

ASET Viewpoints

Degree Apprenticeships

An innovative new model of Higher Education and employment, Degree Apprenticeships are employer led and designed qualifications which allow learners to access the academic study from a traditional university degree, and combine it with the practical experience and wider employment skills vital for career success. This qualification may be particularly enticing to the learner who had not thought of undertaking a full-time degree or, for those in employment but without a degree, to gain an essential qualification which would allow them to progress further within their chosen career. With Degree Apprenticeships, employers are able to develop or upskill from within their organisation and are able to plan for succession.

How are these programmes different?

Launched in September 2015, the Degree Apprenticeship initiative identified a clear appetite for the development of programmes in England across a wide range of subject areas, with Chartered Management, Digital and Technology Solutions, and Engineering representing the top three areas for provision. The English Apprenticeships 2020 vision describes 3 million new apprenticeship starts by 2020, and also introduced the notion of the apprenticeship levy.

From May 2017, employers with a payroll bill of more than £3 million will pay an amount equal to 0.5% of their payroll into the apprenticeship levy. They can draw down from the levy with their Digital Apprenticeship Service account to pay fees for those employees whom they place on apprenticeship programmes, whether these be new recruits or existing employees.

For learners, this means a different student experience, but one without student fees or the considerable debts faced by many upon graduation.

From a relationship perspective, Degree Apprenticeships are a business-to-business sale and not traditional student recruitment as the employers - working to mutually agreed criteria - advertise for and select the candidates who are then enrolled at the Higher Education Provider (HEP).



Immediate impact on the University community

Degree Apprenticeships require a new way of working, but can draw upon established frameworks such as the ASET Good Practice Guide for Work Based and Placement Learning in Higher Education which is linked to the QAA Quality Code, a national benchmark for ensuring that such relationships are managed well.

ASET supports the recommendations of Universities UK for HEPs, and would add the importance of:

- Building a strong case internally for Degree Apprenticeships, securing the support of all relevant staff, including those with expertise in employer engagement and placement learning
- Promoting Degree Apprenticeships to employers, applicants and outreach communities to develop understanding of these new qualifications
- Utilising existing and extensive links with employers to support the development of Degree Apprenticeships
- Acknowledging that the academic community will need to look for more flexible and innovative processes and procedures to meet the needs of employers for this new form of provision

ASET supports the development of these work based learning programmes recognising the value that it brings to the employer, the university and the learner. A rich learning environment can be created, with reciprocal learning, growing commercial knowledge for the academic community and providing much needed resources to new and established businesses. We appreciate the attractiveness of the combination of degree, additional vocational qualifications and professional recognition.

We remain alert to understanding the impact on the traditional work based and placement learning market, and will work hard to continue to support the employers our members work with to provide the full range of learning opportunities - from internships, to placements, to Degree Apprenticeships - as the breadth of students can support this diversity of practice.



ASET is the Work Based and Placement Learning Association, and our aim is to advance the prevalence, effectiveness and quality of work based and placement learning in Higher Education by promoting research into that system of education and publishing the useful results thereof. Work based and placement learning is that which is part of the Higher Education experience, an integrated part of a programme of study, and that is structured to appropriate learning outcomes and assessment.

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For more information please contact: