

Employer involvement

Including mentors and how we can support the learner in the workplace

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Employers are integral to WBL

'the process through which employers directly participant in activity facilitated by an external organisation in pursuit of shared objectives'

(Sector Skills Development Agency 2007 p3)

- + Employers work with educators to create or adapt an existing qualification tailored to their requirements
- + Support an employee to undertake an existing framework for Modern or Graduate Apprenticeships



Creating or adapting a qualification

Requires working with the organisation to understand their requirements

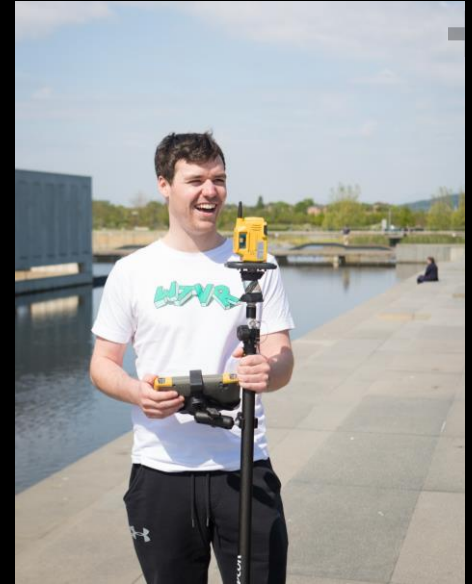
- + Objective of the learning for the employer/sector
- + Does it fit the university's curriculum review?
- + Why are existing routes are not possible?
- + How will it be funded?
- + Is it sustainable?
- + If adapting – is it the qualification and/or delivery?



Employers employing a Modern or Graduate Apprenticeship

Over 80 MA frameworks and 12 GA frameworks

- + Require employer first before a potential apprentice applies
- + There must be a genuine job available with a contract of employment long enough for an apprentice to complete their apprenticeship.
- + Employers can use a variety of training providers



Questions for the employer

Do employers have a clear understanding of their training needs?

Can they clearly articulate the purpose of the programme and its value to them?

Are they engaged and supportive of the learner?

Do they understand their and the university's commitments in the apprenticeship or WBL?

Is there a commitment to WBL both with senior mtg and department level?

Have they identified an individuals (Mentor) to support the learner?

Benefits of employers involvement

Requires mutual understanding and respect and work to develop a long -term relationship (not just a quick win)

- + Able to respond to issues quickly
- + Supports communication between assessor and learners
- + Meeting the business needs and relevant learning
- + Learner feels supported and stays focused
- + Less time required for academic staff to intervene in any disputes



Challenges for academic staff

- + Takes time and effort to develop relationships with employers
- + Who undertakes this liaison with employers
- + More time and effort required to communicate & plan across this triadic arrangement
- + Employers priorities change
- + Ensuring course content is up-to-date with industry needs



Mentors

Requirement for Graduate Apprenticeships but mentors can add so much more.

For learner

- + Someone to discuss ideas and act as a sounding board
- + Allows the apprentice to settle in quickly
- + Improve retention amongst apprentices
- + Improving skills and knowledge transfer

For employer

- + Mentoring can develop leadership skills
- + Expand knowledge and skills in comms and reflection
- + Sharing skills and experience
- + Support the development of the staff

Reflections

- + Should employers be involved in curriculum design – and if so how?
- + How can we help employers to understand their role and the commitment needed?
- + Do mentors need specific training before they support the apprentice?
- + Is it clear within the university who builds this relationship with employers – is it different in HE or FE and subject areas?
- + How do we keep up-to-date with industry needs?