



## DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Analysis of current and planned provision by members of the Chartered Association of Business Schools

June 2018

## ABOUT DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Degree apprenticeships offer students the opportunity to attain a full bachelor's or master's degree as part of their apprenticeship. This new type of programme has been offered by some universities since 2015 and combines working with studying part-time. Apprentices are employed throughout the programme, with some of their time allocated to university study and the rest with their employer. At the end of the programme, apprentices complete an assessment to evaluate both academic learning and occupational competence developed through on-the-job training.

An attraction is that degree apprenticeships will enable apprentices to gain a degree without having to pay tuition fees and give them a head-start in their chosen profession by equipping them with the vocational skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Recruitment for degree apprenticeships is expected to be employer-driven, but both employers and universities will need to be satisfied as to the suitability of applicants.

With the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017, demand for degree apprenticeships is expected to increase as employers opt to use their levy contributions to fund these programmes. Several business schools are already active in offering degree apprenticeships and the number is expected to grow in the coming years, as suggested by the findings from this survey.

## INTRODUCTION

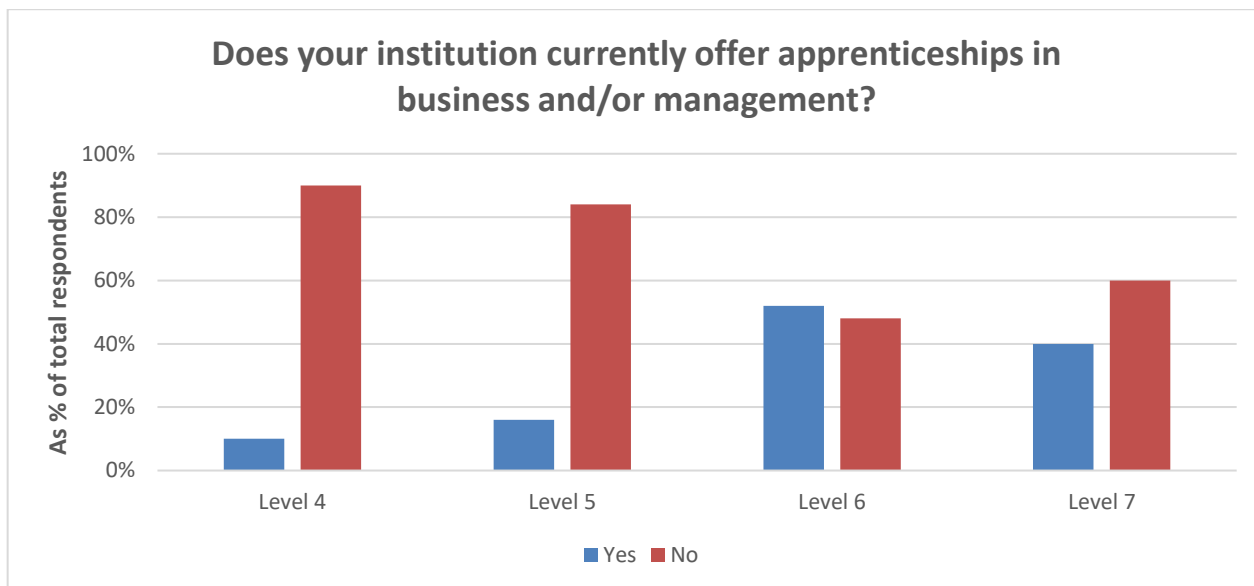
This report provides an overview of the results from a survey of Chartered ABS members' current provision and plans in the area of degree apprenticeships. The online survey was circulated in April 2018 and received a total of 50 responses from individuals with responsibility for degree apprenticeship programmes within their business school.

The questions from the survey covered the following topics:

- Current provision of apprenticeships programmes by the business school and future plans.
- Number of students currently enrolled on degree apprenticeships within the business school and wider institution.
- Projections for number of students expected to be enrolled on degree apprenticeships within the business school and wider institution in future years.
- Extent of support for degree apprenticeships within the senior management of the business school and wider institution.
- Challenges and concerns in the offering of degree apprenticeships.

## FINDINGS

### Current provision of apprenticeship programmes



**Figure 1. Current provision of apprenticeships in business and/or management by level.**

- As depicted by figure 1 above, only a small minority of the responding business schools offer apprenticeships below the level of degree apprenticeships (levels 4 and 5). Nearly half of the business schools offer apprenticeships at the level of undergraduate degree (level 6) and 40% offer apprenticeships at the level of masters degree (level 7).

### Current apprenticeships offered by business schools

- Table 1 (overleaf) offers an indication of the type of apprenticeships currently offered by business schools based on those respondents who provided such information. Few business schools offer apprenticeships at level 4, other than the level 4 component of the Chartered Manager degree apprenticeship which refers to the first year of this programme. For level 5 apprenticeships the Operations/Departmental Manager qualification seems to be quite popular, with four of the business schools currently offering it.
- For level 6 apprenticeships nearly half of the responding business schools (22) said they offered the Chartered Manager degree, by far the most prevalent level 6 apprenticeship

offered by business schools at this time<sup>1</sup>. A handful of the responding business schools currently provide the Digital and Technology Solutions degree apprenticeship.

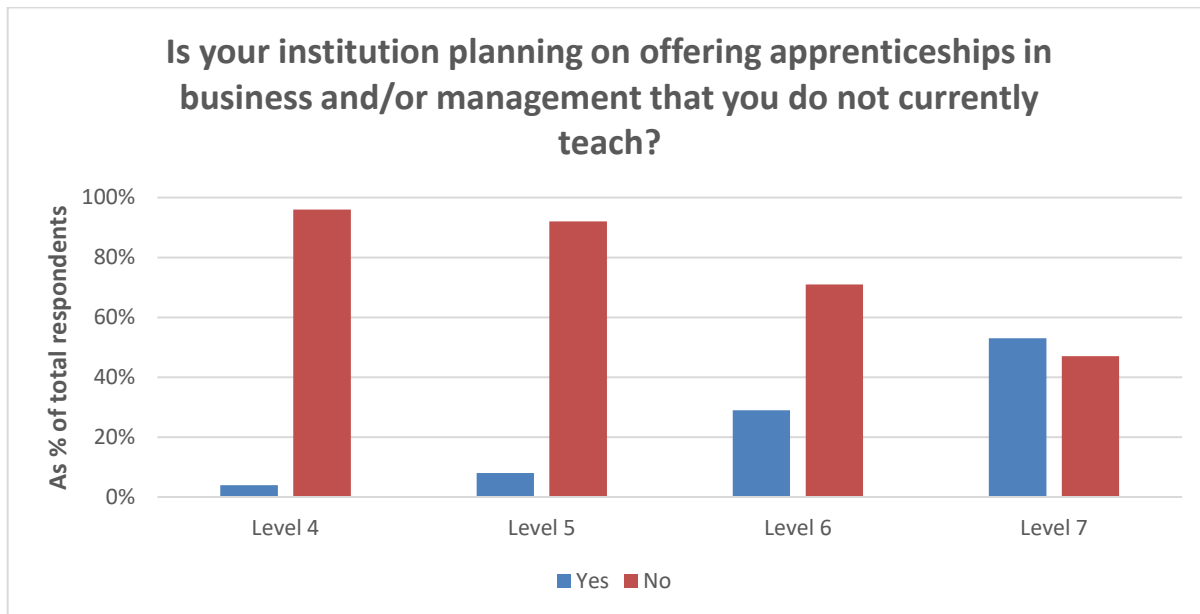
- Similarly, for level 7 apprenticeships the Senior Leaders masters degree is by far the most common and forms part of the current offer for 20 of the responding business schools. A single business school reported offering the Digital and Technology solutions masters degree.

**Table 1. Current apprenticeships offered by business schools.**

Level	Name of qualification	Number of business schools offering apprenticeship (based on survey responses)
Level 4	Level 4 component of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship	4
Level 4	Project Management	1
Level 4	Accounting & Finance	1
Level 4	CIPS - Diploma in Procurement & Supply	1
Level 4	I.T Management for Business	1
Level 4	Business Management	1
Level 4	Associate Project Manager	1
Level 5	Level 5 component of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship	4
Level 5	Operations/Departmental Manager	4
Level 5	Human Resource Management	1
Level 5	Foundation Degree in Applied Professional Practice	1
Level 6 (Degree)	Chartered Manager	22
Level 6 (Degree)	Digital and Technology Solutions	4
Level 6 (Degree)	BA Business Management (Scotland only)	2
Level 6 (Degree)	Social Media and Digital Marketing	1
Level 6 (Degree)	BA Business Management – Financial Services (Scotland only)	1
Level 6 (Degree)	Relationship Manager (Banking)	1
Level 6 (Degree)	School Business Leadership	1
Level 7 (Masters)	Senior Leaders	20
Level 7 (Masters)	Digital and Technology Solutions	1

<sup>1</sup> All of the 22 business schools offering the Chartered Manager degree apprenticeship at level 6 will also offer the level 4 and level 5 components of this qualification which represent the first and second years of the programme, respectively.

Future provision of apprenticeship programmes



**Figure 2. Future provision of apprenticeships in business and/or management by level.**

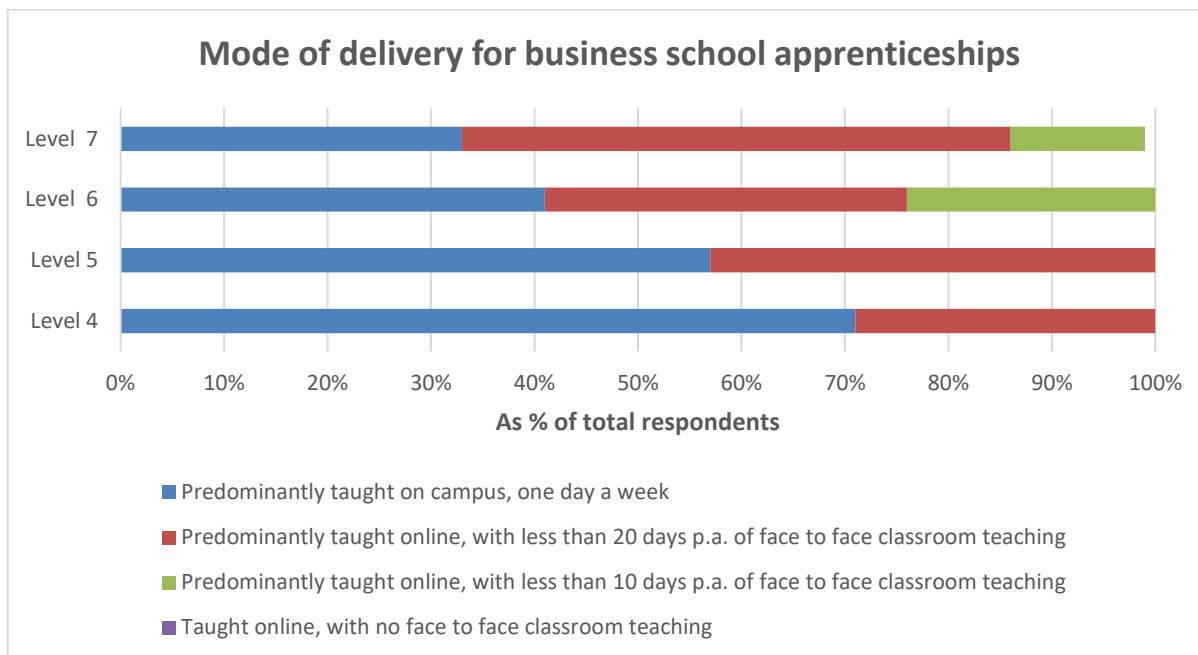
- Very few of the business schools who responded to the survey have plans to launch new apprenticeships in business or management below degree level. For level 4 only 4% of respondents said their school had plans to teach new apprenticeship qualifications, and for level 5 apprenticeships the proportion was only slightly higher at 8%.
- Even for level 6 apprenticeships only 29% of the business schools said they had plans to offer new degree apprenticeships. It is at the level of masters degree where business schools appear to be targeting the biggest growth in apprenticeships, with over half of the responding schools planning to teach new apprenticeships at level 7.
- The focus on level 7 apprenticeships is also strongly evident amongst those schools that at present do not offer any apprenticeships. Of the 12 schools responding to the survey who said that they do not offer any apprenticeships at the moment, nine had plans to introduce level 7 qualifications, three planned to launch level 6 qualifications and none intended to introduce level 4 or 5 qualifications.

**Table 2. Future apprenticeships expected to be taught by business schools.**

Level	Name of qualification	Number of business schools expecting to offer apprenticeship (based on survey responses)
Level 4	Business Management	1
Level 4	Marketing and Sales	1
Level 4	Human Resource Management	1
Level 4	Business Innovation	1
Level 5	Operations/Departmental Manager	2
Level 5	Business Innovation	1
Level 6 (Degree)	Chartered Manager	6
Level 6 (Degree)	Social Media and Digital Marketing	3
Level 6 (Degree)	Digital and Technology Solutions	3
Level 6 (Degree)	BA Business Management (Scotland only)	1
Level 6 (Degree)	Supply Chain Manager	1
Level 6 (Degree)	Business Management	1
Level 6 (Degree)	Accounting	1
Level 6 (Degree)	Financial Services Professional	1
Level 7 (Masters)	Senior Leaders	21
Level 7 (Masters)	Digital and Technology Solutions	3
Level 7 (Masters)	MA Business Management (Scotland only)	1
Level 7 (Masters)	Internal Audit	1
Level 7 (Masters)	E-MBA (potential)	1
Level 7 (Masters)	Professional Accounting & Taxation	1
Level 7 (Masters)	Senior Investment/Commercial Banking Professional	1

- As shown in table 2, for level 4 and 5 apprenticeships the scope of planned provision amongst the responding business schools is limited and is largely confined to qualifications related to Business Innovation and Management.
- For level 6 qualifications, the Chartered Manager degree apprenticeship is the qualification most likely to be introduced by the business schools. A handful of schools also plan to add the Digital and Technology Solutions and Social Media and Digital Marketing apprenticeships to their portfolio.
- The Senior Leaders masters degree features prominently in the plans of many of the business school respondents, with nearly half planning to introduce it, far more than any of the other level 7 apprenticeships. Three of the schools said they planned to teach the masters in Digital and Technology Solutions. The remainder of the level 7 qualifications cited vary significantly and several seem to be tentatively planned.

Mode of delivery for current apprenticeship programmes



**Figure 3. Mode of delivery for business school apprenticeships by level.**

- Figure 3 displays the mode of delivery by level of apprenticeships currently offered by the business schools who completed the survey. For level 4 apprenticeships, traditional campus-based teaching is dominant, with 70% of respondents using this approach.
- For levels 5 and above, however, we see that the online mode of teaching delivery is much more prevalent. In the case of level 5 apprenticeships the campus-based approach is less dominant and a substantial proportion of the courses offered primarily consist of an online approach accompanied by less than 20 days per year of classroom teaching.
- For level 6 degree apprenticeships the online approach accounts for an even higher proportion of the courses offered by the responding business schools (59%) and what is notable is that some of these have less than 10 days of classroom teaching per year.
- For the level 7 masters apprenticeships offered by the business schools the online approach is again dominant, with 66% of the courses using this approach, 13% of which offer only 10 days of classroom teaching per year.

**Table 3. Other modes of delivery used for apprenticeships in business and management.**

Examples of other modes of delivery
<p>Level 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taught at FE college partners.</li></ul>
<p>Level 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivered at institution's FE colleges.</li><li>• Apprenticeship offered to businesses with single cohorts.</li><li>• 'Open' programme consisting of campus delivery of 1 day per week.</li><li>• Block delivery of 20 teaching days plus online supporting materials.</li><li>• Fully blended approach with on-campus sessions and online learning materials with tutor support.</li></ul>
<p>Level 6 (degree apprenticeship):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A mixture of block delivery, mentor support and online.</li><li>• Taught at institution's FE colleges.</li><li>• Offered to businesses with single cohorts.</li><li>• Block delivery on campus comprising 20-25 days per year plus online support materials.</li><li>• Taught on campus face-to-face every two weeks.</li><li>• Block delivery of 2 days approximately every 6 weeks.</li></ul>
<p>Level 7 (masters degree):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Block delivery, teaching support and online.</li><li>• Block delivery comprising 8-13 days on campus plus online supporting materials.</li><li>• Predominantly taught face-to-face.</li></ul>



### Partnerships used by business schools in delivering apprenticeships

Most of the business schools who responded to the survey appear to be delivering their various apprenticeship qualifications as the sole provider. Two of the business schools offering level 4 apprenticeships outsource the teaching to an external provider, with one saying that they retained responsibility for quality assuring the qualification.

A handful of the business schools offering level 6 degree apprenticeships deliver these under varying arrangements with other organisations. One school delivers their degree apprenticeship in partnership with an external training provider that manages the skills and behaviour elements of the qualification whilst the business school has responsibility for the degree teaching. Another school has established a franchise with a local college which has been approved to deliver the course aligned with the franchise standard licenced by the business school.

Amongst the details provided on level 6 qualifications there is another example of programme delivery being outsourced to an external training provider but with the business school responsible for quality assurance. Most of the level 7 qualifications are delivered solely by the business school but two examples of collaboration with specialist external organisations were cited: one involving work-based project supervision and another consisting of vocationally focused teaching.

### Current enrolments in degree apprenticeship programmes

**Table 4. Current enrolments in degree apprenticeship programmes in business schools responding to survey.**

Total students enrolled on degree apprenticeships in business schools	Average number of students enrolled per business school	Total students enrolled on degree apprenticeships in wider institution (excluding business schools)	Average number of students enrolled in each institution (excluding business schools)
1,713	63	1,872	89

- Of the 27 business schools who provided figures on the total number of students currently enrolled on degree apprenticeships in business and/or management, the combined total of students was 1,713 with an average of 63 students at each school<sup>2</sup>. The school with the lowest number of enrolments has 6 students and the highest has 350 students.

<sup>2</sup> According to Department for Education statistics, there were 2,380 starts in Higher Level apprenticeships in the subject of 'Business Administration' for the full year of 2015/16. Source: 'Apprenticeship Programme Starts

- The figures for total students enrolled on degree apprenticeships across the wider university (excluding the business school) should be treated with caution as only 21 of the business schools provided a figure for this question as many were unsure of the number of enrolments on apprenticeships outside of business and/or management.

Projected enrolments for degree apprenticeship programmes in future years

**Table 5. Projected enrolments for degree apprenticeship programmes in 2018/19.**

Projected total of students enrolled on degree apprenticeships in business school in the academic year 2018/19	Average number of students projected to be enrolled per business school	Projected total of students enrolled on degree apprenticeships in wider institution (excluding business school) in the academic year 2018/19	Average number of students projected to be enrolled in each institution (excluding business schools)
4,889	153	2,975	142

**Table 6. Projected enrolments for degree apprenticeship programmes in 2019/20.**

Projected total of students enrolled on degree apprenticeships in business school in the academic year 2019/20	Average number of students projected to be enrolled per business school	Projected total of students enrolled on degree apprenticeships in wider institution (excluding business school) in the academic year 2019/20	Average number of students projected to be enrolled in each institution (excluding business schools)
6,597	189	5,690	259

- The above figures for projected enrolments are based on how many students the business school and wider institution are aiming to have enrolled in degree apprenticeships over the next two academic years.
- They should be viewed with a strong degree of caution as many of the respondents admitted that the figures are guesswork and that their knowledge of projected enrolments outside of the business school is limited.

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by Sector Framework and Apprenticeship Standard, Age and Type of Apprenticeship (2002/03 to 2016/17-reported to date)', DfE.

- However, the fact that the expected numbers for student enrolments in future years (tables 5 and 6) are significantly larger than current enrolments (table 4) indicates that universities are planning to significantly step up their provision of degree apprenticeships.

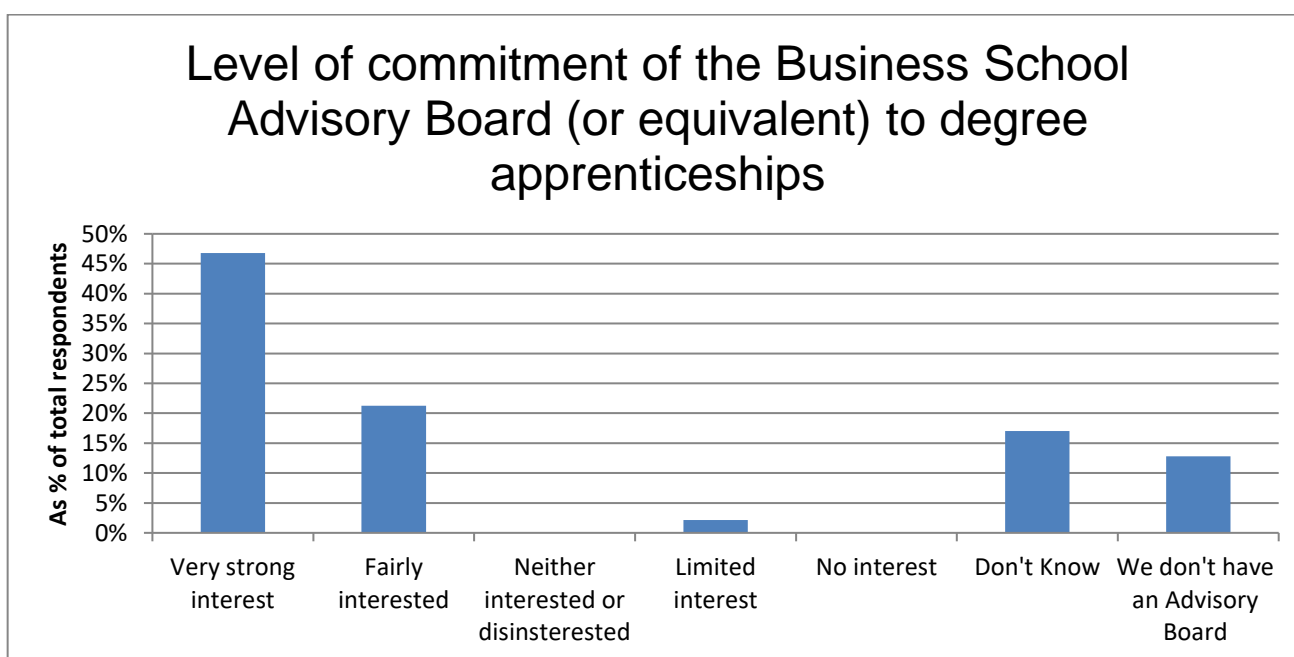
Total degree apprenticeship programmes taught across all institutions (including in business and/or management)

**Table 7. Total degree apprenticeship programmes taught.**

Total degree apprenticeship programmes taught across all responding institutions (including business and/or management)	Average number of degree apprenticeship programmes per institution
115	5

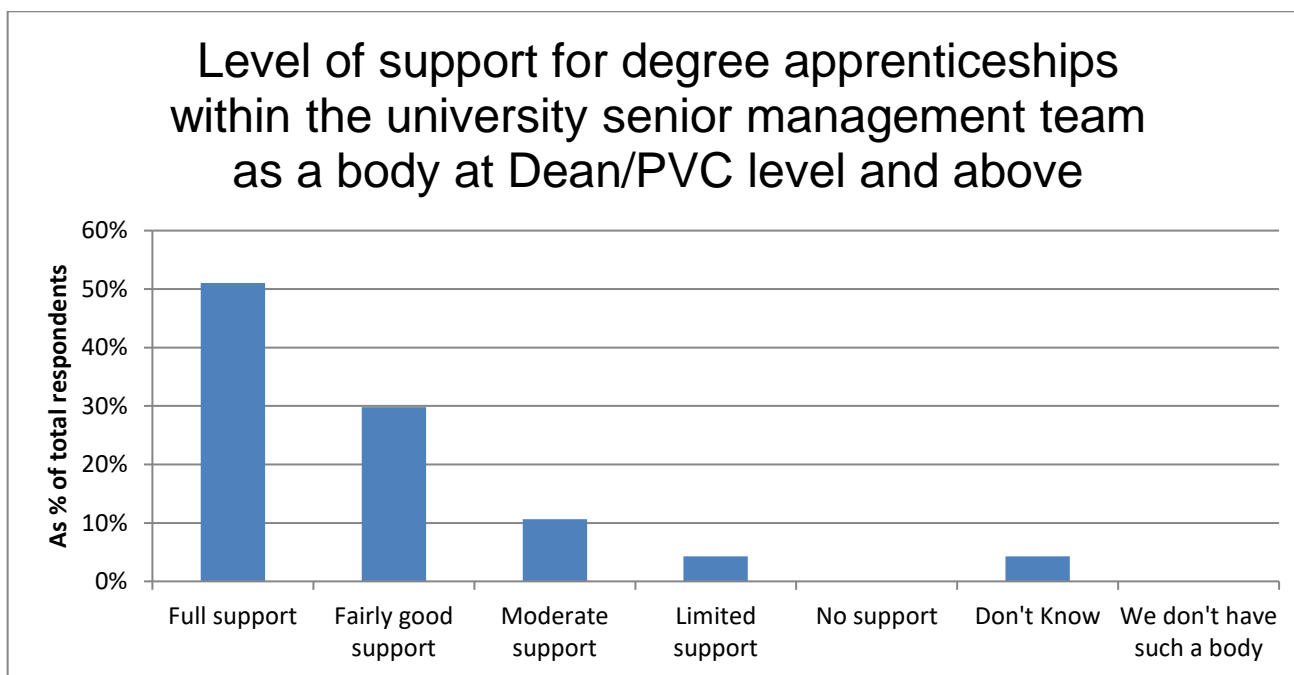
- For the 25 business schools who provided figures on the total number of degree apprenticeships taught across their wider institution, the total number of programmes offered was 115 with an average of 5 programmes at each institution. The institution with the lowest number of degree apprenticeships has a single programme and the highest has 11 programmes.
- The above figures are simply the sum of all the degree apprenticeship programmes reported as being offered across all the institutions whose business schools responded to the survey. The figures do not refer to the number of unique subjects offered as degree apprenticeships.

Level of internal support for degree apprenticeships



**Figure 4. Level of commitment of the Business School Advisory Board to degree apprenticeships.**

- As shown by the results in figure 4 the business schools believe that they have a reasonably good level of interest in degree apprenticeships from their Business School Advisory Board, with over two-thirds of respondents reporting some degree of interest.
- Very few of the respondents see their advisory boards as lacking interest in the concept, although nearly one-third were unable to answer the question, either because they were unsure or because their school does not have an advisory board.



**Figure 5. Level of support for degree apprenticeships within the university senior management team.**

- The results are similar for the level of support for degree apprenticeships amongst the senior management team at the universities, with over 90% of the business schools believing that senior management is at least moderately supportive of the initiative. Furthermore, half of the respondents believe that senior management is providing full support.

### Challenges and concerns related to offering degree apprenticeships in business and/or management

The challenges and concerns most frequently cited by the business schools in relation to degree apprenticeships were:

- 1) Resource capacity.
- 2) Employer engagement.
- 3) Viability of fee levels.
- 4) Developing the systems and processes required to manage degree apprenticeships.
- 5) Lack of understanding of how apprenticeships work.

#### ***Resource capacity***

- Concerns about a lack of capacity and appropriate expertise to manage degree apprenticeships was by far the most frequently cited issue by the responding business schools.
- There was a general recognition that degree apprenticeships will entail additional workload and activities that are unfamiliar to existing staff. It is also felt that it will be necessary to recruit and develop appropriate learning support staff.
- As degree apprenticeships are a new initiative the schools will have to adapt their resources accordingly and there is a belief that they will involve significant 'red tape', a lot of evidence gathering and significant administrative costs.

#### ***Employer engagement***

- Engaging and collaborating with employers is perceived as a significant obstacle to the successful implementation of degree apprenticeships, with many questioning the extent of employers' commitment to the initiative and their willingness to provide appropriate resources and permit employees to have sufficient time away from the office.
- It is believed that the success of the initiative will depend on employers' management of work experience and rotations, three-way performance review meetings, and ensuring that appropriate mentor support is provided and sustained. Some respondents believe that employers lack a proper understanding of how degree apprenticeships work and have been slow to engage with the initiative, suggesting they need to be convinced of its value.
- Business development activity is perceived as taking a very different form when engaging with large corporations in particular, as they may request that their existing training schemes are recognised as part of the degree apprenticeship which means the programme must be

tailored accordingly. Engaging in procurement processes with large businesses is challenging and may require university-wide collaboration that is unusual in other contexts.

- Linked to the concerns about employer engagement is the widespread belief that employers are reluctant to permit their employees to be away from work for long enough to comply with the requirement that 20% of their time is allocated to off-the-job training. In addition to being a problem for employers it also presents an additional time pressure for students.

### ***Viability of fee levels***

- There are concerns that the fee levels for degree apprenticeships are not high enough to make a full degree programme financially viable due to the levy cap being set at £27,000 for level 6 qualifications and £18,000 for level 7.
- The fee level for the Senior Leaders masters degree was cited as being particularly low. One respondent noted that the prices for level 7 degree apprenticeships do not match those for the equivalent post-graduate masters degrees.

### ***Developing the systems and processes required to manage degree apprenticeships***

- Parallel to the business schools' reservations about the resource capacity needed to manage degree apprenticeships is the view that new internal systems will be needed to administrate and manage the programmes because they are very different from their core business.
- The service support required for both learners and organisational staff will be different and will entail the introduction of new procedures, including in relation to student recruitment, and general cultural change. According to one respondent, regulatory guidance on how to manage degree apprenticeships is lacking.

### ***Lack of understanding of how apprenticeships work***

- Many respondents expressed the view that the delivery of degree apprenticeships will be hindered by a lack of understanding of how apprenticeships work, within universities, employers and potential partner organisations.
- The apprenticeships levy itself is seen as a source of confusion and potential uncertainty, as is the complex regulatory environment, involving compliance with ESFA regulations and the uncertainty surrounding the overlap of regulations from different bodies e.g. OfS, Ofsted, QAA.
- The apprenticeship end-point assessment is perceived as posing challenges, as the assessment itself and the associated 'portfolio of evidence' are unfamiliar to universities and the requirements are not straightforward to interpret. One respondent said their institution was unsure about how they could verify that work-based learning had achieved the required standard and the overall quality assurance surrounding this element of apprenticeships.

- According to one respondent, end-point assessment organisations can be inflexible. There is also some disappointment at the length of time it is taking to approve each apprenticeship standard.

***Other important points***

- Several other important points were made that although expressed less frequently remain worth noting. Marketing and promotional activity must be effective in order to encourage both employers and prospective students to engage with degree apprenticeships.
- Some respondents also believe that the initiative represents a reputational risk to universities, particularly for research-intensive universities whose standing will not benefit from association with the word 'apprenticeship'.
- There were several comments that the policy environment in other home nations is not as favourable to degree apprenticeships as in England. In Wales, for instance, the devolved administration has not made funding available for business and management degree apprenticeships, and the funding model in Scotland is perceived as inadequate.

## CONCLUSIONS

Business schools' current and planned provision is focused on the Chartered Manager and Senior Leaders degrees and few are interested in offering level 4 or 5 qualifications

- The findings from the survey suggest that business schools' current provision of apprenticeships in business and management is limited to level 6 or level 7 qualifications, with around half offering an apprenticeship of the former type and 40% offering a qualification of the latter type.
- These existing offers largely consist of the Chartered Manager level 6 degree apprenticeship or the Senior Leaders level 7 masters degree, but a number of business schools are now offering the Digital and Technology Solutions course at both level 6 and 7.
- The outlook is similar if examining the figures that were provided on planned provision of apprenticeships, with very few of the business schools planning to launch level 4 or 5 qualifications but nearly one-third expecting to introduce level 6 apprenticeships and over half expecting to launch level 7 apprenticeships.
- Taken together, the findings on future and planned provision suggest that business schools are reluctant to move too far outside of their comfort zone, hence the focus on degree and masters qualifications.

The business schools are willing to embrace flexibility and innovation in their delivery of degree apprenticeships, and are open to collaboration with a variety of partners

- The mode of delivery for the level 6 and 7 qualifications reveal that business schools are willing to deviate from their usual classroom-based approach to course delivery, with online provision representing the dominant teaching mode, particularly for level 7 courses.
- This may reflect a recognition that those undertaking degree and masters courses will have less time available for conventional classroom-based teaching. Also worth noting is the proportion of level 6 and 7 courses where the number of days of classroom teaching is less than 10 days per annum. A number of respondents cited other delivery models which again suggests that delivery formats are being tailored to specific qualifications.
- Most of the business schools are delivering apprenticeships as the sole provider but a minority are following other approaches, such as outsourcing the teaching to an external provider whilst retaining responsibility for quality assurance, and splitting elements of the teaching with specialist organisations who may be better equipped to deliver certain aspects of the training.



The business schools plan to significantly expand their degree apprenticeships offer, supported by senior management both within the school and the wider institution

- If we compare the figures on total number of students currently enrolled on degree apprenticeships versus the number projected to be enrolled in future, we see that both the schools and their wider institution have plans to substantially scale-up their provision of degree apprenticeships, even if the projected figures should be viewed with caution.
- It would appear that the management of the universities are largely supportive of the plans to expand their degree apprenticeships provision, as a majority of respondents believe that their business school advisory board and senior management within the university are supportive of and interested in these qualifications.

The provision of degree apprenticeships faces numerous challenges, including internally within the business school itself and externally in terms of employer engagement and the regulatory and funding regimes

- The concerns around offering degree apprenticeships centre around the internal capability of the business schools to teach and administer the programmes and the willingness of employers to engage with the initiative in order to maximise the probability of success. The business schools in general view apprenticeships as an unknown field, surrounded by confusion and uncertainty.
- Many believe that there is a lack of detailed understanding on the inner workings of these qualifications, both amongst employers and within their own institutions. There is a feeling that more clarity is needed on issues such as regulation, the apprenticeship levy, end-point assessments and managing the work-based elements of the qualifications. Some respondents believe that the introduction of apprenticeships is being hindered by low fee levels and the slowness in formalising standards for each apprenticeship.