didn't, but all were either running Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship or intended to run other built environment degree apprenticeships when they became available. From what employer interviewees said, some firms may feel more pressure than others to 'get back' apprenticeship levy by taking on enough apprentices to spend what was paid into the levy.

Employers recognised that in addition to the apprenticeship levy shifting the majority of delivery costs to them, the new system requires work they did not do under its predecessor. There was concern (mainly from professional institution interviewees) that smaller firms would not be able to deal with the new system. More employers than not said they would consider using the 10 per cent transfer by which their firms can pass unspent levy funds to smaller firms for apprenticeship, but did not mention specific plans for this. One employer said they would be unlikely to use the transfer because of further work this could cause.

There was concern about lack of university (particularly) staff industry experience and provision being out of date. The first benefit all but one interviewee mentioned was degree apprenticeship's lack of debt, but it is apparent that even this is not influencing young peoples' choices towards degree apprenticeship. Some employer and all professional institution interviewees thought increased speed to professional achievement was a major benefit. This cannot be evaluated in built environment because no built environment degree apprentices have completed. There was also concern that up to one quarter of the present cohort of Chartered Surveyor degree apprentices will not pass end – point assessment at the first attempt. It was said that there would be a 'boost to part time'. Quantity surveying part time undergraduate numbers rose in 2016 – 17. It is possible that degree apprentices made up 29.5 per cent of this increase, but this cannot be established until inaccurate data is corrected.

Section 2 interviewees had high expectations for the impacts of degree apprenticeship on social mobility and diversity. It is too early to assess if built environment degree apprenticeship benefits social mobility and diversity, in addition to this being prevented by presently inaccurate data. Tackling these areas will be challenging because of the entrenched factors behind social mobility and diversity and complexity including the need to involve many actors and actions. Furthermore, promotion to underrepresented groups is a subset of promotion of degree apprenticeship as such and this was already identified as problematic.

### **The Provider Side**

University interviewees and respondents thought applying to the Register of Apprenticeship Providers was difficult because of its further education provenance, further education interviewees said applying to the register was difficult because its requirements differed from those of the previous register. Interviewees in a position to compare the two said that the

reformed system is more difficult than its predecessor. The first (attempted) non – levy provision procurement round's 'pause' followed by few universities being allocated non - levy funds impacted negatively on universities' ability to work with smaller employers. Those bidding for smaller amounts said they were pushed below the procurement exercise's minimum threshold so did not win funds. As things stand, unless a non – levy paying firm has independent funds which it elects to use to pay providers for apprenticeship delivery, the only funding sources are non – levy provision and the 10 per cent transfer which built environment levy paying firms may not use. Far greater interest was found in main provider status (delivery of training and assessment for the whole apprenticeship) than supporting status (delivery by subcontract from one of the main providers up to a value of £500k p.a.) Only 4 per cent of questionnaire respondents' institutions had supporting status and none were pursuing it. Lack of supporting providers could prevent niche requirements being met as degree apprenticeship develops. The continuing lack of built environment degree apprenticeships made numbers and targets given by questionnaire respondents meaningless apart from those related to Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship. Lack of funding for non – levy paying firms' apprenticeship delivery will have also impacted numbers and targets.

Only one university interviewee said they had or knew if their institutions had plans to partner with further education colleges in delivering degree apprenticeship. A few university interviewees visualised recruiting apprentices who had completed at lower levels from further education colleges. According to questionnaire responses, built environment apprentices at degree level are not recruited locally in the main, which was identified as the national trend. It was also forecasted that regional and national growth will be more significant than local, which could be better for built environment higher education. It is possible that not enough numbers of degree apprentices will be recruited to drive development of sufficient provision, which could lead to unmet demand. It was suggested the relevant university staff might have targets for apprenticeship recruitment, which would be helpful but what the project found indicated that providers should examine their learner recruitment strategies and practices for fit with degree apprenticeship.

Less than half of questionnaire respondents said that new programmes were being developed for degree apprenticeships. This may not deal with concerns section 2 interviewees had about provision. Day – release was the most popular form of delivery, block or day release supported by distance learning was second (with variations), a few were relying more on distance learning than other means. There were cases of degree apprentices being tutored separately and infilled for lectures and other cases where degree apprentices' 'off the job' learning was entirely separate from full time students.

According to questionnaire responses around three – quarters of universities and further education colleges had staff dedicated to the main tasks of degree apprenticeship apart from locating employers and recruitment of apprentices, which were both nearing two - thirds. This might reflect that recruitment arrangements vary across providers, but it could be that degree apprentice recruitment is not receiving enough provider attention. There were university interviewees who thought that change (whether by recruitment or development) would be necessary to achieve the right balance of expertise in teams delivering degree apprenticeship but all further education respondents and interviewees said their colleges were recruiting and/developing staff for degree apprenticeship.

76 per cent of questionnaire responses said discipline specific staff were responsible for links between apprentices' workplace study and academic learning. Less than half (48 per

cent) said mentoring was done by discipline specific staff. Providers must have staff who can identify the full range of workplace learning, where evidence is needed against apprenticeship standards, how best to generate this evidence, make arrangements for this to happen, monitor that the correct evidence is being produced and at all stages maximise the relationship between workplace learning and the academic programme. Further education colleges particularly were recruiting staff with recent industry experience (or concurrent, some would continue to work in the industry) and taking action to ensure that staff have relevant professional memberships (which should be helpful in working towards end – point assessment). Amongst related areas, university respondents and interviewees mentioned that there had to be the right balance between academic and industry experience in teams that deliver apprenticeship, also industry familiarisation for academic staff. An experienced university interviewee advised that providers should develop account management capability to manage their relationships with employers, underpinned by suitable information systems system, employers' requirements should be clarified at the outset, employer expectations of support the provider can give must be managed and systems are needed for issue resolution where there is a problem that needs to be addressed during delivery of the programme.

The 44 per cent of questionnaire respondents who said their provider was registered to deliver end – point assessment was high, but this would not be in built environment because so far there are no 'integrated' built environment degree apprenticeships. Experienced interviewees were concerned that ESFA's benchmarks against which providers will be judged on completions are not appropriate to apprenticeship at degree level. It is encouraging that 96 per cent of questionnaire respondents said that their degree apprentices were monitored specifically towards end – point assessment (or that this was intended) but overall, an element of confusion about end – point assessment came through from a reasonably large proportion of questionnaire responses and a few interviews.

Questionnaire respondents ranked the provision of a pathway to professional achievement first as a benefit. Unless young people happen to be aware of the value of professional achievement in employment, they are unlikely to recognise the good it could do them. Lack of promotion to the appropriate age was the number one obstacle. Social mobility and diversity were also highly ranked, but as mentioned these benefits will not be served without some effort and recruiting individuals from underrepresented groups was not mentioned by this section's participants.

Most questionnaire respondents took a middle path on impacts on staffing and systems but 20 per cent saw major impacts. Responses mainly focused on administrative change.

## Recommendations

Government should publish clear account of actions it is taking to promote degree apprenticeship including through its agencies (such as IfA, ESFA) and partners and consider a national awareness campaign to explain the opportunity that degree apprenticeships offer. This could particularly focus on school careers advisers who are in a unique position to advise school leavers and influence their choices. Targeting parents (and their influencers such as the mainstream media) would also be helpful to clarifying that an apprenticeship is not necessarily an alternative to going to university as it provides a degree embedded in a work-based programme.

A group should be established to focus the interests of built environment degree apprenticeship. It should be recognised as representing the views of constituencies including employers, professional institutions, further education colleges, universities and communicate effectively with others including IfA, CITB and if necessary Government and its relevant departments. The agenda of the group would be its own to set but promotion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

IfA should publish on how the inertia which is still seeing degree apprenticeships languishing in development is being addressed. If this publication is to allay growing concerns, it should include how IfA will achieve effective engagement between its staff and employer groups, clearer communication of the criteria for approving standards and assessment plans and preferably removal of unnecessary stages in the approval process. It would also be helpful if the CITB Construction Apprenticeships Working Group prioritises communication of its intentions towards speeding availability of construction degree apprenticeships and towards any other built environment degree apprenticeships.

The system for procuring non – levy provision funding should be reformed and simplified to encourage small and medium sized firms to take advantage of degree apprenticeships as well as levy payers. This would help restore confidence in the ability of Government to manage funding in the apprenticeships system (via the Education and Skills Funding Agency - ESFA) and encourage more higher education providers to participate. It would also be helpful if providers working with levy – paying employers check they have considered the 10 per cent transfer of unspent funds to non – levy paying firms.

IfA must ensure that the process for setting funding bands incorporates effective dialogue between employers, providers and Government to ensure resourcing of degree apprenticeship delivery is set at realistic levels. If employers are consistently paying more from their own money for particular degree apprenticeships, it should be accepted that the relevant funding band maxima need to increase.

A comprehensive plan is needed which identifies potential partners and their actions together with a means of delivery to help maximise beneficial impacts of built environment degree apprenticeship on social mobility and diversity. It would be more efficient if the plan is developed by an existing mechanism that will ensure appropriate representation given its context. Providers should review their arrangements for recruiting degree apprentices from underrepresented groups and develop these as necessary using best practice examples. Universities should also consider incorporating degree apprenticeship into their widening participation strategies and providers of degree apprenticeship should develop metrics to assess the impact of degree apprenticeships on their ability to attract individuals from underrepresented groups.

Providers should ensure support to and preparation of degree apprentices for end – point assessment. Built environment professional institutions should enact a cross – sector board, which should guide providers on end – point assessment. The approach to success rates should be reviewed to take account of the type and level of apprenticeship.

It is recommended that systems are aligned (including those of ESFA and the Higher Education Statistics Agency) to enable providers to manage degree apprenticeships alongside mainstream provision.

Providers of degree apprenticeship should review their arrangements for promotion of and recruitment to degree apprenticeship. Universities in particular should consider increasing awareness, knowledge and expertise of staff involved in promotion of and recruitment to degree apprenticeship and degree apprentice recruitment targets for relevant staff. Further work should be undertaken to clarify provider practice in degree apprentice recruitment.

Providers should consider development of account management capability to manage their relationships with relevant employers effectively, underpinned by suitable information systems such as a customer relationship management system (CRM). Providers might refer to good practice from other service industries, especially consultancies that operate business-to-business professional service models where the principles and practice of account management are well established.

Universities should set out the appropriateness of degrees they use for degree apprenticeship in a way that can be understood including by employers. This could also inform promoting degree apprenticeship to young people and those who influence their decisions (such as parents and schools careers advisers).

Providers should ensure that academic and industry expertise in their teams that deliver degree apprenticeship is balanced and the programme is delivered in such a way that there is the greatest possible confidence the degree apprenticeships will be successfully completed.

# 1. Review: Apprenticeship Reform and Initial Implementation

The term 'Degree Apprenticeship' was used in public for the first time by a member of UK Government in November 2014.<sup>9</sup> The following March, plans were unveiled for 'roll out' of several degree apprenticeships<sup>10</sup> including Chartered Surveyor. The accompanying press release said advertising of construction degree apprenticeships would start in September 2015. Apart from Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship, no reformed degree level built environment apprenticeships<sup>11</sup> were available.<sup>12</sup> Of course, those interested in built environment degree apprenticeship know this, and 'The Richard Review of Apprenticeship' published in 2012. Arguably, Richard's review could not have gone as far as it did without Wolf's wider 'Review of Vocational Education' in 2011. In addressing development and approval of apprenticeship frameworks (which set out what should be delivered in the programmes) Wolf argued that origination of these was incorrectly located;

'It does not appear appropriate, given this Government's commitment to progression through apprenticeship that frameworks should as at present, be drawn up entirely by SSCs'.<sup>13</sup>

Wolf also opposed SSC approval of qualifications prior to formal accreditation.

'The SSCs – which are non-statutory – have become, in the last few years, de facto designers, as well as de facto first-line accreditors, of almost all non-HE qualifications other than the academic ones.'<sup>14</sup>

Wolf's view of SSCs 'de facto designers' of qualifications is reasonable. SSCs led on national occupational standards which underpinned vocational qualifications accredited by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) then what was originally the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). One of this project's interviewees said;

'Alison Wolf is effectively responsible for dismantling a lot of stuff.'

It may be more accurate to see Wolf's review as shaping change that Government had already decided in broad terms. Government led intervention in vocational provision via standards and related certification has a history, including;

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-qualifications-launched-to-meet-uk-demand-for-digital-skills>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-rollout-of-flagship-degree-apprenticeships>

<sup>11</sup> There is a level 6 construction management higher apprenticeship <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/construction-management-apprenticeships> and others at level 5 <http://www.citb.co.uk/citb-apprenticeships/higher-apprenticeships/> all based on frameworks are being replaced by reformed apprenticeships (based on trailblazer standards).

<sup>12</sup> Degree apprenticeships relevant to built environment were approved in March 2018. These were *not* from the Technical and Professional ('Balfour Beatty') Trailblazer <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/senior-head-of-facilities-management-degree/> <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/geospatial-mapping-and-science-degree/>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/180504/DFE-00031-2011.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180504/DFE-00031-2011.pdf) p14

<sup>14</sup> Op Cit p 63 Original emphasis

- The Standards Programme<sup>15</sup> of the late 1980's and early 1990's;
- Funding pressure applied from the early 1990's replaced non – accredited qualifications in vocational programmes<sup>16</sup> with accredited qualifications. By the mid 1990's it was unusual that public funding supported vocational programmes if their qualifications were not accredited.

Additionally, national occupational standards and SSC (Foundation degree) frameworks were 'important reference points' in design and validation of Foundation degrees.<sup>17</sup>

Wolf was among advisers to the Standards Programme, and one of those who criticised national occupational standards and NVQs. For around two decades, such opinions didn't lead to anywhere near the order of the present reforms. By the time Wolf was commissioned to carry out her 2011 review the difference was that faced with the costly behemoth (given the Coalition Government's 'austerity drive') of vocational provision, the views of Ministers changed.<sup>18</sup>

Government was probably very attracted by;

'Improving efficiency and increasing the proportion of funding spent on first-line apprenticeship training are particularly important given that apprenticeship unit costs have been rising very fast in recent years.'<sup>19</sup>

The italicisation is original as it is in the Wolf Review's next paragraph '*In other countries, only employers and the actual training institutions are involved in apprenticeships*' which can be read to blame burgeoning costs on 'managing agents' (administering rather than delivering), awarding bodies and SSCs. Taking SSCs as an example, public funds supported the majority of their staffing and activities. Apprenticeship frameworks and national occupational standards were key SSC responsibilities.

Move definition and approval of apprenticeship away from SSCs, provide an apparently easier (hence more popular<sup>20</sup>) alternative to national occupational standards, reduce public funding because SSCs 'have nothing to do', save money. The Government would also be seen to be acting on 'employer ownership' by handing development of apprenticeship standards to employers.

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<sup>15</sup> Generated national occupational standards, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and was supported by a well - funded research and development programme.

<sup>16</sup> All vocational programmes that contained qualifications funded through Training and Enterprise Councils, then the Learning and Skills Council and finally, the Skills Funding Agency.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Foundation-Degree-qualification-benchmark-May-2010.pdf> p6

<sup>18</sup> As no doubt they will again, for example 'Although the Wolf report was successful in identifying the need for reform and there has been a large reduction in the range of qualifications which can be included in performance tables since its publication, recent evidence suggests that structural weaknesses in this market persist'

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/629694/Assessing\\_the\\_VQ\\_market.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629694/Assessing_the_VQ_market.pdf) p15

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/180504/DFE-00031-2011.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180504/DFE-00031-2011.pdf) p125

<sup>20</sup> This article mentions that the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills - BIS (then responsible for apprenticeship) said 'Employers are free to refer to national occupational standards to support the development of their Trailblazer apprenticeships — most have chosen to do something different'

<https://feweek.co.uk/2016/03/11/institute-gets-first-boss-as-ukces-reveals-closure-plans/>

In 2012 Richard reported his review. Echoing Wolf he was critical of;

‘...overly detailed specifications for each qualification, extraordinarily detailed occupational standards...’<sup>21</sup>

He advised that;

‘We must turn the system on its head and set a few clear standards: preferably one per occupation which delineates at a high level that is meaningful to employers what it means to be fully competent in that occupation, whilst unleashing our educators to reach that goal however they may.’<sup>22</sup>

The glossary of Richard’s review defines apprenticeship standards as describing;

‘...the level of skill, knowledge and competency required to do a specific occupation well and operate confidently within the sector. They are high level and meaningful to employers when they are making decisions about a person’s capability and suitability for a job role. They should form the basis of the final assessment of an apprentice. They are not the same as National Occupational Standards.’<sup>23</sup>

Reformed apprenticeship standards would describe competence, the same purpose as national occupational standards but in a simpler format using less words. Furthermore, Richard said that apprenticeship should not rely on;

‘...completing a package of often small qualifications, selected from many thousands available, many of which are not recognised or valued by employers, and which emphasise continuous assessment or evidencing of individual tasks or competencies at a very detailed level, rather than focussing on the whole outcome expected to be achieved at the end – the type of person the apprentice is expected to become.’<sup>24</sup>

By ‘type of person...’ Richard appears to mean the apprentice’s overall performance is acceptable.

Reformed apprenticeship should;

‘...affirm someone’s competency in a given occupation – as defined by the standard...having completed an apprenticeship. Unlike the qualifications which are included in apprenticeships today, the apprenticeship qualification will be a single qualification that covers the range of skills and knowledge required for a job and, unlike the qualifications which are included in apprenticeships today, they will define what an apprentice should be assessed on at the end of their apprenticeship, not how they should be taught or assessed during it. Qualifications may or may not be designed and developed by Awarding Organisations.’<sup>25</sup>

Richard was noncommittal on levy;

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf) p6

<sup>22</sup> Op Cit p40

<sup>23</sup> Op Cit p24

<sup>24</sup> Op Cit p48

<sup>25</sup> Op Cit p24

'A selection of stakeholders raised the ideas of a training levy, tax or NI breaks as a way of encouraging employer investment and ownership, alongside more employer consultation on framework content and quality. However, some raised concerns about an approach that puts funding directly into the hands of the employer, arguing that there would be challenges over ensuring probity of public spend and avoiding profiteering as well as minimising bureaucracy for employers'<sup>26</sup>.

Wolf suggested a 'National Apprenticeship Fund' in July 2015.<sup>27</sup> Government moved – perhaps given the significance of this change, swiftly – towards the Apprenticeship Levy which began in April 2017.

A House of Commons Briefing Paper 'Apprenticeships Policy in England: 2017' usefully describes the developments and seems accurate, apart from the 'only difference between the [framework and reformed] schemes is how they are funded'.<sup>28</sup> The underlying purposes are identical, but the content of reformed apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3 is not the same as intermediate and advanced apprenticeships.<sup>29</sup> While it would not have made sense to retain higher apprenticeship as it was when all other apprenticeships changed, the criticism of 'too many small qualifications' applies more to framework apprenticeships at lower levels. In addition to other differences<sup>30</sup> a qualification underpinned by professional standards recognised by the industry was an option in higher apprenticeship frameworks. It is possible that SSC control over approval was viewed as an obstacle to inclusion of such qualifications in higher apprenticeship. Furthermore, there was relatively little engagement of universities with higher apprenticeship.

One impediment was that only further education colleges and private providers could be funded for higher apprenticeship delivery by the then SFA.<sup>31</sup>

Richard's review suggests intention<sup>32</sup> that what some saw as an awarding body stranglehold would be broken. As the review was ongoing, it seemed that reformed apprenticeship itself would be certificated rather than contain qualifications. In the published review, Richard conceded that awarding bodies could be involved but was very clear about the 'apprenticeship test';

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<sup>26</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf) p104

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Social-Market-Foundation-Publication-Alison-Wolf-Fixing-A-Broken-Training-System-The-Case-For-An-Apprenticeship-Levy.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN03052/SN03052.pdf> p4

<sup>29</sup> A reformed apprenticeship is likely to feature one qualification at most. Intermediate apprenticeship has NVQ (or 'repackaged' NVQ), 'knowledge qualification' (technical certificate) and Employment Rights and Responsibilities, Personal Learning and Thinking Skills and Guided Learning Hours. Advanced apprenticeship can combine the two qualifications into one but also features the same additional elements as intermediate apprenticeship.

<sup>30</sup> For example, unlike frameworks at lower levels, higher apprenticeship does not require Employment Rights and Responsibilities, Personal Learning and Thinking Skills and Guided Learning Hours.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/universities-risk-missing-out-on-higher-apprenticeships/2012523.article>

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf) includes that too many awarding bodies were involved with individual qualifications, p44; awarding bodies (in collusion with SSCs) had wrested control from employers, p45; costly administrative and data requirements; leading a 'race to the bottom' p52.

‘...the process of accurately and reliably determining whether an individual has met the apprenticeship standard. It may have a number of components, testing the diverse and wide ranging skills required to do the job well...’<sup>33</sup>

Richard says little on what or who would command initiation of apprenticeship standards apart from passing reference to the ‘Employer Ownership Pilot’<sup>34</sup> and;

‘Employer-led bodies are organisations that are *owned* by employers - employers determine their role, shape, structure and functions, according to their needs. These might include existing organisations – such as trade bodies or professional associations – or new organisations, formed specifically to engage in skills and apprenticeships.’<sup>35</sup>

In addition to reformed apprenticeship being based on briefer standards drafted at a high level of generality by employers rather than SSCs channelling employer views, one qualification at most would carry out the NVQ’s skills task and serve the technical certificate’s knowledge purpose.<sup>36</sup> A final assessment would indicate competence against the standards, confirming that the apprentice had become the ‘type of person’ appropriate to the occupation concerned. This is not new, there are similar longstanding concepts such as ‘engineer formation’. But it is an alert that personal skills and/or behaviours can feature in apprenticeship standards. From the Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship standard;

‘Treat everyone with courtesy, politeness and respect and consider cultural sensitivities and business practices.’<sup>37</sup>

And from the construction site manager degree apprenticeship standard;

‘Be able to work within own level of competence and know when to seek advice from others...’; ‘identify own development needs and appropriate action to meet those needs’.<sup>38</sup>

Professional membership assessment should cover these types of skills and behaviours, but their development cannot be left to chance or the apprenticeship standard is at risk of not being met.

Four months after Richard reported, the Government response<sup>39</sup> strongly supported handing the design of apprenticeship standards and qualifications to employers but that

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<sup>33</sup> Op Cit pp 24, 56

<sup>34</sup> Employer Ownership of Skills (Pilots)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/306691/employer-ownership-of-skills-vision-report-final2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/306691/employer-ownership-of-skills-vision-report-final2.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf) p24

<sup>36</sup> And requirements for Employment Rights and Responsibilities, Personal Learning and Thinking Skills and Guided Learning Hours at lower levels would cease.

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/525956/Chartered\\_Surveyor\\_Standard.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525956/Chartered_Surveyor_Standard.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/384290/CONSTRUCTIONB - Construction\\_Site\\_Manager\\_Standard\\_Final\\_051214.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/384290/CONSTRUCTIONB - Construction_Site_Manager_Standard_Final_051214.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> ‘The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Next Steps from the Richard Review’

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/190632/bis-13-577-the-future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-next-steps-from-the-richard-review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190632/bis-13-577-the-future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-next-steps-from-the-richard-review.pdf)

this required 'a major overhaul in the structure of current Apprenticeships, the qualifications which comprise them and the occupational standards which underpin them'.<sup>40</sup> Drawing on Richard, the response stated that 'synoptic, end - point assessment' instead of continuous assessment 'will allow trainers to spend more time teaching, not testing'.<sup>41</sup>

One difference from Richard's review was that the Government response used the term 'synoptic' rather than 'final' test or assessment, defined as 'holistically' examining 'the range of skills, knowledge and behaviours (if specified) required to achieve the Standards'.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, what became the 'Assessment Plan' was passed to employers. Some employers involved in trailblazers did not realise this. A 'process evaluation' set out three stages of a trailblazer; two-page standard, industry consultation and 'high level' assessment plan but said that;

'These stages – and the extent of the work required – were not made clear to employers from the outset, with some believing that their task was completed once the two-page Standard had been developed'.<sup>43</sup>

As one of this project's interviewees said, this was a 'moving beast.' In particular, professional institutions could be named in the assessment plan in the earlier days of trailblazers and;

'While early guidance stipulated that the end-point assessment would constitute a minimum of two-thirds of the overall assessment for the Apprenticeship, this was a temporary policy. Newer versions of the guidance set out the expectation for 100 per cent weighting on the end-point assessment. Consequently, there is variation in the structure of the assessment plans'.<sup>44</sup>

In October 2013, 'The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan' said the overhaul of apprenticeship;

'...is a major programme of reform...Implementation must be done carefully, but we also need to start now. That is why we are identifying a number of early adopters who will run Trailblazers from which they and those coming after them will learn'.<sup>45</sup>

The aim was that 'from 2017/18 all new apprenticeship starts will be based on the new standards'.<sup>46</sup> Industrial Partnerships<sup>47</sup> established from 2014 in sectors where an Industrial

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<sup>40</sup> Op Cit p10

<sup>41</sup> Op Cit p16

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/476940/BIS-15-629-process-evaluation-of-apprenticeship-trailblazers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476940/BIS-15-629-process-evaluation-of-apprenticeship-trailblazers.pdf) p9, footnote 5

<sup>43</sup> Op Cit p21

<sup>44</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/476940/BIS-15-629-process-evaluation-of-apprenticeship-trailblazers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476940/BIS-15-629-process-evaluation-of-apprenticeship-trailblazers.pdf) p9

<sup>45</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/253073/bis-13-1175-future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-implementation-plan.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253073/bis-13-1175-future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-implementation-plan.pdf) p3. The first version of trailblazer guidance was published at the same time.

<sup>46</sup> Op Cit p23

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/industrial-partnerships-an-overview>

Strategy<sup>48</sup> was in place were often engaged in the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilots (EOP). Five initial trailblazer sectors<sup>49</sup> were the same or similar to industry sectors in EOP round 2.<sup>50</sup> EOP was concurrent with trailblazers, until;

‘Following the change in government in May 2015 a decision was made to reduce the pilot timescales with government funding ending in March 2016. This decision was made in order to redirect resources to support the government’s new target to deliver 3 million Apprentice starts by 2020. While the government remains committed to employer ownership their agenda is now focused on apprenticeship reform and the implementation of the apprenticeship levy.’<sup>51</sup>

In March 2014 a proposed development of a higher apprenticeship in construction management was not approved.<sup>52</sup> Nine months later it was agreed that Technical and Professional Apprenticeship<sup>53</sup> Trailblazer would start. Its original summary is shown in Appendix 3 with the current position in Appendix 4. At time of writing, the trailblazer’s degree apprenticeships remain unavailable and reformed construction apprenticeships at level 2 and 3 also in development for some time are not approved for delivery.<sup>54</sup> CITB sold its awarding body Cskills to NOCN, already ‘operationally ready to provide EPA’.<sup>55</sup> It remains to be seen if this will speed availability of the construction level 2 and 3 reformed apprenticeships.

In May 2016, proposals were invited for the first round of the Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund (DADF - granted by Government to HEFCE as part of intentions to raise apprentice numbers overall). HEIs submitting proposals had to have a funding agreement with the then SFA and be on the then Register of Training Organisations (ROTO) which at time of interviews was;

‘...changing to ROATP<sup>56</sup> and all who want to deliver from September 2017 must apply to join it from May 2017... There’s been a mad rush to get on the register. Results from the last registration round aren’t out. Some [receiving DADF support] may not succeed. If that happens it’s going to be tricky.’

DADF was also allocated to the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) to provide support to institutions entering and operating degree apprenticeship, Universities UK (UUK) to gather evidence on existing and developing provision across the sector and the

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<sup>48</sup> Originally facilitated by SSCs in collaboration with UKCES [http://www.policy-network.net/pno\\_detail.aspx?ID=4839&title=Industrial-policy-and-skills-strategy-a-new-partnership-for-growth-](http://www.policy-network.net/pno_detail.aspx?ID=4839&title=Industrial-policy-and-skills-strategy-a-new-partnership-for-growth-)

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/253073/bis-13-1175-future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-implementation-plan.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253073/bis-13-1175-future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-implementation-plan.pdf) pp 24, 25

<sup>50</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/497295/Employer\\_Ownership\\_of\\_Skills\\_-\\_testing\\_collaboration\\_through\\_industrial\\_partnerships.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497295/Employer_Ownership_of_Skills_-_testing_collaboration_through_industrial_partnerships.pdf) p7. A fairly large number of single employers (rather than groups of employers) were involved in EOP round 1.

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/497295/Employer\\_Ownership\\_of\\_Skills\\_-\\_testing\\_collaboration\\_through\\_industrial\\_partnerships.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497295/Employer_Ownership_of_Skills_-_testing_collaboration_through_industrial_partnerships.pdf) p6

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.constructionmanagermagazine.com/news/ciob-anger-institute-backed-apprenticeship-trailbl/>

<sup>53</sup> ‘Balfour Beatty’

<sup>54</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/658712/ticklist\\_10\\_11\\_17.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658712/ticklist_10_11_17.pdf) updated 10th November 2017

<sup>55</sup> NOCN was previously the National Open College Network <http://www.nocn.org.uk/cskills>

<sup>56</sup> Register of Approved Training Providers <https://roatp.co.uk/>

Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR<sup>57</sup>) to gather evidence on existing employer demand for degree apprenticeships.<sup>58</sup>

In early 2016 when DADF was formulated, it was assumed that the Technical and Professional<sup>59</sup> Trailblazer degree apprenticeships would be available by September 2017.<sup>60</sup> DADF's first round supported built environment development in nine universities.<sup>61</sup> Its second round supported built environment development in six universities either alone or as lead in partnerships involving colleges, one college as lead with a university as partner and one college on its own.<sup>62</sup> In addition to further education colleges seeing numbers fall in recent years<sup>63</sup> which could affect recruitment to degree apprenticeship, it has been said (including by some of this project's provider interviewees) that partnerships between universities and colleges are adversely affected by the apprenticeship reforms. HEFCE awarded second round DADF to more colleges<sup>64</sup> than it did first round<sup>65</sup> perhaps to demonstrate that relationships between universities and colleges could work in the new system.

This section set built environment degree apprenticeship within the context of the overall reform of vocational education and specifically apprenticeship reform, which has been said to have been primarily aimed at moving apprenticeship delivery expenditure from general taxation to employers. However, moving from apprenticeship frameworks which were (mainly) a suite of accredited qualifications approved by SSCs to apprenticeship standards and assessment plans developed by employer led trailblazers (now approved by IfA) is massive change. It might be observed that parts of apprenticeship reform have already succeeded. Of course, it is too early to tell if reformed apprenticeships are an improvement on frameworks but in addition to funding now coming from employers, and there are less SSCs,<sup>66</sup> hence reduction in public expenditure.

There are calls to adapt the apprenticeship levy<sup>67</sup> but its introduction signalled that apprenticeship delivery would no longer be supported primarily by public funds. Rising numbers (albeit from a low base) of apprentices at degree level are hailed. However, in 2016 – 17 there were 1,620 starts on degree apprenticeship programmes in England.<sup>68</sup> This represents less than 0.3% of the total new starts on first degree programmes (part-time and full-time combined) recorded by HESA. Furthermore, of the 2,670 starts on degree level

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<sup>57</sup> In September 2017, AGR became the Institute of Student Employers (ISE)

<sup>58</sup> The UUK report is valuable, but had its numbers for 2015 – 16 Chartered Surveyor degree apprentices included UCEM the total would have been 61 rather than 25 <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/degree-apprenticeships-realising-opportunities.pdf> table 2, p10.

<sup>59</sup> 'Balfour Beatty'

<sup>60</sup> The Technical and Professional Trailblazer was approved in December 2014 and started work in early 2015

<sup>61</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name\\_110720,en.html](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name_110720,en.html)

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2017/Name\\_115787,en.html](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2017/Name_115787,en.html)

<sup>63</sup> In 2013, it was reported that 14 further education colleges closed, academic staff numbers fell 27 per cent compared with 2010 – 11 and student numbers went down by 40000 in England

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/nov/07/further-education-statistics-neets-staff>

<sup>64</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2017/Name\\_115787,en.html](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2017/Name_115787,en.html)

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/skills/apprentice/dadf/#phase1>

<sup>66</sup> Built environment SSCs closed since the Wolf Review include Summit Skills <http://www.summitskills.org.uk/> and Asset Skills (previously merged with the Facilities Management Association to form the Building Futures Group) <http://www.tomorrowcleaning.com/httpwww--842.html>

<sup>67</sup> For example <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/03/29/calls-shake-up-training-levy-apprenticeship-numbers-fall/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

apprenticeships recorded in Quarter 1 2017/18 (August - October 2017) 75 per cent of these related to just three standards: Chartered Manager, Digital Solutions Professional and Chartered Surveyor.<sup>69</sup> The low number of starts recorded to date across all other degree apprenticeship standards evidences the need to accelerate approval of new standards in occupational areas wanted by employers. Effectively, the Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills recognised this in her strategic guidance to IfA that she wanted to see ‘further improvements... particularly in reducing the time it takes to approve apprenticeship standards’.<sup>70</sup>

The Technical and Professional<sup>71</sup> Trailblazer’s degree apprenticeships are still awaited, but concern has mounted that their funding will be too low for viable delivery.<sup>72</sup> However, the Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills also said in her strategic guidance to IfA for 2018 - 19 under ‘Affordability’;

‘I would like your funding band recommendations to maximise the value for money of apprenticeships and consider the overall affordability of the apprenticeships programme and the Government’s 3 million starts manifesto commitment’.<sup>73</sup>

The Minister related the 3 million starts commitment to funding bands because it seems that Government wants to retain enough unspent levy to support apprenticeship, up to 2020 (the 3m apprenticeship starts manifesto commitment target date) at least. It was also observed from guidance on use of unspent apprenticeship levy funds<sup>74</sup> that it appears Government will pay 90 per cent of SME apprenticeship delivery costs from leftover levy revenue.<sup>75</sup> UVAC described ‘artificially deflating funding bands...[as] the worst possible solution to making the levy pot go further’<sup>76</sup> but it seems that Government will be cautious about agreeing funding band increases for some time.

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<sup>69</sup> Op Cit

<sup>70</sup> Under ‘Accelerate Standards Approvals’

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/712880/Strategic\\_guidance\\_to\\_the\\_Institute\\_for\\_Apprenticeships.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/712880/Strategic_guidance_to_the_Institute_for_Apprenticeships.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> ‘Balfour Beatty’

<sup>72</sup> Because of recently set maxima for built environment related degree apprenticeships from other trailblazers <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/senior-head-of-facilities-management-degree/> £18,000 maximum <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/geospatial-mapping-and-science-degree/> £27,000 maximum

<sup>73</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/712880/Strategic\\_guidance\\_to\\_the\\_Institute\\_for\\_Apprenticeships.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/712880/Strategic_guidance_to_the_Institute_for_Apprenticeships.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transferring-apprenticeship-service-funds>

<sup>75</sup> <https://feweek.co.uk/2018/02/12/apprenticeship-levy-transfer-policy-explained/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://uvac.ac.uk/lobbying-update/>

## 2. Employers, Professional Institutions, Policy, Development and Implementation Support

This section is based on views from outside universities and further education colleges acquired by telephone interviews which also helped form a questionnaire for provider respondents in the next phase of the project. Interviewees and their perspectives were; one central policy and one central support to development and implementation gave overview, built environment specific views came from one support to development and implementation interviewee, three professional institution interviewees and four employers from built environment firms that have apprentices at degree level or plan to recruit them. Three of the employers were significantly involved in trailblazers. Flexible interview protocols were used to cater for the different perspectives. What interviewees said is related to other sources where relevant.

### 2.1 Policy and Strategy

A central policy interviewee thought the Government's objectives<sup>77</sup> in apprenticeship reform were;

'Improving productivity by matching to employer need.'

The assumptions that apprentices improve productivity and that handing development to employers produces outcomes which meet their requirements were also implied in August 2015's Prime Ministerial announcement of a 'boost' to apprenticeship.<sup>78</sup> It is too early to tell if reformed apprenticeship matches employer need. A Government paper published just before the August 2015 announcement linked apprenticeships and productivity several times, but made only one reference to evidence of this, that 'the cost of apprenticeship training pays for itself within one or two years of completion, through the increased productivity of the former apprentice'.<sup>79</sup> As noted by the National Audit Office (NAO), improving skills in the workforce is only one way to improve productivity. There are many other ways, such as investing in equipment or new technology. These approaches may be combined to achieve optimum results but as yet, there is no clear strategic rationale for how increasing the number of apprenticeships fits into the wider plan for improved productivity and growth.<sup>80</sup>

A central support interviewee said Government introduced degree apprenticeship to increase involvement of universities in work-based learning, including by using degree apprenticeship for their own staff, and said that response would vary according to type of university;

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<sup>77</sup> The project's research suggested that Government did not set its objectives out as such until publication in March 2017 of how the reform's success would be measured, shortly before the interviews began [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/604401/Apprenticeship\\_Reform\\_Programme\\_-\\_Benefits\\_Realisation\\_Strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/604401/Apprenticeship_Reform_Programme_-_Benefits_Realisation_Strategy.pdf) Objectives, p5

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-unveils-plans-to-boost-apprenticeships-and-transform-training>

<sup>79</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/482754/BIS-15-604-english-apprenticeships-our-2020-vision.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482754/BIS-15-604-english-apprenticeships-our-2020-vision.pdf) p3

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Delivering-the-value-through-the-apprenticeships-programme.pdf> p21

'HEIs will be paying levy. 101 universities will be involved, from Oxford to alternative/private providers, including lecturers and researchers, senior admin/management level 7. There's also level 8, PhD, professional doctorate. Universities will still recruit lower grades, but teachers and researchers are big areas. Top league universities are getting on the register [ROATP]. My feeling is that modern universities will act as providers for all sorts of occupations... Russell Group will continue to go for 18 – 19-year olds with high A level grades. Such as [a post 1992 university in London] will be big, 10 – 15 per cent of their recruitment, but I think it could be more.'

Amongst those registered apprenticeship providers are the universities of Cambridge, Birmingham, Kent, Liverpool, Loughborough, Nottingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Southampton, Warwick, Lancaster, Exeter, Newcastle, Reading, Bath, Durham also Brunel University, Harper Adams University and Imperial College.<sup>81</sup> It seems unlikely that all universities paying apprentice levy will write their payments off, and some will use apprenticeship for their own staff. The same interviewee suggested that if universities act on the shift from student to employer as customer, degree apprenticeship could lead to significant income;

'...universities need to go back all the way to the Brown review about the employer being the customer. What proportion of employer levy £2.5bn will go towards degree apprenticeships? I think that's got a lot to do with universities working harder and maybe differently with employers. I saw from UUK report that degree apprenticeship is growing significantly but is small overall. What about NHS (nurses), local authorities (social workers), policing? Police Authorities could spend their entire levy on degree apprenticeships. And there's Chartered Manager. It will be different according to sector'.

The interviewee also suggested that;

'Pushing on level 7 and doing cutting edge work with say, Glaxo Smith Kline could link to collaboration'.

The UUK report also identified links to regional/local economic development and the research agenda as potential benefits and suggested that universities which become most involved will be the bigger winners in engagement with business.<sup>82</sup> Employer interviewees saw influencing higher education as one reason to get involved but for them, 'it was more about wanting suitable apprenticeships at degree level' and that they were taking action;

'We are part of a consortium set up to secure apprenticeships... we've started meeting with possible providers.'

In terms of their own strategies for degree apprenticeship, in the main employers saw it as enhancing rather than replacing their existing approaches;

'Many like [respondent's company] have *trainees* or *cadets* doing HNCs or degrees part time that will become degree apprentices. I imagine many companies, but not necessarily [interviewee's company] might shift from graduate schemes to degree apprentices.'

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<sup>81</sup> <https://roatp.apprenticeships.sfa.bis.gov.uk/download>

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/degree-apprenticeships-realising-opportunities.pdf> p21

In terms of dealing with skills shortages, degree apprenticeships are another route for a narrow range of areas. More companies need to have all routes. We need an answer at different life stages. At 16 – 18, an individual might not know what they want to do. They can find that out at university.’

‘We will retain graduate programmes. I think particularly non – cognate graduates add breadth. They think differently, approach problems differently. Some things are more obvious to them.’

A third employer interviewee said their firm would stop HNC in favour of degree apprenticeship and had considered using it to replace the firm’s graduate scheme but that these changes were being prevented by reformed apprenticeships not being available. However, replacement of existing practices aligns with a report in November 2017 that overall, the combined proportion of employers offering either higher or degree level increased to 33 per cent from 29 per cent in 2015, while the proportion of employers offering non-apprenticeship forms of higher or degree level training fell from 46 per cent in 2015 to 41 per cent in 2017.<sup>83</sup>

All employer interviewees’ firms were using or intending to use degree apprenticeship. This appetite seems to be reasonably widespread amongst built environment employers. It was reported in 2017 that 16 per cent of (all, not just built environment) employers responding to the DADF supported AGR survey said they were offering or planning to run the Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship.<sup>84</sup> The AGR survey also found 91 per cent of responding construction firms said they planned to offer degree apprenticeships yet to become available but;

‘Unsurprisingly when the sector breakdown is analysed, construction firms are at the top of the chart. The construction industry has suffered significant delays in the approval of Degree Apprenticeship and organisations are ready to recruit as soon as it is ready for delivery.’<sup>85</sup>

This suggests that in time built environment higher education may see reasonable numbers of degree apprentices. On the other hand, the AGR report identified that;

‘...the top three challenges that employers expect to face in offering Degree Apprenticeships centre around their attractiveness to students. Employers receive on average 19 applications per apprentice vacancy vs 68 for a graduate vacancy, showing there is a significant gap in the level of competition for places...higher level apprenticeship vacancies are approximately 10 per cent of graduate hiring volumes. There is a risk that a focus on the supply of apprentice programmes will mean that the promotion of the offering will be neglected.’<sup>86</sup>

The Institute of Student Employers (ISE – previously AGR) kindly informed the project that their regular annual survey for 2017 found there were 30 applications on average for a

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<sup>83</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/659710/Apprenticeships\\_evaluation\\_2017\\_employers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/659710/Apprenticeships_evaluation_2017_employers.pdf) p59

<sup>84</sup><https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/ise.site-ym.com/resource/collection/7a850055-3087-407c-8e41-a24ae7015560/AGR%20and%20HEFCE%20Developing%20Degree%20Apprenticeship.pdf?hhSearchTerms=%20apprenticeship+and+report%22> p14

<sup>85</sup> Op Cit p21

<sup>86</sup> Op Cit p3

degree apprenticeship vacancy and 75 for a graduate vacancy. This is an improvement, but by this measure interest in degree apprenticeship is still far lower. Additionally, a 2017 'Which' survey of 1003 young people found that 91 per cent said university was their first choice or they had seriously considered it whereas 3 per cent said apprenticeship was their first choice and only one third had considered it<sup>87</sup> further evidence of how little degree apprenticeship has registered so far with those it is meant to attract. The message that degree apprenticeship does not lead to debt does not seem to have had much effect, despite evidence that many graduates regret having acquired debt. Over half of graduates responding to a 2013 survey by Notgoingtouni said that if they had the information when deciding what to do after secondary education they would have chosen apprenticeship or another vocational route, primarily to avoid debt.<sup>88</sup>

NAO reminded Government of its intentions to promote of apprenticeship to employers, schools and the general public.<sup>89</sup> AGR also recommended that Government should;

- Coordinate campaign activity to continue to raise awareness of degree apprenticeships particularly with parents, bringing in employer and provider groups to support.
- Ensure degree apprenticeships feature in a rounded careers advice and guidance provision by taking a 'carrot and stick' approach with schools and incentivising the provision of advice on apprenticeships and measuring results through inspection.
- Mandate that schools are measured on apprenticeship destinations as well as progression to HE/FE.<sup>90</sup>

The Minister for Skills and Apprenticeship announced that Government would invest a further £2m in 'Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge in Schools' to provide schools and colleges with materials on apprenticeship. The initiative will continue<sup>91</sup> to cover ages 10 – 13. At the same time, the Minister mentioned degree apprenticeships but not their promotion and that providers 'play a fundamental role in letting parents know' about options.<sup>92</sup> At present, it does not appear that Government plans specific promotion of degree apprenticeship (apart from DADF) but providers are expected to help get messages about it across.

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<sup>87</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/15605-which-survey-reveals-gap-in-understanding-about-apprenticeships-compared-to-university>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/many-graduates-would-have-preferred-apprenticeships/2002517.article#survey-answer>

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Delivering-the-value-through-the-apprenticeships-programme.pdf> p49

<sup>90</sup> <https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/ise.site-ym.com/resource/collection/7a850055-3087-407c-8e41-a24ae7015560/AGR%20and%20HEFCE%20Developing%20Degree%20Apprenticeship.pdf?hhSearchTerms=%22Apprenticeship+and+report%22> p5

<sup>91</sup> Because the most recent official information predates the Minister's speech by two years <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/apprenticeship-support-and-knowledge-for-schools-project-launches>

<sup>92</sup> <https://feweek.co.uk/2018/05/14/its-up-to-colleges-and-providers-to-sell-apprenticeships-to-parents/>

## 2.2 Apprenticeship Levy

It was estimated that major contractors including Kier, Carillion and Balfour Beatty would pay £3m - £5m p.a. in apprenticeship levy, Skanska UK £1.19m and Bouygues UK £225,000.<sup>93</sup> The employers interviewed were from firms that are now paying the apprenticeship levy and said, for example;

‘Levy is a form of taxation, great if it achieves the object of employers thinking differently’.

‘Government is shifting money from general taxation to businesses...they [Government] have been trying to get employers to pay for training which benefits them forever and I agree with that up to a point’.

Employers were asked if paying levy will motivate firms to ‘get it back’, which would be likely to increase the number of apprentices recruited. Responses from three employers were along the lines of;

‘Yes, it is [assumed]. But there’s also a realisation that we might not get it all back. We won’t recruit apprentices just because we’re paying levy. If [interviewee’s firm] can’t spend it all, it will go to SMEs...some companies that just fall into levy might spend it all but not those that are paying a lot, like we will’.

Only one employer interviewee responded in line with this assumption;

‘Funding drives, levy payers will have a different motivation. We will be under pressure to spend...It’s critical to get apprenticeship levy back...If there’s apprenticeship levy money in the pot, we shouldn’t be paying for [other forms of provision]. No, trailblazers or frameworks that will be what [the interviewee’s firm] want.’

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Excellence in the Built Environment called for more flexibility in how apprenticeship levy funds are spent for example ‘bridging training for work-ready skills to those that need it’<sup>94</sup> in addition to apprenticeship. So far this seems to have fallen on deaf ears, probably because Government thinks levy paying employers will recruit more apprentices if levy funds cannot be spent on anything other than apprenticeship. In addition, ‘flexibility’ can be interpreted differently in this context, including (as APPG) that levy funds could be used for training outside of apprenticeship, that the requirement that 20 per cent of apprenticeship training is off – the – job should be relaxed,<sup>95</sup> and that employers should be allowed to use levy funds for ‘associated costs’ incurred in running apprenticeship.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> <https://101news.org/2017/04/06/top-contractors-to-pay-4m-each-for-apprenticeship-levy/>

<sup>94</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment <http://cic.org.uk/news/article.php?s=2017-07-12-parliamentarians-call-on-training-overhaul-to-help-build-on-brexite> report via link, p 5, recommendation 7. The APPG also called for for non-UK construction students to be able to stay and work in the sector for a set period of time following their studies p7, recommendation 5.

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/15204-more-flexibility-needed-in-apprenticeship-levy-reforms-to-reverse-poor-start>

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.open.ac.uk/business/sites/www.open.ac.uk.business/files/files/apprenticeship-levy-one-year-on.pdf> p14

The only 'flexibility' at present is the transfer allowance where apprenticeship levy paying firms can transfer up to 10 per cent of their unspent funds to pay for the other ('receiving') firm's apprenticeship training. Asked about the possibility of transferring 10 per cent to other firms, one employer interviewee said;

'[The firm's] present plans are to spend 100 per cent on our own people rather than apprentices being with supply chain companies. Apprentices might be with a supply chain company to actually work, but they would be [respondent's firm] employees, with [respondent's firm] mentoring etc. otherwise, they're not *visible*, we don't know what they're doing.'

Another employer said;

'The supply chain is interested in level 6 degree apprenticeship. We have had conversations with smaller firms, they're asking when will standards be released? Smaller firms do say we haven't trained people like that before. The way we're thinking is that they would be the apprentice of the smaller firm but mentored by such as [interviewee's firm], so we'd be supporting the firm'.

A third employer said;

'Offering support to supply firms in construction? Not yet. I don't know if we would. The supply chain isn't specific to [interviewee's firm]. Isn't that what CITB is for? Shouldn't they do it? The surplus will end up in SMEs' hands anyway. There's thousands of supply companies and we would need a whole team to deal with that. Actually, I would like to but it's probably unrealistic. I think we would work with other companies to influence the supply chain'.

Employer interviewees already knew that the new system requires work from them they didn't do in the previous system and the last above clearly thought that using the 10 per cent transfer allowance would lead to levy paying firms shouldering much of the system on behalf of the smaller firms. The transfer allowance has been said to have 'huge potential to strengthen the ties between employers in the wider supply chain, fostering more seamless collaboration and greater portability of skills'.<sup>97</sup> This may be true, but the project found little to suggest it would be used by many built environment apprenticeship levy paying firms.

Overall, apprenticeship starts have fallen since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy.<sup>98</sup> Growth has been seen at higher levels, but from a low base. Larger firms predominate, with lower than expected apprentice numbers from (smaller) non – levy paying firms. Potential factors include possible economic downturn, smaller firms holding back in the hope that Government would drop the 10 per cent contribution required of employers outside the apprenticeship levy and funding mismatches where employers can't find provision locally.<sup>99</sup> The last was exacerbated when the first (complete) procurement exercise awarded non – levy funding only to providers that already had contracts for apprenticeship provision, and obviously if universities with contracts that were bidding for smaller amounts were 'pushed' below the exercise's £200,000 threshold, this would have made things worse.

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<sup>97</sup><https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/businesses-transfer-apprenticeship-levy-funds-organisations>

<sup>98</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jan/25/fall-in-uk-apprenticeships-may-force-radical-rethink-of-policy>

<sup>99</sup><http://blog.hefce.ac.uk/2017/08/02/dip-in-demand/>

One year on from the introduction of the apprenticeship levy only a minority of funds paid in had been utilised with levy contributions across the UK totalling £1.8bn and £108m withdrawn (in England).<sup>100</sup> Funds not drawn down within two years (by April 2020) will 'expire' (be absorbed by Treasury) and become inaccessible to employers that paid the funds in.

In June 2017, it was estimated that 900 construction employers pay both apprenticeship and CITB levies.<sup>101</sup> Policy and central support interviewees asked what CITB levy paying employers thought about having to also pay apprenticeship levy.<sup>102</sup> Immediate responses from employer interviewees who spoke to this project from that position included;

'CITB costs a fortune! There's the biggest chance ever they [CITB] will be voted out.'<sup>103</sup>

'Yes, they do some great stuff but it's a mixed bag. And there's all the admin involved in claiming [CITB levy] back.'

Apprenticeship is by no means the only form of training CITB grant supports. From what employer interviewees said, built environment firms may see the apprenticeship levy as irksome or worse but those that pay both levies do not necessarily see this as paying twice for the same thing.

## 2.3 Development

An employer asked about why they got involved in development said;

'..was asked if we...well, I was asked if I would get involved. Why did I agree? It has to be employer led but education/skills/training provision is a minefield for employers. We brought someone in who knew all about it and effectively led on all of that'

The individual mentioned – who has a professional institution background and experience in implementation of degree apprenticeship – was interviewed as were others employed by professional institutions who had engaged with relevant trailblazers.

One of these said;

'I first got into trailblazers about 3 years ago. Government wanted them to be led by employers, and professional institutions also. That changed quite a bit. I started

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<sup>100</sup> <http://www.open.ac.uk/business/sites/www.open.ac.uk.business/files/files/apprenticeship-levy-one-year-on.pdf> p7

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.tes.com/news/further-education/breaking-news/apprenticeships-construction-firms-forced-pay-two-levies>

<sup>102</sup> For 2017/18, firms in this position will be helped in claiming back CITB levy through 'enhanced funding for the training they undertake'. <http://www.citb.co.uk/news-events/uk/citb-announces-timeline-for-redesigning-industry-levy/> CITB set up a Levy Working Party to address a possible new CITB levy order. [http://www.citb.co.uk/documents/levy-grant/apprenticeship\\_levy\\_factsheet\\_%20jan\\_17.pdf](http://www.citb.co.uk/documents/levy-grant/apprenticeship_levy_factsheet_%20jan_17.pdf)

<sup>103</sup> CITB Triennial Consensus vote went in favour of retaining CITB levy <http://www.citb.co.uk/news-events/uk/2017/industry-votes-yes/> The Government review of construction – related industry bodies also concluded that the CITB should be retained, albeit with caveats [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/657350/Building\\_Support-the\\_review\\_of\\_the\\_Industry\\_Training-Boards.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/657350/Building_Support-the_review_of_the_Industry_Training-Boards.pdf)

development with which types of surveyors, with the assessment plan mirroring [professional institution] requirements... In July 2015 we got an e-mail from BIS<sup>104</sup>, that it [the assessment plan] is not a monopoly. OK, fine because it's a trailblazer, we learn as we grow. At the start we were asked to show support for degree apprenticeship across large companies, SMEs and professional institutions. Now, as with [the built environment trailblazer] professional institutions can't be named any more'.

This change on naming of professional institutions is blamed for the delay to the Technical and Professional <sup>105</sup> Trailblazer's degree apprenticeships. It is possible that one of the views behind this was that professional institutions might try to influence trailblazer outputs towards whatever might help increase their membership. Another professional institution interviewee mentioned the link to membership but first pointed that their institution supported the industry led approach, in addition to interest which pre – dated trailblazers;

'Even before trailblazers, we were trying to get an apprenticeship at degree level which would have good take up because of the collapse in part time...when Richard came out, we liked it. We were keen on industry led and happy with the link to professional membership'.

Undoubtedly, the change away from naming any professional institution in the assessment plan was disruptive and difficult. Since then, IfA has (amongst other things) entered the line between trailblazers and the Government department responsible and IfA's Head of Standards is a member a member of the new CITB Construction Apprenticeships Working Group<sup>106</sup> which should help minimise the chance of further unexpected changes. DfE might view dealing with delayed trailblazers as an early test of IfA's accountabilities but<sup>107</sup>in time, any IfA intervention will be against the background of its Route Panels<sup>108</sup> with their contributing peer review.<sup>109</sup> Why Construction Quantity Surveyor and Chartered Surveyor (quantity surveyor) are 'mutually exclusive occupations' may not have to be explained immediately in the context of IfA's 'occupational maps' because these relate only to new developments <sup>110</sup> but clarification of this distinction may be sought at some stage.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, then responsible for apprenticeship including trailblazers.

<sup>105</sup> 'Balfour Beatty'

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.citb.co.uk/news-events/uk/2018/new-group-to-shape-construction-apprenticeships-begins/>

<sup>107</sup>For design and operation of approvals and review processes for standards and assessment plans.[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/605552/Apprenticeship\\_Accountability\\_Statement.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/605552/Apprenticeship_Accountability_Statement.pdf) p3

<sup>108</sup> Op Cit p18

<sup>109</sup> Op Cit p10, planned to 'operate at scale' by April 2018, p33

<sup>110</sup>Occupational maps to align with Route Panels

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609008/IfA\\_Driving\\_Quality.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609008/IfA_Driving_Quality.pdf) pp 14, 15, 16, 18, 33

<sup>111</sup> Op Cit p20 Ongoing and 'route based'

## 2.4 Implementation

From what employer interviewees said, it appears some aspects of reformed apprenticeship are the same as its predecessor, for example;

‘The visibility of future workload is a big problem. An apprenticeship may well be longer than the pipeline of work. We’re taking them [apprentices] on faith. I have to ask myself – how do I support in terms of coaching/training/ mentoring? And people need to recognise that they [apprentices] might be unproductive for a year or so’.

This captures several considerations employers face in deciding if they should recruit apprentices including that there will be work which aligns with the apprenticeship standards for the duration of the programme, staff in the numbers and with the expertise needed to support the apprentice throughout and the cost of ‘carrying’ an apprentice until they become productive. Furthermore, a key ‘selling point’ of apprenticeship is the possibility of employment on completion, which lengthens the time frame. Another employer said;

‘HEIs are saying they need guaranteed numbers.’

This is understandable from the providers’ perspective because they want to know their likely income, but precision can be difficult for built environment employers.

A number of interviewees began with criticism of higher education. Again, some of this was familiar from before degree apprenticeship. This surveying employer was sure that;

‘Courses are not fit for purpose, they’re out of date...lecturing staff that have been academics and never been in industry, or about to retire and left industry decades ago. Universities aren’t attracting the right people’.

And a professional institution interviewee said;

‘Going back 10 or so years, most people teaching were former practitioners. Now they have to be published, researchers and so on. This is not in their comfort zone’.

This captures a conundrum facing universities in particular. Academic recognition or industry experience, which is it more important that staff have? Eight of the ten interviewees whose views supported this section when asked what they thought most important to developing the apprentice’s occupational competence said it was partnership between employer and provider. Interviewees were asked how they thought providers were performing with degree apprenticeship so far. Professional institution interviewees talked about this more than employers;

‘Many universities sat back to see what would happen, then saw numbers going up elsewhere and got involved. People who led that were recognised as having expertise...universities didn’t have to revalidate, they used part time accredited degrees’

‘A bit slow to pick up to start with...I get many enquiries from universities. They know what to do with degrees but have trouble with admin, funding etc. However, things are on the up’.

Another professional institution interviewee had concerns;

‘Much of the apprenticeship is implicit, not articulated... [Universities] might repackage an accredited degree they already have’.

This interviewee also said that some universities wanted to do more and were happy to refer to the professional institution’s framework for undergraduate degrees. A review was reported which found that up to now, many degree apprenticeships are ‘not apprenticeships at all but repackaged academic or quasi-academic degrees’ with ‘limited interplay between the off the job teaching provided by lecturers and in the in-work experience of the apprentice, the links such as they are being made by the apprentice rather than being required by the scheme of study’.<sup>112</sup> The article does not say which degree apprenticeships were reviewed (understandably) but the first of these criticisms aligns with interviewees’ concern about provision, the second that integration of academic and workplace learning is not being supported.

## 2.5 Employer readiness

In addition to paying apprentices and supporting their learning in the workplace, since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy employers now also recruit apprentices (which providers often did in the previous system) find suitable providers and carry out financial and administrative functions which were previously with providers. Were employers ready for degree apprenticeship? According to the AGR report, the apprenticeship levy;

‘...has focused the minds of senior management...less than a third of employers had a strategy to introduce degree apprenticeships before the levy... When looking at the likelihood to have a strategy, the construction and digital sectors lead the way with responses of 55 per cent and 60 per cent respectively.’<sup>113</sup>

It was assumed that surveying employer interviewees’ firms were ready for degree apprenticeship because they were offering Chartered Surveyor. Where degree apprenticeships were not available, employers were asked what preparations had been made. One said their firm had;

‘The finance side sorted...It’s all set up at regional level.’

A second employer said systems would be ready when the apprenticeship levy started;

‘We don’t have people doing the financial side, that’s through [E]SFA working with providers at present, but it will be [the interviewee and team] once it [apprenticeship levy] comes in’.

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<sup>112</sup> <https://feweek.co.uk/2018/03/27/degree-apprenticeships-shouldnt-just-be-repackaged-degrees/> by Martin Doel, Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL) Professor for Further Education and Skills, based at the UCL Institute of Education, previously Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

<sup>113</sup> <https://ise.site-ym.com/page/DegreeAppInsight> Developing Degree Apprenticeships pp8,9

The majority of apprentices in the previous system were with smaller firms because these make up the majority the UK's construction industry.<sup>114</sup> Interviewees were asked if they thought smaller firms were ready for degree apprenticeship.

One employer thought that 'small firms don't need to know about the levy and how it works'. Professional institution interviewees had a different view;

'It's especially untrue that many supply chain companies are ready...they will have to do many things training providers used to.'

'I can't imagine what the supply chain know. Non – levy payers will have to use same system, digital account and so on. They will have to put 10 per cent [contribution] in, they will actually be paying more [than under the previous system] but the mechanisms will be same as if they are paying levy.'

Such concern may be justified. In November 2017, research which compared readiness in smaller firms reported that in construction, employers felt less well prepared (52 per cent compared with 39 per cent of all employers) placing construction firms at ninth in a list of the ten employment sectors shown.<sup>115</sup> Across sectors, larger firms may not have been ready either. The Minister for Skills recognised in October 2017 saying she was 'quite flabbergasted' that many bigger businesses were unaware of the apprenticeship levy, despite paying large amounts of money in.<sup>116</sup> This was followed by reports that employers said the new system is too complex.<sup>117</sup>

## 2.6 End – point assessment

End – point assessment is meant to indicate that the apprentice is able to perform as expected of a competent professional. Professional institution interviewees were worried about how providers were handling the run up to the first end – point assessments in Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship;

'This won't happen on its own. Some [HEIs] are OK, they're *allowing* employers to continue to support APC. Smaller employers may not have the infrastructure. I'm concerned that some HEIs aren't supporting'.

'Level 6 [degree apprentices] that started 2 years ago are now enrolling on APC. Will it work? Pass rates on APC are around 70 – 75 per cent...if providers don't really watch this [preparation for EPA] degree apprentices will fail EPA and it will hurt HEIs and their income. Of course, it depends on the firm too to an extent.'

What was advised?

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<sup>114</sup> In 2013, it was estimated that 99.9 per cent of the UK's construction contracting business was comprised of SMEs (employing less than 250)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/210060/bis-13-958-uk-construction-an-economic-analysis-of-sector.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210060/bis-13-958-uk-construction-an-economic-analysis-of-sector.pdf) p18

<sup>115</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/659710/Apprenticeships\\_evaluation\\_2017\\_employers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/659710/Apprenticeships_evaluation_2017_employers.pdf) p105, 308 construction employers interviewed.

<sup>116</sup> <https://feweek.co.uk/2017/10/03/milton-says-flexibility-needed-not-dead-hand-of-the-state/>

<sup>117</sup> For example <https://recruitingtimes.org/recruitment-and-hr-features/22407/number-apprenticeships-fall-new-levy-introduced/>

‘Mirror employer three monthly assessment based on the summary the student does. They should have a mentor and a counsellor’.

‘It’s really important that universities take preparation for EPA seriously and they [providers] must support apprentices in developing their EPA portfolio, probably from the outset.

A lot of what they [apprentices] produce early on might not be end up having anything to do with the actual EPA, but that’s not the point. It’s about getting them [apprentices] on the right track, into good habits and so on’.

Regardless of which Technical and Professional <sup>118</sup> Trailblazer degree apprenticeship is ready for delivery first, its assessment plan will not name any professional institutions. Professional institution interviewees were asked how they saw the implications. Some didn’t see any;

‘Where the degree is sole RICS accreditation, they [apprentices] would do the APC’.

What if the degree is accredited by two (or more) professional institutions?

...if they [apprentices] started a...jointly accredited degree, they wouldn’t be having to go one way or the other until year 3’.

This does not appear to fit with what was said about preparing for EPA from early in the programme. Furthermore, an interviewee pointed out that if a choice had to be made;

‘The employer and apprentice would decide which [professional institution] for EPA. Using the degree apprenticeship portal means it would have to be decided early’.

Another thought there might be ‘turf wars’;

‘It’s down to the student to choose which pathway they want to do. But I can see *hang on, that’s my student* happening!’

A professional institution interviewee suggested that as built environment degree apprenticeship implementation grew, a cross – sector board of professional institutions might be established as an overall support, in addition to handling matters such as jointly accredited degrees

## 2.7 Benefits

Asked about the main benefits of degree apprenticeship, nine of the ten interviewees immediately said no tuition fees and the related lack of student debt. This is not affecting the choices young people make about what they will do after secondary education, evidenced by the 2017 ‘Which’ survey finding that a mere 3 per cent said apprenticeship was their first choice. <sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> ‘Balfour Beatty’

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/15605-which-survey-reveals-gap-in-understanding-about-apprenticeships-compared-to-university>

All professional institution and surveying employer interviewees mentioned cutting time to professional qualification, for example;

‘One big advantage is joined up thinking from professional institutions...Some HEIs are accepting AssocRICS to start apprenticeship at level 6, with APL to year 2. They would qualify in 5 years from age of 16... $2 + 3 = 5$ , so 2 years faster.’

‘For us, there’s the lifecycle of the candidate. It’s presently 36 months to final [professional] assessment. [Degree apprentices] will enrol at start of their degree so overall it will be longer, but they should move a lot more quickly to professional qualification. This means increased numbers in the profession and costs down... People will be on ground more quickly. Some learn better that way anyway. And no debt, greater accessibility, meeting the skills shortage’.

‘Speed is a big advantage. The average age [of those going through professional qualification] tends to be early 30s. Some might think they [degree apprentices] are too young...But we won’t have to get people *ready* because they don’t have the right qualifications...many of our present and historical people started in craft, moved into site management then construction management then another 5 years. It can be 10+ years. Also graduates quite often go away then come back after 3 – 5 years. But as [professional qualification] programmes are competence based, why not have younger people doing them? And a lot of the young ones who have done BTEC or Diplomas...have a different attitude.’

Cutting two years to professional qualification assumes completion in the shortest possible time. This cannot be assumed. 20 – 25 per cent of Chartered Surveyor degree apprentices will not pass end – point assessment if the ‘regular’ APC pass rate is replicated, as an interviewee pointed out.

A professional institution interviewee said;

‘Degree apprenticeships are good because they will be recognised by schools, colleges and parents’.

This is also looking forward. Again, the ‘Which’ survey found that 64 per cent felt they didn’t have enough information to consider degree apprenticeship an option.<sup>120</sup> Government now requires that young people in publicly funded schools and sixth form colleges hear about apprenticeship.<sup>121</sup> This should help but it will take much effort to tackle ingrained thinking that full time undergraduate study is the most desirable destination after secondary education.

The third most mentioned benefit was that degree apprenticeship would boost part time provision, as this professional institution interviewee said;

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<sup>120</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/15605-which-survey-reveals-gap-in-understanding-about-apprenticeships-compared-to-university>

<sup>121</sup> An amendment to the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 came into force on 2 January 2018 which requires the proprietor of all schools and academies to ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in year 8 to year 13 for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships.

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7236/CBP-7236.pdf> p4

‘Numbers. Part time degrees aren’t new, the numbers are...the pass rate is higher for part time and they often get higher grades which can lead to higher salaries’.

HESA student record data started showing apprentice numbers from 2016 – 17. The project found at least 170 more were following Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship in 2016 – 17 than in these data (and that some apprentices were recorded in the data as full time). On the other hand, the HESA data showed that quantity surveying part time undergraduate rose 23.8 per cent in 2016 - 17 compared with the previous year. Using only part time apprentice numbers shown in the HESA data (not the number the project found) quantity surveying apprentices appear to make up 29.5 per cent of this rise.

The interviewee also mentioned better graduate outcomes. It has been found that work experience can contribute to higher degree classifications.<sup>122</sup> Degree apprentices are employees so have substantial work experience, which makes it reasonably safe to assume that degree apprenticeship could have similar effects. In addition, of the first eleven apprentices to graduate (in digital and technology solutions), seven achieved first class honours.<sup>123</sup> A very small number, but presumably the link to higher degree classifications will be followed up as degree apprentice numbers grow.

## 2.8 Social mobility and diversity

The two are linked, but social mobility refers to class whereas diversity relates to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, ability and sexual orientation. In the main and across categories interviewees thought that degree apprenticeship would have social mobility impact, for example from a professional institution;

‘Social mobility, that’s really important. No fees, and an almost guaranteed job at a reasonably high level’.

And an employer said their firm was;

‘...unhappy with the social mix and sense of entitlement [of graduates]. The more embracing we are, the bigger the church, the greater its appeal’.

ISE’s 2017 survey found that employers saw their biggest challenge as increasing diversity.<sup>124</sup> The proportion of women is increasing in some areas of the built environment workforce, as an employer interviewee said;

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<sup>122</sup> Binder, J., Baguley, T., Crook, C. and Miller, F. (2015). The academic value of internships: Benefits across disciplines and student backgrounds. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 41, pp.73-82;  
Kerrigan, Manktelow and Simmons (2018). Sandwich placements: Negating the socio-economic effect on graduate prospects, *Journal of Widening Participation & Lifelong Learning*;  
Saniter, N. and Siedler, T. (2014). Door opener or waste of time? The effects of student Internships on labor market outcomes.

<sup>123</sup> <https://feweeek.co.uk/2017/07/17/first-degree-apprentices-in-uk-graduate/>

<sup>124</sup> <http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/ise.org.uk/resource/collection/D2182353-BDCD-481D-8F81-2F0D2D8F24E9/ISE%20Annual%20Survey%20press%20release.pdf>

'Real estate has changed enormously from being all *Barbour wearing beer swillers*. The gender split now 45/55 [female proportion first]. Under [the age of] 40, it's more like 55/45'.

'Changing the Face of Property'<sup>125</sup> which launched in 2012 with the aim of increasing diversity, particularly by promoting professional opportunities in property to younger people might have helped adjust the gender balance in real estate.

The last interviewee moved onto another aspect of diversity;

'It's got to be social mobility and for example LGBT<sup>126</sup> as well'.

Prominent built environment firms<sup>127</sup> have also contributed<sup>128</sup> to the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ACDN) which launched in early 2017.

Construction has a particular issue arising from many employees being white, working class men who start out on site. Some could work their way up using degree apprenticeship but participation by white, working class men in higher education is low. There have been drives to increase the number of individuals in construction that aren't male or white but what about the social mobility of white working class males in site roles? A policy interviewee said;

'We also have to work on factors like women, ethnicity etc. But yes absolutely, I can see that participation [in higher education] by white, working class men would be one of the big issues in construction'.

In her first statement in the role the present Prime Minister said in 2016 'If you're a white, working-class boy, you're less likely than anybody else in Britain to go to university'.<sup>129</sup> This reappeared in 2018 coverage accusing Government of disinterest which contributed to the Social Mobility Commission's then parlous state<sup>130</sup> implying there has been little centrally driven action on white working class male participation in higher education in the last two years.

The link between degree apprenticeship and social mobility is not fully understood. Government wants to improve its 'understanding of how apprenticeships already contribute to social mobility and find ways in which they could go further'<sup>131</sup> DfE is monitoring apprenticeship starts by individuals identifying as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)<sup>132</sup> using data from Statistical First Release (SFR). There does not appear to be any published

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<sup>125</sup> <http://www.propertyneedsyou.com/about/>

<sup>126</sup> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

<sup>127</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/apprenticeship-diversity-champions-network> p12

<sup>128</sup> Op Cit, p10 Balfour Beatty apprentices delivering community outreach with focus on increasing diversity; p17 Balfour Beatty and NG Bailey, anonymised CVs.

<sup>129</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/statement-from-the-new-prime-minister-theresa-may>

<sup>130</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/social-mobility-downgraded-on-theresa-mays-watch-labour-claims\\_uk\\_5addd06ce4b075b631e7fac0](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/social-mobility-downgraded-on-theresa-mays-watch-labour-claims_uk_5addd06ce4b075b631e7fac0)

<sup>131</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/604401/Apprenticeship\\_Reform\\_Programme\\_-\\_Benefits\\_Realisation\\_Strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/604401/Apprenticeship_Reform_Programme_-_Benefits_Realisation_Strategy.pdf) p6

<sup>132</sup> And Learning Difficulty/Disability (LDD)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/705708/Apprenticeship\\_reform\\_programme\\_-\\_Benefits\\_realisation\\_Feb\\_18\\_to\\_May\\_18.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705708/Apprenticeship_reform_programme_-_Benefits_realisation_Feb_18_to_May_18.pdf)

profile (or plans for profiling) of the background of apprentices at degree level detailed enough to inform assessment of the effects of particular degree apprenticeships on social mobility (or diversity). Since January 2018, apprentices at degree level can be identified by discipline from HESA data, along with their sex, age and ethnicity.

HESA also has student data including socio – economic status, level of parental education and postcode which could be used with Participation of Local Area (POLAR) data<sup>133</sup> to further enhance the picture. Theoretically, using such sources it should be possible to characterise the background of built environment apprentices at degree level, but at present the number of apprentices at degree level (the basis for the exercise) is debatable.<sup>134</sup> Presumably data inaccuracies and any important anomalies will be dealt with. But until the wider picture can be seen, expectation of positive impact arises from the probability that a degree and related employment have beneficial effects on social mobility and diversity.

Research found that work experience improves graduate outcomes for individuals from groups underrepresented in higher education compared to a negative gap and lower graduate outcomes when studying a full-time course.<sup>135</sup> These were studies of work experience but again, degree apprenticeship should have similar effects. It was mentioned that of the first eleven apprentices to graduate (in digital and technology solutions), seven achieved first class honours.<sup>136</sup> In addition to being too small number of cases to draw conclusions from, the backgrounds of these individuals are not known. However, if numbers continue to rise it should not be long before it is possible to clarify degree apprenticeship's contribution to better outcomes for individuals from underrepresented groups.

The Social Mobility Commission's fifth 'State of the Nation' report pointed out that social mobility is firmly linked to geographical location. While apprenticeship is a common entry path to work in the worst performing areas in addition to fewer employers and entry jobs, these geographical areas have the lowest proportion of advanced and higher apprenticeship<sup>137</sup> and London and its surrounding areas are (still) pulling away from the rest of England.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/students>

<sup>134</sup> The project found 170 more degree apprentices than shown in HESA and that some were counted as full time. The number of apprentices shown at degree level in HESA data is also lower than in SFR for the same time period. Furthermore, HESA apprenticeship numbers can be counted by discipline whereas SFR uses apprenticeship title (Chartered Surveyor for quantity surveying, building surveying and whatever other disciplines Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship is running in) so cannot be used to count the number of degree apprentices by discipline. HESA apprentice numbers are presently not accurate enough to make this worthwhile or meaningful in monitoring built environment degree apprenticeship impacts on social mobility and diversity.

<sup>135</sup> Binder, J., Baguley, T., Crook, C. and Miller, F. (2015). The academic value of internships: Benefits across disciplines and student backgrounds. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 41, pp.73-82;  
Kerrigan, Manktelow and Simmons (2018). Sandwich placements: Negating the socio-economic effect on graduate prospects, *Journal of Widening Participation & Lifelong Learning*;  
Saniter, N. and Siedler, T. (2014). Door opener or waste of time? The effects of student Internships on labor market outcomes.

<sup>136</sup> <https://feweek.co.uk/2017/07/17/first-degree-apprentices-in-uk-graduate/>

<sup>137</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/66274/4/State\\_of\\_the\\_Nation\\_2017\\_-\\_Social\\_Mobility\\_in\\_Great\\_Britain.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/66274/4/State_of_the_Nation_2017_-_Social_Mobility_in_Great_Britain.pdf) p67

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-mobility-in-great-britain-fifth-state-of-the-nation-report>

It is unrealistic to expect potential degree apprentices to move to London (or its hinterland) from lower performing areas for several reasons, but housing costs are a major barrier. Setting aside that without additional funds, housing costs prevent an apprentice born and raised in or near London living there independently, and that it is not the only area with high housing costs where degree apprenticeship is meant to be available, this is a particular problem in and near the capital. An employer said that easements can or could include;

‘Season tickets, interest free loans and a rent deposit scheme...Deloittes [together with other large companies] are investing in a housing scheme, but few firms in our area can afford that kind of thing...maybe we will link up with housing associations with them [degree apprentices] sharing rent and/or going into shared ownership.’

What if degree apprentices working for firms based in London studied by distance learning? Might this make it easier for them to live elsewhere? An employer interviewee felt this would not solve the problem in their firm’s case because certain elements of what must be learned by apprentices occur in central offices rather than anywhere else;

‘The only drawback with online/distance learning is if they [apprentices] don’t spend substantial time in London offices of firms like mine they can’t learn really important stuff in the workplace from other people. This is the reason that [interviewee’s firm] has a London hub. Kids need to learn from example, to absorb behaviours’.

In passing, this exemplifies why providers must be able to deal with apprentices’ learning skills and behaviours in the workplace.

Interviewees recognised that the potential of degree apprenticeship to increase social mobility rests within a much wider context, as a surveying employer said;

‘Undergraduates coming through or from Masters tend to be same sort of demographic, regardless of being boys or girls, it’s *my dad works at...* there’s the question of what is a chartered surveyor. We’re trying to get the message into schools, we’re working on that with RICS. How do we break through the family background thing, how do we tap into other kinds of kids?’

Tapping ‘into other kinds of kids’ has serious challenges. In addition to the entrenched link between location and social class noted by the Social Mobility Commission, the ‘Which’ survey found 56 per cent from lower socio-economic backgrounds did not consider apprenticeship as an option at all.<sup>139</sup> It is also possible that degree apprenticeship will become predominantly middle class. The Social Mobility Commission report mentioned an article ‘Degree Apprenticeships Risk Becoming the Preserve of the Privileged’ on a Chartered Management Institute survey which found that ‘Affluent parents are two-and-a-half times more likely than those less well-off to know about degree apprenticeship routes at university.’<sup>140</sup> Articles stressing degree apprenticeship’s lack of debt were also carried by

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<sup>139</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/15605-which-survey-reveals-gap-in-understanding-about-apprenticeships-compared-to-university>

<sup>140</sup> Chartered Management Institute <http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/article-details/degree-apprenticeships-risk-becoming-the-preserve-of-the-privileged>

solidly middle class newspapers, presumably because interest in this was anticipated from that section of society.<sup>141</sup>

Finally, the Social Mobility Commission pointed out that should employers apply their usual graduate recruitment criteria in degree apprenticeship this may exclude able applicants who do not have the academic profile and/or social capital, referencing a university's work with employers 'to encourage and enable them to recruit from a broader pool of applicants'.<sup>142</sup> Elements in this (DADF supported) initiative include engagement with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme<sup>143</sup> working with schools and colleges to identify potential degree apprentices from underrepresented groups, providing specialist careers advice on access to higher education through degree apprenticeships and opportunities for the identified school and college students to meet potential employers through recruitment events together with preparation for recruitment processes.<sup>144</sup> Even at this relatively local level, a multi – faceted approach is being taken to attracting individuals from underrepresented groups. A more experienced university interviewees felt that all providers of degree apprenticeship should be taking action, that universities should integrate degree apprenticeship should into their widening participation strategies and establish metrics to assess the impact of degree apprenticeship on their ability to attract individuals from underrepresented groups.

## 2.9 Summary

This section covered;

**Policy and strategy:** perceptions of why degree apprenticeship was introduced included increasing productivity, matching provision to employer need and bringing universities closer to work based learning. Most employer interviewees said degree apprenticeship would not replace their existing approaches, but all were using or wanted to use degree apprenticeship. There is evidence this appetite is fairly widespread amongst built environment employers. AGR's report said that promotion of degree apprenticeship is being neglected in favour of its development.<sup>145</sup> Evidence indicates that the majority of young people considering choices after secondary education remain likely to prefer full time higher education, despite findings that a large proportion of those who graduated from full time courses regret their choice. The survey that found this was in 2013,<sup>146</sup> so the evidence could be refreshed and made more specific by carrying out a similar survey of full time built environment graduates.

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<sup>141</sup> For example <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-2545440/Uni-degree-vs-apprentice-three-years-study-27-000-debt-no-guarantee-job-job-training-monthly-wage-excellent-career-prospects.html> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2016/03/31/a-masters-level-qualification-in-five-years-with-no-student-debt/>

<sup>142</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/66274/4/State\\_of\\_the\\_Nation\\_2017\\_-\\_Social\\_Mobility\\_in\\_Great\\_Britain.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/66274/4/State_of_the_Nation_2017_-_Social_Mobility_in_Great_Britain.pdf) p69 and

<https://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/university-awarded-funding-support-disadvantaged-pupils>

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/national-collaborative-outreach-programme-ncop/>

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.scci.org.uk/2017/10/university-awarded-funding-to-support-disadvantaged-pupils-to-access-degree-apprenticeships/>

<sup>145</sup> <https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/ise.site-ym.com/resource/collection/7a850055-3087-407c-8e41-a24ae7015560/AGR%20and%20HEFCE%20Developing%20Degree%20Apprenticeship.pdf?hhSearchTerms=%20Apprenticeship+and+report%22> p3

<sup>146</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/many-graduates-would-have-preferred-apprenticeships/2002517.article#survey-answer>

**Apprenticeship levy:** shifts the cost of apprentices' training and assessment from public funding to employers and more management and administration of apprenticeship rests with employers than under the previous system. Only one of the three employers interviewed expected their firm to use apprenticeship levy funds equating to the amount the firm had paid in. One year after the apprenticeship levy started, far more its funds were unspent than spent and overall, apprentice starts have dropped apart from at higher levels which increased (from a low base).

At present the only flexibility in use of levy funds is that levy paying firms can transfer up to 10 per cent of levy funds to non – levy paying firms to pay for delivery of their degree apprenticeships, but it was unclear that many (or any) built environment levy paying firms would use the transfer. At some stage after levy funds begin to expire in 2019, 90 per cent of non – levy payer apprenticeship delivery costs will start being paid by Government from the unspent revenue. Presumably, the remainder will continue to be made up by the 10 per cent co – investment required from non – levy paying firms. Employer interviewees were unhappy they could not use their levy funds where degree apprenticeships they wanted were not available. Employers in this position may not have the time to spend what they paid into the levy before the funds are absorbed by Treasury. IfA is reviewing funding bands for 31 approved apprenticeships (including Chartered Surveyor) but the maximum will remain at £27,000. Employers have to pay more themselves if the cost of obtaining the quality they want is higher than the maximum funding band allows. If employers are consistently paying more for particular degree apprenticeships, this is likely to be because that is what those degree apprenticeships cost.

**Development:** delay to the Technical and Professional<sup>147</sup>Trailblazer was said to have been caused by the responsible Government department telling the trailblazer that (unlike in assessment plans produced by previous trailblazers) no professional body or bodies were to be mentioned by name. IfA which now leads on apprenticeship development and approval has joined the new CITB Construction Apprenticeship Working Group, but this group's agenda is construction apprenticeship at all levels and may not include all built environment degree apprenticeships.

**Implementation:** much of what interviewees said about provider dealings with degree apprenticeship was familiar, with concern expressed about lack of university (particularly) staff industry experience and provision being out of date. Some of these criticisms came from interviewees who could not have seen the most relevant degree apprenticeships to them in action because these degree apprenticeships were not available. However, it was an employer involved with Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship who expressed these views the most strongly.

**Employer readiness:** professional institution interviewees were unanimous that smaller firms were not ready. A Government supported survey of small firms found that those in construction were the ninth out of ten across sectors to say they were not prepared for apprenticeship. Furthermore, about six months after the apprenticeship levy was introduced the Skills and Apprenticeship Minister was 'quite flabbergasted' that some levy paying firms knew little or nothing of the reformed system and there are reports that levy – paying firms are finding the new system too complex.

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<sup>147</sup> 'Balfour Beatty'

**End – point assessment:** there was concern that up to one quarter of existing Chartered Surveyor degree apprentices would not pass end point assessment at their first attempt, which would obviously be disheartening for them. It would also damage the reputation of the provider that delivered their degree apprenticeship and the final 20 per cent payment would not be made, reducing the provider's income. Thorough preparation for end point assessment was seen as the best way to avoid all of this. The practice of a university that is focusing on end – point assessment preparation is highlighted in Appendix 2.

It was suggested that a cross – sector board of professional institutions is established as built environment degree apprenticeship rolls out, particularly to address issues in end point assessment and support development of its best practice.

**Benefits:** the first benefit all but one interviewee mentioned was degree apprenticeship's lack of debt. This (highly apparent) benefit is failing to influence young people to the extent that most of them do not even consider degree apprenticeship as a potential choice. It was said that degree apprenticeships would be recognised, by schools and parents. Evidence also indicates this is not the present reality. It is reasonable to expect that promotion of degree apprenticeship is supported and/or coordinated by Government but not that national promotion on its own would lead to great change in built environment, or any other individual sector. The second most mentioned benefit was increased speed to professional qualification. This cannot be evidenced until the first Chartered Surveyor degree apprentices complete which will be in 2020 at earliest. It was also said that there would be a 'boost to part time'. Quantity Surveying part time undergraduate numbers increased in 2016 - 17. It is possible that degree apprentices made up 29.5 per cent of this increase, but this cannot be established incontrovertibly because of inaccurate data which should be corrected as part of general data improvement. Until the first Chartered Surveyor degree apprentices complete (from 2020 onwards) it is not possible to compare their views with those who studied full time to (hopefully) generate evidence which could help convince young people of the value of built environment degree apprenticeship. In the meantime, a survey of full time built environment graduates covering similar ground to a wider survey in 2013<sup>148</sup> could be helpful, as suggested above.

**Social mobility and diversity:** links are perceived between degree apprenticeship and increased social mobility and diversity, but it does not appear that the socio – economic status, sex and ethnicity of the degree apprentice population has been profiled (or that is planned to profile) this population at a level of detail that would make it possible to examine the frequency of the relevant characteristics of built environment degree apprentices to assess how far built environment degree apprenticeship is living up to expectations. Tackling social mobility and diversity in degree apprenticeship would be challenging and have a number of elements. Employers who spoke to this project were working on social mobility and diversity, but it is not known how widespread such practices are. The industry also has particular issues including that construction employs many white working class men. Attractiveness of degree apprenticeship to individuals from underrepresented groups is a subset of its overall attractiveness, which was already identified as problematic.

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<sup>148</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/many-graduates-would-have-preferred-apprenticeships/2002517.article#survey-answer>

### 3. The Provider Side

This section draws from responses to the project's questionnaire and telephone interviews with a selection of questionnaire respondents, with reference to other sources as relevant.

When the project started, there was no accurate information about which providers were engaged with built environment apprenticeship at degree level. Initial research identified universities, further education colleges and individual staff within them who seemed well placed to respond. A questionnaire (Appendix 1) was developed, piloted then made available electronically.<sup>149</sup> The identified individuals were sent e-mails alerting them to the questionnaire. CHOB heads were also asked to complete and/or distribute the questionnaire. 25 responses were returned from 20 providers in May/June 2017 including from all universities receiving DADF phase one for built environment and the identified further education colleges. In March 2017, UUK estimated that 60 institutions across England are implementing or planning to implement degree apprenticeships.<sup>150</sup> Not all of these will have been built environment providers, so response from 17 universities (and 3 further education colleges) a couple of months after this estimate was published seems reasonable. Questionnaire respondents were at different levels of seniority<sup>151</sup> and providers were either implementing without external support or receiving DADF or colleges (none of which were receiving DADF). 10 questionnaire respondents that had said they were willing were selected for telephone interview so that a range of disciplines and different extents of experience were represented. Primarily, the interviews expanded on questionnaire responses, but more time was spent on certain areas in some cases for example recruitment, where experienced interviewees had more to say.

#### 3.1 Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) and funding

Providers must be on the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) held RoATP to receive funding for delivery of apprenticeship or its learning provision. The Register's further education provenance made its requirements new, particularly to universities;

'I think for most of us in universities, it's about imposition of a further education based system...it's been difficult with [E]SFA because their systems are designed to support further education and training providers'.

Most universities weren't set up for retrospective payment;

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<sup>149</sup> Using Survey Monkey

<sup>150</sup> <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/degree-apprenticeships-realising-opportunities.pdf> p2

<sup>151</sup> Titles included Apprentice Development Consultant, Assistant Vice Chancellor - Regional Partnerships, Associate Head of Department Built Environment, Associate Professor Integrated Design and Construction, Business Development Manager - Apprenticeships and Employer Sponsored Study, Director of Construction Programmes, Director of Education School of The Built Environment, Faculty Director, Faculty Head Construction, Head of Apprenticeships and Quality, Head of Commercial and Business Development, Head of Department, Head of Design and the Built Environment, Head of School, Head of School Architecture and Built Environment, Head of Subject, Head of Surveying, Principal lecturer, Project Consultant, Senior Lecturer, Teaching Fellow and Undergraduate Programme Leader Construction Studies.

'It's a back loaded funding model [which] a lot of universities might not have dealt with before. We have to put a new Management Information System in place for June 2017 to submit...returns to get the money.'

There are further differences between apprenticeship and what most universities have previously experienced. Asked what might be difficult for universities to come to terms with, one of the previous section's interviewees said;

'It must be borne in mind that ESFA has claws. They have a very different culture and ethos.'

Questionnaire comments mentioned cultural differences, a university interviewee said that 'ESFA is ethically different from what we're used to'. At the time of the project, no providers involved seemed to have experienced ESFA's 'claws'.

Only (slightly over) one – third of questionnaire respondents said external support was used or referred to. It is possible that providers had accessed external support, but respondents did not know. However, university respondents particularly might be expected to have accessed external support because of the system's unfamiliarity. UVAC was mentioned in 5 responses with one adding 'regional skills team and LEP'.<sup>152</sup> UVAC was also complimented in interviews as 'instrumental in getting [interviewee's university] involved' and 'there's not many of them, but the UVAC people I dealt with were really good'.

For universities entering the system in time to deliver from September 2017 it would have been like getting on a moving bus because the system itself was changing.<sup>153</sup> Despite this, 75 per cent of respondents' institutions were registered as main providers so were in a position to deliver the whole degree apprenticeship programme<sup>154</sup> and 20 per cent were applying to become main providers. 4 per cent responded that their institutions were on RoATP as supporting providers which cannot access apprenticeship funding directly and can only subcontract from one of the main providers on RoATP up to the value of £500,000 per year. No respondents said their institution was applying as a supporting provider. Where an institution does not wish to take on delivery of the whole apprenticeship programme, supporting status could be worthwhile not least because it could lead to a new income stream. In principle, supporting status would also allow smaller niche providers to deal with specialist requirements as degree apprenticeship rolls out. However, supporting status probably means smaller bids, and interviewees who bid for smaller amounts of non – levy provision funding said they lost out.

Interviewees who worked with the previous system were asked how they found the new one. Responses included 'to be honest, we're struggling with the administrative framework' and from a further education interviewee;

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<sup>152</sup> Local Enterprise Partnership <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-enterprise-zones/2010-to-2015-government-policy-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-enterprise-zones>

<sup>153</sup> For example, the Register of Training Organisations became the Register of Approved Training Providers.

<sup>154</sup> Apart from end – point assessment, which (so far) has to be delivered by a separate organisation in built environment because as yet no built environment degree apprenticeships are 'integrated'.

‘There are issues with the system. Cash flow. There’s the Digital Apprenticeship Service. Now, the money comes from the client [employer] to the college. Then we’re aligning with systems in a university which has never had apprentices. Trying to align enrolments, at different levels, APL. We’ve got...HNCs wanting to move to higher or degree apprenticeship. We have to enable this. And we have over 100 employers linking to degree apprenticeships. They’re relying on us too, we can’t let them down’.

University interviewees who talked about registration and its related requirements usually moved rapidly onto non – levy provision funding, for example;

‘In a way degree apprenticeship is great even if we include applying to RoATP because it forces HEIs to engage in a different way...but then there was the pause on non-levy payer provision [procurement]... most of our part time students are from employers, many SMEs will not be paying levy, this was – and is – very disruptive. Everyone was geed up, then there’s no money?’

Providers wanting to deliver apprenticeship for non – levy paying firms had to tender to ESFA in November 2016 for non – levy provision funding. This procurement exercise was cancelled in March 2017 and relaunched in summer 2017. Interviewees caught up in this said the format for the relaunched exercise was very different, little or no original bid material could be used and applications required a narrative response of over 10,000 words addressing 123 selection criteria. It was also said that scaling back of bids led to those looking for smaller amounts being pushed below the exercise’s £200,000 threshold so unable to win funds ‘no matter how well evidenced on the basis of employer demand, local priorities or skills needs’. Furthermore, the first non – levy funding was awarded only to providers with apprenticeship contracts, which many universities that applied for it did not have because they were preparing for awaited degree apprenticeships. Universities in receipt of DADF were unable to fulfil their contracts with HEFCE. It was suggested that independent training providers working at lower levels of apprenticeship which make up 76 per cent of the 2,200 providers on RoATP generally benefited from the procurement exercise, and the comparatively tiny 4 per cent of universities on the register did not.<sup>155</sup> By June 2017, the situation was that many universities were able to deliver degree apprenticeship only for levy – paying firms until December 2017 at earliest.<sup>156</sup>

It might also be noted that a discussion about the relative value of apprenticeships at different levels began as the number of starts at degree level rose. Falling numbers of starts at lower levels are causing problems for providers that worked with the previous system.<sup>157</sup> While there was concern that the previous system saw too many apprentices at level 2 and not enough at levels above 3, the broad conversation on levels is one to watch<sup>158</sup> not least because there are far more providers of apprenticeship at lower levels than there are at degree level.

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<sup>155</sup> <https://uvac.ac.uk/lobbying-update/>

<sup>156</sup> <https://feweek.co.uk/2017/06/02/horror-show-for-degree-apprenticeships/>

<sup>157</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/17279-address-the-drop-in-apprenticeship-starts-and-respond-to-brexit>

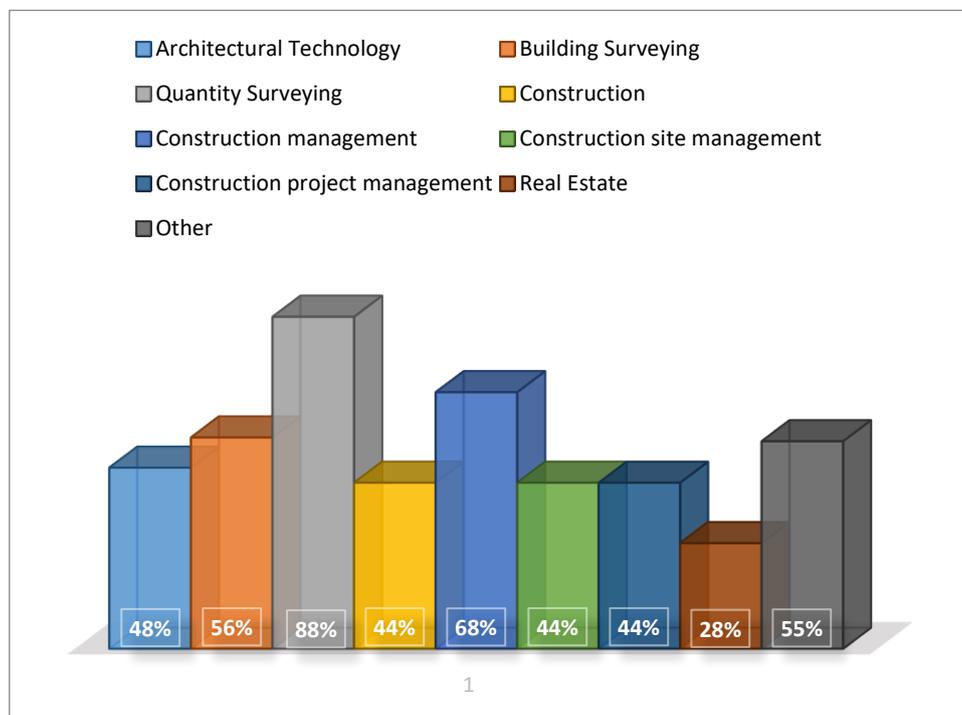
<sup>158</sup> A recent contribution <https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/16956-levy-investment-conundrum-degree-or-l2-apprenticeships>

Concern was expressed as long ago as autumn 2016 that funding band maxima for higher levels of apprenticeship were too low.<sup>159</sup> Towards the end of the project, it came to light that the Head of Facilities Management funding band maximum was likely to be £18,000 and Geospatial Mapping and Science Specialist £21,000. These maxima are now set and at least one university has said in print that they are unviable.<sup>160</sup> A major specialist construction training provider made similar points,<sup>161</sup> and UVAC warned that quality must not be sacrificed for 'affordability'.<sup>162</sup> So far, Government has responded by increasing the number of funding bands<sup>163</sup> rather than the amount which can be drawn from apprenticeship levy funds.

### 3.2 Apprenticeship areas

Figure 1 shows what built environment apprenticeship areas education providers were involved with. It was expected that a surveying discipline would be the most common response, which quantity surveying was.

**Figure 1: What apprenticeships are you involved with?**



Source: Project survey

Building surveying gathered a reasonably healthy number of responses, construction management ranked second. Because Chartered Surveyor was the only available degree apprenticeship when the questionnaire was completed, it might appear that those who

<sup>159</sup> For example, by the Tech Partnership <https://www.thetechpartnership.com/news/after-the-funding-guidance-consultation-what-next-for-the-levy/>

<sup>160</sup> <https://www.ucem.ac.uk/news-events/blog/national-apprenticeship-week-blog-series-ucem-principal-ashley-wheaton-addresses-damian-hinds-secretary-of-state-for-education/>

<sup>161</sup> <http://ukconstructionblog.co.uk/page/2/>; see April 10 2018 <http://www.developtraining.co.uk/>

<sup>162</sup> <https://feweek.co.uk/2018/03/27/the-government-should-focus-on-apprenticeship-quality-not-quantity/>

<sup>163</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/17289-funding-bands-on-the-run>

selected other than surveying disciplines were incorrect. In almost all cases, interviews established choices were right.

Respondents chose construction management either because they were working with provision that that would be used when the Construction Site Manager degree apprenticeship became available, or the Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship was being used in a construction management context.

Construction manager is not a named <sup>164</sup> occupation for use with Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship, but the occupations given are examples.

Work experience could avail quantity surveying to an apprentice employed as a construction manager. Combined with the right degree content, use of Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship would be appropriate. Where questionnaire respondents gave real estate, interviews established Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship<sup>165</sup> was being used apart from one interviewee who named real estate in their questionnaire response said, 'it would actually be facilities management'. Some responded that the institution was not running surveying because the standard was not available. From interviews, this meant the Technical and Professional<sup>166</sup> Trailblazer Construction Quantity Surveyor degree apprenticeship. 'Other' included civil engineering, building services engineering and architectural assistant.<sup>167</sup>

### 3.3 Numbers and Targets

Asked 'If you are awaiting degree apprenticeship standards, what areas do these cover...?' a few responded chartered surveyor, taken to mean Technical and Professional<sup>168</sup> Trailblazer construction quantity surveyor. Architectural assistant, architecture and 'TAC standards'<sup>169</sup> were mentioned. All other awaited degree apprenticeships were expected from the Technical and Professional Trailblazer.

The last questionnaire response was returned in June 2017. When the targets were set, it had to be assumed that that built environment degree apprenticeships expected in 2016 - 17 would become available (Table 1: Numbers and Targets overleaf). Targets which related to any other degree apprenticeship than Chartered Surveyor will have been revised downwards.

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<sup>164</sup> <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/chartered-surveyor-degree/>

<sup>165</sup> The named pathways for Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship are Building Surveyors, Commercial Property Surveyors, Residential Property Surveyors, Planning and Development Surveyors, Rural Surveyors, Minerals and Waste Management Surveyors, Valuation Surveyors, Consultant (Professional) Quantity Surveyors and Consultant (Professional) Project Management Surveyors.  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/525956/Chartered\\_Surveyor\\_Standard.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525956/Chartered_Surveyor_Standard.pdf)

<sup>166</sup> 'Balfour Beatty'

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/knowledge-landing-page/apprenticeships-in-architecture>

<sup>168</sup> 'Balfour Beatty'

<sup>169</sup> Technician Apprenticeship Consortium <http://www.infrastructure-intelligence.com/article/mar-2015/employers-begin-work-civil-engineering-technician-apprenticeship>

**Table 1: Numbers and Targets**

	2016 – 17 numbers	2017 – 18 targets
Architectural Technology	13	91
Building Services Engineering		48
Civil Engineering Site Manager		10
Civil Engineering		68
Construction	10	148
Construction Management	26	187
Construction Site Manager	5	72
Construction Project Management		25
Quantity Surveying	220	526
Building Surveying	25	157
Real Estate	46	158

Source: Project survey

### 3.4 External engagement

Employers are critically important in apprenticeship not least because they now select and pay the provider. Given that apprenticeship levy paying firms can pass up to 10 per cent of unspent levy funds to other firms, it might be thought that working with employer groups would be even higher than the 80 per cent shown in responses to the questionnaire (Table 2). Providers could introduce the matter of the 10 per cent transfer in their contacts with employer groups, particularly those where SMEs engage with larger levy paying firms.

**Table 2: Is your Institution, or department/faculty/school engaged with any of the following in developing/implementing degree (or higher) built environment apprenticeships?**

	Response
Employer groups	80%
Delivery partners including HEIs, FEIs, private training providers, alternative providers	60%
Local Authorities	56%
Local Enterprise Partnerships	44%
Chambers of Commerce	28%
Apprenticeship Training Agencies	24%
Local apprenticeship hubs	24%
Other (please describe)	8%
Not engaged with any of above	4%

Source: Project survey

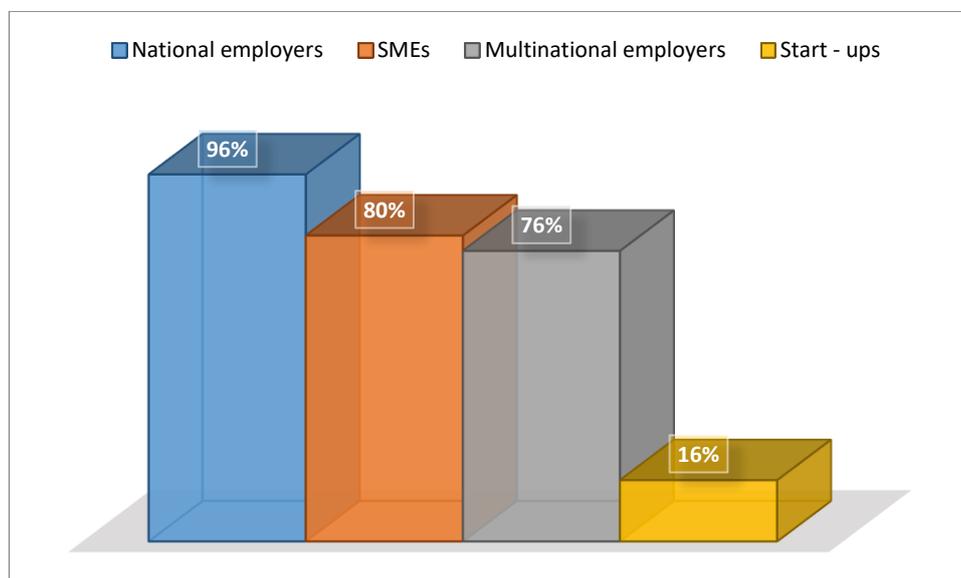
Two respondents added professional institutions in 'other'. Of the three university interviewees that talked about partnerships with colleges, one wondered if;

'Operating with partners might change now [fund] banding has changed. Could we partner with college/s to do level 3 and part of level 4?'

A second interviewee said their university might enhance apprenticeship links as part of forming 'even stronger partnership' with particular colleges, but a third university interviewee said;

'There are construction apprentices, level 3 – 4 at [local] colleges...the way [interviewee's university] works at the moment is that it's not formal relationships. Presently, we get a few QS from colleges. We're not expecting colleges to deliver part of surveying [degree apprenticeship]. They [apprentices] will come straight to [interviewee's university]. Partnering and competition...relationships are changing. I see no reason why private providers can't get involved'.

**Figure 2: What types of employers are you currently working with on built environment degree (or higher) apprenticeship?**



Source: Project Survey

It is no surprise that the vast majority of respondents in Figure 2 were working with national employers. These will be larger, in all likelihood apprenticeship levy – payers and will have more apprentices than an individual smaller firm. 80 per cent working with SMEs seems a good proportion. It might have been lower because the non-levy provision funding procurement exercise was 'paused' a few weeks before the questionnaire was completed. The reason start-ups were included in the questionnaire was an assumed link between degree apprenticeship and growth. Few questionnaire respondents were working with start – ups and little was said by interviewees when links between degree apprenticeship and supporting local/regional growth were explored, apart from '[interviewee's university] has ERDF<sup>170</sup>for support to firms, 12 hours each. We blend our apprenticeship offer in'.

<sup>170</sup> European Regional Development Fund

### 3.5 Recruitment

In the previous system, employers recruited apprentices on occasion, but it was more common that providers found employers for would – be apprentices. Now, employers recruit and providers enrol. It was possible the term ‘recruitment’ would not carry the right meaning in this stage of the project, hence most of the enquiry on recruitment by providers was left to the interviews so that what was meant could be explained.

However, it was found by UUK that degree apprentices are primarily local, and universities envisaged ‘significant growth locally and regionally, and some growth nationally.’<sup>171</sup> The questionnaire included where apprentices were recruited from to find if the trend towards their being local was replicated in built environment. It wasn’t. Responses were 20 per cent locally, 48 per cent regionally and 32 per cent nationally. On the other hand, built environment higher education could be well positioned should the growth pattern be as forecasted.

From interviews, there seemed to be three strategies for recruiting/enrolling apprentices; building on relationships, generating employer interest/supporting employers in recruitment and progression/conversion. Appendix 2 provides insights on practices.

University interviewees at an earlier stage of involvement with degree apprenticeship were interested to hear of recruitment support offered to employers and felt their institutions might consider such services. They also expressed thoughts others didn’t, including;

‘[The university’s] schools liaison team have targets for recruitment to full time courses but not for part time or apprentices...and we should promote at open days, any opportunities we get’.

At the time the project was active it appeared that in general, universities applied relatively little resource to attracting degree apprentices compared with what they did to attract full time undergraduates. Furthermore, it has been observed that;

‘Universities are, for the most part, good at business-to-consumer sales by marketing their services to individual students and recruiting them to programmes. In the case of apprenticeships, the employer is the customer and so there’s a need for a business-to-business sales strategy’.<sup>172</sup>

It could be argued that built environment higher education should be engaging with local and/or national employers in their industry anyway and many may already be doing so, especially where they work with students who are sponsored by their employer. A university interviewee that worked with Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship since it was launched in 2015 advised that because degree apprenticeship requires a deeper level of engagement, providers running degree apprenticeship should develop an account management capability to manage their relationships with sponsoring employers effectively, underpinned by suitable information systems such as a customer relationship management system (CRM).

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<sup>171</sup> March 2017 <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/degree-apprenticeships-realising-opportunities.pdf> p3

<sup>172</sup> <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/double-standards-social-mobility-and-the-degree-apprenticeships-maze/>

The interviewee also said that capabilities should involve clarifying employers' requirements at the outset, managing their expectations of what support the higher education institution can provide and developing systems for issue resolution where there is a problem that needs to be addressed during the delivery of the programme.

The interviewee added that degree apprenticeship providers should refer to good practice from other service industries, especially consultancies that operate business-to-business professional service models where the principles and practice of account management are well-established.

It should also be remembered that the demography of the target age range (for both degree apprenticeship and full time undergraduate recruitment) is forecast to be relatively unstable as degree apprenticeship rolls out. The Office for National Statistics predicts that the proportion of 17 year olds in the UK's population will continue its downward trend before starting to rise in 2021 to more than 87k higher than in 2020 by 2024.<sup>173</sup> Assuming this forecast is reasonably accurate, the demographic nadir coincides with when degree apprenticeship should be reaching full roll out. If numbers of degree apprentices recruited are insufficient to make provision grow, one of the causes could be that degree apprenticeship apprentice recruitment to higher education lost out to full time undergraduate recruitment.

### 3.6 Degrees and their delivery

56 per cent of questionnaire responses were that the introduction of degree apprenticeship did not require a new programme. 44 per cent indicated that new programmes were needed. The split in response to 'did or does the introduction of built environment degree apprenticeship require re-validation to amend existing degrees?' was 54 per cent no, and 46 per cent yes. An interviewee explained the kinds of changes being made to their programme and why;

'What we're doing is taking the bulk of the part time programme, but redesigning elements - new assessment and new modules, in order to make best of workplace learning. Not just re-badging, so all joins up correctly. To make sure we provide opportunity to apply in the workplace, we can *version* assignments to help with that. But it all comes back to the university to assess knowledge, skills and competencies'.

Some section 2 interviewees were worried about the use of existing degrees. Whether or not the types of change to provision mentioned would allay these concerns is unknown but it should not be assumed that they would. However, the final sentence above captures that the provider is responsible for delivery of the whole apprenticeship programme. This is a fundamental point, and the more experienced recognise it as such. An academic involved with the Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship asked for advice on what the project's enquiry might cover said;

'I'd want to know if HEIs are supporting delivery of standards - as opposed to just the degree. Are they looking at what's going on in the workplace, are they mentoring, are they tracking performance or are they just thinking about the academic programme? There must be integration – synergy between doing and learning. Theory from practice, so that we're turning out apprentices who can do the job'.

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<sup>173</sup> Calculated from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/nesscontent/dvc219/pyramids/index.html>

Or, as a further education interviewee with over 20 years' experience of apprenticeship put it;

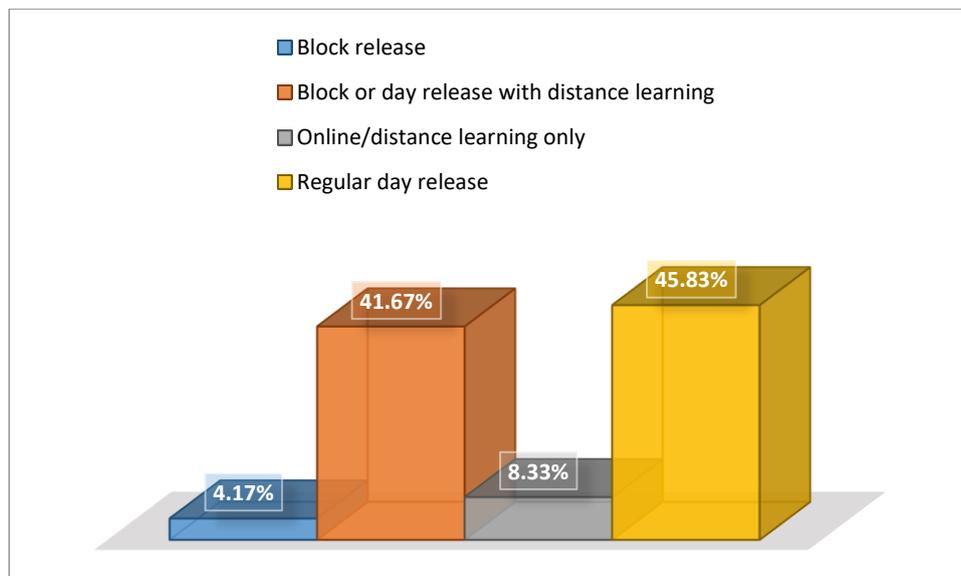
'University people should see it [degree apprenticeship] as a work – based programme with a degree in it, not a degree with bits tacked on'.

Some practices familiar in higher education are rare or non – existent at lower levels, for example;

'...collaborative provision [by subcontracting] where maybe a private provider does first 2 years then HEI does last 2. This is particularly important in some sectors, but it seems new to [E] SFA.'

'[E]SFA is wary of the online model, perhaps they associate it with Level 5 and below where it might not work as well because the apprentices would probably be younger, maybe need more guidance and so on.'

**Figure 3: For each Degree (or Higher) Built Environment Apprenticeship area identified, how are these being delivered to employers?**



Source: Project Survey

In Figure 3 day release was the most popular form of delivery, block or day release supported by distance learning in second place. Two interviewees said that delivery was more varied;

'Work based learning via a VLP coupled with webinars, workshops and opportunities to attend evening sessions.'

'Some block, some day release- all supported by distance learning.'

A third interviewee described their university's approach;

'...the degree itself is delivered wholly online via our VLE but we provide two optional face-to-face workshops per semester to help apprentices develop study skills.'

The present ESFA funding rule classes delivery by distance learning only as ineligible<sup>174</sup>. However, as the university concerned has been engaged degree apprenticeship for some time, what this university is doing has evidently been acceptable to ESFA so far. One of the previous section's interviewees felt that ESFA took the position it did on distance learning because they felt that online delivery doesn't work at lower levels of apprenticeship. Online delivery is not necessarily a bar below level 5. 80 achievements of Level 3 Surveying Technician apprenticeship were recorded for 2014 – 15.<sup>175</sup> UCEM whose delivery is online is the only provider of the relevant Diploma, hence all 80 were online. Delivery will have been supported, or UCEM would not have provided these Diplomas given the ESFA funding rule.

Interviewees also considered if their institutions would run apprentice specific provision, for example from a university interviewee;

'We run part time and full time in parallel but tutor separately. If demand is there we'll do bespoke.'

By providing separate tutoring for degree apprentices, this university is recognising that their needs will differ from those of full time undergraduates. On the other hand, there is also infilling to full time undergraduate courses. Other interviewees mentioned that degree apprentices were (or would be) infilled. What degree apprentices and employers think of this is not known. The overall area of how providers deal with off the job training would benefit from further work because it could impact on apprentice performance.

### **3.7 Staff deployment**

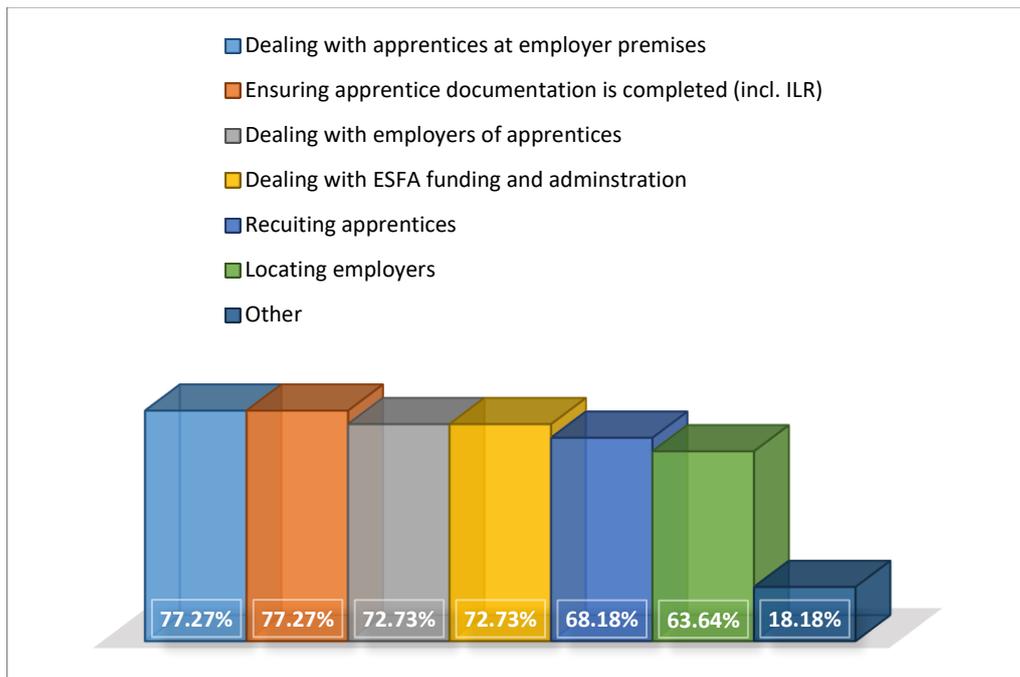
Implementing apprenticeship is likely to affect a provider's staff deployment for reasons including the criticality of workplace learning, its integration with academic learning, monitoring, tracking and related evidence requirements, administration necessary to delivery and drawing down of funds. In order to deliver the apprenticeship programme (not just the degree) there may need to be recruitment of staff with expertise new to the institution, development of existing staff to undertake new activities and potentially different relationships with employers. Figure 4 considers whether education providers have staff dedicated to specific roles and responsibilities.

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<sup>174</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/612159/PROVIDER\\_V3\\_1\\_.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612159/PROVIDER_V3_1_.pdf) para 82.5, p14

<sup>175</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/624424/apprenticeships-level-SSA-framework-data-tool-achievements-v1.xlsm](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/624424/apprenticeships-level-SSA-framework-data-tool-achievements-v1.xlsm) framework dashboard, right click, unhide, framework data

**Figure 4: Does your Institution have staff dedicated to...?**



Source: Project survey

'Other' comments were that recruitment was in hand or planned, and 'the apprenticeship related role is one of many they [staff] are responsible for'.

The amount of staff dedicated to most of the tasks that must be fulfilled in delivery of apprenticeship seems encouraging, particularly at this relatively early stage but responses on the key tasks of locating employers and recruiting apprentices were fourth and fifth lowest respectively.

Asked 'who ensures completion of apprenticeship tracking documentation (including Individual Learning Record - ILR)', 48 per cent said *not* 'discipline specific' staff from the department/faculty/school and 40 per cent 'discipline specific'. 'Other' comments included 'workplace mentor' and 'a combination of our Built Environment and Engineering Services Faculty and our work-based learning team' with one 'not yet decided'.

### **3.8 Links between provider, workplace and apprentice**

Questionnaire respondents were asked to say what kind of staff mentor apprentices in the workplace. 48 per cent this was done by 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school and 4 per cent *not* from 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school. There were eight 'other' comments, five of which effectively said employer staff would be responsible, one that it would be a member of the professional body, another it 'may be either of the above' and;

'We have a named member of Student Services staff who provides pastoral support and is involved in recruitment and induction. She sits outside the academic team but joins all planning and progress review meetings with apprentices. Students are also allocated workplace mentors from the companies who sponsor trainees. They look after and support them at work and provide regular progress and performance updates.'

Asked who leads on linking apprentices' workplace learning with academic study, over three quarters responded 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school with two responses *not* from 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school with 'other' saying that this was 'employer/link tutor', 'TBC' and 'Mentor and supervisor are from employer'. Because the last does not mention a link to the provider, it is hoped the question was misinterpreted.

Employers know their firms' operations but might not know the academic programme well enough to position the apprentice to apply the degree's knowledge in the particular ways that will – all things being equal – produce appropriate evidence for assessment against the standards. This implies a need for discipline specific expertise. The proportion of 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school visiting apprentices in their workplace at 76 per cent was much higher than the 16 per who said *not* from the 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school. Over three – quarters said staff leading on linking workplace with academic learning were discipline specific. This number of such staff might be expected to increase as more institutions gain degree apprenticeship experience.

At the time of the interviews, further education colleges were working on increasing industry relevance by recruiting and developing staff;

'We've done sixty interviews over the last couple of months. Mainly people from industry. We got a QS from a top company and five new staff on lecturing... [We have recruited] fractional post people who are working in industry, anything from 0.1 – 0.9 [of full time post]. We [recently] filled four .25 posts with people like that'.

'By the time it's needed, all [the college's relevant staff] will have the correct professional memberships, competences etc. That's critical to the link between academic and workplace learning'.

The university with the longest experience of built environment degree apprenticeship combines employer and apprentice seeing the same (specialised apprenticeship) face with virtual means to keep on top of progress across the programme;

- Apprentices are allocated an Apprenticeship Officer as main point of contact with the HEI;
- Apprenticeship Officer carries out 1 -1 progress reviews with apprentice and employer representative every 10 weeks to see that they are progressing with all aspects of the apprenticeship and to identify any support needed;
- Progress is recorded formally and monitored using a bespoke progress tracking system.

Some of the less experienced university interviewees also realised that staffing of the relationship between workplace and institution is critical, for example;

'The employer/link tutor is really important. If they [apprentices] don't complete, you lose 20 per cent. We have to ensure both employer and apprentice are aware of their responsibilities. We must maintain the link with the employer. We have to make sure someone there is chartered for the relevant route way. That's for EPA as well as everything else. And staff at [interviewee's university] do an industrial training year, so that they're familiar with talking to employers'.

This features key elements including making sure that employer and apprentice are on track, helping employers to ensure professional institution requirements are met and provider staff ability to communicate with employers. Another university interviewee said;

‘With apprenticeship, there’s a difference from a degree on its own. Yes, it’s about them [apprentices] developing with the degree and applying it in workplace, including skills and knowledge. But there is one proviso. The employer has to put the apprentice in the right place to apply that knowledge in the workplace.’

Asked to explain what they meant by ‘put the apprentice in the right place’, the interviewee replied;

‘Take for example, *be able to prepare and control budgets and apply statutory and commercial frameworks to ensure profitability and adherence to budget.*<sup>176</sup> They [apprentices] would probably have to spend a couple of months in commercial and perhaps do a specific project to ensure that was covered...It’s got to be practical activities, evidence based. It depends on what the apprentice is doing. They might produce for example methods plans, safety plans. Maybe review a new material or process. I can see those kinds of things working. It’s not like can they use a theodolite, which is just yes or no’.

The same interviewee said that the Technical and Professional<sup>177</sup>Trailblazer degree apprenticeship standards;

‘Wave the skills and behaviours in your face, you can’t miss them, they’re very clear. It’s different from how it works with [national] occupational standards, they’re there too but peppered about.’

Skills and behaviours are made obvious in reformed apprenticeship standards because they are essential to completion of the programme. To deliver degree apprenticeship programmes successfully, providers must recognise they are responsible for securing skills and behaviours shown in the standards across the programme, including in the workplace. The last interviewee was also asked how they would deal with personal skills development in the workplace. The interviewee used the example of staff management;

‘We might look at having a development plan with diagnostics. Run that with the apprentice then see if the apprentice could transfer the approach to [workplace] staff. It might be a bit like how you assess a teacher. We have to learn from things like that.’

A further education interviewee was asked what advice he would give about bringing academic and workplace learning into line. The interviewee gave the example of a level 3 apprenticeship Transport Planning Technician ‘Skills Portfolio’ the achievement of which is ‘demonstrated through the process of internal and external quality assurance of evidence gathered during the course of learners’ work in the workplace’.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/384270/CONSTRUCTIONB\\_B\\_-\\_Civil\\_Engineering\\_Site\\_Manager\\_-\\_Final\\_081214.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/384270/CONSTRUCTIONB_B_-_Civil_Engineering_Site_Manager_-_Final_081214.pdf) third line under ‘Skills’

<sup>177</sup> ‘Balfour Beatty’

<sup>178</sup> Op Cit p7. ‘Underpinning skills requirements that the learner should be able to demonstrate by the end of the apprenticeship’ and ‘recommended sources of evidence’ pp9 - 28

Links between provider, workplace and apprentice underpin ensuring that the programme is successfully completed, and it is most important that staff deal with these links correctly. The project found little to help degree apprenticeship providers and their staff check and develop the necessary expertise.

There are checklists and similar which provider staff can use to rate their readiness for engaging with reformed apprenticeship<sup>179</sup> but the examples found were not specific to apprenticeship at degree level. A version for those working at degree level could help relevant staff assess their readiness and identify development needs. Links between provider, workplace and apprentice are so critical that it seems surprising there has been no intervention apparently aimed directly at staff development, including production of guidance to providers and staff on identification of appropriate development objectives and ways in which these can be fulfilled.

### 3.9 End – point assessment

An interviewee said (with admirable openness);

‘We’re not quite sure as yet about a number of things to do with EPA. How will it fit onto the end of the degree? Who will do it? Some here had the view we should wait until all [built environment degree apprenticeships] were working but in the end, we decided to pilot it ourselves’.

Obviously, this interviewee was waiting for degree apprenticeships to be approved. Despite this, they were doing their best to prepare the ground in advance.

To meet any reformed apprenticeship standard at any level, what has been learned during the programme must be brought together in the end - point assessment. It should also be noted that;

- The employer (and in some cases the provider) must be satisfied that the apprentice has met the ‘gateway’ criteria to undertake end - point assessment;
- End - point assessment must be administered by an assessor from an approved, independent Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation, and not by the provider who works with the employer during the on-programme part of the apprenticeship programme with the exception of integrated apprenticeship, where the provider and end - point assessment organisation can be the same;
- Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations must be on the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations (RoAAO).<sup>180</sup>

44 per cent of questionnaire respondents said their institution was on RoAAO. Where interviewees’ universities had applied to RoAAO they were asked why;

‘So we can do synoptic [end – point] assessment for other apprenticeships. Engineering, computing, cyber security...CMI and others that are integrated [degree apprenticeships]. Construction degree apprenticeships aren’t [integrated]’;

‘Possibly, we might sell [end - point assessment] services to others. Not for built environment apprenticeships, I mean where it makes sense.’

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<sup>179</sup> For example <http://www.strategicdevelopmentnetwork.co.uk/blog-trainers-confidence-scale/>

<sup>180</sup> <http://futureapprenticeships.org.uk/end-point-assessment/>

Asked if apprentices are or will be monitored specifically towards end - point assessment 76 per cent of questionnaire respondents said yes, 20 per cent that this was intended, altogether, 96 per cent which seems encouraging. Interviewees said;

'All ours will have portfolio that feeds forward to the start of EPA, beginning as early as makes sense then becomes part of their professional diary towards professional interview';

'We will mirror three monthly assessment based on the summary the student does. They should have a mentor and a counsellor'.

There was a comment in one response that 'currently EPA mentoring is the responsibility of the employer, thus some employers have a well - structured mentoring scheme whilst other don't offer mentoring'. This may be true, but it raises questions of what and how the provider knows of the apprentice's progress in the workplace. In practical terms alone, the provider should be aware as this university interviewee said;

'The link tutor is a really important role. When they've [apprentices] done their degree, it may be another year to EPA. The link tutor is there to make sure they [apprentices] haven't gone off the leash, [link tutor will] know when the EPA is, ensure they [apprentices] are well supported.'

On who would carry out specific mentoring towards end - point assessment respondents said employer and provider would work together, that it would be a combination of 'internal academic with discipline specific knowledge alongside an external professional member of the specific professional group', 'internal RICS Assessor and lecturer'. One said, 'we are recruiting new staff to provide counselling/mentoring services to the apprentices during the final two years of the degree'. There was one response of 'external mentor'. Without the provider side it is hard to see how the integrated overview needed for end – point assessment would develop.

What did interviewees think about encouraging development towards end – point assessment? A university interviewee spoke of 'three monthly reports from the workplace and university tutor'.

Others said;

'I'm sure generating and building up evidence for EPA will be better if it's done from early on. From day 1, apprentices could have an e-portfolio and do IDP [Individual Development Plan] online'.

'All ours will have a portfolio that feeds forward into the start of EPA. The portfolio begins as early on as makes sense then becomes part of professional diary towards professional interview'.

'You've got to have a portfolio of experience...The portfolio would go through their final year, it could include winning work. It could be a technical exercise like a survey. They [apprentices] will give presentations about their experience with their employers invited. With the employer, we will give formative feedback'.

There was an interviewee who thought concentration towards the end would be best;

‘...our plan is to do a top up non – credit bearing unit to get to the EPA. Our civil engineering people already have an eight week course to prepare for EngTec’.

One interviewee said; ‘We already embed ICE/ICES because the first employer we worked with on [apprenticeship] wanted ICE – it was civil engineering...some of our learners were going to CIOB and CIAT so we adapted to that. But obviously all RICS ones will be the same.’ A different interviewee seemed closer to the mark when they said ‘You can’t put a generic EPA together. It must always respond to the working context’.

The Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship assessment plan recommends that apprentices have both a supervisor and a counsellor and that the supervisor ‘assesses the apprentice’s competence every three months and the counsellor makes an assessment every six months. The outcome of the assessment is recorded by the apprentice in their Log Book. The assessments require apprentices to demonstrate the required skills and behaviours’.<sup>181</sup>

It was also said that regardless of apprenticeship standards being mapped to professional institution requirements ‘you have to keep looking back at the [apprenticeship] standard.’ Again, this shows understanding that the provider is responsible for ensuring there is evidence that degree apprenticeship standards have been met.

One of the more experienced university interviewees said that success measures for degree apprenticeship (by which providers will be judged) are inappropriate because they are based on benchmarks used by ESFA for across all levels of (the previous system’s) framework apprenticeships. The interviewee felt these benchmarks do not take into account that degree level apprenticeships are longer than at lower levels, and will be more difficult to achieve because degree apprenticeship requires end – point assessment at professional level.

Furthermore, volumes will increase, as an interviewee said;

‘Professional institutions have to recognise that if you’ve got 500 learners all moving forward at the same time, there would be 500 professional reviews at roughly the same time too’.

This questions the readiness of professional institutions, in addition to making the entirely valid point that volumes will be a challenge in themselves.

IfA has said that end – point assessment is ‘an attempt to address employer concerns that under the old system they could have someone who had completed an apprenticeship but they would not always be capable of actually doing the job they were trained in’.<sup>182</sup> It would seem odd if its capacity to indicate competence is not evaluated at some stage. Of course, this would be helpful, but providers should be aware that evaluation of end – point assessment’s capacity to denote occupational competence might be carried out or directed by IfA.

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<sup>181</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/525957/Chartered\\_Surveyor\\_Assessment\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525957/Chartered_Surveyor_Assessment_Plan.pdf) See ‘Assessment Details’ - ‘On Programme’

<sup>182</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609008/IfA\\_Driving\\_Quality\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609008/IfA_Driving_Quality_.pdf) p9

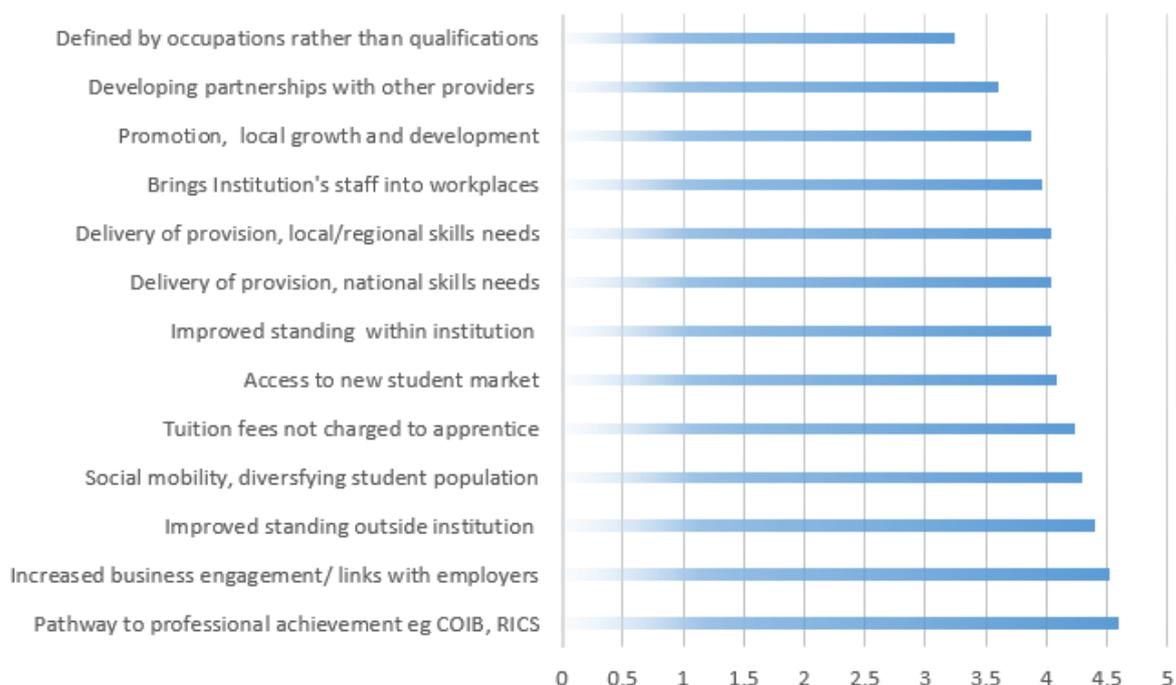
At the time of the project, evaluation of end – point assessment was out of the question because insufficient numbers of degree apprentices had completed in any occupational area. In built environment, Chartered Surveyor was the only active degree apprenticeship. Its first cohort will finish their degrees in 2019 at earliest and end – point assessment will not be completed until later, probably from spring 2020.

The furthest forward are only now approaching the half way mark. End – point assessment for degree apprenticeships awaited from the Technical and Professional<sup>183</sup> Trailblazer will almost certainly differ in some respects from that of Chartered Surveyor.<sup>184</sup> Full examples of built environment degree apprenticeship assessment are impossible at this stage, but Appendix 2 gives insight into a promising approach.

### 3.10 Benefits and obstacles

Questionnaire respondents were asked to rank suggested benefits and obstacles of degree apprenticeships by importance (1-5 with 5 highest). Figures 5 and 6 show weighted average based upon frequency of responses for each benefit and obstacle.

**Figure 5: Benefits**



Source: Project Survey

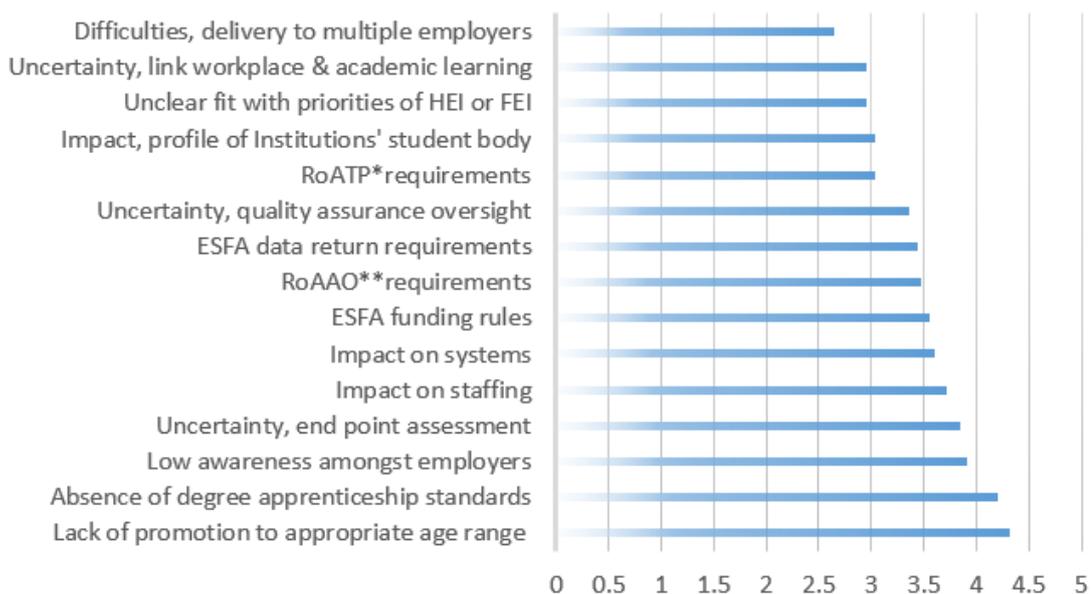
The ‘no brainer’ (degree apprentices’ tuition fees are covered) was rated fifth highest. Professional achievement is clearly appreciated by respondents, but it may not be the top attraction of degree apprenticeship for younger people particularly because they might not know or understand the value of professional achievement.

<sup>183</sup> ‘Balfour Beatty’

<sup>184</sup> For reasons including involvement of different professional institutions, and other changes in approval expectations of assessment plans  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/476940/BIS-15-629-process-evaluation-of-apprenticeship-trailblazers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476940/BIS-15-629-process-evaluation-of-apprenticeship-trailblazers.pdf) p9

It is unclear why interest in business engagement and closer links with employers didn't translate to the interviews. Employer, professional institution, policy and support interviewees thought social mobility and increased diversity important, as did questionnaire respondents. Recruitment to degree apprenticeship seems relatively weak compared with what (particularly) universities do to attract full time students. No specific expertise in recruiting individuals from underrepresented groups was mentioned by this section's interviewees. Some time ago, the Chartered Management Institute said, 'If universities don't make more effort, thousands of students stand to lose out'.<sup>185</sup> There is food for thought in this reference, but providers could develop specific expertise in recruiting individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to degree apprenticeship including support to employers in locating and recruiting from underrepresented backgrounds and helping applicants from such backgrounds in the recruitment process. Universities might incorporate degree apprenticeship into their widening participation strategies and establish metrics to assess the impact of degree apprenticeships on universities' ability to attract individuals from underrepresented groups. The low position of increased contact the institution's provider staff and workplaces may not bode well for the integration of academic and workplace learning. The low position of provider partnerships was echoed by some interviewees who said that the reforms – particularly funding bands – were causing these to fall away.

**Figure 6: Obstacles**



Source: Project Survey

\* Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers / \*\*Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisation

Lack of promotion was also identified as an obstacle<sup>186</sup> in section 2. The only surprise is that questionnaire respondents saw this as slightly more problematic than absence of degree apprenticeships. Uncertainty about end - point assessment was also mentioned by

<sup>185</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2017/aug/18/if-degree-apprenticeships-are-to-widen-access-we-need-to-raise-awareness>

<sup>186</sup> By interviewees and <https://c.yimcdn.com/sites/ise.site-ym.com/resource/collection/7a850055-3087-407c-8e41-a24ae7015560/AGR%20and%20HEFCE%20Developing%20Degree%20Apprenticeship.pdf?hhSearchTerms=%2Aapprenticeship+and+report%22> p3

interviewees. The position on quality assurance has been clarified since the survey.<sup>187</sup> It is hoped that the relative confidence about links between workplace and academic learning is not misplaced. It was expected that impacts on staffing and systems, rules and requirements of ESFA and RoAAO would be seen as obstacles.

### 3.11 Impacts on staff and systems

72 per cent said staffing impacts were noticeable, 20 per cent major, 8 per cent not very noticeable and none that impacts were minor. Comments included 'Numbers are low at this stage. Some people are not affected whereas others e.g. course leaders are greatly affected'. 'This is a strategic opportunity the university is gearing up for, very fluid/changeable landscape though. Link tutors and support staff are required, central admin-illr etc.' 'There is an additional workload in managing relationships now that we are responsible for learning in the workplace as well as the university'.

There were a few echoes of what section 2 interviewees said about university staff industry experience. These examples from university questionnaire responses;

'There has been a drive to raise numbers of staff with doctorates. Apprenticeship shifts to the practitioner. The team that should deliver is a balance between the two'.

'Continuing to practice [in industry] and teach as well is going to have an impact on staff profile. We are taking on people working in industry, trying to get a balance'.

68 per cent said systems impacts were noticeable, 20 per cent major, 12 per cent not very noticeable and none that impacts were minor. There were comments such as; 'compliance with [then] SFA funding requirements, contractual arrangements, liaising with employers. All require auditable records and there's need for monitoring'. There was also 'impact on timetables/ operations as a consequence of offering DAs'. A university interviewee said;

'We've thrown a lot of resources at apprenticeship. The AVC is setting a lot of it up. We're tweaking programmes to reflect. Approval systems are being adjusted to be more agile. We won't have to resource from this department. But there will still be interaction between employers and academics, competency logging etc. It will make what we do already very complicated. Colleges are much better set up'.

University interviewees saw wariness amongst management. This fairly senior interviewee said that management might not want to get involved because;

'...stability in system is questionable. Some may be concerned it's just a passing fancy, a flash in the pan and so be unwilling to invest'.

The wait for built environment degree apprenticeships is unlikely to have helped with this, or encouraged university management to invest to provision, administration and in developing/recruiting staff to ensure expertise is in place. But again, when most universities engaged with degree apprenticeship last year they discovered a new system with (to them) unfamiliar provenance. As an interviewee said, reflecting on changes their university might make to succeed with degree apprenticeship;

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<sup>187</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2017/Name,113266,en.html>

'We didn't used to market very strongly to employers, it was all *UCAS centric*. We made small returns to the [E] SFA, we supported some direct entry. Such as reviews and log books are new. The uncertainty is stressful...then there's entry requirements with thirteen boxes to tick. Yes, we meet with employers but it's collegial. We are doing a lot of it – we interview students, we check documentation but not all of the stuff – it's a cultural change.'

### 3.12 Summary

This section covered;

**Register of Apprenticeship Providers (RoATP) and funding:** applying to RoATP was challenging. University interviewees and respondents thought this was because the register's requirements had a further education provenance, further education interviewees said RoATP was difficult because it had different requirements from those of the previous register. The first (attempted) non – levy provision procurement round's 'pause' followed by few universities being allocated non - levy funds impacted negatively on universities' ability to work with smaller employers.

Differences in requirements between the second round and the first led to what was said to be unnecessary work and those looking for smaller amounts felt they were pushed below the minimum threshold so did not win funds, despite well evidenced proposals. As things stand, unless a non – levy paying firm has independent funds which it elects to use to pay providers for apprenticeship delivery, the only funding sources are non – levy provision and the 10 per cent transfer which built environment levy paying firms may not use. Far greater interest was found in main provider status (delivery of training and assessment for the whole apprenticeship) than supporting status (delivery by subcontract from one of the main providers up to a value of £500k p.a.) Only 4 per cent of questionnaire respondents' institutions had supporting status and none were pursuing it. Lack of supporting providers could prevent niche requirements being met as degree apprenticeship develops.

**Apprenticeship areas:** not all questionnaire respondents were working with apprenticeship because of the unavailability of degree apprenticeships from the Technical and Professional<sup>188</sup>Trailblazer but were preparing for degree apprenticeships. Further education college interviewees were working with apprenticeships up to level 5 and preparing for degree apprenticeships. Universities were using Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship in areas such as real estate and construction management. It was assumed these arrangements were acceptable, but as an interviewee said 'ESFA has claws' which could be put to use should there be uncertainty about the match between any degree apprenticeship standard and the occupation it is being used in.

**Numbers and targets:** 2017 – 18 targets for apprentice starts given to the project were made meaningless by the lack of degree apprenticeships apart from those for programmes using Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship standards.

Lower than expected non – levy apprentice starts will have also affected 2017 – 18 targets. Interviewees were particularly critical of non – levy funding procurement, saying that the second attempted exercise caused unnecessary work, then they were pushed out of the exercise by their bids being scaled back. In the first instance, non – levy funding was

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<sup>188</sup> 'Balfour Beatty'

awarded only to those providers that already had apprenticeship contracts, which led to universities that did not have contracts being unable to work with non – levy paying firms' apprentices until at least December 2017. Providers want non – levy funding to be allocated fairly and transparently. There is little doubt that levy – paying employers would agree with them.

**External engagement:** only one university interviewees said they had or knew if their institutions had plans to partner with further education colleges in delivering apprenticeship at degree level. A few university interviewees visualised recruiting apprentices who had completed at lower levels from further education colleges, but only one knew of plans for arrangements to encourage such progression. The proportion of questionnaire respondents who said they were working with SMEs seemed high because of the lack of non – levy provision funding. Presumably, providers whose staff engaged with this project had the foresight to keep talking to SMEs despite this.

**Recruitment:** according to questionnaire responses, built environment degree apprentices are not recruited locally in the main, which was identified as the national trend. It was also forecasted that regional and national growth will be more significant than local, which could be better for built environment higher education. There were providers involved in the project with well-developed practices to encourage employers to send their apprentices to them.

It is possible that insufficient numbers of degree apprentices will be recruited in the next two years as degree apprenticeship is supposed to be rolling out to drive development of provision. It was suggested the relevant university staff might have targets for apprenticeship recruitment, which would be helpful but what the project found suggests that recruitment strategies and practices should to be examined by providers for their fit with degree apprenticeship.

**Degrees and their delivery:** less than half of questionnaire respondents said that new programmes were being developed for degree apprenticeships. This does not seem to deal with concerns section 2 interviewees had about provision. On the other hand, it was not only experienced interviewees who said that providers must recognise that they are responsible for delivering the whole apprenticeship programme, not just its degree. Day – release was the most popular form of delivery, block or day release supported by distance learning was second (with variations), a few were relying more on distance learning than other means. It was picked up that there were cases of degree apprentices being tutored separately and infilled for lectures, other cases where degree apprentice 'off the job' learning was entirely separate from full time undergraduates. The approach taken could affect apprentices' ability to complete. Providers need feedback from employers and apprentices on their views of how programmes are being delivered.

**Staff deployment:** according to questionnaire responses around three – quarters of universities and further education colleges had staff dedicated to main tasks (such as dealing with apprentices at employer premises, ESFA funding and administration) apart from locating employers and recruitment of apprentices, which were both nearing two - thirds. It may be this reflects that arrangements vary across providers but it might be that degree apprentice recruitment is not receiving enough attention. There were university interviewees that thought that change (whether by recruitment or development) was necessary to achieve the right balance in teams delivering degree apprenticeship. Further education respondents and interviewees all said their colleges were recruiting and/or developing staff for degree apprenticeship.

**Links between provider, workplace and apprentice:** Providers must have staff who can identify the full range of workplace learning, where evidence is needed against apprenticeship standards, how best to generate this evidence, make arrangements for this to happen (or support apprentices in making these arrangements, which might be appropriate as they become confident. There could be learning opportunities as such in this, particularly of personal skills), monitor that the correct evidence is being produced and at all stages maximise the relationship between workplace learning and the academic programme. This is particularly important where the required learning can only occur in the workplace. Further education colleges were recruiting staff with recent industry experience (or concurrent, some would continue to work in the industry) and ensuring that staff have relevant professional memberships (helpful in working towards end – point assessment). It was advised that providers should develop account management capability to manage their relationships with employers, underpinned by suitable information systems system, employers’ requirements should be clarified at the outset, employer expectations of support the provider can give must be managed and systems are needed for issue resolution where there is a problem that needs to be addressed during delivery of the programme. It was also said that providers should refer to good practice from other service industries, especially consultancies that operate business – to – business professional service models where account management is well established. Links between provider, workplace and apprentice are critical so could be supported including by guidance on staff development. The university with the longest experience of degree apprenticeship had a well - developed system with ‘Apprenticeship Officers’ but there were also relatively inexperienced respondents and interviewees who saw how important staffing is to the link between academic and workplace learning.

**End – point assessment:** the 44 per cent of questionnaire respondents who said their provider was registered to deliver end – point assessment was high, but this would not have been for built environment degree apprentices because no existing built environment degree apprenticeships are ‘integrated’.<sup>189</sup> Experienced interviewees were concerned that ESFA’s benchmarks against which providers will be judged on completions are not appropriate to apprenticeship at degree level. It is encouraging that 96 per cent of questionnaire respondents said that their degree apprentices were monitored specifically towards end – point assessment (or that this was intended) but overall, an element of confusion about end – point assessment came through from a reasonably large proportion of questionnaire responses and a few interviews.

End – point assessment is supposed to indicate occupational competence. It would seem strange if IfA does not carry out or direct evaluation of end – point assessment’s capacity to denote occupational competence.

**Benefits and obstacles:** section 2 interviewees who saw speedier professional qualification as a key benefit of degree apprenticeship might be pleased to know that questionnaire respondents ranked the provision of a pathway to professional achievement first. However, unless young people happen to be aware of the value of professional achievement in employment, they are unlikely to recognise the good it could do them. It does not seem difficult for young people to understand that degree apprenticeship does not result in student debt (placed fifth in benefits), but most of them are not swayed by this when choosing what they will do after secondary education. Lack of promotion to the appropriate age was the

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<sup>189</sup> For integrated degree apprenticeships the organisation that carries out the end – point assessment does not have to be independent (but the individual assessor must be). <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/developing-new-apprenticeships/developing-an-end-point-assessment-plan/>

number one obstacle. Social mobility and diversity were also highly ranked benefits, but these will not be served without some effort. Recruitment of individuals from underrepresented background sits with recruitment to degree apprenticeship as such and this appears relatively weak particularly compared with what universities do to attract full time students. Recruiting individuals from underrepresented groups was not mentioned by this section's participants.

**Impacts on staff and systems:** in both areas most questionnaire respondents took a middle path but 20 per cent saw major impacts. Responses mainly focused on administrative change. All further education participants said (by questionnaire and interview) that staff were being recruited and systems were being developed, not as many university participants referred to these directly. Amongst related areas, university interviewees mentioned that there had to be the right balance between academic and industry experience in teams that deliver apprenticeship, also industry familiarisation for academic staff.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

This section brings together what was reflected in this report to form conclusions and recommendations. Where relevant, actions are suggested that could be addressed by providers, employers, policy makers and other stakeholders over the next 2 – 3 years to support implementation of built environment degree apprenticeship.

Almost all who contributed to this project – employer, support, professional institution, further education and university staff – felt that lack of awareness among target groups for degree apprenticeships is an obstacle. The literature also sees promotion as a weak spot and it has been recommended that Government should coordinate promotion of degree apprenticeship.<sup>190</sup> There is evidence that messages are not getting through to and/or not influencing young people making choices about what they will do after secondary education.<sup>191</sup> The project found actions in support of apprenticeship in general (for example statutory change<sup>192</sup> encouraging awareness amongst children<sup>193</sup>) but apart from DADF what is being done to promote degree apprentice is opaque.

**Government should publish clear account of actions it is taking to promote degree apprenticeship including through its agencies (such as IfA, ESFA) and partners and consider a national awareness campaign to explain the opportunity that degree apprenticeships offer. This could particularly focus on school careers advisers who are in a unique position to advise school leavers and influence their choices. Targeting parents (and their influencers such as the mainstream media) would also be helpful to clarifying that an apprenticeship is not necessarily an alternative to going to university as it provides a degree embedded in a work-based programme.**

A national awareness campaign alone cannot address all promotion of degree apprenticeships. For example, it cannot be expected to convince providers of why they should engage or continue with built environment degree apprenticeship (particularly given the trailblazer delay). To promote degree apprenticeship to younger people (and those that influence them) more recent information than 2013<sup>194</sup> is needed on what graduates from full time undergraduate degrees think now for example, did they feel advice they were given on degree apprenticeship before deciding what to do after secondary education helped them to make an informed choice. If there is to be lasting change in how built environment degree apprenticeship is seen, promotion effort specific to it needs to be developed and coordinated. The project found no means to do this.

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<sup>190</sup> <https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/ise.site-ym.com/resource/collection/7a850055-3087-407c-8e41-a24ae7015560/AGR%20and%20HEFCE%20Developing%20Degree%20Apprenticeship.pdf?hhSearchTerms=%22Apprenticeship+and+report%22> pp 3, 5

<sup>191</sup> For example 2017 'Which' survey of 1003 young people, 91 per cent said university was their first choice or had seriously considered it whereas 3 per cent said apprenticeship was their first choice and only one third had considered it

<sup>192</sup> Amendment to Technical and Further Education Act 2017. Requires the proprietor of all schools and academies to ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in year 8 to year 13 for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships.

<sup>193</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/apprenticeship-support-and-knowledge-for-schools-project-launches>

<sup>194</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/15605-which-survey-reveals-gap-in-understanding-about-apprenticeships-compared-to-university>

Mechanisms exist but they are not exclusive to degree apprenticeship or higher education and may not cover all built environment disciplines. Promotion is particularly critical at this time. If too few young people come forward over the next 2 years or so, built environment degree apprenticeship may not embed and ultimately fail.

**A group should be established to focus the interests of built environment degree apprenticeship. It should be recognised as representing the views of constituencies including employers, professional institutions, further education colleges, universities and communicate effectively with others including IfA, CITB and if necessary Government and its relevant departments. The agenda of the group would be its own to set but promotion should be considered as a matter of urgency.**

The inertia which led to the Chartered Surveyor being the only degree apprenticeship available until recent approvals<sup>195</sup> is not limited to built environment. The low number of starts recorded across all but three degree apprenticeships<sup>196</sup> indicates the need to accelerate approval of new standards in occupational areas demanded by a wider range of employers. Construction is a case in point, where the five degree apprenticeships developed by the Technical and Professional<sup>197</sup> Trailblazer are not available for employers to use despite being in the system for over three years. Employers being unable to use levy funds which are then absorbed by Treasury because apprenticeships were not available in time seems likely to put Government in an awkward position. How IfA is dealing with any of these delays is unclear. IfA's Head of Standards is a member of the new CITB Construction Apprenticeships Working Group but at present, what could happen about accelerating availability of construction degree apprenticeships is unknown, as is whether or not the CITB group will relate to built environment degree apprenticeships in addition to those from the Technical and Professional<sup>198</sup> Trailblazer.

**IfA should publish on how the inertia which is still seeing degree apprenticeships languishing in development is being addressed. If this publication is to allay growing concerns, it should include how IfA will achieve effective engagement between its staff and employer groups, clearer communication of the criteria for approving standards and assessment plans and preferably removal of unnecessary stages in the approval process. It would also be helpful if the CITB Construction Apprenticeships Working Group prioritises communication of its intentions towards speeding availability of construction degree apprenticeships and towards any other built environment degree apprenticeships.**

Procurement arrangements for funding to deliver non – levy paying employers' apprenticeships are a major barrier at present. Providers wishing to work with non-levy paying employers were required to tender to ESFA in November 2016. This exercise was 'paused' in spring 2017 and relaunched in summer 2017 using a format so different from the previous one that providers were not able to use their original bid material. A narrative response was required instead, and this was highly demanding.

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<sup>195</sup> Senior Head of Facilities Management and Geospatial Mapping and Science Specialist degree apprenticeships approved 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018

<sup>196</sup> 2,670 starts on Level 6 apprenticeship programmes recorded in Quarter 1 2017/18 (August - October 2017) 75 per cent of which were for Chartered Manager, Digital Solutions Professional and Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeships.

<sup>197</sup> 'Balfour Beatty'

<sup>198</sup> As above.

The first non – levy provision funding was awarded only to providers that already had contracts which disproportionately impacted providers that were preparing for but had not run degree apprenticeship previously.

There was a further problem for providers bidding for relatively small amounts because scaling back of bids resulted in them being pushed below the £200,000 threshold. It is also unclear that many (if any) built environment levy – payers will use the 10 per cent transfer<sup>199</sup>the other likely funding source for non – levy payer provision. It is probable that many providers are now focusing entirely on levy – payers. Already, there are geographical areas with little or no degree apprenticeship provision which will disadvantage local employers and learners. Disproportionate impact on certain occupations is likely, for example building surveying tends to be concentrated in small practices which will not pay levy. The majority of construction firms are also too small to be levy payers. Action is needed to prevent the effects of this lack of funding developing to the extent that built environment degree apprenticeship fails non – levy paying employers.

**The system for procuring non – levy provision funding should be reformed and simplified to encourage small and medium sized firms to take advantage of degree apprenticeships as well as levy payers. This would help restore confidence in the ability of Government to manage funding in the apprenticeships system (via the Education and Skills Funding Agency - ESFA) and encourage more higher education providers to participate. It would also be helpful if providers working with levy – paying employers check they have considered the 10 per cent transfer of unspent funds to non – levy paying firms.**

Providers see funding band maxima for certain degree apprenticeships as unviable.<sup>200</sup>IfA is reviewing certain funding bands (including for Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship) but the maximum will remain at £27,000.<sup>201</sup>Employers have to pay more from their own money if the cost of obtaining the quality they want is higher. It might be that funding band maxima are being used to try to ensure there is enough unspent levy to pay for the manifesto pledge of 3m apprenticeship starts by 2020. There may also be hopes that maximum funding bands will drive provider charges down. But it must be understood that some degree apprenticeships might cost more to deliver as a matter of course than the maximum levy funding allowed.

**IfA must ensure that the process for setting funding bands incorporates effective dialogue between employers, providers and Government to ensure resourcing of degree apprenticeship delivery is set at realistic levels. If employers are consistently paying more from their own money for particular degree apprenticeships, it should be accepted that the relevant funding band maxima need to increase.**

Links are perceived between degree apprenticeship and increased social mobility and diversity for good reason. The socio – economic status, sex and ethnicity of the degree apprentice population would need to be profiled, so the frequency of the relevant characteristics in this population cannot be examined to assess how far degree apprenticeship matches up to expectations. The project found no reference to such profiling.

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<sup>199</sup> One reason for this could be that the levy payers are saving their funds for delayed apprenticeships, another could be that levy paying firms think that using the transfer will cause them additional work.

<sup>200</sup> Built environment examples include Head of Facilities Management degree apprenticeship (maximum £18,000) and Geospatial Mapping and Science Specialist (maximum £21,000).

<sup>201</sup> <https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/17277-esfagov-to-double-apprenticeship-funding-bands>

Inaccuracies and (and possibly anomalies) in data sources would need to be ironed out. Those who work in construction 'on the tools' are often white working class men, a group less likely to go into higher education so less likely to benefit from social mobility expected to result from degree apprenticeship. No recent action on participation by this group was found. Employers who participated in this project were involved in initiatives on social mobility and diversity in apprenticeship<sup>202</sup> but in addition to uncertainty about the extent of practices of this nature, degree apprenticeship will not automatically complement such programmes. Development work has been supported<sup>203</sup> with the intention that its outcomes are intended to guide providers in driving on recruitment of degree apprentices from underrepresented groups. Universities should look at the relationship between degree apprenticeship and their widening participation strategies, and providers should bear the need to evidence outcomes in mind. Tackling social mobility and diversity in degree apprenticeship would be challenging like promotion, and like promotion it would have a number of elements and involve many actors and activities and so requires organisation.

**A comprehensive plan is needed which identifies potential partners and their actions together with a means of delivery to help maximise beneficial impacts of built environment degree apprenticeship on social mobility and diversity. It would be more efficient if the plan is developed by an existing mechanism that will ensure appropriate representation given its context. Providers should review their arrangements for recruiting degree apprentices from underrepresented groups and develop these as necessary using best practice examples. Universities should also consider incorporating degree apprenticeship into their widening participation strategies and providers of degree apprenticeship should develop metrics to assess the impact of degree apprenticeships on their ability to attract individuals from underrepresented groups.**

There was concern that up to one quarter of existing Chartered Surveyor degree apprentices would not pass end point assessment at their first attempt, which would obviously be disheartening for them. It would also damage the reputation of the provider and the final 20 per cent payment would not be made, reducing income. It is most encouraging that nearly all (96 per cent) of questionnaire respondents said their provider's degree apprentices were monitored specifically towards end – point assessment (or that this was intended) but an element of confusion was apparent in some questionnaire responses and interviews. Interviewees were also concerned that ESFA's benchmarks against which providers will be judged on completions are inappropriate to degree apprenticeship, partly because it requires professional achievement via end – point assessment. Setting the apprenticeship levy aside, end – point assessment is the most substantial difference between the old and new systems. It is supposed to indicate occupational competence. It would seem strange end – point assessment's capacity to do this is not evaluated. Providers should be prepared for this in addition to standard quality assurance activity. A professional institution interviewee suggested that a cross – sector board of professional institutions is established as built environment degree apprenticeship rolls out, particularly to address issues in end – point assessment and support development of its best practice.

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<sup>202</sup> For example <http://www.propertyneedsyou.com/about/> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/apprenticeship-diversity-champions-network>

<sup>203</sup> <https://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/university-awarded-funding-support-disadvantaged-pupils>  
Supported by DADF, so outcomes of this initiative should be in the public domain at some stage.

**Providers should ensure support to and preparation of degree apprentices for end – point assessment. Built environment professional institutions should enact a cross – sector board, which should guide providers on end – point assessment. The approach to success rates should be reviewed to take account of the type and level of apprenticeship.**

Further education colleges and a university that ran apprenticeship before the levy was introduced told the project the management system for reformed apprenticeship needed investment and is more complex, for example different formats for reporting to HESA and submitting to ESFA. While it is to be expected that providers have to invest in new systems and resources to manage their apprenticeship provision, the administrative burden is a barrier to wider implementation.

**It is recommended that systems are aligned (including those of ESFA and HESA) to enable providers to manage degree apprenticeships alongside mainstream provision.**

It is clear that promotion of degree apprenticeship needs to be addressed but whatever happens in the future, providers cannot expect the efforts of others to bring them suitable candidates. From research, questionnaire responses and interviews (not only with providers) the impression the project was left with is that many providers are focused on promoting and recruiting to full time undergraduate provision to an extent that there may be a danger that degree apprenticeship is pushed out of the picture.

**Providers should review their arrangements for promotion of and recruitment to degree apprenticeship. Universities in particular should consider increasing awareness, knowledge and expertise of staff involved in promotion of and recruitment to degree apprenticeship and degree apprentice recruitment targets for relevant staff. Further work should be undertaken to clarify provider practice in degree apprentice recruitment.**

Degree apprenticeship requires a deeper level of engagement than providers previously had with employers. The project found that the most experienced providers had account management systems which they used to clarify employers' requirements at the outset, manage employer expectations of what support is possible and help resolve issues should there be a problem to be addressed during the delivery of the programme.

**Providers should consider development of account management capability to manage their relationships with relevant employers effectively, underpinned by suitable information systems such as a customer relationship management system (CRM). Providers might refer to good practice from other service industries, especially consultancies that operate business-to-business professional service models where the principles and practice of account management are well established.**

Some section 2 interviewees felt that provision is not sufficiently up to date. 56 per cent of questionnaire respondents said their institutions were using or planned to use existing degrees for degree apprenticeship, which does not put this criticism entirely to rest. There were also concerns about 'repackaged' degrees. 46 per cent of questionnaire respondents said degrees required re – validation for use in degree apprenticeship but whether the type and level of changes made meet these concerns is unknown.

**Universities should set out the appropriateness of degrees they use for degree apprenticeship in a way that can be understood including by employers. This could**

**also inform promoting degree apprenticeship to young people and those who influence their decisions (such as parents and schools careers advisers).**

A number of section 2 interviewees also felt that university (particularly) staff do not have appropriate industry experience. Provider interviewees and some questionnaire respondents confirmed industry experience to be an issue, mentioning that staff are required to have doctorates and other forms of academic recognition, for example publications, citations. As a university interviewee said 'it all comes back to the university to assess knowledge, skills and competencies' across degree apprenticeship programmes. Not impossible for staff without industry expertise but too important to be left to chance. Approaches including individually tailored outcome based staff development could be considered. Acquiring feedback from employers and degree apprentices would help providers ensure they are handling degree apprenticeship in a manner likely to ensure the best outcome, for example taking feedback from employers and degree apprentices on what they think of degree apprentices being infilled to full time provision.

**Providers should ensure that academic and industry expertise in their teams that deliver degree apprenticeship is balanced and the programme is delivered in such a way that there is the greatest possible confidence the degree apprenticeship will be successfully completed.**

## Appendix 1: Provider Questionnaire

Q1: Title: (Please choose an option): Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr, Professor, Other, I would like to remain anonymous

Q2: Name (unless anonymous)

Q3: Role

Q4: Name of Institution (University/College/Provider)

Q5: What Built Environment Apprenticeship area(s) are you involved with? Please select all that apply: Architectural Technology (design manager), Building Surveying, Quantity Surveying, Construction, Construction Management, Construction site manager, Construction project management, Real Estate, Other (please describe)

Q6: What were your numbers for apprenticeships in each area (between 2016 - 2017)?

Q7: What are your target numbers for apprenticeships in each area (between 2017 - 2018)?

Q8: For each Degree (or Higher) Built Environment Apprenticeship area you identified in answering question 5:- who visits apprentices in their workplace? Member of 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school, Member of Institution (University/College/Provider) staff not from 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school, Other (please explain)

Q9: Who mentors apprentices in their workplace? Member of 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school, Member of Institution (University/College/Provider) staff not from 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school, Other (please explain)

Q10: Who leads on linking apprentices' workplace learning with academic study? Member of 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school, Member of Institution (University/College/Provider) staff not from 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school, Other (please explain)

Q11: For each Degree (or Higher) Built Environment Apprenticeship area you identified in answering question 5, please indicate how these apprenticeships are being delivered to

employers; Block release, Block or day release with distance learning, Online/distance learning only, Regular day release

Q12: For each Degree (or Higher) Built Environment Apprenticeship area you identified in answering question 5; who ensures completion of apprenticeship tracking documentation (including Individual Learning Record (ILR)): Member of 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school, Member of Institution (University/College/Provider) staff not from 'discipline specific' department/faculty/school, If any different, or if several Apprenticeship areas are delivered in different ways, please explain

Q13: For each Degree (or Higher) Built Environment Apprenticeship area you identified in answering question 5, are apprentices mentored towards the End Point Assessment (EPA) specifically? Yes, No, If any different, or if several Apprenticeship areas are delivered in different ways, please explain

Q14: If your answer to question 12 above is yes, who mentors apprentices towards EPA specifically (e.g. external mentor, member of department/faculty/school)?

Q15: What arrangements does your Institution have or plan for EPA of Built Environment Degree Apprenticeships (you identified in answering question 5): Carried out wholly by Professional Institution, Carried out between Institution and Professional Institution, Carried out between employer and Professional Institution, Other (please explain)

Q16: If you are awaiting Degree Apprenticeship Standards, what areas do these Standards cover (e.g. Construction Site Management Degree Apprenticeship)?

Q17: What is the current status of your Institution in regards to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Organisations (RoATP)? Please select which one applies; Main Provider, Supporting Provider - delivers as subcontractor only, Application as main provider on-going, Application as subcontractor on-going, Other (please explain)

Q18: Have you had or referred to external support (e.g. support provided by UVAC - Universities Vocational Awards Council)? Yes, No

Q19: How are your Built Environment Degree (or Higher) Apprentices recruited? Locally, Regionally, Nationally

Q20: Please indicate types of employers you are currently working with on Built Environment Degree (or Higher) Apprenticeships (please select all that apply); Start - ups, SMEs, National

Employers, Multinational employers

Q21: Is your Institution, or department/faculty/school engaged with any of the following in developing/implementing Degree (or Higher) Built Environment Apprenticeships? (tick all that apply); Apprenticeship Training Agencies, Chambers of Commerce, Employer groups, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Authorities, Local apprenticeship hubs, Delivery partners including HEIs, FEIs, private training providers, alternative providers, Not engaged with any of above, Other (please describe)

Q22: Does your Institution have staff dedicated to: (please select all that apply); Recruiting Apprentices, Locating employers, Dealing with apprentices at employer premises, Dealing with employers of apprentices, Ensuring apprenticeship documentation is completed (including Individual Learning Record – ILR), Dealing with ESFA funding and administration, Other (please describe)

Q23: Would you say the impact of Degree (or Higher) Built Environment Apprenticeship on department/faculty/school staffing is; Minor, Not very noticeable, Noticeable, Major

Q24: Would you say the impact of Degree (or Higher) Built Environment Apprenticeship on your department/faculty/school systems is; Minor, Not very noticeable, Noticeable, Major

Q25: Did or does the introduction of Built Environment Degree Apprenticeship require new degree programme development? Yes, No

Q26: Did or does the introduction of Built Environment Degree Apprenticeship require re-validation to amend existing degree programme/s? Yes, No

Q27: Please rank the following suggested benefits of Degree Apprenticeships ('1' not important, '5' highest importance); Student fees are paid by employers/through Apprenticeship Levy and Government co – investment, Access to new student market, Defined by occupations rather than qualifications, Delivery of provision meeting local/regional skills needs, Delivery of provision meeting national skills needs, Increased business engagement and closer links with employers, Developing partnerships with other providers (HEIs, FEIs, alternative providers as relevant), Promotion of local growth and development, Social mobility, widening and diversifying student population, Pathway to professional achievement (e.g. CIOB, RICS), Improved standing of

department/faculty/school within Institution, Improved standing of department/faculty/school outside Institution (e.g. with employers), Brings Institution's staff into workplaces

Q28: Please rank the following potential obstacles to the implementation of Degree Apprenticeships ('1' not important, '5' highest importance); Absence of (Degree Apprenticeship) standards in area/s of interest, Unclear fit with priorities of HEI or FEI, Difficulties of delivering to multiple employers, Low awareness amongst employers, Lack of promotion to appropriate age range (e.g. in schools, by careers provision), Register of Apprenticeship Training Provider (RoATP) requirements, ESFA apprenticeship funding rules, ESFA data return requirements, Uncertainty about delivering appropriate links between apprentices' workplace learning and academic study, Uncertainty about quality assurance oversight, Uncertainty about End Point Assessment (EPA), Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO) requirements, Impact on staffing, Impact on systems, Impact on profile of Institution's student body

Q29: Is your Institution already on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations? Yes, No, Don't Know

Q30: Is your Institution in the process of applying to the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations? Yes, No, Don't Know

Q31: Is your Institution considering applying to the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations? Yes, No, Don't Know

Q32: If you are willing to be interviewed by telephone (about 20 minutes duration) for a case study, please give your contact details -:

## Appendix 2: Insights

### [A] Recruitment

Three strategies were identified, building on relationships, generating employer interest/supporting employer recruitment of apprentices, progression/conversion, which tend to interlock where institutions have longer apprenticeship experience. A college **building on relationships** has;

‘...an employer consortium run by the employer side...50 – 60 members. There are termly meetings, working with 15 of the 40 top consultants and trailblazer companies’.

Members include a relevant professional institution, such as the Highways Authority and TAC<sup>204</sup>. In addition, the college has a ‘...database of 2,000 employers, it’s unique. About one third link to the technical professional side’. The college does not rely solely on these two avenues. ‘We have 157 [construction and related] HNC first years. In September 2017, 120 of them will be progressing, mainly at [the college]. And 70 civil engineering first years. Many of those will do the same’. The respondent said ‘[apprentices] often come to [the college]...from level 3 at other providers to progress rather than stay at the original college, some from as far away as [city approximately 45 miles from college].’ Help is also offered to employers in selecting apprentices (most usually from students at the college who have completed their first year of HNC). ‘We shortlist, sift so that the company interviews six or seven. Those that don’t succeed in getting a job at one employer, we try again with other employers’.

One **generating employer interest/supporting employer recruitment** a university’s website has pages aimed at employers defining apprenticeship, benefits, ‘myth busting’, FAQs about apprenticeship and a quiz employers can use to check their knowledge of apprenticeship. Additionally, the university offers help to employers in recruitment through an apprenticeship vacancy area on its website. Another university holds face to face events and webinars for employers, and has an Apprenticeship Management Team which works with employers in;

- Helping to determine funding arrangements and profiling costs for levy paying and non-levy paying employers
- Providing initial advice to help select the most appropriate apprenticeship to meet business needs
- Supporting the recruitment process, advising on the job advertisement and suitability of candidates
- Guiding the employer through registration and sign-up process once the apprentice is secured
- Face-to-face induction for the apprentice and their line manager to explain how the apprenticeship works and the responsibilities of each party.

lining up with AGR’s recommendation that providers should ‘have a consistent approach to supporting employers who are unclear or uncertain about the development and delivery of

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<sup>204</sup> <http://www.tacnet.org.uk/employers/515>

degree apprenticeship...<sup>205</sup> At the time of interview, the university had around 200 technician level apprentices; 'We're expecting a lot of our [degree apprentice] numbers to come from our technician provision' and 'some will come from [a longstanding apprenticeship partner]'.

Colleges using **progression/conversion** is no surprise. Some universities plan this too;

'We've got about 200 HNCs studying over 2 years, [interviewee's university] does our own – not Pearson – Higher Nationals in quantity surveying, building surveying, architectural technology, construction management and civil engineering, all at level 4. Quantity surveying and construction management are aimed at companies whose people then progress to [interviewee's university] construction management degree, same with architectural technology. Civil engineering goes on to [a university near London] and building surveying to [a university in London]'.

The same university interviewee said 'Why not think about this as extension of workplace opportunities, including for 16 year olds? It would be OK if they're office based like they're a trainee buyer, surveyor or estimator', adding 'conversion', 'we also have 60 – 70 part time students that might become degree apprentices'. Other universities and colleges said they were asking part time students if they wanted to become degree apprentices and for example had 'introduced part time students to employers...and advertised as such to our students as well.' There were comments such as; 'We can only deal with levy payers so it all depends on the company' and 'Demand is a stumbling block. We thought there would be more potential apprentices, more demand from them. But it seems to be completely employers'. Concern was expressed about expectations that universities might be expected to '...relax entry requirements. We can't have them failing and repeating. They must finish for the final 20 per cent'. Conversely, a college worried that universities might set their entry bar too high.

## **[B] Preparation for end – point assessment**

The furthest forward Chartered Surveyor degree apprentices are now only approaching the half way mark but as one university at this stage said '20 per cent is held back until we provide evidence of completion of end – point assessment' which is why 'Counselling has to be in place from year 3'. To ensure links necessary to preparation for end point assessment between university, apprentice and employer (in addition to already having staff who operated in the workplace<sup>206</sup>) the university was;

'...setting up pool of APC counsellors, they'll be needed once apprentices get into their third year [October 2017]...It will be costly...a substantial element'

and has amended provision, particularly by introducing a;

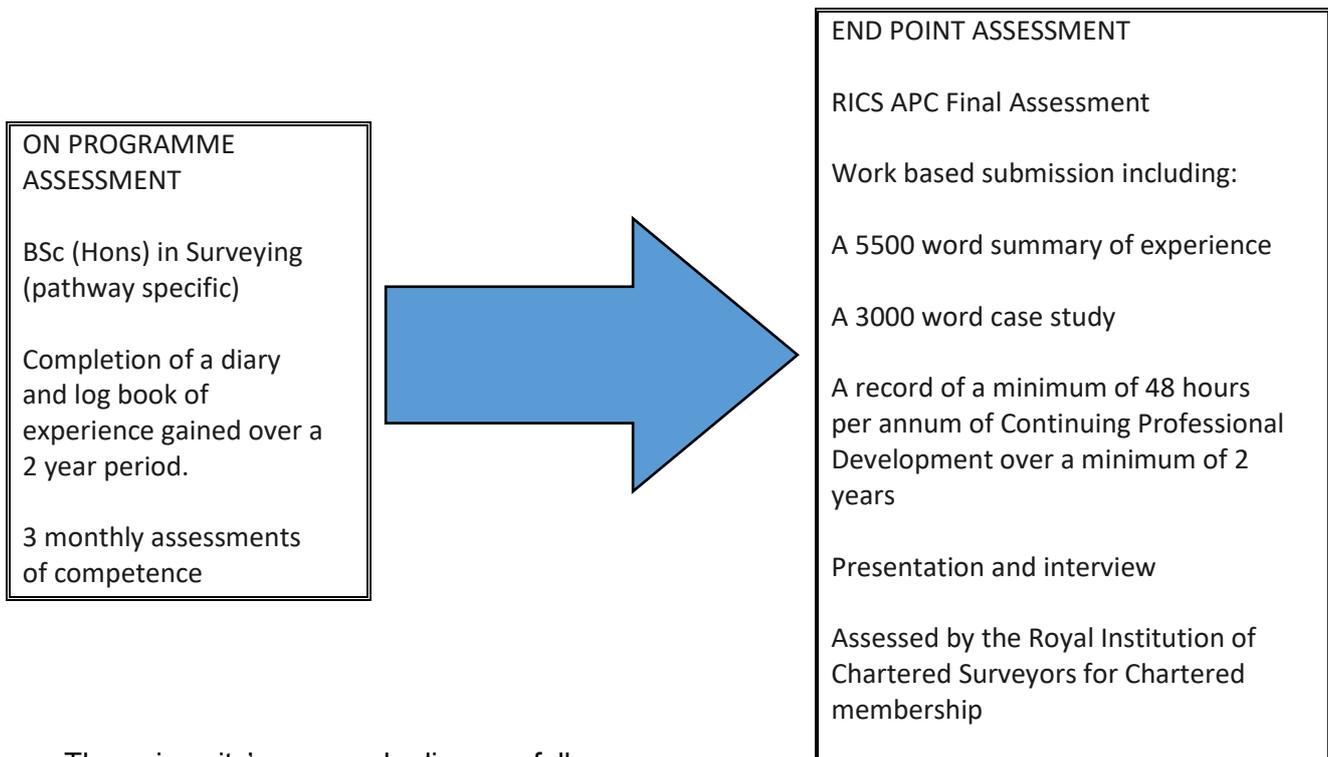
'...level 6 programme alteration to include a work based learning project which supports building of the portfolio for the APC. More project work basically, but hence the EPA will be inside of delivery with degree. But we won't mark it – that has to be RICS'.

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<sup>205</sup> <https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/ise.site-ym.com/resource/collection/7a850055-3087-407c-8e41-a24ae7015560/AGR%20and%20HEFCE%20Developing%20Degree%20Apprenticeship.pdf?hhSearchTerms=%20Apprenticeship+and+report%22> p5

<sup>206</sup> Via the HEI's Apprenticeship Management Team

The project is designed so that apprentices reflect on the relationship between knowledge, skills and techniques acquired through the academic programme and study of professional practice derived from the workplace. Apprentices must demonstrate and communicate the details of the experience gained, together with an in depth consideration, mapping to the competency requirements and the ethical conduct needed for professional body membership. The Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship Assessment Plan sets out the requirements of and relationships between on programme and end – point assessment. <sup>207</sup>



The university's approach aligns as follows:

- *Monitoring and recording of progress towards the standards:* basis is provided by university apprenticeship team induction of apprentice and their line manager to explain how the apprenticeship works and the responsibilities of each party. University apprenticeship officer carries out progress reviews every 10 weeks, recorded in 'One File' and signed off by apprentice, employer and university apprenticeship officer. By the end of year 3, a 2000 word portfolio of evidence comprising diary to cover competences, reflective essay, case study proposal and by the end of year 4, a 4000 word portfolio of evidence comprising diary, evidence based documentation to cover required competences and reflective essay are submitted, with the portfolio of evidence from the first year being resubmitted as part of the final portfolio.
- *Integration of academic and workplace learning:* programme is eight semesters over four years, application for and final APC assessment in year five. Part one of the work based learning project is started by the end of year two and carried out in semesters five and six. Part two of the project is started by the end of year three,

<sup>207</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/525957/Chartered\\_Surveyor\\_Assessment\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525957/Chartered_Surveyor_Assessment_Plan.pdf) 2.3

carried out in semesters seven and eight and completed by the end of year four as part of BSc (Hons) in the relevant Chartered Surveyor degree apprenticeship pathway discipline, with a required 6000 word report.

- *APC* enrolment takes place, structured training and activities begin by the end of year two, with separate CPD record. The *APC* counsellor can be provided by either the university or the employer, is in place by the start of year three and will support the apprentice in bringing all together in the end - point assessment.

## Appendix 3: Summary of New Technical and Professional Apprenticeship Standards for Construction Management (January 2015)

We are pleased to announce that in December 2014 BIS approved a range of new apprenticeship standards for delivery from September 2015. These standards are in a range of occupations that contribute to the control and management of construction projects. They could replace current day and block release schemes and delivery should be on a similar basis, via local colleges and universities. They have the support of major construction companies within UKCG and CECA and a range of SMEs and professional institutions - including CIAT, CIBSE, CIOB, ICE and RICS. They have been designed around Trailblazer criteria and so follow the new Apprenticeship Standard structure. This means: Employer-led, end test, graded, 20% off-the-job training, links to professional membership and qualifications optional. The blocks below show an outline of the content. Detailed design and agreement of modules is currently being conducted with a consortium of employers, professional bodies, colleges and universities.

<b>Design Manager</b> MCIAT	<b>Building Services Engineering Site Manager</b> IEng ACIBSE	<b>Construction Site Manager (with additional Planning pathway)</b> MCIOB	<b>Civil Engineering Site Manager</b> IEng MICE	<b>Construction Quantity Surveyor (with additional Estimating pathway)</b> MRICS
<b>BSc (Hons) Architectural Technology</b> SMSTS	<b>BEng (Hons) Building Services Engineering</b> SMSTS	<b>BSc (Hons) Construction Management</b> SMSTS	<b>BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering</b> SMSTS	<b>BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying</b> SMSTS

### Professional Apprenticeships (separate Standards) – Level 6. 3 years (approx.)

**Entry criteria: Level 4 Apprenticeship or APEL with equivalent experience and qualifications**

<b>Design Co-ordinator</b> TCIAT	<b>Building Services Site Technician</b> EngTech LCIBSE	<b>Construction Site Supervisor</b> ACIOB	<b>Construction Site Engineer</b> EngTech TMICE	<b>Quantity Surveying Technician</b> AssocRICS
<b>HNC</b> SSSTS	<b>HNC</b> SSSTS	<b>HNC</b> SSSTS	<b>HNC</b> SSSTS	<b>HNC</b> SSSTS

### Construction Technician Apprenticeship (single Standard separate pathways) – Level 4. 3 years (approx.)

**Entry criteria: 5 GCSEs(A\*-C), including English, Maths and a Science**

Year 1 will be common across all pathways and will be based around Level 3 Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment units.

[http://www.constructingexcellencesw.org.uk/assets/News/Trailblazer\\_Construction\\_Management\\_Standards\\_Summary\\_TJE\\_14Jan15\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.constructingexcellencesw.org.uk/assets/News/Trailblazer_Construction_Management_Standards_Summary_TJE_14Jan15_2_.pdf)







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