

HOW WILL PROVIDERS NAVIGATE THROUGH CHANGES ACROSS THE SKILLS SECTOR?



Rising to the Challenge: Universities, Apprenticeships, and the Shifting English Skills Landscape

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Apprenticeships

The Importance of Higher Education in a Technical Education System: Advantages & Challenges.

The Challenge for Degree Apprenticeships

Incorporating higher education into Technical and Vocational education can elevate the system by providing advanced theoretical knowledge alongside practical skills.

This combination prepares individuals for complex roles in the workforce, fostering innovation and adaptability.

Still in demand by employers, despite government position on L7.

The Challenge against Degree Apprenticeships

Higher education institutions often emphasize theoretical knowledge, which have not always aligned with the practical concepts, hands-on approach central to apprenticeships

This misalignment can result in graduates possessing qualifications that do not meet industry-specific skill requirements, thereby perpetuating the skills gap.

L7 Funding Reduction and sudden Policy shifts.

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Higher education and degree apprenticeships in England face several challenges

1

Financial Constraints: Universities are experiencing reduced real-term income due to tuition fee caps and inflation, leading to financial strains, despite the planned increase. Decline in international students.

2

Regulatory and Policy Issues: Government's (without notice) apprenticeship policy implementation has inadvertently caused confusion and a loss of confidence with employers, but not demand. Future concern about levy use.

3

Operational Challenges: High non-completion rates in all apprenticeships and the need for viable student cohorts pose difficulties in programme delivery. AAF Interventions can position Providers against Employers.

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Fixing the False Narrative Between Entry-level and Degree-level Apprenticeships



Building Seamless Progression Pathways

Provider and Employers need to develop structured pathways enabling apprentices to progress from entry-level to degree-level apprenticeships with aligned curricula and employer collaboration.



Accessibility and Inclusion

Ensure apprenticeships at all levels are accessible to diverse learners, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, through inclusive policies and targeted support.



Unified Apprenticeship Ecosystem

Promote the complementary roles of lower and higher-level apprenticeships, highlighting their collective value in building foundational skills and driving innovation.

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Short, Medium, and Long-Term Priorities for Degree Apprenticeship Policy in England

Short-Term Priorities (0–1 years)

Funding Stability: Ensure sustainable funding mechanisms for all apprenticeships, stop the top slicing of the budget.

Employer Engagement: Strengthen partnerships with employers

Med-Term Priorities (2–3 years)

Progression Pathways: Promote clear progression routes from lower-level apprenticeships to degree-level.

Workforce Planning: Deeper alignment of apprenticeships with local skills needs, focusing on areas like healthcare, digital, and green technologies

Long-Term Priorities (3+ years)

Lifelong Learning Ecosystem: Create a unified system that supports lifelong learning, enabling seamless movement between education and employment.

Global Competitiveness: Position degree apprenticeships as a model for addressing skills gaps, supporting economic growth, and enhancing the UK's global reputation.



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