

# THE CHARTERED MANAGER DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP: TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose** In 2014, the UK government introduced a new form of apprenticeship, the Degree Apprenticeship, which extends across all undergraduate degree and Master's degree levels, maps to professional standards, and which is now embedded within governmental levies of large businesses. The purpose of this paper is to share early experiences of developing these Degree Apprenticeships, and consider the processes deployed to achieve it.

**Design/methodology/approach** This paper combines desk research with reflections on the experience of developing the new Degree Apprenticeships within Higher Education Institutes (HEI) and considers the implications of this upon current and emerging HEI practice and research.

**Findings** There were a number of key resources which facilitated the approval of the Degree Apprenticeship, and these included a pre-existing, flexible work based learning framework, the associated mechanisms of accreditation, existing professional networks, and a professionally oriented interface between the university, employer and professional body.

**Research limitations/implications** As the context is currently at the early stages of implementation, and the policy context is rapidly changing in the context of Brexit, so too will the related scholarship. This means factors others than those highlighted within this paper may emerge over the coming year or two.

**Practical implications** There are a number of practical implications for the development of Degree Apprenticeships from this research that are reflected in the findings, and include the development of flexible and collaborative processes, resources, and networks.

**Originality/value** This paper is one of the first published accounts of the development of a Degree Apprenticeship within the context of the new policy context in the UK.

## INTRODUCTION

The political reform of apprenticeships is attracting renewed interest across the globe. In examining 450 educational policy reforms between 2008-2014, the OECD found that 29% of the reforms specifically targeted vocational education and training (OECD, 2015). England is no exception and its arrangements and organisation of apprenticeships are currently undergoing a radical transformation, and supported by a recent governmental pledge to start 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020. Announced in November 2014, one new form of apprenticeship, the Degree Apprenticeship, extends to all levels of an undergraduate degree (levels 4, 5 and 6) and a Master's degree (level 7), and is intimately linked to professional standards as set by recognised professional bodies. The funding for Degree Apprenticeships is now embedded into a new levy from April 2016 for large organisations with a payroll exceeding £3 million, but smaller organisations will receive notable incentives to adopt Degree Apprenticeship opportunities which may even exceed their initial outlay (BIS, 2016a). The levy is 0.5% of the large organisation's wage bill (see guidance here <http://www.apprenticeshipslevy.com/>).

The introduction of Degree Apprenticeships has been reported as one of the biggest changes in higher education for decades, and as a sustainable approach to simultaneously develop relevant talent and offer an alternative to traditional degree programmes (City & Guilds Group Industry Skills Board, 2015). Others have considered it to be "the greatest opportunity ever seen for anyone concerned with skills and employment" (Jeffrey 2016). For organisations, Degree Apprenticeships now offers a low cost opportunity for an employer to attract and retain staff whilst developing skills. Early evidence suggests that organisations are reconfiguring their training policies to maximise the return on their contribution to the extent that there are concerns that existing training and development programmes will be shoe-horned into the new model of apprenticeship (CBI, 2016). Early indicators also suggest that there is no shortage of prospective apprentices to take advantage of a 'debt free' degree plus professional qualification.

Driving this new development is the desire to deepen the development of educational systems which meet the needs of employers and therefore the wider economy (Lee, 2012; Wall and Perrin, 2015; Wall, 2016a,b; Wall and Jarvis, 2015). Despite record levels of graduates in the UK, there are increasing concerns about the perceived quality of graduates leaving university. For example, 89% of employers unhappy with the lack of work-readiness (Association of Business Schools, 2014), citing unrealistic work expectations and a lack of commercial awareness amongst the vast majority of graduates (CBI, 2011). Indeed, 80% of employers rank employability skills above degree subject (CBI, 2012), and most critically, the skill areas of communication, team working and project management.

The difficulties of acquiring such employability skills directly through mainstream academic curriculum are widely documented alongside the opportunities afforded by developing associated tacit or professional knowledge in live business environments (e.g. see Ng & Feldman, 2004; Archer & Davison, 2008; Hughes, Sheen and Birkin, 2013; Billett, 2014). These perspectives echo Schon's (1983) view that there is still too sharp a distinction between an academic qualification and measurement of professional competence, which may be seen as a devaluation of degrees or at best result in the Degree Apprenticeship merely becoming a disjointed, extended sequential process (e.g. Lee, 2012). The fundamental concept is that HEIs working closely with employers and professional bodies to deliver Degree Apprenticeships promise to directly tackle these issues around employability and professional competence.

Though with great promise, early responses have stalled, partly due to the lengthy delays in the publication of new Degree Apprenticeship standards, and conflicting messages around the funding model. However, once the standards were published, the earliest Degree Apprenticeship developments emanated from HEIs who had already established flexible, work-based learning frameworks and extensive links with professional bodies and employers. At the time of writing, just 37 HEIs were registered to deliver Degree Apprenticeships, with the majority of those reportedly 'cautious' (HEFCE, 2016). This paper therefore offers a review of how one of these earliest Degree Apprenticeship providers, a North West higher

education institution (HEI), responded to the new governmental policy and engaged in rapid Degree Apprenticeship development to deliver one of the first programmes. In doing so, this paper reflects some of the key resources and processes which enabled this development, with a view to support other HEIs in developing their own responses.

## **CHALLENGES FOR HEIs IN DELIVERING DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS: A LITERATURE**

Apprenticeships are not a new concept, with the first documented use of the term “apprenticeship” around 1563, and has since developed from the learning of traditional trades to embracing integrated qualifications for modern emergent sectors including IT, retail and customer service. The introduction of Higher Apprenticeships in 2008 was well received by employers, Further Education Colleges (FECs), training providers and professional bodies (Wilson, 2012), although there was less clarity surrounding their compatibility with HEIs as they addressed only one or two thirds towards full attainment to degree status. The relationship between apprenticeships and higher education, however, has been more problematic.

Indeed, matching the terminology “apprenticeship” to an honours degree, and the reported unscrupulous use of some apprenticeship funding (Ofsted, 2015), has undermined the term “apprenticeship” and led to a widespread confusion about the worth of exit awards amongst stakeholders (Lee, 2012). In particular, there has been insufficient information given to young people and their school careers advisers. Many schools set targets for the number of pupils they send to a HEI, and most teachers followed the traditional tertiary route themselves. Such potentially biased advice, coupled with the common inference that apprenticeships equals “stacking shelves” (Wallop and Williams, 2013) or “making coffee” (Ofsted, 2015) has resulted in the perception of a second class employment route, as opposed to what might be argued as being a programme for the most highly able and driven professionals of tomorrow, without the average accrued £44,000 debt (Kirby, 2016).

HEIs are usually divided into a number of faculties where individuals specialise in particular subjects and roles, and to some extent, maintain a degree of autonomy from the rest of the organisation. The culture of such fragmented organisations is difficult to change (Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Angwin, Regner, 2014) and many become trapped by their traditional ways of doing things, often requiring much internal lobbying to facilitate innovation (Handsome, 2003). This is still evident in HEIs despite the recent investments and capacity development to deliver enterprise and commercial work across the sector. Successive governments have driven the requirement for HEIs to develop entrepreneurial third stream activities, but HEI responses have been varied depending upon their ‘entrepreneurial architectures’ (Nelles & Vorley, 2008) and customer-centric structures (Garnett, 2009; Garnett, Workman, Beadsmoore and Bezencenet, 2008). It is becoming increasingly apparent that this lack of flexibility and entrepreneurship has to a varied initial response to Degree Apprenticeships from HEIs, affecting both the geographical and occupational reach as HEI and faculties wrangle with their Degree Apprenticeship strategy. Some HEIs have even responded to this issue by creating directorates to provide an ‘institutional view’ of higher level skills (UUK, 2016).

Within HEIs, academics argue that whilst Degree Apprenticeships might be appropriate in certain subject areas such as business and management, some more scientific subject areas could suffer from a manipulation of content and lack objectivity (Barnett, 2002; Gillis and McNally, 2010). Additionally, some opportunities or projects may not be seen as of equal worth or academically credible (Lester and Costley, 2010) and there may be issues regarding management styles, culture and hierarchy that affect the apprenticeship which the HEI cannot influence or control (Talbot, 2014). Equally, Degree Apprenticeships seem likely to represent a threat to the existing undergraduate portfolio and it is already apparent that a number of seemingly traditional students are keen to engage in a ‘debt free’, employer-led degree, with anecdotal evidence emerging of some prospective applicants willing to defer their university application until more degree apprenticeships become available next year.

That said, Degree Apprenticeships will provide an alternative income stream from some non-traditional students amidst a decreasing youth population, and allow further diversification of HEI portfolios (UUK, 2016).

A further issue facing HEIs is that of resource and internal expertise. Plewa, Galan-Muros & Todd (2015) have found that the engagement of business in developing the curriculum is highly valuable, however this cannot be simply limited to one or two superficial activities. Whilst Degree Apprenticeships clearly have huge potential to provide a significant income stream, their inception is difficult and time consuming work that requires high-level negotiation skills, alongside the ability to write appropriate work based degree programmes which meet apprenticeship standards and individual employer needs. Many employers and apprenticeship standards, such as the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, require professional institute qualifications to be incorporated, often leading to a plethora of learning outcomes to ensure that both practical and theoretical competencies are tested to the standards of the professional institute as well as the learning provider.

Unfortunately university resource devoted to the development of Degree Apprenticeships has been scarce, and the UK Government has only just announced an £8 million pump priming to help universities develop their 2016/17 Degree Apprenticeship programmes (BIS, 2016a). Currently, there is a lack of awareness of Degree Apprenticeships and how this will operate in practice for employers and HEIs. Much of the confusion and delay lies with a lack of detail surrounding administrative processes with early evidence signalling excessively bureaucratic and cumbersome application and data collection methods. This has been exacerbated by the proposed transfer of funding from the current Skills Funding Agency system to the Digital Apprenticeship Service in time for the introduction of the levy in April 2017 (UUK, 2016), as well as the introduction of UCAS-led applications which effectively means the creation and implementation of two different systems in HEIs within less than twelve months.

It is not just HEIs who are grappling with the inception of Degree Apprenticeships. There is insufficient detailed information for employers, in particular levy payers, who merely know the amount they will be taxed (CBI, 2016), with many of the procedures and costs still unclear. There is also geographical inconsistency in funding as a result of devolution, which creates major problems for border HEIs and employers (SFA, 2016). No further guidance will be published until June 2016, ten months before the levy starts, with some arguing that this is an unrealistic lead in time for employers to agree recruitment strategies and timescales. This delay has created an unintentional halt in critical employer engagement activity with one of the largest employers in the UK recently complaining privately that trying to understand the latest guidelines released by the Government (BIS 2016a,c) was like “plaiting fog”, whilst the manufacturers’ organisation is openly calling for a delay in paying the levy until September 2017, calling it a “looming car crash” (Gordon, 2016).

The publication of the new Apprenticeship Standards has taken much longer than anticipated with very few currently available to the final level of an undergraduate degree or a Master’s degree (i.e. levels 6 and 7). The government has acknowledged that the introduction of the levy warrants an extension of the old frameworks so that employers have time to effectively develop new occupational standards for delivery by 2017/2018 through trailblazer groups (BIS, 2015). These trailblazer groups have emerged from “established employer networks” comprising of highly experienced and committed managers (IES, 2015, p. 6). Though implemented recently, there is a risk that non-members are excluded, that competing employers will not collaborate, and that too much time investment is required. There is evidence that support is already potentially decreasing due to the resource intensive nature of trailblazer work, with the immense difficulty negotiating consensual development, future reviews, and the continuity of standards (IES, 2016). In addition, newly interested employers have no guidelines or contact points to refer to if they wish to join a newly formed trailblazer group before an expression of interest is made.

In contrast to the issue with delayed publication of standards, problems are becoming increasingly apparent in those standards that are available and in certain instances it would appear that regulations and advice from BIS (2015) has not been adhered to in the rush to get

published, and that innovation has been restricted due to limited timescales (IES, 2015). For example, Digital and Technology Solutions (SFA, 2015b,c) refers to no less than thirteen different job roles within one very generic occupational standard, yet only six specialism job titles appear in the assessment criteria. Another example is that the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) is written in such a manner that it can only lead to one qualified professional status, with an enforced professional membership cost and little room for alternative interpretation to involve other awarding bodies. As a final example, synoptic gateway and end point assessment details are currently vague, and nobody is yet authorised to act as an end point assessor for this particular apprenticeship (SFA, 2015b,c). This has forced HEIs to design, approve and commence programmes without having a clear understanding of what these assessments might ultimately entail.

It is acknowledged that these factors may not be an issue for those employers within the trailblazer group who have successfully influenced models as a result of their sustained input. However, evidence suggests they are becoming problematic for other employers, who have not been consulted and therefore even before delivery has commenced, feel that particular standards are not suitable for their organisation, and in certain situations, even the wider business community. These employers are therefore far less likely to invest in programmes that do not meet their needs. This mismatch in expectations is forcing HEIs seeking to engage with industry to attempt to provide rapid solutions, often through the support of alternative trailblazer groups, which is proving time consuming and resource intensive for all concerned.

Finally, the latest round of funding is open to FECs, which will fund them to develop their own Degree Apprenticeships, but it is not yet clear what role FECs will have or how they will respond with (or indeed without) HEIs. Currently, FEC provision is experiencing a series of area reviews which may lead to a reduction in provision and reduced geographical spread (SFA, 2016; BIS, 2016b). At the same time, FECs are vastly experienced in the administration and delivery of higher apprenticeships which are commonly delivered to Level 5, have an excellent record of employer engagement, and are keen to partner with HEIs to widen the delivery of Degree Apprenticeships. Yet HEIs may be reluctant to sub-contract Degree Apprenticeships to FECs, partly because of a direct competitive threat for Degree Apprenticeships, but also because of the average completion rates of apprenticeships compared to degrees (70% (AELP, 2016) compared to 90% (HEFCE, 2015), respectively). As completion rates will be a metric which will directly influence scores and rankings within the Teaching Excellence Framework next year, it is likely that completion rates will have an even greater force in strategic decisions.

## **EXPERIENCES OF DEVELOPING THE CHARTERED MANAGER DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP**

Notwithstanding the issues discussed earlier, the publication of Degree Apprenticeship standards has resulted in significant change within the HE sector. Apart from the implication of heavy investment in resources to create a market months ahead of any idea of income potential, there is also the need to align or create new modules, programmes and delivery methods which presents a challenge for many HEIs. Typically the process will involve developing multiple new modules, the alignment to one, or more, professional bodies and the attainment of full programme approval. Although this may pose many challenges, it is possible to adapt and build upon existing provision, in particular, the embedded culture of fostering professional learning whereby work-based learning opportunities have been developed for full-time undergraduate students on traditional programmes of study (Major, Meakin and Perrin, 2011).

The establishment of this type of placement-based provision together with sustained interest from central government in encouraging links between HE and industry led a number of universities to develop academic frameworks focused on work-based learning (WBL) for adult learners already in employment. The development of these frameworks in the UK – most typically at leading post-1992 universities – was underpinned for over a decade by

strategic government reports, most notably the Dearing Report (1997), the Lambert Report (2003) and the Leitch Review (2006). These academic frameworks typically fused radical approaches to pedagogy and independent learning (Lester and Costley, 2010; Wall, 2015) with a focus on the fostering and assessment of capability (Stephenson and Weil, 1992). When situated within the modular, credit-based system that became virtually ubiquitous in UK HE during the 1990s, they were able to provide flexible learning opportunities across a wide range of professional areas for learners in the workplace.

There were two main ‘waves’ of WBL development for adult learners in work – in the early 1990s, largely led by Middlesex, Portsmouth and what was then Leeds Metropolitan University, and then a second wave around the turn of the millennium, in many cases impelled by additional resources from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) via its ‘Learning Through Work’ University for Industry initiative (Stephenson and Saxton, 2005). A number of HEIs have therefore already developed wide-ranging frameworks for negotiated work based learning, which enable the granting of academic reward from practical, experiential learning where students are able to demonstrate their workplace capability. At the same time, it allows for focused continual professional development drawing on subject expertise and taught input in a way not often seen in negotiated WBL programmes – in this sense, being a framework for the promotion of both work-based and work-related learning (Wall, 2013).

In this context, many of these universities have found that the development of Degree Apprenticeships has been able to start from a solid base in that both the academic infrastructure that can facilitate the development of degree apprenticeships has been in place, alongside a culture which is based on the recognition that much of the knowledge capital in society exists outside of the academy. In this respect, the emergence of Degree Apprenticeships may not be seen as so much as a threat (either in terms of unfamiliar pedagogy or as potentially undermining recruitment on more traditional full-time undergraduate routes) but as an opportunity building on the university’s existing strengths. Indeed the perceived internal threat to undergraduate recruitment and early academic snobbery surrounding Degree Apprenticeships seems to be fading fast. The last funding round has seen a rising number of new entrants to this market, with 40 learning providers starting programmes this year, many of whom are highly experienced in work based and distance learning delivery (TES, 2016).

One of the first developers of the Degree Apprenticeship for managers (the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship – the CMDA) was the University of Chester. One of the most significant resources in facilitating the CMDA appears to be experience of previous projects or developments with organisations to deliver work-based programmes. This experience seemed to act as a foundation to build structural capital, or the resources to fulfil the needs of customers (Garnett, 2009; Garnett, Workman, Beadsmoore and Bezencenet, 2008). It appears as though HEIs who have a history of previous developments will have experience of developing a significant number of customised work-related modules that are specifically designed according to demand from the commissioning organisation, and based on a learning methodology which blends online materials with periodic workshops that could enable learning to be applied experientially, and then be reflected upon in the workplace. Such resources in the form of learning materials and modules (e.g. in *Managing and Leading People*) can then also developed and adapted over time for more generic audiences in different sectors. These modules, plus work-based learning framework units which allow for the negotiation of work based projects and similar experiential learning, have proven to be important building blocks in the development of the first Degree Apprenticeship (see Perrin et al, 2009).

Established networks were equally as important in this development. The University was approached by Airbus two years ago with a specific request for support in developing their world class apprenticeship programme, in particular the provision of work-based degrees plus relevant professional qualifications. Airbus are a highly sought after, global employer of choice and this is reflected in the quality of apprenticeship that they strive to deliver. Airbus wanted a programme that was a true reflection of the learning that takes place in the

workplace, but that was also flexible enough to meet business needs, with the minimum of disruption. The head of early careers at Airbus, Gavin Jones, explains his perspective:

At Airbus we recognise that full time university is not for everyone as some learners prefer a more “hands on approach” to education. We view our Undergraduate apprenticeships as a very effective alternative method of education that allows us to tailor the learning path of the individual to give them work experience that underpins their academic studies.

An initial review of the University’s work based learning module descriptors revealed a high correlation between the learning outcomes of the modules and the ILM’s professional qualifications at Diploma level. Because of the flexibility and sheer number of modules available within the University’s work-based learning framework, it was possible to effectively develop and cross-map an entirely bespoke BA (Hons) Leadership and Management for Airbus to include embedded ILM Diplomas at Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, thus creating a unique undergraduate and postgraduate offering in the UK for aspiring managers and leaders. Julie Rowlett, business manager for the ILM, said:

We are delighted to be working with the University of Chester to support the launch of their Degree Apprenticeship Programme. The unique work-based approach of Chester Degree sits entirely with the ethos of the ILM vocational qualifications. The embedding of our qualifications into the academic framework offer the learners the opportunity to demonstrate practitioner application in addition to aligning themselves to a professional body.

It was clear that this particular programme, a precursor to HDAs, would align almost perfectly with the CMDA. Unfortunately there was much confusion and misinformation circulating about the ability to use the HDA Standard with an alternative professional body, therefore independent advice was sought from the Skills Funding Agency and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Despite the initial delay, the programme was fully reviewed in November 2015, soon after the Standard was published. Three new modules were written to ensure that all of the CMDA core competencies were met and further ILM mapping took place, as well as a mapping overview of the gateway and end point assessments.

As a result of the previous work with Airbus and support from a colleague mapping to the same Standard in another university, the validation process was relatively smooth. The CMDA comprising the renamed BA (Hons) Business Management and Leadership (WBIS), three ILM diplomas, Chartered Manager status (from the Chartered Management Institute), and the Apprenticeship itself was approved by April 2016 for immediate delivery.

The negotiated, work-based learning framework is paramount to the unique design of this programme. Whilst the CMDA curriculum is focused upon the core competencies identified within the Standard, each assessment can be individually negotiated to specifically put apprentices’ learning into context, resulting in a comprehensive portfolio of evidence that may also be used by Airbus to inform others and enhance organisational performance. The programme also incorporates a bespoke, individually tailored consultancy project at each level (using work-based project modules) which apprentices would be able to negotiate and design in conjunction with Airbus to benefit a specific business area.

Airbus is currently using the precursor to the CMDA as a pilot of HDAs. Their next cohort will commence in September 2016 with the launch of the CMDA and they will be joined by a number of other organisations, with subsequent open or closed cohorts available at any time of year (subject to minimum numbers for viability) and in accordance with employer needs. Applications will be assessed in tandem with employers, using qualifications and/or relevant experience as the criteria, and accreditation is potentially available for previous experiential learning. There is no minimum UCAS point threshold. The programme delivery model is extremely flexible with compulsory workshop attendance just twelve days per year, supported by a blended learning approach and regular workplace visits. Uniquely in

the UK, apprentices who complete the programme at the University of Chester will not only gain a BA (Hons) Business Management and Leadership (WBIS), with an addendum to the award title where specialisms exist, they will also be awarded the ILM Diplomas at Level 4, 5 and 6 as well as the achievement of Chartered Manager status and of course the Apprenticeship itself.

Such a thorough alignment is testament to the collaborative approach taken by ILM, Airbus and the University of Chester and its ability to rapidly develop and deliver a highly relevant, employer-led programme with added value embedded throughout. Though supported by an extended team of knowledgeable colleagues, there was also a key academic lead with extensive experience within commercial settings and growing experience in academe. This academic was therefore a professionally oriented interface between the university, employers and professional bodies. This academic led the development of the HDA programme within the University, from inception, organising events with industry and the professional bodies, through to pricing and approval, and will continue to lead it through to delivery. It appears that this has created a clear sense of project ownership to realise the promise of the HDA agenda.

Even with the achievement of gaining internal support, it is recognised that there may still be difficult negotiations between employer and university in the future, particularly in terms of delivery and content. Whilst many employers espouse the benefits of Degree Apprenticeships, in reality their primary concern is how study time will affect productivity, and some are already finding that even the latest Degree Apprenticeship Standards may not be fit for their needs. This then raises the complex issue of how Standards might be interpreted and adapted to meet individual requirements, or engages the challenge of instigating and supporting a new trailblazer group.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The new Degree Apprenticeships holds promise in terms of offering an additional opportunity for people to engage in a form of higher education which explicitly develops professional competence. Linking to professional bodies and embedding it in the national business tax system positions it as a serious business cost and investment. Yet the recent introduction of the Degree Apprenticeships in the UK has been challenging for all stakeholders so far, including HEIs, employers, professional bodies, and potential apprentices. This is partly to do with the speed of the introduction, delays and confusion about the guidelines and parameters of the Degree Apprenticeship scheme, as well as the structures of academic approval within HEIs. Yet at the same time, we can see from the case that there are strategic, structural resources within HEIs which can serve to support developments under such circumstances.

It appears as though a strong heritage of working collaboratively to develop flexible work based learning curricula provides the structural and cultural foundations to be able to respond to employer and professional body needs. Building flexibility does not just relate to providing a choice between optional modules within a pre-existing programme, but is more intertwined into the cultural fabric of a HEI this links to pedagogy and even unit level learning experiences (Wall, 2013; Wall and Perrin, 2015). This includes the academic frameworks and associated processes of accreditation, relationships with professionals and professional networks, and a suitably qualified interface to facilitate and own development work. This echoes the sentiments of Garnett and colleagues around structural capital, to orient towards the needs of customers (Garnett, 2009; Garnett, Workman, Beadsmoore and Bezencenet, 2008).

The cultural heritage of flexibility also offers a level of adaptability and responsiveness under the conditions time pressure, multiple stakeholders, as well as ambiguity. Indeed, this echoes the recent call from Akrivou and Bradbury-Huang (2015) who argue that if HEIs want to create authentic change agents within practice, and therefore meet governmental agendas of educational programmes directly impacting economies, HEIs need to examine and transform their own organisational values, structures, and processes. The

aspiration must be to create an educational environment which inculcates such mindsets in and for practice. The case study presented here indicates that there are communities in HEIs which are structured in ways towards this aspiration, but more cases and research are needed to examine how the UK will deliver against the promise held by the Degree Apprenticeships on a wider scale. The promise is bold, but we still ask, what will the stakeholders be able to deliver?

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