

‘Raising the Standards’

Investigation into Apprenticeship Starts,
Retention and Achievement

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Apprenticeship concerns

Government figures show that almost half of all apprentices are now dropping out of their course

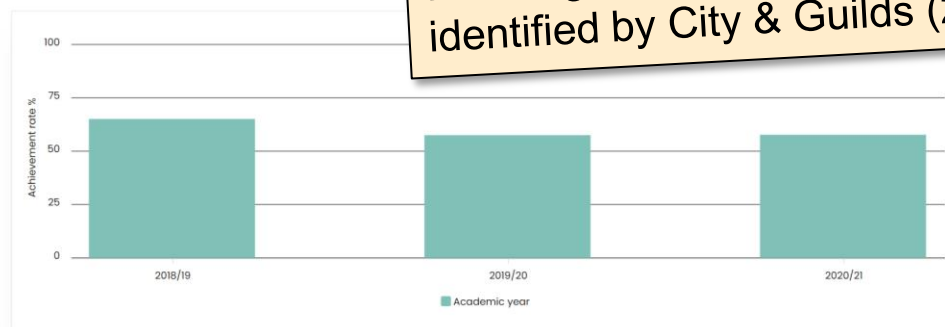
Eleanor Regan
December 5, 2022



The apprenticeship achievement rate in 2021 was 51.8% and this means nearly half of apprentices withdraw before completing their programme. Although we must be mindful that some of these statistics are drawn from the highly disruptive pandemic period we cannot be complacent about the underlying causes of such poor achievement rates. These are serious problems which compound skills shortages in the UK, which need to be addressed as soon as possible. Therefore, this study investigated the factors of apprentices' withdrawal, particularly focusing on some of the essential sectors in the UK identified by City & Guilds (2022)

Headline % Achievement Rates

275,380 leavers in 2020/21. Source: DfE National Achievement Rates



The headline rates mask a very different set of results for frameworks and standards. The achievement rate for standards was just 51.8% in 2020/21 (see graph below), a massive 17.1 percentage points lower than the 68.9% rate for frameworks. Given that all apprenticeships are standards, it is shocking that the achievement rate of 51.8% is 33.7 percentage points lower than the 85.5% achievement rate for 19+ education and training (non-apprenticeship ESFA funded courses).

Most apprenticeship dropouts in England blame poor quality programmes



Published: 29 Nov 2022

Nearly half (47%) of all apprentices in England dropped out of their training in 2021, with a majority citing 'poor quality' as the reason behind their failure to complete.

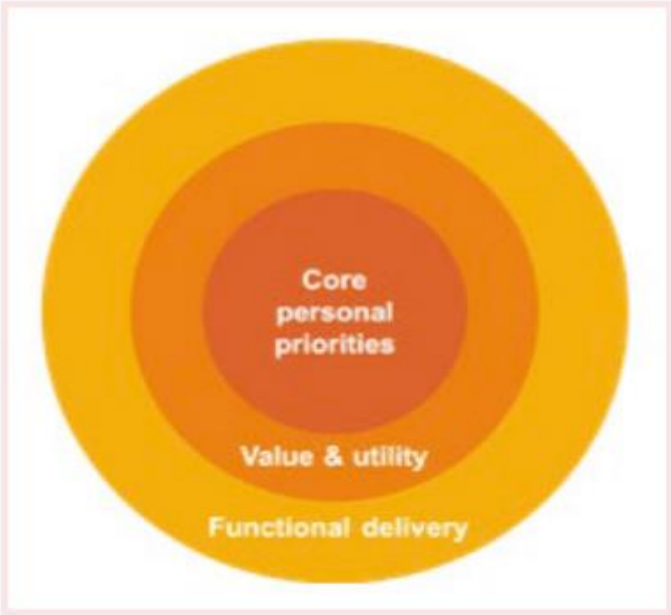
Burghart sets 'ambitious' apprentice achievement rate target and announces feedback tool drop-outs

But AELP chief fears the target will be unachievable



Factors impacting apprenticeships

FIGURE 1: Completion Requirement Model



Source: Kantar Public (2019). DfE Learners and A Completion. London: Department for Education,

Sector	Specific Issues
Agriculture & Animal Care	Mental Well-being
Construction/BSE	Duration
Engineering	Admin Overhead
ICT	Content currency

5. CROSS-SECTORAL FACTORS OF APPRENTICES' WITHDRAWAL

During this research, we were able to identify particular issues as being major drivers for withdrawal in specific sectors, but there were also a number of other issues that were more generally shared.

In total, six such cross-sectoral issues are found;

- 1 English and Math requirements
- 2 Career guidance
- 3 Trainer retention/recruitment
- 4 Engagement with employers
- 5 Challenges with EPA
- 6 Apprentices' job or career change/better job offer

High level recommendation clusters

Raise esteem & currency	Funding and training impact	Induction and support	Accreditation and assessment
<p>1 – Continue to raise perceptions of benefit and value (linked to productivity)</p> <p>2 – Inclusion of apprenticeships in job adverts</p> <p>4 – Stronger enforcement of Baker Clause and PAL</p> <p>5 – More robust outreach strategy for parents/guardians</p> <p>14 – Graduation ceremonies</p>	<p>3 – Review in line with costs of business and staff attraction/retention</p> <p>6 – Standards complexity & duration review in line with bands</p> <p>15 – Interim milestone and completion incentives</p>	<p>7 – Robust onboarding & initial assessment</p> <p>8 – More detailed and engaged progress checks</p>	<p>9 – Contextual Functional Skills</p> <p>10 – Study towards Maths & English</p> <p>11 – Transcript of attainment</p> <p>12 – EPA and industry qual alignment</p> <p>13 – EPA methodology review</p>