Degree-level apprenticeships overview

The purpose of this document is to provide the Construction and Infrastructure Centre of Vocational Excellence (ConCOVE) with an overview of the key characteristics of degree-level apprenticeships and identify issues to be resolved through the pilots

Overview of Degree-level Apprenticeships

Groups that can play a key role in degree-level apprenticeships

Registration bodies
- Engineering New Zealand (EngNZ)
- New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA)
- Building Officials Institute of New Zealand (BOINZ)
- New Zealand Institute of Building Surveyors (NZIBS)
- New Zealand Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NZIQS)
- New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI)
- Civil Contractors New Zealand (CCNZ)
- Architectural Designers New Zealand
- New Zealand Institute of Building

Degree-level standard-setting bodies
- NZQA (non-university TEOs)
- Committee on University Academic Programmes (universities)

TEOs
- Any tertiary education organisation with authority to grant degrees

WDCs and ITOs
- BCITO
- Waihanga Ara Rau
- Hanga-Aro-Rau

What are degree-level apprenticeships...

Overview: Degree-level apprenticeships involve people in employment undertaking a full-time programme of study leading to an undergraduate degree that embodies on-job and off-job education and training delivered in tandem.

Degree-level apprenticeships have the following characteristics:

Components	Impact
- the basic requirements (standards) are specified by an employer-led working group, registration body and agreed by the relevant standard setting body - a degree is either a requirement of a professional institution or registration body, or is customarily required in the industry as evidenced by employers' recruitment practices validated by employment and skills data - Apprentices must undertake at least six hours in off-job training (i.e. attendance at an institution or the equivalent in the form of e-learning, independent study or similar) if they are full-time employers (30 hours +) - end-point assessments (EPA) delivered by the off-job training provider are used to determine if they have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge, either integrated into the programme of study or kept separate (Lester, 2020)g, (IFATE, 2024).	- Integrated theoretical and practical learning, - Enhanced employment and career benefits, - Ability to gain a degree while working and without debt, - New pathways into higher-level work, - Upskilling of the workforce - Addressing of skill shortages. - Attracts mature learners, further education students, and workers who would not otherwise have considered higher education or other continuing development programmes (UUK 2019, WECD 2019, Engeli & Turner 2019)

Key definitions...

Standards
- Standards describes the skills, knowledge, and behaviors required for a specific occupation and outlines what an apprentice should be able to do upon successful completion of their apprenticeship program.
- These standards can replace the normal requirement that a programme leads to a qualification.

Areas of further work

The following areas require more investigation:
- What are the costs of developing and delivering degree-level apprenticeships and how can the funding system enable providers to develop internal surpluses from these programmes, particularly early on their development given that economies of scale may be slow to emerge or limited?
- What are the most appropriate quality assurance settings including both ex ante and ex post facto requirements?
- How do we minimise administration for employers and ensure that small employers can participate equitably?
- How do we ensure that underserved learners and people from the most socioeconomically deprived communities can access degree-level apprenticeships?
- Is there any distance between the construction standards developed in England and the graduate profiles and other standards developed in New Zealand?
- What fees will be charged to apprentices and who is expected to pay? And will apprentices be eligible for student loans and allowances?
- How long will it take to get degree apprenticeships up and running? The experience in the UK indicates at least 12 months and NZ advice suggests a minimum of 18 months.
- What is our expectation of the time to complete? The UK system anticipates that apprentices will complete within the same time frame as other undergraduates, i.e. three years or so.
- What exit points should we provide for at the end of year one or two if the apprentice needs to leave their employment?
- How should we think about prior learning and RCC? Should we consider Masters-level apprenticeships in scope?
- What flexibility do we need to build into programmes to account for the balancing of study, work and life?
- What do we know about early-career instability?
- How do we ensure that capstone assessments aren't see as an unnecessary toll booth?
- How do we monitor these programmes? Do we need a way to tag this provision in the SDR?

People and resources...

Apprentices
- People in employment aged 16 years or older working at least 30 hours per week earning at least the training wage

Employers
- Involved in curriculum design and pay and release apprentices

Practitioner educators
- Practitioner educators are professionals who both practice in their field of expertise and teach or educate others in that same field

Academics
- Academic programme design and teaching and learning, and links to research knowledge

WDCs
- Standard development and intelligence

Key success factors
- Integrated practical and theoretical learning (rather than 'parallel' or 'dual')
- Evidence of a work-integrated learning 'signature' pedagogy where practitioners are educated for their new professions...to think, to perform, and to act with integrity
- Assessment methods are adapted for the workplace
- Good 'round' view of quality of learning and assessment through partnership between the academic lecturers and tutors and practitioner educators
- Motivated and engaged employers are critical, so deliberate and conscious strategies to address barriers are critical
- Lecturers/tutors and practice educators are involved in recruitment and selection, employer and academic steering group determine admissions policies and employers nominate practice educators
- Shared accountability between providers and employers for programme quality, scalable quality training of practitioner educators and funding for professional development of practitioner educators
- Careful and systematic mapping of professional registration requirements

Work-integrated learning

Work-integrated learning is at the heart of the model
- Work-integrated' is a mode of education and training that contrasts with parallel (typically day-release) patterns familiar from further education, and the sequential (full-time education followed by workplace training) models
- Close integration between on- and off-the-job components (sometimes described as moving beyond the distinction between 'on' and 'off' job);
- Effective use of work-based projects and online learning; up-to-date content and resources
- Individualised three-way learning agreements
- Effective learner support
- Integration of the assessment requirements for the degree, the apprenticeship, and where relevant professional recognition.
- The workplace is a major source of learning, rather than a site of application

Key enablers...

The following are important enablers of effective degree-level apprenticeships:
- Effective and sustained strategic communications that emphasizes the value of work-integrated learning
- Common set of design principles for work-integrated learning and degree apprenticeships
- Streamlined processes and targeted funding for the development of degree apprenticeships standards and programmes
- Appropriate quality assurance arrangements
- Professional development of practitioner educators