



BRIEFING PAPER

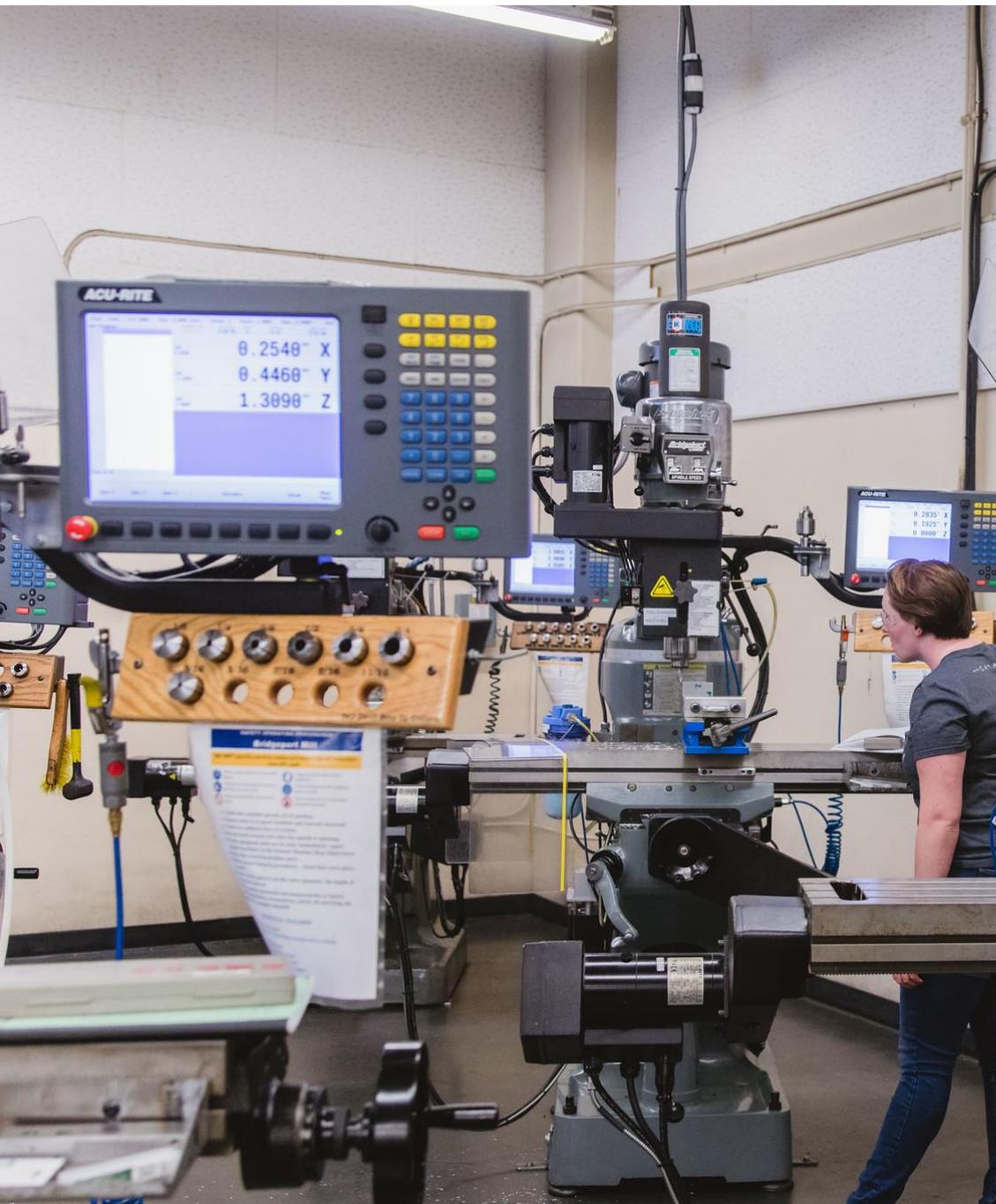
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Degree apprenticeships

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Summary

Degree apprenticeships were **launched in 2015-16**, they are higher education courses which **combine working with part-time study**; courses can be taken at degree level or masters level and courses take between three to six years to complete. Apprentices are **employed throughout the course**.

Degree apprenticeship programmes are developed by employers working in partnership with universities, and professional bodies.

13,587 people started a degree apprenticeship in England 2018-19. The number has grown rapidly since they were introduced. Among 2018-19 starters 43% were female, 57% were male and the majority (62%) were aged 25 or older.

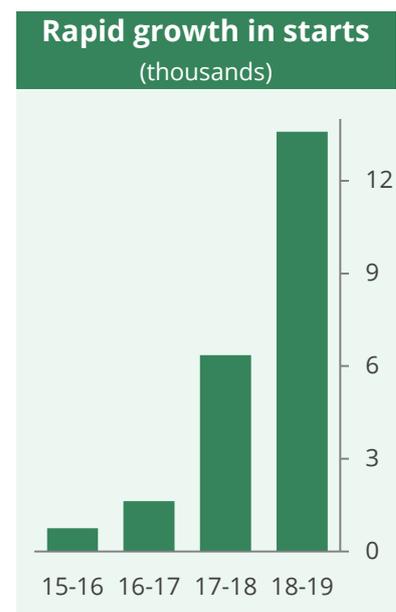
The large majority of degree apprenticeships are supported by the **apprenticeship levy**. Most degree apprenticeships (71% in 2018-19) are at level 6 (undergraduate level). Two-thirds of people starting degree apprenticeships in 2018-19 **had already been with their employer for more than 12 months**.

Almost **half of degree apprenticeship starts in 2018-19 were in business, administration and law**.

Degree apprenticeships have a number of advantages over a standard degree: students benefit by getting a degree without debt, earning while learning and gaining relevant work experience. Higher education institutions benefit by gaining a new income stream which also enables them to widen access to higher education and meet their participation goals. Employers benefit from co-designing courses to meet their needs and by the creation of a pool of work ready future employees.

There are however some issues with these degrees such as the claim that employers are not creating new schemes but are simply **re-badging their graduate schemes** and critics also say that these apprenticeships are **taking funding away from lower level apprenticeships**.

After an apparent initial reluctance universities are now onboard with degree apprenticeships and Universities UK is an “enthusiastic supporter” of these degrees. As a result the number of these courses is growing rapidly.



1. What are Degree Apprenticeships?

Degree apprenticeships (DAs) were **launched in the 2015-16** academic year in four sectors: digital, automotive engineering, banking relationship manager and construction.

DAs are higher education courses which **combine working with part-time study**. Apprentices are **employed throughout the course** and spend part of their time at university and the rest with their employer.

Courses can take between three to six years to complete depending on the course level – DAs can include either a **bachelor degree** (level 6) or a **masters degree** (level 7). Currently, the scheme is only available in England and Wales, although applications may be made from all parts of the UK. Scotland has its own graduate apprenticeship scheme.

Degree apprentices must be 16 or over and they can be new, or current employees.

DA programmes are developed by employers, universities, and professional bodies working in partnership. The apprenticeship system in England is intended to be ‘employer-led’, with employers establishing ‘trailblazers’ to develop apprenticeship standards that are co-designed with providers and focus on their occupational and skills needs.

An analysis of the system was set out in a Universities UK report, [The Future of Degree Apprenticeships](#) July 2019 and in a report by the Higher Education Commission, [Degree Apprenticeships, Up to Standard?](#)

1.1 Degree Apprenticeship standards

The content of each apprenticeship is set out in either a ‘framework’ or a ‘standard’ (frameworks are currently being phased out in favour of standards). Apprenticeship standards outline the skills, knowledge and behaviours (KSBs) required to carry out a particular job. Standards are developed by employer groups known as ‘trailblazers’. The number of DA standards approved for delivery has increased considerably since 2015 and in December 2018 360 standards were approved.¹

Universities will be providing degree apprenticeships across almost all of the available standards. **Chartered manager** and **digital and technology solutions** are the two most implemented standards across each English region, with at least 43 and 33 institutions, respectively, providing them. The third most implemented individual standard is **manufacturing engineer**.

As well as delivering existing standards universities are **developing new standards in 43 industry areas**.

DAs are available in the following areas:

The aim of degree apprenticeships is to bring together the very best of higher and vocational education to meet key skills needs, enhance productivity, strengthen university and employer partnerships, and offer a new route into work.

UUK 2019

¹ Universities UK, [The Future of Degree Apprenticeships](#) July 2019 p52

- [Business and administration](#)
- [Childcare and education](#)
- [Construction](#)
- [Creative and design](#)
- [Digital](#)
- [Engineering and manufacturing](#)
- [Health and science](#)
- [Legal, finance, and accounting](#)
- [Protective services \(e.g. police\)](#)

1.2 Structure of courses

Degree apprentices spend a minimum of **30 hours at work each week**. Work can be done on a day-to-day basis or in blocks of time, depending on the programme and on the requirements of the employer. Apprentices must spend at least **20 per cent of their time in off-the-job study/training**.

Apprentices must complete the course and undertake an independent assessment at the end of the programme which tests both academic learning and competency in the KSBs set out in the occupational standard.

The UCAS website explains that courses can be structured in two ways:

- 1 Employers, universities, and professional bodies come together to co-design a fully-integrated degree course specifically for apprentices, which delivers and tests both academic learning and on-the-job training. This may be the preferred approach for many sectors, as the learning is seamless and it doesn't require a separate assessment of occupational competence.
- 2 Alternatively, sectors may wish to use existing degree programmes to deliver the academic knowledge requirements of that profession. They would then combine this with additional training to meet the full apprenticeship training requirements, and have a separate test of full occupational competence at the end of the programme.

On both routes degrees will be awarded by universities and will be of an equivalent standard to degrees taken via the full-time undergraduate/postgraduate route.

Box 1: Regulation of Degree Apprenticeships

The Department for Education is accountable for the apprenticeship programme in England. The Education and Skills Funding Agency is responsible for apprenticeship policy and funding, and for overseeing delivery of the programme. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, which was set up in April 2017 is responsible for ensuring the quality, consistency and credibility of apprenticeships, including helping employers to develop apprenticeship standards and approving the standards. The [Higher Education Commission](#) had been critical of the complex regulatory structure which it states creates unnecessary bureaucracy and costs.

1.3 How to find a degree apprenticeship

Details of specific DA programmes can be found on the UCAS website at [Degree apprenticeships](#) and in a booklet by the National Apprenticeship Service, [A guide to higher and degree apprenticeships](#).

DAs can also be found on the GOV.UK website at [Find an apprenticeship](#).

Background details on the apprenticeship standards, including entry requirements, role profile and employers involved, can be found on the [Institute for Apprenticeships](#) website.

1.4 How do these degrees differ from sandwich degrees?

DA programmes build on the existing models of sandwich degrees (spending a year in industry) and work placements (doing industry placements in term time or holidays). The UCAS website outlines ways in which DAs differ from sandwich degrees and work placements:

- Degree apprentices are employed throughout and are doing paid work from day one.
- Employers may view these apprenticeships as a way of recruiting top prospective graduates.
- Degree apprentices are likely to have a greater attachment to their employer, and already being employed means they are more likely to stay with that company afterwards. Retention rates for apprentices can exceed 80%.
- In cases where a new degree is developed, employers will be able to work with universities to shape the overall degree programme and all aspects of their apprentice's training.

1.5 What is a higher apprenticeship?

Higher apprenticeships are available from level 4 to 7 with most apprentices on these courses gaining an NVQ Level 4, HND, or a foundation degree. Some higher apprenticeships offer the opportunity to progress to Level 7 (which is postgraduate degree level).

Employees on higher apprenticeships do not have to complete a higher education qualification to pass their apprenticeship.

1.6 Which universities and employers offer DAs?

Around 87 universities and 70 employers are involved in delivering DAs including Russell Group universities, large companies like Rolls Royce, GlaxoSmithKline, Goldman Sachs and public sector organisations such as the [NHS](#) and the [Government Economic Service](#). Members of the University Alliance and MillionPlus mission groups are among the most active providers of DAs along with the Open University.

Individual employers offer widely differing numbers of DA places, for example EY offer 61 places on their assurance apprenticeship programme, other employers may have only one place.

A list of universities and employers offering DAs is given in a booklet, [The Complete Guide to Higher and Degree Apprenticeships 2019/20](#) p10.

2. Statistics on apprenticeships

13,587 people started a degree apprenticeship in 2018-19. The number has grown rapidly since they were introduced, as shown opposite. **Degree apprenticeship starts are still much smaller than the number of undergraduate entrants from England which stood at 455,000 in 2017/18.**²

The increase in degree apprenticeship starts is in contrast to the overall number of apprenticeship starts which fell by 18% or 165,000 between 2016/17 and 2018/19. The largest drop was in intermediate level apprenticeships³ which fell by 43% or more than 200,000. The overall number of higher level⁴ apprenticeships doubled to 124,000.⁵

The **large majority of degree apprenticeships are supported by the apprenticeship levy; 83% in 2018-19.** The remainder are either funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency or unfunded.

In 2018-19 43% of starters were female and 57% were male. This varied by industry. More than three-quarters of starters in manufacturing, ICT and building and construction were men. A similar proportion of those on nursing and health and social care courses were women.

The majority of starters were aged 25 or older, 62% compared with 17% aged 19-24 and 11% under 19. Again this varied by industry with more than 80% of starters in business management and nursing aged 25+, while the large majority of those starting in building and construction, ICT and manufacturing were under 25.

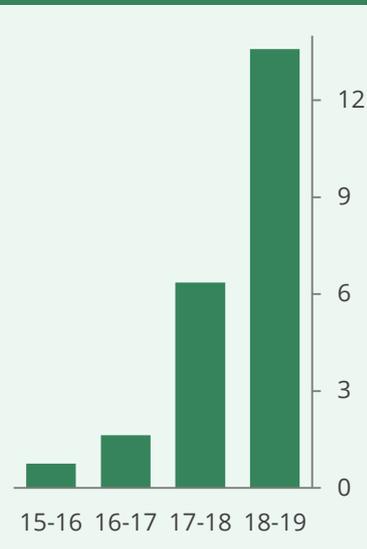
Most degree apprenticeships (71% in 2018-19) are at level 6 or undergraduate level. The remainder are at level 7 or postgraduate (master's) level. There are also higher level apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7 which are not classed as degree apprenticeships. Learners *may* achieve a degree on these programmes but as it is not mandatory, they are not deemed to be degree apprenticeships. In 2018-19 there were almost 9,000 starts on these apprenticeships, nearly 7,000 of which were accountancy/taxation professional level 7 programmes.⁶

Two-thirds of people starting degree apprenticeships in 2018-19 had already been with their employer for more than 12 months.

This varied with age and was highest (83%) for those age 25+ and lowest (14%) for those aged under 19. Nearly 80% of new starters aged under 19 had been with their employer for less than three months.

Almost half of degree apprenticeship starts in 2018-19 were in business, administration and law. This has been the largest subject

Rapid growth in starts
(thousands)



² [HE student enrolments by subject of study and domicile 2014/15 to 2017/18](#), HESA

³ Equivalent to 5 or more GCSE passes

⁴ Level 4 and above, includes degree apprenticeships

⁵ [Further education and skills: November 2019](#), DfE

⁶ [Further education and skills: November 2019](#), DfE

area since degree apprenticeships were introduced. A breakdown by high level subject is given below

Degree apprenticeship starts by broad subject		
2018-19, England		
	Number	% of total
Business, Administration and Law	6,496	48%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	2,053	15%
Health, Public Services and Care	1,979	15%
Information and Communication Technology	1,715	13%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	1,208	9%
Science and Mathematics	94	1%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	39	0%
Arts, Media and Publishing	3	0%

Source: [Further education and skills: November 2019](#), DfE

The most common 'standards' (role the apprentice is learning) are listed opposite. Overall there were 45 different degree apprenticeship standards⁷ in 2018-19.

The Department for Education publishes [data](#) which breaks down starts by the region, local authority and Parliamentary constituency of learners and where the apprenticeships is being delivered. The next table gives a regional breakdown of where learners are from.

When compared the size of the adult population⁸ in each region the number of degree apprenticeships per head was highest in the North East and North West and lowest in London.

2.1 Widening participation

The Government does not publish demographic data on degree apprentices. The Office for Students looked at the [background of degree apprentices](#) in 2016-17.

Readers should note that the number of starters is now more than eight times as high, so these patterns may have changed. They found that new starters were:

- More likely to be men (66%)
- Less ethnically diverse⁹
- Less likely to have a declared disability

Degree apprenticeships: Top 'standards'

Starts in 2018-19, England

Business management -Senior Leader	3,410
Business management -Chartered Manager	2,850
Digital and Technology Solutions Professional	1,508
Chartered Surveyor	1,192
Registered Nurse	1,034
Civil Engineer (Degree)	623

Source: [Further education and skills: November 2019](#), DfE

Degree apprenticeships by region

Starts in 2018-19 by learner's region

North West	2,324
South East	2,125
Yorkshire and The Humber	1,448
East of England	1,407
East Midlands	1,321
West Midlands	1,301
South West	1,235
London	1,180
North East	1,069
Other	177

Source: [Further education and skills: November 2019](#), DfE

⁷ With one or more starters

⁸ Mid-2018 population estimates, ONS (via [Nomis](#))

⁹ Compared to comparator groups of degree entrants studying similar subjects at universities that provided degree apprenticeships

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- More likely to be mature (21+) than full-time first degree students, but less likely than part-time students.
- From a similar range of areas when analysed by educational advantage.¹⁰

Universities are working with employers to use the development of DAs as a way to provide local opportunities to students who might not have considered doing a degree. Degree apprentices are mostly based locally to their university or employer.

DAs could be used by universities as part of their widening participation strategies.

A response to a [PQ](#) in September 2019 outlined how DAs can support social mobility:

Apprentices: Degrees: Written question - 281643

Paul Farrelly: 24 July 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that degree apprenticeships support (a) social mobility and (b) lifelong learning among underrepresented groups.

Mrs Kemi Badenoch: 03 September 2019

Apprenticeships benefit people of all ages and backgrounds, offering high quality on and off-the-job training. Level 6+ and degree apprenticeships offer people an alternative to full time university, as well as the opportunity to upskill or re-train throughout their lives.

The Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund (DADF) aims to enable and encourage greater social mobility and widen participation. The DADF has supported 103 higher education (HE) providers and has resulted in 4,464 degree apprentice starts. The Office for Students has published an evaluation of the fund, which can be found at the following link:
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/7cd79cd8-536f-49e5-a55f-ebd83b344b16/dadf-evaluation.pdf>.

HE providers, such as universities, can include degree apprenticeships in their Access and Participation Plans; these set out how they will support underrepresented groups and help individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds access and succeed in HE. The National Apprenticeship Service works with local partners to ensure that apprenticeships at all levels are available in disadvantaged areas.

We are running an employer engagement campaign, 'Opportunities through Apprenticeships', working with partners in Portsmouth, Nottingham, South Tyneside and Torbay. It aims to support social mobility by creating opportunities for more apprentices from disadvantaged areas to undertake high value apprenticeships with higher earnings potential and progression, such as degree apprenticeships.

¹⁰ POLAR4 which classifieds small areas into one of five groups according to past ;levels of higher education participation.

3. Funding of degree apprenticeships

In the November 2015 Spending Review it was announced that an apprenticeship levy would be introduced in April 2017:

1.173 The apprenticeship levy on larger employers announced in the Summer Budget will be introduced in April 2017. It will be set at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's paybill. Each employer will receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment. This means that the levy will only be paid on any paybill in excess of £3 million and that less than 2% of UK employers will pay it.¹¹

Information on how the levy is used to fund DAs is set out on the Office for Students website at [Degree apprenticeships - guide for employers](#):

Funding and finance

Employers must pay degree apprentices at least the minimum wage for apprentices. This will be £3.90 per hour from April 2019.

They must also offer the apprentice a job which lasts long enough to cover the length of their degree apprenticeship.

Paying for tuition

The Government covers the cost of tuition through the apprenticeship levy.

Employers pay the levy at 0.5% of their annual pay bill, if the bill is over £3 million.

Employers can get this money back (and more), if they commit to apprenticeship training.

Employers who pay the levy

Employers who pay the levy are able to use their available levy funds to cover the tuition costs of their degree apprentices. The Government also adds 10 per cent.

Employers who don't pay the levy

Employers who don't pay the levy currently only pay 10 per cent of the tuition costs for their degree apprentices. They must pay these costs direct to their higher education provider.

The government will pay the other 90 per cent of the cost. In addition, levy-paying employers can transfer some of their available levy funds to other employers, for instance those within their supply chains.

In 2016 the [Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund](#) (DADF) was launched to “boost capacity and internal infrastructure within higher education, to embed high quality degree apprenticeships as an accepted alternative to traditional higher education, to boost productivity, and to enable and encourage greater social mobility”. Between November 2016 and November 2018 £8.8 million of DADF funding supported 103

¹¹ HM Treasury, [SPENDING REVIEW AND AUTUMN STATEMENT 2015](#), Cm9162, November 2015 p46

higher education providers. An [evaluation report](#)¹² of DADF was published in March 2019. The report found that DADF funding had been instrumental in the development of DAs across the HE sector:

In general, the evaluation has found that without this funding, many institutions would have pursued some degree apprenticeship activity, but activity would have been less well focused, less ambitious and would have progressed slowly.¹³

3.1 Support for degree apprentices

Degree apprentices are considered to be in full-time employment so they do not have student status and they are not eligible for student support. Tuition fees and training costs are agreed and settled between the education institution and the employer.

Apprentices earn a wage, which must be at least the minimum wage for apprentices - £3.90 per hour from April 2019. Many employers however pay significantly more, for example a project management DA with Siemens pays £20,000 pa.

DAs as employees have the same rights as other employees, including paid holidays.

¹² Report to the Office for Students Warwick Economics & Development, [Evaluation of the Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund](#), March 2019

¹³ Ibid pii

4. Benefits of degree apprenticeships

Students benefit from DAs in a number of ways including: gaining a degree without debt, earning whilst completing a degree and by gaining relevant work-based skills.

Universities UK's report [Degree Apprenticeships: Realising Opportunities](#) 2017 set out the benefits of DAs for universities:

- Degree apprenticeships are a way to complement current business engagement activities. Institutions value the opportunity to create closer links with employers, strengthen existing relationships and build new collaborations.
- Degree apprenticeships could attract students that wouldn't have gone into traditional university programmes, helping institutions reach widening participation and social mobility goals.
- Degree apprenticeships are a way to ensure higher education provision meets employers' needs.
- Implementing degree apprenticeships allows universities to access a new income stream.
- Thanks to relationships between institutions and local employers, degree apprenticeships have the potential to promote local growth and development and increase talent retention.
- Many universities are working closely with other training providers supporting the development of new education partnerships.

Degree apprenticeships present a new income stream for institutions.

UUK 2017

4.1 Universities UK 2019 report

Universities UK report, [The Future of Degree Apprenticeships](#) July 2019 said that UUK was an "enthusiastic supporter of degree apprenticeships" but they said that "more needs to be done to make them an even bigger success". The report made four main recommendations to improve the system:

- Government should lead a campaign to **promote the benefits of degree apprenticeships** to employers and the public, including better careers information and guidance at an earlier age in schools, and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) should make the application system for degree apprenticeships as straightforward as it is for undergraduate degrees.
- Government should invest in initiatives to support **social mobility**, lifelong learning, and growth in degree apprenticeships among underrepresented groups.
- The system should develop to meet current and future demand for higher level skills in areas such as **digital technology**,

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management, and public services, to boost regional economies.

- Make it **easier for employers to include a degree within their apprenticeships** where they see it adding value to their business and to their apprentices, and streamline processes and reduce unnecessary costs in the system

5. Issues with DAs

The Universities UK report [The Future of Degree Apprenticeships](#) July 2019, gave an overview of some concerns about DAs :

The development of degree apprenticeships has attracted controversy. The employer-driven shift in the balance of apprentices to higher levels could impact upon resources available for other provision. As degree apprenticeships are longer than most apprenticeships and employers expect a certain level of quality, they are often in higher funding bands. Questions have been raised about the value of leadership and management apprenticeships, the inclusion of the degree, the offer of opportunities to existing employees, and the quality of degree apprenticeship provision.

5.1 Use of levy funding for higher level courses

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has suggested that “all level six and seven apprenticeships, including those with integrated degrees, should be removed from the scope of levy funding to relieve mounting pressure on the budget.”¹⁴

In December 2018 the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education estimated that the apprenticeships budget for England could be overspent by £0.5 billion in 2019/20, rising to £1.5 billion during 2021/22. As generally the number of apprenticeship starts has dropped, it has been suggested that the overspend is the result of higher per-start funding than expected caused by the sharp rise in management apprenticeships with high prices.

A report by the Resolution Foundation commented on the rise in mid-career MBA apprentices:

Again, the common assumption is that growth in higher-level, and especially degree- and Master’s-level programmes have been driven largely by white-collar, levy-paying firms. The idea is that, relative to their non-levy counterparts, levy-paying firms being forced to spend levy cash directed a much larger share of their funds towards higher-level programmes for already highly qualified apprentices – hence public concerns about mid-career MBA apprentices.¹⁵

The report suggested that school leavers were being ‘crowded out’ of apprenticeships.¹⁶

Amanda Spielman the head of Ofsted has also expressed concern that higher level apprenticeships (level 4 and above) **are taking funding**

¹⁴ “[Stop levy funding for all level 6 and 7 apprenticeships, demands training providers](#),” *FE Week*, 20 March 2019

¹⁵ Resolution Foundation, [Trading up or trading off?](#) August 2019

¹⁶ “[School leavers ‘crowded out’ of apprenticeships, finds report](#)”, *People Management*, 27 August 2019

away from lower level courses that are taken by younger people.¹⁷ The 2017/18 Ofsted report outlined concerns:

Along with the sudden expansion in the number of providers offering apprenticeships, we continue to be concerned about access to apprenticeships for the third of students who leave school without a full level 2 qualification each year. The number of under 19s starting an apprenticeship has been in decline for the last two years. Level 2 apprenticeship starts have declined from 78,500 last year to 62,000 this year.

In contrast, the number of learners starting a higher apprenticeship has been growing year-on-year since 2011/12, increasing by around 10,000 apprentices a year for the past four years. We welcome more apprenticeships at higher levels, particularly when there is clear progression in an occupation from level 2 to degree level.

However, despite this rise in higher level apprenticeships, we are concerned that in many cases, levy money is not being spent in the intended way. We have seen examples where existing graduate schemes are in essence being rebadged as apprenticeships. This might meet the rules of the levy policy, but it falls well short of its spirit. We hope that government will give greater thought as to how levy money can be better directed at addressing skills shortages.¹⁸

5.2 Rebranding of graduate schemes as apprenticeships

A high number of adults aged over 25 are taking DAs and a large proportion of these adults have worked for a company for some time before starting a DA. This has raised concerns that many DAs are really graduate schemes that have been rebranded as apprenticeships – doing this allows companies to retain some of their apprenticeship levy contributions. This was suggested by Ms Spielman. The chief executive of the Association of Colleges, has also voiced his concerns:

“There’s some really interesting stuff about apprenticeships and how the levy seems to be being used a lot for people who are already in work, in management positions, for higher level and degree apprenticeships,” he said.

“I’m really worried about that – as Ofsted is – because we really must make sure apprenticeships are particularly for young people entering the labour market.

“That’s what the spirit is all about, rather than giving people who are already privileged in the system more skills that probably would have been funded differently by employers in the past.”¹⁹

¹⁷ [“Ofsted annual report warns apprenticeship levy being spent on graduate scheme rebadging,” FE Week, 4 December 2018](#)

¹⁸ Ofsted, [The Annual Report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills 2017/18](#), HC 1707, 4 December 2018 p15

¹⁹ *ibid*

5.3 Engagement with small and medium employers (SMEs)

Employer involvement is essential in DAs and in some cases university engagement with employers can be difficult. In many regions the largest number of employers are SMEs and interaction with these employers can be particularly difficult. This issue was raised by Universities UK:

Challenges around employer awareness and engagement that universities have experienced are magnified with SMEs, because they often have neither the specialist staff nor the time to engage with apprenticeship processes and requirements on their own. One university noted that it was a significant challenge to engage with smaller employers, as SMEs' knowledge of the new apprenticeship rules was 'shockingly poor'.²⁰

The Higher Education Commission report, [Degree Apprenticeships, Up to Standard?](#) made the following recommendations to improve interaction with SMEs:

- The DfE and ESFA [Education and Skills Funding Agency] should consult urgently on, and implement, the inclusion of all approved HE Institutions to deliver to non-levy payers so that SMEs have equal access to degree apprenticeships.
- The Government should commission a review investigating barriers and incentives to the participation of non-levy payers and SMEs in degree apprenticeships.

A [PQ on 3 September](#) 2019 gave information on how DADF funding has been used by providers to form collaborations with SMEs:

Universities: Apprentices: Written question - 281644

Paul Farrelly: 24 July 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department and the Education and Skills Funding Agency are taking to support universities to work closely with non-levy-paying small and medium-sized enterprises.

Mrs Kemi Badenoch: 03 September 2019

The department and the Education and Skills Funding Agency continue to encourage universities to work with employers, including non-levy-paying small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund (DADF) has focussed on building collaborative projects between providers and employers; including non-levy-paying SMEs. DADF has funded additional engagement activities to better understand their needs.

Birmingham City University, University of Greenwich and Aston University have actively engaged with SMEs as part of DADF-funded projects.

Over the course of the next year, all employers will be able to control how they pay for their apprenticeship training and assess and recruit their apprentices via the apprenticeship service. This will allow non-levy paying SMEs to work closely with a greater number of high-quality training providers, including universities.

²⁰ Universities UK, [The Future of Degree Apprenticeships](#) July 2019, p61

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